MOVING FROM DISCOURSE TO PRAXIS: SITUATING ACADEMICS AT THE CENTRE OF DECOLONISATION STRUGGLE

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ABSTRACT

As part of contributing to the decolonisation debate to reclaim and re-purpose the universities as public good institutions, drawing from Freire's notion of praxis we argue that there is a need to move from theorisation of concepts or what we refer to as discourses to praxis, and academics must drive the decolonisation project. Unlike students, academics have immense power to influence choices of pedagogical approaches, processes of curriculum design, and knowledge production. Academics enjoy academic freedom. This implies that they have the freedom to teach and conduct research without external control in their area of expertise, which gives them special protection within the classroom and the parameters of their field of expert knowledge. Thus, we argue that the freedom that academics enjoy puts them in a good position to be drivers of the project of decolonising higher education. As key role players on processes of teaching and learning as well as knowledge production in higher education, they have some degree of power that they are better positioned to drive the decolonial project. They can use their roles as teachers and researchers to advance the decolonisation agenda.

Keywords: academics, Africanization, change agents, colonisation, decolonisation, curriculum, knowledge, higher education

INTRODUCTION

The decolonisation call by students in South African universities, which took place in 2015, was a major turning point in the higher education discourse in South Africa (Chikolo 2021; Hlatshwayo 2019; Mampane and Omidire 2018; Mbembe 2019). It was a turning point as students held the view that the present university designs and settings still emulate and exacerbate the colonial and apartheid designs and structure. They argued that the skewed labour market systems; substantial racial and gendered wage gap are a product of colonial and

apartheid settings, which are still prevalent in South African universities and that affect the working class and its offspring. Mbembe (2019) argues that the decolonisation call by students has created necessary debates around institutional racial hierarchies and violence. The decolonisation call is not a new phenomenon (Chikolo 2021; Hlatshwayo 2020).

It dates back to the 1960s, this was the independence period in the context of Africa, albeit under different names of Africanisation and indigenisation. Mbembe (2017, 05), Stein and Andreotti (2016, 07) argue this expression to decolonise dates back to the 1960s albeit under different names of "Africanization", "indigenisation". In the context of Africa, the term decolonisation emerged within a specific context of anti-colonial struggle, intended to rid Africa with European colonial powers and authority (Jansen 2019). For Keet (2014), decolonisation is about attending to whatever is left undone by colonialism. Essentially, it is about dealing with colonial legacies in our democratic society, including the prevalence dominance of Eurocentric knowledge and curriculum in higher education institutions, which must be Africanised (Heleta 2016a; Hlatshwayo 2019).

In the context of curriculum, although in details it has amended, fundamental it is not impressively different because it was never considered for the present social settings, and was rather inherited and like any inherited system, good or bad for its time when held to too long hampers social progress (Flinders and Thornton 2013). In the African context, a decolonised higher education and its curriculum must be embedded within the African traditions, epistemologies, cultures, values, and identities for it to respond to societal problems in which the university is implicated. Regarding the decolonisation of knowledge and the curriculum, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that it is significant to teach African languages. For him, a decolonised university in Africa is about the centrality of African languages in teaching and learning spaces, as they (languages) are critical in shaping knowledge. Decolonility is a school of thoughts emanating from the latin american scholars' modernity/coloniality/decoloniality (MCD) research programme, (Maldonado-Torres 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2011; Mignolo 2018; Mignolo and Walsh 2020; Mignolo and Escobar 2010), which focuses mainly on knowledge prodiction. We focus more on decolonization because it allows us to go beyond debates, that scholars have been engaged on, to explore possibilities of undoing the colonial project in terms of systems and structure through praxis.

The students have broadened decolonisation in their context to mean: the total change in syllabus or curriculum content, which according to Hlatshwayo (2019) and Mbembe (2019) is applicable mainly in social sciences, or humanities. In addition, Mbembe (2019) argues, changes concerning student demographics, at the same time recruiting more Africans, changing the academic and administrative support bodies, institutional cultures and spaces, funding

deficit for higher education, and high level of dropouts, amongst others.

There is no doubt that the noble call supported by many students and some academics in some institutions is not without context and history. It is about reshaping and re-purposing the university in societal needs. Essentially, it is about reclaiming the institutions of higher learning as a public good, free from colonial trappings (Ndlovu-Gatsheni n.d.). Mamdani (2019) argues that the present universities that exist in the continent have very little to do with what was the case in these African universities pre-colonialism, rather more everything to do with what was created in Europe. He makes examples about institutions such as Timbuktu, Alexandria, Tunis, Cairo to the extent that they did not shape nor influence the present African universities.

The notion of decolonization has been engaged with mainly at an abstract and theoretical level, without translating it into practice. For this reason, we draw from the work of Pualo Freire, a Brazilian Educationist who developed the concept of education as an emancipatory practice. According to this notion of education, the theory is part of a praxis, which is about reflecting and acting in the world in order to change it (Freire 2000). "Freire's theory was based on an ontological argument that posited praxis as a central defining feature of human life and a necessary condition of freedom" (Glass 2001, 16). According to Freire, the pedagogy of the oppressed, which he described as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two stages. The first stage is about unearthing the reality and extent of oppression and making the commitment to transform that reality through praxis (Freire 2000). The second stage, is when the reality has been changed, the oppressed then becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of emancipation. With this in mind, the engagement with the decolonial issues has been at the discursive level.

Thus, in this article, we argue that academics have an essential role to play in moving decolonization debates in higher education from discursive level to praxis. While, Vandeyar (2020) asked necessary questions in terms of their readiness to decolonise their minds from embedded colonial values and belief systems; and whether or not they are ready to unlearn, re-learn, and critical change as individuals and academics. These are necessary questions to ponder because, as Heleta (2016a) suggests, the concept "decolonisation" scares South African academics.

As a starting point, we give an overview of the higher education in South Africa, to argue that despite apartheid ending in 1994; the system of higher education still reflects apartheid designs and settings and continues to do so 27 years later.

THE 1948 ELECTIONS ENTRENCHED RACIAL AND CULTURAL EXCLUSION AND VIOLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

There is consensus in the literature that post 1948 elections, racism and violence were prevalent in the higher education sector (Heleta 2016b; Hlatshwayo 2020; Mzileni and Mkhize 2020; Vandeyar 2020). However, the disparities in university education have long existed even prior-1948 which is the year that entrenched the segregation policies in all facets of life in South Africa (Sached Trust 1988). The inequalities in education settings often reflect colonial and apartheid settings exacerbate the existing disproportion in the labour market, thus obstructs the social transformation necessary for national progress.

World Bank Group (2018) concurs that the inequality in the South African education system, which is still very much entrenched, perpetuates the status of unemployable offspring of the working class and the poor. The racial regime post 1948 viewed higher education in South Africa as one of the broader state machinery intended to racially exclude black people and bolster white supremacy nationwide (Heleta 2016b; Hlatshwayo 2020). Heleta (2016b) argues that the intention was to embed the power and privilege of the white establishment who had just won electoral support in an unfair and discriminatory process.

Higher education during the apartheid regime in South Africa was premised on the epistemic, social, economic, and cultural reproduction of the regime as racialised norms (Heleta 2016b; Hlatshwayo 2020). The overarching principles and policies of apartheid education were meant to keep black Africans at a low level performing subservient and unproductive tasks so that they are not economically competitive (Letseka, Breier, and Visser 2010). From the very inception, higher education was unfairly designed to entrench the power and privilege of white supremacy.

The apartheid government had one intention only to separate development based on race, thus universities were set up to preserve this grand racial exclusive development. The replica of prevailing patterns of powers and privilege in higher education through normalised anomaly practices and sediment tradition of knowledge is a moral and epistemic injustice (Booi, Vincent, and Liccardo 2017). Although the Apartheid system was replaced by the democratic system and values, there still prevalent inequities across racial groups shaped through the uneven education system of the Apartheid years are being addressed but still hard to uproot altogether.

LANGUAGE AS A SYMBOL OF CULTURAL POWER AND HEGEMONY

Central to decolonisation is language and culture. Mampane and Omidire (2018) assert, language is crucial to the production of knowledge to guarantee epistemic and cultural identity which must be observed. Despite South Africa having achieved a democratic breakthrough,

with most South Africans, mainly black having political power without economic power, of significance in the debate the higher education remains entrenched in colonial, apartheid, and Eurocentric. The imposition of language and culture created a cultural superiority and undermining of other cultures and languages (Alexander 2014; Mampane and Omidire 2018, 2; Mbembe 2017, 7; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 1986, 4).

The dominant use of colonial languages albeit retains as an official in a democratic state affirms the system still very much entrenched. English and Afrikaans are dominant languages of the British oppressors spoken by many South Africans as opposed to their mother tongue in university settings. This demonstrates the severity of the segregated educational system established under white majority rule and the Apartheid years has been enormous. For Booi et al. (2017), social justice in higher education, decolonisation, total overhaul of institutional cultures, and general discourses around knowledge production patterns are seldom discussed. They posit that for scholars and academic researchers in the higher education space is important to continue to probe, uncover how the racialised, classed gendered assumptions remain deeply entrenched in the norms, practices of historical white measured universities in South Africa, and with what effects (Booi et al. 2017). Booi et al. (2017) and Hlatshwayo (2020) narrating the intricate nature of former white institutions of higher learning argues how senior white academics act as gatekeepers in ensuring that those who enter the academy have the "educated language", habitus, attributes, attitudes, and values as well as temperaments that would assist them to successfully partake and survive in the university. Secondly, Mheta, Lungu, and Govender (2018, 05) argue that public spaces in universities and architecture, in general, are significant in the context of decolonisation, as they are a cultural symbol with specific values. Thus, they argue that public spaces and buildings in institutions of learning embody a capital symbol that must be considered in the decolonisation process. Furthermore, they cite Mbembe (2015, 5) to argue that buildings and public spaces in higher education institutions are inseparable. Although the struggle to decolonise higher education will have casualties, academics must nonetheless commit to it in an attempt to restore order and dignity, culture and heritage as well African knowledge system (Mampane and Omidire 2018, 2).

1994 PERIOD: ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

When the government of the African National Congress took over power after winning the elections in 1994, it inherited a racially divided higher education system of 36 universities and technikons (Bunting 2002; Fiske and Ladd 2004). Therefore, higher education transformation (with regards to student access, affordability of education, the kinds of knowledge produced,

standards, curriculum design, and the type and quality of graduates produced by universities) became crucial in the context of the country's transition to democracy. The main goal was to create a higher education system that is single and integrated and would "contribute to the common good of society through the production, acquisition, and application of knowledge, the building of human capacity, and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities" (White Paper 3: A Program of Higher Education 1997, 1.20). Without denying the fact that the apartheid legacy continues to shape South Africa's higher education in adverse ways, Webbstock (2016) argues that two decades post-1994, the sector is very different from what it was under apartheid.

One of its major restructurings was the creation of new intuitions through mergers such that there are now only 26 universities instead of the 36 that existed under apartheid (Weber and Vandeyar 2004). Of the 26 institutions, 11 are traditional universities (offering university-type programmes), 9 are universities of technology (offering technikon-type programmes) and 6 are comprehensive universities (offering both university and technikon-type programmes). Furthermore, massification has been another important component of the higher education transformation agenda. This opened access to students of racial groups that were marginalised under the apartheid regime. However, the student body is still not representative of the country's population as a whole (Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; HESA 2014; Lewin and Mawoyo 2014; Smit 2012; Wangenge-Ouma 2012; Webbstock 2016). In 2019, the share of student participation rates for individuals aged 18–29 in South Africa was 4.3 per cent for Africans, 4,6 per cent for Coloureds, 17,4 per cent Indians, and 20 per cent for Whites (Statista 2020). Moreover, the increase in access for the previously disadvantaged groups is not accompanied by corresponding success rates. The literature shows that success rates continue to be skewed by race and prior education (Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Webbstock 2016). In its 2012 report, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) asserted that for a cohort of Black African students who began studying towards a three-year degree in 2005, only 41 per cent graduated in regulation time and 59 per cent dropped out (HESA 2014). In 2013, it reported that the percentage of Black African and Coloured students who graduated within five years is still less than 50 per cent in the majority of undergraduate programmes (Lewin and Mawoyo 2014). According to Higher Education South Africa (HESA), 35 per cent of students at South African universities dropout in their first year of study (Strydom, Kub, and Mentz 2010).

There are many other areas of the higher education system that are undergoing a slow pace of transformation, causing a lot of dissatisfaction among students and some members of the academic staff. These include curriculum, admission policies, institutional cultures, and other areas. The dissatisfaction with the slow pace of transformation became more apparent from the year 2015 with the emergence of an unprecedented wave of student movements in democratic

South Africa (Luescher 2016), which include #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, #ReformPukke, #TuksUprising, #OpenStellies, #RhodesMustFall, #SteynMustFall, #PatriarchyMustFall, #OpenStellenbosch, and #AfrikaansMustFall, End Outsourcing Campaigns and #TheTransCollective among others were central to the decolonisation project in the sector. Luescher (2016) argues that the thread that connects these different formations and campaigns is the struggle for transformation in South African universities, as students phrased it, decolonisation of higher education. The most prominent of these hashtag movements were the #RodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall.

South African South Africa has a long history of students protest both during the anti-apartheid struggle and the post-apartheid area (Luescher 2016; Weber and Vandeyar 2004). However, the recent demonstrations of students' displeasure with the slow pace of transformation, particularly at historically white universities, began with the "WITS Transformation Memo 2014" which was written by a group of post-graduate students at the Politics Department of the University of the Witwatersrand late in 2014 (Naicker 2016). These students were calling for the decolonisation of the curriculum and an increase in the number of black academics in the university's politics department. The memo also demanded the acknowledgement and appreciation of the African political, philosophical, and historical intellectual traditions as a means of building a post-colonial African university. However, 2015 marks the year of the emergence of the unprecedented wave of student movements in democratic South Africa. According to Luescher (2016), there has never been a student movement in democratic South Africa that received the level of media attention, intellectual scrutiny, and high-level government response as the collective of hashtag student movements.

On the 9th of March 2015, a student at the University Cape Town started protesting the presence of a statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the university's upper campus. These protests culminated in the emergence of the #RhodesMustFall movement quickly gained momentum, leading to the removal of Rhodes' statue on the 9th of April 2015. The #RhodesMust Fall Movement sparked a national debate about the decolonisation of universities in South Africa. This was beyond the mere dismantling of colonial symbols like the Rhodes statue, it also included the decolonisation of the curriculum. This call for decolonisation was carried over by the #FeesMustFall movement, which also emerged in March 2015, when students at various campuses took to the streets protesting tuition fee hikes of up to 11.5 per cent announced by the Department of Higher Education (DHET) (Naicker 2016). The initial message of this movement was that the costs of higher education were too high and unaffordable for the majority of poor black students, and therefore, the movement demanded no fee increases to the fees that were already high. The movement's demands later evolved to also include a call for

decolonisation of education, the transformation of universities to address racial and gender inequalities, in transformation in terms of the staff composition, and the insourcing of general workers.

According to Butler-Adam (2016), President Zuma's announcement in October 2015 that there will be 0 per cent fee increase for 2015 signalled the government's understanding of the financial difficulties faced by students. He argues that this inspired students' demand for free higher education in 2016. However, it must be noted that the concerns raised by the student movement are about more than just exorbitant fees. The student movement is also concerned about the neo-liberalisation of the university, universities' failure to transform, the politics of knowledge, the extent to which they feel represented in the production of knowledge, a reflection of their experiences in the curriculum pedagogy, and the long-lasting legacy of institutional racism and Eurocentrism (Hodes 2017). It also demanded free-quality-decolonised higher education (Waghid 2016). Students' concerns at the University of Stellenbosch – a historically white Afrikaans university – including Black students feeling marginalised, alienated and intimidated in a space that has remained almost untransformed and unchallenged since the dawn of democracy in South Africa (Naicker 2016).

Given the colonial history of higher education in South Africa, students also called for the decolonisation of the curriculum. As Peter (2015), cited in Waghid (2016), argues, the university curriculum is Eurocentric and excludes "blackness" and renders it invisible – a situation that the #FeesMustFall attempted to disrupt. The domination of a Eurocentric curriculum in historically white universities, which continue to showcase their Black students as symbols of their transformation agenda is inconsistent with what it means to be inclusive (Waghid 2016). Such a curriculum perpetuates Eurocentrism, which views what is African as its marginal other (Waghid 2016).

In the following sections, we suggest that academics have a responsibility to drive the decolonial project in higher education – we suggest that we need to move from discourses, the theorisation of decolonisation to praxis, thus we argue that academics as change agents of society have a responsibility to lead the struggle.

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO DECOLONISE?

Black academics at historically white higher education institutions continue to reveal the agonising experiences of negotiating and navigating blatant and explicit racism in teaching, research workshops and seminars, staff meetings, and are expected to justify their employment and belonging (Heleta 2016a; Hlatshwayo 2020). In this article, we argue that academics should play a leading role in the decolonisation project, ensuring that it is realised. Unlike students,

academics have immense power to influence choices of pedagogical approaches, processes of curriculum design, and knowledge productions. They have immense knowledge, history, and experience about historical injustices, unfairness, discrimination, racism, and epistemic violence brought about by colonisation. Moreover, various education policy documents and reports post-1994 are seen to have failed to tackle sufficiently address the entrenched racism which structural and institutional, and the marginality not only of black students but also of black academics (Hlatshwayo 2020). Vandeyar (2020) argues that the praxis of academics should enable conditions that democratise learning spaces.

As thought leaders in society who constitute an invaluable part of any democratic society, academics are acutely aware, we suppose that imperialism and colonisation, in addition to apartheid shaped both direct and indirectly the political economy of every sector, in addition to dominance and political control and exploitation of resources in Africa (Heleta 2016b, 4). Critical to exploitation which borders on unfairness and injustices was the belief that colonisers had: that they are superior to others in the world and were on the god-ordained mission to salvage and bring life to Africans in their spaces. Heleta (2016b, 7) argues that the colonial universities were established as part of a colonial mission to promote white supremacy and unapologetic about their Eurocentric culture, knowledge, systems, and curriculum.

Thus, critical re-looking and reframing the culture and tradition, curriculum, teaching, and learning as well as research that academics leads must reflect the continental and South African realities (Heleta 2016, 6). Academics should be the change agents that Africa needs in this regard, of meaningful educational change and social cohesion (Vandeyar 2020). It is about time that South African stories and those in the continent at large be spoken in the teaching space, thus academics must drive the project in terms of teaching and research, in addition to "coming on board" as per Heleta.

For decolonisation to take shape and be meaningful, academics shall lead research aimed at developing curricula that are relevant to the needs and lived experiences of students. One of the most destructive effects of imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid was the undermining, suppression of indigenous knowledge system and privileging western culture, knowledge, and hallowing out African identities and symbols (Heleta 2016b; Mamdani 2019; Mampane and Omidire 2018).

ACADEMICS AS CHANGE AGENTS

Academics enjoy academic freedom. This implies that they have the freedom to teach and conduct research without external control in their area of expertise, which gives them special protection within the classroom and the parameters of their field of expert knowledge (Altbach

2007). Thus, we argue that the freedom that academics enjoy puts them in a good position to be drivers of the project of decolonising higher education.

As key role players on processes of teaching and learning as well as knowledge production in higher education, they have some degree of power that they are better positioned to drive the decolonial project. They can use their roles as teachers and researchers to advance the decolonisation agenda.

The teaching role is one of the academics' key performance areas in higher education. In most cases, they are involved in the design of the courses they teach. They also have the power to make pedagogical choices for who they will deliver the course that they teach.

These choices have an impact on the quality of the experience of the students they teach and on the graduate attributes that those students will have upon graduation. Paula Freire, we have cited give us an insight into the significance of the pedagogical choices that teachers make. He argued that pedagogy is more than a mere method of teaching, it is a combination of philosophy, politics, and practice that requires teachers to involve themselves and their students in transforming oppressive social conditions, which in this case is the colonial organisation of the university (Freire 2000). As Zembylas (2018) argued, if the decolonised higher education is to be realised, academics as teachers in higher education need to interrogate the pedagogical practices emerging from Eurocentric knowledge approaches by drawing on and twisting these very practices. "These efforts can provide spaces to enact decolonial pedagogies that reclaim colonised practices" (Zembylas 2018, 8). Academics have the freedom to adopt pedagogical practices that advance the decolonial project. Part of the call for decolonisation of higher education is about decolonising the curriculum (Heleta 2016; le Grange 2018; Mheta et al. 2018). Academics are at the forefront of curriculum design; they often design the courses they teach. They choose the material that forms part of the courses they teach.

If the decolonisation of the curriculum is to be realised, we argue that academics adopt a critical approach to how they make choices of the materials that form part of the curriculum. This is not about supplementing the existing Eurocentric curriculum with non-Western perspectives. This maintains the status core while the non-Western perspectives inserted in the curriculum create an illusion of transformation. Real decolonisation of the curriculum is about dismantling the dominance of Eurocentrism in the curriculum. According to Zembylas (2018, 5), decolonising is about:

> "Identifying the epistemological and ontological hegemony that structures the existing university and enabling epistemological and ontological access to a range of knowledge demand paying attention to the pedagogical practices of students and educators – that is, not teaching methods in the strict sense, but rather pedagogies as processes, practices, and paths of struggle that oppose

ongoing colonisation on an everyday basis and seek to reclaim humanity beyond its colonial legacies."

Academics can drive the process of decolonisation of higher education if only they can make the curriculum and pedagogical choices that are in line with the decolonial agenda. However, to do this, we believe that they need to align their values and attitude with those of the decolonial project. In Freirean terms, they need to develop the critical consciousness to see the epistemic violence and oppression of the colonial organisation of higher education and allow that consciousness to translate to praxis.

Research is a big part of the academic profession, and as knowledge producers, academics must be critical about the knowledge they produce and how that knowledge is produced, in the context of the call for decolonisation of universities. As part of decolonising higher education, is to problematise the western knowledge and Africanise it, to have a curriculum that is more Africanised and less western philosophy (Allais 2016, 2).

Chikolo (2021, 3) argues that decolonisation takes place in the higher education sector in South Africa ensuring that amongst others, the research must embrace the divergent views worldwide, in Africa and South Africa. This can be achieved when academics in Africa deliberate about adopting a decolonising research methodology, which Keikelame and Swartz (2019, 1) describe as "an approach that is used to challenge the Eurocentric research methods that undermine the local knowledge and experiences of the marginalised population groups". This involves being deliberate about conducting research that is culturally appropriate and in a language that is relevant to the people with whom research is conducted.

> "It should also be propelled by constructive discussions on knowledge systems and how these systems restrain and exclude other forms of knowledge, and the kind of actions needed for these systems to be more open and integrated." (Keikelame and Swartz 2019, 1).

Intellectual imperialism is another issue against which academics in African universities must take a stand if the goal of decolonising higher education is to be realised. Alatas (2000) suggests that the political and economic structure of imperialism created a concurrent structure in the thinking of the dominated people, which is a product of intellectual imperialism.

> "Intellectual imperialism is the domination of one people by another in their world of thinking. Intellectual imperialism is usually an effect of actual direct imperialism or is an effect of indirect domination arising from imperialism." (Alatas 2000, 24).

Intellectual imperialism manifests with six traits. Firstly, the exploitation of Africa as a data

minefield by European organisations. Raw data is collected here, processing into articles and books in Europe, and then sold back to Africa. Secondly, it manifests through tutelage, which includes the canonisation of European scholarship and its use as the standard of good scholarship. Thirdly, it manifests through the exploitation of conformity demonstrated in the uncritical use of Eurocentric theories and methodologies and their acceptance as universally applicable.

The fourth is the secondary often played our intellectuals in partnership projects with European intellectuals. The fifth is the rationalisation of the civilising mission. This manifests in that European universities and scholars have prescribed the model for universities and scholarships. Scholars in Africa are expected to develop knowledge according to the prescribed model. Lastly, it is having mediocre scholars from Western countries building their careers in the global south.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we have argued that academics have an essential role to play in moving decolonization debates in higher education from discursive level to praxis. We further argued that the freedom that academics enjoys better positions them to be pioneers of practical actions and initiatives to realize the decolonisation projects in higher education. This argument implies that academics not only in South Africa but in the continent as a whole, must be at the forefront in transformation higher education. In addition, as key role players on processes of teaching and learning as well as production of knowledge, they have considerable degree of power to lead and implement the decolonialization project. A decolonised higher education must be embedded within the African traditions, epistemologies, cultures, values, and identities for it to respond to societal problems in which the university is implicated. Academics as change agents must help society to reshape and re-purpose the university to broader social struggles. After all, universities are public good institutions; therefore, academics must lead the struggle to reclaim these institutions of higher learning as a public good, free from colonial trappings.

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