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What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a University in Gauteng

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What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a University in Gauteng.

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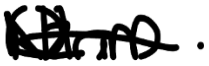
A Research Report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Education by Coursework and Research Report at the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

March, 2024

Declaration

I, *Noxolo Zandile Dlamini*, declare that this Research Report titled: ***What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a University in Gauteng*** is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree Master of Education by Coursework and Research Report at the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Signed:  .

Date: 15 March 2024

Noxolo Zandile Dlamini

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Dedication

I dedicate this project to my amazing family, from my late father Thokozani Dlamini to my mother Nocwaka Maselana and siblings Bongiwe and Sibusiso Dlamini. Thank you for grounding me and being rays of light and love in my life. Ngiyabonga bo Nkosi, Dlamini.

List of Abbreviations and Terms

Course- a structured academic program or module that focuses on a specific subject or area of knowledge over a period of a semester or year.

HE- Higher Education.

HEI- Higher Education Institutions.

Lecturer- a faculty and school member responsible for the teaching and learning of student within a course.

Reading- the required or recommended texts, journal articles, and academic material that students are required to engage with as part of learning in a course.

Student- an individual enrolled in a course or academic program at the HEI.

ABSTRACT

The discourse on curriculum decolonisation in South African higher education institutions has been marked by contention, particularly as the country contends with the enduring legacies of apartheid, colonialism, and a pervasive coloniality. This study was conducted at a university in Gauteng where curriculum decolonisation has been established in a postgraduate teacher education course for about 8 years. The research aimed to explore how lecturers perceive and implement curriculum decolonisation at intended and enacted curriculum levels, encompassing knowledge, pedagogy, and assessment. Through a decolonial case study approach, involving document analysis and semi-structured interviews, this study explored how lecturers involved in curriculum decolonisation navigate this diverse, multi-layered concept in practice. The findings highlighted the dynamic and complex nature of curriculum decolonisation presenting a range of opportunities and challenges- as lecturers are presented with unique ways of engaging and challenged within tensions of institutional power dynamics. While progress and responsiveness to curriculum decolonisation are evident in both the intended and enacted curriculum of the course, this study illustrates that there is a critical need for heightened dialogue, support and mutual understanding among lecturers and students to address the deeply embedded coloniality, diverse perspectives and experiences related to curriculum decolonisation. Thus, the study joins in a larger conversation happening nationally and internationally on curriculum decolonisation in higher education.

Keywords: Decolonisation, intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, coloniality, power dynamics.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

1. Introduction

The calls for curriculum decolonisation have been a prominent and contentious issue in the recent years in South African higher education institutions (HEIs) as the country still grapples with the legacy of apartheid, colonialism, as well as a pervasive coloniality and its matrix of power (Masinire, 2020; Maluleka, 2021). Initial steps towards decolonising curriculum in higher education (HE) have been seen in some university departments across the country through re-designing courses and programmes to reflect a decolonial thrust. At the university where this study was conducted, there is an entire postgraduate teacher education course where the idea of curriculum decolonisation has been running for the past eight years. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how lecturers teaching the course perceive and implement curriculum decolonisation across knowledge, pedagogy and assessment. The core question which guides this study is how do lecturers who believe that they are involved in decolonising curriculum do decolonial work? With an array of divergent and competing perspectives on decolonisation, it becomes crucial to explore how those who purport curriculum decolonisation engage with this idea in their courses or programmes.

1.1 Background

The dominant academic organisational model in South African HEI is based on colonial knowledge and systems which were established and solidified during colonialism and apartheid (Masinire, 2020; Senekal and Lenz, 2020).This has not been significantly revolutionised post 1994 resulting in much of what is taught currently still being largely a legacy of the colonisation and apartheid (Mbembe, 2016; Senekal and Lenz, 2020). As a result, the HE system in South Africa remains predominantly racially and class exclusionary by promoting Western ways of knowing and being, thus, discounting the knowledge of the people colonised and their ways of being (Masinire 2020; Pillay and Swanepoel 2018; Senekal and Lenz, 2020). Consequently, the HEI landscape fails to fulfil the promise of addressing and contributing to social, epistemic justice and development reinforcing itself as an organisation of social exclusion and injustice (Costandius et al., 2018; Le Grange, 2016).

After 1994, the government and universities across the country developed frameworks to address the socio-racial and epistemic injustices of colonialism and apartheid through policies and frameworks such as the *National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001), Soudien Report (2008)* and the 2015-2016 *Five-Year Review of Teaching and Learning* at the University of the Witwatersrand (Hlatshwayo, 2020; University of the Witwatersrand, 2019). However, even after decades of frameworks and policies institutions have not fundamentally changed their epistemic traditions and ways of doing due to several barriers (Morrieira, Luckett, Kumalo and Ramogotra, 2020; Heleta 2016; Hlatshwayo, 2020). According to Hlatshwayo (2020) while the post 1994 frameworks and policies aimed to prioritise transformation and reform within academia, these efforts did not adequately address the persistent and deeply rooted racism and marginalisation still experienced by Black students and academics in South African HE.

Studies conducted by Senekal and Lenz (2020), Morriera et al. (2020), and more recently, Hlatshwayo (2021), reveal that there are fundamental barriers to HE curriculum decolonisation. The barriers identified include: neoliberalism which continues to commodify knowledge production and encourage competition amongst faculty and students, resistance to change by the lecturers due to being content with the current status quo and preferring to grapple with what they know than what they do not, the argued lack of systematised African content and human resources to teach the content, the internalised perception that Western knowledge is superior from both lecturers and students, unwillingness of lecturers to take the time to rethink and reconceptualise and implement new curricula. Thus, the transformation frameworks and policies shifted admission policies and racial demographics. However, the institutional culture, curriculum content and implementation remained Western dominant inhibiting meaningful epistemological access to HE (Govender and Naidoo, 2023; Hlatshwayo, 2023; Masinire, 2020).

"While universities globally have formulated new policies and frameworks pertaining to equality, equity, transformation and change, institutional cultures and epistemological traditions have not changed" (Pillay and Swanepoel, 2018, p.121). South African HEIs, were centred around issues of transformation post 1994however, this change was minimal, and decolonisation was not explicitly addressed (Hlatshwayo, 2023; Pillay and Swanepoel, 2018). The student protests in 2015 – 2016, dubbed #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests, brought forward means to question the so-called post-1994 transformation measures by demanding universities to be decolonised and education to be made free. Years following the

protests, Mashiyi et al. (2020) argue that decolonial transformation in HEIs has been gradual and unequal across courses due to several obstacles. The obstacles are mainly the deep-rooted colonial ideals of what a quality education is and diverse opinions from scholars on how to tackle decolonisation (Mashiyi et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a need to engage with the current approaches taken to decolonise HE curricula to develop and possibly reconceptualise the decolonial project across HEIs in South Africa so that we can move beyond the conceptual arguments for decolonisation in South African HE and focus on the issues of its implementation (Govender and Naidoo, 2023).

1.2 Problem Statement

Decolonisation has been an intense topic in South African research, debates and activism as the country deals with the remnants of colonisation, apartheid as well as pervasive coloniality and its matrix of power (Govender and Naidoo, 2023; Maluleka, 2021). Mashiyi et. al. (2020) state that the concept of decolonisation is multi-layered and gives rise to diverse perspectives which are likely hindering its progression in terms of implementation in South African HE. Thus, despite the increasingly overwhelming research on decolonisation in South African HE, critical engagement with its curriculum implementation and underlying decolonial perspectives that shape it in HEIs -remain a field that is yet to address the student calls. There is a need for a study that will explore lecturers' perspectives in relation to their approaches in a course with a decolonial thrust to understand how they grapple with this multi-faceted concept and bring it together in one course. This will assist those who engage in curriculum decolonisation to understand what progress has been made, as well as understand challenges encountered in practice.

1.3 Significance

The study has the potential to contribute to the growing understanding of curriculum decolonisation in HE at an implementation level. It provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities involved in decolonising the curriculum through the exploration of lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to their implementation in a postgraduate course. Moreover, the findings of the study may inform the development of more effective strategies towards curriculum decolonisation in HEIs beyond theoretical and intention levels.

1.4 Personal Motivation

Decolonisation has been a topic that intrigued me prior to HE having seen it on the X social media platform (formerly, Twitter) and general searching on the internet. The project truly struck me coming from a predominantly white and Eurocentric school which made me want to know more and dream of the possibility of *seeing and feeling myself* through the knowledge I learn and the social learning environment (see Godsell, 2019). The Eurocentric nature of the curriculum and the lack of representation of diverse ways of knowing and doing in the classroom created a cultural dissonance and feelings of alienation and possibly confusion. This sense of alienation as a result of coloniality fuelled my desire to delve deeper into decolonisation, as I yearned to see myself and my experiences reflected in the knowledge and learning environment. When I ventured into my Bachelor of Education degree in 2018, undergraduate courses such as sociology, philosophy, and curriculum, exposed me to the concept of decolonisation in a more profound way. It was through these courses that I began to understand decolonisation. This pivotal understanding propelled me towards pursuing postgraduate studies, where I could further explore the complexities of decolonisation from a curriculum lens. The experience of engaging with a range of curricula, and decolonial, perspectives in my postgraduate studies deepened my commitment to this area of research. I was intrigued by a course that presented curriculum theory through a decolonial lens where an array of perspectives challenged my views and beliefs about curriculum decolonisation. My experiences of studying that course led me to want to research more on how lecturers understand and work with the concept of decolonisation. More so, how they bring their perspectives, thinking, personal experiences, histories and practice in a course that has a decolonial thrust with the hope of allowing teachers, future researchers, and policymakers to challenge their beliefs and thinking about curriculum and knowledge.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

- To discuss and explore lecturers' understanding and perception of decolonisation within the HE curricula and postgraduate teacher education.
- To explore how lecturers select, organise, teach, and assess knowledge in a postgraduate teacher education course in relation to curriculum decolonisation.
- To establish the affordances, opportunities and challenges lecturers have in implementing a decolonised curriculum.

- To identify potential changes that lecturers recommend towards enhancing curriculum decolonisation and improving student learning experiences in HE.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curricula in a postgraduate teacher education course at a university in Gauteng. The study provides insight on how lecturers' perspectives translate into the planning and implementation of a decolonised curriculum within a university in Gauteng. It offers awareness of the opportunities and challenges within HE given the diverse conceptions of decolonisation in South Africa and globally. The study further contributes to the advancement in research knowledge on decolonisation implementation informing future policies, course co-ordination, assessment, and pedagogical innovation in HE in South Africa and internationally. Moreover, the study provides an alternative contribution to a South African HE perspective on curriculum decolonisation.

1.7 Research Questions

Main:

How are lecturers decolonising the curriculum in a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng?

Sub-Questions:

I. *What are lecturers' perspectives of decolonisation in a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng?*
II. *How do lecturers select, organise, teach, and assess knowledge to decolonise the curriculum in a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng?*
III. *What are the challenges and opportunities faced by lecturers in decolonising the intended and enacted curriculum in a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng?*

1.8 Outline of Chapters

The report was organised into seven chapters as seen in the outline below, which detail the contents of each chapter.

Chapter One introduces the study by mapping out the decolonisation and transformation efforts issues in South African HEI. The aims and justification of the study are explained to illustrate the gap and necessity of the study.

Chapter Two presents the conceptual framework which includes the four dimensions of responsiveness to decolonisation by Moll (2004) and the colonial matrix of power, being and knowledge as the guiding theoretical framework.

Chapter Three locates the study in a review of the broader conceptual and empirical literature on foundations of coloniality, decolonisation and curriculum.

Chapter Four explores the steps undertaken and considered to gather and analyse the data. The decolonial approach and researcher positionality, ethical considerations, data collection, research paradigm, and sampling are discussed.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the study where the voices and perspectives of the participants are deeply explored and foregrounded.

Chapter Six provides a discussion of the findings in relation to the reviewed literature and overarching conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter Seven concludes the study by providing a summary of the study, a critical reflection, discussion of the limitations, implications and recommendations of the study.

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study by providing a background, justification of the study from theoretical and personal grounding and the questions framing it. Therefore, the proceeding chapters will provide further theoretical contextualise, empirical data and discussion of the findings to address the research questions and provide insight into the notion of curriculum decolonisation in practice.

CHAPTER TWO

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

2. Introduction

The chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical framework used as the guiding lens in this study where concepts from the dimensions of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation function with the theoretical insights offered by the colonial matrix of power, being, and knowledge. The chapter begins by exploring the four dimensions, each representing a facet of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation and then moves on to present, the theoretical framework of study which is the colonial matrix of power – highlighting the intricate dynamics that have shaped and continue to permeate power structures, social identities, and knowledge production within HE.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

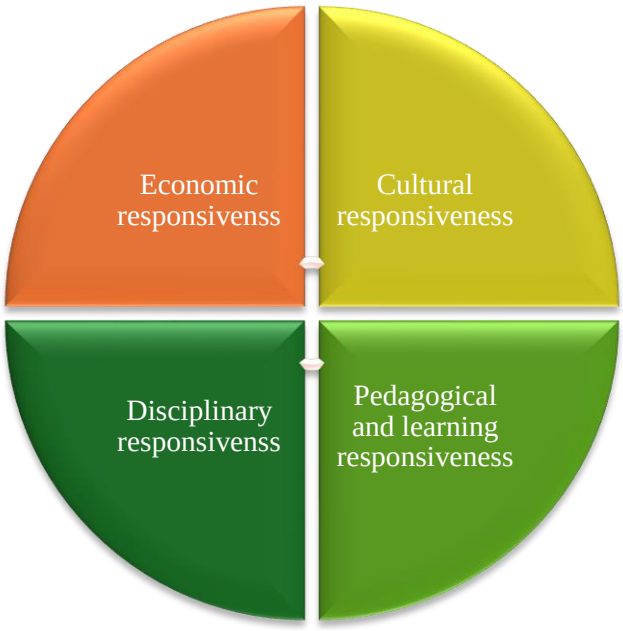

Figure 2.3: Four dimensions of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation (Moll, 2004 and Forumnyam and Teffera, 2017).

Fomunyam and Teferra (2017) explore four dimensions of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation, as adapted from Moll (2004), that can be used as a lens to explore lecturer perceptions and curriculum implementation. The literature demonstrates that there are a range

of ways of understanding the notion of curriculum responsiveness. According to Moll (2004), it is understanding whether a curriculum is adapting to the dynamic needs and challenges of society. Thus, the four dimensions provide a holistic benchmark for exploring the responsiveness of HE curricula beyond the economic dimension by exploring disciplinary, cultural and pedagogical dimensions. Fomunyam and Teffera (2017) orient these dimensions towards decolonisation to use them as a lens for understanding and analysing decolonisation within HE curricula. According to Fomunyam and Teffera (2017), these dimensions can work as a guide for lecturers in HEI, allowing them to perceive and address the historical legacies of colonialism and promote more inclusive and diverse educational experiences for students.

The first dimension as seen in the diagram is economic responsiveness, which entails developing a curriculum that meets the demands of the global and local economy which entails training students to become skilled professionals for the growth of the global and local socioeconomic context (Moll, 2004). "By economic responsiveness, we mean the university curriculum is responsive to the prevailing labour market by incorporating the necessary high-level qualifications, knowledge, skills demanded by a modern diversified economy." (Moll, 2004, p.4). This dimension of responsiveness to decolonisation can be understood as the instrumental use of curriculum, it focuses on equipping students with the knowledge and practical skills required to sustain, develop and advance their local and socioeconomic context.

The second is cultural responsiveness which is concerned with how the curriculum can enable access and respond to the cultural dissonance students experience in the academic space and enable diversity (Moll, 2004). The cultural responsiveness dimension to decolonisation focuses on the incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives, histories, and knowledge systems into the curriculum (Fomunyam and Teffera, 2017). The cultural responsiveness dimension entails lecturers empowering students to see their identities and experiences reflected in the educational content. This not only fosters a sense of belonging and validation but also promotes critical engagement with diverse cultural viewpoints, enriching the learning experience for students in HEI by "incorporating multiple cultural reference points that acknowledge diversity and constitute various alternative learning pathways for students." (Moll, 2004, p.5)

The third dimension as seen in the diagram is identified as disciplinary responsiveness which is centred around the responsiveness of the underlying subject knowledge through the inclusion, exclusion, or integration of various knowledge (Moll, 2004). It is centred around how well is it up to date with knowledge emerging in a particular field which means coupling

the way knowledge is produced to the way students learn and interact in their everyday, local and social environments (Fomunyam and Teferra, 2017). In relation to curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation, this emphasises the need to critically evaluate and shape the underlying subject knowledge within the curriculum, taking into account the inclusion, exclusion, or integration of diverse knowledge systems. For lecturers in HEI, this dimension calls for a thoughtful examination of the subject matter being taught, with a focus on broadening the scope of knowledge and perspectives included in the curriculum.

The fourth and last dimension is pedagogical and learning responsiveness which is concerned with the responsiveness to student needs to enhance learning and thinking (Fomunyam and Teferra, 2017; Moll, 2004). The dimension highlights the importance of employing instructional approaches and assessment methods that are humanising leaving room for critical engagement, different experiences and abilities (Fomunyam and Teferra, 2017). This dimension centres on the student, humanising the student in the sense of not simply applying a 'one size fits all' approach but being critical and conscious of the students being taught and assessed and allowing them to be part of the teaching, learning and assessment process.

The four dimensions offer a framework to locate the perspectives and approaches to decolonisation in the intended and enacted university curriculum because they apply to the various aspects of the curriculum from the planning through knowledge selection, lecturing and assessment of students. The epistemological development and curriculum decolonisation of HEI can be achieved through the four dimensions however the extent to which each of these dimensions apply ultimately depends on the individuals who shape the curriculum (Fomunyam and Teferra, 2017). Therefore, it is a valuable conceptual framework that can be used to guide this study. The four dimensions provide a lens for the analysis, collection of the data and narrowing of the scope. This means that firstly, the four dimensions were used as a guide for the literature review by ensuring that the literature explored can be understood through these dimensions. Secondly, the four dimensions were used as a guide to generate interview questions to ensure that the main research question is addressed. Thirdly, the four dimensions were used as a source to analyse the data gathered from the interviews to locate the perceptions of lecturers and their practices within the dimensions. Lastly, the four dimensions were used in the analysis of the course outline, and the intended curriculum to explore how any or all the dimensions have been present in the course, thus informing the overall discussion and implications of the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

"Today's HEIs which claim to be liberated do not challenge the predominant hegemonic practices that demeaned African IK. That hegemonic practice needs to be displaced from the central position of what students are learning. If hegemonic practices continue, it will be difficult for a nation to achieve its national goals, visions and aspirations" (Meda, 2020, p.92). These hegemonic practices within institutions of learning are protected by what many scholars refer to as coloniality. Coloniality preserves dependence on the global North through global imperialist structures (Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Coloniality is reproduced in three domains which Mignolo (2007) refers to as the colonial matrix of power, being and knowledge. These three domains are deeply intertwined and play a fundamental role in perpetuating colonial ideologies and practices.

Coloniality of power

The coloniality of power refers to the enduring structures of power and control that developed during modernism and colonialism and continue to shape the world (Maluleka, 2021; Mignolo,2007). According to Mignolo (2007) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) the coloniality of power is reinforced in four ways namely, economically through physical resource extraction and labour exploitation, controlling gender and sexuality by re-defining the concepts of family, controlling authority through asserting military superiority. Additionally, through subjectivity and knowledge universalism leading to epistemological colonisation by the undermining and subjugation of African ways of knowing (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Maluleka, 2021). Therefore, Maluleka (2021) states that the coloniality of power in this present day, not only manifests itself through physical oppression and political authoritarianism but also in epistemological oppression and domination. The coloniality of power can be noted in the Eurocentric nature of South African HEIs from policies, physical structures, and curricula which created physical, economic and epistemic injustices (Hlatshwayo,2022; Pillay and Swanepoel,2018), that led to calls for decolonisation in the 2015/16 student protests in South African HEI, including the institution where this study is located it.

The coloniality of power, therefore, is characterised by practices that construct power relations where Euro-western ways of knowing and being are considered superior to others (Govender and Naidoo, 2023; Maluleka 2021) These power relations play out within and through curricula, influencing knowledge production, and the inclusion/exclusion of African or non-Western knowledge. Thus, the coloniality of power provides meaningful theoretical tools to

analyse the relations and Eurocentric curricula prevalent in HEI. Due to the coloniality of power continuing to reinforce practices of oppression, exploitation, and authoritarianism, it shapes, labels and constructs identities relating to the coloniality of being.

Coloniality of being

Maldonado-Torres (2016) defines the coloniality of being as the Manichean, dual classification that has resulted in the dichotomisation of individuals and their cultures such as "categorise people and their culture as either Christian/barbarian, good/evil, primitive/civilised, inferior/superior, rational/irrational, white/black, knowledge/myths, and developed/undeveloped" (Maluleka, 2021, p.76). It presents itself as a project that seeks to bring about social classification and edification, dictating the global social hierarchy. Therefore, the coloniality of being results in the dehumanisation and depersonalisation of colonised people, their knowledge and knowledge systems which contributes to the objectification and commodification of Africans (Maluleka, 2021; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Consequently, the coloniality of being has tied people, knowledge, beliefs etc. that are non-Western, particularly those from the global South to negative connotations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This can be observed in the HEI where indigenous knowledge, is labelled as unsystematic and mythical, invalidating it as a form of knowledge with power. Thus, the coloniality of being is interconnected with the coloniality of power and knowledge, as it reinforces the Manichean mode of binaries imposed on the colonised and shapes how knowledge is produced, distributed, and valued- in the context of this study shaped and distributed within a HE course curriculum (Maldonado-Torres, 2016).

Coloniality of knowledge

The coloniality of knowledge refers to the validation and production of knowledge from a Eurocentric gaze which has historically marginalised and devalued non-Western forms of knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The coloniality of knowledge perpetuates the hierarchy and disqualification of curriculum knowledge where Western knowledge is privileged over other forms (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, Maluleka, 2021). Moreover, the coloniality of knowledge further reinforces the monopolisation of knowledge production and the politics of knowledge within the epistemic logics of the dominant Euro-western perspective (Ibid). This results in the systematic exclusion of other forms of knowledge and the perpetuation of Euro-centric epistemologies as the norm. Thus, the coloniality of knowledge raises questions about who is

legitimised to produce knowledge, what knowledge is deemed relevant, and how certain forms of knowledge disempower communities and peoples (Maluleka, 2021).

The coloniality of power, being and knowledge are interconnected and mutually reinforcing by maintaining Western systems of power, perpetuating knowledge hierarchies and shaping the way individuals and communities understand and perceive themselves (Hlatshwayo, 2022; Maldonado-Torres, 2016; Maluleka 2021). The three domains provide the awareness and understanding of deeply ingrained influences and beliefs that have shaped knowledge production and reproduction in HEI. Therefore, understanding the colonial matrix of power is pivotal for exploring the underlying epistemological assumptions that inform curricula and educational practices, while further revealing the overlooked contributions of marginalised knowledge systems. This provides meaningful theoretical tools to view and engage with literature, collect and analyse data as well and form conclusions.

2.3 Chapter Conclusion

Overall, by employing the four dimensions of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation and the colonial matrix of power, being and knowledge as guiding frameworks, this study endeavours to explore the complexities and opportunities of decolonising the curriculum of postgraduate teacher education course.

CHAPTER THREE

Literature Review

3. Introduction

While the previous chapters introduced the study and its conceptual and theoretical lenses, this chapter which is divided into two sections, explores conceptual and empirical literature informing this study. The conceptual literature review provides an in-depth field of crucial concepts that this study rests on which are foundations of coloniality, decolonisation and curriculum. The empirical review based on discourses on decolonisation then moves on to empirically position this study and highlights a gap by exploring similar studies that were conducted and their findings.

3.1 Conceptual Review

3.1.1 Historical background and foundations of the coloniality of knowledge

To grapple with the concept of decolonisation and what it meant for the students calling for it in 2015 – 2016, tracing the history of South African universities, illuminates the strong colonial and Eurocentric foundations of university curriculum. European imperialism in the 18th century across the globe led to South Africa becoming a colony of the Dutch in 1652 and that of the British in 1806 (Beck, 2013). These developments made Europeans establish the first university founded in 1829, now commonly known as the University of Cape Town to educate their children as they settled. The university established at the Cape and those that came later reflected a Western, Eurocentric structure in an African context (Beck, 2013). These institutions were aligned with coloniser interests and were regarded as an extension or part of the colonial empire (Mbhele, 2018). Moreover, these institutions were designed to train workers such as mining engineers who would serve the needs of the colonial government (Hoadley, 2010). Thus, the curricula in these universities were influenced by the ideologies, values and beliefs of the colonial rulers where European language, knowledge were used, and lecturers were from Europe (Mbhele, 2018; Masinire 2020). It is in this manner that colonial power was introduced and reinforced through education, which was an integral aspect of the complex, multi-faceted system of colonialism that involved domination and exploitation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

Furthermore, the establishment and enactment of apartheid by the National Party in 1948 meant that HE in South Africa continued to maintain Eurocentric continuities (Msila, 2007), because South Africa moved from colonisation to apartheid, a racially segregated system. Apartheid became an extension of colonisation as it built and reinforced the ideologies, structure and practices of white supremacy and racial discrimination that were prevalent in the colonial era (Msila, 2007). Universities formed part of this segregatory system which legislated and divided the institutions by race and purpose. Hoadley (2010) elaborates on this notion by stating that South African HEIs became divided into three: White liberal, White Afrikaner and Black "bush" universities. The White liberal (English) universities functioned as extensions of international academia with Eurocentric knowledge, with minimal to no black student admission (Hoadley, 2010). On the other hand, the Black and Afrikaner universities were state functionary as they explicitly promoted the apartheid system (Hoadley, 2010). The ideals of this apartheid system were promoted by restricting scholarship in Black universities and using Afrikaner universities to maintain the gap which were also using predominantly Euro-Western knowledge in the Afrikaner language (Hoadley, 2010). The approach to knowledge and scholarship in South African universities has historically and continues to be Euro-Western-dominant and exclusionary of the African perspective (Du Plessis, 2021; Govender and Naidoo, 2023). This can be attributed to colonisation and apartheid, which were inherited exclusionary systems in nature and form.

Therefore, the global imperial designs of colonisation have had a lasting impact on the present where the colonial power remains through the poverty and political instability in Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This also finds expression through coloniality. Coloniality is a concept that moves beyond the period of colonialism and refers to the enduring, persistent effects of colonialism on post-colonial societies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Maluleka, 2021). Coloniality has polarised and dichotomised Africa and the global North. Thus, Govender and Naidoo (2023) and Mbhele (2018) argue that even post-1994, after apartheid and colonisation, HEIs in South Africa continued to model the structures of the colonisers by ostracising African perspectives yet the student demographic became increasingly black. As a result, the student protests in 2015-2016 brought this dissonance into question through the decolonisation demands. Jansen (2017) states that the protests enabled university lecturers as knowledge selectors and presenters to engage in conversation and to invite students to be active in the curriculum discussion process. It is by enabling all stakeholders to be involved in the decolonisation process that affords an inclusion of various perspectives and experiences

because the racial, cultural, and historical differences between students and lecturers have implications in the HE space (Costandius et. al., 2018). Moreover, several studies have been conducted and the race, gender, and the kind of institution one was oriented to scholarship all impact the approaches and limitations to decolonisation by lecturers which is one of the reasons why HE curricula remain Western dominant (Ibid.).

Consequently, the perpetuation of Euro-Western hegemony in HE is facilitated by lecturers in African universities who are themselves products of Eurocentric education systems. This can be noted in some inherent beliefs in the superiority of Western knowledge and the dismissal of other forms of knowledge contribute to the maintenance of Eurocentric dominance in HE curricula (Costandius et. al., 2018; Mashiyi et al., 2020). Thus, the hegemony of coloniality and its matrix of power in education continue to shape the perspectives, approaches, and outcomes of research and teaching in Africa (Costandius et. al., 2018; Govender and Naidoo, 2023). Universities as institutions of colonial and apartheid descent are faced with the challenge of decolonising their curricula, pedagogical and assessment approaches to embrace alternative conceptions of knowledge and ways of knowing through decoloniality.

3.1.2 Decolonisation

It is crucial to distinguish decolonisation and decoloniality. Decolonisation can be understood as "a political and territorial project, and decoloniality, an ideological and epistemological one" (Morerria et. al.,2020, p.4). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) asserts that decoloniality is not limited as a political and epistemological project but rather it is a way of knowing and doing aimed at liberating the colonised from entrenched coloniality. Decoloniality is a powerful tool to challenge and transform the prevalent colonial power structures (Maldonando-Torres, 2016). Therefore, decoloniality in HE can be perceived as epistemic defiance through the decolonisation of power, being and knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Mashiyi et al. (2020) state that decolonisation refers to the deconstruction, reconstruction, transformation and recognition of the historic structural and cultural inequalities created by the colonial and apartheid systems in the country. It is about integrating African ways of knowing, experiences, and perspectives in education. Thus, Tuck and Yang (2012) assert that decolonisation is not a metaphor that can be used to label institutional efforts to engage in transformation and change. Decolonisation requires confrontation and critical engagement with colonial violence and tangible action to dismantle systems of coloniality and oppression- reasserting the respect and understanding of indigenous ways of knowing and doing (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Du Plessis (2021) highlights the importance of questioning the structural and functional aspects of educational systems that perpetuate Eurocentric narratives and uphold dominant power dynamics as a way of decolonising HEI aligning with Tuck and Yang (2012). By disrupting these narratives and structures, decolonisation opens up space for diverse perspectives and forms of knowledge to be recognised and valued within education (Du Plessis, 2021; Govender and Naidoo, 2023). Therefore, decolonisation can be understood as a crucial step towards progressing social, epistemic justice and inclusivity in HE and addressing the persistent marginalisation of African ways of doing and knowing (Mashiyi et. al., 2020; Pillay and Swanepoel, 2018).

However, there are varying perspectives on decolonisation which position African and Western knowledge in different ways. Due to the varying conceptions and perspectives on decolonisation by scholars, decolonisation can be regarded as a multi-layered concept which can give rise to multi-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary approaches to higher education curricula (Mashiyi et. al., 2020). Heleta (2016) broadly frames decolonisation in two perspectives where the existing curriculum is integrated with African ways of knowing or the existing curriculum is dismantled, and a new Afrocentric one is formulated. In a study conducted by Mashiyi et. al. (2020), it was noted that there is not one shared, common conception of decolonisation which results in issues of conceptual tensions between lecturers and academics working towards decolonising HE curricula. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) and Machingambi (2020) state that decolonisation entails epistemic freedom to "regulate the overrepresentation of Eurocentric thought in education, knowledge and social theory" (Machingambi, 2020, p.35). It involves creating a HE space that reflects and is relevant to the historical, social and material realities it is located (Ibid).

Meda (2020) elaborates on the notion of decolonisation by arguing that the project does not entail reverting to "pre-modern" practices however it involves challenging academics to rethink the role of indigenous knowledge in HEI curriculum and knowledge production, integrate it and foreground student engagement in pedagogy and assessment to allow them to be critical and conscious of their immediate environment. "It is about creating a curriculum that acknowledges and creates space for the voices and knowledge of indigenous people" (Meda, 2020, p. 90). Meda (2020) asserts that students have a valuable contribution and position in curriculum decolonisation in HE. This aligns with the notion of decolonisation as humanisation by Fanon (1961) which in the case of teaching, entails humanising both the student and the

lecturer by engaging with the student as a knower and deconstructing one-way authoritative teaching and learning.

Conversely, Jansen (2017) makes a crucial argument that critiques the expectations and role of the student in the curriculum decolonisation process and implementation process. He cautioned the regular use of the concept of curriculum decolonisation which has resulted in a conceptual muddle where students understand it is instrumentally as work for lecturers and curriculum developers to provide more resources with no contribution and critical engagement by them in the process. Therefore, Mbembe (2016) states decolonisation in HEI must involve the underdoing of the bureaucracy and instrumental views of curriculum and education in HE which were adopted from colonial and apartheid academic organisational models. Consequently, the varied conceptions and proposals by scholars on how to critically engage with decolonising the university curriculum perpetually leave the concept at discussion, theoretical levels and minimal integration (Govender and Naidoo, 2023; Mashiyi, 2020).

Accordingly, Du Plessis (2021) and Senekal and Lenz (2020) discuss several challenges in implementing curriculum decolonisation in HEIs. Du Plessis (2021) and Senekal and Lenz (2020) assert that the challenges encompass a lack of connection with the realities of students, a reluctance to change from staff and leadership, a lack of dialogue between staff, perceived superiority of Western knowledge and a lack of scope and time. Equally, Du Plessis (2021) and Le Grange (2018) explore several opportunities and affordances of curriculum decolonisation in HE. Du Plessis (2021) states that curriculum decolonisation affords lecturers with the opportunities to foster openness and engage in conversation with each other and students, promote voice and deep discussions with students and create interrelationships between social issues and content. Le Grange (2018) further elaborates on opportunities by stating that it presents lecturers with the opportunity to engage in complicated conversations that require commitment, energy and pedagogy that facilitates belonging and challenges Euro-western knowledge domination.

Consequently, decolonisation has been noted by several scholars such as Meda (2020) and Mashiyi et al. (2020) as an ongoing process in HEI. Le Grange (2016) presents a step process towards decolonisation which colonial subjects experience namely: rediscovery and recovery, mourning, dreaming, commitment and action. According to Le Grange (2016), rediscovery and recovery is when colonial subjects discover and then recover their history prior to colonisation and learn more about it since colonialism excluded and subjugated it. The mourning stage is

where the colonial subjects lament their continued subordination because of colonial power (Le Grange, 2016). The dreaming stage is where the colonial subjects start engaging and thinking of ways of restoring their identities, free from the colonial system (Le Grange, 2016). This stage was explored in this study where lecturers may have dreamt and had innovative ideas around decolonisation and curriculum however were constrained by a range of factors such as time, resources, structures and engagement of students. The commitment stage is then a result of the dreaming when colonial subjects decide to commit to engaging in means to change the situation -leading to action (Le Grange, 2016). This stage can be observed in the 2015 – 2016 student protests where students committed to questioning and challenging the Eurocentric curriculum. This stage can be noted through the course this study explores, as the academics conceptualising it made a commitment towards responding to the decolonisation calls during the protests.

The action stage is where the dreams and commitments become realisable and are given the platform to come to fruition (Le Grange, 2016). The study engaged in the action stage too, where the way lecturers have engaged with and applied commitments and the dreaming in the curriculum. The intention and implementation of the course demonstrate the action stage. The study aimed to discover the underpinning of this stage by engaging with the perceptions of lecturers which are driven by the 'commitment and dreaming' and how they have shaped the intended and enacted curriculum. Thus, the action stage is situated within the responsiveness to decolonisation however, the nature of responsiveness may vary. Given the varied perspectives on curriculum decolonisation, the possible role of the lecturer, student and its responsiveness, it becomes necessary to explore how the idea of curriculum decolonisation has been taken up in practice.

3.1.3 Curriculum

According to Maluleka (2021) curriculum is a highly contested concept which legitimises certain knowledge and knowers in field. Curriculum according to Young (2011) can be understood as tool of "emancipation or domination" (p.11), where what counts as valid specialised knowledge is selected through inclusion and exclusion criteria. Thus "curriculum is an extraordinarily complicated conversation about what students learn" (Meda, 2020, p.89). Equally, curriculum can also be understood as a broad and multi-layered concept because it carries different connotations for different people. Therefore, when the notion of decolonisation is brought into curriculum discussions there arises an added dimension of complexity and

plurality of views resulting in no single accepted manner of decolonising the curriculum (Meda, 2020).

Graham-Jolly (2002) defines curriculum in three ways namely, the intended, enacted and hidden curriculum. The intended curriculum is defined as a formalised, written intention for teaching and learning (Graham-Jolly, 2002; Hoadley and Jansen, 2013). The intended curriculum contains the educational goals and objectives, content to be learnt and the sequencing and guidelines (Ibid). Hoadley and Jansen (2013) suggest that the intended curriculum involves curriculum developers such as lecturers because they select and organise knowledge in the HE curriculum. According to Mbhele (2018) and Machingambi (2020) the HE intended curriculum is based on educational standards and formal documents such as university curriculum policies, course outlines and templates. This can be related to issues of decolonisation of curricular knowledge in HEI, because lecturers may have a curriculum plan incorporating alternative and local knowledge to make it resonate with the students however, they may have to consult policies and approval from management. Yet, without the actual implementation, the intended curriculum remains a written plan which may leave decolonisation at a theoretical, planning level (Hoadley and Jansen, 2013). Thus, Machingambi (2020) argues that it is important to broaden the view of curriculum, beyond it encompassing course outlines, timetables, teaching plans and policies.

Accordingly, the concept of enacted curriculum broadens the understanding of curriculum. The enacted curriculum, which is also referred to as the implemented curriculum, is a holistic view of curriculum that encompasses the practices of teaching and learning (Graham-Jolly, 2002; Maluleka 2021). The enacted curriculum involves the experiences of the student while under the institution (Machingambi, 2020). It highlights the educator's role as a mediator of the intended curriculum and the broader experiences in schooling which affect the teaching (Graham-Jolly, 2002; Machingambi, 2020). Moreover, the enacted curriculum includes lecturers, students and the university context because these are some of the factors that shape and put the intended university curriculum into practice. According to Mbhele (2018), this suggests that understanding enacted curriculum is valuable for HEI because it enables an understanding of how lecturers interpret the curriculum and policies. Therefore, the enacted curriculum can either foreground and promote decolonisation or background decolonisation. The enacted curriculum can be observed as lecturers following an intended decolonial curriculum, using alternative inclusive strategies such as multimodal representations, local and alternative knowledge integration, dialogue and collaboration in lectures and assessments.

Alternatively, rather maintaining the Western modes of content delivery regardless of the intended decolonial curriculum.

The third definition of curriculum which is communicated implicitly in the intended and enacted curriculum is the hidden curriculum which Maluleka (2021) refers to as the implicit curriculum where ways of doing and being are taught. According to Graham-Jolly (2002) the hidden curriculum entails the unwritten rules of how to conduct and engage socially within an institution. Maluleka (2021) states that this form of curriculum is taught implicitly and is the site of reproducing coloniality. The curriculum in HE becomes a system where voices that matter or that should matter are silenced or promoted (Fomunyam and Teffera, 2017). Therefore, in this study, the relationship between the intended and enacted curriculum with the hidden curriculum are explored to provide valuable insights on how lecturers grapple with decolonisation at intended and enacted levels of the curriculum with their knowledge and underlying culture and values to promote perspectives and voices that matter.

In the context of curriculum decolonisation in HE practices, the struggle is not for control over production forces but for the control of consciousness through the curriculum. Lawrence and Buchanan (2017) argue that understanding power means recognising and acknowledging the inherent power of professional associations, language, and social cultures and customs, as well as the agents that inhabit roles within these structures and enact those routines. Thus, educational institutions, including schools and universities, not only shape individuals but also control the meaning through the curriculum-as a result the curriculum can never be neutral (Apple, 2004). The discourse surrounding the curriculum, therefore, becomes a means of controlling and establishing what is considered legitimate knowledge (Govender and Naidoo, 2023).

Apple (2004) and Fomunyam and Teffera (2017) contend that power is the key factor in determining this legitimacy and the control of the curriculum discourse. It plays a crucial role in shaping whether knowledge enhances or hinders responsiveness to decolonisation. Fomunyam and Teffera (2017) and Lawrence and Buchanan (2017) highlight the significance of power in shaping decisions related to planning, development, and evaluation processes that impact individuals and communities, predominantly in education. In HE, the curriculum serves as a platform where different perspectives and knowledge systems are either silenced or promoted. Fomunyam and Teffera (2017) and Popekwitz (2012) assert that knowledge is a product of power, particularly in the discourse around formal and epistemological access to HE

in South Africa. This assertion is attributed to knowledge production being directly tied to power as a resource and this power shapes what is validated as knowledge worthy of inclusion in the curriculum (Fomunyam and Teffera, 2017).

Therefore, Young (2011) refers to the notion of powerful knowledge and knowledge of the powerful which he thus argues should be employed in curricula as a means of social justice in South African education. This aligns with an approach to decolonisation by Leibowitz (2017) in Keebine-Sibanda (2021) which entails providing students with the most powerful forms of knowledge as a form of redress however, this approach is critiqued as perpetuating the hegemony of Eurocentrism due to Eurocentric knowledge exclusively fulfilling the criteria of what constitutes as powerful knowledge as broken down by Young and Muller (2013).

The notion of power relations plays a crucial role in exploring and understanding the coloniality within operational structures in institutions, the assessment and pedagogical relationship between lecturers and students. These dynamics shape the learning environment, influence interactions, and impact the distribution of opportunities and resources within institutions (Lawrence and Buchanan, 2017). Therefore, beyond the curriculum planning and reconceptualisation meetings, teaching and learning interactions and engagement are too inherent in power relations constructed by coloniality which the decolonisation of knowledge, pedagogy and assessment aims to deconstruct.

3.2 Discourses on decolonisation: South African perspectives

Several studies have been conducted on decolonisation in HEIs in South Africa similar to the ideas and theory informing this study. A review of a number of these studies aimed to demonstrate this study's position within existing research and a gap for this study particularly in the South African context. Pillay and Swanepoel (2018) conducted a study at a South African university in response to the 2015/16 student unrest calling for the decolonisation of the HE curriculum. The study involved HE lecturers engaged in a workshop to decolonise the Bachelor of Education honours curriculum, focusing on rethinking ways of knowing. The study, framed by Foucauldian discourse, explored the experiences of eight lecturers involved in teacher induction. Findings indicated a need to involve stakeholders at the grassroots level, but challenges exist in engaging with solely Afrocentric theories due to a lack of indigenous knowledge systems and research. The study emphasised the importance of reshaping the curriculum to challenge power dynamics and privilege in classrooms. Similarly, this study involves an exploration of rethinking curriculum to challenge power dynamics and privilege

however, this study builds on this study by moving beyond the thinking around curriculum reconceptualisation by exploring how the reconceptualisation has operated in practice- of the implementation beyond the rethinking and intention and employs decolonial theory as a research paradigm.

Furthermore, a study by Keebine-Sibanda (2021) addressed the need for a decolonised university curriculum in South Africa, prompted by the 2015/16 student protests and focused on understanding the conceptions of academic staff responsible for designing and implementing such education. Keebine-Sibanda (2021) employed an interpretivist paradigm and semi-structured interviews with 13 purposively sampled academic staff at a South African university. The study revealed two main conceptions of decolonisation: recentring and decentring. Some academics advocated for recentring the curriculum from the West to Africa, while others emphasised decentring knowledge from Western hegemony without necessarily recentring it to African hegemony. The findings also indicated a continuum between a "hard" and "soft" version of decolonisation, highlighting a vacillation in respondents' conceptions. Similarly, to my study, the study engaged with lecturers as the curriculum developers and implementors in HEIs. The study by Keebine-Sibanda (2021) similarly to Pillay and Swanepoel (2018) involves lecturer conceptions and thinking around the curriculum and decolonisation as a concept. Thus, my study moves beyond and builds on the definitions and views established from the two studies to explore the action on the theorisations and findings these two studies generated and used alternative decolonial guiding frameworks to unpack notions of coloniality, power relations etc.

Le Grange, du Preez, Ramrathan and Blignaut (2020) investigated four case studies detailing how higher education institutions have grappled with the demands for decolonising their curricula. While the cases in the study by Le Grange et. al. (2020) exhibit differences in form and content, each institution's unique responses to decolonisation are described and analysed. The commonality among these institutions is the utilisation of extensive public lectures, seminars, and workshops as a strategy to address calls for decolonising curricula. The inquiry was driven by the concern that some institutions may opt for superficial and instrumentalist solutions, resulting in "decolonial-washing" rather than meaningful change. Thus, similarly to Le Grange et al. (2020) this study explores the implementation and approaches towards decolonisation in practice. However, it is crucial to note that this study focuses on one particular case study and a course-intended and enacted curricula, meaning it is more centred around the knowledge itself and knowledge recontextualisation and reproduction.

Another study on decolonisation was conducted by Machingambi (2020). Machingambi (2020) explored the decolonisation of HE, focusing on how a new university can respond to this demand across teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum development, and research. Ten senior academics from a comprehensive new university participated in qualitative research, with Antonio Gramsci's cultural hegemony theory used as an analytical lens. The urgency and overdue nature of HE decolonisation were emphasised by the interviewed participants. Academics were identified as crucial agents in this endeavour due to their roles in teaching, curriculum development, assessment, and research (Machingambi, 2020). The study recommended adopting non-violent, evidence-based approaches to the decolonisation campaign by involving students, academics, university leaders, and the public. The study by Machingambi (2020) focused on curriculum decolonisation similarly to this study however, it presents recommendations and measures to best achieve decolonisation at a HEI, unlike this study which explores curriculum decolonisation currently at a HEI which has been historically established and maintained Eurocentric knowledge and practices.

The last study to be reviewed, to locate this study in the empirical literature, was conducted by Mashiyi et al. (2020) at a South African HEI on conceptions of decolonisation and decolonisation of curricula among lecturers. The study revealed varied conceptions and approaches to decolonisation among academics in the Faculty of Education. The study by Mashiyi et al. (2020) revealed the importance of a consultative, participatory multi-disciplinary/trans-disciplinary approach to achieving decolonisation in HE. The findings highlighted the complex and multi-layered nature of decolonisation and the need for shared understandings across disciplines to make significant progress. Therefore, this study is conducted at a school of education too where it aims to demonstrate to multi-layered nature of decolonisation however it builds on these findings by demonstrating how the multi-layered nature of decolonisation reproduces at intention and implementation levels.

Overall, there are more studies that explore decolonisation in South African HEI however the core purpose of this section was to demonstrate that there is a range of studies concerned and developing the notion of decolonisation in HEI. The review of the studies has demonstrated that emerging studies on decolonisation in South African HEI is centred on the theorisation, recommendations and measures on what academics believe can be the best practice. Nevertheless, there are limited studies that explore the practice to how the diverse conceptions are reconciled in practice, the opportunities and challenges the decolonial, transformation project presents in HEIs.

3.3 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter mapped out the theoretical and empirical field of this study and decolonisation in South African HE and research. The literature review has demonstrated that the prevailing coloniality, relations between knowledge and power continue to challenge the decolonial project in education. Therefore, the process of decolonisation in HEI requires careful and intentional curriculum critical consideration, deliberation and planning. The following chapter discusses the methodology of the study used to answer the research question.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Design and Methodology

4. Introduction

Methodology is the manner in which researchers generate knowledge in research contexts (Scott and Morrison, 2006). This chapter provides detail on the methodology employed to achieve the aims of the study and fill the gap located in the literature in answering the research question. This will be achieved by describing the research approach, researcher positionality, research paradigm, trustworthiness, sampling, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations of the study.

4.1 Research Approach

The study employed a decolonial qualitative approach in the form of a case study. Creswell (2012) states that a qualitative case study is used when a researcher engages in an in-depth exploration of individuals, groups or phenomena through a variety of methods however this study moves further by engaging and addressing power relations, fostering trust, respect and sensitivity with participants (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019). In this study, lecturers of a course were interviewed where ideas around decolonisation were not imposed but expressed from their varied perspectives to foster a sense of respect and trust while further deconstructing the traditional research approaches where the researcher regarded more knowledgeable or exercising power over participants (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019). The course outline was analysed using the conceptual framework to draw on the selection, organisation and assessment features of the course and to further inform the themes generated together with the semi-structured interviews.

Moreover, the study engaged with the inherent power dynamics and my positionality where critical reflexivity, trust, respect and reciprocity were facilitated which Keikelame and Swartz (2019) and Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) highlight as a key feature in decolonising research methodology. This meant that I continually reflected before and after each interview, reassured the participants and respected their autonomy and ethical rights. The decolonial case study approach was the most appropriate because it enabled deep, open-ended responses from participants where it was an exercise of power with the participants rather than over them as explained by Keikelame and Swartz (2019). The decolonial approach allowed participants to that were not simply responding to the extraction of knowledge but were educating broadening

my perspectives too which challenged my own inherent bias, assumptions and experiences from experiencing the course while also reflecting on their own practices.

4.2 Research Paradigm

The reflexive decolonial paradigm challenges power structures, social inequalities, and dominant ideologies (Thambinathan and Kinsella, 2021; Keikelame and Swartz, 2019) It is a research paradigm that centres on critical engagement and emancipation where the researcher aims to either reflect, critique, or reveal prevailing power structures to deconstruct Eurocentric notions prevailing in a research context (Thambinathan and Kinsella, 2021). Therefore, the study is located within the decolonial paradigm because it engaged with diverse perspectives within a university context exploring how power dynamics, culture and historical legacies constrain or allow curriculum decolonisation implementation and influence lecturer perceptions in a course.

The decolonial paradigm enabled the critical exploration, reflection, and valuing of multiple dimensions, voices and actors involved in knowledge selection, teaching and assessment in the postgraduate teacher education university course. This paradigm was fundamental to my study as it enabled me to critically analyse the pervasive influence of coloniality within institutional structures such as the curriculum. Through this lens, I explored power relations and knowledge production, shedding light on how Euro-Western perspectives perpetuate colonial and apartheid legacies in educational setting (Mellor, 2022). It further allowed me as a researcher to critically engage with the diverse understanding and implementation of decolonisation when reviewing literature, interviewing, and analysing data which may challenge and deconstruct the dominant discourses and power relations of knowledge in South African HEI. Moreover, the decolonial paradigm allowed me to be aware of my own knowledge and positionality as a novice researcher and former student who has experience of the course from the other side and now working with experts in the field which had power relations added into the dynamic.

4.3 Researcher Positionality

It is crucial to engage with my positionality as a researcher engaging in research framed within decolonisation. As a young, black African woman in the HE space and a former student of the course, there are biases, assumptions and experiences that I bring into the research process. Mellor (2022) states that awareness and engagement with these inherent biases allow the disruption and redistribution of power in the research process where trust, respect and

reciprocity are fostered. Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) state that critical reflexivity is a powerful source for a researcher to become critically aware of their own bias and assumptions to break down hierarchal barriers between the researcher and participants and data analysis. Therefore, to address, this I embarked on reflecting before and after each interview, including a one-page reflection in this report on my overall experiences in the course as a student and now as a researcher.

According to Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021), critical reflexivity is fundamental in decolonising research practice because it involves researchers critically examining their epistemological assumptions, acknowledging their situatedness within the research process, and addressing power dynamnics inherent in research endeavours. Thus, it is crucial to note that I brought assumptions that there is some resistance from the institution for curriculum decolonisation and that the power relations between me and my participants will be unequal because they are experts and my former lecturers. However, the notion of critical reflexivity, and openness overcame and allowed reciprocity and trust research process. Critical reflexivity continually challenged and enabled me to share my own experiences and understand the experiences and perspectives of lecturers.

Moreover, conscious engagement with my positionality allowed me to be aware of my operating view of decolonisation as dismantling the hegemony of Eurocentrism in HEI by engaging in epistemological justice where with Euro-Western and African knowledge are treated as equal, interacting forms of knowledge rather than exclusive, distinct forms of knowledge. This working definition was challenged by some of my participants' views who foregrounded Marxist, social justice views however, this allowed me to understand and be open to learning about other perspectives deeper and further see how these different, layered views came together in one course.

4.4 Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness is used in qualitative research to ensure that the research process is reliable and valid enough to produce the claims it aims to produce (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012). Therefore, in a qualitative study, the concepts of credibility, transferability and dependability are used to prove trustworthiness rather than validity and reliability which are generally used in positivist approaches (Guest et. al, 2012). Credibility is required to ensure that the study explores what it aims to accurately report findings (Guest et. al., 2012). This aspect was addressed by requesting a more experienced researcher, which were my supervisors,

to review the questions prior to submission and interviews to ensure that they align with core question and purpose and to guide the process.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be generalised or used to make a wider claim (Guest et. al, 2012). Transferability was aimed for by grounding the research in theory, the results may not be generalised because it is a case study however the theoretical grounding which guides the research can be used to inform research in universities that may have a decolonial course. Lastly, the concept of dependability which the study is clear for replication to receive similar results (Guest et. al., 2012). Dependability was aimed through the clear theoretical positioning of the study, conceptual framing and detailed methodological steps which were aimed at enabling possible replication and transparency.

4.5 Population and sampling

The population in this study consisted of lecturers of the postgraduate course at a university in Gauteng. A qualitative study requires a researcher to study a limited number of cases in depth thus sampling in a population is crucial (Scott and Morrison, 2006). According to Betram and Christiansen (2014) sampling is process of selecting a setting and set of individuals or units from a larger population in a study. In this study, the sample consisted of six lecturers lecturing the postgraduate course. The participants were initially chosen through purposive sampling however, to meet the sample size, convenience sampling was used which opened up the study to past lecturers of the course. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to make theoretically informed decisions about who to include in the study based on specific criteria to meet the needs of the study whereas convenience sampling involves a researcher using participants who are accessible through proximity, time and availability (Betram and Christiansen, 2014). The purposive sampling was used by ensuring that the lecturers interviewed taught different topics to provide depth to the study and it was initially only confined to those currently lecturing the course. However, convenience sampling was employed because of staff availability where then lecturers who were previously on the course and were accessible on campus were approached to be participants.

The specific course was selected based on it being restructured towards decolonisation following the #FeesMustFall and # RhodesMustFall protests. Moreover, it was selected for this study because it is core course within the university catering to a whole postgraduate level of students and me being a former student within it. The course describes its aims and purpose around answering questions around education and schooling through the structure of

contemporary debates centred on decolonisation, transformation and emancipation in school and university education. It covers topics such as knowledge and context, decolonising the mind, conscientisation and critical pedagogy and curriculum knowledge building. The course is presented by several lecturers who each have varying perspectives and approaches to decolonisation and transformation. Thus, the chosen sample of lecturers was on the basis of the number of topics on the course to allow a diverse range of responses.

4.6 Data collection

Yin (2009) states that the most common data collection techniques for qualitative studies are observations, interviews, document analysis and focus groups. The data for this study was collected through individual semi-structured interviews, which were conducted mostly face-to-face, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to use core questions as guide however, there was probing, and open-ended responses drawn from the participants to gain an in-depth understanding of their perspectives and implementation of decolonisation in the postgraduate course and holistically in their other work within the school.

It is crucial to note that in the data collection process, there was unequal power relations as I was engaging with experts in the field, lecturers. Thus, it was not a simple extraction of information from the participants, but it involved educating the researcher, me, about the layers and structures in place. However, me as the researcher and student, helping them as experts in the field to reflect and think critically about their epistemological, pedagogical choices, positioning, experiences in the course. The data collection process enabled what Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) refer to reciprocity in the research process. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allowed in-depth exploration of responses from participants where they could openly frame and contextualise their responses. Bowen (2009) states that a document analysis is used by research to give meaning around a topic through evaluation of electronic or physical documents. The document analysis of two course outlineswas used to gain insight on the intended curriculum in terms of the four dimensions of curriculum responsiveness and to generate a number of interview questions for the participants.

4.7 Data analysis

Betram and Christiansen (2014) state that data analysis is made up of three steps, reduction, display and conclusion. The reduction step involves the sorting of the data in this study being transcribing, sorting the responses from the lecturers, filtering out any irrelevant information.

I did this step by firstly transcribing and beginning to highlight aspects within the transcripts and removing identifying information such as the participants mentioning names of other staff members and themselves and further sorting the highlighted information according to the interview questions. According to Betram and Christiansen (2014) second step which is display involves the presentation of the data in a structured manner which would then mean taking now the sorted data and putting it according to similarities, differences in a table. This is where I sorted the data according to patterns, and codes identified within broad similarities and differences traced. The conclusion step involves interpreting what the data shows, where now themes are generated from the categories/patterns from the data (Betram and Christiansen, 2014). The data was analysed beyond the similarities and differences, where now categories and themes were generated from the patterns analysed in the data. Moreover, through the use of critical reflexivity, I reflected on my identity and experiences in the course and how that shaped how I constructed meaning in the course as a student and in the study, analysed and interacted with my participants.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Ethics are defined as moral principles to do no harm that guide research, in a study that particularly involves participants ethics need to be carefully considered (Obar, et. al., 2000). In a qualitative case study involving human participants, ethics need to be considered and upheld. In this study, ethics was considered through exercising the right to informed consent where the lecturers participating were informed clearly about the nature of the study through information sheets and emails that detailed the purpose of the study so that they may make an informed decision in choosing to participate and have the right to withdraw at any point. Secondly, the name of the institution and course name and level were not listed to maintain further confidentiality of the lecturers. Thirdly, the right to anonymity and confidentiality was also employed where the participants were informed and given the right to remain anonymous in the study. Due to internal confidentiality issues because the research report is submitted and examined within the same context as where the data was collected, the labelling of participants using pseudonyms,1,2,3 or A, B, C was refrained from to mitigate any patterns that would result in identifying features. Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge that being a former student in the course has ethical implications as I bring levels of bias and assumptions, and this was addressed through critically reflecting and discussions with my supervisors. Lastly, I requested permission from Ethics Committee, the school and university registrar prior to data collection

as can be seen in appendix D and E which ensured approval from appropriate structures for the protection of the participants and myself.

4.9 Chapter conclusion

This chapter explored the processes and procedures taken to conduct the study in a transparent, ethical manner. It demonstrated how the methodology was designed and conducted under careful consideration and was theoretically positioned. The following chapter thus presents the findings from the data collected using the discussed steps.

CHAPTER FIVE

Data Presentation and Findings

5. Introduction

The core aim of this study was to explore how lecturers perceive and engage in curriculum decolonisation. Therefore, this chapter presents the data and findings of the study. The chapter presents an overview of the intended curriculum of the course and five themes generated from semi-structured interviews and document analysis of two course outlines which provide insight into decolonisation at intended and enacted curriculum levels of the postgraduate teacher education course.

5.1 Overview of Intended Curriculum

The intended curriculum of the course provides an in-depth exploration of the relationship between knowledge, the curriculum, and power, with a focus on decolonisation. The course is structured around four sections, each taught by a different lecturer, introducing students to various theoretical perspectives.

5.1.1. The outline of the postgraduate course that this study is based on

The purpose of the course, as presented in the course outline, is to enable students to understand the role of the curriculum in society and its potential for social change. The course begins with an introduction to the central idea of 'curriculum and social change' and its link to different disciplines, including sociology, philosophy, and education. This provides students with a foundational understanding of the key concepts and theoretical foundations of the curriculum. The second section explores the relationships between knowledge and context, examining how knowledge is constructed and influenced by many factors, such as social, cultural, and historical factors. This section also explores the concept of powerful knowledge and indigenous-endogenous knowledge highlighting the importance of understanding knowledge within specific contexts and challenging dominant, Eurocentric narratives with theorists such as Walter Mignolo and Paulin Hountondji. The third section focuses on decolonising the mind, drawing on the work of scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o to explore the politics of language and culture in the curriculum. This section critically examines the impact of colonialism on

knowledge production and seeks to challenge and subvert colonial structures and ideologies within the curriculum.

The fourth section explores critical pedagogy and conscientisation, drawing on the work of Paulo Freire and Maxine Greene to consider the role of education in promoting social change and critical consciousness. This section explores the role of activism in education and the potential for transformative pedagogies to challenge power structures and create more equitable learning environments. The final section focuses on curriculum and knowledge-building as social practices, exploring how knowledge is transmitted and constructed within educational settings drawing on key curriculum theorists such as Basil Bernstein and Karl Maton. This section also highlights the role of pedagogy and the structuring of knowledge, providing a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural influences on curriculum design and implementation- drawing all the other sections together.

The required readings of the course include a diverse range of texts, from foundational works by prominent curriculum theorists to some contemporary scholars in the field of decolonial studies. The course emphasises the importance of engaging with a wide range of perspectives and offers students the opportunity to explore different viewpoints on the curriculum and its relationship to power and knowledge. In addition to the lectures and tutorials, the course also includes assessments such as multiple-choice questions, written assignments, and a sit-down examination, which allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the course material in multiple ways. Therefore, the course's intended curriculum is oriented towards decolonisation through its emphasis on exploring dominant narratives in curriculum and knowledge production, exploring marginalised voices, and interrogating power structures within the curriculum.

5.1.2. Semi-structured interviews with the lecturers on the course

The semi-structured interview questions and preparation were drawn from the above-intended curriculum understanding thus lecturers who lecture(d) the different topics were interviewed. The participants in this study were lecturers who are employed within the school of education for teacher education, lecturing both postgraduate and undergraduate courses. The participants hold doctorates in the philosophy of education and history with lecturing experience within the institution the study is located in, other HEIs and basic education (schools). In addition, the participants possess experience from 1 to more than 10 years of teaching in the course, however they all possess more than five years of lecturing experience in other courses and institutions.

The table below presents a summary of the organisation process through themes, categories, and codes that were identified in the data collected for the study. The data was drawn from course outlines and semi-structured interviews which provided insight into the experiences and perspectives of the lecturers implementing curriculum decolonisation through the course.

Theme	**Categories**	**Codes**
5.1.1 Diverse, evolving perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation.	-Social justice, liberation -Political vs critical approaches -Marxist view -Evolving	‘ conscious of student experiences’. ‘Understand how systems work to dismantle’ ‘ to liberate and achieve epistemic, social justice.’ ‘Challenging power relations’ ‘Exposure to all knowledge to critique and interrogate.’ ‘Part of de-classing project’ ‘perspective developed by experiences’
5.1.2 Institutional power dynamics in integrating decolonisation into the curriculum.	-Conceptual tensions/theoretical diversions -ambivalence to decolonisation -staff changes -different lecturers in one course -purpose of course being lost	‘coming together of staff’ ‘structural support’ ‘Given pedagogical freedom’ ‘lack of support and discussion’ ‘staff changes.’ ‘lack of meeting attendance’ ‘ main thread of the course, getting lost.’ ‘it was just adding scholars who could maybe be roped into some projects to keep European knowledge afloat.’ ‘removal of theorists’
5.1.3 The role and engagement of students in the enacted curriculum.	-expectations of students from lecturers -lack of participation and dialogic engagement -reading for active participation	‘important for students to engage quite systematically with ideas in readings.’ ‘decolonisation work requires participation from the student’. ‘minimal attendance in lectures and tutorials.’ ‘less engagements, right, whether it be the level of reading and classroom’
5.1.4 Teaching to embrace change and decolonial curriculum responsiveness.	-student voice -reflection - different modes -selection and organisation of readings -consciousness of the student -	‘Engage interactively’ ‘students learning visually as well’ ‘students to think deeply’ ‘use of podcasts’ ‘a balance between theoretical readings that give students real understanding of the concepts’ ‘Give the students an opportunity to interrogate self before opening up to other knowledges’
5.1.5 Tensions around assessment	-unchanged, standard assessment practices -one-sided, acted upon student. -awareness when marking -room for change	‘new assessment policy’ ‘assessment is standard’ ‘ mark students fairly’ ‘cultural aspects that go with students’ ‘use more reflective assessment’ ‘based in the knowledge authority of the readings’

Table 5.1: Summary of data organisation into codes, categories and themes.

5.2 Themes

5.2.1 Diverse, evolving perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation.

The research findings demonstrated the diverse and evolving nature of understanding decolonisation in the context of curriculum and education. One of the key aspects of curriculum decolonisation highlighted by the lecturers is the focus on liberation epistemic and social justice. Many lecturers in the study emphasised the importance of using education and curriculum to liberate and achieve social justice. One lecturer stated,

> *"And I see decolonisation is as part of using education through the curriculum to liberate, to understand that injustices are created through particular political and economic hierarchies."* and another lecturer further elaborated on the notion of epistemic and social justice by stating that *"Challenging power relations and exposing students to all knowledge to critique and interrogate is vital for decolonising the curriculum."*

This perspective reflected an awareness and understanding of the unequal power relations in society and the role of education through a decolonised curriculum in challenging and transforming these dynamics.

Another perspective emerged from a lecturer who highlighted the perspective of curriculum decolonisation as engagement with different values, views and opening and diversifying theory with no removal of colonial or Western knowledge but the interrogation of it.

> *"I view curriculum decolonisation like an open field where ideas should engage rather than be dismissive of other ideas. This lets us critique the ideas and lets us be exposed to them. I'm taking a critical approach to decolonisation rather than a more political approach.".*

Furthermore, some lecturers stated that curriculum decolonisation entails humanising the curriculum by being conscious of students and their experiences. A lecturer explained: *"I think that it's very difficult for me to think about curriculum decolonisation without thinking about the voices of the people who are the learners [students] in the class".* Another lecturer echoed this notion by stating that:

> *"curriculum decolonisation would be about being very aware of the criteria in which you choose some concepts, some theorists, some ideas, some examples, some case studies, rather than others. And I think, for me, you know, bearing decolonisation in mind, is for what purpose? Are you doing this? Know who are your students, what do you want them to learn? Are you simply perpetuating the status quo? are you introducing them to tools that address their particular concern?"*

On the other hand, a Marxist lens of decolonising curriculum emerged from the research findings. A lecturer raised the progressing weakness of the decolonial project in the present day as the world is evolving. The lecturer argued that class limitations remain relevant thus decolonisation and curriculum decolonisation need to be viewed from a Marxist viewpoint "b*ecause curriculum, decolonisation means nothing more than today, nothing more than getting people to realise that education is a project, which positions people for various class relationships in society"*. This perspective reflected a Marxist perspective and understanding of the economic and class-based dimensions of curriculum decolonisation.

The findings illustrated diverse perspectives on decolonisation however it can be noted that the main commonality lies in the evolving nature of their perspective. The lecturers employ unique insights and perspectives on decolonisation based on their life, work experiences and education, resulting in their varied perspectives on curriculum decolonisation. One lecturer mentioned having experienced schooling during the colonial period which developed their perspective on curriculum decolonisation:

> *I think there's been some developing understanding of my take on curriculum decolonisation. I had some very strong views about what needed to be in the curriculum from a decolonial or decolonisation point of view. And that hard stance, I would say, also arose from my experience as a learner, probably one would say, during the colonial period.*

Another lecturer mentioned their perspective being developed from their experiences as lecturing staff

> "*I continued to see how coloniality is impacting our students in the structure of the institution and the content of the curriculum and in the pedagogy and in the assessment and in the way that the university treats students. So, I started reading a lot, through and after fees must fall*.".

Some of the lecturers attributed their perspectives to their HE experiences where one lecturer noted that the learning environment, they were exposed to shape their perspective as reported:

> *"I come from a left-wing socialist perspective in Cape Town. Right. And so it dovetails with the decolonial, debate, discussion, and so on*.".

Another lecturer too stated: *"I've come from a very critical liberal education, where my lecturers, my peers, were involved in the struggle against apartheid, involved in kind of initiatives to, to dismantle this kind of legacy. And I see, decolonisation as part of using education through the curriculum to liberate.".*

Therefore, it was apparent in the findings that diverse perspectives were a result of their different experiences and evolving within an educational space as a learner, student and staff member.

5.2.2 Institutional power dynamics in integrating decolonisation into the curriculum.

The findings from the data illustrated that the integration of decolonisation into the curriculum has been a positive move however complex resulting in a number of opportunities and challenges. A key finding that demonstrated the positive nature of institutional power dynamics at play, was highlighted by one of the lecturers:

> "*The most impactful and interesting aspect of the course is that it was reconceptualised to meet the decolonisation calls by the students, it used to be a course on curriculum theory. And then in light of fees must fall, Rhodes must fall and so on. Then we thought, okay, well, let's keep the curriculum theory. But let's see how decolonisation debates play out through curriculum theory."*

This can be noted more explicitly in the 2022 course aims which include debates and discussion around curriculum and pedagogy with the notions of transformation, emancipation and decolonisation in school and HE and in the 2023 course aims being referred to as engagement with links between curriculum, knowledge and power and opening up the view of curriculum as a tool for social change. The finding demonstrates a level of awareness of issues affecting postgraduate teacher education students at different levels and support from the institution in creating a responsive curriculum. Another participant stated that the support they receive from the institution as a structure has been motivating and has allowed them to have the agency to structure other courses within the school of education and research institutes with a decolonial thrust.

Moreover, some lecturers noted the positive nature of discussion and inclusion of decolonisation within the institution unlike the ones they previously studied and worked at, one lecturer noted: "*The pushback against decolonisation was so brutal, where I did my postgraduate studies".* Another lecturer further added:

> *It has been interesting being in the institution. I mean decolonialisation is part of the discussion, explicitly included, you know, which it's not emphasised that much at the university I come from. So, in that sense, it's new to me, but it's not 100%. since I've always been operating in that area. But I didn't necessarily label it decolonisation".*

Moreover, lecturers commended the powerful nature of the structuring of the course, from staff member inclusion for teaching and aiming for a decolonial lens which can be noted in the

course outlines which are structured in the form of each topic being taught by a different lecturer for 2 weeks. However, a lecturer expressed a lack of conversation, dialogue and support in terms of which theorists to include and exclude in the intended curriculum. This results in them being brought in to teach a theorist who has been selected for them:

> *"Teaching in the course is interesting because it's supposed to be a coming together of people from the school of education to think together about what curriculum theory is. And I think that idea is really powerful, but I don't think this course is doing that because they're not bringing people on to say who do you think we should include".*

The lecturer noted that this was problematic for them because they only had agency and freedom in their pedagogy. As a result, several lecturers noted the issue of conceptual tensions between staff and the content taught as different lecturers possess different perspectives on decolonisation and curriculum. One lecturer stated:

> *"I think the big problem is a conceptual problem, how we understand decolonisation, even probably how do we understand curriculum. Even though the course is about curriculum within the framework of decolonisation, I think the fact that there are always connotations around these ideas makes it challenging. Now, that's a challenge especially if a course is taught by more than one person is in this case. We get that kind of melting pot I would say, have ideas, concepts that do not align. But it doesn't mean they cannot be taught."*

The issue of conceptual tensions has been an issue noted by several lecturers which they attribute to adding decolonisation to an existing curriculum than deconstructing and creating a new one. Another lecturer stated:

> *"I never felt it was a happy marriage at all. And that it was, from my perspective, the whole decolonisation just became an add-on and that it wasn't in my understanding, with a genuinely symmetric thread. I think it was an add on and it was to speak to what they believed was students demands but from my perspective, it never gelled".*

A number of lecturers challenged the selection of theorists for the course because they felt like they do not truly align with the decolonial project. Therefore, conceptual tensions which other lecturers refer to as theoretical diversions resulted in some sections/ theorists from the course being removed because they did not align with the rest. One lecturer mentioned, "*in my case, my part was removed completely. Because of a conceptual tension, and it was decided, no, take it out".* Another lecturer stated that conceptual tensions are a mainly a result of ambivalence to decolonisation from some staff members as they mentioned:

> *"what I think happens in this course is that the people who are structuring the course are ambivalent about decolonisation. And maybe even scared of decolonisation. But there are some people who are excited about it, but the kind of keystone people on the course are not convinced. Are not convinced by decolonisation, and so there's and an effort to include it, but keep European knowledge afloat"*

Some lecturers discussed administrative issues that impact the teaching and aim of the course. One lecturer noted that the main purpose and message of the course has been getting lost over the years which is a result of many factors as mentioned:

> *"And then there are many many changes in staff and lecturing, and so on. And then the thread the message of the of the course, somehow gets lost along the way. But we what we tried to do was to pull it together very, strongly and very explicitly at the end to try and compensate for that. But, you know, so it's not that anybody taught you things that was useless, but they just maybe didn't make didn't help you to see the connections."*

A lecturer further added that another factor that affects the thread, and guiding principle in the course is that some staff members miss meetings or are new additions who only understand a section of the course. The lecturer stated:

> *"not everybody comes to the planning meetings or something. So it certainly does happen. You know, if you are one lecturer or teaching a full course, you can make sure that you're going step by step by step. But when you have lots of different lecturers coming in and out, and these change from one year to the next. Now you've got a new lecturer, you have several new lecturers who have never taught on this course before, they're picking up parts of it and then they're not linking to the big picture, which was very, very much kind of how it was designed."*

The positive aspects and challenges explored in the findings, as a result of institutional and power dynamics, demonstrate how the HEI, as a structure facilitates and supports decolonisation however the operation of power of course conceptualisers and those teaching on the course, diverging perspectives and understandings of decolonisation shape how it plays out in practice resulting in a range of tensions.

5.2.3 The role and engagement of students in the enacted curriculum.

The role and engagement of students in the enacted curriculum is a critical aspect of HE that is often overlooked which the findings highlighted. The lecturers noted that students have an active role in their learning in any curriculum but more so when engaging within a decolonial curriculum. The need for active student participation is particularly pertinent in the context of decolonisation work because decolonisation work takes a lot of work and active participation from students. It requires dialogic engagement between students and between students and lecturers. As one lecturer stated, *" decolonisation work takes a lot of energy, which is what we*

should be doing, but it also sometimes it's a back and forth between students because decolonisation work requires presence. It's easier to sit passively in a lecture". Active engagement in decolonisation work requires a lot from the student, the lecturer added that it requires:

> *"not just what they think of the reading, but like what they're bringing to the class in terms of prior knowledge, who they are, who, what their experience, their lived experiences are, how they make sense of the world.".*

Another lecturer echoed this notion by stating:

> *"It's more important for students to engage quite systematically with ideas in readings as part of their preparation for research. But I don't just want it to be kind of pontificating in the sky, You know, it was very important for me in this course, that I bring it down to their actual classroom experiences and practices all the time, and how does this play out in your classroom? How does this play out?"*

One of the primary expectations of students from their lecturers is reading, active participation and dialogic engagement as further stated in the course outlines *"Please make sure that you prepare for the various lectures and discussions by doing the relevant reading(s)"* (Course outline, 2023, p.2). The lecturers stated that they aim to create an atmosphere where students are encouraged to voice their opinions, ask questions, and engage in meaningful discussions that contribute to the learning process. However, the lack of participation and dialogic engagement from students has become a growing concern. As one lecturer noted,

> *"Over the number of years that we've been teaching, increasingly, what you see is students bring less and less and less in terms of their engagement, whether it be the level of reading, whether it be the level of engagement in a classroom situation.".*

Another lecturer further corroborated stating that "*it has become by large, a one-way engagement".* This demonstrated some effort and need for student engagement from the lecturers however, students not being responsive- creating a monolithic learning environment. Some lecturers further elaborated on a lack of commitment and attendance from students which results in their lack of engagement. One lecturer stated:

> *"And also, if you were there in the class, this year, over time, you will not believe how minimal attendance is in lectures, let alone in tutorials. So there's that particular dimension as well. So the question that I ask is, So how then do you engage, if there's hardly any people to engage with, and if they are there, they don't want to engage with you, because they expect you to give them a lecture."*

The lack of attendance is to be prevalent by the lecturers despite the course outlines from both 2022 and 2023, outlining the role of the student through the due performance requirements

which state the need for 75% attendance. Another lecturer echoed the notion by stating that students often show up and attempt to engage when an assessment is close "*students didn't read the readings before the class. This is almost for the entire course. They didn't read before. But there's only some sort of reading when they get the essay topic."*

The findings suggest a noticeable lack of participation and engagement from students, which can hinder the aims of the curriculum however possible causes were identified by some lecturers. A lecturer noted: *"It became a top-down transmission approach, I suppose there was some room for engagement, but we did not know the students well which also makes the prompts for engagement not always well received".* Another lecturer elaborated on the lack of engagement from students arguing it cannot be viewed in isolation:

> "*All of that, can feel very risky to bring to class for students, because I think the universities are often not very much of a safe space. So how do you kind of create that? So yeah, so these are the kind of things that I try and think about to create a safe space for students so that they can feel free to engage"*

Therefore, the lecturers asserted that engagement with students is facilitated by creating a safe space and fostering a culture of active engagement where students can fully benefit from their education and contribute meaningfully to the learning process. The lecturers asserted that addressing this issue requires a concerted effort from both students and educators to create a learning environment that values and encourages active participation and engagement in the academic experience.

5.2.4 Teaching to embrace change and decolonial curriculum responsiveness.

Teaching to embrace change and decolonial curriculum responsiveness was another theme that emerged from the data as lecturers explored how they exercised their pedagogical freedom within the limits of the course. Several lecturers highlighted that incorporating student voice into the curriculum is essential for creating an inclusive and responsive learning environment. As one lecturer noted,

> *"I would engage in a more interactive way with students and therefore presenting them with different questions and different understandings of the subject matter. That is not based just on text. That was one area where I was trying bring in this different way of thinking, and I tried to speak about it in a decolonial way".*

This approach allows students to contribute their unique perspectives and experiences to the learning process, promoting a sense of ownership and empowerment in their education which moves away from traditional HE teaching settings.

Furthermore, some lecturers discussed the use of alternative modes of learning apart from the standard use of slides. This allows students to engage with visual and auditory materials in addition to textual content to broaden their understanding of the subject matter. One lecturer stated:

> *"I tried to speak to the notion of students not only being textually stimulated, but visually as well. Not that the text is not visual, it's just that it's a different kind of visual. So, it's a visual that has notions of colour, texture. You know, like one of those things that make up an artwork, sometimes an article could range from a photograph to a painting, to a drawing and so on."*

The lecturer noted that it was not just a normal selection of art but one associated with the liberation struggle in South Africa aimed

> *"to see whether students were able to engage with it and whether it made any sense to them. So, I had, for instance, the Butcher boys that I used in the one and it was around codification. And whether students understood that notion of what it meant. So that was an engagement."*.

Another lecturer reported on the use of created auditory material to prompt engagement:

> *"I recorded a series of four podcasts with Salim Vally, Leanne Naidu, Athambile Masola and Connie Benson, who are all scholars who Freire a foundation in their pedagogy is, so I wanted to get a sense of the more lived use of his work. I tried to bring other voices in so that it wasn't just me talking to the students, talking at the students.."*

The use of the art and podcasts by the lecturers enabled the contextualisation of the theory presented which promoted a deeper connection and understanding of the theory for the students. This approach challenges traditional teaching and Eurocentrism by opening up space for diverse perspectives to be valued and included in the curriculum.

Lecturers reported that engaging in critical dialogue with students encourages them to think deeply about the knowledge they are acquiring. One lecturer stated that in their teaching they

> *"give the students an opportunity to interrogate their own educational histories, their own assumptions, their own biases, their own experiences, before opening up their ideas to other possibilities beyond their own".*

In addition to engaging with student voices and promoting critical dialogue through different modes, the selection and organisation of readings play a crucial role in promoting conceptual depth and clarity in the curriculum. A lecturer noted that a mindful selection of theoretical and empirical readings for teaching allows contextualisation and responsiveness while developing theory.

> *"it was important to include readings that give conceptual clarity. It's not just the lecture explaining these concepts, you need to see how the theorists themselves explain those concepts. And others were very empirical, how researchers are using those tools to analyse exclusion, marginalisation, and effective teaching in South African classrooms, and show how the pedagogic choices the teachers are making are either disadvantaging kids further or empowering them. And so, it was very much a balance between the conceptual tools and empirical studies in the South African context."*

The selection of readings can be seen in the two course outlines too which illustrate the balance and expose students to a range of perspectives beyond the theorists, particularly in the prescribed readings from authors such as bell hooks, Walter Mignolo, Maxine Greene, Steve Biko, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni etc.

Moreover, a lecturer discussed employing reflective practices to self-evaluate their teaching practices which allows more responsive teaching: "*So I tried to, you know, infuse reflection in my approach to everything I do, Who am I teaching for? Where am I teaching? And how am I teaching?".* It is through the reflections that a level of awareness and consciousness of the students' experiences and context was ensured for an equitable and responsive teaching and learning experience.

5.2.5 Tensions around assessment.

Assessment in a curriculum with a decolonial framework is an area with tensions and complexities as findings demonstrated conflicting views from the lecturers regarding assessment practices in the course. A lecturer highlighted the transformative nature of the assessment policy in the school which deconstructs the hegemony and coloniality of final assessments:

> "*the new assessment policy here has is actually really positive because it moves away from sit down exams, it moves away from exams that hold like 50% of the course work mark it opens for a lot more continuous assessment, a lot more formative assessment, which I think is all moving is always, it's not that that automatically addresses coloniality but there those are more tools that I think we can use to address coloniality within assessment".*

The course outlines illustrated this too by demonstrating a distribution of marks and through continuous assessment and essays which weakens the historic hegemony of summative assessment:

4 sets of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)	Due at the end of the teaching of each section.	10%
Assignment 1: (1000 – 1500 words) *(Knowledge and context)*	Due Friday 18 August 2023 by 23h59 (online submission via Ulwazi)	25%
Assignment 2: (1000-1500 words) *(Decolonising the mind & Critical pedagogy and Conscientisation)*	Due Monday 9 October 2023 by 23h59 (online submission via Ulwazi)	25%
Sit-down Examination Two essay topics (one compulsory, one choice). Part 1: Compulsory: 1000-1500 words Part 2: Choose one from a range of questions.	Exams Office to publish final assessment timetable.	40% (20% + 20%)

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)	Due at the end of the teaching of each theorist/section:	10%
Assignment 1: (1000 - 1500 words) *(African knowledge & Decolonizing the Mind)*	Due TBA	20%
Assignment 2: (1000-1500 words) *(Conscientization & School and Everyday Knowledge)*	Due TBA	20%
Sit-in Examination Two essay topics (one compulsory, one choice). Part 1: Compulsory: 1000-1500 words Part 2: Choose one from a range of questions. Duration of the exam: You will be given a specific period of time to complete both questions.	Due: TBA	50% (25% + 25%)

Figure 5.1 Extracted from Course Outlines, 2022 & 2023.

However, one of the lecturers stated that:

> *"this is tension between what happens in institutions, what institutions require. And in terms of assessment, that goes to the mark. At the end of the day, I want to see how did you get there. So that can be seen a kind of a very top down kind of dominant power block approach to assessment.".*

Another lecturer stated in addition that *"the assessment is also just very standard. It's essays and exams"*. The lecturer further argued that the nature of assessment in the course remained unresponsive to the experiences, cultural backgrounds of students because "*it's very much based on the knowledge authority of the readings rather than the knowledge authority or the knowledge value of the student."*

The lecturers expressed that assessment was acted upon the student rather than with the student which demonstrated roots of coloniality. Another lecturer added that

> " the *assessments could be more reflective about the students journey with the knowledge of the course. Rather than just saying what is this theorist, think about this and how would you make an argument about that? We should be asking the student to reflect on their own, learning to think about the journey that they've made..*"

This reflected a need for assessments that align and engage with the experiences of the students particularly because they are teachers in practice, working in educational departments or researchers engaging with curriculum theory. The findings illustrated the necessity of shifting the focus of assessments to explore the diverse forms of knowledge and expertise that students possess, rather than solely privileging established academic sources.

Conversely, some lecturers challenged this notion by arguing that the core purpose of assessment is for students to be able to give an argument. One lecturer stated:

> *"you are confronted with knowledge? How are you able to engage with? How do you deal with it. But that becomes the important way in which you can be assessed. Now, to just say, well, that is a Western way, you must prove it. You can't assume that it is necessarily the case."*.

The lecturer argued for the current assessment practices in the course because they are not entirely Western practices. Alternatively, one lecturer explored the role and importance of being a marker. The lecturer emphasised the importance of markers being aware of the varied contexts, cultural aspects, and language differences of students when assessing student work:

> *" my take on it is that, at the end of the day, I'm trying to mark students as fairly as possible, trying to be aware of what they're saying, understanding their language differences, there a whole range of contexts, cultural aspects that go with students, you know, delivery of content, but, you know, how do I engage with that, in a way that, that's understanding of all of this. And so yeah, it's about having some decolonisation in terms of assessment by having some kind of social conscience".*

The findings highlight that tensions around assessment in the course are complex and multifaceted. However, it can be noted that while the standard assessment practices persist, there is a growing awareness among the lecturers of the need for change and a recognition of the importance of learner-responsive assessment practices.

5.3 Chapter Conclusion

The chapter has explored the intended curriculum and presented findings that have highlighted the interconnected nature of lecturer perspectives, their pedagogical practices and assessment. The findings on lecturer perspectives on decolonisation highlight both the challenges and opportunities in the selection, organisation, teaching, and assessment of knowledge in the course. While there are institutional and conceptual challenges to overcome, there is also a growing consciousness and willingness among lecturers to embrace transformative change and adapt their teaching practices to be more responsive to decolonial principles. This indicates an awareness and a recognition of the importance of diverse perspectives and the need to challenge existing power relations within the curriculum. Thus, this chapter has provided valuable insight into the affordances, opportunities and complexities of HE curriculum decolonisation within a teaching education course. These findings will be used to answer the research question in relation to the literature and conceptual framework.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion of Findings

6. Introduction

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how the curriculum is being decolonised within the context of a postgraduate teacher education course. This chapter discusses and reflects on the findings in relation to the main research question: *How are lecturers decolonising the curriculum in a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng?* This will be conducted through the discussion of the key findings with reviewed literature and overarching conceptual and theoretical frameworks. The data revealed five key themes: diverse and evolving perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation, institutional power dynamics in integrating decolonisation into an existing curriculum, the role and engagement of students in the enacted curriculum, teaching to embrace change and decolonial curriculum responsiveness, and tensions around assessment. These findings are significant because they provide insight into how the curriculum is being decolonised with the opportunities and complex dynamics as lecturers intend and enact the course curriculum.

6.1 Lecturer Perceptions and Understanding of Decolonisation.

One of the central aims of the study was to explore how lecturers perceive and understand curriculum decolonisation. The findings indicated a range of diverse and evolving perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation among the lecturers which illustrated the varied nature of understanding decolonisation within a HE teaching context, consistent with the definitions by Govender and Naidoo (2023) and Mashiyi et al., (2020). Mashiyi et al. (2020) state that decolonisation is understood as multi-layered concept with no single accepted understanding and approach. The lecturers' perspectives on curriculum decolonisation were diverse however, all demonstrated an awareness of coloniality within HEI and the need to dismantle it from their respective views. The findings revealed lecturer awareness of epistemic, social and economic injustices entrenched in education and society which influence their justice and liberatory decolonisation perspectives. These perspectives challenge the coloniality of power highlighted by Mignolo (2007) and Maluleka (2021) by aiming to dismantle the domination and assumed objectivity of Euro-Western knowledge to liberate and empower students. Thus, the lecturers' perspectives echo Mashiyi et al. (2020) and Pillay and Swanepoel,

(2018), who state that decolonisation can be understood as movement towards social, epistemic justice and inclusivity in HE. The lecturers' emphasis on liberation, epistemic and social justice in the curriculum aligns with the need to challenge and transform power structures that perpetuate economic and epistemic injustices. This perspective reflects an awareness of the coloniality of power and its impact on education, as discussed by Maluleka (2021). Similarly, a perspective of engaging in a critical approach rather than a political one with different values and views in the curriculum, without removing colonial or Western knowledge but interrogating it was reported. The perspective aligns with concept of pluriversality as a decolonial and epistemological project. Pluriversality enables epistemic diversity where there is dialogue and critique of different epistemic traditions (Mbembe, 2016). The perspective reflects a critical engagement with the coloniality of knowledge and a recognition of the need to critique and challenge the dominant Eurocentric ways of knowing. However, it is equally important to note that the political approach to decolonisation can be considered critical. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) states that colonialism was political project that has left its remnants ingrained within many spheres, including education. Therefore, the idea of decoloniality as a way to critique, challenge and dismantle ideologies and epistemologies to reasserts the African history and identity away from the roots of coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Govender and Naidoo)

Moreover, the perspective of curriculum decolonisation as part of the de-classing project and Marxist project was a different and unexpected finding which was implicitly explored in literature. This perspective aligns with social justice and liberatory perspectives, however, liberation from an economic and social class lens. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) explores the coloniality of power as reinforced economically through labour, resource distribution and control which the Marxist lens of curriculum decolonisation challenges by seeking to dismantle the hierarchical class structures and ideological dominance that sustain those colonial power dynamics through knowledge interrogation and exposure. This perspective challenges to the coloniality of power and is rooted in the Marxist belief that dismantling oppressive structures occurs through weakening, deconstructing ideological transmission and dominance through the curriculum to achieve liberation.

The findings further indicated a perspective of curriculum decolonisation as humanisation, where there was an indication of mindfulness of student experiences and foregrounding of their voice rather than complete knowledge authority. This aligns with Fanon's (1961) discussion of decolonisation, he emphasises the importance of humanising both the coloniser and the

colonised. When we apply this perspective to teaching and curriculum, it's about creating an educational environment that acknowledges the students as knower and engages with the experiences of all students, including those who have been historically marginalised or oppressed. This means fostering understanding, empathy, and respect for diverse perspectives, histories, and identities of the students. Meda (2020) explored this notion further as a crucial aspect of decolonisation in HEI where the student is engaged with and represented in the teaching and learning process. This aligns with Machingambi (2020) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) who argue that decolonisation entails epistemic freedom where Eurocentrism is deconstructed by creating a teaching and learning environment that reflects the historical, social and material realities the institution is located in. The humanisation perspective of curriculum decolonisation challenges the coloniality of being and knowledge entrenched in the curriculum by removing the boundaries between the knowledge and student, lecturers and students, interrogating and decentralising Western knowledge and experiences to a more social and culturally responsive curriculum. The lecturer's perspective on curriculum decolonisation enables what Mbembe (2016) refers to as a move from an instrumental view of education that was inherited from colonial and apartheid curriculum models.

Therefore, it is crucial to note that the diverse perspectives are consistent with the reviewed literature on decolonisation, which foregrounds the importance of acknowledging diverse perspectives and the need for an evolving understanding of decolonisation in educational settings. As highlighted by Mashiyi et al. (2020) and Meda (2020) decolonisation is not monolithic, but rather a dynamic process in HEI that requires ongoing critical engagement with a range of perspectives and experiences. Similarly, the findings of the study align with the literature by demonstrating that the lecturers' perspectives on curriculum decolonisation are shaped by their unique experiences of coloniality at different levels such as their own schooling, work and postgraduate education which developed their diverse and evolving understandings- emphasising the dynamic nature of curriculum decolonisation. The perspectives emerging from their experiences illustrate the effects of coloniality as some lecturers expressed how experiences of epistemic violence as a learner, socio-economic inequalities, apartheid and the 2015/16 student protests for decolonisation influenced their perspectives. This finding demonstrates the lasting impact of coloniality and its values in education which influences and shapes individual views and the necessity for curriculum decolonisation.

Overall, the varying perspectives, from the lecturers which were informed by their personal experiences, education, and engagement with decolonial discourse, illustrate the commitment stage of the decolonisation process explained by Le Grange (2016). The lecturers' perspectives demonstrate a level of commitment and understanding of decolonisation within HE curricula which purported the reconceptualisation of the postgraduate course following the 2015/16 student protests. The lecturers' perspectives illustrate an awareness of the need for decolonial-responsive curricula in HE. However, in the context of the course, varying perspectives indicate some positioning within a dimension or dimensions of responsiveness to decolonisation alluding to the varying nature of their possible approaches to decolonising the intended and enacted curriculum of the course. This may present an opportunity for engagement among lecturers and possible challenges as tensions and power relations may shape which perspective is foregrounded and backgrounded in the intended and enacted curriculum of the course. As Meda (2020) asserts that curriculum is a complex conversation about what is essential for students to learn which decolonisation adds as another layer of complexity.

6.2 Challenges in Implementing Curriculum Decolonisation.

The findings illustrated that the decolonisation of the curriculum has been a positive move, however, it is complex and results in several challenges. Du Plessis (2021) and Senekal and Lenz (2020) identified a range of challenges in implementing curriculum decolonisation in HE some of which are similar and the findings of this study. It can be noted in the findings that the prevalent challenges were a subtle reluctance to change by some lecturers with theorist choices and assessment, and a lack of dialogue concerning course theorist selection and teaching. Lastly, a challenge of a lack of scope and time was identified in the findings where lecturers are limited in establishing and building rapport with students to create comfortable, safe and dialogic environments where students feel free to bring themselves and their experiences.

Thus, to explore the findings elaboratively, the findings illustrated the role of power relations in shaping decisions related to course curriculum planning, teaching, and assessment. It was noted that there is a lack of discussion and input in terms of the selection of key theorists in the course which is perceived by some lecturers as an aim to maintain elements of Eurocentrism due to ambivalence to the decolonial project. The reported lack of discussion can be analysed as an operation of the coloniality power as discussed by Maluleka (2021) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) where it functions to reinforce and maintain Western ideological dominance, in this context of the course, to maintain the perspectives and interests of lecturers who decide which

theorists are taught. This finding illustrates the prevalent power of colonial culture and norms of education within institutions.

The findings further established that the lecturers acknowledge the influence of power relations in determining the legitimacy of knowledge and control of the curriculum discourse through the inclusion and removal of theorists over the years. These findings align with Fomunyam and Teferra (2017) emphasis on the pervasive and inescapable nature of power relations in HEIs in controlling the meaning through the curriculum and the distribution of opportunities and resources within institutions. Govender and Naidoo (2023) and Maluleka (2021) note the influence of the coloniality power in promoting and silencing voices through educational decisions which the findings highlighted the curriculum of the course as a representation of the perspectives and beliefs about knowledge, power and transformation of the select lecturers. The findings exemplify what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) refers to as knowledge as a result of the coloniality of power. Thus, the coloniality of power shapes what knowledge is validated for curricular inclusion. This perpetuates a power struggle for intellectual and cultural control, as different lecturer perspectives and understandings of decolonisation contest (passively and openly) for representation within the course curriculum.

Consequently, the findings highlighted a challenge of theoretical diversions amongst the lecturers predominantly because decolonisation was added to an existing curriculum. This finding illustrates the challenge of multiple perspectives on decolonisation resulting in conceptual tensions between lecturers and academics working towards decolonising HE curricula synonymous with the findings discussed by Mashiyi et al. (2020). The conceptual tensions were further created by the existing theorists in the course clashing with the decolonial project. The findings align with Tuck and Yang (2012) who discuss the complexities of decolonial work. Tuck and Yang (2012) discuss how in educational settings dominated by Western knowledge systems, there is a tendency for well-meaning efforts to address colonial legacies which may inadvertently reinforce colonial power structures. This occurs when decolonisation efforts are an addition, which may result in failing to truly challenge the underlying power relations and Eurocentric norms embedded within the curriculum. The reported level of ambivalence and fear of decolonisation among some staff members to decolonisation efforts may reflect a reluctance to disrupt these entrenched power relations and challenge the privileging of European knowledge. The notion of the coloniality of power and knowledge further illustrates this dynamic. According to Maldonado-Torres (2016) and Maluleka (2021) the coloniality of power and knowledge operates through subtle mechanisms

of control, including the legitimation and regulation of knowledge in the curriculum. In the context of the course, the identified conceptual tensions as a result of decolonisation efforts can be understood as a manifestation of the coloniality of power entrenched within the institutional structures that seek to maintain the status quo by preserving Eurocentric curricular knowledge.

The findings indicated another challenge of decolonising and working with multiple lecturers in the context of the enacted curriculum of the course which aligned with a challenge identified by Du Plessis (2021). The findings indicated a loss of the guiding principle of the course due to staff changes, lack of discussion and planning meeting attendance as lecturing staff. As a result, lecturers were reported teaching the course around their topic without bringing it to the broader frame of curriculum theory. The reported enacted curriculum fragmentation suggests a disconnect between the intended curriculum as what lecturers aim to teach, and the purpose of the course and the enacted curriculum as what is taught and experienced by students (Machingambi, 2020). Despite the intentions to decolonise the curriculum, by engaging with curriculum theory through a decolonial lens, the lack of dialogue, support and structural changes from staff members hinder the translation of these intentions into meaningful connections for students. Consequently, the purpose of the course becomes obscured.

Moreover, in the effort to engage in decolonial work, the findings illustrated another challenge which is a lack of engagement and attendance from students. The lack of student responsiveness can be seen as a manifestation of coloniality as discussed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and Maluleka (2021), where students are conditioned or accustomed to accepting and reproducing dominant Euro-Western narratives without critically questioning their underlying power dynamics because education has been historically structured in that manner. Maluleka (2021) states that the hidden curriculum reproduces coloniality where students become socialised into ways of doing and being in the classroom. Thus, the finding highlights that despite efforts by lecturers to integrate elements of decolonisation into the curriculum, coloniality embedded in the hidden curricula curriculum becomes a barrier to the required student energy and engagement. Coloniality and its matrix of power not only impact the content of the curriculum and lecturers as mediators, but it further shapes student attitudes and behaviours within the educational setting. Accordingly, the historic power relations of teaching and learning in HE may discourage students from actively participating in decolonisation efforts, as they may perceive such efforts as threatening the status quo as well as unnecessary and irrelevant to their academic or career pursuits.

In addition, the findings revealed unexpected insights which can be viewed as a challenge in curriculum decolonisation- which are the tensions around assessment. The conflicting views on assessment practices reflect the inherent challenges in disrupting colonial legacies within the course assessment. The recognition of the need for more learner-responsive assessment practices from lecturers, while facing resistance to change from others, demonstrates the complexities of decolonising assessment within the context of the colonial matrix of power. The colonial matrix of power, as described by Maldonado-Torres (2016), provides a framework for understanding how deeply ingrained influences and beliefs shape knowledge production and reproduction in HEIs. Thus, these tensions leave many lecturers for culturally and pedagogical responsive assessment at the dreaming stage of decolonisation (Le Grange, 2016)

The assessment practices in the course are products of the reported tensions and power relations, as they reproduce and reinforce knowledge and experiences that are deemed valuable. Therefore, the tensions around assessment in the course reflect the contestation among lecturers, as some express the need to reimagine assessment to accommodate student voice and experience and challenge dominant narratives reinforced by the coloniality of power and knowledge as argued by Maluleka (2021) -while other lecturers express the need to maintain knowledge authority. Assessment practices can shape the way individuals perceive themselves within the educational context and students' success or failure in assessments can influence their self-perception, academic identity, and sense of belonging within the institution. Therefore, the meaningful contribution and role of the student in curriculum decolonisation as identified by Meda (2020) needs to be reflected in assessment practices too.

The challenges identified in the findings illustrate the dreaming stage of the decolonisation process as discussed by Le Grange (2016). The dreaming stage is where the colonial subjects start engaging and thinking of ways of restoring their identities, free from the colonial system (Le Grange, 2016). This stage is evident in findings as some lecturers had dreams, innovative ideas and perspectives on readings, theorists to include and exclude and structuring of the course however, they have been constrained by the identified conceptual tensions between them as staff as a result of power relations, a lack of engagement from students and administrational issues. The findings demonstrate the complexities and possible opportunities for improvement in moving the decolonial project further with the HEI.

6.3 Opportunities and affordances in implementing curriculum decolonisation.

Curriculum decolonisation presents a range of opportunities and affordances for lecturers and students to redefine and reimagine their roles in teaching and learning space. The findings of this study are similar to a number of the identified opportunities and affordances discussed by Du Plessis (2021) and Le Grange (2018). Lecturers reported promoting student engagement, encouraging discussion and creating relationships between the content and social issues where they taught knowledge using podcasts from African voices and art and creating a balance between empirical and theoretical readings. However, some of the identified opportunities and affordances were absent and were reported in challenges where lecturers reported a lack of discussion, and conversation amongst them as lecturers in the course highlighting a lack of complicated conversation.

Several opportunities and affordances of curriculum decolonisation were identified in the findings of the study. The opportunities and affordances identified illustrated the action stage of the decolonisation process (Le Grange,2016). Le Grange (2016) discusses the action stage as involving the concrete implementation of dreams and commitments to transform the curriculum and educational practices. Lecturers play a pivotal role in this stage within HEI as they actively engage in curriculum redesign, pedagogical and assessment restructuring and innovation as demonstrated in the findings of the study.

One of the key opportunities that emerge from implementing curriculum decolonisation is the potential for institutional and structural change (Heleta, 2016). The findings demonstrated that the HEI, as a structure, facilitates and supports decolonisation, providing productive frameworks. The findings of the study highlighted how the reconceptualisation of the course to incorporate decolonisation arose in response to student calls for HE decolonisation and social change which illustrates support and operation of power to dismantle the coloniality of knowledge in the course by rethinking curriculum theory and meaning to facilitate transformation and curricular change as discussed by Govender and Naidoo (2023) and Apple (2004). According to Jansen (2017), the student protests enabled university lecturers as knowledge selectors and presenters to engage in conversation which is illustrated in the research findings with its reported complexities. The reconceptualisation of the course presented an affordance to engage in discussion allowing lecturers to explore their dreams and commitment to decolonisation (Le Grange, 2016). The course reconceptualisation

demonstrates an awareness of issues affecting teacher education students and the power and support from the institution which enabled curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation. Moreover, the challenging of the coloniality of power can be observed from the findings that indicated an intended curriculum that holistically engages with links between curriculum, knowledge and power and opens the view of the curriculum as a tool for social change with a specific focus on decolonisation.

According to Lawrence and Buchanan (2017), power relations shape the learning environment, influence interactions, and impact the distribution of opportunities in institutions. Thus, in the context of assessment in the course, the findings further highlighted the transformative nature of the new assessment policy in the university. The identified policy has been reported to have weakened the hegemony of final assessments presenting students with more assessment opportunities. The shift away from traditional high mark weighting, exam-based assessment towards continuous and formative assessment demonstrates a positive step towards addressing elements of coloniality and its matrix within the assessment. This facilitates the weakening hegemonic practices that reinforce coloniality of knowledge and being within institutions (Meda, 2020; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). As a result, several lecturers highlighted that the new policy and decolonial-oriented course present affordances and opportunities to create assessments that engage with the students' journey with knowledge in the course and a decentring of knowledge authority in assessment. However, due to the diverse views and tensions, assessment in the course has not been reconceptualised. This illustrates the notion of power relations as discussed by Lawrence and Buchanan (2017) which impacts the distribution of opportunities and interactions within institutions.

In addition, the findings further illustrated that some lecturers are aware of the power relations between them as the assessor and the student within assessments and aim to deconstruct it when marking students by being aware of the varied contexts, cultural aspects, and language differences of students. Meda (2020) highlights student awareness as an integral aspect of decolonisation which aligns with the lecturer's awareness of what the student brings into the assessment process to be marked fairly. Meda (2020) argues for the importance of foregrounding student engagement in pedagogy and assessment to foster critical consciousness and empower students to challenge dominant narratives. This aligns with the use of varying critical pedagogical approaches by the lecturers which allowed students to bring themselves into the learning process and to interrogate knowledge in alternative forms such as listening to podcasts created for the course, art to visually stimulate thinking and encourage voice as well

as challenging students to interrogate their biases, assumptions and experiences through questioning and discussion in lectures and tutorials. It is crucial to note that these approaches presented an opportunity, an alternative form of teaching and learning shifting away from the conventional top-down teaching and learning experience within HE as noted by Hlatshwayo (2022).

The diverse approaches were further encouraged by the decolonial, transformative nature of the intended curriculum content in the course. The creative pedagogical approaches illustrate the difference between the intended and enacted curriculum as discussed by Machingambi (2020) because lecturers transformed the single intended curriculum into diverse, meaningful pathways of engagement with knowledge for students in the course. Machingambi (2020) states that the enacted curriculum highlights the role of the mediator of the intended curriculum, in the context of this study, this illustrates the mediation and translation of the intended course aims in diverse ways. The enacted curriculum in the course as demonstrated in the findings, demonstrates the agency and critical awareness of the lecturers in structuring their lecturers and tutorials.

Furthermore, the findings indicated lecturers have the freedom to select readings for the topic they teach in the course which presented some with the opportunity to create a balance between theoretical and empirical readings for students and contextual responsiveness. The balance between the readings can be understood as a step towards fostering inclusivity and representation within curriculum knowledge for epistemological social justice as foregrounded by Le Grange (2016) and Mashiyi et al. (2020)- where students are presented with the application of the theory connecting them to their immediate environment. This notion of inclusion and representation aligns with another affordance of engaging in curriculum decolonisation which is engagement with the student Meda (2020) unpacks the importance of the student in the decolonisation process and the findings highlighted the value and role of student engagement in the enacted decolonial curriculum, however, was hindered by a range of complexities and expectations from students.

Consequently, the findings highlighted the affordance of engaging in curriculum decolonisation which was reflecting and rethinking ways to be more responsive and prompt student engagement. Lecturers indicated employing reflective teaching practices which served as a mechanism through which they can critically interrogate and dismantle authoritarian power dynamics associated with coloniality. It is by engaging in self-evaluation, that lecturers can

become more cognisant of their positions of power and privilege within the academic, teaching and learning space (Keikelame and Swartz, 2019). This enables a more nuanced understanding of how their teaching practices may inadvertently reproduce coloniality or exclude certain perspectives. This self-awareness enables lecturers to actively work towards humanising the teaching and learning environment. It further allows them to create more safe, equitable and inclusive learning environments that value student knowledge- thereby reconstructing power relations within the educational space (Fomunyam and Teffera, 2017; Meda 2020). Therefore, through the consciousnesses of students' experiences and contexts through reflective practices, lecturers are able to empower students to engage critically with the curriculum and assert agency in their learning processes. The highlighted opportunities and complexities of engaging in curriculum illustrate the differences in the intended and enacted curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation.

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the study in relation to the literature and aims of the study. The discussion revealed a multifaceted, dynamic approach to curriculum decolonisation in relation to the question of how lecturers are engaging in curriculum decolonisation. This chapter illustrated that curriculum decolonisation in the course involves a range of challenges and opportunities that are influenced and shaped by coloniality and its matrix of power. Therefore, the findings illustrated elements of decolonisation in the intended curriculum but more so in the enacted curriculum where the different lecturers have the agency to structure their topic according to their views and best practices. It was revealed that curriculum decolonisation requires and involves the deconstruction of power relations shaped by the deeply embedded coloniality, engaging with diverse perspectives, promoting student engagement, lecturer critical reflection and creating a humanising, safe environment for student voice and engagement.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Recommendations and Conclusion

7. Introduction

The previous chapters of this study provided the location and structure of the study, explored the findings and the analysis of these findings through existing literature to enable a clear and in-depth understanding of how lecturers are engaging in curriculum decolonisation in a postgraduate course. This chapter serves as the culmination of the study, providing an opportunity to reflect on the key findings and outline recommendations for future action and research. Therefore, the chapter provides a summary of the study, a critical reflection of my journey in the course as a student and then a researcher and an exploration of the limitations of the study. Lastly, a discussion of the implications and recommendations based on the findings and how they contribute to the broader discourse on HE curriculum decolonisation and development will be explored.

7.1 Summary of the study

The study aimed to explore how lecturers perceive, understand and engage in curriculum decolonisation. The study was conducted with four core aims and objectives exploring how lecturers perceive and understand curriculum decolonisation. Thus, establishing the possible challenges and opportunities lecturers have as they select, organise, teach and assess knowledge in the course and identifying potential changes lecturers recommend enhancing curriculum decolonisation to improve student experiences.

Chapter One provided the introduction to the study, offering background information on the decolonisation and transformation in South African HEI with its reported barriers to HE decolonisation, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. This chapter set the field for the research study, outlining the importance and relevance of the study in addressing the pressing issue of decolonisation practice within HE.

Chapter Two explored the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. The conceptual framework was the four dimensions of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation and theoretical framework was the interrelated colonial matrix of power, being and knowledge.

Chapter Three positioned the study within the existing literature, exploring the conceptual and empirical literature. This chapter provided a theoretical foundation for the research, drawing on existing scholarship to explore the notions of coloniality, decolonisation, curriculum and power and to further inform the discussion of findings. This chapter was significant for effectively locating the study within the literature and strengthening the analysis of the findings.

Chapter Four explored the research design and methodology of the study, which was a decolonial case study involving semi-structured interviews and an analysis of documents. This chapter outlined the specific research approach employed in the study, detailing the decolonial research paradigm, researcher positionality, the structure of data collection, the sample of lecturers and ethical considerations used to gather and analyse data in order to address the research questions.

Chapter Five presented the findings of the study, which were organised into five themes:

- *Diverse, evolving perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation* explored the various ways in which decolonisation is viewed by the lecturers. This included discussions around social justice, liberation, political versus critical approaches, and the evolving nature of decolonisation. It also highlighted the importance of being conscious of student experiences, understanding how systems work to dismantle and liberate, and challenging power relations in education.
- The *institutional power dynamics in integrating decolonisation into the curriculum* theme revealed the affordances and tensions that arise in the curriculum decolonisation process. This included the potential of structural change, conceptual tensions, reported ambivalence to decolonisation, staff changes, and the purpose of courses being lost. It further addressed the need for less control, structural support, pedagogical freedom, and the impact of staff changes on the decolonisation process.
- *The role and engagement of students in the enacted curriculum* theme focused on the expectations of students from lecturers where there was a reported lack of participation and dialogic engagement and minimal attendance of lectures and tutorials.
- *Teaching to embrace change and decolonial curriculum responsiveness* highlighted the need for student voice, reflection, different modes of teaching, and meaningful selection and organisation of readings. This theme highlighted the importance of engaging with

students interactively and using a range of modes and theories to allow students to bring themselves and be active in the learning process.

- The tensions around the assessment theme addressed the positive, transformative nature of the new assessment policy however citing the unchanged, assessment content practices in the course. The theme explored the varying views on assessment and recommended the room for change by some lecturers citing the potential for more reflective assessment practices,

In **Chapter Six**, the findings were discussed in relation to the literature to provide a more nuanced understanding of the findings. The discussion provided light on the challenges and opportunities lecturers have in the course as they select, organise, teach, and assess knowledge in the curriculum. The chapter revealed that lecturers' perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation challenge coloniality and its matrix of power through diverse perspectives. The chapter further discussed the challenges and opportunities that are shaped by power relations, the colonial matrix of power, being and knowledge and notions of decolonisation in both the intended and enacted curriculum. This chapter aimed to situate the findings within the broader context of existing scholarship, offering a critical analysis of the research findings illustrating the complex nature of engaging in decolonial work.

Chapter Seven provides a comprehensive summary of the study, including a critical reflection from the researcher, limitations of the study, and recommendations. This final chapter offers a reflective analysis of the research study, highlighting its contributions, addressing its limitations, and providing practical recommendations for practice in the field of HE curriculum decolonisation.

7.2 Critical Reflection

In my academic journey, I have often found myself longing for subjects and courses that not only expose me to different perspectives but also represent and provide room for me to engage my views and experiences. This is why I was drawn to the study of exploring lecturers' perspectives in relation to the intended and enacted decolonisation within a HE course, where I hoped to explore and understand the thinking and knowledge behind the curriculum planning and action of the decolonial framed course. In the course, I was exposed to a range of perspectives and theories around curriculum, decolonisation, knowledge and power. The course expanded my understanding of how knowledge is selected, organised, taught, and assessed within the academic setting given the tensions and debates around what constitutes as

knowledge, power and curriculum. The course provided with me conceptual tools to challenge and understand the foundation and reinforcement of Eurocentric curricula. However, I found myself longing for more African and women representation within the curriculum, as well as the space to engage in discussions, express my perspective and also bring my own experiences. This was mainly because the course was taught online due to COVID-19 restrictions, tutorials generally followed a top-down approach and even though the prescribed readings presented some African scholars some texts were quite old and were difficult to resonate with. Yet, what was interesting and probed me was the recommended readings list which presented the representation and longing I had which left me with questions of why they weren't included in the required reading list. The questions and longing led me to critically reflect and decide to research this course which is very thought-provoking around curriculum theory for social change.

Therefore, as I engaged in the study, I was given a unique opportunity to gain insight into the perspectives of lecturers on decolonisation, the challenges and opportunities they face in implementing a more diverse and contextually responsive curriculum. The interviews with lecturers provided me with a different lens through which I view the complexities of decolonisation within the educational context. I learned that lecturers themselves are often grappling with the tension between traditional knowledge and the need for a more inclusive and diverse curriculum and institutional power dynamics. This insight allowed me to be more understanding of the challenges they face, the efforts they make as well as the complexities of implementing change within the institution.

Writing up the research study enabled me to critically reflect on my own experiences within the course and to consider how I can contribute to creating a more inclusive and diverse curriculum in my own capacity. It also allowed me to see the potential for more change within the institution and to consider ways in which I can advocate for more representation of African and female perspectives within the curriculum. I came to realise that while the current academic environment may not fully reflect diverse perspectives, change is possible, and through continued engagement and reflection, I can be a part of that change even as a student. Moving forward, I am more committed than ever to advocating for curriculum decolonisation and having an awareness of the dimensions of curriculum responsiveness to decolonisation.

7.3 Limitations of the study

Scott and Morrison (2006) state that the limitations of the study are the factors that may influence or constrain the gathering of data and the interpretation of findings in a study. There are several limitations of this study given its qualitative and decolonial theory-framed nature. The first is the lack of generalisability and transferability of the findings. This is mainly because the research design was a case study based on only one institution located within an urban context, thus, the findings may not apply to other contexts. Therefore, to attempt to address this I ensured that the study follows a clear methodology and in-depth location within existing literature, should another researcher attempt a similar study in a different context. The second limitation was the scope and time, the nature of decolonised research is creating a relationship of trust and respect between the researcher and participants, and this is given a short period due to time. Therefore, I tried to reach out to my participants well in advance, reschedule where needed and spend more than the stipulated interview time to allow them to ease in and be more comfortable and open. The third limitation may be that the data analysis and collection may be affected by subjectivity and researcher bias due to my positionality as a former student in the course. I possess my own perspectives on curriculum decolonisation which were different to some of the participants in the study. This limitation was addressed by acknowledging this bias and engaging with it by reading more literature on decolonisation, diverse perspectives and consulting my supervisors for guidance.

7.4 Implications

The implications of the study based on these aims and objectives become particularly salient when considering the findings and discussion. The findings of the study and literature have demonstrated a spectrum of perspectives on curriculum decolonisation ranging from enthusiastic embrace to subtle scepticism or resistance. This illustrates the ongoing awareness, work, discussion and energy decolonisation requires within a HEI. Moreover, the findings provided valuable insights into the readiness of academic staff to engage with decolonial initiatives and can inform targeted interventions to address gaps in knowledge, administration and student engagement. Similarly, exploring how lecturers select, organise, teach, and assess knowledge in the postgraduate course curriculum has revealed subtle aspects of entrenched biases or Eurocentric frameworks that shape curriculum design, delivery and assessment while there are positive efforts made with the curriculum reconceptualisation and several innovative pedagogical approaches. Therefore, by highlighting these practices, the study can stimulate

critical reflection among all the lecturers on the course either individually or collectively. This can prompt discussions among the lecturers and with students to engage in uncomfortable conversations around knowledge and epistemic violence to address the need for more inclusive and decolonial-responsive knowledge selection, teaching and assessment.

Furthermore, by identifying and discussing the challenges and opportunities lecturers face in implementing curriculum decolonisation, the study offers practical guidance for identifying, overcoming barriers and reinforcing existing strengths within the institution and the course. Whether it is navigating staff resistance within the structure of institutional support, engaging with lecturer theoretical diversion constraints, or capitalising on opportunities for collaboration, and support of all stakeholders. The findings provide actionable insights for driving meaningful change towards curriculum decolonisation and enhancing student experiences in the postgraduate teacher education course.

7.5 Recommendations

Several recommendations can be made to improve and maintain aspects of curriculum decolonisation in the postgraduate teacher education course based on the findings.

Collaboration and support

There is a need for continued dialogue and collaboration among lecturers to address the diverse perspectives and experiences of curriculum decolonisation. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and professional development opportunities that provide a platform for lecturers to share their experiences and engage in critical, complex conversations about decolonisation perspectives and understanding of curriculum decolonisation. A collaborative approach will ensure that all lecturers are aligned in their efforts of decolonising the curriculum where the course intended curriculum is critically evaluated collaboratively and that support is provided for lecturers navigating the course. The collaboration will further enable the creation of support networks for lecturers to exchange best practices and strategies for curriculum decolonisation and coping with the course overall.

Inclusion and support for students

There is a need to engage with student experiences and voice as it was highlighted in the findings that decolonisation requires energy and work from the student too. Therefore, to allow students to bring themselves in the process, lecturers can, firstly, continue to explore innovative

and alternative teaching practices that allow students to bring themselves into the learning process and to critically interrogate knowledge in alternative forms. Secondly, it can involve creating safe and inclusive spaces for student voice and engagement where students are required to engage in reflective practices on the content and with their peers. This can allow a shift away from traditional, top-down teaching, learning and assessment experiences within the HEI and create space for students to ease into being comfortable with sharing their experiences and voice.

Critical reflective practices

The practice of promoting a culture of reflective teaching practices and self-awareness, where lecturers actively interrogate their positions of power and privilege within the course and educational space can alleviate some of the challenges encountered. Lecturers can reflect on their practices individually and as the whole group to work towards creating safe, equitable learning environments that empower students to engage with the curriculum critically and assert agency in their learning processes.

Institutional funding and support

It is important for universities to invest in resources and support for lecturers in implementing a decolonised curriculum for the project to move further and for more people to see and understand its value. Therefore, support may include the development of open-access teaching materials, funding for seminars and workshops on the decolonisation of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and using that work to inform curriculum discussions. Furthermore, the institution can establish committees dedicated to curriculum decolonisation initiatives and allocate resources for curriculum decolonisation-related projects.

7.6 Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that decolonisation is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a collaborative and inclusive approach among lecturers and students within the postgraduate teacher education course. It is clear from the findings that there has been progress and levels of responsiveness towards curriculum decolonisation in the course from the intended and enacted curriculum levels. However, there is a pressing need for increased dialogue and mutual understanding among lecturers to address the diverse perspectives and experiences related to curriculum decolonisation and dismantle prevailing remnants of coloniality in the course.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Approval Letter from Graduate Studies Committee

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
POSTGRADUATE OFFICE

11 August 2023
Student Number: 1855898

Miss Noxolo Zandile Dlamini
1685 Kilimanjaro Street Wedela
Carletonville Merafong 2499
Gauteng South Africa
By Email: 1855898@students.wits.ac.za
Cc: Supervisor

Dear Miss Dlamini,

RESULTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION PROPOSAL

I am pleased to be able to advise you that the readers of the Graduate Studies Committee have reviewed proposal entitled "***What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a University in Gauteng."*** and recommended that the research proposal can pass.

I confirm that **Dr. Alfred Masinire** has been appointed as your supervisor in the School of Education.

The research report is normally submitted to the Faculty Office by 15 February, if you have started the beginning of the year, and for mid-year the deadline is 31 July. All students are required to RE-REGISTER at the beginning of each year

Please note that should you miss the deadline of 15 February or 31 July you will be required to submit an application for extension of time and register for the research report extension. Any candidate who misses the deadline of 15 February will be charged fees for the research report.

Please keep us informed of any changes of address during the year.

Note: All MA and PhD candidates who intend graduating shortly must meet your ETD requirements at least 6 weeks after your supervisor has received the examiners reports. **A student must remain registered at the Faculty Office until graduation.**

Yours Sincerely
Faith Herbert
Faith Herbert
Senior Faculty Officer
Faculty of Humanities
Tel: +27 11 717 3018
Email: Faith.Herbert@wits.ac.za

Private Bag 3, WITS 2050, South Africa I **T** + 27 11 717 3018 I **E** help.humanities@wits.ac.za I www.wits.ac.za/humanities

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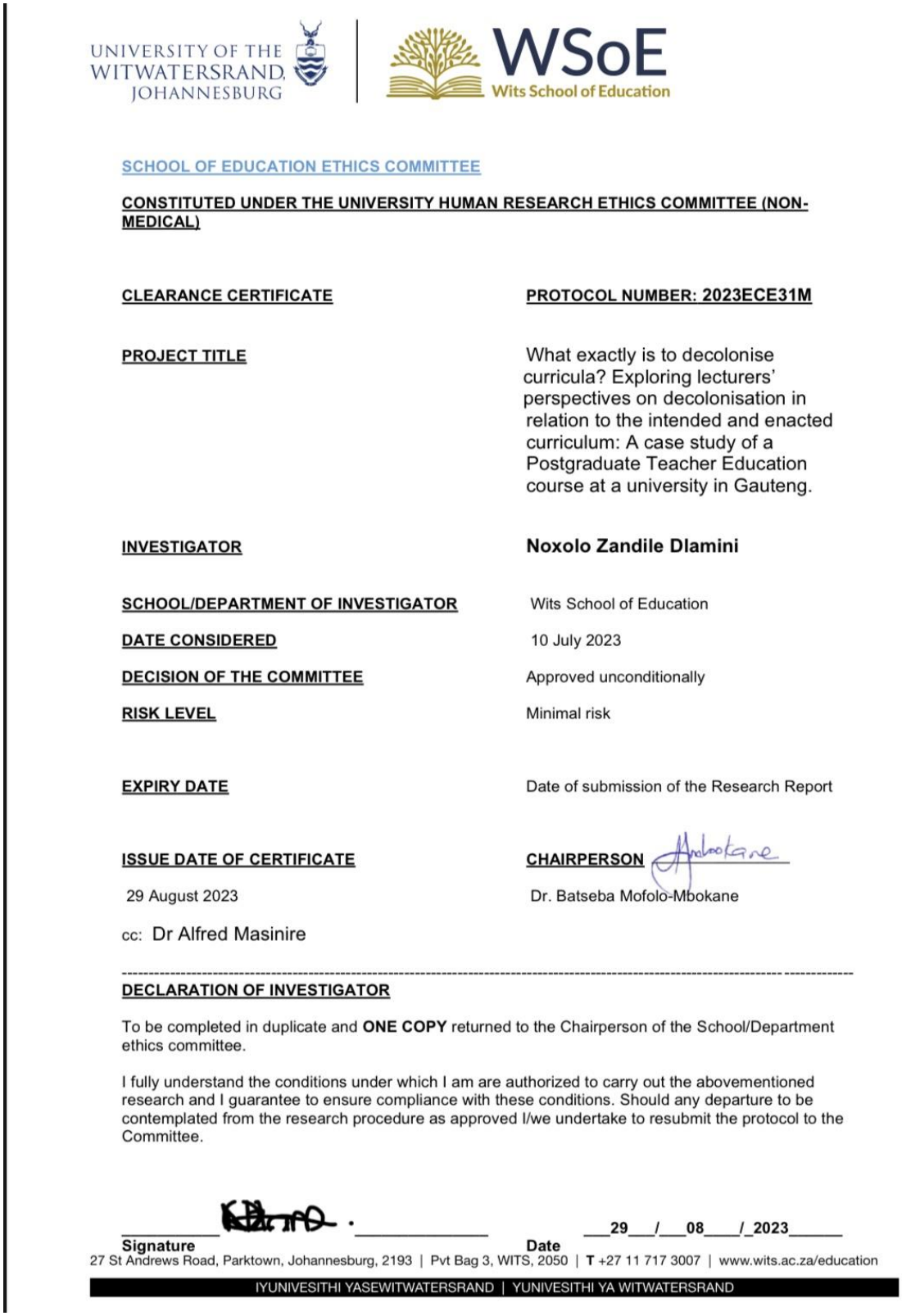
Appendix B: Ethics Certificate



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | WSoE Wits School of Education

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2023ECE31M**
PROJECT TITLE	What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng.
INVESTIGATOR	**Noxolo Zandile Dlamini**
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	Wits School of Education
DATE CONSIDERED	10 July 2023
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	Minimal risk
EXPIRY DATE	Date of submission of the Research Report
ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE	**CHAIRPERSON**
29 August 2023	Dr. Batseba Mofolo-Mbokane

cc: Dr Alfred Masinire

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

_____ · _____ ___29___/___08____/_2023_____

Signature **Date**

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 | Pvt Bag 3, WITS, 2050 | **T** +27 11 717 3007 | www.wits.ac.za/education

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Appendix C: Approval letter from University Registrar

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY REGISTRAR

18 September 2023

Noxolo Zandile Dlamini
Student Number (1855898)
Master of Education by Coursework and Research Report
Wits School of Education

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on ecolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng."

This letter serves to confirm that the above project has received permission to be conducted on University premises, and/or involving staff and/or students of the University as research participants. In undertaking this research, you agree to abide by all University regulations for conducting research on campus and to respect participants' rights to withdraw from participation at any time.

If you are conducting research on certain student cohorts, year groups or courses within specific Schools and within the teaching term, permission must be sought from Heads of School or individual academics.

Ethical clearance has been obtained. (Protocol number: 2023ECE31M)

Research Expiration: (Research submission date)

Potgieter

Nicoleen Potgieter
University Deputy Registrar

Private Bag 3, WITS, 2050, South Africa | **T** +27 11 717 1204/8 | **E** nicoleen.potgieter@wits.ac.za | www.wits.ac.za
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Appendix D: Approval Letter from Head of School



19 September 2023

Ms Noxolo Zandile Dlamini
Master of Education by Coursework and Research Report
1855898@students.wits.ac.za
Wits School of Education

Re: Permision to conduct research at the Wits School of Education - PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2023ECE31M

Dear Ms Dlamini,

Permission is, hereby granted for you to conduct your study **'What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on ecolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng.'** at the Wits School of Education in accordance with PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2023ECE31M.

Sincerely,

JC Perumal

Professor Juliet Perumal
Head of School
Wits School of Education
Tel: 011 717 3003
Email: Juliet.Perumal@wits.ac.za

Appendix E: Letter requesting to permission from Head of School



18 September 2023

Professor Juliet Perumal

Head of School

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road

For attention: Prof Perumal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Dear Professor Perumal

My name is Noxolo Dlamini, a Master of Education student here at the Wits School of Education. I write seeking your permission to conduct research within the Wit School of Education The research I wish to conduct for my Masters report titled "What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a university in Gauteng." will be analysing how lecturers are grappling with the decolonisation at intended and enacted levels of the curriculum. The methodology involves interviews and document analysis and thus requires the participation of staff members within a course here at the Wits School of Education. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Alfred Masinire and Mr Paul Maluleka and will adhere to ethics.

I have provided you with a copy of my ethics clearance, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the university research deputy registrar.

If you require any further information or documentation, please do not hesitate to contact me on at 1855898@students.wits.ac.za and 061 997 1733. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Noxolo Zandile Dlamini

Appendix F: Form requesting permission from the University



FORM A - Request to conduct Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

This form is to be completed by registered Honours/Master by Research/ PhD students and staff at Wits wishing to conduct research by using Wits student/staff data. Please email this form with your supporting documents to Research.Deputy-Registrar@wits.ac.za

First Name	**Surname:**
Noxolo Zandile	Dlamini

Staff/Student number:	
1855898	

Degree currently registered:	**School:**
Master of Education by CW and RR	Education

Research title: What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate Teacher Education course at a University in Gauteng.

Has ethics clearance been obtained from the University Ethics Committee/School Ethics Committee?

√ **YES**	**NO**

(If yes, please include a copy of the ethics clearance certificate and protocol number below)

Protocol number:

2023ECE31M

***PLEASE NOTE**: If an unconditionally approved ethics clearance certificate has not been obtained, you will not be granted permission to conduct your research.*

Has your Head of Department/Supervisor granted permission for the research to be conducted?

√ **YES**	**NO**

(If yes please include a copy of the letter of approval)

What is the expected duration of your research and on which date do you intend submitting the research?

6 months- 15 February 2024

Whom is the research and/or questionnaire being conducted on?

Students	
Staff	√

(Please tick the appropriate box)

If the research will be conducted on student data please specify year of study /Faculty or degree data will be required for:

First Year Students	
Second Year Students	
Third Year Students	
Final Year Students	
Postgraduate Students	
Faculty	
Degree	

Section A:

How will the research be conducted?

E-Mail (please indicate if school administrators will be assisting in circulating the emails)	-
Interviews (please attach a copy of the interview questions)	Semi-structured interviews.
Other data collection (please specify lists or statistics)	-
Focus Groups	-
Venues (If using a venue for your research, please indicate venue name and ensure arrangements have been made with the venue manager)	-

Section B:

This section only needs to be completed for the circulation of questionnaires, surveys etc. by the University Registrar's Office:

Please provide the link for your questionnaire and attach a copy of the questionnaire (the link will be emailed to students in order for them to complete the questionnaire)	

Please provide us with a brief message that will accompany your questionnaire. This message ~~is~~ will be sent as an e-mail to students requesting them to complete the questionnaire.	

<u>NOTE</u>: If using REDCAP, circulation may take place with departmental administrators within your school. You need to make the necessary arrangements with the administrator.
However, if your department/school does not use REDCAP, then complete the section above.

Student signature: ……  **.……**

Date……14/09/2023……

Appendix G: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Good day 06 October 2023

My name is Noxolo Zandile Dlamini (Ethics **2023ECE31M)** a Master of Education student in the Curriculum division at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisors are Dr Alfred Masinire and Mr Paul Maluleka. I am conducting a research study about curriculum decolonisation in higher education. The study title is *What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate teacher education course at a university in Gauteng.*

I am kindly inviting you to take part in my study through an interview. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last a maximum of 60 minutes. The interview will take place at your convenience preferably your office, staff lounge or virtual via MS Teams.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview. This data will be stored in a password protected file and device and will be deleted after 5 years. Only I, the researcher, and my supervisors will have access to the data. The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you. With your permission, other researchers may use the data collected from this research study, but your name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it will be because you want to volunteer. You are not obliged to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. Lastly, you will not be paid for being in this research study and the risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life.

This research study will be written up as a research report. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any

concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Noxolo

Researcher:
Noxolo Dlamini, 1855898@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisors:
Dr Alfred Masinire, Alfred.masinire@wits.ac.za, 011 717 3056
Mr Paul Maluleka, paul.maluleka@wits.ac.za, 011 717 3170

Appendix H: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

Title of project: *What exactly is to decolonise curricula? Exploring lecturers' perspectives on decolonisation in relation to the intended and enacted curriculum: A case study of a Postgraduate teacher education course.*

Name of researcher: Noxolo Zandile Dlamini

I, ……..……., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please tick the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study.	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded.	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report.	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript/book chapter)	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.	YES	NO

…… (signature)
…… (name of participant)
…… (date)


…… (signature)
…Noxolo Dlamini…… (name of researcher)
…… (date)

Appendix I: Interview Schedule

Noxolo Dlamini Interview Schedule

Ice Breaker Questions

1. For how many years have you been lecturing at Wits and how has the experience been?
2. Could you kindly provide an overview of your journey in scholarship, research background and knowledge expertise?
3. When and how did you first learn about decolonisation?

Main Questions

1. What does curriculum decolonisation mean to you, and how does it relate to the topic that you teach in the course?
2. How has decolonisation directed your understanding of knowledge, curriculum and power in the course?
3. Is there anything decolonial about the section that you teach in the course? In terms of the readings, lectures and/or assessment. Please explain how you select, organise, teach and assess knowledge your topic in the course?
4. What opportunities do you find yourself afforded as a lecturer when it comes to teaching about curriculum, knowledge and power in relation to decolonisation? How does it provide unique avenues for engaging with students?
5. What specific obstacles/challenges have you encountered in planning and teaching your topic in the course?
6. Do you have any questions, concerns, issues to raise that I may have not explored in the questions?