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# Decolonising the Geography Curriculum in post-apartheid South African public secondary schools: a critical evaluation of approaches to decolonising knowledge

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# Decolonising the Geography Curriculum in Post-Apartheid South African Public Secondary Schools: A Critical Evaluation of Approaches to Decolonising Knowledge

**By**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in Education in the Curriculum Division, School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand. 16 December 2021**

***Declaration***

This study represents an original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

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## Abstract

Education in South Africa, under colonialism, especially the epoch of apartheid, was used as means to advance the colonial logic through enforcing segregation and white supremacy. It achieved this through perpetuating the dominance of Europe-America in knowing, thus rendering subjects of colonised societies unable to think. This status quo gave birth to cognitive injustice which educational reform prioritized reversing, since the advent of democracy in 1994. Curricula (the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9, the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12, and the current curriculum, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements) implemented in post-apartheid sought to get rid of colonial logic through aligning aims of education with human rights, social justice, inclusivity and valuing of indigenous ways of knowing.

However, though, a wave of students' protests that ripped through the country recently, calling for the decolonisation of education in South Africa revealed that despite the curriculum having gone through numerous reforms, it continues to run along colonial lines. One of the outstanding features of this colonial character is content knowledge which continues to erase the local community and their geographic space from knowing. In the geography curriculum (encapsulated in CAPS), this has been traced to the absence of theories originating from local ways of knowing. What the reforms have been able to achieve, so far, is the recognition of indigenous knowledge which does not extend to the practical inclusion of local perspectives in the content for Secondary schools. By implication, the current curriculum for geography is colonial.

The purpose of this conceptual study was to critically evaluate approaches to decolonising knowledge in order to identify an approach that would transform the current curriculum for geography into a policy document that effectively tackles cognitive injustice created by a colonial curriculum. It engaged six approaches to decolonisation, proposed by Jansen (2017 a) in Ammon (2019). They are decentring of European knowledge, critical engagement with settled knowledge, encounters with entangled knowledges, the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society) and the Africanisation of knowledge as a potential tool for transforming the curriculum (Ammon, 2019). It puts forward the Africanisation of knowledge as the best suitable approach for transforming the geography curriculum, within South Africa's current context of learning.

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Balungile Mushagasha

Supervised by:

Doctor Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi

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## Dedication

This project is dedicated to the God Almighty, who is the pillar that holds my life. I also dedicate it to my late mother Constance Zodwa Hlophe, my late grandmother Sarah Mdluli, my sons, Sir John Mhlonishwa Mushagasha and Christian Zanomusa Mushagasha.

## Terminology and Glossary

Keywords: Colonialism; Colonisation; Coloniality; Decolonisation; Decoloniality; Africanism; Africanisation; Afrocentricity; Knowledge; Indigenous Knowledge; Epistemicide; Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement; Curriculum; School.

## List of acronyms and abbreviations

**DoE** Department of Basic Education

**DoESA** Department of Economic and Social Affairs

**CAPS** Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

**CHE** Council of Higher Education

**IK** Indigenous Knowledge

**LTSM** Learning and Teaching Support Material

## Definition of terms

**Decolonisation:** a process of ending a formal system of political control, its current usage refers to a process of terminating the continued control of former colonies by the system of power inherited from Colonialism (Quijano, 2007).

**De-coloniality:** is an ideology aimed at disentangling contemporary societies from the continued control of colonial power embedded in modernity, western civilisation and capitalism (Quijano, 2007).

**Colonialism:** refers to the "combination of territorial, juridical, cultural, linguistic, political, mental/epistemic, and/or economic domination of one group of people or groups of people by another (external) group of people" (Murrey, 2020, 315).

**Colonisation:** a process of taking over a system of government by another (Murrey, 2020).

**Coloniality:** refers to "long standing patterns of power between settlers and colonised societies resulting from colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations,

and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (Maldonaldo-Torres, 2007, 24).

**Africanness:** means African identity and everything that characterise being African, our values, our interests, our customs and our philosophy.

**Afrocentricity:** a manner of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate (Chawane, 2016).

**Africanisation:** the process or vehicle for defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity and culture (le Granje, 2018).

**Africanism:** having Africans in structures of power initially occupied by non-Africans does not guarantee that the colonial presence will be erased (le Granje, 2018).

**Knowledge:** traditionally refers to a justified true belief (Horsthemke: 2016).

**Propositional Knowledge:** embodies traditional knowledge [justified, true belief].

**Indigenous Knowledge:** broadly refers to "but not limited to local knowledge, traditional knowledge, indigenous technical knowledge, peasants' knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge and folk knowledge" (Shizha: 2013 in Msimanga & Shizha: 2014: 138).

**Curriculum:** modern word "curriculum" comes from the Latin word "currere", meaning the running of a race (Lovat & Smith: 1995).

**Epistemicide:** destruction of knowledge belonging to indigenous communities

## Introduction

Despite having gone through numerous transformations since the advent of democracy in 1994 (from the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9, the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12, and the current curriculum to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements), the current curriculum for geography in public secondary schools remain colonial. The geography curriculum in question is encapsulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The downside of having a colonial curriculum is its inherent character of producing power imbalances between the west and its former colonies, rendering an authentic move away from the grips of former colonizers impossible (Quijano, 2007), yet formal colonialism ended over two decades ago in South Africa (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). This permits calls to decolonise the current curriculum for geography in order to rid it of coloniality or its hangovers.

Whilst decolonisation originally refers to a process of ending a formal system of political control, its current usage refers to a process of terminating the continued control of former colonies by the system of power inherited from Colonialism (Quijano, 2007). However, though, the current curriculum for geography used in public secondary schools does value other ways of knowing (DoE, 2012). Commendably, this move creates space for challenging coloniality. But, because the policy document which this curriculum is a product of, only states that it values indigenous knowledge without clearly stating its role in the learning of geography, it renders the inclusion of alternative knowledge irrelevant (Mushagasha, 2019). This study sought to engage decolonisation as a tool to curriculum transformation in order to suggest how can it be used to transform the current curriculum for geography in order to align it with the political project of a post-apartheid South Africa.

It focused on Jansen's (2017 a) six approaches to decolonisation. They are decolonisation as the decentring of European knowledge, decolonisation as critical engagement with settled knowledge, decolonisation as encounters with entangled knowledges, the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society) and decolonisation as Africanisation of knowledge (Ammon, 2019). It concludes by putting forward the Africanisation of knowledge as the best

suitable approach for transforming the geography curriculum, within the context of an Afrocentric model of education.

**Problem Statement**

The advent of democracy ushered South Africa into a political shift that essentialized the re-birth as a post-apartheid state, which created space for a move away from the colonial character brought by apartheid (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). The system of education, chiefly characterised by Europe-American imperialism and inferiorization of Africanism and its sum total (identity, blackness, ways of knowing, belief systems) needed major transformation in order to align it with principles of a democratic society (DoE, 1995). What characterises a democratic society is an entitlement to self-determinism, which gives a society the right to define itself and also control its own destiny (Shizha & Makuvaza, 2017). This means that the new political dispensation allowed South Africa to decide the direction its system of education ought to take.

At the outset, post-apartheid education was tasked with reversing effects of the colonial system of education introduced under apartheid (DoE, 1995). Apartheid is a system of governance introduced by Dutch settlers in South Africa from 1948 to 1994 that hierachized identity (with whites sitting at the apex) and advanced it through enforcing the superiority of Europe and America in education (Mashau, 2018). This translated into a racially divided curriculum meant to enable the perpetuation of the racial hierarchy (Vally & Dalambo, 1999). Yet, two decades after the advent of democracy in South Africa, the system of education continue to run along colonial lines (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014).

This status quo can be traced in the current curriculum for Geography in Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Whilst it recognises the inclusion of indigenous knowledge (DoE, 2012), it subliminally enforces Europe-American imperialism through omitting ways of knowing originating from local communities. I say this to mean that, the current curriculum for geography does not make ways of knowing with historical ties to local communities an obligation in the geography content (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014). Rather, it

leaves it open for pedagogical intervention. What this means is that it is up to the teacher to include indigenous knowledge or not.

Considering that the official curriculum is not always in alignment with the enacted curriculum (Lovat & Smith, 1975), there is no guarantee that Geography teachers are decolonising the Geography discipline through pedagogical interventions. Being a practising geography teacher myself, I can affirm that there is no local perspective that I ever include when teaching geography knowledge, mostly because such knowledge does not form part of ideas and ways of thinking that gets assessed. Whilst an analysis of performance in the 2019 National Senior Certificate examination for the Geography subject shows that learners find it difficult to transfer Geography knowledge into skills that can be used to solve real life problems (DoE, 2019). This can be attributed to the use of concepts originating from outside the context of learners, on the basis that knowledge, being and a cultural context are interwoven (Young, 2010). What this means is that knowledge cannot be separated from the space of knowing and the knowing person. Wa Thiong'o (1986) stresses this point by stating that when knowledge is separated from being and cultural context, knowledge becomes alienating.

This is what I have identified as the problem statement of my research study; that the content of the Geography subject alienates the learners because the content is foreign to them; secondly, it excludes the local ideologies, thoughts and perspective of the local communities in which these public schools are based and are supposed to be serving. Yet, for knowledge to produce understanding and ideas that geography learners can transfer into skills that can be used to solve real life problems, it must illuminate the reality of the South African community of learning (Dei, 2000).

**Aim(s) of the study**

The aim of the study was to critically evaluate approaches to decolonising knowledge, as an alternative tool to transform the current curriculum for geography encapsulated in CAPS, in order to identify an approach that carry material advantages for affirming a post-apartheid South Africa.

**Central claim:**

The curriculum used in post-apartheid South African public-secondary schools re-inforce cognitive injustice through legitimizing grand narratives as the only body of knowledge that counts in geography education (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014). I say this to mean that inherent qualities of geography knowledge, encapsulated in CAPS for further education and training pin the discipline on theories (ways of knowing) with historical ties to the colonial logic. Because the colonial logic affirms unequal power relations between the coloniser and the colonised, maintaining the curriculum in its current state grants Europe-America cognitive imperialism (Maldonado-Torress, 2007). It therefore, needs to be decolonised. But, because thinking is intimately linked to context, the problem of cognitive imperialism from an African context, cannot be effectively countered without relocating thinking to Africa. Geo-politics of knowledge essentializes the context of knowledge construction (Mignolo, 2011). Therefore, one cannot engage the debate on decolonising knowledge outside the politics of space. This, then, permits the consideration of Africa (as a place for thinking) in the pursuit for approaches to knowledge decolonisation. But, adopting an African approach to decolonisation require contextualising education in Africa. That is to say, centring Africa in learning. Hence, this study holds that a best approach for decolonising the geography curriculum should adopt Africanisation of knowledge as a starting point (Ammon, 2019).

**Sub-claims:**

- The current curriculum for geography in post-apartheid South African public secondary schools (in CAPS) is colonial.

- Africa, which South Africa is part of, needs a curriculum that connects school knowledge to African realities in order to eliminate coloniality in the current curriculum for geography.

- Decolonising the current curriculum for geography can create opportunities for transforming the curriculum for geography into a policy document that affirms principles of a post-colonial (post-apartheid) society.

- The current curriculum for geography in public secondary schools in South Africa can be decolonised through decolonising knowledge.

- The right approach to decolonisation that can best suit South Africa's context of learning is decolonisation as Africanisation of knowledge.

**Methodology**

A research methodology is basically about how the phenomenon being studied will be investigated, guided by the nature of the question to be answered in the study (Pandey & Pandey, 2015).This study is an inquiry based on concepts and texts (Naagarazan, 2006). It is aimed at making visible the meaning of ideas and concepts underpinning the phenomena under investigation in order to evaluate the curriculum for geography against the criteria of a post-colonial and apartheid curriculum. The chosen methodology for this research study will, therefore, adopt a conceptual approach through using three methods of inquiry: descriptive, analytical and normative (Naagarazan, 2006).

Firstly, the descriptive inquiry will provide an understanding of coloniality versus decoloniality, and what these two concepts entail in praxis. Secondly, the analytical inquiry will provide an evaluative judgement of approaches to decolonisation in order to identify potential opportunities and challenges for transforming the curriculum for Geography in post-apartheid secondary schools. Further, it will assess what is possible and what is not possible to achieve with decolonising the Geography curriculum within a context of what Geography education aims to achieve. Thirdly, the normative inquiry will suggest an approach to decolonisation that has a potential of transforming the Geography curriculum into a rich curriculum through centring studying the world on local perspectives, and by implication expanding opportunities of learner understanding (Naagarazan, 2006).

## Chapter 1: Coloniality and the current curriculum for Geography in post-apartheid South African secondary schools: trends and debates

### *1.1: Introduction*

This chapter sought to demonstrate that despite political colonisation having ended over 20 years ago in South Africa, education in post-apartheid society continues to run along colonial lines. This is at the expense of an African approach to education.

### 1.2: *Coloniality: trends and debates*

Coloniality, a concept originating from the discourse of South American scholars (Quijano, 2007 & Mignolo, 2007) refers to a status quo produced by power imbalances constructed through colonialism, which continue to permeate and take control of all spheres of life in contemporary societies. Coloniality was born out of colonialism, generally referring to the "combination of territorial, juridical, cultural, linguistic, political, mental/epistemic, and/or economic domination of one group of people or groups of people by another (external) group of people" (Murrey, 2020, 315). Its central features are dispossession, appropriation, Eurocentrism and othering. Dispossession occurs when colonizers take over land and material possessions belonging to a colonized group by force or coercion. Appropriation occurs when the colonizers adopt cultural resources of the colonized group and transform it for personal gain. Eurocentrism occurs when values and ideologies of the colonizers dominate that of the colonized groups. Othering refers to the reconstruction of identities of the colonized groups as sub-humans.

Colonialism produced a system of power that created a hierarchical relationship between the colonisers and the colonised. This hierarchy was based on colonial logic, which is a classification of western values and thought as superior than that of colonized societies. It therefore produces power imbalances between former colonizers and the societies which they had colonized, called coloniality. By coloniality I mean "long standing patterns of power

between settlers and colonised societies resulting from colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations" (Maldonaldo-Torres, 2007, 243). I understand coloniality to mean thinking behind the thinking about being, knowing and acting in the world. Considering that this thinking, also referred to as the colonial logic, had been part of colonial subjects for years, it eventually became part of who they are. This creates space for it to continue existing beyond the end of political colonization. This, therefore, does not only render coloniality invisible, but capable of reproducing and sustaining power relations constructed through the project of political colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

Therefore, coloniality, can be understood as the second generation of colonization. Quijano (2007) intimately links it with the order of the world brought by modernity, western civilization and capitalism. The South American scholar means that as long as today societies live under the terms of modernity, western civilisation and their economies dominated by capitalism, they indirectly remain under the control of their former colonisers (Quijano, 2007). This makes coloniality not just a political or cultural condition, but a structure that creates conditions for Europe and America to continue dominating subjects of their former colonies. Maldonado-Torres (2007) posits that this structure has created a matrix of knowledge, power & being. By this, the scholar means a condition for Europe and American thought, control and identity to supercede that of local communities. Coloniality, therefore, works as an organizing principle that sustains a power relation that classify Europe and America as superior than the rest of the world.

The colonial matrix of power operates through control of the economy, control of authority, control of gender and sexuality and control of knowledge and subjectivity (Mignolo, 2007).

- The control of economy manifests itself through dispossessions, land appropriations, the exploitation of labour, and control of African natural resources.
- The control of authority which includes the maintenance of military superiority and monopolization of the means of violence.

- The control of gender and sexuality which involves the re-imagination of 'family' in Western bourgeois terms and the introduction of Western-centric education which displaces indigenous knowledges.
- The control of subjectivity and knowledge which includes epistemological colonisation and the re-articulation of African subjectivity as inferior and constituted by a series of 'deficits' and a catalogue of 'lacks' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012,1-2).

I am more concerned about the introduction of western-centric education and the colonisation of epistemology because the stronghold of coloniality, in all spheres of life, is knowledge. Despite that knowledge and knowledge production played an active role in the conquest of societies (Maldonado-Torress, 2007), being a social construct, it is laden with values, ideas and the culture of the context of production (Young, 2010). This attributes of the social context provide a mirror of how individuals see themselves, how they see the world around them, and how they situate themselves in the world. What we know serves as a mirror which we look at the world through, and what we see in that mirror creates reality (wa Thiong'o, 1993). Put differently, knowledge and its sum total; culture, values and ideas, create reality and identity. The African scholar clarifies this argument by stating that,

> culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses, through which they come to view themselves and their place in the universe. Values are the basis of a people's identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race (wa Thiong'o, 1993, 14-15).

The problematic about knowledge in contemporary societies is that its chief inherent feature is imperialism. By this I am narrowly referring to the superiority of western knowledge traditions that continue to suppress the production of local knowledges (Maldonado-Torress, 2007). This status quo originates from political colonialism which produced conditions to subjugate knowledges belonging to the colonised societies on the basis of scientificity (Maldonado-Torress, 2007). Methods of science provides a normal or settled way of thinking in order to arrive at the truth, yet the truth is subjective, and constructed within a historical context, with its own power relations (Butin, 2006). This power relations shape knowledge

production, fabricating terms for othering local knowledge traditions. The impression created by coloniality in knowledge production is that there is knowledge, then there is something else. This is the very power relations, in the guise of scientificity, that produced conditions for erasure, disqualification and or subjugation of local traditions of knowledge on the basis that it was below the level of cognition (Spivak, 1988). This status quo choreographed epistemicide. By this I mean the killing and destruction of knowledge belonging to local communities (Masaka, 2016). The legacy of epistemicide continues to shape knowledge production in contemporary society, reproducing coloniality of knowledge.

> It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day (Maldonado-Torress, 2006, 117).

The above quote illuminates the depth and width of the colonial logic in contemporary societies through being embedded in different spheres of life, where it reproduce imperialism. It exists in records of knowledge. Considering that what one knows influences how they see the world and themselves (Wa Thiong'o, 1986), modern subjects perceive themselves through a lens of coloniality. This is to say subjects of former colonies still view themselves through coloniality. This serves as a basis for pursuing the decolonisation of knowledge, which is at the heart of this study. Therefore, coloniality is an extension of colonialism. But, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) cautions that coloniality and colonialism are not the same thing. The latter narrowly refers to a system of power that allowed Europe and America to have control of the economy and politics of other countries. Whereas coloniality lives beyond the formal control of the economy and politics. Coloniality, therefore, is an invisible power structure that lies at the centre of the world dis/order in which contemporary societies live in (Mignolo, 2011). This is the definition of coloniality adopted in this study.

*1.3: Curriculum and coloniality*

The word curriculum is a variegated concept, and is defined differently by different scholars (Pinar, et. al., 1995). The plethora of definitions include curriculum as content, curriculum as a learning experience, curriculum as behavioural objectives and curriculum as instruction (Lunenburg, 2011). Broadly, the concept refers to a guideline for knowledge and activities that learners need to engage with in order to develop particular skills (Pinar, et. al., 1995). Conceptualising curriculum this way, renders it a policy. In this sense, a curriculum is a guideline for selected knowledge which a particular course should teach, the type of educational experience learners should engage in order to learn, and the type of skills learners should possess at the end of a course. As a policy, curriculum is the official document adopted by departments of education as a guideline of what learners should learn, what experiences are appropriate in order for learners to learn and how leaning should be measured (DoE, 2012).

But Kelly (2009) contends that curriculum is not just about selecting knowledge and deciding best ways of transmitting it. It is more about the reason behind the selection of knowledge, influenced by what a society finds worthy to learn in order to be able to fulfil a particular purpose (du Preez & Simmonds, 2014). In some cases, the reason behind selection of knowledge is to generate skills for economic growth. That is why any useful definition for curriculum should include intentions, reality and product (Lovat & Smith, 1975). It is the reality illuminated through knowledge selected for curriculum that wa Thiong'o (1993) finds problematic on the basis that knowledge selection tends to privilege knowledge with historical links to the epoch of political colonialism. Msimanga & Shizha (2014) affirms this claim by stating that curriculum continues to run along colonial lines by creating space for the western thought and ways of knowing to dominate and legitimate knowing.

If reality is constructed through the type of knowledge included in the curriculum (wa Thiong'o, 1986), knowledge selected for curriculum development determines the view of reality learners hold. It is then essential to examine knowledge included in the curriculum to ensure that the reality it creates is in line with views of reality held by learners. If not, the

curriculum becomes alienating (wa Thiong'o, 1986). The downside of an alienating curriculum is that it separates learners from what they know and where they belong. CHE (2017, 5) advances this argument by contending that,

> How students experience the curriculum is important, as education is both an epistemological and an ontological project. In other words, as students engage with knowledge, they become different kinds of people. However, if they are alienated from the knowledge and from teaching and learning processes they may struggle to learn.

Building on CHE's (2017) quote, the starting point when selecting knowledge for curriculum should be consideration for the reality which such a curriculum is intended at constructing. It is in this vein that calls for a curriculum that reflects the reality and being of learners becomes indispensible.

Therefore, a curriculum that is suitable for Africa is an African curriculum. Such a curriculum uses Africa as a mirror for reality. This is the very curriculum that this study finds suitable for transforming the geography curriculum, in order to turn it into a policy that can empower South Africa's community of learning without dislocating them from their context of existence. Ramoupi (2012) advances this argument by contending that South Africa is in the African continent. Therefore, if South Africans are to know anything, they need to know about the African continent before knowing about the rest of the world. The scholar further justifies the Africanisation of the curriculum by putting forward that knowledge which emerge from Africa is universal because the knowledge known as global discourses actually originated from Africa.

Van Wyk & Higgs (2012) advances this argument by contending that a curriculum illuminates social context. This suggests that there is a direct link between the social context of learning and what is learned in schools. If that argument is accepted, then the current curriculum ought to be a reflection of a social context of a post-apartheid South Africa.

Quoting van Wyk & Higgs (2012, 174) verbatim, “curricula are created within a wider social order and, as such, an understanding of the curriculum cannot easily be accomplished without recognition of the social world in which it has been shaped.” This is an approach to curriculum development that this study sympathises with.

*1.4: Geography & the current curriculum for geography*

Geography is a body of knowledge which offers a systematic way of studying the environment and human-environment interaction (Rusznyak, 2017). But the scholar further posits that geography draws from other bodies of knowledge, therefore, its claim for being a discipline is disputable. The fields of discipline where geography knowledge emerge from include economics, chemistry, zoology, botany, physics, and sociology. Accordingly, a befitting definition of what geography is should view it as applied science (Rusznyak, 2017). Defining it this way foregrounds its conceptualisation on how it can be used.

Within education, geography is used to create awareness about place, spatial processes, spatial distribution patterns, human and environment interaction (DoE, 2012). Place refers to where people live whereas spatial processes refer to natural events that take place within space. Spatial distribution patterns refer to how people are distributed within space.

Human and environment interaction refers to changes in the environment resulting from human activities. For example, maps and coordinates provide understanding on where people live on the surface of the earth. Summarily, geography education entails inducting learners to geographic thinking (Rusznyak, 2017). In order to develop geographic thinking skills, learners must be able to answer the following questions:

- Where is it?
- What is it like?
- Why is it there?
- How did it happen?
- How is it changing?

- What impact does it have?
- How should it be managed for the mutual benefit of humanity and the natural environment?

For me to be able to answer such questions as a geography teacher, I need to engage deeply with the discipline in order to understand mechanisms that influence geography phenomena and its potential effect on place, people and the environment. This means that knowledge selected for geography education should be able to provide understanding about generative mechanisms and resultant factors in order develop geographic thinking among learners. This criterion is essential in consideration for Africanising the discipline.

Within the context of South Africa's secondary school, the curriculum for geography is encapsulated in CAPS. The policy document provides a guideline for knowledge and skills that count as geography knowledge, as well as how they should be assessed (DoE, 2012). For example, at grade 12 level, the geography curriculum specifies that geography knowledge should build on FOUR core concepts; climatology, geomorphology, settlements and economic geography. Climatology teaches learners about natural events occurring within the atmosphere. Geomorphology teaches learners about the physical space and forces that shape it. Settlements provide knowledge on where people live. Economic geography investigates the relationship between the physical space and the people occupying it (Cohen, 2012).

One of the barriers to geography learning is learners inability to apply geography knowledge onto real life situations (DoE, 2019). I interpret this to mean that geography knowledge offered in secondary school is disconnected from South Africas context of learning. An analysis conducted by the department of education on barriers to geography learning identified that majority of learners in post-apartheid public secondary schools fail to create linkages between geography knowledge and real life problems (DoE, 2019). Yet for learners to demonstrate that learning has occurred, they must be able to transfer knowledge onto skills that can be used to solve real life problems (DoE, 2019). Wa Thiong'o (1986) puts forward that linkages between school knowledge and skills for real life scenarios are inherent in the context of knowledge production. This, then, permits the argument for the need to construct

knowledge within the local context of learning through including local knowledge in content for geography. This can be simply achieved through including indigenous knowledge.

The current curriculum for geography in CAPS laudably does create space for locating African realities in the discipline through recognizing indigenous knowledge. This is to say that there is space for knowledge belonging to local communities to inform geographic skills and thinking. But, the curriculum leaves the real task of using alternative knowledge to teachers by not including ways of thinking drawing from local knowledge in the list of concepts serving as a guideline for geography content knowledge (DoE, 2012). I use local knowledge to mean knowledge grounded on local experiences and justified through local systems of thought (for example; South African philosophy).

Practically, as a geography teacher, I have the leverage of infusing local perspectives and African worldviews in the discipline. But the problem is that such knowledge is not included in the textbooks which have been recommended for teaching, neither does it get assessed. By implication, indigenous or local knowledge remains excluded from the content of geography for public secondary schools in South Africa. I attribute this omission of local knowledge from the geography content to claims of indigenous knowledge having a challenge of epistemic uncertainty (Horsthemke, 2013). By this I mean that there are contestations and disputations about whether indigenous knowledge is fit to be used as school knowledge, with parallel arguments holding that the system of thinking that validates such knowledge is a myth. This claim reduces indigenous knowledge to mythology or hearsay (wa Thiong'o, 1993).

On the contrary, Goduka (2000), Msimanga & Shizha (2014) and Ramoupi (2012) hold that such knowledge does exist as a science but was not properly documented because colonisers labelled it as mythology. African knowledge has, therefore, always existed as a science but was marginalised in formal education (Ramoupi, 2012). If the argument of these scholars is accepted, decolonising geography knowledge is possible. The real task is in reviving knowledges subjugated through the emergence of western traditions of knowledge, and documenting it in a form of textbooks that can be used in the classroom. The significance of

having such knowledge in forms of textbooks is quality control within the context of a standardised system of education. Foucault in Butin (2006) brings to light how the reliance on scientificity as the tradition for knowledge production created conditions for the subjugation of local knowledges. The implication of this in the geography discipline is the continued dominance of western epistemologies in the geography textbooks used in post-apartheid secondary schools (Peters, 2015).

*1.5: What is the purpose of (secondary) schools in post-apartheid South Africa?*

A school is a place where a society initiates its younger generation into "an intellectual, imaginative, moral and emotional inheritance" (Oakeshott, 1971, 5). This is to say that, schools are a place for developing mental abilities and concsietization of young people on ways of behaviour acceptable within a society. Schools, therefore, are not just places for acquiring information. They are a place where societies remake and re-orient the younger generations. The process of change young people go through at school enables them to lead meaningful lives (Pinar, et. al., 1995). By this I mean that knowledge and skills acquired by young people at school enable them to make independent decisions in order to better their lives, as well as come up with solutions to their problems. Therefore, a good deal, is for school to provide conditions for developing critical thinking whilst enforcing patterns of behaviour that can enable learners to change their lives for the best (Young, 2011).

Hamm (1989) posits that whilst schools have different roles in every society, their primary purpose is mental development. This makes schools a special place for initiating learners into ways of thinking about the world beyond their personal experiences (Young, 2011). The world is introduced to them as an object of thought rather than a place where they live (Charlot, 2009). Relating to the world in this manner provides conditions to move from lower order thinking to higher order thinking (Vygotsky, 1978). Whilst schools are not the only space where thinking develops, what makes them unique is the ability to create space for learners to develop higher order thinking. Developing higher order thinking requires an engagement with concepts of a scientific nature (Bernstein, 2000). Lower order thinking develops from socialisation as the child or an individual learns to adapt or survive in the

world. The claim that higher order thinking only develops through an engagement with scientific concepts is what differentiates out of school learning from formal education. By formal education I mean the type of learning that occurs within a schooling environment and is based on a curriculum (Oakeshott, 1971).

Whilst the argument that scientific concepts have a unique role in the cultivation of higher order thinking skills seems to have been accepted, there are contestations and disputations that education is not an end in itself but rather means to an end. This is to say that, the primary purpose for education is beyond intellectualisation of learners. The knowledge and skills they develop from school should empower them to improve their lives (Charlot, 2009). In the post-apartheid South Africa, the principal role of education is to help society address challenges inherited from apartheid. They include reversing racial inequality created through the apartheid policy, economic development, as well as poverty alleviation (CHE, 2017). Within the context of secondary schools, education has two purposes; facilitating the transition of learners from secondary to institutions of higher learning, and producing skills needed by employers (DoE, 2012).

This pins the purpose of secondary education on inducting learners onto ways of engaging with knowledge that will contribute to academic success, whilst also introducing them to fields of practice in order to develop skills needed to perform duties in the world of work (Muller, 2014 & Betram, 2008). This means that secondary education must find a balance between creating space for developing academic skills whilst at the same time teaching learners thinking skills that can enable them to perform duties at work. For education to prepare learners for academic success, it must provide what Morrow (2003) in Muller (2014) refer to as epistemological access. Morrow (2003) in Muller (2014) differentiates epistemological access through juxtaposing it with formal access, narrowly referring to gaining admission into an institution of learning. Epistemological access provides a gateway into the culture of the discipline by introducing learners to disciplinary knowledge and initiating them to forms of thinking applicable within a field of study (Muller, 2014).

At subject level, the purpose of education is outlined in aims, which stipulates the type of knowledge and skills learners should know and develop. Rowntree (1982) defines aims as broad statements communicating what certain subjects and themes should aim at achieving. The purpose of geography education in South African public secondary schools is to provide a systematic way of studying the earth in order to understand how places, distribution of people and the shape of the earth change over time (Dube, 2014). The current curriculum, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) stipulates that geography education should provide ways of explaining and understanding of the physical and social world. It should also develop a critical awareness of how the relationship between the physical and social world influence each other (DoE, 2012). In terms of skills, geography education should empower learners to apply geographical knowledge in their physical and social world (DoE, 2012). This means that any changes in the curriculum should balance epistemological access and transfer of skills onto the real world.

However, in Africa, education has historically been a site for enforcing Europe-American domination over colonial subjects. The new system of education introduced during the political control of Africa served the interest of Europe and America through privileging a Eurocentric model (Ramoupi, 2012). This created space for the emergence and dominance of Europe and American values in education, founded on ways of thinking that centre Europe in thinking, being knowing (wa Thiong'o, 1987). Goduka (2000) posits that the system of education introduced by former colonisers got rid of the African system of education in order to make way for a modern way of life. By so doing, Africa lost not only its land, but identity, ways of knowing and the right to think. This status quo rendered modern education a colonial project that was meant to transform African societies into colonial subjects through colonising their minds. The practicality of this is the centring of Europe and America in thinking, being and acting (wa Thiong'o, 1986).

South Africa's system of education suffered the same fate, especially during the apartheid era. This marks a period where South Africa's politics were based on the principle of racism, which hierachized being, with whiteness being at the apex (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). Formal education became a space for advancing the colonial agenda of stripping colonial subjects of Africanness and further dispossess them of their resources through enforcing

ideologies that inferiorised non-Europe and America identities (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). This political agenda changed in 1994 when South Africa gained independence. The political shift towards a democratic society required over-hauling structures of government in order to rid the society of colonialism (DoE, 2012). The system of education, chiefly characterised by racism and segregation was one of the structures needing transformation (DoE, 1995). Post-apartheid education, was then, primarily tasked with reversing societal inequalities and providing intellectual tools for re-establishing South Africa as an independent state, which comes with rights to self-determination. It is the right to determination that necessitated a transition into a post-apartheid political project. Post-apartheid education, was tasked with reversing societal inequalities and providing intellectual tools for re-establishing South Africa as an independent state, which comes with rights to self-determination. It is the right to determination that necessitates a transition into a post-apartheid political project.

Yet, South Africa's system of education continues to face challenges inherited from the apartheid system of governance, despite structural adjustments having been put in place (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). Borrowing the words of Shizha & Makuvaza (2017, 84).

> "Munhu/umuntu struggles to find self-identity and self-confidence through the current education system, which is individualistic and does not function as a collective unit."

The gist of the above argument is that the current system of education still has a colonial character. This is caused by the privileging of western values and ideologies in content knowledge. The values embodied in the culture and curriculum used in post-colonial schools reproduce coloniality.

Ramoupi (2012) advances this argument by stating that education in South Africa has not changed meaningfully since the advent of democracy. It is still very much dominated by western culture, at the expense of an African culture. What South Africa needs, is an African-centred education. By this, the South African scholar means that South Africans need to study

and conceptualise the world from their own contexts and content (Ramoupi, 2012). It is in this vein that calls for an education system in alignment with principles of the post-apartheid political project cannot be ignored. Ramoupi (2012) further puts forward that colonialism did not only cause physical violence, but also mental violence. This study sought to advance this agenda through focusing on how the decolonisation of knowledge can end the mental violence inflicted on South African community of learning, through centring Africa in the geography curriculum.

However, Griffiths (2019) cautions that with South Africa being a rainbow nation, transformation in the education system should not alienate members of the learning community who do not fully identify with Africanness. I understand this to refer to generations of Europeans and Americans who settled permanently in South Africa. But Ramoupi (2012) underscores that the majority of the South African population is African. This permits the pursuit of an African approach to decolonisation.

### *1.6: Conclusion*

This chapter sought to bring the continued existence of the new form of colonialism, referred to as coloniality in education to the surface. It demonstrated this through exposing the continuation of a Eurocentric model of education in post-apartheid South Africa, at the expense of an education system that centre African realities.

## Chapter 2: South Africa needs a curriculum that enforces the emergence of democratic values and principles in order to align education with the post-apartheid era.

### *2.1: Introduction*

This chapter sought to highlight the problematic nature of the current state of geography as a discipline and the essentiality of decolonising knowledge in order to align geography education with the political project of post-apartheid. Post-apartheid is a period beginning from the end of Europe's political control over South Africa in 1994, marking the end of colonialism in Africa's south society (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). At the outset, the education was tasked with ridding the society of apartheid, chiefly characterised by white supremacy. The initial focus of education was unifying the system of education by ending the allocation of schools according to different races and through the offering of a racially differentiated curriculum (Vally & Dalambo, 1999). Whist that objective has been achieved, the system of education has failed to meet the needs of a post-apartheid society (Ottara, 2012). By this I mean using knowledge to empower learners with skills that can be used to sovle real life problems. This statement can be extended to the current geography curriculum (DoE, 2019).

### *2.2: Education in Africa and its effects on the attainment of educational outcomes*

Africa's system of education remains poor (Otara, 2012). Major challenges facing education in Africa stem from their linkange to Europe-American tradition of education (Dei, 2008). Content knowledge still very much draws from traditions (disciplines) which emerged from the colonial project (Vorster, 2016). Whilst this seems understandable in view of the argument for knowledge structures, with scholars (Bernstein, 2000, & Vygotsky, 1978) contending that scientific concepts have a unique role in formal education, they are not grounded on learners experiences (Dei, 2008). They are rarely linked to histories, experiences and philosophical foundations of African people, and by implication, becomes alienating (Goduka, 2000). "For many black students this creates a sense of a hierarchy of superior and

inferior knowledge and, thus, of superior and inferior people" (Vorster, 2016, 5). What this means is that values, attitudes and skills inherent in knowledge disconnects learners from their real-world of existence and worldviews. This argument is advanced in Shizha & Makuvaza's, (2017, 84) contention that "munhu/umuntu cannot find their 'self' as long as the values espoused by the education systems are foreign and alien, and as long as the space occupied is defined from an alien perspective."

Dei (2008) posits that education in Africa should be about developing a person in totality. That is the body, mind and soul. In this vein, what is taught in schools should develop learners as a whole, through grounding knowledge in the everyday experiences of learners. The African scholar further argues that for knowledge to be useful, it must not be abstract, but practical. The essentiality of Dei's (2008) argument is in Dei's (2000) claim that Africa needs a system of education that responds to its challenges. Otara (2012) backs this point from a position of education for economic development. This requires education to provide knowledge and skills that can enable African societies to respond to the identified challenges (Dei, 2000).

Wa Thiongo (1986) contends that for education to achieve such, knowledge must be linked to learners lived experiences. He advances the argument by contending that knowledge is a mirror through which learners look at the world. Put differently, what learners know shape how they understand the world and how they see themselves in it. What they know, in other words, creates their reality (wa Thiongo'o, 1986). Considering that knowledge is a social construct, it is intimately bound up to context (Young, 2010). What this means is that knowledge illuminates context. Within a learning space, the context characterised in knowledge orients understanding of the world or represented phenomenon. This means that there must be connectivity between what is taught in school and the reality and the real world lived experiences of learners (wa Thiongo, 1986). Arguments linked to this concern, raise questions on the degree to which the content being studied in schools relate to lived experiences of learners. When there is no connectivity between the reality illuminated in knowledge and learners lived experiences, such knowledge becomes alienating (wa Thiong'o, 1986). This then begs an examination of content knowledge in order to determine the degree to which content knowledge relates to learners real world experiences (CHE, 2017).

In post- apartheid South Africa, where formal education was founded on two epochs of colonialism, the reality mirrored in content knowledge warrants a re-examination. The first era of colonialism in South Africa was before the scramble for Africa, which came with the mission schools from at least the late 1700s, led to the disbanding of traditional education systems in African societies. This was replaced by formal education, which was part of the colonial project through the use of knowledge to colonise the minds of the colonised (Maldonado-Toress, 2007). A clear demonstration of the significance of education in advancing the colonial project can be traced from South Africa's second period of colonialism, which was characterised by apartheid. This period, between 1940 to 1994, showcases how white supremacy was enforced through education. Under the apartheid banner, the purpose of education was to enforce separation between different racial groups in order to protect white supremacy. Knowledge advanced this project through shaping learners understanding of being, as naturally hierarchized, with the white race being at the apex, thus natural dominators whilst the races sitting in the middle and bottom of apex naturally meant to serve whites (Vorster, 2016).

Whilst there have been attempts at transforming the system of education since the end of apartheid in 1994, its residues continue to permeate the schooling system. The policy for the current curriculum explicitly counters coloniality through stating that the aim of education is to reverse racial inequalities produced by apartheid. It also provides conditions for connecting education to lived experiences of South African learners. But pragmatically speaking, by failing to include locally produced knowledge, it implicitly enables knowledge produced outside the context of learners to dominate content knowledge. With formal education having historical ties to colonizers, dominant epistemologies tend to belong to former colonisers. By implication, the current curriculum reproduce coloniality. It is in view of such arguments that the pursuit for decolonisation becomes a useful enterprise. At the heart of any decolonising agenda, is the desire to end coloniality through suggesting a move away from conditions that reproduce colonialism. South Africa's system of education, by virtue of being born out of a colonial system, needs to go through rigorous transformation in order to characterise a post-apartheid era. What this means is that content knowledge needs to question perceptions inherent in disciplinary knowledge in order to decolonise the mind (wa Thiong'o, 1986).

Going back to wa Thiong'o's (1986) assertion that knowledge creates reality, it is important that knowledge taught in school reflects the reality where it is being applied. Learners must be able to use such knowledge to make sense of their experiences and conditions in their immediate world. If not, such knowledge cannot empower them to effect any changes in their space (Vorster, 2016).

Smith (2010) attributes this to the continued permeation of colonizing attributes in education to the dependency on science as the correct and only way of knowing about the world. The history of knowledge production make injustices created by power relations visible, thus permitting the questioning of the selection of methods of knowledge production (Foucault, 1980). For Hodgson & Standish (2009), the history of knowledge production and power relations at play make a case for social justice, which permits working against traditional power relations imposed by the reliance on science as the only way of knowing about the world. Working against traditional power relations in knowledge production require breaking away from western science in order to create space for other knowledges to participate in the dialogue on the study of the world. A best way of achieving this in education is having an African centred education.

Shifting focus to geography, it remains a "white" discipline (Peters, 2015). Western ways of knowing (theories) are still used as the official geography knowledge, whilst worldviews particular to the locale (South Africa's context of learning) remain excluded. For example, there are no theories of explaining the world or any phenomenon which originate from South Africas system of thought. There are also no theories which have been written by local authors. This makes it difficult to connect being and life experiences of local communities to the geography discipline. Such a discipline, becomes alienating to learners. The practicality of this alienation is learners struggling to relate to the geography content. One of the barriers to success in secondary school geography is learners inability to understand and apply contents used in the geography discipline in the real world (DoE, 2019). This means that learners cannot transfer geography knowledge onto skills that can solve real life problems. Consequently, the geography subject remains one of the underperforming subjects in the National Senior Certificates examinations.

An analysis of last years' matric results showed an improvement in the knowledge of core concepts pinning the geography subject. Out of 218 821 learners who wrote geography for the National Senior Certificate in 2019, 80.5% obtained 30% and above, whilst 53.3% obtained 40% and above (DoE, 2019). This was an increase of 6.3% from the number of learners who reached 30% and above in 2018. The number of learners who got 40% and above, increased by 13.3% from 2018 (DoE, 2019). However, most questions which learners were able to answer correctly were either multiple choice questions, or required learners to match concepts with provided definitions and choosing the correct answer from a list of concepts in order to complete a provided statement by filling in the missing word (DoE, 2019). Although such types of questions do not always fall within lower order thinking category, the manner in which they were phrased in geography paper 1 for 2019 National Senior Certificate examination required lower order thinking.

Considering that 25% of the questions required lower order thinking, the pass percentage could be a reflection of knowing about geography, which is different from knowing geography (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Knowing about geography could simply require learners to be familiar with concepts used in geography without understanding them. They could recall concepts and identify them in sketches and diagrams, and identify distinct features of a concept but have no idea of ordering principles and how to relate that concept to other concepts and real world. Given that the geography subject policy puts emphasis on the acquisition of critical thinking skills and the ability to apply theory onto real world problems, it is important for the subject to bridge the gap between theory and application (Rusznyak, 2017). For learners to be able to make linkages between disciplinary knowledge and reality, ideas and ways of knowing used in the geography knowledge must characterise their immediate world (Dube, 2014). This calls for deconstructing the discipline in order to connect it to African realities in its total sum; which is being, conditions of existence and ways of thinking.

*2.3: What model of education does South Africa needs in order to end coloniality in the current curriculum for geography?*

The geography curriculum needs to centre Africa in learning. What this means is that content knowledge should use Africa as a starting point to studying a phenomenon or the worltd (Ramoupi, 2012). This requires shifting away from a Eurocentric view to education, which centres Europe in knowing, understanding and interpreting the world. Adopting an afrocentric approach to education will create space for connecting education to Africas context, being and thinking.

Afrocentricity, as a school of thought, dates back to the 1970's but was popularised through the work of Asante in the 1980's (Chawane, 2016). As a philosophy, Afrocentricity contends space for the emergence of African identity, thoughts, values, and interests in all spheres of life. These include economics and politics and academia. As a base for curriculum development, Afrocentricity contends space for situating African perspectives at the centre of knowing and theorising but aiming at providing a global understanding. I understand this line of argument to mean that, Afrocentricity adopts an African understanding of phenomena but such knowledge should be written for a global audience. What this means is that perspectives should be interpreted from an African point of view but the meanings or explanations given through such perspectives should not be limited to Africans only. That is to say, Africanising knowledge is not about producing a discipline for Africans only. Rather, it is a base for creating space for African interests, experiences, culture, identity and voices in global discourses.

Chawane (2016, 78-79) offers multiple ways of defining Afrocentricity. They include definition of Afrocentricity as…

- a manner of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate.
- an exercise in knowledge and a new historical perspective.
- an intellectual movement, a political view, and/or a historical evolution that stresses the culture and achievements of Africans.

- a transformation of attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviour results, suggesting that it is the first and only reality for African people – a simple rediscovery.
- as meaning "African centeredness", according to which Africans should be given their intellectual pride as the originators of civilisation.

The above definitions present Afrocentricity as an advocacy for shifting the geography of reason to Africa in order to create space for the emergence of Africa as an intellectual community, with the right to pursue its interest and promote its values, in a manner that embraces Africanness. Defining Afrocentricity this way, does not only create space for cognitive justice lost to colonialism, but also advocates for the emergence of an African identity, which in my view, is an important aspect in not just countering coloniality linked to Europe and America, but also other forms of coloniality that could emerge from other contexts. I identify this as a critical element when expropriating decolonisation to Africa. This study puts forward that in an African context, decolonisation should adopt an Afrocentric view. This is to say, in Africa, decolonisation cannot be considered without putting Africa at the centre.

The biggest achievement of the project of colonialism is the lost identities of members of formerly colonised societies (Lugones, 2010). Therefore, any attempts of ending the effects of colonisation, should begin by empowering formerly colonised societies to recover their lost identity.

The argument for identity recovery permits the location of Africa, as a continent and space for knowledge production, in the decolonial project. This is to say, pursuing decolonisation without locating Africa at the centre of the decolonial project does not automatically help Africa to restore its rights to thinking and name its world by themselves and also does not automatically restore Africanness. By Africanness I mean African identity and everything that characterise being African, our values, our interests, our customs and our philosophy. Ramoupi (2012) equates Africanness to hummaness. The definition this study adopts broadly conceptualise Afrocentricity as an advocacy for African voices, values, thought, perceptions

and meanings to be given recognition as a legit and sufficient representation of African experiences that can serve as a mirror for the world to see Africa from.

From a position of theory, Afrocentricity "places African people at the centre of any analysis of African phenomena in terms of action and behaviour (Chawane, 2016, 80). I understand the above statement to mean that theories from an Afrocentric perspective are constructed based on observing actions and behaviour of African people rather than formulating assumptions of a theory based on grand narratives. For example, theorising about the effects of human activities in climate change should focus on what people in Africa do that contribute to the change in climate rather than basing assumptions on human factors that contribute to climate change on the experiences of other continents. The benefit of this approach to the geography subject will be in building linkages between school knowledge and learners lived experiences.

Locating Africa at the centre of school knowledge will also create space for meanings originating from African cultures. Masaka (2016) puts forward that meanings are tied to the context of knowledge production. Therefore, concepts imported from outside Africa cannot have the same meaning when applied in a different context. Considering the high rate of learners that struggle to demonstrate understanding of concepts, using concepts that originate from African cultures, perhaps, could bridge the gap between concepts and meanings. As alluded to earlier, knowledge, being and context are intimately bound-up (wa Thiong'o, 1993). Therefore, using knowledge produced outside the context and identity of learners destroys the intimacy, making it difficult for learners to learn.

What makes Afrocentricity a best approach to transforming the geography curriculum is that it does not seek to replace Eurocentricism. Rather, it seeks space for an African perspective in global discourses, without rejecting what Europe and other cultures and continents bring to the table. In a globalised economy where societal survival is dependent on the ability to compete in a global stage, rejecting other worldviews in the interest of creating space for African perspectives to disadvantage African education (Mosweunyane, 2013). The contribution for Afrocentricity in curriculum development is advancing pluriversality by

adding an African perspective in global knowledge production and shifting African perspectives from the periphery to the centre. However, for Africa to be at the centre of learning, South Africa needs to have an African curriculum. This requires re-orienting education in order to situate Africa at the centre of education, and achieving such, require Africa to have an African curriculum (van Wyk & Higgs, 2012).

*2.4: From your preferred notion of decolonising the geography curriculum (grounded on you your conceptual framework & its central features), what do you affirm, reject & contest as far as post-apartheid education policy in South Africa?*

The policy for the geography curriculum in South African secondary schools embraces a post-colonial approach to education. The subject policy encapsulates aims of a post-apartheid South Africa, built on the values of democracy, and social justice for all (DoE, 2012). "The Preamble to the Constitution states that the aims of the Constitution are to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights … Education and the curriculum have an important role to play in realising these aims" (DoE, 2012, no. p).

Principles of democracy have a distinct and active role in the process of decolonisation through providing political tools for disrupting colonialism. Therefore, aligning the policy with principles of democracy creates space for decolonising the discipline of geography in South African secondary schools. Considering the centrality of policy in effecting change, orienting the geography subject policy towards the post-colonial era lays a firm foundation for decolonising the geography discipline.

The desire to move away from a colonial system of education has also been followed by a series of curriculum reforms, which the geography curriculum policy is a product of. The policy stipulates that the current curriculum is "the culmination of our efforts over a period of seventeen years to transform the curriculum bequeathed to us by apartheid" (DoE, 2012, no. p). The apartheid policy enabled differentiation of education according to racial groups. Each

race group had its own curriculum meant at providing the type of knowledge and skills appropriate to its needs (Vally & Dalambo, 1999). The introduction of a single national curriculum for all public schools in South Africa counters the differentiated curricula introduced under apartheid. Whilst decolonisation is multifaceted, in principle, it is about disrupting the world order constituted through colonialism. Therefore, the act of countering the differentiated system of education is decolonial in nature (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

There has also been an attempt at disrupting coloniality at the level of curriculum knowledge. The geography curriculum policy valorises indigenous knowledge. The implication of this move is the creation of space for indigenous local knowledge as an alternative way of studying the world (DoE, 2012). Indigenous knowledge broadly refers to ways of understanding which existed before the arrival of settlers in settler societies (Horsthemke, 2013). The latter refers to societies which were dispossessed by European settlers who later settled in their societies permanently (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs , 2006). From the position of decolonisation, the inclusion of indigenous knowledge negates Eurocentricism in disciplines (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

However, whilst there is a commitment towards decolonising the curriculum, the approach used to steer the curriculum towards anti-coloniality has brought partial changes. It has been successful, and recommendably so, at removing physical features of colonialism. For example, the change in policy enabled the introduction of a single curriculum for geography for all public secondary schools. At the level of curriculum knowledge, indigenous knowledge has been valorised without being given space for contributing to ways of studying the world (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014).

Put differently, theories used for studying the world are of European or Western origin. What can be connected to indigenous knowledge is case studies used to negotiate space for European and western ideologies within South Africas context of learning. The absence of an indigenous framework for interrogating European or western disciplines in geography subject is evidence of power relations that are left unchallenged (Collins, 2013). A lack of an

alternative way of studying the world puts Europe or the west at the centre of knowing, and validates scholastic thinking through the lens of the west. By implication, it extends imperialism (Standish, 2019).

What is more concerning is that the majority of learners in public secondary schools continue to struggle with the understanding and application of scientific concepts onto real-life problems (DoE, 2019). This status quo has been linked to the continued dominance of Europe-American worldviews in the discipline of Geography, making it inaccessible to local communities, whilst at the same time reinforcing colonilaity (Peters, 2015). With knowledge, having played a very important role in the constitution of colonilaity, through colonising the minds of formerly colonised groups, its significance in challenging the status quo created through colonialism cannot be downplayed (Maldonado-Toress, 2007).

If the argument that the current curriculum for geography in CAPS privileges Euro-American worldviews is accepted, then the curriculum for geography is not tilting towards a post-apartheid curriculum. What characterises a post-apartheid curriculum is the move away from coloniality and countering the dominance of Europe and American values, realities and thinking in education and knowing (wa Thiong'o, 1993). In this case, the pursuit for decolonisation does not only become essential, but a starting point. This shift can transform the geography curriculum into a policy document that disentangles the discipline from the colonial power matrix (Radcliffe, 2017; Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006& Long, Dalu, Lembani & Gunter, 2019).

Decolonisation emphasizes the decentring of Europe and the west in knowing in order to shift the geo-bio politics of knowledge production (Mignolo, 2011). At the level of implementation, curriculum policy contests space for dismantling Euro-American imperialism through shifting knowing from the west. This enables the curriculum to draw knowledge and ways of knowing from local resources (culture and experience), whilst theories originating from Europe and the west either complement or critique locally produced theories. Yet, the context of learning created by the current geography policy locates Europe and America at the centre of knowing whilst indigenous ways of thinking remain silent. As

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, 138) puts it, “the results of this is that we are studying Africa from within using a lens that is without”.

Decolonisation is also not a substitute for relevance (Collins, 2013), but a framework for resisting the continued permeation of the colonial matrix of power in systems of thinking within post-colonial societies (Quijano, 2000). The essentiality of this argument is in contesting that attaining a state of relevance in curriculum does not equate to decolonising it. Therefore, whilst the current curriculum for geography might offer a sense of relevance to some degree, through using local examples to link geography knowledge to learners lived experiences, by excluding worldviews drawn from local resources of knowledge (experiences and cultures), it remains colonial. Borrowing Mbembe’s (2016) argument, if anything, the policy for the geography curriculum masquerades as anti-colonial.

As a geography teacher in a public secondary school, I find it easier for learners to understand topics pragmatically and practically linked to lived experiences of learners. For example; the topic of settlement is where learners tend to perform better than in climatology. What I can underscore about these two topics (settlements and climatology) is that the knowledge base for the former makes geography knowledge to come alive. It becomes something that almost every learner engages with and can easily make sense of. Whereas with climatology, learners struggle to translate concepts of pressure cells into rainfall events that they experience in their locale. I deduce the reason for differing levels of engagement with these two topics on ways of knowing used to explain the phenomena. The founding concept in climatology is atmospheric pressure, used to refer to the weight exerted by a column of air on the earth’s surface. This so called weight is abstract because learners cannot sense it or experience it. They just have to accept that it exists. Yet settlements are defined as place where people live. Defining it this way make it more relatable for learners because they can straightforwardly link school knowledge to their world of existence.

Whilst the desire to decolonise the curriculum for geography is part of the winds of change blowing through epistemology, within education circles, consideration for decolonisation are driven by the quest for connecting formal education to the needs and aspirations of local

communities rather than adhering to dictates of founding fathers of formal education. In Africa where formal education has historical ties with colonisation, the curriculum tends to serve the interest of former colonisers, which often disconnects knowledge from the identity of learners and their world of existence (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014).

The current curriculum for geography is suffering the same fate. It continues to run along colonial lines enabled by privileging perspectives, worldviews and epistemologies with historical linkages to Europe-America (Peters, 2015). This state of affairs does not only go against the norm of the post-colonial era, which centralises locale in knowing and ways of knowing. It also alienates South African learners from the discipline of geography. Masaka (2016) and wa Thiong'o (1986) posit that there is a strong relationship between knowledge and knowing, controlled by the degree of connectedness to identity and the socio-cultural context. This privileging of knowledge with linkages to Europe-America in the geography curriculum can be linked to learners' continued struggle with transferring geography knowledge into skills that can be used to solve real life scenarios (DoE, 2019). For South Africa's system of education to turn things around, it needs to adopt an African curriculum.

### *2.5: What is an African Curriculum?*

What makes a curriculum African is having Africa as the focus (van Wyk & Higgs, 2012). Learning and knowing should be about Africa as the object of study, through African ways of knowing and for African development. I mean this to say that the curriculum should be centred on Africa as a context, and that ways of knowing should reflect African systems of thinking. Knowledge and skills gained from such a curriculum should also be more concerned about addressing African problems. Van Wyk & Higgs (2012, 171) put forward that such a curriculum needs to assert distinctively African ways of knowing. I understand this to mean a curriculum that draws from African culture, language, customs and practices. The scholars (van Wyk & Higgs, 2012) back this argument by underscoring that knowing is intimately linked to being and doing.

Considering that outcomes of learning in the geography curriculum, encapsulated in CAPS, require learners to transfer knowledge into skills that can be used to solve real life problems, the essentiality of connecting the curriculum to identity, culture and practices of local communities cannot be downplayed. For example, for learners to be able to develop geographic thinking, they need to connect geography knowledge to the local context of learning and as well be able to link knowledge to experiences of local communities in order to have an understanding of a geography phenomenon impacting the lives of the local community. As alluded to earlier, (Rusznyak, 2017), in order to develop geographic thinking skills, learners must be able to answer the following questions.

- Where is it?
- What is it like?
- Why is it there?
- How did it happen?
- How is it changing?
- What impacts does it have?

I argue that developing such thinking pins down understanding in the local social context. Therefore, disconnecting knowing from the local context alienates South African communities of learning from the curriculum. Scholars like Goduka (2000), wa Thiongo (1986), as well as van Wyk & Higgs (2012), amongst others, have alluded to the alienating character of curriculum through excluding African culture, customs and practices, and the implication of that in learning. Therefore, when judging a curriculum, we need to look at the knowledge, values and practices underpinning it.

### *2.6: Is the geography curriculum used in South African public secondary schools tilting towards an African curriculum?*

Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, education has gone through a series of changes in order to align it with principles of a post-colonial era. The changes effected at

structural and curriculum level have created space for closing racial divisions entrenched by the apartheid policy of government effected in 1948 (Vally & Dalambo, 1999). The geography curriculum advances the shared purpose of education by providing an intellectual space for healing the divisions of the past through the adoption of a single curriculum for all public schools in South Africa. During the era of apartheid, education was used to entrench separation of races in order to exclude other racial groups from having access to quality education. The use of a single curriculum for geography education in all public schools signals a shift from the colonial project enforcing separation through education.

Whilst the introduction of a single geography curriculum has the potential of levelling the ground for geography education across races, understanding the world draw from disciplines of western origin rather than local knowledge. Radcliffe (2017) avers that the status quo of the discipline excludes the South African community of learning from knowers through the use of theories constructed elsewhere and by authors with a different identity to that of learners. For example, the theory of the tri-cellular model was constructed by authors whose identities differ from that of pupils being taught through these theories. The origin of this model is traced to three different authors who named the theory after themselves. For example, the pattern of circulation between 0 and 30 degrees was discovered by George Hadley who named the theory Hadley Cells. By implication, the curriculum for geography centres the west in knowing (Cohen, et., al. 2012).

The curriculum for geography education has also been developed by South Africans. In the preamble, the minister of education states that the curriculum is "the culmination of our efforts over a period of seventeen years to transform the curriculum bequeathed to us by apartheid" (DoE, 2012, no p). This implies that the current curriculum for geography was produced by the South African people, and therefore, aligns to the needs of a post-colonial South Africa. However, Msimanga & Shizha (2014) contends that despite a series of curriculum reforms having taken place since the end of apartheid, the curriculum used in South Africa continue to run along colonial lines. Beets & Le Granje (2008) observed that changes that have taken place within geography education since the dawn of democracy in 1994 have only been at status level. What changed in geography education is the recognition

of the discipline as an independent field of study at the level of further education and training (FET band).

Prior to democracy, geography was split between Physical sciences and Human sciences as a complementary body of knowledge. For Msimanga & Shizha (2014), the contributing factor is that the project of curriculum reform is often sponsored by international organizations, who are themselves part of former colonizers. The scholars (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014) also attribute the lack of genuine move away from the colonial curriculum to reliance on international experts to drive the process of curriculum change. Dastile & Ndlovu-Gastheni (2013) posits that the solution to the problem of coloniality cannot come from the very people who caused it.

Whilst Msimanga & Shizha's (2014) argument that the reliance on international experts for advice on curriculum reform and dependence on international donors for funding the project of curriculum change is a significant observation, reliance on international experts might be an attempt at aligning South Africa's system of education with the rest of the world. This could be necessitated by the fact that South Africa is part of a global economy. For the people of South Africa to continue participating in the global economy, its system of education needs to produce skills and knowledge that can enable the community to compete at a global stage. Rather than problematising dependence on foreign experts for advice, what should be interrogated is terms of participating in a global economy. The sovereignty of states and leverage to self determination will remain a dream as long as nation states remain dependent on the west for economic growth and survival.

The geography curriculum also values indigenous knowledge as an alternative way of studying the world. This move creates space for challenging Eurocentricism through the inclusion of other ways of knowing, whilst also bridging the gap between knowing and South Africa's community of learning. However, the role of indigenous knowledge is limited to relevance by making geography theories relevant to the context of learning rather than offering an alternative way of studying the world. Msimanga & Shizha (2014) avers that the

current status quo of indigenous knowledge creates conditions for Eurocentricism, thus does not have the capacity to transform the geography curriculum into an African curriculum.

This is an argument I concur with on the basis that the purpose for creating space for other ways of knowing is to challenge the perception of the west as the rightful place for reasoning rather than complement it. An analysis of the geography curriculum shows that there is an attempt at moving away from a colonial curriculum of education by decolonising the curriculum, but the effect is only at structural level through the use of a single curriculum for geography education. By implication, larger issues posing barriers to the transforming the geography discipline remain unresolved. Put straightforwardly, the geography curriculum used in South African secondary schools is advancing the colonial project of shaping indigenous communities into colonial subjects.

*2.7: Conclusion*

Continued dependence on knowledge with historical ties to colonisation as curriculum content is crippling the potency for breaking free from coloniality. Whilst this type of knowledge is undoubtedly important in advancing the goal of education; mental development and skills production for the workplace, relocating its site of production is a necessity in order for knowledge to produce skills that are responsive to South Africas context of learning. Decolonising knowledge can create space for locating the characteristics of the local context in knowing, and automatically creating linkages between knowing and reality. Achieving this goes beyond connecting local experiences to concepts imported from elsewhere, owing to the fact that decolonisation is not narrowly about attaining relevance. It is about ending domination of Europe and America over other communities of learning through opening up space for knowledge production to other experiences and contexts.

## Chapter 3: Decolonisation and its relevance to post-apartheid education in South Africa

### *3.1: Introduction*

This chapter sought to offer a conceptualisation of decolonisation and its relevance to the contemporary society through demonstrating what modes of thinking linked to the discourse of decolonisation can offer to education transformation.

### *3.2.: Decolonisation & Education*

The definition of decolonisation belongs to two generations of colonisation. The first definition refers to a process signifying the end of political system that enabled Europe and north-America to control former colonies. This form of control was part of the project of taking over the world through a process of colonization. Knight (2017, 2) defines it as the "withdrawal of colonial power". Its second definition refers to a process aimed at tackling the second generation of colonization constituted through a system of power, called coloniality. In this context, decolonisation focuses on actions that can be taken in order to dismantle the matrix of knowledge, power and being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

At the heart of the second definition of decolonisation is the pursuit for decoloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Decoloniality refers to "the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world" (Maldonado-Torress in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, 488). Put differently, decoloniality is an analytical tool that makes the continuity of unequal power relations between the west and other societies, visible. This power structure changed form, from being an official system of political and economic control into a system of classification that naturalizes being and knowing, ushering contemporary societies into a new form of colonization under the guise of modernization or westernization (Mignolo, 2007). It views modernity as equal to colonialism (Mignolo, 2011).

Shifting to decoloniality will change the long patterns of power in order to free countries in the global south from the claws of the colonial power matrix, through moving the locus of enunciation from Europe and north America (Quijano, 2007). But Maldonado-Torress in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, 488) contends that decoloniality

> informs the ongoing struggles against inhumanity of the Cartesian subject, the irrationality of the rational, the despotic residues of modernity…and should be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future-a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to delink from the tyranny of abstract universals….

Decoloniality, as a liberatory approach builds on three pillars: de-coloniality of power, de-coloniality of knowledge and de-coloniality of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). De-coloniality of power questions power relations between former colonizers and former colonies in order to unmask power imbalances foot holding coloniality. De-coloniality of knowledge interrogates how the historical production of knowledge and claim for universality grant ideas and knowledge with historical ties to colonizers power to dominate opinions and perspectives of local communities. De-coloniality of being creates space for challenging how the colonial power matrix constructs identity, race and gender, and how modernity and or westernization produce conditions for furthering these constructions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

Within education, de-coloniality focuses on deconstructing the Eurocentric model of education inherited from colonialism (Ramoupi, 2012). At the heart of the pursuit for decolonising education is the desire to establish an education system that can contribute to the development of Africa in order to end the dependence of Africa on Europe and America for intellectual capital. Yet some of the challenges Africa is faced with need content produced from an African standpoint (Ramoupi, 2012). But van Wyk & Higgs (2012) put forward that Africa needs to have its own definition of the concept of development because the meaning attached to it necessitates a Eurocentric model of education. This argument is backed in Masaka (2016) who puts forward that meanings are bounded up to context of generation.

A parallel argument is brought forward in Ramoupi (2012), who holds that what Africa needs is to end the imposition of western values, thought, and experience embedded in western disciplines. These disciplines dominate content knowledge in African education on the basis that they were produced based on the principle of objectivity, permitting them to be universalised. Quoting the scholar verbartim, "in deconstructing Eurocentric education, the call I make is to teach, research, talk and write from a content that is Africa-centred without discriminating against other contents of any knowledge production" (Ramoupi, 2012, 1). This call advocates for situating Africa at the centre but does not suggest that other existing view points should not be considered.

Pragmatically speaking, what Ramoupi (2012) is advocating for is an inclusive approach to curriculum decolonisation through shifting African perspectives from the periphery to the centre of knowing. This creates space for pluriversality of knowledge. This is a call the study found worthy on the basis that decolonization does not deny the existence and legitimacy of other perspectives. But contends that every space and body has a right to interpret its own world and experience in its own terms of reference and should be heard and given space in the global space of discoursing (Mignolo, 2007). From a position of education, the necessity of an inclusive approach to knowledge decolonising is in noting that Africa does not exist in isolation but in a global community tied together by a global economy. The implication of this is that education cannot afford to cut Africa from the rest of the world, as long as it continues to be part of a global economy (du Preez & Simmonds, 2014).

Navigating the trap of setting knowledge free from the shackles of coloniality safely require consideration for an African centred curriculum, founded on the principles of a post-apartheid South Africa without cutting the continent from the rest of world. Through engaging geo-politics of knowledge, decolonisation offer ways for centring Africa in education by contesting space for the emergence of communities historically discriminated from knowledge production. The problematic of raising South African communities into intellectual communities is that there is a tendency to neglect South African scholarship and scholars in the world of Academia (Ramoupi, 2012). But such attitudes should be expected on the basis that colonialism inferiorised local traditions of knowledge.

*3.3: Geo and body politics of knowledge production*

At the heart of the geo and body politics of knowledge is the necessity for a shift in the geography of reason, privileged by the colonial agenda, from the global north to the global south (Mignolo, 2011). The global north is a metaphor for discourses entangled in imperialist thinking, predominantly used as a lens for analysing world systems of economy, politics and education, among others, on the grounds that post-colonial scholarships produced in the Global North have parochial and anti-intellectual tendencies (Mignolo, 2011). The scholar contends that scholars from the global north are too much focused on increasing production for wealth generation which is hindering them from producing discourses that can meet the intellectual criteria for global discourses, and therefore, can no longer effectively provide a lens to analyse what is going on in the world (Mignolo, 2011).

On the contrary, the global south refer to discourses that expose how the colonial power matrix disposed "economic, political and epistemic dependency and unequal relations in the global world order, from a subaltern perspective" (Mignolo, 2011, 165). He adds by stating that,

> "…the Global South is where the global political society is emerging, precisely to do something to save us all, including the elite of the G7 nations, who apparently are too busy competing with one another in terms of production, consumption, and wealth that not much is left for thinking about life in general…"

Mignolo (2011) backs his argument through retracing the origin of civilisation around 1500, and notes that narratives capturing the history of civilisation assumes that civilisation only came from the west. Yet, there are other types of civilisation that existed before 1500 and some of them were swallowed up by western civilisation, whilst others remain resilient. In his review of Carl Schimdt's article on historical events of western civilisation, Mignolo (2011) underscores that the concept of nomos used by Schimdt to trace the development of western civilisation "consolidates the very idea of Western civilisation by promoting linear thinking instead of de-colonial thinking. He states that Schimdt's narrative misinterprets that civilisations which existed before the expansion of western civilisation did not disappear, and

that this fact is very important for understanding the global dis/order today. He further contends that global linear thinking and the idea of a global map as a description for the origin of the world dis/order is a misfit in post-colonial discourses, and cannot provide intellectual tools to dismantle residues of the colonial power matrix.

Mignolo (2011) also posits that effects of the colonial matrix of power can be better understood from analysing currently underdeveloped and emerging nations, where systems of thought and being are still underpinned by principles of colonialism. He made reference to principles of christianity and science which continue to "constitute one of the pillars of enunciation in establishing the principles and criteria of knowing" (p.179) as well as categories of being. The continued dominance of former colonies impinge on de-colonial thinking, thus should be centralised in post-colonial discourse.

The south American scholar further problematise the knowing person in discourses, noting that the pretences that the knowing subject does not factor in, when judging knowledge neutrality is part of the Western strategies to maintain dominance (Mignolo, 2009). He argues that it is high time decolonial thinking interrogated the interest of authors behind scholarships production with the aim of identifying hidden agendas. The scholar further posits that the colonial power matrix was embedded in the bodies of people, the colonisers and the colonised by categorising them as either human or subhuman, therefore, thus entangling the bodies in the colonial power matrix (Mignolo, 2009). He further proposes epistemic disobedience as an option for decolonising thinking, a concept which requires the production of postcolonial scholarship from the perspective of scholars from the Global South rather than the Global North. What Mignolo means here is that value coding systems for formal apparatus of knowledge production should be determined by scholars from the Global South rather than scholars from the Global North (Mignolo, 2009). This is the same argument advanced in Spivak (1988) in her contention for the subaltern to be allowed to speak in her/his own voice. I extend this argument to the pursuit of an African centred approach to education. Africans should be allowed to interpret and name their world in their own terms.

*3.4: How does decolonisation offer possibilities for ending the continued coloniality in education?*

Modes of thinking associated with decolonisation builds on ideas of post-colonial scholarship, but creates a realization that power relations constructed through colonialism continue to exist in all spheres of life, including in knowledge production (Bhambra, 2014). This discourse then offers possibilities for transformation through broadening spaces for knowledge production. This will enable narratives excluded from global disciplines by the political agenda of colonization. By extension, decolonisation offer communities space to contest the terrain of knowledge production. Considering the consequences of colonialism in knowledge production, resulting to the continued neglect or intended exclusion of local knowledge in the school curriculum, this is a necessity (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014).

Lugones' (2010) approach to decolonisation offers a different dimension by focusing the solution to the effects of colonial logic to individuals and members of community rather than systems of power by presupposing a delinking of categorical senses of being from the colonial logic. This approach is relevant to South Africa's context of learning which continues to be haunted by the legacy of apartheid (Christie & McCkinney, 2017). However, race is beyond the scope of this study.

Maldonado-Torress (2010) advances the argument by cautioning against the universalism or generalization of interpretations of effects of the colonial power on different groups of populations, and argues for the discrimination of approaches in order to formulate compatible mechanisms. The line of thread that seems to cut across the different modes of thought is that the effects of colonization exists within human beings, and that reversing them should focus on changing how people think about their sense of existence and the world order.

As a move away from coloniality, decoloniality offers delinking as praxis. By delinking Mignolo (2011) means breaking away from the system of classification constructed through colonialism. This move creates space for re-inscribing new forms of power, being and knowledge in order to re-imagine the world outside the confines of colonial logic. Pragmatically, delinking creates space for pluriversality in knowledge production. Delinking

will also enable contemporary societies to shift the geography of reason (context) as well as the biology of reason (authorship) from societies at the centre of the colonial power matrix (Mignolo, 2011).

In reference to delinking knowledge, contemporary societies need to change the terms of knowledge qualification through pursuing epistemic disobedience. By this I mean the production of knowledge outside the methods used to eviscerate scholars from outside Europe and north America from the canon of knowledge producers, and the epistemological traditions that excluded pre-colonial knowledge from global circulation on the guise that it is barbaric (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This will allow contemporary societies to re-imagine the world beyond the limits of the paradigm of European rational knowledge, which is not only a product of the colonial power. But also a producer of the colonial power (Maldonado-Toress, 2006). Freedom from the colonial power cannot be imagined within the same power that colonized it (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This charts a way forward for breaking new grounds in knowledge production, which is at the heart of the study. But such, should privilege the centring of Africa in knowing. This requires re-orienting education in order to situate Africa at the centre o education, and achieving such, require Africa to have an African curriculum (van Wyk & Higgs, 2012).

*3.5: What are the challenges of decolonising the Geography curriculum?*

In a nutshell, the promises for curriculum transformation decolonisation carry are premised on taking difference serious, positionality and breaking away. The notion of difference require knowledge to embody pluriversality and diversity. In praxis, this approach entail the inclusion of different modes of knowledge in one field of study in order to create space for the emergence of voices, values and identities subjugated by the centring of knowledge production on western forms of thought.

Expropriating this approach into the curriculum will open space for multiple perspectives, worldviews, ontologies and epistemologies within a context of standardised outcomes of

learning. This argument is captured in Smith (2010) who observes that whilst there has been a shift in approaches to knowledge, assessment practices seem to be fixed on positivists view to knowledge. The implication of this is a curriculum, which open spaces for different modes of knowledge, whilst continuing to standardise learning outcomes. If that is the case, then pushing for the inclusion of different modes of knowledge in the curriculum might be paradoxical. A serious consideration of difference need to begin with widening the scope of learning outcomes in order to accommodate different worldviews, ontologies and epistemologies.

Another challenge that might be posed by insistence on difference is that it might counter efforts of healing divisions created by the system of apartheid (DoE, 2012). The preamble states that the curriculum seeks to advance the constitutional aim of healing the divisions of the past (DoE, 2012).

Within South Africa's context, the quest for pluriversality might also create tensions within communities of learning, characterised by a wide-scope of cultural groups. This complicates the pursuit of difference in a sense that it might be difficult to include all the different cultural groups in one body of knowledge. If this happens, cultural groups whose worldviews, perspectives, ontology and epistemologies are left out might suffer the very injustice the project of decolonisation aims to tackle (Griffiths, 2019). The notion of positionality which aims at removing Europe-America from the centre of disciplinary might face the same challenge. The bone of contention is likely to be disagreements on which cultural group should be at the centre of knowing. Dennis (2018) predicts that in this scenario, perspectives, worldviews, ontology and epistemologies that are likely to be centred are those belonging to dominant cultural groups in South Africa. This is what is happening with local languages. This state of affairs create new forms of domination which gives particular cultural groups control over others, reproducing power imbalances.

Decolonisation also presupposes a break-away from the legacy of colonialism in knowledge production. Whilst this move has a potential of authorising marginalised perspectives, worldviews and epistemologies as acceptable modes of knowledge that can be circulated in

global spaces, it foregrounds de-linking from western epistemological traditions and thought (Mignolo, 2011). The danger of delinking from western epistemological traditions is that it leads to uncertainty because it gets muddied by the politics of philosophy centring on the perception of African thought as a myth rather than a thought system that can provide a firm base for knowledge production (Hountondji, 1974). This raises questions on the validity of perspectives, worldviews and epistemologies based on African philosophy on the basis that it is a myth because it has no linkages to a shared ontology (Horsthemke, 2013).

But Dugben & Skupien (2018) counters this claim by putting forward that thinking has no geographic limitations, and that all perceptions or worldviews are abstracted from reality. Mathebula (2019) locates this argument within South Africa's context by alluding that the shared understanding of African philosophy held by the post-apartheid society is misguided because it views it as primitive and an uncontested, and an un-argued mode of thinking. This means that the project of delinking knowledge needs to begin with a revisit to African philosophy in order to clear this uncertainty.

Another foreseeable challenge of expropriating approaches to decolonisation to curriculum transformation is that it is also viewed as means of settling scores of the past. This argument relates to the realisation of epistemic justice, which aims to counter epistemic injustice (Masaka, 2016). This suggests that epistemic justice can only be possible if formerly colonised societies are able to retrieve knowledges constructed before colonialism. What one learns from the arguments against the acceptability of indigenous knowledge as an adequate account of truth is that knowledge belonging to local communities was poorly documented. Indigenous knowledge refers to "but not limited to local knowledge, traditional knowledge, indigenous technical knowledge, peasants' knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge and folk knowledge" (Shizha, 2013 in Msimanga & Shizha, 2014, p 138).

This means that as much as they once existed, developing a body of knowledge based on such knowledge might prove to be a challenge. Most of the people who participated in the construction of pre-colonial knowledge are no longer alive, complicating the mission of recovering knowledges which existed in the pre-colonial era or constructing new bodies of

knowledge that draws from knowledges of the past. Another potential challenge posed by the quest for epistemic justice is that it might counter transformation by bringing back knowledge from the past which might not speak to the current socio-cultural context.

### *3.6: Conclusion*

Continued dependence on knowledge with historical ties to colonisation as curriculum content is crippling the potency for breaking free from coloniality. Whilst this type of knowledge is undoubtedly important in advancing the goal of education; mental development and skills production for the workplace, relocating its site of production is a necessity in order for knowledge to produce skills that are responsive to South Africas context of learning. Decolonising knowledge can create space for locating the characteristics of the local context in knowing, and automatically creating linkages between knowing and reality. Achieving this goes beyond connecting local experiences to concepts imported from elsewhere, owing to the fact that decolonisation is not narrowly about attaining relevance. It is about ending dominion of Europe and America over other communities of learning through opening up space for knowledge production to other experiences and contexts.

## Chapter 4: The current curriculum for geography in CAPS and approaches to decolonising knowledge.

### 4.1: *Introduction*

This chapter sought to explore the different approaches to decolonising knowledge in order to weigh their relevance to South Africas context of learning. It begins by capturing calls to decolonise the curriculum and concludes by putting forward an approach that can best suit South Africas context of learning without compromising the role education sought to play play in a post-apartheid society, and its connectedness to the rest of the world.

### *3.2. The state of the geography discipline and calls to decolonise it*

Calls to decolonise the geography discipline, underpinned by the disciplines' tendency to reproduce coloniality are not exclusive to South Africa. At global scale, calls to decolonise the geography curriculum builds on the argument that the discipline continues to advance the colonial project of shaping colonial subjects into objects of power (Fataar, 1997).

Within the American context of academia, geography education has been accused of negating the move away from the colonial project through failing to align the curriculum with ideals of the post-colonialism era of decentring the west in knowing and knowledge production (Esson, et. al., 2017). Knowledge selection for curriculum development continues to centralise whiteness through the exclusion of geography related work produced by authors of colour and other minority races. By implication, geography education alienates non-white students whilst at the same time entrenching whiteness and its values of supremacy (Maldona-Torres, 2007).

In Australia, geography education is seen to be advancing the colonial project of domination and suppression through the continued use of symbols characterising colonisation. Colonial

symbols still part of the geography discipline are maps (Collins, 2013). The continued use of boundaries set up by settlers as a guideline for map production in modern societies creates political bias and by implication entrench coloniality (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006). Harle (2015) posits that maps are not just about sense making, but "embodies a particular worldview which dictates how a territory is represented and what elements are included or excluded. Historically, this worldview has been that of a powerful controlling authority, such as that of colonial powers" (no.p). By implication, the colonial project of imperialism and Eurocentricism remain unresolved in the geography discipline (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006).

Within Africa's context of geography education, the permeation of the colonising power is made visible through adherence to the global and regional maps based on territorial guidelines drawn by settler powers on colonised societies. African states continue to function within these very boundaries as legitimate demarcations of physical space (Long, Dalu, Lembani & Gunter, 2019). Official demarcation on the physical space in South Africa is no exception. The map demarcating the land owned by South Africans was set up colonial powers (Crush, Reitsma & Rogerson, 1982).

This status quo should be problematised because it is evidence of disciplinary reticence, and negates the post colonial era whose main goal is to decenter the west in order to pave way for the emerging diverse humanness (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs , 2006). By disciplinary reticence, the scholars mean lack of willingness to transform the discipline (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006). Despite the requirement of aligning the discipline with the era of post-colonialism, the continued use of colonial maps in former colonised societies advances the colonial project through eviscerating settler societies from the cannon of knowledge production (Standish, 2019). Long, Dalu, Lembani & Gunter (2019) contends that physical space and human interaction within space are central to the geography discipline, thus the discipline cannot afford to ignore the politics of space.

Debates on the decolonisation of the geography curriculum also contests the valorisation of geography knowledge through terms of western science on the basis that it creates conditions

for the subjugation of other ways of knowing from the discipline (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Holding onto western science as the qualifying criteria for knowing within geography education puts Europe in the centre of knowing, and by extension entrench coloniality. Conditioning knowing on terms of western science also create conditions for the versification of other knowers from the cannon of knowledge production, thus re-centers thinking in Europe (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006).

What makes the argument of the geography of reason valid in geography education is the need to align disciplines with the era of post-colonialism, which gives former colonies the right to self determinism and reclamation of the identity of its people, and ways of knowing lost to the colonial project (Maldonado-Torress, 2007). However, calls to decolonise the geography discipline in order to make it accessible to a diverse community of students have been made, followed by action to decolonise the discipline at the level of research and education through opening up a debate between the discipline and indigenous geographies (Knight, 2018).

At the heart of the decolonial agenda is the re-imagining of the world in order to create spaces for alternative ways of studying it, by going back to ways of knowing erased by the institution of western science as a qualifying criteria for knowledge production (Bhambra, 2014) . At the level of praxis, opening up a dialogue between the discipline of geography and indigenous geographies has raised the question of commensurability between the existing body of knowledge and indigenous geographies.

But Shaw, Herman & Dobbs (2006) argue that the so called differences between international disciplines cannot be traced to pre-modern thinking of the west and many indigenous cultures. If this argument is accepted, then the claim for differences between western and non-western ways of knowing could just be one of the many strategies to entrench colonialism through the constitution of modernity (Mignolo, 2011). If the split between western and non-western disciplines is a feature for modernity, then the criteria for knowledge qualification based on western science should be treated as part of the colonial project that should be dismantled.

Since reviving indigenous geographies require reviving ways of studying the world in existence before the era of colonisation, there are concerns that labelling such knowledge as indigenous underpins it to the concept of indegeinity. Indigeinity refers to a state of being (identity) held by colonial subjects before the inception of colonisation (Dei & Jaimungal, 2018). With human societies having evolved since the inception of colonialism, tracing communities with the true identity could pose a major challenge (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006). However, if the post-colonial era is about moving away from colonialism and its suppressing features, then the argument for commensurability between western and indigenous disciplines is irrelevant (Bhambhra, 2014).

Moving away from colonialism requires separating knowledge production from western science in order to provide access for non western science in the cannon of knowledge production. Self determinism is a right, therefore, should not be negotiated within a context of coloniality (Spivak, 1988). The view of knowledge production as having been influenced by the politics of power, whose conditions were created through the use of methods of science in knowledge production, makes the argument for the evolution of the geography discipline outside the strict principles of western science valid (Foucault,1980).

Thinking through the terms of western science excludes other ways of knowing, thus making it impossible to open the discipline to other cultures. This study sympathizes with the proposed move away from western science in order to create spaces for engaging indigenous geographies or ways of studying the world which existed prior to colonialism.

*4.2: Decolonising the geography curriculum in post-apartheid South Africa and approaches to decolonising knowledge: trends and debates*

The debate about the continued permeation of colonial hangovers in the discipline of geography has reached a consensus on the need to open up the discipline to other ways of studying the world (Peters, 2015). This approach allows for the collaboration of different worldviews with the desire to create space for ways of studying and understanding the world

marginalised by power relations from the cannon of knowledge production. Adopting a collaborative approach to knowing about the world enables an engagement between the discipline and indigenous knowledge in order to capture experiences of the indigenes in the discipline of geography (Pierotti & Wildcat, 2000).

However, using the geography curriculum policy as an analytical tool shows that the engagement between the discipline of geography and indigenous knowledge remains as an idea that failed to translate into action. Indigenous knowledge is included only as case studies in order to make theories imported from Europe and the west relevant to South Africa's context of learning (Mushagasha, 2019). By implication, the attempt at transforming the geography curriculum in order to pave way for a post-colonial discipline is stuck at the level of ideas rather than action.

A key factor that has created a stumbling block in efforts of transforming geography into a post-colonial discipline, by countering coloniality is the argument for differences in forms of knowledges. The claimed difference between scientific concepts and everyday knowledge implicates curriculum policy in knowledge politics, building on the assumption that scientific concepts are abstracted differently from everyday knowledge, thus offer powerful ways of studying the world (Bernstein, 1999). Whilst there has been a shift in thinking about scientific concepts as powerful knowledge (Young, 2010), the argument for indigenous knowledge to meet the standard for western epistemic traditions point out that scientific knowledge is still seen as a correct way of knowing. The demand for indigenous knowledge to meet the criteria for western epistemic traditions serves as potential barrier to the resurgence of indigenous geographies on the grounds of incommensurability (Quijano, 2000).

A solution to the stumbling block created by allegiance to western epistemic traditions can come from adopting a decolonised curriculum. Jansen (2017a) in Ammon (2019) identifies six ways in which this can be achieved. This entails approaching curriculum decolonisation as:

1. Additive-inclusive knowledge,
2. The decentring of European knowledge,

3. Critical engagement with settled knowledge,
4. Encounters with entangled knowledges,
5. The repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society) and,
6. The Africanisation of knowledge (Ammon, 2019).

**Decolonisation as additive-inclusive knowledge** takes an integrated approach to curriculum knowledge through including alternative perspectives to settled knowledge. This view perceives settled and current knowledge as equal, requiring equal consideration in the curriculum. It therefore enables knowledge belonging to local communities to become part of the body of knowledge framing a discipline (Ammon, 2019). Whilst this approach does create opportunities for dismantling the colonial and apartheid power matrix, it does not guarantee epistemic justice. I say this to mean that pragmatically speaking, the addition or inclusion of local knowledge in the curriculum does not automatically translate into a power balance between western knowledge and local perspectives. Msimanga & Shizha (2014) argue this point on the bases of lack of a system of reference that validates local knowledge, rendering its epistemological base questionable. Within the secondary school geography context, local perspectives are silenced. Linkages between the discipline e and learner's lived experiences only exist in terms of application, where theory is linked to local cases demonstrating geography phenomena. Approaching curriculum decolonisation in this manner has resulted to locally produced knowledge being at the periphery whose role is limited to serving the purpose of contextual relevance rather than a competitive worldview (Msimanga & Shizha, 2014).

Approaching **decolonisation as decentring Europe** focus on tackling the geo-politics of knowledge which centres Europe-America in thinking. In this context, Europe-America become the lens for studying the world. Decentring Europe locates local communities at the centre of knowing, whilst Europe-America shifts to the periphery. This allows African perspectives to become the starting point of studying the world, thus shifting the Geography of reason to Africa which is the locale of South Africa; the latter is not located in Europe or America. Whilst the focus of education in Africa should prioritize Africa in order to enable learners and students to interpret their own world, Euro-America is the focus of curriculum. Put differently, Euro-America continues to define Africa for Africans instead of Africans to

define their own world. By extension, it becomes the only worldview (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

A critique levelled against this approach is that in practice, curriculum knowledge continues to centre Europe-America as the geographic space for reasoning (Ammon, 2019). An enabling factor could be the history of knowledge production which disadvantaged local communities from contributing in the cannon of knowledge production through qualifying knowledge through methods of science (Foucault, 1980). Putting Africa at the centre of knowing will position African ways of knowing as the lens through which disciplines study the world, whilst Euro-America assume the role of complementing local perspectives as other ways of thinking about the world rather than being presented as the only worldviews that qualify to authenticate African worldviews.

The implication of this within a classroom space is the use of theories constructed within a non-African context and experience, which ought to be de-contextualised in order for them to fit in the local context of learning. Masaka (2016) problematises this on the bases that the meaning of concepts is tied to the context where the concept was constructed. When a concept is dislocated from its original context, it loses the original meaning. This is to suggest that concepts imported from Euro-America lose the original meaning when applied within an African context. That being the case, using such concepts in Africa, which South Africa is part of, is misleading because the meaning they generate within non Euro-American context is different.

The third approach to curriculum transformation is **decolonisation as critical engagement with settled knowledge.** I understand settled knowledge to mean grand narratives or big theories which have been accepted as believable and justified truths. Adopting a critical stance creates space for interrogating grand narratives rather than accepting them as truths of absolutes. It consietizes learners and students about the geo and bio politics of knowledge and the potential influence of geography and biology on knowledge. By so doing, power relations between settled knowledge and other worldviews become visible (Ammon, 2019).

Whilst this approach straightforwardly carry material advantages for challenging the superiority of western values and thought, the lack of an African worldview to compare or contrast settled knowledge renders western epistemologies questionable without giving learners and or students a better worldview. In a practical sense, a teacher may allude to the origin of concepts, permitting learners to think about the thinking behind the thinking. For example, motives. But if a teacher cannot provide them with an alternative worldview, critiquing settled knowledge might not bring any genuine transformation. In the end, learners will have to accept settled knowledge as the only worldview.

Decolonisation of curriculum is also approached as **encounters with entangled knowledges**. This positionality views all forms of modes of knowledge as interwoven, making it difficult to set up boundaries for knowledge belonging to colonizers and colonised societies (Ammon, 2019). It footholds on the argument that contemporary societies are a product of a mix of generations of colonizers and colonized societies. These once difference societies have evolved over the years, resulting to the erosion of boundaries which existed before colonialism. In terms of knowledge, it therefore makes it difficult to neatly separate worldviews. This then makes existing knowledge a property of both the colonizers and the colonized (Ammon, 2019).

This argument is more relevant within South Africa's context with a long history of colonization; firstly by the British empire and later by the Dutch settlers. Generations of these two nations became a settler society, which is now part of South Africa's rainbow nation (Griffiths, 2019). It is this co-existence which scholars argue that it resulted to cultures permeating each other. If cultures permeated each other, worldviews also got entangled (Griffiths, 2019). Whilst the view of knowledge as entangled might hold water, it does not suffice to dismiss the continued colonial logic inherent in disciplinary knowledge. I say this to mean that as much as the current knowledge might not purely belong to settler societies, the history of knowledge production which excluded knowledge originating from communities of colonized groups, on the basis of having a questionable claim to truth that can be objectively verified created conditions for cognitive injustice (Maldonado-Toress, 2007). This being the case, the claim that current knowledge is a combination of knowledge from the colonizers and the colonized in misleading. If this argument is accepted, then the

current knowledge lacks locale. If we agree that decolonisation is about undoing colonization through reclaiming what colonized societies lost to the colonizers, then knowledge lost to colonization should be reclaimed.

The fifth approach to decolonisation focuses on the **repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society).** In this context, decolonisation aims to get rid of settled knowledge and settler societies by sending them back to original countries. Decolonising curriculum knowledge creates space for removing ideologies and bodies with roots to settler societies in order to develop a body of knowledge based on non-European and non-American perspectives. This approach adopts a position which totally resists settled knowledge in curriculum knowledge (Ammon, 2019). Despite that this approach might be more of a political project than an educational one, it seems far-fetched based on the fact that the settler societies who are part of a post-apartheid South Africa might have African roots. Therefore, sending them back to the country of their ancestors might prove impossible and might be met with resistance. If contemporary societies cannot get rid of settler societies, settled knowledge will always have a place in formerly colonized societies.

The last approach is **decolonisation as the Africanisation of knowledge**. Decolonisng the curriculum through adopting an African perspective in school knowledge is based on the notion that despite knowledge having played an important role in colonizing societies, it continues to reproduce coloniality. Mignolo (2007) labels it as part of the three pillars of coloniality and that it remains alive in books (Maldonado-Toress, 2007). As part of the three pillars of coloniality, knowledge justifies the logic (how societies see the world and how they act in it). The coloniality of knowledge is embedded in disciplines inherited from curriculum knowledge introduced as part of modern education. Africanising knowledge will counter coloniality through replacing knowledge inherited from colonizers in the curriculum, thus creating space for African worldviews and perspectives.

As a decolonial project, this approach takes a hard stance by completely removing settled knowledge from the curriculum in order to create space for asserting an African identity. School knowledge is constructed from African worldviews without comparing such

knowledge to settled knowledge. This requires a consideration of how Africans see Africa, rather than how Europe-America sees Africa. As le Granje (2018, 10) puts it,

> The project of Africanising is therefore, a decolonising/decolonial one because it involves the undoing of colonialism (in all its forms) in Africa so that matters concerning the African condition are discussed, debated and (re) solved by Africans (and those who work in the interest of Africa) and on terms set by Africans. Moreover, the very invocation of Africanising deconstructs and decentres colonial and imperial knowledge in the sense that Europe is no longer the centre of knowledge.

The significance of Africanising knowledge in the curriculum contests space on the point of relevance and liberating the mind from the colonial matrix of power. Msila (2007) puts forward that school knowledge should be connected to learner's lived experiences and locale, in order for education to be meaningful. For wa Thiong'o (1986), the mind is the stronghold for the continued coloniality, therefore, ending colonialism should focus on decolonising the mind. Knowledge then becomes an integral part of the decolonial project since it carry power to liberate the mind.

This is an approach I symphathise with, on the basis that despite advancing the decolonial project beyond formal systems of control, it carry material advantages for transforming the geography curriculum, whose knowledge continues to reproduce imperialism. I say this to mean that knowledge selection in the curriculum for geography (in CAPS) privileges western perspectives in studying the world and how human relates to it. Higgs (2011, 1) alludes to this to the fact that "much of the history of Africa has been dominated by colonial occupation". Africanizing geography knowledge will shift the geography of reason from Europe-America and focus on worldviews constructed from Africa. South Africa, being part of Africa, can benefit a lot more from African perspectives than those constructed in Europe and America. In a practical sense, geography knowledge will build on learners lived experiences and how they interpret them in relation to understanding the world. Going back to Masaka (2016)'s argument about meaning being tied to context of construction, concepts produced in Africa will likely be interpreted in a similar fashion across the African continent because African's have more in common in terms of lived experiences than Europeans and Americans.

As much as the debate generated by different approaches to the decolonization of curriculum might be appropriate, my special interest is in approaching decolonization as Africanisaton of knowledge. This approach will provide a framework for including African's ways of seeing the world and responding to it in the geography curriculum. Paraphrasing Higgs (2011, 2) Africanisation of knowledge will give Africans "the right to name the world for themselves, rather than be named through the colour-tinted glass of the Europeans." The scholar further disputes that African knowledge lacks epistemic certainty which could be a disadvantage in advancing education (Higgs, 2012). The claim that African knowledge is uncertain is linked to its valuing system, being African philosophy and therefore, cannot be universalized. But, Ramoupi (2012) disputes the disqualification of African knowledge based on the claim of lack of universality. In his view, all knowledge originated from Africa, but was appropriated by Europe and America as its own. He contends that "all humans have their physical, social and intellectual origins in Africa.

Therefore, an African centred approach to education is an approach which celebrates the culture, heritage, contributions and traditions of all humans, beginning with the Africans themselves because Africa is the origins of humanity (Ramoupi, 2012, 3). The scholar advances this argument by noting that decolonisation entails unlearning and re-learning. This entails a change in how we think about the world around us, including what we accept as truthful and meaningful. Put differently, decolonisation is a call to deeply analyze and understand the coexistence of people and their cultures in order to find what is locale. Within the context of geography, Africanising knowledge entails re-examining the discipline in order to identify the colonial present, and then re-orienting the disciplines in order to place African experiences at the centre.

### *4.3: How do we decolonise the geography curriculum through the Africanisation of knowledge?*

At the heart of Africanisation of knowledge is the desire to create space for the emergence of African identity in school disciplines. This entails placing African ways of knowing at the centre and using them as a mirror for studying the world (Ramoupi, 2012). Within the context

of the geography curriculum, Africanizing knowledge would create space for geography knowledge to be theorised from inside Africa for the purpose of interpreting and responding to problems within the locale. Pragmatically, this would require re-imaging the world outside the scope of coloniality, by rethinking what it means understand the geography discipline through the lens of lived experiences of African people (Peters, 2015). In re-theorising the discipline, geography knowledge can be deconstructed and re-constructed in order to assert distinct African ways of studying the world. For example, the phenomenon of extreme rainfall events (cyclone) can be studied from an African philosophy and then structured as a theory than can provide adequate understanding to learners.

In cartography, Africanising knowledge can focus on drawing back maps that were in existence before the onset of colonialism (Harle, 2015). The presence of indigenous maps in the geography curriculum can create space for epistemic justice (Radcliffe, 2017).

*4.4: Conclusion*

Whilst decolonising knowledge offers practical and effective ways of transforming the current curriculum for geography in order to align it with characteristics and needs of the post-apartheid South African learning community, it cannot be universalised. This is to say, for decolonisation to bring change that is best suitable for the South African context, it needs to locate Africa, its experiences and its reality at the centre in order to avoid falling into the trap of becoming another form of colonisation. This requires shifting the geography of reason to Africa.

## Chapter 5: How does Africanisation of knowledge offer possible strategies for getting from where we *are* to where we *ought to be*?

### *5.1. Introduction*

This chapter sought to use decolonisation as an analytical tool to evaluate the state of education in Africa and implications on the performance of learners in the geography subject. It concludes by putting forward the africanisation of knowledge as an ideal approach for decolonising the current curriculum for geography.

Africanisation of knowledge, as alluded to earlier, gives education an African-centred approach. What is meant by an African centred approach is that the order of knowledge becomes a reflection of African values, cultural preferences and practices of African people (Higgs, 2012, 1). Decolonisation as Africanisation of knowledge provides a framework for the emergence of African voices in education, in order to create space for a conversation between the past and the present (Higgs, 2012, 1). For van Wyk & Higgs (2012) the point of departure in Africanising knowledge should be restoring an African identity. These South African scholars posit that such can be realized by constructing a curriculum that draws from indigenous African systems of knowledge and other arrays of knowledge as competing worldviews.

Africanisation of knowledge footholds on principles of African renaissance, which advocates the re-assertion of distinct African ways of knowing about oneself, the world around and acting on it. The concept of African renaissance provides a reason for the need to restore African epistemologies in the school curriculum through contesting space for correcting wrongs imprinted by the use of colonialism as a framework for education. Except denying local communities the right to interpret their own world in their own terms, colonialism also separated knowledge from the knowers, whilst also excluding other realities form the knowledge pool.

> It also seeks to make a contribution to the momentum for a return of humanism to the centre of the educational agenda, and dares educators to see the African child-learner not as a bundle of Pavlovian reflexes, but as human being culturally and cosmologically located in authentic value systems (Higgs, 2012, 2).

In this sense, education adopts a holistic approach by encompassing identity, spirituality and emotions rather than the narrow view of knowing impartation and teaching students how to think. This is the very character of formal education that African scholars (Dei, 2008, Goduka, 2000 & wa Thiongo, 1986) have strongly problematised. It, therefore, creates new knowledge space that connects being to knowing in order to avoid alienating learners from school knowledge. As a tool for curriculum transformation, Africanisation of knowledge draws from African experiences and thought as a foundational resource for new knowledge (Higgs, 2012). This is an approach this study argues for.

*5.2: Africanisation of knowledge*

Whilst decolonisation is essentially about reversing colonialism, Africanisation of knowledge is part of the project of decolonising the curriculum in order to have an education system that does not only improve thinking abilities to the people being taught. But also about coming up with knowledge and ways of knowing that provides means of responding to challenges and demands of the immediate environment.

Whilst decolonising the curriculum is basically about interrogating and countering imperialism produced by the dominance of ideologies belonging to colonizers in the curriculum, the point of departure for Africanising knowledge is locating Africa in knowing (Horsthemke, 2006).

As Makgoba (1997) in Horsthemke (2006, 454) puts it, “Africanisation is the process or vehicle for defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity and culture. It encompasses an African mind-set or mind-set shift from the European

to an African paradigm." In this sense, Africanisation creates space for the emergence of African thought, ways of knowing, systems of knowledge and African voices in global knowledge. This quest manifests as perspectives that centre African experiences and meanings generated within an African context in order to undo the colonisation of knowledge (van Wyk & Higgs, 2012). But le Granje (2018) posits that decolonisation and Africanisation are not necessarily the same thing, with the latter having a potential of working against decolonisation. The scholar points out that Africanisation tends to focus on bio-politics through limiting the project of decolonisation to representation of Africa by African faces in structures of power. What le Granje (2018) means is that, by having Africans in structures of power initially occupied by non-Africans does not guarantee that the colonial presence will be erased.

Maldonado-Toress (2012) alludes to the fact that colonisation did not have the same effects across former colonies. Arguing that the effects of colonisation are not the same everywhere suggests that effects of colonisation in South-America might not be similar to how Africans experienced colonisation. This then permits the consideration of an African approach to decolonisation in order to adapt decolonial thinking to African experiences.

From a personal perspective, what qualifies the consideration of an African approach to decolonisation is that at the gist of coloniality, is identity. I say this to mean that the final product for colonisation and the colonial power matrix is a colonial subject. If anything, colonisation stripped colonial subjects of their identity and turned them into Euro-American clones. Therefore, any efforts of reversing the effects of colonisation should begin by recovering identities lost to colonialism. Since identity has a physical aspect through being connected to space, the politics of geography in decolonisation cannot be over-emphasized.

Decolonisation in Africa then has to adopt an African character. However, though, the conception of Africanisation adopted in this study is bigger than the politics of representation (bio-politics). It privileges what le Granje (2018) terms as Africanism. The focus here is on centring African culture and identity in the undoing of colonialism. For Ramose (1998) in

(Letsekha, 2013), Africanisation is about claiming the right to be African. Makgoba (1997, 199) in Letsekha (2013) adds that Africanisation

> is not about excluding Europeans and their cultures, but about affirming the African culture and its identity in a world community. It is not a process of exclusion, but inclusion. It is a learning process and a way of life for Africans. It involves incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into and through African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility so essential in the global village.

I understand the above quote to mean that Africanisation is not about dislocating Africa from global knowledge production and putting the lid on the rest of the world. But about locating Africa in the mix. This is to say, Africa should be recognised as a geographic space for thinking by valuing interpretation of African experiences, as explained from African philosophy in disciplinary knowledge. Africa, then, becomes a physical place for experiences and modes of thinking framing ways of knowing constructed through the process of Africanisation. But knowledge and modes of thinking generated in other parts of the world, should also be incorporated. This approach to decolonisation requires a collaborative approach to knowledge production.

Africanisation from this perspective advocates for a collaborative approach to knowledge production, but a distinctive feature is its special emphasis on Africa as a place of theorising about the world rather than elsewhere. Ammon (2019) categorises this approach as a soft stance to decolonisation, a positionality Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia (2006) contest on the basis that advocating for a collaborative approach is anti-thesis. To the scholars, decolonisation is about moving away from the colonial presence, which an anti-colonial approach creates space for. This argument is advanced in wa Thiongo' (1986, 88) by stating that,

> certainly, the quest for relevance and for a correct perspective can only be understood and be meaningfully resolved within the context of the general struggle against imperialism. How we view ourselves, our environment is very much dependent on where we stand in relationship to imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial stages; that if we are to do anything about our individual and collective being today, then

> we have to coldly and consciously look at what imperialism has been doing to us and to ourselves in the universe."

I understand the above quote to mean that the position we assume as we interrogate the effects of colonialism in today's society determines what we are able to see. This line of argument makes a case for the need to revisit the project of colonisation and its present effect in contemporary society in order to assume a critical stance on theories originating from Europe and America. The essentiality of adopting a critical stance to western theories is in avoiding falling in the trap of ending up validating African knowledge through modes of thinking produced through the colonial project. African knowledge is already having a tough time being recognised as knowledge on the basis that for it to be knowledge, it must conform to western traditions of knowledge (Horsthemke, 2014). Ndlovu-Gathseni (2015) contends that judging African knowledge through a colonial gaze is equivalent to trying to solve a problem through the very conditions that produced it, and thus, it is entrapping.

The argument put forward above is worth considering on the basis of the history of knowledge production. Foucault's geneaology of knowledge production exposes how power-relations shape knowledge production by privileging truths that enables those in power to maintain their position. Colonialism, as a project of power-relations created opportunities for erasing versions of truth that did not advance the colonial project. The ultimate outcome of this was the erasure and subjugation of knowledges from colonised societies on the basis that it did not conform to the criteria for science (Butin, 2006).

The rejection of knowledge not conforming to science is what resulted to cognitive injustice, and epistemicide of knowledge belonging to colonised societies. Therefore, it cannot be used to solve the very problem it created. It is in this vein that Mignolo (2011) advocates for epistemic disobedience. This will allow for the re-insurgence of knowledge removed from global discourses on the basis that it did not conform to standards of science. Epistemic disobedience can benefit the project of Africanising knowledge, in view of the fact that knowledge originating from African cultures is facing epistemic uncertainty on the basis that it does not meet the standard of western knowledge traditions.

For example, western knowledge traditions conform to propositional knowledge. By this I mean what Hospers (1997) define as statements where the knowing person provides ways of how they got to know, and whoever follows the steps they took in finding out what they know, should also be able to arrive at the same conclusion (Muller & Gambler, 2010). Bernstein (2000) refers to such knowledge as vertical discourses, which she juxtaposes with horizontal discourses. Accordingly, vertical discourse refers to meanings that can be generalised whilst the later refers to meanings that are tied to immediate contexts. The overriding argument about vertical and horizontal discourses is that for knowledge to develop mental abilities, it must have a structure for vertical discourses. Arguments like this put African knowledge in limbo because it is generally classified as a horizontal discourse. If it is indeed a horizontal discourse, the pursuit for decolonising the geography curriculum through Africanising knowledge is at a point of zero.

The arguments that African knowledge is a horizontal discourse is based on its philosophical foundation (African philosophy), viewed to be an uncontested and unproven collective worldview (Horsthemke, 2014). The problematic with African knowledge, in this view, is theorisation. The argument being advanced in Horsthemke (2014) is that the system of thought where African knowledge is produced cannot defend itself. I say this to mean that there is a big narrative about African philosophy being unable to justify the claim to knowledge (Hountondji, 1974). Viewing it this way, renders it incapable of becoming a system of thought that can generate knowledge that can be justified with evidence and that has a right to the claim of truth. This reduces it to a myth.

But authors like Ramoupi, (2012), Msimanga & Shizha, (2014) reject this claim on the basis that African knowledge does exist as a science. Ramoupi (2012) backs his argument by noting that the science behind geometry and mathematics is a contribution made by Egyptians. Msimanga & Shizha (2014) argue this point from a position of African knowledge on the use of herbs which can be backed by evidence to justify it as true. Having grown up within an African community, I can attest to this fact based on personal experience. I do know that a mixture of boiled water with guava tree leaves can cure stomach ache. Ramoupi (2012) further posits that all knowledge originate from Africa. If his argument is acceptable,

suggesting that African knowledge is different from knowledge originating elsewhere is invalid. Chawane (2016) puts forward that the gist for the pursuit for the Africanisation of knowledge is that "Africans are entitled to give their own perspective on the African experience" (201). I strongly agree with this argument on the basis that if it has been accepted that knowledge is a social construct whose historical production was influenced by power dynamics, Europe-America perspectives should not be universalised. Rather, all perspectives should be accepted as equal worldviews originating from different places of experience.

Rejecting African knowledge on the basis of its philosophy, Hountondji (1983) contends that the claim that African philosophy is a myth is misleading. By philosophy I mean a system of thinking (Higgs, 2012). The scholar underscores that that all perceptions are abstracted from reality, and that includes African experiences. Dei & Jaimungal (2018) posit that African interpretations of life and the world around them are based on their experience of their immediate world in a bid to survive in it. What I deduce from this line of argument is that African knowledge and ways of reasoning were a response to the world around them, rendering the African point of view relevant and appropriate as a lens for looking at an African phenomenon and African experience.

What is remaining in the pursuit for cognitive justice for Africans is to re-discover African knowledge and locate it in school curriculum. But Hountondji (1997) observes that African knowledge was poorly documented. Most of it exists in implicit form. That is to say it exists in the bodies of people, typically elders in the communities, and gets passed on through oral means rather than as knowledge which is recorded in books like western disciplines. The implication of this in the pursuit for African knowledge for curriculum development is the lack of resources. I say this to mean that for the curriculum to have African knowledge as content knowledge, there is a need to have a reliable pool of resources on African knowledge. The significance of textbooks in curriculum development is protecting subject knowledge by ensuring that the ideas teachers expose learners to are acceptable in the field of practice where subjects draw knowledge from (DoE, 2015).

For example, content knowledge for the geography subject originates from geography as a discipline and a field of practice. And since what learners learn in schools is aimed at initiating them to fields of practice, therefore, content presented in school subjects need to align with knowledge framing the practice. The implication of this in the pursuit for an African knowledge in geography is the need to forge a new direction in knowledge production of the discipline of geography in order to centre African world views. This could be achieved through writing back the discipline of geography in order to re-discover African view-points lost to the evisceration of African perspectives from global knowledge production, pioneered by colonialism.

Mosweunyane (2013) and Goduka (2000) claim that Africa had a system of education before the advent of colonisation, whose purpose was to teach the younger generation survival skills. Knowledge and skills were passed mostly by the word of mouth and beneficiaries of such knowledge were expected to use it to improve the whole community. By writing back the discipline of geography, Africa could re-discover perspectives marginalised by power dynamics that controlled knowledge production during colonialism (Butin, 2006). However, the danger of writing back the geography discipline is in losing perspectives on changes that have occurred in the natural and social environment (Mosweunyane, 2013). For example, in the geography discipline, phenomena posing challenges in the immediate environment of African learners has changed. These include climate change, which is a latest arrival in the discipline. Writing back the discipline, meaning (Dei, 2008) bringing back knowledge which existed before colonisation to life, might exclude new developments in knowledge disciplines.

This study symphathises with re-imagining the discipline of geography from an African perspective in order to give geography knowledge an African identity. I link this approach to what Hountodji (1997) terms as endogenous knowledge. What the Bernice scholar mean by this is the reproduction of knowledge from an African philosophy through a critical engagement. This require interrogating African ideologies from a view point of ontology in order to ensure that ideologies presented as African knowledge correspond to the reality and are based on true observations of phenomena or events. Approaching knowledge production

from that point of view will qualify African knowledge for what Hospers (1997) classify as propositional knowledge. The qualifying criterion is truth, justifiability and belief.

Approaching knowledge production from this perspective produce truthful accounts of reality through offering justification for belief (Hospers, 1997). For example, one can claim to know that water evaporates when it reaches 100 degrees Celsius by referring to the laws of vaporization. When put to test, these laws produce similar results regardless of context and time. Such knowledge, then, must be documented in order to create a pool of resources that can be used to develop a school curriculum. This should be the starting point for generating a pool of knowledge from an African perspective is community elders and the archives. A framework for producing such knowledge is Afrocentricity.

### *5.3: How does decolonisation offer opportunities for Africanising education?*

A consideration of a suitable transformative approach to education in Africa needs to go beyond a quest for relevance and settling scores of past. The main guiding principle should be the type of thinking that geography education needs to produce at the level of secondary schools. This widens the scope of any transformative approach beyond the post-colonial (post-apartheid) era which seeks to reclaim what former colonies lost to colonisation. The most precious resource that former colonies lost to the project of colonialism in the context of education is the opportunity to take a leadership role in the construction of their world, and positioning themselves in it. This serves as a point of departure for Africanising education. From a perspective of geography education, material opportunities offered by decolonisation to curriculum transformation can be summarised into three themes: relevance, epistemic justice and social justice.

#### *5.3.1: Relevance*

The aims of geography education in secondary schools are not only about acquiring knowledge. But also about developing skills to solve geography problems from a real world

perspective (Rusznyak, 2017). This require learners to transfer geography knowledge into real life scenarios (DoE, 2019). This means that the body of knowledge framing the geography discipline must connect knowing to doing and locate it to the South African context. With knowledge being a gateway for accessing the world, it shapes how learners see the world around them. Put bluntly, it shapes how one sees the world. Therefore, if the curriculum for geography is to connect knowing to doing, the starting point should be connecting knowledge to the context of application, through centring knowledge in African realities (wa Thiong'o, 1993).

Decolonisation advocates for the use of knowledge belonging to local communities in curriculum knowledge through adoptive an integrated approach to curriculum knowledge. This approach creates space for the emergence of African communities of learning as intellectual communities. By so doing, it creates linkages between disciplinary knowledge and the context of application, thus rendering the curriculum relevant. This is an important element within the context of geography whose main challenge is learner's inability to transfer geography knowledge into real world scenarios (Radcliffe, 2017).

### *5.3.2: Epistemic Justice*

Epistemic justice refers to the revival of local knowledges marginalized through the valorisation of epistemology through Western scientific methods (Oelofsen, 2015). It counters epistemic injustice, the act of removing other knowledges from global knowledge on the basis that all modes of knowledge should adhere to the principles of science in order for them to be accepted (Foucault, 1980). This argument is advanced in Maldonado-Torres (2012) who posits that science is one of the pillars of the civilising mission aimed at justifying the colonisation of memory, people's sense of self, identity and cosmological organizations. Epistemic injustice resulted to the removal of epistemologies from the South from global knowledge, and by extension creating space for epistemologies originating from the west to dominate disciplinary knowledge (Mignolo, 2008).

The current curriculum for geography is an embodiment of epistemic injustice. The body of knowledge underpinning the discipline base geography knowledge on ideologies and concepts inherited from settler societies or originating from Europe-America (Radcliffe, 2017). This is despite that the curriculum values locally produced knowledge as an important part of the body of knowledge framing the discipline of geography in secondary schools (DoE, 2012). Despite the requirement of aligning the discipline with the era of post-colonialism, the continued use of colonial maps in former colonised societies advances the colonial project through silencing locally produced knowledge (Standish, 2017). Long, Dalu, Lembani & Gunter (2019) contends that physical space and human interaction within space are central to the geography discipline, thus the discipline cannot afford to ignore the politics of space.

Decolonisation offer material advantages for tackling this epistemic injustice through advocating for pluriversalism, which allows for the diversity of viewpoints in knowledge production (Mbembe, 2015). Mignolo (2011) argue that attaining pluriversality necessitates epistemic obedience, meaning the production of knowledge through a different qualification criteria. This positionality creates space for the emergence of African knowledge lost to the project of colonisation under the guise of con-conformity to western traditions of knowledge, (Horsthemke, 2014). Decolonisation also offer writing back as an approach to knowledge production. This will allow for the re-insurgence of maps based on boundaries set up by former colonies as well as perspectives for studying the world which were in circulation or held by local communities before colonialism (Shaw, Herman & Dobbs, 2006).

### *5.3.3: Social Justice*

Social Justice ensures the equal treatment and equal distribution of resources within a society (DoESA, 2006). This is one important element that colonisation denied former colonies of. It created conditions for inequalities and unfair treatment through taking over land and material possessions belonging to a colonized group by force or coercion (Murrey, 2020). Cultural capital belonging to colonised societies was also eviscerated in order to be used by settler

societies for their gain. In this process, colonised societies also lost their identities whilst also being denied access to benefit from resources which use to be their own. Decolonisation offer opportunities for recovering what former colonies lost to colonisation through aiming at reclaiming rights and material possessions taken away from them. Within the context of curriculum, social justice tackles injustices done to colonised societies through firstly removing knowledge belonging to them in the name of it being a myth rather than knowledge.

Local communities were also denied participation in the cannon of knowledge production through the use of western epistemological tradition. This erased their identity whilst also stripping them of their right to thinking. Decolonisation creates space for the restoration of African identity in the curriculum and knowledge production.

*5.3.4*: *What are the limitations of Africanising knowledge as an approach to curriculum transformation in post-apartheid South African secondary schools?*

Despite that the concept of Africanness is entangled in politics, which muddies any project of transformation linked to it, identity is the point of departure. In the context of knowledge production, identity is not only about social justice. But about connecting knowing to being in order to forge a relationship between knowledge and societies. As a project of epistemic justice, Africanisation seeks to include the identities of communities who were eviscerated from the cannon of knowledge production through the colonial power. Whilst this is no doubt a worthy course considering that principles of democracy, in which the post apartheid society is set in, permits societies to define their own world, it is exclusive in nature. The exclusivity decides the scope of relevance and application, thus pose a limitation. For example, sectors of society which might not perceive themselves as African might find knowledge with an African identity irrelevant to them. By implication, such knowledge might not have a place in non-African societies yet the post-apartheid South African society is a *rainbow* nation (Griffiths, 2019).

Another potentially limiting factor is that the approach to curriculum transformation embodied in Africanisation either through breaking away or integrating perspectives, worldviews and epistemologies belonging to local communities into western knowledge, require a development of a new body of knowledge. This require a rich pool of perspectives and worldviews produced locally, which can be turned into epistemologies that can be used to develop a new body of knowledge. Considering that the for the longest time, knowledge production was controlled through the colonial power which filtered out perspectives and worldviews belonging to formerly colonised societies, developing a rich pool of epistemologies might hinder the realisation of epistemic justice (Hountondji, 1997). The implication of this in Africa is the lack of or neglect of African scholarship in disciplinary knowledge (Ramoupi, 2012).

Within a context of a geography curriculum, the realisation of epistemic justice might be hindered by the lack of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). Learning and teaching support materials are an integral part of curriculum development, especially in a context of standardised outcomes of learning. Their availability does not only support learning and teaching through becoming a point of reference for teachers and learners, but also provide means for ensuring that the type of knowledge included in the curriculum has a potential of developing skills that geography knowledge ought develop among learners in order to produce the desired learning outcomes (Nilsson, 2006).

### *5.3.5: Conclusion*

Colonisation was mainly about erasing identities of colonised subjects. Therefore, reversing any form of its continued effects on contemporary societies or/and hangovers or residues should use the reclamation of identity as a point of departure. This being the case, then, using a blanket approach to rid contemporary societies of ills inherited from colonisation might limit the decolonising agenda on the basis that it might end up working against its very own thesis through failing to create space for the emergence of identities deconstructed or erased by the colonial project. Decolonisation is also not about plurality or multiplicity. But about ending continued oppression of former colonies by former colonisers through denying them

the right to speak, think and name their world in their own terms. That is what necessitates differentiating and modification of decolonial approaches in order for it to best suit the context in question. After all, former colonies did not have a similar experience of colonisation, therefore, the effects of colonization cannot be characterised by hegemony. Decolonisation that will work for Africa should adopt an African approach.

## 6: Conclusion

At the heart of this study was a concern as to whether approaches to decolonisation offer intellectual tools that can be used to transform the curriculum for geography into a post-apartheid policy without compromising intended educational outcomes of geography education in secondary schools? It aims to investigate approaches to decolonisation in order to identify an approach that can be expropriated to curriculum transformation in order to respond to the growing need for a curriculum that connects learning to doing without compromising the development of intellectual capacity.

As a methodology, this study employed a conceptual approach which was undertaken through reviewing literature on decolonisation in order to gauge the degree of effectiveness as a transformative approach to the geography curriculum, within a context of post-apartheid and a modernist approach to education.

There are six approaches to decolonisation that can be employed to curriculum transformation. They are decolonisation as decolonisation as additive-inclusive knowledge, decolonisation as the decentring of European knowledge, decolonisation as critical engagement with settled knowledge, decolonisation as encounters with entangled knowledges, decolonisation as the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society) and decolonisation as the Africanisation of knowledge (Ammon, 2019).

These approaches, isolated or integrated, offer opportunities, challenges and limitations of decolonisation to geography curriculum transformation. Opportunities centre on connecting the discipline of geography to South Africa's context of learning and humanness. By so doing, it expands opportunities for learners to understand and make judgements about the geography knowledge and its founding theories. However, decolonisation also present challenges to curriculum transformation through premising knowledge transformation on differentiation, which might widen disparities holding the rainbow nation hostage. Its limitation emanate from insisting on distinct ways particular to African communities and

African identities, which might limit the decolonial project to local communities (Ammon, 2019).

However, though, the imagined challenges do not override the need to decolonise the curriculum for geography. Geography, as a discipline is intimately linked to the project of colonisation. As knowledge, it played an important role in the discovery of conquered lands, including South Africa. As a school subject, the discipline continues to carry residues of being a colonial project through re-enforcing worldviews originating from the Europe and America. It has been labelled white (Peters, 2015). That is why the demand for decolonising the discipline is essential in order to transform it to a social construct that is intimately connected to values and norms of the local community, whilst at the same time, connecting knowing the knower.

Dei (2008) contends that African societies have more in common than Europe and America. South Africa, is part of Africa, therefore, share similarities with the continent than Europe and America. This is to say that, African knowledge connects to South African reality better than the so-called universal knowledge. It is in this vein that I argue that Africanising knowledge would be suitable as a tool to transform the current curriculum for geography in CAPS. But because secondary schools are tasked with producing skills for economic development that can compete in a global market, a suitable approach to curriculum transformation needs to adopt an Afrocentric model of education. This will provide resources to tackle coloniality and cognitive injustice whilst at the same time locate African education in the mix of global discourses.

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