Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for examination or a degree.

Signature

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

The South African higher education landscape was and is still facing numerous challenges. Even after the new democratic government implemented major policy reforms to address these challenges, epistemologies and knowledge systems at most universities still remain embedded in Western worldviews. Considering South Africa's higher education history, it seemed a valuable contribution to explore how academics are pursuing curriculum transformation, in an effort to eliminate the power of Western epistemological traditions, by means of decolonising their curriculum.

The scholarly literature explored the influential discourses that are crucial in understanding decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation. It was, therefore, important to first discuss a few significant events, both pre-1994 and post-1994, that have helped shape the higher education landscape of South Africa by necessitating the urgency to decolonise the curriculum. To better understand the nuances of decolonisation, I explored decoloniality, in response to colonialism and coloniality. Africanisation and indigenisation are unpacked as two important interlinking concepts of decolonisation. Decolonising the curriculum is then addressed through the theories of the lived curriculum and *currere.* I unlocked some of the complexities of decolonisation by exploring different approaches and possibilities to decolonising the curriculum. The central part of this study is to investigate curriculum transformation as well as how it can be fostered through academics and a decolonised curriculum, which is why I explored *Ubuntu-currere* and the importance of becoming in the context of this study.

The phenomenological study was situated in an idealist interpretivism paradigm and utilised a qualitative research design. Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach was used as the foundation for my semi-structured, one-on-one interviews as the data generation method. The University of Cape Town (UCT) was purposively selected as the research environment, mainly because UCT was at the forefront of the student protest in 2015 (through the *#RhodesMustFall* movement), which ignited the decolonial movement and placed decolonising the curriculum in the spotlight. UCT academics specialising in curriculum studies or education as their area of scholarship were purposefully chosen to participate in my study. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was the method of analysis.

From the views shared by the participants, eight themes have emerged. The first theme highlights the participants' personal views on the importance of the 2015 student movement and the decolonial moment. The second theme reveals that decolonisation within the context of the university and its curriculum is a complicated and multi-layered concept. The third theme discloses the impact on teaching and learning as well as on academic freedom as a result of the transformation committee and the *Curriculum Change Framework*. In the fourth theme, it was revealed how participants have perceived transformation within the university as a result of the 2015 student movements. The fifth theme displays the need for more cultural and curriculum change within the university environment. Participants provide their approaches to a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy in the sixth theme. In theme seven, it was revealed that participants believe English, as a medium of instruction, is obstructing the transformation process in universities. In the last theme, it becomes evident that the participants have enjoyed a valuable journey of transformation and self-discovery through a momentous shift in their ideology.

The concluding chapter captures how academics who have embraced the decolonial moment transform their curriculum through decolonisation. Five reflective statements emerged: 2015 #*Fallism* student movements revived dormant decolonisation conversations; English as a medium of instruction as counterproductive to the ideals of decolonising the curriculum; challenges of fostering curriculum transformation; absence of cultural and curriculum transformation at the university; engaging with decolonising the curriculum as a becoming, through learning to unlearn.

The dissertation concludes by highlighting possible limitations and suggestions for further research.

Keywords: curriculum transformation, decolonisation, higher education, academics, #Fallism movements, *Ubuntu-currere*

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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The oppressive and racist apartheid system came to an end in 1994, however, "epistemologies and knowledge systems at most South African universities have not considerably changed; they remain rooted in colonial, apartheid and Western worldviews and epistemological traditions" (Heleta, 2016:1). Higher education curricula remain largely Eurocentric and continue to reinforce the Western dominance. We have, however, experienced several campaigns by South African students and progressive academics calling for the decolonisation of the curriculum at universities "by ending the domination of Western epistemological traditions, histories and figures" (Molefe 2016:32).

In line with Heleta (2016) and Molefe's (2016) observations, this chapter commences by providing in-depth background on the transformation that took place in South Africa's higher education landscape post-1994, as well as elucidating the intellectual conundrum of my study (1.2). To offer a further basic overview of the positioning of my research study, I present my research questions (1.3) and the aims of the study (1.4). Furthermore, to address my research questions and achieve the research aims, I discuss the research design and methodology chosen for this study (1.5) and the data generation methods (1.6). This is followed by the strategies I utilised to ensure trustworthiness (1.6) as well as the ethical considerations to which I adhered (1.7). Thereafter, I briefly discuss my role and responsibilities as a researcher (1.8). Lastly, I conclude this chapter with the division of chapters (1.10).

1.2 Background and intellectual conundrum

The dawn of the new democratic era was well received by many South African scholars, as it triggered tremendous attention to the history and development of South Africa's higher education sector (Hay & Monnapula-Mapesela, 2009). Before democracy, South Africa had an education system that was "racially differentiated, with fragmented departments organised along racial lines" (The Presidency, 2014:4). The apartheid laws imposed forced segregation at established universities and other tertiary institutions, which was why the offerings of further education and training differed depending on race

(Ebewo & Sirayi, 2018). The system, from basic education through to higher education and training, was generally unequal in terms of access, infrastructure, internal efficiency and input and output (The Presidency, 2014). However, the 1994 elections initiated change and the new democratic government implemented major policy reforms to address these inequalities (The Presidency, 2014). The new policy reforms signified the government's commitment and dedication to transforming the higher education sector.

According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2015), transformation is a process rooted in fundamental change that is meant to re-evaluate our thinking, attitudes, ethos, belief systems, policies and behaviours. However, teaching and learning transformation, coupled with debates about knowledge and social justice, will be negatively affected if transformation is not viewed in a holistic manner. Majola (2017) agrees that transformation should be approached holistically and states that transformation should be considered in a broader spectrum, not just prioritising particular issues “without taking cognisance of their intersectionality of all the different forms of oppression”. This implies that the focus should not only be on race and increasing the numbers of previously disadvantaged students in the universities but also on exploring other factors that could possibly hinder access to education, such as cost, cultural inclusion and curriculum changes.

Unfortunately, the ambitious plans for the new South African democratic education sector were not without challenges and Majola (2017) notes that some of the challenges to transformation in universities far exceeded just access and also includes “student success rates, curriculum relevance, unsuitable student accommodation, a questionable three-year degree structure, the lack of integration between bridging courses and the core curriculum”. Another major challenge, according to Majola (2017), is the different interpretations of the term transformation. He continues by saying some institutions have a very narrow interpretation of the term, which is limited to demographic changes only, while others extend their understanding to institutional culture and general reform of the institution. Based on the challenges mentioned above, faced by the higher education sector, it is imperative that transformation involves addressing all aspects of curriculum as well as teaching and learning, together with the support elements such as funding, housing and making academia attractive to a new generation of academics (Majola, 2017). In addition, to transform the higher education sector it is equally important to create

a system that is “free from all forms of unfair discrimination and artificial barriers to access and success, as well as one that is built on the principles of social inclusivity, mutual respect and acceptance” (Majola, 2017). The Department of Higher Education envisages that striving towards a transformed higher education will enable students to achieve their full potential through knowledge that is continually being stretched and deepened. Transformation will, furthermore, contribute to the economic, political, and social development that is essential for achieving equity (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015).

Policies were central to addressing the inequalities in higher education and they advocated for transformation. Lange (2019) draws our attention to two critical periods, 1990−2001 and 2001−2016 and emphasises four notable policies that were developed to address these needs and objectives to facilitate transformation in the higher education sector. The first policy is the *South African Qualification Authority* (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995, with the main task of establishing the *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF). Lange (2019) stresses the importance of the NQF as one of the most essential instruments designed to realise the goals of access, equity and redress. Lange (2019) also believes that the NQF is, by far, the most influential policy on curriculum issues. Another significant policy is the report of the *National Commission on Higher Education* (1996), which, according to Jansen (2004), was the founding policy document on higher education after apartheid. The report reflected on the higher education system and mentioned that although it has areas of excellence, it is also filled with inequities, imbalances and distortions derived from apartheid, making the system fundamentally flawed. The third policy is the *Education White Paper 3 – A Programme for Higher Education Transformation* (Department of Education, 1997), which, according to Du Preez, Simmonds and Verhoef (2016), was one of the key policy documents that addressed the ideals of the new democratic government. For Ramrathan (2016), the path of South Africa's higher education after apartheid has been guided by the *Education White Paper 3* (Department of Education, 1997). It is a path that, primarily, has been hypothesised within a framework of equity through redress and social justice that pursued changing the face of higher education through demographic changes. The last influential policy mentioned by Lange (2017) is the *Higher Education Act 101* of 1997 which is underpinned by eleven desires, *inter alia* to establish a single co-ordinated higher education system and to redress past discrimination and ensure equal access.

According to Lange and Luescher (2016), higher education policy during the period 1990−2001 was mainly concerned with identifying values and principles to shape transformation and establish a diagnosis of the state of the system. Yet, policies lacked detail about how to implement the solutions and, for this reason, institutions were left to interpret policy frames by themselves. Ramrathan (2016) agrees with this by expressing his experience of curriculum transformation during this period, which was the implementation of modularisation of courses into coherent units of learning. Higher education institutions were required to modularise their courses into term, semester or year-long modules and then allocate credit values to each module. However, there was no clear guidance on allocating credit values. Hereafter, institutions developed modules by breaking up existing courses into smaller units of learning and allocated credit points based purely on institutional discretion. Ramrathan (2016) brings our attention to further developments in the modularisation process, which was the standardisation of module credits within the NQF, which can be defined as the structure and purpose of qualifications. After that, the NQF was reviewed, and the new NQF was extended to 10 levels, with the doctoral qualification occupying the highest level on the NQF. This new development also allowed for transitions between qualification types and programmes streams, meaning students could start within one field of study and could then change streams to another qualification in a different field of study. Ramrathan (2016) asserts that these curriculum developments were merely instrumental and that credit points, level descriptors and rules of combination formed the foundation of curriculum transformation. Lange (2017) agrees and affirms that during 1990–2001 higher education policy was more interested in the exoskeleton of the curriculum, as presented in the NQF than focusing on the actual curriculum.

During the first ten years of democracy, the government was preoccupied with structural transformation. However, during the second period that extended from 2001–2016, the focus shifted to ideological transformation (Du Preez *et al.,* 2016). This period also saw a "growing preoccupation with the effectiveness and efficiency of the higher education system" (Lange, 2019:82). A series of intervention programmes were initiated to provide epistemological access to universities. Student performances were analysed and newly available data indicated that student success rates, especially among African students, were inadequate. This meant that extra support was necessary in order for students to successfully bridge the gap between high school and higher education (Scott, Yeld &

Hendry, 2007). Extended (foundation) programmes were introduced in an attempt to solve this conundrum. The concept of the extended programmes was embedded in the academic development movement of the 1980s, but the application thereof became more visible in later years. The focus was on teaching practices, as that is what was considered to be the answer to the failure of the large numbers of students. These interventions dealt with knowledge through structure and were designed for those specific students who were not yet ready to enter a mainstream curriculum. The new structure provided extra support, especially in the areas of language and academic literacy, which would allow students to gain knowledge and skills to adapt and perform better once they enter a mainstream curriculum. Lange (2019:82) expresses that "epistemological access was the fundamental concept around which the effort of the extended programmes was built". Ramrathan (2016), furthermore, highlights another effort to increase epistemological access to higher education during the period 2001–2016. This was manifested by a task team set up by the CHE (Council on Higher Education), who proposed introducing a flexible curriculum for the undergraduate programmes offered at higher education institutions. The proposal was based on addressing the shortcomings of school education by changing the higher education undergraduate curriculum by restructuring the existing undergraduate three-year curriculum into a four-year curriculum for all students (Council on Higher Education, 2013). Unfortunately, as before, "structure trumped the knowledge contained in the curriculum" (Lange, 2019:83) and the proposal was rejected by the government as well as several higher education institutions (Lange, 2019; Ramrathan, 2016). Lange (2017), however, is of the opinion that the CHE proposal could have provided an interesting standpoint not just on the structure of the degree but also on its curriculum. Ramrathan (2016) concludes that despite the dismissal of the flexible curriculum proposal, most higher education institutions in South Africa offer some form of foundation programme that provides additional support to students who do not meet admission requirements or selection requirements into programmes and, thus, ultimately, widening access.

Under the Higher Education Act 1997, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), a permanent committee of the CHE, was officially launched in 2001. The responsibilities of the HEQC were to promote quality assurance, to audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions, to accredit programmes of higher education and to coordinate and facilitate quality assurance activities with other education and

training quality assurers (Lange, 2017). Teaching and learning were the focus of the HEQC, and the criteria for institutional audits and programme accreditation prioritised teaching and learning. The criteria examined the “existence of policies, processes and structures that support tasks such as assessment, curriculum design and programme management, or academic governance, but did not specifically address curriculum” (Lange, 2017:45). One of the main objectives of the accreditation system was to increase public confidence in higher education programmes and qualifications as well as to protect students from poor quality programmes. Lange (2017:45) further explains that the HEQCs idea of quality suggested “more than minimum standards; it linked the concept of transformation as an emancipatory socio-political change process with transformation as an individual change process”. According to the HEQC (2008:17), the “fitness for purpose” of HEIs would be determined by three core functions, “teaching and learning, research and community engagement”, as the sites of transformation. The way in which this was conducted allowed institutions to exercise their academic freedom. The concerns of the HEQCs fitness of purpose and transformation concerning teaching and learning were, according to Lange’s (2017) view, generally “focused on the responsiveness of HEIs to national needs”, which did not, in her view, involve the “explicit encouragement of curricular review or the notion of curriculum transformation” (Lange, 2017:45).

Badat (2016:8) agrees with Lange (2017) and points out that “critical epistemological and ontological questions” concerning curriculum and pedagogy have not received enough attention. He explains that this could either be because of a “refusal on the part of academics to do so”, which is sometimes in deference to “academic freedom”, or it could be due to a “lack of the capabilities and/or support to do so” (Badat, 2016:8). Seemingly, at several universities, teaching and learning, which is crucial to student success, is frequently “neglected and overshadowed by research” and Badat (2016:8) expresses that this could be, “perhaps because the former are considered as innate abilities or commonsense activities”.

For Ramrathan (2016:2), regardless of the various initiatives, policies and developments towards transforming curriculum in higher education, it is still “lacking in its approach to innovative ways of curriculum intellectualism, largely because of the fixation on redress transformation agendas based on numerical changes”. As a result, very little has changed in terms of content, pedagogy and assessment of curriculum (Lange, 2017). Heleta

(2016) also articulates that regardless of the many transformation policies and commitment at various levels to fast track the radical educational transformation of South Africa's higher education sector, knowledge systems and the curriculum at most South African universities have not transformed much. It is undeniable that the call for transformation in higher education has been addressed and discussed for decades by various influential leaders, academics and policies. More than two decades ago already, in the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, the Ministry expressed its concern and stressed that it is imperative for transformation to take place in the higher education sector (Department of Education, 1997:3). It was further noted that these changes in the system should "redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities" (Department of Education, 1997:3). Consistently, this was again noted in the 2008 Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions, also known as the Soudien Report (Department of Education, 2008), when the importance of curriculum transformation was undeniably highlighted. Given that the primary function of higher education is the production and transmission of knowledge, it could be argued that epistemological transformation is at the heart of the transformation agenda. At the centre of epistemological transformation is curriculum reform – a reorientation away from the apartheid knowledge system, in which curriculum was used as a tool of exclusion, to a democratic curriculum that is inclusive of all human thought (Department of Education, 2008:90).

Lange (2017) makes a very significant observation and concludes that it is crucial to realise and accept that, even after the release of the Soudien report, with a few exceptions as mentioned above, there have been no serious engagement at an institutional level (a) with regards to knowledge as epistemology; (b) as different frames of understanding; (c) as a necessary critique of knowledge; and (d) as a creator of identity. The general policy choices made by the new democratic government, combined with the preoccupation of the NQF, did not create enough opportunity for the investigation of knowledge and pedagogy in the curriculum to address the transformation of the curriculum beyond the concern of national needs pertaining to economic and developmental goals of South Africa (Lange, 2017). According to Lange (2019:83), this created "an epistemological vicious circle in which the lack of examination of curricula supported a lack of examination

of institutional cultures, especially in relation to academic and student identity". Some students and staff are raising concerns about aspects of institutional transformation in South African universities that are not addressed. Lange (2017), furthermore, reiterates that if universities in South Africa are to attend to these concerns, it is important that they look at the relationship between curriculum, knowledge and identity and how they are being defined, so as to determine where universities stand in relation to these defined concepts. This statement by Lange (2017) is akin to Majola's (2017) view, as discussed above, that many universities have a narrow view of the interpretation of the term transformation, which in Majola's (2017) opinion is a major challenge faced by universities in their journey to a transformed university.

Years after the 2008 Soudien Report release, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Blade Nzimande, also highlighted which changes did not take place over the years in the higher education sector. These include more access for black and women students; greater financial support to poor students; and the progress made on the decline of drop-out rates. Nevertheless, according to Nzimande (2015b), "we still have a long way to go and transformation efforts must continue uncompromisingly". He continues to set out that there is still an urgent need to drastically change the demographics of our professoriate; to transform research agendas; to eliminate all forms of unjust discrimination; to increase student support; and to improve academic success rates. Lange (2017:49) agrees that the demographics of the professoriate need attention and points out that "Academic identity has been unspoken except obliquely as it refers to the plight of black academics at historically white universities". Meaning that academic identity, as in what defines an academic as an academic, has not been given enough engagement. Nzimande (2015b) continues and states that a few institutions have made progress in transforming themselves, but others have not. For Nzimande (2015b), it is vital that everyone pays attention to these matters so as to cultivate greater awareness of Africa and curriculum transformation in order to move South Africa forward towards a transformed and just higher education system.

Similar to the reports and voices above is the report on higher education released by the Council on Higher Education (2016). Insights were delivered as well as data and document analyses to provide a deeper understanding of the higher education sector. It was noted in the report that, although progress has been made in the structural domains

of higher education curriculum through policy-related improvements, “it has made very little progress in the arguably more important cultural domain of ideas and theories” (Council on Higher Education, 2016:171). In addition, it was also reported that higher education curricula have mainly stayed unchanged even though there were major changes that have occurred in social and economic conditions (Council on Higher Education, 2016). Indisputably, this could raise the question of why everyone was so shocked by the 2015 student protest movements, which called for transformation, when clearly the concern about the lack of transformation in higher education had been voiced for so many years by different role players. The 2nd Higher Education Transformation Summit, in October 2015, included a critical reflection on the history of transformation over the past 21 years, but also specifically the last five years. The summit's aim was to provide a chance to re-think higher education transformation and build a vision for what future South African universities should look like. Minister Blade Nzimande emphasised that the term transformation is a complex and multi-dimensional term and stressed that transformation refers to profound and radical change in higher education, summoning all universities to Africanise and decolonise (Nzimande, 2015a).

Chapter 2 draws on the developments around rethinking curriculum in universities in more detail as initiated through the various students' protest movements. Some of these cries for transformation have been centred along the idea of decolonising the curriculum. Du Preez (2018:21) asserts that higher education institutions use decolonisation as a strategic response “to redress past inequalities and injustices”, which challenges and questions the authority of Western knowledge, pedagogy, research and the colonial roots of university practices and curricula. Deputy Minister of Higher Education (now the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation), Buti Manamela, spoke at the UNISA Conference in 2018 on Decolonising Knowledge, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and stated, “[i]n the context of South African higher education, decolonisation is the comprehensive transformation of the curriculum and institutional cultures to primarily reflect and promote African context” (Manamela, 2018). For these reasons, this study especially looked into decolonising curriculum as part of the transformation process in higher education.

According to Heleta (2016) in order to engage with the decolonisation of the curriculum in South Africa, we need to consider two approaches, as discussed by Garuba (2015).

The first is to “add new items to the existing curricula”; whereas, the second approach requires us to “rethink how the object of study itself is constituted” and then only can you restructure to bring about fundamental change (Garuba, 2015). Heleta (2016:5) claims that South African universities promote the first approach in their focus to maintain the status quo. This implies that institutions mainly want to keep Eurocentric worldviews in the curriculum and only add segments of Africa and previously colonised places and peoples. The first approach creates the illusion that reforming and transforming has taken place in an institution when, in fact, the opposite is true. This approach also resonates closely with what Le Grange, Du Preez, Ramrathan and Blignaut (2020:25) term decolonial-washing; they put forward their concern that some institutions resort to “instrumentalist and quick-fix solutions to decolonise curricula” in an attempt to adhere to the curriculum transformation mandate. The outcome of this is decolonial-washing or the impression that decolonisation has taken place instead of actual fundamental change. Similar to the views of the abovementioned curriculum scholars is that of Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:6), who observed that “current knowledges, epistemologies and methodologies are for equilibrium rather than transformation”, thus implying it was less about change and more about the status quo. Heleta (2016) argues that fundamental change can only happen if universities apply the latter approach, as suggested by Garuba (2015) by reconsidering the study’s object and how it is constituted. This would entail universities to completely “rethink, reframe and reconstruct the curriculum and bring South Africa, Southern Africa and Africa to the centre of teaching, learning and research (Heleta, 2018:8). However, this does not imply that Africa will be the only focus of the curriculum (Heleta, 2016), nor does it mean that a decolonised curriculum will neglect or even replace other knowledge systems and global context (Department of Education, 2008:92). This is because “universities still have to develop globally competent graduates capable of functioning in the complex and connected world” (Heleta, 2016:8).

Lange (2017) reiterates that curriculum transformation has been overlooked and overshadowed by higher education policy and asserts that there is an urgency for a deeper level of curriculum transformation, which cannot be captured within any form of policy framework. Mamdani (2015) declares that universities must undergo a change process of decolonising knowledge and the curriculum, including radical sharing and universal inclusion of various kinds of knowledge space. However, Le Grange (2016) emphasises that decolonisation is not easily achieved, as it is not an event, but a process

and we cannot simply turn back time. Lange (2017:50) concurs that this process, referred to by Le Grange (2016), requires “bold self-examination, the unbalance of power and the creation of instances of dialogue and debate to which we are not used”; thus, making it an arduous endeavour. Attempts at this resonate with Lange’s (2017:49) stance that role players in the institution must be actively involved in this process because it is not the responsibility or the role of the government “to develop a blueprint for the transformation of the curriculum” but rather the role of the academics.

With the voices mentioned above of significant South African scholars in the field of curriculum studies in mind and in light of arguments for decolonising the curriculum, it is deemed necessary to explore the voices of academics to understand how academics have responded to the call to decolonise their curricula. This will enable a more informed understanding of how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of curriculum transformation.

1.3 Research questions

In order to address the intellectual conundrum discussed above, the researcher formulated the following primary research question:

Primary research question:

How are academics engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation?

Secondary research questions:

- What discourses are influential in understanding decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation?
- How are academics engaging with the decolonial moment through their curricula?
- How could curriculum transformation be fostered through academics and their curricula?

1.4 Aim of research

To respond to the primary research question, I set the primary aim as:

- To explore how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation.

The secondary aims of this study are:

- To review what discourses are influencing the understanding of decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation.
- To explore how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment through their curricula.
- To explore how curriculum transformation can be fostered through academics and their curricula.

1.5 Research design

A plan or strategy that starts with a philosophical assumption is described by Nieuwenhuis (2019b) as a research design. It is the process a researcher follows in conducting a study to explore a phenomenon, to obtain answers and elaborate on the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). One of the first steps in the research design plan is for the researcher to decide if the research study will be quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method research. I opted for qualitative research as my study aimed to unlock the essence of my participants' lived experiences and how meaning is socially constructed through their interactions in their world (Merriam, 2002).

Furthermore, for Nieuwenhuis (2019b), a research design includes the selection of the research environment, participants, data-generating methods and data analysing techniques. Thus, in this section of the study, I will elaborate on the chosen research design and methodology by examining the five fundamental elements of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). These elements are briefly discussed in the next sections: phenomenology as the methodology (1.5.1); idealist interpretivism as the research paradigm (1.5.2); purposive sampling as the sampling method as well as the research environment (1.5.3); data generation through interviews (1.5.4); and, lastly, analysing the data through interpretive phenomenological analysis (1.5.5).

1.5.1 Research methodology: Phenomenology

I opted for qualitative research and by keeping in mind the aim of the study a phenomenological methodological approach was chosen. When researchers try to understand and explain how their participants make meaning of their feelings, lived experiences, beliefs and convictions, they use phenomenology, which allows the essence of the phenomena to emerge (Schurink *et al*., 2021a; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

Phenomenology enabled me to engage with my research questions and allowed my research study to unlock the essence of the experiences of academics in the decolonial moment in pursuit of transforming their curriculum. See Section 3.3 of this study for further elaboration.

1.5.2 Research paradigm: Idealist interpretivism

The belief of a person and how they see the world is called a paradigm. Regarding research, this paradigmatic belief is what guides the researcher's thinking and interpretation of the research study. For this phenomenological research study, an interpretivist paradigm was embraced (Schurink *et al.,* 2021a; Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). Nieuwenhuis (2019b) elucidates that from a phenomenologically influenced view of interpretivism, reality is not objectively determined but rather socially constructed – the socially constructed reality, from which participants make meaning of their experiences (Schurink *et al.,* 2021a). According to Schnelker (2006), there are two types of interpretivism, namely realist interpretivism and idealist interpretivism. The realist paradigm undertakes that social reality exists independent of the perceptions around it and it searches and creates theories that best fit or validate complex data that are generated in context (Schnelker, 2006). The idealist paradigm undertakes that reality is a mental construct. It focuses on how people make sense of their worlds instead of focusing on what people conclude about their worlds. In order to understand this process, the research must be done within the context of the individual or event (Schnelker, 2006).

For the purpose of the study, an idealistic position was taken within the paradigm of interpretivism. This position claims that reality can only be constructed through the human mind and socially constructed meanings (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). This paradigm supported my efforts to explore how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation. See Section 3.4 of this study for further elaboration.

1.5.3 Research environment and sample: Purposive sampling

Sampling is used to "produce accurate findings without the need to collect data from each and every member" of the population (Denscombe, 2010:23). Various methods of sampling can be employed in qualitative research, such as purposive sampling, theoretical sampling, deviant case sampling, sequential sampling, snowball sampling, key

informant sampling and volunteer sampling (Strydom, 2021). However, when a study is conducted on a specific cultural domain Tongco (2007) suggests that using purposive sampling is the most effective. The sampling method allows the researcher to decide what information needs to be identified and then the researcher engages with people who can and are willing to provide said information based on their knowledge and experience. Creswell (2014), is of a similar opinion and states that purposive sampling allows the researcher to purposefully select participants that will best assist them in understanding the phenomenon and the research question.

In this study, the phenomenon of interest is 'decolonising the curriculum', which was explored through my purposive sampling criterion within the University of Cape Town (UCT). I opted to purposively select this university as the research environment, mainly because UCT was at the forefront of the student protest in 2015 (through the *#RhodesMustFall* movement), which ignited the decolonial movement and placed decolonising the curriculum in the spotlight.

For Merriam and Tisdell (2016), when a researcher uses purposive sampling, the selection criteria directly reflect the study's purpose. Therefore, it is crucial to choose the most suited participants to be studied. A total of four participants who met the following selection criterion were invited to participate in the study:

- Current UCT academics, specialising in curriculum studies or education as their area of scholarship during the *#RhodesMustFall* movement.

See Section 3.5 of this study for further elaboration.

1.5.4 Data generation method: Interviews

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe data as little pieces of information that are put together to create knowledge. Different data generation methods can be used, but Nieuwenhuis (2019b) advises that the selection should be based on the most suitable method for the research design. Data generation methods for a qualitative research study can include: observations, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, structured interviews and documents.

A conversation between one or more participants and an interviewer is used to generate data that give the interviewer a better comprehension of the participants' experiences,

feelings, sentiments and opinions regarding a specific topic, issue or phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). Three common types of interviews are available to the researcher, namely structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. According to Nieuwenhuis (2019b), a semi-structured interview is not as formal as a structured interview. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) semi-structured interviews stimulate thinking and encourage interaction, which could provide the researcher with the opportunity to formulate a holistic picture of the topic being researched. This is because a semi-structured interview approach allows the researcher to follow up on interesting or developing topics as the interview progresses. Merriam and Tisdell (2016), further points out that one-on-one interviews are used to gather data through verbal communication, which enables the researcher to tap into the participants' minds. Therefore, by applying a semi-structured, one-on-one interview approach, the researcher is able to generate more valuable data if he/she manages to create an environment of trust between him-/herself and the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

I opted to use semi-structured, one-on-one interviews that are based on Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach as well as on literature that focussed on exploring the participants' unique perceptions, opinions and experiences on curriculum transformation as part of the decolonial movement. How the interviews were conducted, the questions that were asked (Addendum E) and how the data were recorded are elaborated on in Section 3.6 of this study.

Due to the location of UCT as well as keeping to the COVID-19 protocols, the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews took place through the participants' chosen online platform, which was either ZOOM or Microsoft Teams.

1.5.5 Data analysis: Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)

The qualitative data analysis process is the classification and interconnection of phenomena combined with the concepts of the researcher. The analysis of qualitative data requires the researcher to deal with meanings and not just with numbers (Graue, 2015). Mayer (2015), refers to the quote of Albert Einstein, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted" and explains that researchers have realised that not all phenomena can be measured in quantities. Therefore, to overcome these limitations that relate to certain research interests or

questions, qualitative approaches and numerous corresponding methods have emerged since then. Now, researchers can choose from a variety of methods and approaches, for example, critical content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory and interpretive phenomenological analysis. Each of these has its own set of strengths and weaknesses, and the approach chosen by the researcher should be cautiously selected based on the “view of the world of the researcher as well as the particular objective of the research” (Mayer, 2015:62).

In this research study I employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the best suited data analysis method for this study. Section 3.7 of this study will elaborate in more detail.

1.6 Trustworthiness

Two crucial elements in research are trustworthiness and validity. It is expected of the researcher to be trustworthy, especially when it comes to working with confidential information such as the responses of participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2019c). According to Miller (2008), validity refers to the accuracy of data generation and analysis. These two crucial elements of research should not be considered as similar concepts nor should they be seen as something that only happens after the research. Both of them should be regarded as a process that is employed concurrently with the research. Certain strategies can be employed to ensure trustworthiness and validity in research. These strategies and the strategies I employed to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of this research are elaborated on in Section 3.8 of this study.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics are a set of moral principles that guide the researchers and offer rules and behavioural expectations as to how the researchers must conduct themselves when dealing and interacting with participants (Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). The protection of human subjects or participants in any research study is imperative and by utilising and applying appropriate ethical principles, harm can be reduced or even prevented (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2001:93).

I adhered to the following considerations to ensure that I conducted my research study in an ethical manner: avoidance of harm to participants, voluntary participation, written

informed consent, no deception of participants, respect for the privacy of participants, anonymity and confidentiality, and no compensation for participants (Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). See Section 3.9 of this study for further detail.

I have never worked at UCT, nor I am currently involved with the institution in any way, therefore, I had a strong sense of objectivity towards the study as I am an outsider to the research environment. Furthermore, as the researcher, I also had to consider ethical protocol by obtaining ethical clearance from North-West University (NWU) as well as the University of Cape Town (UCT). These aspects will be elaborated on in the next section.

1.8 Role of the researcher

According to Merriam (2002), one of the characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher endeavours to understand the meaning that people have created about their world, their experiences and how they make sense of those experiences. Therefore, according to Nieuwenhuis (2019b), it is important that qualitative research uses open, exploratory research questions in order to completely understand the phenomenon being studied. I managed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon – decolonising the curriculum – this allowed me to make a noteworthy contribution not only to the findings of this study but also to the research conducted in this specific sector as well as curriculum studies.

The second characteristic of qualitative research, according to Merriam (2002), is that the product of the qualitative inquiry should be richly descriptive. This means that rather than using numbers, the researcher should make use of words and pictures to convey what he/she has learned about the phenomenon. I represented the findings of this research by analysing the narratives of the participants and then coding these into themes, so that the findings could have a valuable impact in the field of decolonisation research and curriculum studies.

As the researcher, I was responsible for obtaining ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee, EduRec, of North-West University (NWU) (Addendum A). The University of Cape Town (UCT) was identified as the research environment (Creswell, 2014), therefore, I also had the responsibility of obtaining ethical clearance from UCTs Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Centre for Higher Education Development (Addendum B). I also had to gain approval from UCTs HR Department to access staff for research

because I conducted interviews with staff (Addendum C).

Furthermore, I had the obligation of sourcing the relevant literature and reviewing it, compiling semi-structured, one-on-one interview questions and then accurately facilitating the interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After collecting the data, it was my responsibility, as the researcher, to analyse and interpret the data and then report on the data and provide recommendations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

1.9 Division of chapters

Table 1.1, includes a brief overview of each chapter.

Table 1.1: Brief overview of each chapter

Chapter	Heading	Brief overview
1.	General overview of the study	In this chapter, I introduce the topic for the research study. I also provide the background by highlighting the intellectual conundrum, the research questions, the aims of the study, as well as a brief description of the research design, the methodology (phenomenology), research paradigm (idealist interpretivism), the research environment and sampling (purposive sampling), data generation techniques (document analysis and interviews), as well as data analysis (discourse analysis). This chapter concludes with the measures taken to make the research valid, trustworthy and ethical.
2.	Literature review	The main purpose of this chapter is to unpack what current research, specialists and scholars in the field are saying about this intellectual conundrum and, more specifically, in terms of the nuances and trends in curriculum transformation related to decolonisation. This includes engaging with the scholarly literature by exploring and discussing

Chapter	Heading	Brief overview
		student movements both pre- and post-1994, unpacking the terms decolonisation and decoloniality, discussing a few prominent concepts that interlink with decolonisation (Africanisation and indigenisation), unpacking what it means to rethink curriculum, as well as unlocking some of the complexities of decolonising the curriculum through *Ubuntu-currere*.
3.	Research design, methodology and research processes	In this chapter, I elaborate on my research design, which consists of five elements: methodology (phenomenology), paradigm (idealist interpretivism), sample (purposive sampling), data generation (semi-structured, one-on-one interviews) and data analysis (interpretive phenomenological analysis). I clarify my role as a researcher and I discuss the trustworthiness and validity of my research. Lastly, I provide the details of the ethical aspects of my research.
4.	Data findings	This chapter presents and discusses the main findings based on the data generated from the analysed semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. It concludes with a summary of the main themes that emerged from the data.
5.	Conclusion	In this chapter, I review my research by reflecting on the significance of my research, as well as the main research findings, which are presented in order to answer the research question and to draw a conclusion. In addition, the possible limitations of the

Chapter	Heading	Brief overview
		study and recommendations for further research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the scholarly literature that is centred around exploring the discourses that are influential in understanding decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation. According to Sium, Desai and Ritskes (2012), decolonisation can be described as a process that is both messy, dynamic and conflicting. It is a complicated and multi-layered concept that cannot just be narrowed down to a straightforward definition but has to be explored and understood within all its nuanced facets.

I, therefore, begin this chapter by exploring when and why student movements and events, both pre-1994 and post-1994, have helped shape the higher education landscape of South Africa by necessitating the urgency to decolonise (2.2 & 2.3). To better understand the term decolonisation, I explore decoloniality (2.4) and pay attention to colonialism and coloniality in response to decolonisation and decoloniality. I continue to unpack Africanisation and indigenisation as two important interlinking concepts of decolonisation (2.5) before arguing for the importance of rethinking curriculum in the conventional manner (2.6). In the penultimate section of this chapter (2.7), I unlock some of the complexities of decolonisation by exploring different approaches and possibilities to decolonising the curriculum. To conclude this chapter (2.8), I explore *Ubuntu-currere* and the importance of becoming in the context of this research study.

2.2 Decolonisation: Some historical events (pre-1994)

The call for education to transform and decolonise is not a new occurrence in the South African landscape. Badat (2016:1) advocates that students have long been part of steering and shaping the higher education landscape through the use of institutional governance mechanisms as well as student protests, especially at the historically black institutions that merged as part of the higher education restructuring after 2000. Protests also occurred in different parts of the African continent at other times. The most noticeable being in the post-colonies as a natural reaction to obtain independence from their former colonial masters. Jansen (2017c:1) notes that calls for the Africanisation of curriculum, in particular, are “at least as old as the Republic of Ghana, the first African country to gain

independence" In South Africa specifically, the policies of the apartheid government and the introduction of the *Bantu Education Act* 47 of 1953 ignited the formation of numerous movements and student protests that significantly impacted the South African education sector.

Prominent in 1968 was the *Black Consciousness Movement* that took place under the leadership of primarily Steve Biko and Barney Pityana (SAHO, 2011c). The *Black Consciousness Movement* became one of the most significant anti-apartheid movements of the late 1960s in South Africa (SAHO, 2011c). It was built on the ideology that it is important to understand and accept that black liberation would not only come from envisaging and fighting for structural political changes, but also from psychological transformation in the minds of black people themselves (Sikhosana, 2017:2). *Black Consciousness* emphasises values of black solidarity, self-reliance, individual and collective responsibility, as well as black liberation (Sikhosana, 2017:2). A year later, in 1969, the *Black Consciousness Movement* marked the formation of, *inter alia* the *South African Students' Organisation* (SASO). Officially launched in July 1969, it was led by *Black Consciousness Movement* founder, Steve Biko, to address racial and academic institutional inequalities, as well as to politically galvanise students and the black oppressed, against apartheid (SAHO, 2011c). In 1972, SASO mobilised a student movement in protest of the expulsion of the former Student Representative Council (SRC) president at the University of Limpopo (UNIN), Onkgopotse Abram Tiro. Tiro delivered an intense speech at a graduation ceremony, criticising the apartheid system and its educational policies. Consequently, he was expelled and SASO mobilised a movement causing the boycotting of classes. Police were brought onto the campus and, as a result, more than 1 000 students were expelled (SAHO, 2011a).

Prior to 1994, there were many injustices in the South African education system (Prinsloo, 2006). In the 1970s, curriculum studies scholars revealed the inequalities and injustices of educational opportunities (Schubert, 2010). Scholars revealed factors such as context, language used for teaching and learning, race, gender, socio-economic class, ethnicity, culture and nationality as the inequalities and injustices found in education (Schubert, 2010). Since the 1970s, huge strides have been made toward overcoming some of these injustices (Grant, 2014). It could be argued that the values and beliefs of the *Black Consciousness Movement* regarding educational inequality in higher education

influenced and inspired similar student movements at school level. The Soweto Uprising on 16 June 1976 is one prominent example of a fight against the inequalities in the South African education system (Grant, 2014) and one which profoundly influenced the socio-political landscape in South Africa. Amongst other factors, such as the *Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953*, the immediate cause of the uprising was due to the directive given by the government in 1974 that Afrikaans would become compulsory, alongside English as a medium of instruction in schools (SAHO, 2013). On 16 June 1976, the South African Students Movement's Action Committee, supported by the *Black Consciousness Movement*, mobilised between 3 000 and 10 000 learners in Soweto. Driven by justice, students left their schools and marched in peaceful protest against the South African educational system (SAHO, 2013). Demonstrating learners were met by armed police who fired teargas and live ammunition. Consequently, the peaceful march ended in a widespread revolt that turned into an uprising against the government, which spread across the country and continued until the next year (SAHO, 2013). The following year, Steve Biko died on 12 September 1977, while in the custody of security police. The events in the period leading up to his death, which started with the Soweto Uprising, can be described as some of South Africa's most turbulent events and signified that the apartheid administration would not be able to maintain its oppressive rule without massive resistance (SAHO, 2011b).

Pre-democratic student movements and events put discrimination, separation and exclusion based on race under the spotlight to elicit its effects on intellectual and moral reform of life, politics and economics (Sikhosana, 2017:45). These historic student movements share the same ideologies and the desire that students in the post-apartheid era have for education equality and decolonisation. South Africa's education system is still being challenged in the post-democratic rule and it can be argued these historical events and the *Black Consciousness Movement* paved the way for future student campaigns and protest. This is highlighted in more recent student protests, which according to Jansen (2019:51) do not exist in a vacuum, as it is evident they have their precursors such as some of the movements mentioned above. Decolonisation in relation to education is not uniquely South African, nor is it a new occurrence, however, the nationwide student protests that started in 2015, and later became known as the *#Fallism* movements, evoked more intense conversations on decolonisation in South Africa and its higher education system. A few of the more recent significant student movements will

now be discussed.

2.3 Some current events (post-1994) in the name of decolonisation

The ongoing student movements that started in 2015 caused the higher education sector to experience an unprecedented level of campus protests at major universities all over South Africa. Protests focused initially on what would become known as “the decolonisation moment” (Jansen 2017b:12) or as Badat (2017:3) term it “the decolonial turn” in the struggles for institutional transformation. Witnessed at the forefront of these student movements, was a “resurgence of *Black Consciousness* language” (Sikhosana, 2017:2). According to Du Preez, Simmonds and Chetty (2017) these movements reflect the way in which both academics and students use their agency to think, to reflect and to act on social matters that concern all citizens. For Du Preez *et al*. (2017:97), what is important is to perform one’s agency, “not only to cultivate a healthy democratic environment where citizens can articulate their free will, but also to challenge hegemonic structures that limit the agency of people”. As a result of ‘performing one’s agency’ the *#Falllism* or *#MustFall* student movements gave rise to hashtag campaigns such as *#ScienceMustFall*, *#PatriarchyMustFall*, *#OutsourcingMustFall* (Steyn Kotze, 2018), *#OpenStellenbosch* and *#EndRapeCulture* (Gouws, 2018). Inspired by the eminent *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* movements, students protested against different forms of domination in South Africa’s higher education institutions (Steyn Kotze, 2018). Steyn Kotze (2018:124) explains that the *#Fallism* movements “embrace a cultural memory of struggle and awakening” and through advancing the symbolism of the resistance against Western-dominated curricula it can construct meaning. He continues to assert that because the oppression continues, the ‘fallists’ have a responsibility to “advance decoloniality for transformation in order to remove this shame and abjection through recreating a new symbolic order through a violent shattering” (Steyn Kotze, 2018:124). For Garton (2019:412) the *#Fallism* movements were cultivated from a place of “anger and discontent with the status quo of inequality and oppression resulting from historical legacies of apartheid and forms of domination”.

One of the more notable of these *#Fallism* protests was the *#RhodesMustFall* movement that resonated at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Murris (2016:274) referred to it as an act born out of motivation linked to the “visible signs of colonialism and lack of transformation". The movement asserted the importance of the need to decolonise the

higher education curriculum that centres on Western epistemology (Murris, 2016:276). In essence, #*RhodesMustFall* represented the quest for racially and culturally inclusive campuses, as well as the transformation of the university curriculum and its culture, campus symbolism and the professoriate. The argument was that campus symbolism celebrated colonial conquest; the curriculum was still based on Western knowledge; institutional cultures were racially exclusive; and the professoriate was mostly white and male-dominated. The solution to this was made clear in banners, public speeches, daily conversations and even in the media, which was that "formerly white institutions needed to be decolonised" (Jansen, 2019:51). Consequently, the statue of the British imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes, at the University of Cape Town (UCT) was removed on 9 April 2015 and it became the most notorious symbol of the #*RhodesMustFall* moment (Jansen, 2019).

The influential power of #*RhodesMustFall* spread to other parts of the nation and even to other parts of the world. The #*RhodesMustFall* movement was replicated in other national universities, such as Stellenbosch University, where issues with teaching and learning in Afrikaans were contested, which led to the #*OpenStellenbosch* movement (Mpofu, 2017). Campaigns to decolonise knowledge reached England in November 2015 at Oxford University, where students gathered at the entrance of Oriel College, demanding the removal of the Rhodes statue as a symbolic reference to their cries to decolonise the university. The protest was, however, not successful in its immediate objective, but ignited serious debates about how institutions in Britain teach and memorialise the imperial past and, thus, called for a review of Oxford's curricula (Maylam, 2020). Similarly, in October, 2015, a group of Harvard Law School students, dubbed Royall Must Fall, declared its unity with the #*RhodesMustFall* movement (Harvard Law School, 2015). Students were disgruntled that Harvard Law School crest glorifies a Massachusetts slave trader, namely saac Royall Jr. He was renowned as one of the largest slave drivers/traders and his participation included the horrific act of burning 77 black people (Johnson, Clayborne & Cuddihy, 2015). Students of Royall Must Fall movement, felt that it is essential to confront and address this history, as the seal of Harvard Law represents "a continuing culture of subjugation and oppression" and does nothing to enhance diversity (Johnson *et al*, 2015). Student activists, called for, "the decolonisation of our campus, the symbols, the curriculum and the history of Harvard Law School" (Harvard: Royall Must Fall, 2015) as well as for the seal to be changed (Ryan, 2018). After months of discussions, in March

2016, a Law School committee appointed by the Dean recommended the retirement of the seal. The recommendation was approved later that same month by the university's highest governing body (Ryan, 2018).

Back in the South African landscape, another student movement began to develop in October 2015. According to Garton (2019:407) the movement was driven by "the economic exclusion to tertiary education that resulted from the differential development of apartheid and neoliberal reforms instituted by the African National Congress (ANC)". Although this movement was clearly connected to the *#RhodesMustFall* movement, this student movement became known by its own hashtag, *#FeesMustFall* and students demanded "free decolonised education for black people" (SABC Digital News, 2016). It began when the South African treasury announced that there would be a 10.5 percent university fee increase. Consequently, a degree was even more unreachable for the largely black, economically underprivileged, majority of students in the country and, in response, protesting students across the country brought universities to a close (Griffiths, 2019). Protests started at the University of the Witwatersrand and quickly spread to other universities, such as Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and the University of Fort Hare (UFH). Even though the movement was directed at demonstrating frustration against the high fees for students, specifically those from disadvantaged backgrounds, it quickly escalated into violence, vandalism and disruptions, as well as the arrest of students. In 2015, President Jacob Zuma announced that there would be no increase in university fees in 2016 (Sikhosana, 2017). However, in August 2016, the CHE reported that maintaining current fee levels were unsustainable. Thus, the CHE came forward and encouraged universities to increase their fees, based on inflation in 2017 (Bendile, 2016). The announcement of additional fee increases with particularly low levels of loan disbursement (Bronkhorst & Michael, 2017) instigated the national *#FeesMustFall* protests. Protests settled down in December 2017, after the announcement was made that financially needy students would be funded through loans and not grants and that universities would receive higher subsidies to lower the costs that were passed on to students (The Presidency, 2017).

However, student protests are not just going to vanish as we continue to see campaigns where students loudly make their voices heard on various issues. This is highlighted in more recent events, such as the call for free accommodation in February 2019, which

was initiated by students from Wits, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Durban University of Technology (DUT) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Another student movement unfolded in March 2021, at Wits' Braamfontein campus and was soon joined by other universities such as Rhodes University calling for a national shutdown of 26 of South Africa's universities (Charles, 2021). The South African Union of Students (SAUS) presented a memorandum and demanded, among many other issues, the scrapping of historic debt; for government to increase national funding; for the university to allow students with historical debt to register; free registration; providing laptops to students and to increase student enrolment quotas (Charles, 2021). Protests began to trend on social media with the hashtag #*WitsAsinamali*, which in isiZulu translates to "we do not have money". Since the protests, Wits has made COVID-19 relief funds available for the registration of students and also made amendments to their policy, allowing students with historical debt to register (Mlaba, 2021).

The student movements discussed above and especially the two notable student movements #*RhodesMustFall* and #*FeesMustFall* are in a sense reminiscent of Biko's *Black Consciousness Movement,* as they challenged the colonial matrices of power that eluded the making of the post-apartheid state (Sikhosana, 2017). For Disemelo (2015) both of these student protest movements were concerned with equal and quality access to education, the dismantling of complexities of class relations in South Africa, eradicating hostile and negative verbal and/or physical abuse encountered by black students, as well as revealing the heterosexual, male-dominant and neoliberal capitalist values that characterise universities in South Africa. Badat (2016:22), however, draws attention to the fact although student protest movements have set a number of demands, they have not always been consistent nor clear, making the nature of demands difficult to judge. It is important to note that given the complexity of the issues that are involved, the diversity of the students and the different ideological and political forces that are assumed to make up the student movements, it cannot be expected for the demands to be well-defined or comprehensive. However, these movements do illustrate that throughout the history of South Africa, the fight against colonialism, apartheid and dominant knowledge systems and the complexities that define it is nothing new to the higher education spectrum. Moreover, for the students that are involved in the #*Fallism* campaigns, South Africa has never really been decolonised and even 21 years after the transition to democracy, the remnants of colonialism remain (Gouws, 2018).

Du Preez *et al. (*2017), however, point out that we cannot negate that nothing significant stems from student movements as they add value and motivate the initiation of change, as well as driving that change in the higher education sector. Lange (2019) is of a similar opinion as she states that student movements continue to put the issue of curriculum on the agenda, which has long required fundamental change. Consequently, a number of curriculum specialists in higher education are now engaging in new conversations about the decolonisation of the curriculum. Likewise, for Le Grange *et al.* (2020), student movements have induced more intense conversations on decolonisation in the country. Since these prominent student protests, South Africa has also observed an increase in literature being produced on the topic (Le Grange, 2021). Moreover, we have seen the South African state give attention to decolonisation concerning the university curriculum. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, one such example was the 2nd Higher Education Transformation Summit, which was held in October 2015 and came at a much-needed time in response to student calls for transformation (Le Grange *et al.,* 2020). Minister Blade Nzimande gave a directive for all universities to Africanise and decolonise (Nzimande, 2015a). Following the protests and student calls for the curriculum to be decolonised as well as the directive of the Minister, certain universities responded diligently by appointing task teams, while other universities appointed curriculum transformation committees. This was all done in an effort to discover and explore ways in which South African universities could decolonise their curriculum (Le Grange *et al.,* 2020).

The *#Fallism* student movements necessitated the urgency to deeply grapple with what decolonisation means, what it could mean and what it represents. For this reason, I deem it significant to unpack the concepts of decolonisation and decoloniality that have been the focal point of South Africa's higher education landscape over the last few decades.

2.4 Some perspectives of decolonisation and decoloniality

Following the *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* student movements of 2015 and 2016, decolonisation and decoloniality have received a great deal of attention in South Africa. Distinguishing between the two concepts is necessary to appreciate other significant concepts, such as the legacy of colonialism, developed by Latin American curriculum scholars in order to critique coloniality (Le Grange, 2021) and neo-colonialism, a term coined by the first president of independent Ghana, to describe the remains of

decolonisation. For Le Grange (2018), any discussion on decolonisation also requires a discussion on colonisation, which according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020) institutes colonialism. However, Maldonado-Torres (2007) brings our attention to coloniality as a representation of long-standing power patterns that survive colonialism. Differentiating between these concepts is very noteworthy as decolonisation is undoubtedly a complex matter. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that some of the most significant subjects in the study of Africa today are the crucial issues surrounding decolonisation.

The term decolonisation is understood very differently by different people, especially in the higher education landscape (Mheta, 2018). Sium, Desai and Ritskes (2012:II) make us attentive to the fact that “decolonisation is a messy, dynamic, and contradictory process”. Jansen (2019) agrees to this by stating that the term decolonisation is highly contested, as there are so many interpretations of the concept. Even though there are so many opposing views on defining decolonisation, inspiration can be drawn from leading scholars, such as Kenyan writer and academic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986). He believes that decolonisation is a project of re-centering and claims that decolonisation is about discarding the notion that Africa is a mere extension of the West. Wa Thiong'o (1986) continues by stating, it is not just about excluding European and other traditions, but rather clearly defining the centre. This centre, according to Wa Thiong'o (1986), is Africa. From a research and methodological perspective, according to Chilisa (2012), decolonisation is a process of researching in such a way that those who have suffered a history of oppression are given the opportunity to express themselves from their frame of reference and the chance to rewrite what was incorrectly written. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020), the potentialities and possibilities of creating another world are encapsulated in decolonisation and he articulates that what is rooted in decolonisation are colonial wounds crying out for healing. He even refers to decolonisation as the theory of life (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, cited in Omanga, 2020). For scholars such as Smith (1999) and Chilisa (2012), decolonisation is about discovering and recovering their own identities, cultures and history; mourning the loss of their languages, cultures and knowledges; correcting the wrongful assumptions about colonised people; seeking self-determination; protecting the knowledges of colonised people; and sharing the experiences, struggles and hopes of colonised people with the world. Le Grange (2021) describes decolonisation as the removal of the colonial administrative rule, produced by the insurrections and

uprisings against colonisation by the colonised people; “decolonisation is the undoing of colonisation” (Le Grange, 2018:8).

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020), the definition of colonisation is something that can be dated, in relation to when it started and to when it came to an end. He describes colonisation “as an event—that is in terms of people (colonists) coming, conquering, and dominating other people at a particular moment, and administering people colonially, until the colonized fight and push them back”. Wa Thiong'o (1986), on the other hand, defined colonisation in a more relentless manner, by describing it as a process of epistemological takeover and cultural supremacy that demoralised the knowledge of indigenous people and destroyed their sense of identity. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020) points out that colonisation institutes colonialism and insists that making a distinction between the two concepts is vital, he notes that

> Even when you push back colonisation as a physical process (the physical empire), colonialism as a power structure continues as a metaphysical process and as an epistemic project, because it invades the mental universe of a people, destabilising them from what they used to know, into knowing what is brought in by colonialism, and it then commits ‘crimes’ such as epistemicide (where you kill and displace pre-existing knowledges), linguicide (killing and displacing the languages of a people and imposing your own), culturecide (where you kill or replace the cultures of a people).

By this, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020) means that even though colonisation has been overridden, colonialism remains and it can be identified through different forms of modern-day crimes such as epistemicide, linguicide and culturecide, mentioned above (also see the work of Kumalo [2020]). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020), further emphasises that colonialism is unmistakably a “very complex power structure”. It transforms people's way of life and creates a colonial intersubjective relationship between citizens (coloniser) and the subject (colonised people), where economic resources are transferred from indigenous people to those who are conquering. Colonialism also creates institutions and power structures that retain the coloniser – colonised relations of exploitation, domination and repression (Ndlovu-Gathseni in Omanga, 2020).

Le Grange (2021:7) brings attention to the notion that what has remained from

decolonisation, is the legacy of colonialism. This legacy of colonialism is referred to by Quijano (2007) as the colonial matrix of power. He states that these matrixes of power are about who controls the economy, who controls authority, who controls gender and sexuality, and who controls subjectivity and knowledge. Other scholars and politicians have used different terms to describe this legacy in a more nuanced way. Two such examples are that of Kwame Nkrumah (1965) and Frantz Fanon (1967). Nkrumah, the first president of independent Ghana, referred to the remains of decolonisation as neo-colonialism, a term coined by himself, that means the newly independent country is still under the influence of ex-colonial or newly developed superpowers (Le Grange, 2019b). Nkrumah was of the opinion that neo-colonialism is a more deceptive form of colonialism as it is more difficult to identify and involves the new elites who were trained by colonialists to take on the roles of colonialists in countries after gaining independence. Fanon's (1967) position on the legacy of colonialism came at the end of the Algerian war, where he claimed that decolonisation did not take place and grieved that independence was simply the Africanisation of colonialism (Le Grange, 2021). Africanisation, in the same sense that Fanon referred to it, is equivalent to the concept of neo-colonialism of Nkrumah (De Beer, 2019).

Providing us with an even more nuanced understanding of colonisation and colonialism through their elucidations of coloniality and decoloniality is that of Latin American scholars Walter Mignolo, Ramon Grosfoguel, Anibal Quijano and Nelson Maldonado-Torres. Qujano (2007) argues that even though colonial power has been demolished by gaining independence, the logic of coloniality still remains. This, according to Le Grange (2019b), means that systems of power that classify, degrade and overpower still remain dominant and, in a modern world, these systems of power are more deceptive than previous more naked forms of colonisation (Le Grange, 2019b). Grosfoguel (2007) argues that a myth of the postcolonial world was created due to the removal of colonial administrations because what we have witnessed was a shift from a period of global colonialism to a period of global coloniality. Mignolo (2011) maintains that the darker side of the modern world is coloniality and it is evident in forms of slavery, imperialisms, genocides, racism, sexism or, basically, all forms of oppression suffered by colonised peoples under the current neoliberal order. Maldonado-Torres (2007) describes colonialism as a political and economic relation in which the power of a nation or its people depends on the power of another nation and, as a result, that nation becomes an empire. Maldonado-Torres

(2007) deems it notable for highlighting the meaning of coloniality in a contrasted view of colonialism. He defines coloniality as representing long-standing patterns of power that occurred as a result of colonialism, “but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243). Coloniality, thus, survives colonialism and dismantling it is a necessity. However, undoing it will not be an easy task because it is “maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243). He, therefore, concludes that, to a certain extent, “as modern subjects we breath coloniality all the time and everyday” (Maldonado-Torres, 2007:243). I am in agreement with Maldonado-Torres (2007) that as modern subjects we do indeed breathe coloniality, and draw on Ndlovu-Gatsheni’s (2013) words when he states that coloniality was created and is sustained by asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and the Global South, which denotes it as a global power structure.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) continued to build on the work of Latin American scholars and argued that coloniality is underpinned by three concepts: coloniality of power; coloniality of knowledge; and coloniality of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni in Omanga, 2020). Le Grange *et al.* (2020) insightfully summarises these three concepts mentioned by Ndolvu-Gatsheni (2013). The first, coloniality of power, unpacks the deeper meaning of the current asymmetrical global power structure as a consequence of modernisation benefits, enjoyed by the West, such as imposing the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid on the rest (Le Grange *et al*., 2020). The second is coloniality of knowledge. It relates to “how the genesis of disciplines in the West resulted in epistemicides in the Global South and how Africa is now burdened with irrelevant knowledge that disempowers rather than empowers” (Le Grange *et al*., 2020:27). Third, is the concept, coloniality of being, which enables us to delve deeper into how whiteness had increased ontological density that far exceeds that of blackness and how the notion of Descartes’s ‘I think, therefore, I am' transformed into 'I conquer, therefore, I am' and its production of 'coloniser and colonised' articulation of subjectivity and being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:6).

In a response to coloniality, the decoloniality concept was developed as an analytic of coloniality by the Latin American scholars mentioned above, not only to challenge global

coloniality as a structure that survives colonialism, but also to encourage us to "pluriversalise our thinking about the future of the world" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014:91). For Maldonado-Torres (2006) decoloniality means to dismantle the relations of power and ideologies of knowledge that provokes the reproduction of racial, gender and geopolitical hierarchies that discovered new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern world. This simply means that decoloniality allows us to critically think about how the ex-colonised epistemic sites endeavour to understand the position of ex-colonised people within the current modern world system. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2014:91) reiterates that this critical way of thinking of decoloniality challenges the present world system to pave the way for "indigenous knowledges" of the non-Western world. For Mignolo (2011:54) decoloniality is about unmasking coloniality as an "underside of modernity that coexisted with the rhetoric of progress, equality, fraternity, and liberty" and labels decoloniality as "critical intellectual theory" and a political project aimed at disentangling the ex-colonised parts of the world from coloniality on a global scale. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) concludes by emphasising that decoloniality in the 21st century is necessary as coloniality is still taking place and needs to be decolonised.

Regarded as a complicated conversation, decolonisation cannot be understood in isolation, but rather requires us to recognise that attempts to decolonise are vested in the nuanced understandings of concepts that interlink with decolonisation. Le Grange (2018) emphasises the importance of engaging in these complicated conversations concerning decolonisation, so as to create learning spaces where power can be negotiated and actualised in productive ways and create the sense that we belong to something bigger. According to De Beer (2019), indigenisation is one form of decolonisation. The other is Africanisation (which relates well within the African context), as opposed to decolonisation, which is a much broader construct and can be applied globally. I do, however, acknowledge that there are other concepts that can interlink with decolonisation, for example globalisation and internationalisation (Du Preez, 2018; Dzvimbo & Moloi, 2013; Le Grange, 2018). However, for the purpose of this study, I am only going to elaborate on indigenisation and Africanisation following the line of thought of De Beer (2019). These two prominent interlinking concepts of decolonisation will now be discussed.

2.5 Interlinking concepts of decolonisation

According to Le Grange (2018) indigenising embraces indigenous ways of knowing, both in social and education processes. It is about the (re)discovery of indigenous cultures, such as indigenous ways of knowing and seeks out social and cognitive justice for indigenous people. Horsthemke (2017) states that indigenisation is not only utilised to promote effective political persuasion, justification and mobilisation, but it is also used as a tool in transforming areas of education, culture and the socio-economic environment. Andreasson (2010), argues that indigenisation has provided the government with a way to give legitimacy to its policies and rule, by grounding its policies in a culturally acceptable context. This was achieved by "providing African citizens with a sense of ownership and participation in policymaking" (Andreasson, 2010:427), which, in return, could enhance social stability in an otherwise unstable context of a postcolonial struggle to improve living conditions. In addition, Andreasson (2010) expresses that indigenisation is praised for its logical way of dealing with past injustices and present inequalities as well as for its role in assisting the formerly oppressed overcome their colonial dispossession. Mudaly (2018) opines that indigenisation refers to transforming the educational landscape to incorporate indigenous knowledge into lessons. It encourages a culturally responsive curriculum that addresses the needs, knowledge and cultures of local communities. Indigenisation does not suggest creating completely new knowledge systems but instead including culturally relevant practices, materials and knowledge into the teaching process, that would enhance the understanding of particular concepts. Horsthemke (2017:1) notes that

> radical indigenisation involves a 'back to the roots'-type of traditionalism and nationalism that are more often than not inspired by the colonial experience and the need for political consolidation, respectively. Examples of this response include radical endorsements of Africanisation and Afrocentrism.

The concept of Africanisation has become a very significant issue for individuals in pursuit of unity, a sense of belonging as well as a sense of pride in who they are and what they stand for (Louw, 2010). Horsthemke (2004) refers to Africanisation as the latest buzzword of the last few decades. For him, Africanisation signifies a renewed focus on Africa by reclaiming what has been taken from Africa, thus making it part of post-colonialist, anti-racist discourse. It focuses on indigenous African knowledge and concerns, while simultaneously protecting this knowledge from being exploited. Africanisation, from an

education perspective, focuses on institutions, the curricula and criteria for excellence in research and performance (Horsthemke, 2004).

Schiele (1994) points out that it is a standard to couple the idea of Africanising universities with the notion of an explicitly Afrocentric language. However, Afrocentrism does not just mean to educate students about the history, culture, philosophy and values of Africa, but rather placing Africa at the centre, historically, culturally, philosophically and morally. This view on Africanisation of Schiele (1994) strongly resonates in Wa Thiong'o's (1986) standpoint on decolonisation as a re-centring project and placing Africa in the centre. Makgoba (1997:203) agrees with Schiele (1994) and defines Africanisation as a process of "defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity and culture. It encompasses an African mindset or mindset shift from the European to an African paradigm". Makgoba (1997:200) concludes by boldly expressing that education is the very foundation of a successful society and "tertiary education in particular its highest form". Thus, Africanising the tertiary institutions of South Africa becomes essential. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2016:18) states that Africanisation means "to be part of transformation aimed at indigenising inherited institutions". Botha (2007) notes that one of the key imperatives to transforming higher education is Africanisation. Louw (2010:52) agrees with that and states that, "Africanisation should be a key priority in tertiary institutions in South Africa", however, he believes that it is still far from ideal. Mtukela (cited in Botha, 2007:206) articulates that "unless African experiences find expression through the indigenisation of knowledge production, recognition of material and discursive experiences of Black staff and students, then the transformation project of higher education is incomplete". Horsthemke (2017) conflates three terms of interest to this current research study, which are transformation, Africanisation and decolonisation. He states that the Africanisation of higher education is, by and large, assumed to involve institutional transformation and, more overtly, the decolonisation of higher education.

Considering these two significant interlinking concepts on the discourse of decolonisation as well as the fact that decolonising the curriculum continues to be a point of interest, it is necessary to explore exactly how we need to place curriculum critically within the decolonial moment to foster curriculum transformation. However, before discussing the decolonisation of the curriculum, Le Grange (2016) suggests that we analyse the term curriculum, because in order to decolonise the curriculum, we have to first rethink the

term curriculum and how it is understood conventionally.

2.6 Rethinking curriculum

Curriculum has multiple meanings and interpretations that differ based on context, historical times and philosophical assumptions. Generally, curriculum relates to what knowledge is included in teaching and learning programmes and for Simmonds and Le Grange (2019), what knowledge and whose knowledge is included is of most worth and is at the very heart of decolonising the curriculum.

Curriculum theorist, Madeleine Grumet, defined curriculum as the stories told to students about their past, present and future (Grumet, 1981). This view allows us to ask two questions, what are the stories that are told to the students and who tells those stories. Le Grange (2016) mentions that another approach to view curriculum, is the division of curriculum into explicit curriculum, hidden curriculum and null curriculum. The first, explicit curriculum, is the information and materials students are provided with at university, such as textbooks, study guides and prescribed readings, etcetera. The second, hidden curriculum, is what students end up learning about the culture of the university and the values that it produces, without any provided materials, but rather the knowledge gained from experience. The latter, null curriculum, is what is left out the curriculum; in other words, not what is taught and learned at the university but rather what is not taught and learnt. According the Le Grange (2016), these three broad perceptions did not receive much attention in relation to universities, contrary to the view of well-known curriculum scholar, Ted Aoki, who conceptualised the idea of metonymic doubling. For Aoki (1999) when we speak about the term curriculum, a person automatically only considers the planned curriculum (curriculum-as-plan), which refers to the content required to be taught and learned in a subject. The curriculum-as-plan originates outside the classroom and is the work of curriculum planners. These curriculum planners are often subject specialists under the supervision of a curriculum director or curriculum supervisor. Consequently, because it is the work of people, unavoidably, it is infused with their perceptions of the world and personal assumptions about ways of knowing and about how teachers and students are to be understood. Embedded in the text of the curriculum-as-plan, are the goals, aims, and objectives of the subject; guidelines of what teachers and students should do; resources to be utilised and guidelines on how knowledge will all be evaluated (Aoki, 1993). Emphasis on challenging the domination of this image of curriculum-as-plan

is captured by Aoki (1999:180) as “it tends to reduce ‘teaching’ to mere instruction-structuring pre-givens into learners’ heads, ‘learning’ to mere acquisition, and ‘assessment’ to mere measuring the acquired”.

This is the reason for Aoki (1999) calling for the legitimation of another meaning of curriculum, namely a curriculum-as-lived by teachers and students. This refers to how the curriculum is experienced by teachers and students, as well as understanding the uniqueness of each student. Aoki (1999), importantly, points out that legitimating the curriculum-as-lived does not mean the curriculum-as-plan must be discarded, but rather that the curricular landscape should open up and accommodate both the curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived, so as “to co-dwell in dynamically tensioned interplay” in what Aoki terms metonymic doubling (Aoki, 1999:180). This is also echoed by Le Grange (2019b) when he emphasises the need for an extended understanding of curriculum. He believes that curriculum should not only be viewed in the conventional way such as the planned activities designed to strictly align elements like outcomes and assessment and delivered in university classrooms and lecture halls. Instead, academics should make room for unplanned activities in teaching/learning spaces, to give “legitimacy to students’ lived experiences and to experiment with new ways of doing, that open up pathways for students to become” as opposed to limiting students’ desires and potential to create newness in the world, by favouring a fixed curriculum (Le Grange, 2019b:41). Le Grange (2019b) emphasises that this does not mean ignoring the planned dimension of curriculum, because for as long as institutions exist, they will form part of the curriculum. Le Grange (2019b) concludes by agreeing with (Aoki, 1999) and states that by legitimating the curriculum-as-lived it could highlight how the current university curriculum is experienced by students and could, therefore, be used as a basis for decolonisation.

Pinar (2012:44) continues to raise concerns about the planned curriculum and emphasises that the planned curriculum has steered teachers to become scripted, as they deliver lessons not of their own making and rather than students learning that they can apply their own subjectivities to their study, students have transformed into “consumers of educational services”, not aware that they are unique individuals that can apply their own understanding to the world through the curriculum they study. To highlight the concept of education as self-formation, within the frame of the lived curriculum as presented by Aoki, Pinar devised the method of *currere*, which means to run the course

(Pinar, 2012). Pinar (2011) advocates for *currere* as a verb because it emphasises the lived rather than the planned curriculum. As a verb, emphasis is placed on “action, process, and experience in contrast to the noun, which can convey stipulation and completion” (Pinar, 2011:1). He argues that even though every course comes to an end, the consequences of study are an ongoing process and the running of the course, *currere,* occurs through conversation, not only in the classroom but among students and teachers as well as within an individual’s private thoughts.

By invoking the etymological root of curriculum, Pinar’s (2011) aim was to refocus the curriculum on the significance of the individual experience. The concept of c*urrere* “privileges the individual” (Le Grange, 2021:8) and Pinar (2011) asserts that it is a complicated concept that we have with self because each of us is different. Each individual’s conversation with self will be different from that of someone else’s conversation, because of how different we all are based on our upbringings, our families, genetics, race, gender, class, etcetera. *Currere,* accordingly, shifts attention away from the predetermined course to run and rather focuses on how the course is run by each individual, given their uniqueness. According to Le Grange (2021), dominant approaches to curriculum (studies) are disrupted by *currere* and Pinar (2012), therefore, develops *currere* as an autobiographical method that signifies both temporal and reflective moments for autobiographical research of educational experiences and consists of four moments: (a) The regressive moment focuses on the past, by reflecting on the influences on one’s life in the past, namely environmental, cultural, religious, educational, political, etcetera and how these impact one’s present; (b) The progressive moment focuses on the future, where a person looks forward to what is not yet present, imagining possible futures and also how the future resides in the present. This moment also focuses on personal aspirations as well as future possibilities; (c) The analytical moment involves distancing oneself from one’s past and future to create a space of freedom in which one analyses how the future is present in the past, the past in the future and the present in both; and (d) The synthetical moment provides a sense of wholeness as one re-enters the lived present and asks what the meaning of this present is.

However, Le Grange (2021:9) cautions us that autobiography “holds the risk of sentimental solipsism”. Recognising the dangers of narcissism, Pinar (2011) proposes that *currere* should serve as a motivation for political mobilisation. Le Grange (2021)

outlines how this could be realised by utilising the four moments of *currere,* starting with the regressive moment. The regressive moment provides the individual with an opportunity to analyse and reflect on how they have actively pursued including decolonial discourses in their life. This moment symbolises the individual's new-found freedom as he/she repents and rids the self from the "shackles of coloniality" (Le Grange, 2021:9). In the progressive moment the individual visualises a life that is fair and just, a world that is more democratic, more sustainable and decolonised. Thirdly, in the analytical moment, the individual investigates how the past, future and present overlap each other by detaching him-/herself from the past. This allows the individuals to experience a moment of freedom from their present realities and/or circumstances. In the analytical step, the individual detaches him-/herself from the past and future analyses how the past, future and the present are imbricated in one another. In the last moment, the synthetical moment, the individual returns to the present, renewed and with a new "sense of self, able to see the wholeness of past, present and future. Now the individual can synthesise and evaluate on what all of this means and how he/she can take action in order to transform the present to make a difference in the future. I will further elaborate on aspects of *currere* in Section 2.8.

It is highlighted in the abovementioned, that curriculum can be viewed in different forms, that it has different explanations and theories and that it means different things to different people. Thus, it is evident that understanding the nuanced meanings of curriculum and what it could mean could provide us with countless opportunities and possibilities to decolonise the curriculum. These opportunities will be explored in the next section by unpacking various nuanced approaches to decolonising the curriculum in South Africa.

2.7 Unlocking some of the complexities of decolonising the curriculum

Decolonisation of the curriculum could involve a range of possibilities as there are various credible curriculum theories and approaches that could underpin the decolonisation of the curriculum. I will now engage in a few of approaches on how to decolonise the curriculum. I will begin by discussing how decolonisation can be achieved through various phases (2.7.1) and strategies (2.7.2). Then, I will elaborate on a range of possibilities as explained by Le Grange (2016), that can be applied to decolonise the curriculum (2.7.3). Following a discussion on Jansen's six concepts of curriculum decolonisation (2.7.4), I will end this section by unpacking what, according to Le Grange (2016) is central to any

curriculum approach – rethinking the subject – which resonates with his concept of *Ubuntu-currere* (2.8).

2.7.1 Decolonisation phases

Mbembe (2015) argues that instead of just duplicating dominant Eurocentric, Westernised education, knowledge systems and curriculum it is important that we focus on the transformative policy-making to promote a decolonised curriculum. This process of change calls for critical thought and action to be taken to break the cycle of the colonial worldviews that are overpowering the realities of Africa and many South Africans (Mahabeer, 2018). Intellectuals are called on to "execute strategy and diplomacy in formulating policy; to critically evaluate and articulate policy alternatives, with the purpose of democratising the curriculum policy-making process" (Mahabeer, 2018:3).

Drawing on the work from Laenui (2000), Chilisa (2012) claims that there are five phases in the process of decolonisation. They are rediscovery and recovery, mourning, dreaming, commitment and action. The process where colonised people revive and improve their own history, culture, language and identity refers to rediscovery and recovery. The process of mourning refers to the grief experienced as a result of the continued assault on the identities and social realities of the oppressed. Dreaming calls on the colonised people to invoke their histories, views and indigenous knowledge systems to help envision alternate possibilities, for example, a different curriculum. Commitment means to recognise the voices of the colonised in bringing university curriculum change through research-driven interventions. Action is the phase that transforms dreams and commitments into action strategies for social change and, in the context of this study, this will refer to the university curriculum transformation.

2.7.2 Decolonisation strategies

Corresponding to the phases mentioned above, Smith (1999) identified seven strategies for decolonisation. They are deconstruction and reconstruction; self-determination and social justice; ethics, language, internationalisation of indigenous experiences, history and critique. Deconstruction and reconstruction entail discarding what was distorted in the past writings and questioning people's misrepresentations and negative labelling, retelling the stories of the past and imagining the future, which facilitates the rediscovery and recovery process (Smith, 1999). Self-determination and social justice seek justice for

those who have been marginalised by Western institutions. Ethics is the construction and regulation of ethical issues related to safeguarding indigenous knowledge systems. Language is concerned with the importance of teaching and learning indigenous languages in response to the anti-imperialist struggle. Internationalisation of indigenous experiences refers to sharing common experiences, issues and struggles experienced by colonised people through international scholars. History, in this instance, is concerned with the recovery of history, philosophy and languages of indigenous/colonised people and then using them for future redress. Critique concerns a critical appraisal of the Western model of the academy that continues to restrict those historically marginalised from expressing themselves (Chilisa, 2012; Le Grange, 2016).

The above-outlined phases in decolonisation, as well as the strategies for decolonisation, illustrate that decolonising the curriculum is not a simple process, but rather one that requires a person to reflect on the past and be critically aware of the present, so as to be able to imagine future possibilities. The aim is to transform the curriculum through debate and committed action. This is akin to Pinar's (1975, 2004) method of *currere* that calls on indigenous people to draw on their past experiences, knowledge and understandings in becoming critically aware, while visualising future possibilities so that they can make sense of transforming and decolonising the curriculum (Mahabeer, 2018).

The next section explores decolonisation of the university curriculum by opening up the conversation on rethinking the university curriculum by introducing the 4R model, as well as a range of possibilities for decolonising the South African university curricula that encourages action against colonial thinking and that seeks social justice (Le Grange, 2016).

2.7.3 Decolonisation possibilities

Jansen (2019:73) observes that the demand for decolonisation, "offers an incomplete response to a real set of curriculum problems" that is faced by South African universities. The decolonisation moment is going to pass, because "the power of a settled curriculum within established institutions" is underestimated in terms of "core knowledge commitments", which continue to be "impervious to the politics of protest" (Jansen, 2019:73). In an attempt to respond to the pressure of curriculum change, it should come as no surprise that some universities replaced poorly defined Western content with

African content in the name of decolonisation (Jansen, 2019:73). Pinar (2010) expresses that there is an urgent need to move beyond dialogue and debate, which results in agreements and disagreements and even though conflict cannot be avoided by taking such measures, the truth is that we learn, through conflict, our differences and disagreements. Le Grange (2016) suggests utilising the 4R paradigm, as well as considering five possibilities for decolonising the curriculum in South Africa.

Le Grange (2016:9) notes that the decolonised curriculum is based on the 4Rs that are central to "an emergent Indigenous paradigm". The 4Rs are relational accountability, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriation and rights and regulation. Relational accountability implies that all parts of curriculum are connected and accountable to all relations (Le Grange, 2016). Respectful representation is concerned with how the curriculum recognises the voices and knowledges of indigenous people and creating spaces for those voices and knowledges (Le Grange, 2016). Reciprocal appropriation asserts that the benefits of various indigenous knowledges are given voices by both universities and communities (Le Grange, 2016). When referring to rights and regulations, it means observing ethical protocols that unite ownership of knowledge to indigenous peoples around the world (Le Grange, 2016). In conjunction with the 4R paradigm, Le Grange (2016) also provides five possibilities for decolonising the curriculum. The first possibility is the "radical rethinking of disciplines" (Le Grange, 2014:1288). Le Grange (2014) believes that this entails a radical rethinking of the curriculum for each academic discipline that is Western-dominated. This radical approach to the rethinking of Western knowledge is what Odora-Hoppers and Richards (2011:3) define as "distant, antiseptic and removed from the experiences of the lived world [that] comes from recognising the pain, anger and anguish being experienced in society". Le Grange (2016:6) hypothesises that "such rethinking requires the expansion of empirical beyond mere observation and listening, so as to include knowing through the tastes, pain, and hunger of our bodies and through expressions of anger, passion and desire". This relates to what Chilisa (2012) terms the mourning phase, which is an important part of the decolonisation process. The second possibility is through "emerging transdisciplinary knowledge", which is not based on a social knowledge system that only includes knowledge produced by the university, but one that includes ordinary people and the indigenous communities (Le Grange, 2016:9). Le Grange (2014) argues that the reason it is necessary for those people to be included, is because they are the people who best understands the adversities they face

daily. He continues, to state, that such a social distributed knowledge system, that unites the university and communities can be manifested in the curriculum through service-learning programmes. According to Le Grange (2016) the third approach could be an exploration into the development and design of local and regional concepts into curricula in such areas where Western epistemologies continue to dominate. An example of this is the work done in the sociology of science, which places emphasis on the performative aspect of knowledge and less emphasis on the presentation of knowledge (Turnbull, 1997; Le Grange, 2007). Focusing on the performative aspect of knowledge is not intended to destroy Western knowledge but to recognise indigenous knowledge as third spaces between Western knowledges, where dissimilar knowledges can be compared equally and function to work together to decolonise the curriculum. In the South African context, a fourth approach is for students to learn together and share knowledge to promote and preserve human histories, as well as epistemologies of human beings that emerged from the Cradle of Humankind, known as Afrikology (Nabudere, 2011). Afrikology is defined as an attempt by Africans to strengthen their achievements in humanity and to oppose dehumanisation acts inherited from Western civilisation (Nabudere, 2011). Human knowledge was first created and later spread to other parts of the world, such as Greece and modern Europe and finally returned to the cradle (Nabudere, 2011). This has enabled the reassertion of the fact that the original knowledge production started with the Greeks and was copied by the Europeans scholars who succeeded in redesigning and 'methodising' the knowledge into "senseless abstraction and fragmentation" (Nabudere, 2011:7). The last possibility draws inspiration from a university in Ecuador and is based on their approach to decolonising curriculum in order to accommodate indigenous peoples and their cultures. According to DeCarvalho and Florez-Florez (2014) as interpreted by Le Grange (2016) this approach has three cycles, the ancestral sciences' formation (community learning); learning of Western sciences (learning to un-learn and re-learn); and learning of interculturality (learning to un-learn, re-learn and moving to active learning). This approach is encouraged for adoption in the decolonising curriculum in South African universities by Le Grange (2016) as it also strongly resonates with Le Grange's (2021) notion of *currere* as a form of decolonisation, as well as Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (cited in Omanga, 2020) argument that we must learn to unlearn in order to re-learn. Next, I will unpack the six conceptions developed by Jansen (2017a) to decolonise curriculum.

2.7.4 Decolonisation conceptions

Jansen (2017a) identifies a typology of six conceptions of decolonisation in terms of knowledge as embedded in the university curriculum. They are divided into two categories, the soft version and the hard version. The conceptions are (1) decolonisation as an additive inclusive knowledge; (2) decolonisation as the decentring of European knowledge; (3) decolonisation as critical engagement with settled knowledge; (4) decolonisation as encounters with entangled knowledges; (5) decolonisation as the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society); and, lastly, (6) decolonisation as the Africanisation of the curriculum. These conceptions can help us grapple with our understanding of decolonisation as they attempt to unpack and uncover the rich and in-depth meanings thereof. When Jansen (2017a:158) introduced these conceptions, he emphasised to the importance of not reading them along the lines of sharp distinction, because "the distinctions lie in the emphases of meaning in various works by recent curriculum scholars".

The first concept, decolonisation as additive-inclusive knowledge, is built on Le Grange's (2016) theory of the 4Rs. It is described by Jansen (2017a) as the soft version of decolonisation. This concept recognises that current canons of knowledge are valuable but also requests that new knowledge should also be recognised and added to the already established curriculum. Similar to Le Grange's (2016) 4R theory that suggests that the current knowledge must be acknowledged while creating a space for knowledges of indigenous people, which will result in the expansion of the current curriculum, this concept advocates for the expansion of the existing curriculum by adopting a content-driven additive approach (Jansen, 2017a). However, simply adding content, although necessary, will not be sufficient to completely decolonise the curriculum. Adding what has been left out, such as adding a new course to a degree or a new book to the curriculum, leads to the danger of ghettoising the new content from the mainstream disciplines. One such example provided by Jansen (2017a) was that of subordinate groups during the 1970s; as a result of the civil rights and campus protests against exclusion, courses in African and gender studies were simply added to the curriculum. These groups often had their own centres in special facilities with a group of staff, without ever disturbing the dominant canons of the institutions. Du Preez (2018:22) opines that this conception is "problematic insofar as it artificially separates African knowledges from other knowledges"

and it could also result in the reinforcement of epistemic injustices that were dominant in the colonial curriculum. Heleta (2016) is also opposed to this concept and claims this approach is only used by those who wish to maintain a Western status quo.

In the second concept, decolonisation as the decentring of European knowledge, Jansen (2017a) mentions that the problem with this approach is that educational institutions arrange the content of the curriculum around the knowledge, values and ideals of Europe, which is the site of both colonial and postcolonial authority. An example provided by Jansen (2017a) was that South African students under the apartheid administration were likely to be educated more about Europeans fighting against fascism than about their own wars against colonialism. The notion is not to erase Europe from the curriculum but rather to place the values, achievements and ideals of Europe second to a new knowledge system that places Africa at the centre. Le Grange (2016:6) advocates for decentring and states the decolonisation of the curriculum involves “a process of change that does not necessarily involve destroying Western knowledge but in decentring it or perhaps deterritorialising it (making it something other than what it is)”. In an effort to decolonise, this approach would, for example, include asking students to choose a text of the Western rule, then study what the text says of the ‘other’; then the students are required to analyse and describe the conventions of the author and decide what knowledge to include in the text, after that, the students would use the same information to construct a different narrative to that of the author (Le Grange, 2019b). This is akin to Wa Thiong'o (1986) who believed, it is not just about excluding European and other traditions, but rather clearly defining what the centre is and, for him, this centre is Africa. Mamdani’s (2016) statement about transforming the curriculum around African knowledge and decentring European values, knowledges and ideals to promote decolonisation agrees with this concept of Jansen. The concept of recentring could be defined as a soft version of Africanisation, restoring the location of African knowledge “at the heart of how we come to know ourselves, our history, our society, our achievements, our ambitions and our future” (Jansen, 2017a:159).

Decolonisation as a critical engagement with settled knowledge is the third concept and advocates for the empowerment of students to engage with knowledge by posing questions such as: “Where did this knowledge come from? In whose interest does this knowledge persist? What does it include and leave out?” (Jansen, 2017a:161). For Le

Grange (2016), this type of empowerment could lead to students' critical engagement with the voices and knowledges of indigenous people to facilitate a respectful representation in the curriculum. As an example, here we can consider amongst others the #*RhodesMustFall* movement and the removal of the statue of the British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes. It could be argued that removing these types of colonial or apartheid symbols or placing them out of sight eliminates the opportunity to engage with those reminders in a direct and visible way (Jansen, 2017a). Jansen (2017a) brings attention to the fact that we have to acknowledge these representations as part of our nation's history and that a person cannot just erase or ignore what they do not like about the past. Instead, Jansen (2017a) suggests that inviting critical involvement with such curricula in a way that, ultimately, transforms the original form. Basically, one looks at the same set of problems with new eyes by making use of new theories, methods and perspectives.

The fourth concept, decolonisation as encounters with entangled knowledges, resonates with the idea of relational accountability within Le Grange's (2016) 4Rs model, when he states that the curriculum is connected in all of its parts. For Garuba (2015), the meaningful integration of different knowledge systems in curricula might bring about fundamental transformation. Jansen (2017a) further hypothesised on Le Grange's (2016) 4Rs model and claimed that our knowledges are intertwined and cannot be separated. This way of thinking about the decolonisation of the curriculum is relatively new. Jansen believes that knowledge should not be divided into binaries such as us and them, but that "our knowledges, like human existence, are rather intertwined in the course of daily living, learning, and loving" (Jansen, 2017a:162). This approach is echoed in Le Grange's (2016:9) statement that "a decolonised curriculum is evidenced by a shift in subjectivity from the arrogant 'I' . . . to the humble 'I', to the 'I' that is embedded, embodied, extended and enacted". This notion of Le Grange is echoed in his concept of *Ubuntu-currere*, which will be discussed in 2.8. Jansen (2017a) concludes by expressing that we cannot escape our entangled lives, as they are unfailingly imitated in what we know and how we know it. This is especially relevant to the apartheid era, where former enemies shared social spaces in schools and universities and engaged with the same troubled knowledge within in the curriculum.

Decolonisation as the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society) is the fifth concept and also the first of Jansen's six conceptions that he refers to as the hard version of

decolonisation, in which curriculum is assigned with a great deal of power to impact the settler society and the settled knowledge. This approach is akin to Tuck and Yang (2012:3) that maintain "decolonization is not a metaphor" and argue that discussion about decolonisation must refer to the repatriation of indigenous land and life. They continue to note that the occurrence of repatriation, like decolonising the curriculum is dangerous in the sense that it could risk becoming what they refer to as the "settler moves to innocence", such as ways of domesticating decolonisation, letting go of the guilt and renouncing the complicity of settlers without challenging existing distributions of power and land (Tuck & Yang, 2012:10). People who are involved in the struggles to help indigenous people regain control over their original land are advocates for this repatriation approach and supporters of this approach of decolonisation are enraged by those who suggests the additive-inclusive model for a decolonised curriculum as they claim that "this kind of inclusion is a form of enclosure, dangerous in how it domesticates decolonisation" (Jansen, 2017a:163). When compared to the other four concepts mentioned above, this approach has a much more inspiring ending, which includes land repatriation to native tribes and nations. From this perspective, it is impossible to compare demands to reconcile and decolonise, since reconciliation tries to rescue a settler future. Jansen (2017a:163) expresses that "decolonisation is not about pampering settlers and affording them innocence through an accommodationist curriculum in educational institutions". Instead, its goal is to create awareness about the need to end modern forms of slavery, give back stolen land and overthrow the concealed imperialism which keeps indigenous people in subjection. The concept of repatriation of occupied knowledge (Jansen, 2017) is reminiscent of Le Grange's (2016) 4Rs model, rights and regulation, which involve observing ethical protocols and suggest that indigenous people must be granted ownership over their knowledges. It could also be argued that reciprocal appropriation, which also forms part of the 4Rs model (Le Grange, 2016), can also be linked to this concept of Jansen (2017a) on decolonisation, as the benefits of knowledge that are produced and transmitted are shared by the community as well as the university. Therefore, it is only after ownership of indigenous peoples' knowledges is granted to them can their knowledges be shared as well as spread throughout the community and the university.

In the last concept, unlike the decentring concept that supports the idea for Africa to be exchanged with Europe and placed at the centre of the curriculum, this hard version of

Africanisation involves the “displacement of colonial or Western knowledge and its associated ideals and achievements as the standard against which to measure human progress” (Jansen, 2017a:159). For students, the Africanisation of the curriculum, means to be able to read books and poetry by African authors, to learn about artwork by African artists, rediscovering the greatness of Africa through the achievements made by Africans and being able to study the cinematic works of Africans (Jansen, 2017a). This means that a decolonised curriculum should be about Africa and not Africa in relation to Europe or the West. For Le Grange (2014) the Africanisation of the university curriculum means to rethink the model of its academic organisation as well as the knowledge that is included in its programmes. However, he continues by saying that although Africa and its concerns take priority, Africanisation does not propose a narrow-minded focus only on African concerns. Nor does Africanisation mean to turn back time, or reverse technological advancement, but for Le Grange (2014) it means to focus rather on counteracting transcendent thinking, by counteracting, the concept of *currere’s* reactive force, which is discussed in more detail in Section 2.8. He suggests that this could be achieved by invoking the holism central to the worldview of the majority of the continent's people and that inspiration can be found in notions such as *Ubuntu*, which is also discussed in more detail in Section 2.8 Therefore, for Le Grange (2014) the Africanisation of the university curriculum is dependent on the understanding of the active force of *currere,* as the active force of *currere* can “express the Africanisation of the university curriculum in multiple ways – ways unforeseen by us and making possible newness in the world” (Le Grange, 2014:1292). Heleta (2016) concludes by adding that the critical and analytical skills of learners cannot develop with a curriculum that only acknowledges Western knowledge, which ultimately hinders the African continent from moving forward.

Because decolonisation is such a complex term and there are so many possibilities available, all of which are linked in one way or the other, all aspiring to achieve a decolonised curriculum, I argue that academics should not simply choose only one specific theory or approach, but rather apply these approaches and theories in multiple ways and in various combinations. Academics should use what they believe will be best suited to their curriculum, discipline, environment and culture to transform the curriculum through decolonisation.

Prominent voices continue to strengthen the call for decolonisation of higher education

curriculum in South Africa and, in doing such, decolonisation of the curriculum can be approached in numerous ways. But for Le Grange (2016:8) “central to any approach must be rethinking of the subject”, which resonates with his concept of *Ubuntu-currere* and the notion of becoming. These concepts will be discussed in the next section.

2.8 Decolonisation through *Ubuntu-currere*: The importance of becoming

For Nyaumwe and Mkabela (2007), *Ubuntu* is an African concept that refers to humanness between people within a community. It is part of a Zulu phrase which means “a person is a person through other people” (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019:28). Simply put, *Ubuntu* means “becoming more fully human through deeper relationships with other human beings” (Le Grange, 2019a:217). Ramose (2009), however, makes us attentive to the fact that *Ubuntu* (humanness) is not humanism; it is, in fact, the exact opposite. Ramose writes (2009:308–309)

> Humanness suggests both a condition of being and the state of becoming, of openness or ceaseless unfolding. It is thus opposed to any, ‘-ism’, including humanism, for this tends to suggest a condition of finality, a closedness or a kind of absolute either incapable of, or resistant to, any further movement.

Le Grange (2019a:218) sums up this statement by saying it implies that humanness is “inextricably bound up in the human being’s connectedness with other human beings” within an ever-changing world filled with complexities. Modern philosopher, Rene Descartes’ famous saying, “I think, therefore I am,” laid the groundwork for how we conceptualise our sense of self (Paulson, 2019). However, Ramose contrasts the Western way of Cartesian thinking with the African philosophy of “we think”. Ubuntu is captured by Ramose (1999:49) as

> the root of African philosophy. The be-ing of an African in the universe is inseparably anchored upon ubuntu. Similarly, the African tree of knowledge stems from ubuntu with which it is connected indivisibly. Ubuntu then is the wellspring flowing with African ontology and epistemology.

This refers to the notion as discussed by Nabudere (2011), in Section 2.7.3, known as Afrikology, that claims mankind was born in Africa and then spread to other parts of the world and, therefore, implying that all people can be seen as one united *Ubuntu* family.

To elaborate on Pinar's (2011) notion of *currere,* as discussed in Section 2.6, Le Grange (2021) posits that *currere* as a form of decolonisation resonates with Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (cited in Omanga, 2020) argument that we must learn to unlearn in order to re-learn. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020), what is a necessity is a decolonial attitude based on the principle that all people should be accepted as human beings and that all people are born into knowledges that are both valid and legitimate. Furthermore, it entails acknowledging that all knowledges are equal and implies the opening up of curriculum, not closure thereof. Le Grange (2021:10) adds that "the process of unlearning and relearning is a lifelong process". Therefore, he is of the opinion that the four moments of *currere,* as an autobiographical method, could represent one cycle of inquiry in an individual's life. Thus, the assumption can be made that in "the lifelong process of unlearning and relearning" the subject (individual) endures and experiences several cycles of inquiry, which result in a continuous cycle of inquiry (Le Grange, 2021:10)**.**

For Le Grange (2016), decolonising the curriculum entails the liberation of the present Western model of academic organisation, upon which the curriculum of South African universities is based, into a fusion of the African concept *Ubuntu* (I am because we are) and the active force of the Western concept *currere*. The active force of *currere* celebrates the oneness of mind and body and the oneness of humans and the more-than-human-world (Le Grange, 2015). Le Grange (2019a) believes that if the "human is always in-becoming then it can't be defined or essentialized" and then strives to be an active conceptual force of *currere*. Meaning the subject becomes in relation to other human and non-human beings (Le Grange, 2019a:221). Akin to Ramose's (2009) previously discussed view, where he perceives *Ubuntu* as being humanness and not as humanism, that suggests a state of finality. Le Grange (2019a:214) opines that when curriculum is the active conceptual force of *currere*, it "does not have fixity or closeness—that the term does not convey an a priori image of a pedagogical life". When it relates to the engrained potential of the becoming of a pedagogical life, it implies newness, the creation of unforeseen things and experimentation and, in so doing, it opens up multiple pathways for the becoming of pedagogical lives and could also provide a basis for decolonisation (Le Grange, 2019b).

Le Grange (2019a), however, brings our attention to Western education and the territorialisation of *currere's* active force into the reactive force, whereby "to run" has

become “course to run” (Wallin, 2010:2). By this it is meant that, “one way of doing has become the way of doing” (Le Grange, 2019a:215). In the twentieth century and even now in the twenty-first century, the reactive force of *currere* has dominated university education. Instrumentalist approaches to teaching, where outcomes are predetermined and students that are tracked by standardised tests is evident of this (Le Grange, 2019a). The reactive force in education has dominated due to Western society’s commitment to transcendence. For Deleuze and Guattari (1994), transcendence means believing in the existence of a substance and/or thing beyond empirical space, power or existence, known as the ontological being. Because of this strong commitment to transcendence, human beings have been separated from nature, which has caused an education system that has reinforced dualisms (Le Grange. 2019a). Transcendent thinking is not only visible in conservative positivist approaches to education but is also evident in critical pedagogy informed by Marxist thinking. Simply put, *currere* in its reactive form territorialises; whereas, *currere,* in its active force, has the potential to deterritorialise (Le Grange, 2019b).

The significance of Pinar’s (2011) concept of *currere* and the African concept *Ubuntu* are two profound ideas embedded in the debate on the decolonisation of curriculum, which led to Le Grange (2016) coining the concept *Ubuntu-currere* as it portrays an active conceptual force that enables decolonisation (or decolonising the curriculum) and in so doing has the potential to alter our frame of reference from a focus solely on the human being to include that of “human-human-nature” (Le Grange, 2019a:222). Le Grange (2019a) agrees with Ramose’s (1999) notion of replacing the Western way of Cartesian thinking and asserts that decolonising the curriculum must involve freeing one’s thought from Descartes’s *cogito* and states that subjectivity is ecological rather than individual and the subject is always in-becoming (Le Grange, 2019a).This implies that a decolonised curriculum will promote a shift in subjectivity from the arrogant ‘I’ of Western individualism to the humble ‘I’ to the ‘I’ that is “embedded, embodied, extended and enacted” (Le Grange, 2016:9).

Le Grange (2019a:223) further remarks that education, which is informed by *Ubuntu-currere*, is not competitive but rather based on co-operation that opens up numerous “coursings” for developing post-human feelings that are driven by the term known as *potentia*. This is a form of positive power that expresses desire, sustains life and connects

“curriculum scholars across national boundaries” (Le Grange, 2019a:223). It is for this reason that *Ubuntu-currere* is anti-humanist, as it is in contrast to education informed by humanism, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, environmental destruction and a predetermined course to run through standardised education systems. These are all manifestations of *potestas*, which is the negative power form of *currere*, that is hierarchical, transcendent and colonising. In short, *potestas* territorialises *currrere’s* active force into a reactive force. However, *potentia* promises to neutralise these destructive displays of humanism (Le Grange, 2019a).

In conclusion, decolonisation is not a once-off event but a process. Moreover, decolonisation is not an imposition but a becoming or an unfolding. Therefore, at the centre of a decolonised curriculum is the theory of *Ubuntu-currere*, which is motivated by the active force of Pinar’s (1975) autobiographical method *currere, and further* enforced by *potentia* in opposition to *potestas* (Le Grange, 2019a).

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed pre-1994 student movements and events as well as the post-1994 ongoing student protests that have given impetus to the transformation of university curriculum in the name of decolonisation. I explored perspectives on decolonisation and decoloniality by outlining what is meant by their counterparts, colonialism and coloniality. Decolonisation cannot be understood in isolation and, therefore, I discussed two prominent interlinking concepts of decolonisation, namely Africanisation and indigenisation. I further argued that we cannot have a conversation about decolonising the South African university curriculum without, first, rethinking what the term curriculum means. Thus, I explored different ways of rethinking the term curriculum and the importance of understanding those different meanings and proceeded to investigate a range of possibilities and approaches that could underpin the decolonisation of the curriculum. Lastly, I argued that simply rethinking the curriculum and applying different approaches and theories to decolonise the curriculum is not enough. I argue that decolonisation should be driven by the active force of *currere* which is encapsulated by *Ubuntu-currere*, underpinned by the notion of becoming and enforced by the positive power of *potentia*.

In Chapter 3, I explain the research design and methodology of my research.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

Every research project starts with an idea or a vision that develops into a topic and is refined into a research question (Fouché, 2021b). According to Bertram and Christainsen (2014), the researchers must plan systematically to generate and analyse data that would lead them to answer the research question.

One of the first steps in the research design plan is to decide if the research study will be quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method research. This study embraced a qualitative research approach. According to Schurink *et al.* (2021a:289), the qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding people, context and situations, they focus on, "exploring, describing and understanding realities from the inside out".

This chapter provides in-depth detail on my research design (3.2) by examining the five fundamental elements of qualitative research as suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). The first element of my research design is phenomenology as the research methodology (3.3), the second element is idealist interpretivism as the research paradigm (3.4), the third element is focussed on the research environment and sampling (3.5), the fourth element is data generation by means of interviews (3.6) and the fifth element is analysing the data through interpretative phenomenological analysis (3.7) – see Figure 3.1: Research Design. Furthermore, I elaborate on the trustworthiness of the data generated (3.8) and discuss the ethical considerations within the research study (3.9).

3.2 Research design

A research design can be viewed as a plan or a blueprint that starts with a philosophical assumption and is used for conducting a research study (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). For Punch (2006), a research design includes the initial stages of planning and executing a research project until the final stages of data interpretation. By keeping the purpose of the study in mind, the researcher will be able to make conclusions about the phenomenon and answer the research question.

According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016) each of the five elements, methodology (3.3),

paradigm (3.4) sample and environment (3.5), data generation (3.6) and data analysis (3.7) are each vital for conducting sound research. These elements of my research design are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

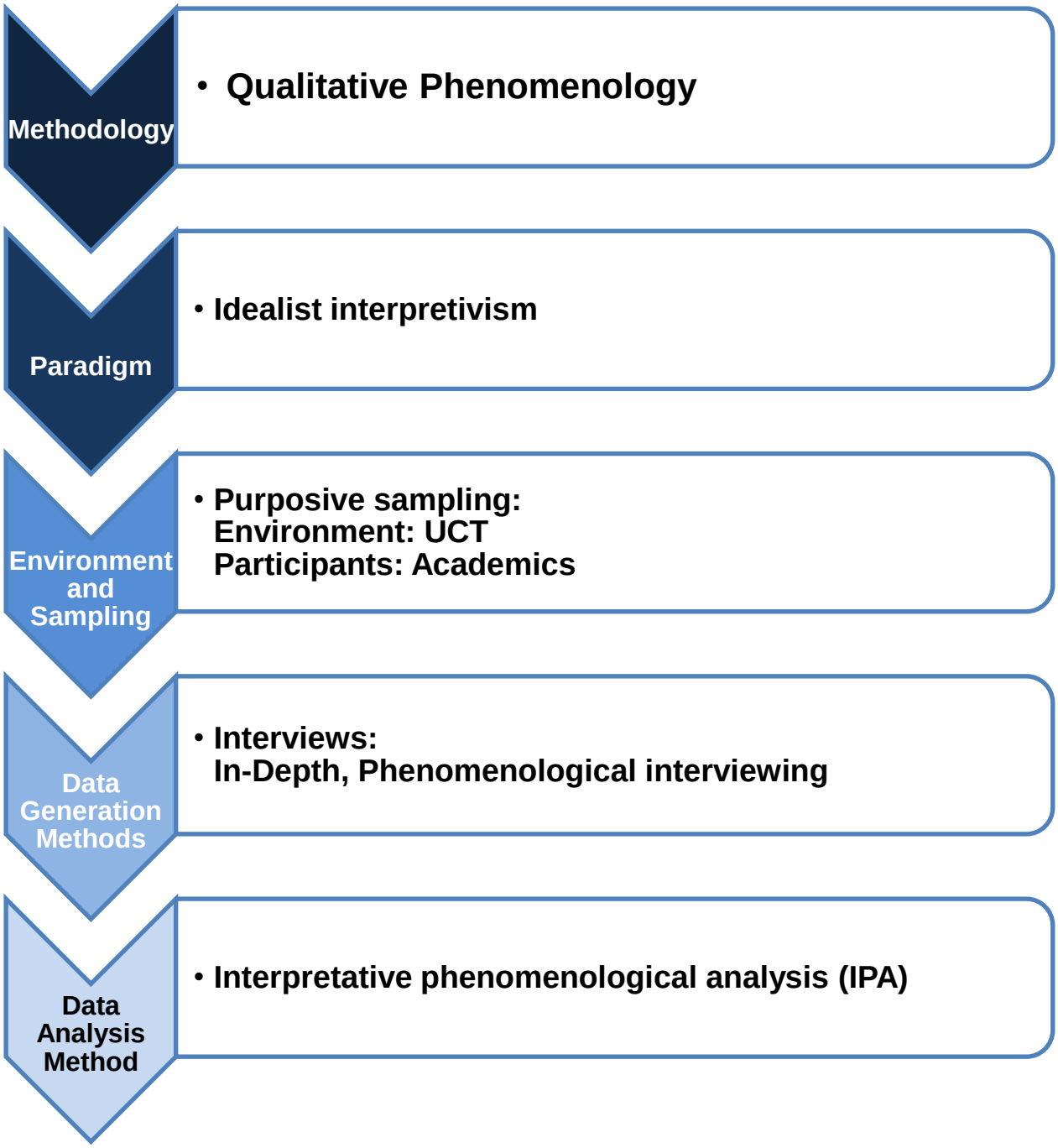

Figure 3.1: Research Design

Figure 3.1 illustrates that I approached my research study with a phenomenological methodology with an idealist interpretivist paradigm. I also made use of purposive methods of sampling, which guided the selection of the research environment and the participants who participated in the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Finally, I used an interpretive phenomenological analysis to analyse the data generated.

According to Fouchè (2021a), the quantitative and qualitative methodologies are the two well-known approaches to research. The researcher must be aware that these two methodologies differ incisively from each other and, therefore, have to orient themselves to these differences and decide which one would be best suited to their study, or whether perhaps a mixed-method (Creswell, 2014), that combines the qualitative and quantitative approach might be better.

Each approach has its purposes, methods of conducting the investigation and strategies for collecting and analysing the data (Fouché, 2021a). Being aware of the characteristics of each will help the researcher choose the best approach. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research involves studies on social and cultural phenomena in social sciences and reflections on everyday occurrences in their natural setting; the data is then reported on in words. A qualitative research design aims at unlocking the experiences or circumstances of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and allows participants to describe their views and opinions relevant to their lived experiences in their specific contexts (Creswell, 2014), enabling the researcher to discover what the participants know, understand and perceive regarding the phenomenon that is being studied (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). Qualitative methodologies, therefore, can be seen as an investigation in an attempt to explore, understand and interpret the social happenings that influence people's views and thoughts regarding these happenings.

Qualitative research, however, has both advantages and disadvantages. Denscombe (2017) highlights four main advantages to qualitative research and the data generated:

- The data are detailed, rich and allow for in-depth descriptions.
- The data highlight the complexity of socially constructed experiences by tolerating ambiguity and contradictions.
- The data highlight the multiplicity of realities within a phenomenon, as alternative explanations could occur during the analysis of the data.
- As the research is rooted in the conditions of social existence, the data analysis

that is represented is authentic.

As mentioned above, conducting qualitative research have some disadvantages. These possible disadvantages, as noted by Denscombe (2017), include:

- If the researcher does not provide an in-depth description of the conditions of social existence, it could lead to the generalisation of experiences.
- Data interpretation could be influenced by 'the self' of the researcher. This is because qualitative research allows for the recognition of the beliefs, background, and identity of the research, which leaves room for the researcher's 'self' to interfere with the interpretation of the data.
- Words and/or images from the generated data may be taken out of context during the coding and categorising process. Therefore, it is crucial to represent the data according to the sequence of data and the surrounding circumstances at the time of the data generation.
- The explanation should not be oversimplified, as a social phenomenon is complex, and the data analysis should clearly illustrate this.
- Qualitative data take longer to analyse than quantitative data.

Nieuwenhuis (2019a) asserts that a researcher could consider five broad qualitative research approaches for their study: narrative studies, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study research. These approaches can also be referred to as methodologies (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). The best suited methodology for my research study is phenomenology. As my research study is aimed at exploring the experiences of academics in the decolonial moment in pursuit of curriculum transformation, a qualitative approach to my research was deemed the best suited approach to interpret these experiences as a phenomenon.

3.3 Research methodology: Phenomenology

A phenomenological study "seeks to understand the essence or structure of a phenomenon" (Merriam, 2002:93). Phenomenology focuses on the individual's independent experiences, beliefs, attitudes, feelings and convictions and identifies the essence of human experiences as a phenomenon described by the participants. As it relates to the lived experiences, phenomenology is characterised as a method and as a philosophy (Creswell, 2014). According to Schurink *et al*. (2021a), at the centre of

phenomenology is to understand the phenomenon under study and describe human experiences as the participants experience them. The findings of a phenomenological research study are then captured in a cautious description of the participants' conscious everyday experiences and social actions (Schurink, *et al*., 2021a).

Phenomenology is, furthermore, described as "the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990:10). Therefore, the aim of using phenomenology as a methodology is to systematically try to understand how participants make sense of their experiences, as well as how they reflect on these experiences (Denscombe, 2017). In order to understand the essence or structure of experience, Merriam (2002) suggests that the researcher momentarily put aside any personal attitude or belief regarding the phenomenon being researched to allow the consciousness to become heightened. Van Manen (1990:10) notes that consciousness of the phenomenon being studied "is not introspective but retrospective", which means it reflects the lived experience. Furthermore, to understand the essence of the phenomena, the assumption that culture exists is crucial (Patton, 2002).

Phenomenology can take two forms, existential phenomenology and social phenomenology. The former focuses on the essence of the experience, and the latter focuses on the ways in which people interpret social phenomenology (Denscombe, 2017). Based on Denscombe's (2017) methodological insight, my research study is a combination of both forms of phenomenology, as this research study aimed to understand the essence of the experiences of academics in the decolonial moment in pursuit of curriculum transformation, whilst also attempting to understand how academics interpret decolonisation as a social phenomenon.

Phenomenology could lack scientific rigour, admits Denscombe (2017), focusing on subjectivity, description and interpretation rather than objectivity, analysis and measurement. On the other hand, this also means that phenomenology allows for a humanistic approach to research to unlock the possibility of authentic accounts of the complex social phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014; Denscombe, 2017). These accounts are detailed and could attract a wide readership as they describe the authentic feelings of the participants (Denscombe, 2017).

3.4 Research paradigm: Idealist interpretivism

A paradigm can be described as a belief or a lens through which one sees the world. In research, a paradigm guides the researcher's thinking and interpretation of the research study. From a phenomenologically influenced view of interpretivism, the reality is not objectively determined but rather socially constructed (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). This socially constructed reality should be interpreted through the meaning of which participants make of their experiences (Schurink *et al*., 2021a). This means that their historical, cultural and social realities are influenced by their understanding of their unique lived experiences.

According to Nieuwenhuis (2019a) the interpretivist paradigm is an 'antipositivist' paradigm as it was developed as a reaction to positivism. On a philosophical level, interpretivism is influenced by hermeneutics and phenomenology and is referred to as constructivism as it highlights the ability of the individual to construct meaning. Interpretivism displays excellent strengths in the richness and depth of explorations and description it produces (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). Hammersley (2013) believes that the primary focus of interpretivism should be to try and understand particular people and events in specific socio-historical circumstances. Denscombe (2017) concurs and asserts that the primary concern of interpretivism is developing insights into people's beliefs and their lived experiences by using qualitative data.

According to Hammersley (2013), interpretivists argue that it is needed to comprehend how people interpret and make sense of their world and act on their interpretations, otherwise we will not be able to grasp why people do what they do or why particular institutions exist and operate in characteristic ways. This means that to understand people and their way of doing things, you need to put yourself in their shoes, be part of their world, experience what they experience and in this, you will get a deeper meaning and understanding of why people do what they do. Accordingly, Nieuwenhuis, (2019a) argues that, ultimately, interpretivism aims to understand human beings, their experiences and what is important to them.

Schnelker (2006) states that there are two types of interpretivism: realist interpretivism and idealist interpretivism; the former is a modification of the postpositivism paradigm and undertakes that social reality exists independent of its perceptions. Schnelker (2006) claims that reality is a complex matter and the only way to understand it is by

acknowledging that the elements of a phenomenon cannot be isolated or examined in isolation. One should, instead, investigate the phenomenon in its context and how its elements come together. Realist interpretivism searches and creates theories that best fit or validate complex data that at generated in context (Schnelker, 2006). The latter is defined by Schnelker (2006) as idealist interpretivism which undertakes that reality is a mental construct. Contrary to realist interpretivism, Schnelker (2006) claims that idealist interpretivism cannot exist independently of perceptions, feelings, motives, values, or experiences. Researchers who support this paradigm "focus on how people make sense of their worlds rather than on what people conclude about their worlds" and in order to understand this process, the research must be done within the context of the individual or event (Schnelker, 2006:45).

In my research, I am interested in "perceptions, feelings, motives, values, or experiences" (Schnelker, 2006:45) of the participants, therefore, my study took an idealist positioning within the interpretivist paradigm. From an idealist position, Smith (1983) highlights that the researcher should seek to identify what the participant deems significant and relevant values to ensure that the importance of the study relates to the participants. Smith (1983) further maintains that in order for an idealist researcher to understand the essence of reality, the researcher has to acknowledge that human experiences are context-based. Smith (1983:12) concludes by making the argument that in order for an interpretivist-idealist researcher to be able to depict reality as the reality of the participants, the researcher has to know what the participant is experiencing by "engaging in a recreation of those experiences in oneself".

As my research study aimed to understand the essence of the experiences of how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation, an idealist positioning within interpretivism supported my efforts to explore this phenomenon as well as allow me to understand the essence of my participants' experiences through engagement with and recreation of those experiences within myself during the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews (as elaborated on in Section 3.6).

3.5 Research environment and sampling: Purposive sampling

Sampling is used to "produce accurate findings without the need to collect data from each and every member" of the population (Denscombe, 2010:23). A sample is often a smaller

subgroup of the population chosen to participate in the research study to engage with the phenomenon being researched. However, when it comes to sampling size for a qualitative study, Patton (2002) claims that there are no rules to be followed. The sample size should depend on what the researchers want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be helpful in the study, what will have credibility and what can be done with the available time and resources. Sampling in qualitative research occurs subsequent to establishing the circumstances of the study. This means that the sampling is undertaken only after the actual investigation has commenced (Strydom, 2021).

Two common methods can be employed to identify a research sample, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Denscombe, 2017; Strydom, 2021). According to Denscombe (2017), probability sampling is often associated with representative samples, whilst non-probability sampling aims to produce an explorative sample. For Strydom (2021), probability sampling is based on randomisation and non-probability sampling is done without randomisation. However, in the qualitative paradigm, the focus is mostly on non-probability techniques. It is highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2018) that researchers of a qualitative study seek out individuals, groups and settings where it is most likely for the specific process under study to occur. Within qualitative research, data are often derived from one or two cases. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that these cases are randomly selected (Strydom, 2021). Non-probability sampling permits “an element of discretion or choice on the part of the researcher at some point in the selection process” (Denscombe, 2010:25). This discretion or choice is influenced by the technique chosen within the sampling process. Possible non-probability sampling techniques are purposive sampling, theoretical sampling, deviant case sampling, sequential sampling, snowball sampling, key informant sampling and volunteer sampling (Strydom, 2021).

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, I chose to follow a non-probability sampling approach to obtain an explorative sample and employed purposive sampling for my research environment as well as participant selection. A purposive sample is defined as a sample that has been selected deliberately (Punch, 2006) and with an explicit purpose in mind (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental sampling, meaning the chosen sample is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher. This implies that the chosen sample comprises of elements, such as certain characteristics and attributes

of the population that would serve the purpose of the study best (Strydom, 2021). This form of sampling is used in qualitative research, where participants and the environment are selected on purpose to help the researcher undertake the research problem of the study. Strydom (2021:383) concludes by stating that, “in the case of purposive sampling, the researchers purposely seek typical and divergent data”.

As mentioned above, I have chosen purposive sampling as my sampling method for the selection of the research environment as well as the sampling criterion of the participants. I opted to purposively select the University of Cape Town (UCT) as the research environment, mainly because UCT was at the forefront of the student protest in 2015 (through the *#RhodesMustFall* movement), which ignited the decolonial movement and placed decolonising the curriculum in the spotlight. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) note that when a researcher uses purposive sampling, the selection criteria directly reflect the purpose of the study; therefore, it is crucial to choose the most suited participants to be studied and in this study the participants were:

- Current UCT academics, specialising in curriculum studies or education as their area of scholarship during the *#RhodesMustFall* movement.

The selection process was done through collaboration with my supervisor to identify which participants met the criterion. Participants that met the criterion were invited to participate voluntarily.

In Section 3.7 I elaborate on my chosen data analysis method, IPA, but it is noteworthy to mention that my sampling size is consistent with what is suggested by IPA. One of the main concerns in IPA is to give full appreciation to the account of each participant. Noon (2018) points out that the IPA researcher aims at generating a purposive, fairly homogeneous sample. This is to ensure that the study holds relevance and personal significance to participants, while also enabling the researcher to capture details on a specific group of individuals who have experienced a particular phenomenon. For this reason, the sampling in IPA studies is usually small, which enables the researcher to provide a detailed case-by-case analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Therefore, having purposively identified the research environment and participants that I wished to study, I elected to invite only four academics, currently at UCT, who specialise in curriculum studies or education as their area of scholarship during the #RhodesMustFall movement. This was to ensure that participants had sufficient acquaintance with the decolonial

movement and curriculum transformation within the institution to produce the in-depth, rich responses required for IPA. These proved to provide the in-depth descriptions needed to address the research questions and, thereafter, it was decided that data saturation had been reached.

3.6 Data generation methods: Interviews

According to Nieuwenhuis (2019b), different methods of data generation can be used for the research design, but the selections must be based on methods most suitable for the research design (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). For a qualitative study, the following data generation methods can be used: observations, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews, structured interviews and documents. I generated my data using semi-structured, one-on-one interviews.

Nieuwenhuis (2019b) defines interviews as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer poses questions to the participant in order to gain data with regards to the participant's beliefs, views and opinions. I opted for a semi-structured, one-on-one interview with open-ended questions based on Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews can be conducted in various ways; however, given the participants' location and taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic, I opted to invite my participants to participate in online interviews via their chosen online platform of Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The way in which the interviews were conducted, how the questions were asked and how the data were recorded are elaborated on in the next section.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews are complex dialogues that take place with a particular agenda and must be conducted according to the intended purpose (Denscombe, 2017). They can be seen as a conversation that takes place between an interviewer and a participant, which allows for the interviewer to collect valuable information about the feelings and views of the participant, towards a specific topic (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b).

Three common types of interviews can be followed, namely structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews do not allow for any deviation from the interview schedule. The interviewer has to follow the schedule

strictly, to ensure there is a strong focus on controlling the format of the interview (Denscombe, 2017). Both unstructured and semi-structured interviews provide the interviewer with the possibility of going back and forth between questions as well as being able to deviate from the interview schedule (Denscombe, 2017).

To answer my research question, I opted to conduct semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews are defined mainly by the use of open-ended questions set by the researcher, which do not limit the participants in the range or intention of the answers that they provide (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Denscombe, 2017). This type of interview plays an important part, as it brings flexibility and authenticity to the responses of the participant, as it allows them the freedom to guide the interview in a direction the participant feels comfortable with (Denscombe, 2017). Although semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility, their main focus remains in unlocking the phenomenon under study.

3.6.2 In-depth, phenomenological interviewing as data generation method

For this research study, I opted to approach my semi-structured one-on-one interviews using Seidman's (2006:15) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach. Inspired by Bertaux (1981) and Schutz (1967), this method combines life-history interviewing and focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology. In this approach, the interviewer mainly uses open-ended questions. The reason for this, according to Seidman (2006) is to build on and explore the responses of the participants to those questions. The main goal is to get the participant to reconstruct their experience within the topic under study. In this case, it would be the participant's experiences with regard to decolonisation and curriculum transformation. This approach allows for a range of topics to be adapted to it, "covering almost any issue involving the experience of contemporary people" (Seidman, 2006:15).

As mentioned, in Section 3.7, I discuss IPA as my method of analysing the data. Once again, it is worth noting another similar characteristic, which is the type of interview and because another main concern of an IPA researcher is to provide a rich, comprehensive, and first-person account of the experiences and phenomena that are under investigation, Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggest making use of semi-structured, in-depth, one-on-one interviews. These allow "the researcher and the participant to engage in a dialogue

in real-time" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), while also providing enough space and flexibility for unique and unforeseen issues to arise, that the researcher may choose to investigate further in more detail.

Seidman (2006) highlights one of the most distinctive features of the in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach is to conduct a series of three separate interviews with each participant. The reason being, that "people's behaviour becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them" (Seidman, 2006,16). However, for the purpose of this study, I have adapted this approach to three distinct phases within a once-off, semi-structured interview. A few reasons for the adaption are, *inter alia*:

- **Adequate time**: I have scheduled each interview for two hours, which provided enough time to work through all three phases in one interview session.
- **Flow of the conversation**: I wanted to ensure that was a natural flow to the interviews, to get a detailed account of the participants' life experience and, therefore, did not want to risk doing it in three separate sessions.
- **Competent participants**: All four participants are academics and I believed that they are highly capable of having one interview that consists of three sections for a longer period of time, as opposed to three separate interviews

The first phase establishes the context of the experiences of the participants, the second phase allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs and the third phase encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them. These three phases will now be elaborated on:

3.6.2.1 Phase one: Focused life history

In the first phase, the interviewer asks the participant to tell as much as possible about him or herself in light of the topic up to the present time. This puts the participant's experience in context as participants are asked to reconstruct their early experiences within their families, school, with friends, in their community and at work. This is reminiscent of how Pinar (2011) thinks about the regressive moment, which focuses on the individual's past by reflecting on the influences on the participant's life in their past. In this study, as the aim of this phase is the participant's experience as a curriculum specialist, the focus could possibly be on the participant's past experience in higher

education and/or in any situation such as lecturing, mentoring and tutoring, before becoming a curriculum specialist. In order to put their lecturing, tutoring or mentoring in the context of their life history, Seidman (2006) suggests asking questions such as how instead of why, in the hope that participants reconstruct and narrate a series of constitutive events in their past-, family-, school-, and work experience that place their employment as a curriculum specialist in the context of their lives.

3.6.2.2 Phase two: The details of the experience

In the second phase, the purpose is to focus on the concrete details of the participants' present lived experience in the topic area of the study. Participants are asked to reconstruct these details. This is akin to Pinar's (2011) analytical moment of his autobiographical methods, because it requires the participants to distance themselves from their past and future to create a space of freedom in which they analyse how the future is present in the past, the past in the future and the present in both. The interviewer can, for example, ask them what they actually do in their jobs. The interviewer does not ask for opinions but rather focuses on the details of their experience, which could lead to their opinions being expressed built on their experiences. Seidman (2006:18) claims that in the second phase the task of the interviewer is "to strive, however incompletely, to reconstruct the myriad details of our participants' experiences in the area we are studying". To place the experiences of the participants within the context of the social setting, the interviewer could ask the academics, for example, to speak about their relationships with their students, colleagues and administrators, line-mangers, mentors and the wider community. Seidman (2006) suggests, for example, to ask them to reconstruct a day in their life, from the moment they wake up to the time they fall asleep. The key is to ask for stories about their experience in the institution as a way of eliciting details. For Pinar (2011) this would be phrased as the progressive moment which focuses on the future, where a person looks forward to what is not yet present, imagining possible futures and also how the future resides in the present.

3.6.2.3 Phase three: Reflection on the meaning

Pinar (2011) also provides us with the synthetical moment, which offers a sense of wholeness as one re-enters the lived present and asks what the meaning of this present is and for Seidman (2006) this meaning is found in the third phase of the interview, where

participants are asked to reflect on the meaning of their experience. The aim is to address the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' work and life. The interviewer could, for example, ask the participants to reflect on what they make of their life now, based on their experience before their profession, as well as their experience about their profession in the present. This question may take a future direction by asking the participants where they see themselves in the future. It is important that participants are able to make sense of their life, by reflecting on how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to their present situation.

Seidman (2006) makes us aware that the third phase of the interview can only be effective if the groundwork for it has been established in the first two phases. Even though we focus on the participants' understanding of their experience only in the third phases, through all three phases, participants are making meaning. When participants are asked to reconstruct details of their experience, they select significant events or moments from their past, and in so doing so, they impart meaning to them. When participants are asked to tell stories of their experience, they may frame certain aspects around a beginning, a middle and an end and, thereby, make it meaningful, whether it is in phase one, two, or three. However, in phase three, we focus specifically on that question in the context of the two previous phases and make that meaning the centre of our attention.

Seidman (2006) posits that it is important to keep to the three-phase structure, as each phase serves a specific purpose by itself and in correlation to each other. It could happen that the participant starts telling an interesting story about his present work situation in the first phase; however, this type of information is only the focus of the second phase. As it might be tempting to forsake the structure and follow the participants' lead, this could severely hinder the focus of each interview and the interviewer's sense of purpose. Each phase comprises a multitude of decisions that the interviewer must make. Therefore, Seidman (2006) suggests following the open-ended, in-depth inquiry as it is best suited to carry out the structure and would allow for both the participant and the interviewer to maintain a sense of focus in each of the phases of the interview.

According to Boyce and Neale (2006), the major advantage gained from conducting in-depth interviews is that it provides more detailed information than what can be gained through other data collection methods, such as surveys. In-depth interviews can also provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information, as participants might

feel more comfortable having a conversation with the researcher about the topic of interest, as opposed to filling out a survey. For Granot, Brashear and Motta (2012) the advantage of in-depths interviews is that it leads to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the complexities and coherence of people's experiences. But, most importantly, they state that researchers gain an appreciation for the value of storytelling, as well as the participants who have lived those stories. However, Boyce and Neale (2006) bring our attention to a few pitfalls of in-depth interviews. An interview can be a very time-consuming and intense activity, due to the time it takes to conduct interviews, transcribe them and analyse the results. Therefore, they suggest that when a researcher plans for the data collection effort, they need to make adequate provision for the transcription and analysis of this detailed data. The researcher must also be appropriately trained in interviewing techniques, so that he/she can provide the most detailed and rich data from the participant.

Effective interview techniques, such as avoiding yes and no questions, avoiding leading questions, using appropriate body language, and keeping personal opinions in check has to be applied by the researcher at all times. In Section 3.7, it is noted that Noon (2018) also emphasises the significance for researchers to develop their interview skills, by actively listening to the participants, showing empathy and having the ability to build trust and rapport with participants. Lastly, they point out that generalisations about the results are usually not possible to make, as the samples are not a random selection but rather a small and purposively chosen selection. Granot *et al*. (2012:552) add that the researchers shape narratives from the participants that are necessarily limited, meaning their lives go on, but our presentations of the participants are "framed and reified". They conclude by saying that even though in-depth interviews can be enlightening, the researcher has to remain tolerant towards uncertainty. There are various stages in the interview process, and how I approached this in my study is discussed next (3.6.3)

3.6.3 Interview process

As the location of the UCT and the participants in my research study were not in close proximity to me and in keeping to the COVID-19 protocols, I opted for online interviews, via the participants' chosen platform (Zoom or Microsoft Teams). In order to obtain accurate transcriptions, I needed to record these interviews by using the recording feature of the chosen platform (Greeff, 2011). Below I discuss the steps I followed to conduct the

interviews.

Before the interview:

- After gaining approval and access to the participants via the UCT ethics committee and HR department, I contacted the participants through the collaborative assistance of my supervisor.
- I introduced myself as the researcher via email.
- I explained my research study and its purpose.
- Once the participants had agreed to participate voluntarily, I asked that the informed consent document (Addendum D) be completed and signed, and the participants received a copy of the interview schedule beforehand.

On the day of the interview:

- I reminded my participants that their participation was voluntary and should they feel uncomfortable with a question or wish to stop the interview at any time, they could do so without any consequences.
- I requested permission from the participants to record the interview for the sole purpose of accurate transcriptions.

The interview itself:

- I had a list of questions (Addendum E) as a guideline that was utilised during the semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The questions were based on Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach, as well as on literature which focussed on exploring the participants' unique perceptions, opinions and experiences on curriculum transformation as part of the decolonial movement.
- I provided the participants with a copy of the interview schedule on the day to assist the participants in following the structure of the interview. (*Note: This structure served as a guideline for the interview*).
- Then only did I start conducting the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the participants.
- The interviews were recorded after participants gave permission to do so, using the online platform's recording function.

The interviews were recorded using the chosen online platform's recording function. All recordings were password protected. The recordings were only used for accurate

transcriptions, that were typed into a password-protected Microsoft Word document. This was done so that codes could be easily identified from the data. Furthermore, as agreed, according to the ethical clearance requirements from both NWU, as well as the UCT, these voice recordings have to be kept by my supervisor for five years. At this time, all copies of the data will be destroyed. As my interviews took place via an online platform, only the participant and I were present. This environment helped to ensure confidentiality, enhance participant comfort, prevent interruptions and eliminate the possibility that the presence of others may contaminate data.

3.7 Data analysis: Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA)

Graue (2015:5) refers to the quote of Neil Armstrong, “research is creating new knowledge” and explains that conducting research is the natural consequence of the exposure of a question that has not yet been answered. The researcher either chooses to analyse further an already examined phenomenon or attempts to explore a new one.

The process of analysing data is used to bring order and structure as well as to provide meaning to the data collected (Schurink, Schurink & Fouchè, 2021b). For Graue (2015), the qualitative data analysis process is the classification and interconnection of phenomena combined with the concepts of the researcher. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014:7) feel that qualitative researchers are mostly concerned with meaning, such as “how individuals make sense of the world, how they experience events, what meaning they attribute to phenomena”. Schurink *et al. (*2021b:391), summarises qualitative data analysis as “messy, ambiguous and time-consuming”, but it can also be a captivating process that inspires creativity. A variety of data analysis approaches are available, such as critical content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory and IPA. Each of these has its own set of strengths and weaknesses, and the approach chosen by the researcher should be thoughtfully selected based on the “view of the world of the researcher as well as the particular objective of the research” (Mayer, 2015:62). However, Graue (2015) points out that there are four key steps that most of these qualitative data analysis approaches have in common, namely data collection, data reduction, data displays and conclusion drawing/verification.

For the purpose of this research study, I employed an IPA that allowed me to investigate how individuals make sense of their experiences, which is the primary goal of an IPA

researcher. IPA also resonates with Seidman's (2006:15) "In-Depth, Phenomenological Interviewing" approach, which I used as the basis for my interview schedule (3.6.2). With IPA, the researcher actively interprets the events, objects, and people in their lives. To examine this process, IPA is built on the fundamental principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. I also chose IPA as it possesses all the main characteristics that reside within the elements of my research design and, for this reason, IPA has been deemed the best-suited option for this study. The three theoretical orientations of IPA as well as the elements will now be explained.

The first theoretical orientation is phenomenology, which is concerned with paying attention to how things appear to individuals in their experiences and aims to identify the essential components of phenomena or the experiences that make them unique. A phenomenological study focuses on how people recognise and talk about objects and events, rather than "describing phenomena according to a predetermined categorical system, conceptual and scientific criteria" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:8). Hermeneutics, from the Greek word 'to interpret' or 'to make clear', is the second theoretical orientation and emphasises that a person needs to understand the mindset of another person and his/her language, which mediates your own experiences of the world, in order to translate the message of the other person (Freeman, 2008). This is why an IPA researcher attempts to understand what it is like to stand in the shoes of their subject/s, while also recognising this is never completely possible, but through interpretative activity, the researcher attempts to make the meaning clear by translating it. Therefore, an IPA study is described by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014:8) as a "dynamic process", where the researcher influences the extent to which they get access to the participant's experience, and through interpretative activity, the researcher is able to make sense of their subject's personal world. Idiography is the third theoretical orientation that IPA relies upon and refers to an in-depth analysis of single cases and the examination of individual perspectives of participants in their unique contexts (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA also encourages researchers to study people idiographically to generate rich and detailed descriptions of how individuals experience the phenomena under investigation. For this study, the phenomenon is curriculum transformation in the decolonial moment. IPA is, furthermore, concerned with the in-depth exploration of their lived experiences (the academics at UCT) and how they make sense of those experiences.

However, when it comes to analysing the data within the IPA framework, Larkin and Thompson (2012) claim that there is no correct way to do so. They point out that all IPA studies share the same analytic focus: (a) attention to patterns in participants' experiences; (b) the ways in which they make meaning of those experiences; and (c) interpreting those experiences within social and theoretical contexts. Therefore, to align with IPAs idiographic nature, each case should be thoroughly and independently examined for themes before proceeding to explore patterns between cases. Analysing qualitative material using the IPA framework can be an arduous and time-consuming task, but at the same time, it can also be very enriching and inspiring. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) recommend that the researchers should completely immerse themselves in the data by stepping into the participant's shoes as much as they possibly can.

The aim of IPA is twofold. First, it provides evidence of how the participants make sense of the phenomena under investigation (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). For Larkin and Thompson (2012) the aim is to understand what matters to the participants, with attention to specific events, particular relationships and core values. Secondly, according to Pietkiewicz & Smith (2014) it is to document the researcher's sense-making. Larkin and Thompson (2012) explain that this is where the researcher goes beyond pure description toward interpretation, exploring the meaning participants give to aspects of their stories. Miller, Chan and Farmer (2018:247) note that the researcher's aim here is to take a wider lens, "considering the initial description within societal, cultural, and theoretical frameworks". Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) further elaborate on these two aims and explain that the researcher moves between the emic and etic perspectives. The former view, "protects researchers from psychological or psychiatric reductionism" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:11). However, by analysing the data from the perspective of an outsider, the researcher has the opportunity to develop higher-level theories and perceptions, which the participant may not have access to. The etic perspective is achieved by viewing the data through a psychological lens, "interpreting it with the application of psychological concepts and theories", which the researcher uses to highlight the comprehension of the research problem (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:11). Analysing data within the IPA framework is reminiscent of Pinar's (2011) four moments of *currere*, which I discussed in Section 2.6 and made reference to in Section 3.6.

Lastly, after the analysis, the researcher has to provide a narrative account of the study.

This usually involves taking the themes that the researcher identified and writing them up one-by-one. Each theme has to be explained and supported with extracts from interview/s, followed by “analytic comments from the authors” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:13). Using the words of the participants enables the reader to “assess the pertinence of the interpretations” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014:13) as well as to provide a voice for the participants’ personal experiences and gives the researcher a chance to present the emic perspective. Both the participants’ accounts of their experiences in their own words, as well as the interpretative commentary of the researcher, will be included in the final findings. In a typical IPA study, the narrative account is followed by a discussion section that connects the themes that were identified to the existing literature. In this section, a reflection on the research can be included, as well as comments on the implications of the study, its limitations and ideas for future development (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

3.7.1 My application of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to the study

To engage with the two secondary research questions, I explore in Chapter 4, I planned on employing IPA as discussed in 3.7. However, because IPAs characteristics strongly appeal to my methodology, I realised that other elements already addressed in my study complement IPAs characteristics. For this reason, I explicitly drew on two concepts that allowed me to analyse the data with an even deeper understanding and in a more profound way.

The first concept is Seidman’s (2006) three phases of his in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach (3.6.2) that I used as the basis for my interview schedule, which (a) allowed me to gain valuable information on the participants' life histories; (b) enabled me to gain insights to their present lived experience around curriculum decolonisation; and (c) allowed participants an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their experiences around curriculum decolonisation. The second concept that complements my data analysis method is Pinar’s (2011) four steps of his autobiographical method (2.6), which signifies both temporal and reflective moments for autobiographical research of educational experiences. This concept further contributed to exploring the participants' experiences of the phenomenon of the decolonial moment and how they are engaging with it through their curricula (2.6). Throughout Chapter 3, I make reference to similar

characteristics within these methods, which illustrates and supports my unique approach in analysing the data.

These concepts greatly influenced how I applied IPA to analyse my data. With this in mind and for a more elaborate and pragmatic explanation, I will now provide a summary of my data analysis process:

- First, I re-listened to the recordings of all the interviews, making notes as I went along, paying attention to possible inaudible parts or any disturbances.
- Then I listened for a second time. I immersed myself in the data by stepping into the participant's shoes while I transcribed the interviews (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). I chose to transcribe the interviews myself as it allowed me to connect deeper with data.
- As a personal preference, after the interviews were transcribed, I printed hard copies to work on
- I read the transcriptions in detail and, based on the first phase of my interviews (Seidman, 2006), I was able to write the life histories of the participants (4.3). Through in-depth analysis of the participants' perspectives, I focused on how things appear to the participants in their life experiences to identify essential components that make them unique (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). I concentrated on their past and influences such as education, politics and culture that had impacted them and led them to become professionals in their field (Pinar, 2011). A write-up of these life histories was emailed to participants for approval.
- Once the life histories were completed, I focused on the remainder of my data, which is presented in Section 4.5. This section is based on the participants' present, future, and personal aspirations (Pinar, 2011). By employing phases two and three of my interviews (Seidman, 2006), I gained insights into the participants' current lived experiences. Here participants also had the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of their experiences (Seidman, 2006; Pinar, 2011). It was essential for me to understand the mindset of the participants so as to give voice to their opinions and beliefs on the phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).
- Supporting an inductive approach, I began to interpret the data and applied a combination of (a) in vivo coding, which refers to a direct word or a phrase from the participants, which is placed in quotation marks, (b) descriptive coding, which

summarises the main idea of an extract, and (c) initial coding, where the researcher breaks down the qualitative data into distinct parts to look for similarities and differences. I highlighted sentences, words, interesting passages and verbatim quotes that stood out or spoke to my two secondary research questions. This process was accompanied by making notes and writing keywords or phrases next to the highlighted sections (Saldaña, 2016).

- After coding, I categorised the codes by grouping similar and differing elements. In some events, recoding took place and some codes were subsumed by other codes and renamed, while others that was deemed irrelevant were removed.
- Thereafter, I found it necessary to reorganise some of the coded data into different and even some new categories (Saldaña, 2016).
- After refining the categories, I used them to devise multiple possible themes.
- Lastly, I merged the themes with related aspects to produce the eight final themes as presented in Section 4.5 in narrative form to give voice to the participants and this is supported by verbatim quotes.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Researchers are expected to be trustworthy, especially when it comes to working with confidential information such as the responses of participants (Nieuwenhuis, 2019c). Two crucial elements in a research study are trustworthiness and validity, which aids to the credibility of the study (Denscombe, 2017) and by not following certain strategies to ensure validity and trustworthiness, there is a possibility that the researcher will not conduct the research process in an ethical and trustworthy manner. In pursuit of a study that is deemed trustworthy, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose criteria that should be considered by qualitative researchers, they include: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Nieuwenhuis (2019c) expresses the importance of applying these strategies in a qualitative research study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) agree and also stress the importance of taking trustworthiness strategies into account throughout the entire research process, which means being transparent with participants in all aspects of the research study. Each of these criteria and the manner in which I applied them to the study will now be outlined.

- **Credibility**. The researcher can achieve and enhance credibility by applying several strategies in their research. The strategies are: choosing a well-

established research method; having a research design that fits the research questions; following a theoretical framework that is aligned with the research questions and methods; ensuring that purposive sampling is well-defined; implementing detailed data generation methods; and imposing triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher can also enhance credibility by familiarising themselves with the participants involved in the study.

  - During the interviews, I verified my raw data by asking the participants to confirm my understanding of what they had said. This was done to ensure credibility, as it provided my participants with the opportunity to correct my understanding of what they had shared and ask them to verify whether my interpretation of their answer was correct.
  - After I transcribed the interviews, I provided the participants with a copy of the transcriptions, as well as a write up of their life history for member checking. This gave the participants the opportunity to verify the transcript, provide me with correct facts (in the event something was inaudible), as well as raise any concerns they might have.
  - I also coded my own data to ensure more significant trustworthiness in terms of further familiarising myself with the data because I had conducted and transcribed the interviews before engaging in the coding process (Nieuwenhuis, 2019c). I clustered similar ideas and related concepts together to analyse data better. This was done to enable a better comparison of my findings and the literature.

- **Transferability** allows research readers to make connections between some aspects of a study and that of their own research or experiences. The researcher should concentrate on how typical the participants are to the context being studied and the context to which the findings apply (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
  - To ensure transferability in this study, I purposefully selected participants who are typical of the phenomenon being studied. This means I intentionally invited four academics who are curriculum specialists and who have been part of the decolonising curriculum phenomenon.
- **Dependability** refers to how the researcher reached certain conclusions (Denscombe, 2017). It can be demonstrated through the research design and the implementation thereof, the operational detail of data generation and the reflective

evaluation of the project (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- I ensured dependability during this study by adequately documenting the process of analysis that will allow possible future readers of this study to see the decisions that I have made. Through an audit trail, I transparently documented why and how I have made decisions pertaining to the research process (Nieuwenhuis, 2019c). The raw data, transcribed data and interview schedules for the research study were seen as the audit trail.

- **Confirmability** in qualitative research means that data is constructed and co-constructed through a process of interpretation (Denscombe, 2017). For Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability is the extent to which the findings of this study are shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, motivation, or interest.
  - As I have never worked at UCT, nor I am currently involved with the institution in any way, as the researcher, it allowed me to be unbiased towards the study. This also ensured that I successfully achieved confirmability as I stayed objective at all times, but also admitting any predispositions that I had and discarding my ideas to see what the data presented to me.
  - I engaged in peer debriefs with my supervisor, which allowed her to guide me in ensuring that the findings and conclusions reached were valid and trustworthy.
  - Carefully choosing my quotes was a crucial aspect of presenting the findings as an accurate representation of the participants' voices; thus, I did not use participants' words out of context and chose only the most meaningful quotes (Nieuwenhuis, 2019c).

Using the above strategies for the research study assured me that the data generation process was valid and trustworthy.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Strydom and Roestenburg (2021) point out that ethics, values, standards and laws differ from each other without necessarily being mutually exclusive. Good ethical practice with the wellbeing of humans as the primary interest is crucial when research is conducted with human beings. Ethics are applied to avoid causing harm to the participants and ensure they are recognised not as mere objects but rather as people who experience emotions and trauma and who also can express those emotions and experiences

(Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). Therefore, ethics can be seen as a set of principles that guide the data generation process (Denscombe, 2017).

In this study, there was no risk, even though the participants have been purposively selected because they were at UCT at the time of the #*RhodesMustFall* movement. However, it did not mean that they have had to be part of the protest. Secondly, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the aftermath of the #*RhodesMustFall* movement in terms of its implication on the curriculum and curriculum transformation. This study did not investigate the involvement or non-involvement of these academics in the #*RhodesMustFall* movement. Furthermore, this study did not research their lived experiences, beliefs or opinions of being part of such a movement. This study solely focused on how the climate of UCT and the influences of the movement have brought about curriculum transformation. Participants were treated with respect and throughout the research process, I considered their vulnerability at all times.

To conduct my research study ethically, I employed the following considerations (Denscombe, 2017):

- The fundamental rule of social research is that **no harm** should come to the participants. To avoid psychological or emotional harm, I did not ask intrusive questions during the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews.
- All participation in research should be **voluntary**. It was clearly communicated to the participants that their participation, at all times, would be voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time during the study, without consequences. This was communicated to the participants in both the letter of informed consent and during the research process.
- Written **informed consent** is vital for ethical research to be conducted. The participants were provided with informed consent letters via email that explicitly stated what they could expect by participating, the duration of their involvement, possible advantages and disadvantages of the research study, as well as the process that was followed to complete this study (Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). The language used in the letter was easy to understand. Participants were informed that they were welcome to ask questions or raise concerns before the research study started and during the study (Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021). It was mandatory for the participants to sign the informed consent letter so that there

was evidence of their informed consent to take part in this research study. The informed consent letters were signed and returned to me via email.

- Withholding information from participants or misrepresenting facts is considered to be deceptive. **The deception of participants** is unacceptable. Therefore, I was transparent in my communication with the participants.
- **Privacy** refers to the element of personal privacy. All participants were assured of their right to privacy. Furthermore, the participants' privacy was ensured by first scheduling a meeting to obtain the data through the semi-structured, one-on-one interview; otherwise, I did not encroach on their time or space.
- I clearly informed the participants that their identities would be protected by enforcing **anonymity,** which means that the identity of the participants remains confidential. Only a few individuals (such as myself and my supervisor) know the identity of the participants. The database containing the participants' details was archived following my supervisor's directives. When reporting on the participants' responses, pseudonyms were used, which is strongly suggested by Nieuwenhuis (2019c). Keeping the identities of the participants confidential will ensure that they are not exposed to any risks (Strydom & Roestenburg, 2021).
- **Compensation** is not unethical unless it manipulates the participants. I did not provide participants with compensation.
- For Strydom and Roestenburg (2021), it is the researcher's ethical responsibility to all participants to **accurately and honestly report the data** and in order to do so, Strydom and Roestenburg (2021), emphasise a number of values that should be considered. These values are mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises and expectations of all participants. To illustrate internal validity, the data must match the reality (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This means that the study has to render the participants' representations of reality truthfully.

Furthermore, before my research study could commence, an application for ethical clearance was submitted and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC), of NWU (Addendum A). Thereafter, before I could commence with my interviews, I had to apply to obtain approval from UCTs Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Centre for Higher Education Development (Addendum B). After receiving approval from UCTs REC, I applied for approval from UCTs HR Department to access staff for research purposes. Approval was granted (Addendum C).

In my collaboration with my supervisor, possible participants were identified and invited to participate voluntarily in my research study. Informed consent was received from willing and available participants to conduct the interviews. Next, I scheduled the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews on a date and time that best suited the participants.

3.10 Conclusion

Phenomenology enabled me to become immersed in the participants' lived experience as an academic in the decolonial moment. This allowed me, as the researcher, to generate in-depth descriptions and rich data on how these academics are engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation.

In Chapter 4, I present the results of my data analyses and findings for this study.

CHAPTER 4
REPRESENTATION OF DATA FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the data generated through the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews I conducted and gives voice to my participants' experiences through their verbatim responses. My aim was to explore how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment through their curricula and how curriculum transformation could be fostered through the curricula of academics.

In order for me to engage with these questions, I employed an IPA. As discussed in detail in 3.7.1, IPA is the most significant and appropriate analysis method for my study, as it promoted a good synergy between the theories I applied, namely Seidman's (2006) three phases of his in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach and the four steps of Pinar's (2011) autobiographical method and how they underpin the data generation. Therefore, I have taken the data that I have generated through those theories and used IPA to elicit what I have found in the data generation optimally.

I will first provide a brief background on the interviews as well as some ethical considerations (4.2), before I give a narrative of the life histories of the academics (4.3) as illustrated in Figure 4.1. Thereafter, I provide the thematic presentation of the main findings (4.4) as illustrated in Figure 4.2. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 are methodically structured according to the two theories I applied from Seidman (2006) and Pinar (2011). I conclude this chapter by reflecting on the main data findings (4.4).

4.2 Background of interviews and key ethical considerations

Participants were invited to participate in an online interview via their chosen online platform. Three out of the four participants opted for Microsoft Teams and one participant chose for the interview to take place via Zoom. The interviews took place between September 2021 and October 2021. The duration of the interviews ranged from 65 minutes to 118 minutes. The recordings of the interviews were used for transcription purposes only and once the transcriptions were completed and member checking was done, the recordings were deleted. Participants were provided with a pseudonym as well as a write up of their life history for approval and were also given the opportunity to choose

their own pseudonym, but all the participants agreed to the pseudonyms I provided for them. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the background of the interviews as well as their pseudonyms.

Table 4.1: Background of the interviews and pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Stanley Cohen	Yvette Hayes	Catherine Packington	Natasha Lewis
Form of interview and chosen platform	Online via Microsoft TEAMS	Online via ZOOM	Online via Microsoft TEAMS	Online via Microsoft TEAMS
Duration of Interview	84 minutes	65 minutes	92 minutes	118 minutes
Date of interview	23 September 2021	29 September 2021	30 September 2021	4 October 2021

4.3 Life histories of the academics

This section will elicit a narrative description of each academic, drawing on the first phase of Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach. In this phase, the focus was on the life history of the participants and their journey to becoming academics and specialists in their field. This life history narrative also resonates strongly with the first step in Pinar's (2011) autobiographical moment, the regressive step, that focuses on the individual's past by reflecting on the influences on the participant's life in his/her past. The life history of each participant was analysed through IPAs theoretical orientation, phenomenology. I paid specific attention to how things appear to participants in their experiences and aimed to identify the essential components of the experiences that make them unique. The theoretical orientation of idiography within IPA guided me to do an in-depth analysis and examine the individual perspectives of participants in their unique contexts. Figure 4.1 is a representation of the concepts I employed to narrate an in-depth life history of each participant.

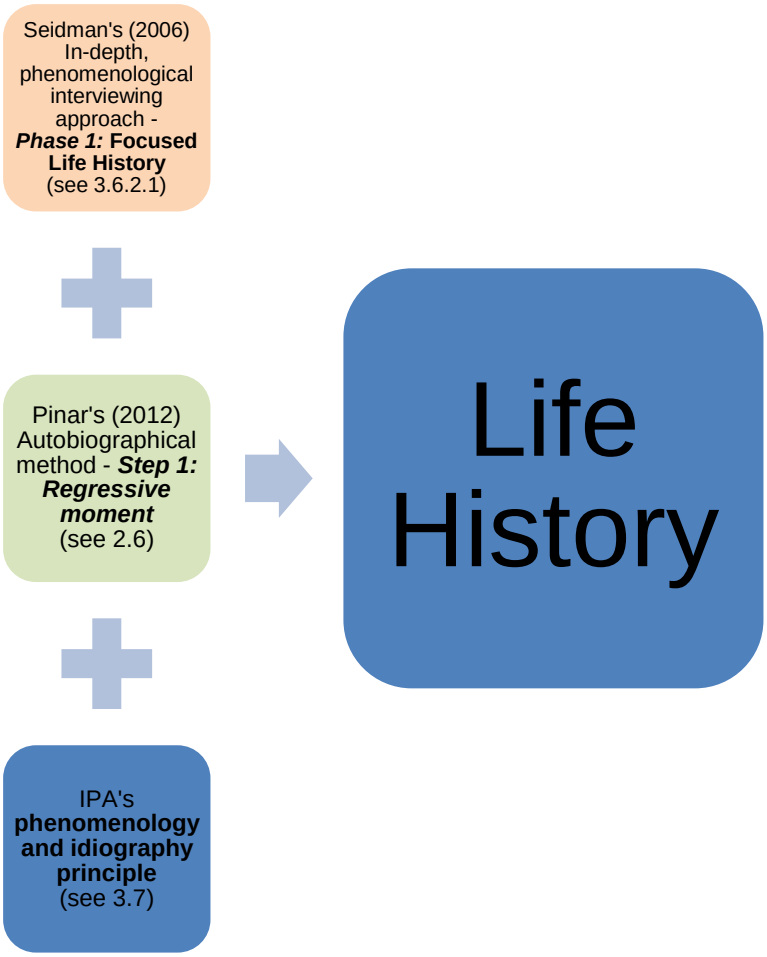

Figure 4.1: Concepts used to narrate the life history of the participants

The particular approach I have chosen warrants that I disclose rich and meaningful information that will help set the scene for the rest of the data findings. For this reason, a write-up of each participant's life history was drafted and in keeping with the trustworthiness strategy, known as member checking as discussed in Section 3.8, I emailed the write-up of the participant's life history to each of them for their approval. To ensure the anonymity and confidentially of the participants, pseudonyms were used to protect their identity and participants had the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym if they were not satisfied with the one I provided for them.

The life history of each participant will now follow:

4.3.1 Yvette Hayes

Yvette Hayes completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE), but was never interested in teaching per se, but more generally in the field of education. Only after

she completed her Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) did she really get attracted to the sociology of education, which was part of the PGCE qualification. Yvette was inspired by one specific lecturer, who spoke about education and its role in society and education in relation to inequalities. She feels that this is what really "ignited her interest". Yvette remembers the lecturer very clearly and even recalls the videos of a British series, he showed them in class to support his lectures. After she completed her PGCE, an opportunity presented itself, where Yvette could do her Masters straight after she completed her PGCE.

The focus of Yvette's Masters was on a particular syllabus, mainly because that syllabus was one of her methods and something she did in her undergraduate studies. Greatly influenced by one of her supervisors, this was Yvette's first real encounter with curriculum. Towards the end of her Masters, she was offered a job on a research project. However, while waiting for the project's funding to come through, Yvette went to teach for six months. Based in Khayelitsha, the project investigated learners' progress and achievements and the factors that enabled or inhibited progress through schooling for children in poor communities. This project started during the time of the President's Education Initiative (1997) and was one of the first significant post-apartheid classroom-based studies that were conducted. As part of the project, Yvette and the rest of the research team visited classrooms and observed what was happening. She believes that because of this specific project, her "interest in curriculum and pedagogy, was forged very early on".

After the project, she was granted a fellowship, and she enrolled for her PhD, full time. Yvette's PhD focused on similar issues around inequalities and the ways in which pedagogy reproduced differences in the classroom. Yvette is strongly of the opinion that curriculum and pedagogy are "intertwined" but are sometimes "artificially separated" and, thus, curriculum and pedagogy became her field of interest. After her PhD, Yvette went to work at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) but went back to UCT to pursue her postdoctoral research and has been there for more than 10 years.

4.3.2 Stanley Cohen

Stanley Cohen started his career as a teacher, teaching Economics and History at a high school in Cape Town. Not only did he have his Masters in African Studies before he

started teaching, but he was also trained as a major in Economics. Stanley was very involved with the politics of what was going on in the school system at the time and feels that not only was the school environment a “very active political space”, but even teaching was very political. Stanley recalls the things that were going on during that period and believes that the “schooling system has probably not properly recovered since then”. He believes that it is not easily visible to people, but that the “culture of schooling has changed so dramatically”. He even feels that many of the learning difficulties evident in many of the schools today are a result of that. For Stanley, the collapse of learning cultures and the collapse of commitment to learning, that was there before, was weakened in a way that people do not properly understand. He expresses that it is very hard to build cultures and environments, which are productive and generative and it is “difficult to get young people and even their teachers into a mindset that learning is really a wonderful thing”.

Stanley feels that the intensity of what was going on in the schools at that time was just too much and he had to extricate himself from that environment. Stanley had a feeling of restlessness and wanted to understand the world more but in a much calmer environment. These were all motivators in what drove Stanley out of the school system.

The period he decided to change jobs was during the height of the student uprisings in the school sector, which was during the latter part of the 1980s. He left for UCT, where a job presented itself. At UCT, although slightly less, the politics continued and Stanley remained actively involved. Stanley was profoundly influenced and inspired by the events that took place in the school system and when he got to UCT his focus was on trying to “explain what had happened” in the school sector. This has been his focus ever since – exploring what “had historically gone down and what was going on inside the environments, inside the communities, inside the heads of young people”. He then went on to do his PhD with a focus on how young people’s thinking was being formed. Some of his other research is also interested in how people come to learn. This unlocks a social psychologist dimension, which is underpinned in his scholarship. At UCT he was also very involved with trying to put the issues of poverty and inequality on the national agenda and was part of a poverty and inequality initiative, which had significant involvement from political leaders, Vice-Chancellors, policymakers and universities around the country. Stanley has been a professor at UCT for more than three decades.

4.3.3 Catherine Packington

Catherine Packington, became a teacher by chance and not by intention. Her father had suddenly passed away and she needed to obtain a qualification. She decided to go into teaching. However, Catherine's turning point only came after two years of working in the classroom, when she got an opportunity to join the South African Committee for Higher Education (Sached) and prepare materials for black adult education and be part of a teacher upgrading project running in the townships. Working with Sached was "very exciting and very informative" of her own thinking. Later on, Catherine was fortunate enough to get an opportunity to do her Masters in Education at the University of Queensland. Being able to study outside of the "restrictions" of South Africa was very stimulating for Catherine. She also feels very fortunate to have good teachers in both Sociology of Education and Comparative Education as part of this experience.

In the 80s she worked alongside a group of radical thinkers at Wits University. This mix of colleagues had a significant influence on her and also helped inform her scholarship. But what informed her perspective on issues like decoloniality, was the experience she gained from working as the Dean of Education at Wits University. This presented Catherine with a different perspective of a university and she realised that, although the humanities are vocal, "they aren't the backbone of the university that they think they are". She believes that although they are essential to a university, the project is so much bigger and "we the scholars in humanities and those talking about decoloniality, tend to forget that". Catherine further believes that "universities are professional vocational places as well, and not just places of ideas". For Catherine these are the kinds of happenings that shaped a foundation for her to become involved in policy.

Catherine has been moving between two countries, South Africa and Australia, for decades. She has two sets of publications and two sets of university experiences. She firmly believes that the scholars in her time had to get out of the country because of the many restrictions on thought, which is not the case today anymore. She was already politically involved before she went to Australia and gained experience from working at Sached, but for Catherine, going overseas is what really put her "scholarship on a totally different level". Catherine was free to explore whatever ideas she liked, and there were no constraints. While working in South Africa, Catherine did her PhD through the University of Queensland, with a focus on school desegregation.

4.3.4 Natasha Lewis

Natasha Lewis' journey as a teacher started with her grandparents, who had both trained as teachers. Her father was a high school teacher and now in his 70s, continues to be a popular and radical educator. Her father greatly influenced Natasha from a young age. She recalls always getting dragged along by her father when he went to teach. She also believes that her not so "normal" view of education was shaped by seeing her father enforcing a whole range of different kinds of education, which "totally explodes the views" of education.

Natasha attended a historically black university in the Western Cape on a TEFSA bursary, now known as an NSFAS bursary. She enrolled for a teaching qualification, partly because that was the only way to access the state bursary and partly because of her family history. She enrolled for what at the time was called a Higher Diploma in Education and majored in Human Movement studies to become a physics teacher, or as they now call it, Life Orientation. After completing her degree, Natasha went on to do her teaching practical, but never committed to actually teaching.

After some time, Natasha got back into education and worked on various initiatives to support individuals from townships to give them different kinds of support, such and access to food, physiotherapy and educational programmes. Natasha was also involved in developing a curriculum that supports professionals from different backgrounds and ended up working for an establishment, as an education officer. For Natasha it was at this point in her life when she started "thinking more critically about education". From there, Natasha moved to a university in Gauteng, where for nine years she was a project manager. Because of this experience, Natasha started becoming more interested in radical pedagogy. While she was working as the project manager at the university, she did a part-time Masters. Her Masters explores how radical education is taken up in student movements. After that, she did her PhD, which focuses on the educational practices internal to *the #RhodesMustFall* movement. After completing her PhD, Natasha started working at UCT, as an assistant lecturer. The *#RhodesMustFall* uprisings and resistance protests of 2015 gave Natasha the first sense that maybe the "university can potentially be a place to change society". Natasha has been lecturing at UCT ever since, and, at the time of the interview, she was working on a research project and plans on using her research to inform her future teaching.

These life histories elucidate the background stories of the participants' lives and provides meaningful information as to what led them to become academics and specialists in their field. In the next section, I will provide a brief reflection on the life history of the participants.

4.4 Reflecting on the life history of the academics

The narratives of the life histories of four participants, one black female, two white females and one black male, reveal their extraordinary journeys in education. All the participants have in common that they either started as school teachers, pursuing a teacher's qualification or with some educational inspiration in one form or the other. For example, Yvette was never interested in teaching and more in general education; it was only after some inspiration from one of her lecturers that her interest in teaching was ignited. Stanley, however, started out as a teacher, teaching Economics and History at a high school in Cape Town, while Natasha's journey in education was strongly shaped by her grandparents and father who were teachers. Catherine's teaching journey started out more circumstantial than by choice and her turning point only came after two years of working as teacher, when she became part of a teacher upgrading project running in the townships.

The participants have completed various studies in the education field, from a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDHE), Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Higher Diploma in Education, to Masters and PhD, both at national and international institutions. They have over a hundred years of combined experience in the education sector, working on various projects and initiatives, working as teachers, working as lecturers, professors and Deans at universities, both nationally and internationally, as well as working in other education sectors, such as the Sached and the HSRC. All of the participants are highly qualified in the field of education, specialising in areas from curriculum and pedagogy, society and education in relation to inequalities (Yvette), issues around politics, poverty and inequality in education (Stanley), policy (Catherine) and radical pedagogy (Natasha).

It is evident from the life histories, that regardless of their race, gender, experience, influences and life paths, etcetera, they all have an immense passion to give voice to students, they strive to understand more about students, how they learn and what

influences them, as well as advocating for fair and equal education.

The participants' life histories are an essential part of my study as it sets the tone for the themes to come. It provides the reader with a brief but interesting background of the journey of participants, which led them to their profession and area of specialisation.

4.5 Thematic presentation of main data findings

In this section, I present the main data findings through the theoretical orientation and principles of IPA as well as the two crucial elements I mentioned in Section 4.1, Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach and the last three steps in Pinar's (2011) autobiographical moment. Keeping true to the nature of the IPA framework, during the data analysis phase of my study, I was completely immersed in the data by putting myself in the participants' shoes as much as I possibly could.

During the second phase of Seidman's (2006) interviewing approach, the focus is on the current lived experiences of the academic within the realm of curriculum decolonisation. This resonates within Pinar's (2011) analytical step. Participants are encouraged to detach themselves from the past and future to analyse how the past, future and the present are imbricated in one another. This allows the participants to experience a moment of freedom from their present realities and/or circumstances. After submerging themselves in the analytical step, the participants transition to the progressive step where they are able to visualise a life that is fair and just, a world that is more democratic, more sustainable and decolonised. Participants were asked to reconstruct these details and with the guidance of the IPA s theoretical orientation, I needed to understand the mind-set of the participants as well as their language, so as to mediate my own experiences of the world. This allowed me to translate the message of the participant (Freeman, 2008) and, therefore, enabled me to analyse their current lived experiences and report on the findings of that data.

In the last phase of Seidman's (2006) interview approach, participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of their experience, to address the intellectual and emotional connections between the participants' work and life. This phase relates to the last step of Pinar's (2011) autobiographical moment, the synthetical step, where I encouraged the participants to return to the present, to synthesise and evaluate what all of this meant and how they can take action in order to transform the present to make a difference in the

future.

Figure 4.2 is a representation of the elements I employed to provide an in-depth analysis of the data from phase 2 and phase 3 of the interviews. Because the data analysis method was fluid and non-linear, Figure 4.2 should be read the same. Illustrated in the centre of the figure is the aim of the interviews, which was to explore how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment and fostering curriculum transformation. The first effort to explore the aim started with phase 2 of the in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach and was conducted in conjunction with step 2 and 3 of the autobiographical method. More depth was acquired through phase 3 of the in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach and this was conducted concurrently with step 4 of the autobiographical method as well as applying the principle of hermeneutics in IPA.

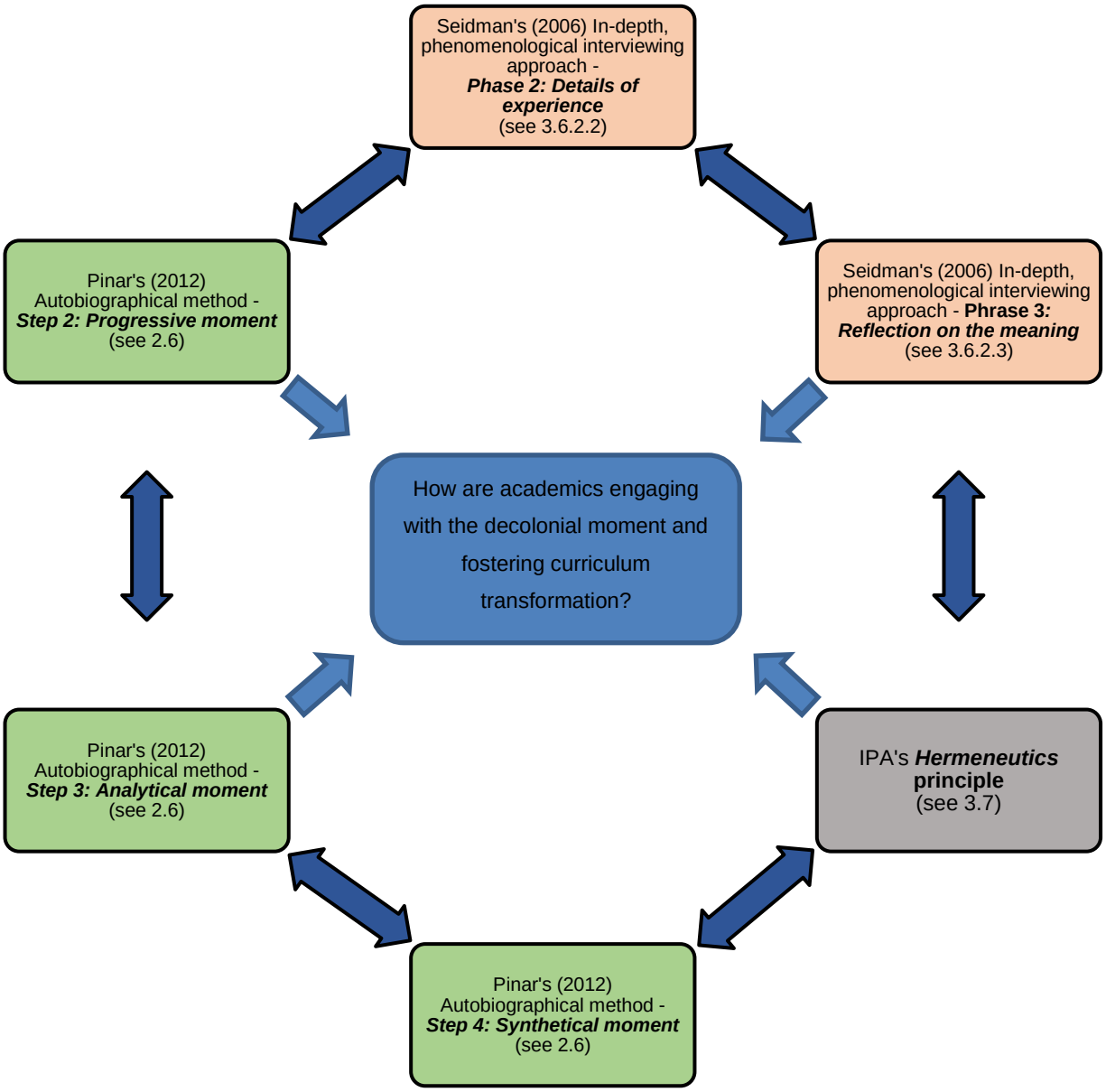

Figure 4.2: Elements of data analysis

From the steps discussed above in Figure 4.2 and to ensure alignment with IPAs idiographic nature, each interview was thoroughly and independently analysed for themes

before I proceeded to explore patterns, similarities and differences between each semi-structured, one-on-one interview. The findings are provided in a narrative account.

It is important to note that the participants used their own institution, being UCT, as an example, when some of the issues were discussed. But they also drew on moments they experienced as well as knowledge that they have about practices that are being done at other higher education institutions in South Africa.

The main themes identified are as follows: The significance of the 2015 student movement and the decolonial moment from an academic's perspective (4.4.1); The nuances of the concept decolonisation within the context of the university (4.4.2); Curriculum transformation committees, the *Curriculum Change Framework* and the notion of academic freedom (4.4.3); Transformation following the 2015 protests (4.4.4); The foundation for a transformative university (4.4.5); Approaches to a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy (4.4.6); The dominance of English as a linguistics barrier in the transformation process (4.4.7); and Participants' personal transformation journey (4.4.8). These will now be discussed in detail.

4.5.1 Significance of the 2015 student movement and the decolonial moment from an academics' perspective

In this theme, I will reflect on the findings of the participants' responses based on their personal views on the importance of the 2015 student movement and the decolonial moment. I will start this theme by drawing on the idea that the call for education to transform and decolonise is not new in the South African landscape (Badat, 2016). This statement resonated with Stanley when he expressed that he is critical of the "decolonisation movement" and the "dominant narrative" that it started in 2015. He explained that it came as a new idea for many people, as an "intervention into the cultural and intellectual landscape", but for him, "we were into this thing a long, long time before that". He maintained that it is crucial for people to understand this. Natasha agreed with Stanley and stated, "I don't believe there was a moment, only one moment, there's been a number of moments in South Africa and in the world". Due to the *#RhodesMustFall* movement that landed in the South African universities in a "very explosive way", as Natasha noted, it was in some ways a "decolonial turn", but it was not a "2015 moment", because these decolonial struggles didn't start in 2015 with the Rhodes statue,

decolonisation has been an “ongoing struggle”.

Although 2015 was not the start of a new revolution, based on the participants' responses, it evidently created cognisance for specific issues in the higher education landscape. Natasha stated that 2015 opened the “possibility for a different kind of conversation”, and for Yvette

> it created a heightened awareness of the need for change and the need to be more open to rethink practices and to really change the nature of many accepted ways of doing things and make some of those more explicit.

Yvette continued, noting that 2015 was a “painful moment”, and she disagreed with many things, such as the “shutdown, the destruction of property”, because she just wanted “teaching and learning to continue”. She does, however, believe that the movement brought about a “heightened sensitivity”, but also a “consciousness” to a lot of people, herself included, to what it means to “be a black student or student of colour at UCT”. Stanley is of a similar opinion and voiced that the “value” of 2015 is that it “accelerated and sharpened the cultural and intellectual landscape, it raised the profile of the problem and pushed it onto a global scale”. Stanley explained that he attends many virtual platforms that include people from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, US and UK, all of whom are into decolonisation. He explained that their involvement is “largely because of what happened here in South Africa”. For him, that is the core value of what 2015 brought – “it accelerated it”.

Some would also argue that the 2015 student cries for transformation have been centred along the idea of decolonising the curriculum (Du Preez, 2018). This conforms to one of Catherine’s notions that the catch cry of the 2015 protests was “a free decolonised education”. However, Yvette is not convinced that “curriculum decolonisation was the true call of the 2015 student movements” and believes that the motivation for the student movements was “fees and exclusions”, but mostly

> institutional cultures that were antagonistic to the students of colour coming from different cultural and social backgrounds, finding institutions of higher education alienating places to be, where they lived experience wasn't recognised nor represented in the kinds of course offerings and in the social experience.

Yvette elaborated by saying this “culture” was particularly acute at UCT, because of “its long liberal history and because particular sets of social rules and cultural underpinnings are quite invisible”. This account is similar to Catherine’s notion where she stated that the students want the institutions “not to be so Eurocentric” and to make more space for “other views and other people to create things”. She concluded by saying they are asking for “respect for differences”.

Natasha pointed out that the “Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) students experimented with expanding the idea of what a classroom is”. She explained that if you speak to many of the students, they will tell you, “‘we learned more in our occupation about South Africa and the world than we did in two-three years of our undergraduate degrees’”. Natasha noted that it is essential to understand that “what you're learning is not confined to the classroom and the curriculum” and for her, the students “exposed and amplified that in a way that was quite beautiful”. She also added that students wanted and insisted on:

> black authors and black intellectuals to come and talk to them. They were clear on that in the context of a white liberal, Eurocentric university, like UCT, that there was space needed to be made to listen to black academics and to amplify them.

Natasha concluded that this does not simply mean to “replace everyone with black academics”, but to acknowledge that the “black academics have something very important to say about knowledge”.

This theme highlights the participants’ views on the 2015 student movements and the notion of a decolonial moment. Two of the participants expressed that decolonisation is not a new occurrence. However, what is held firmly by all the participants is the significance of the 2015 protests and that it brought awareness to many dire issues within the higher education landscape. From the participants' standpoint, the drive behind the 2015 student movements varies from a “decolonised curriculum” (Catherine) to protesting “fees and exclusion”, alienation, “recognition” (Yvettte), “respect for differences” (Catherine) and the notion that “what you're learning is not confined to the classroom and the curriculum” (Natasha). However, this could imply that the participants’ perceptions of UCT as a “Eurocentric university” (Natasha) with a long “liberal history” (Yvette) seems good cause for all the motives behind the student movements, as argued by the

participants. In the next theme, I will explore the complexity of decolonisation as used within the university context.

4.5.2 Nuances of the concept decolonisation within the context of the university

In this theme, I will reflect on the findings of the participants' responses based on the notion that decolonisation within the context of the university and its curriculum is a complicated and multi-layered concept, which is interpreted differently from person to person.

I begin to explore this theme with Yvette, who stated that she is "not sure about the term decolonisation and what it means to be decolonised". She does not believe it is possible to be decolonised – "we can be transformed, we can be changed, we can be facing our own context, we can be attuned to colonial legacies, or ways of doing things that are inherited rather than doing things new", but not decolonised. Yvette, therefore, maintained that decolonisation is "poorly theorised". She motivated her statement and reasons that this is because many prominent decolonial theorists, like Maldonado-Torres, and other Latin-American scholars, are essentially concerned with knowledge production, not with curriculum, which is about knowledge reproduction.

Yvette mentioned "transformation" as part of her elucidation of decolonisation, yet Natasha argued that "transformation" is another misrepresented term and believes it to be "a watered-down version of decolonisation because it's trying to deal with the more structural things by setting up committees and having faculty representation in each department and so on". She elaborated that this might create the impression that there is an infrastructure, but "the work of transformation supporting black students, supporting poor students, these fall on and get taken up by academics who are really doing that work". Contrary to Yvette, Catherine is significantly influenced by the works of Walter Mignolo and Maldonado-Torres and advocates for using the definition of "decoloniality as opposed to decolonisation". For her, the knowledge project around decoloniality is not just "throwing away the western epistemic, or assuming that you can replace one thing with another", knowledge takes a while to build, and it is "scholarly". You can make an enormous difference and get people to understand the situatedness of their perspective. Catherine further emphasised that it is about a deep respect for "the other" in the "philosophical, moral and ethical sense". Catherine believes that if people are respectful

of others, they (people) will respect where they (others) come from, as well as what they (others) bring into learning and teaching situations. For Catherine, this signifies that “we won’t kind of just insensitively parade our positions as if they’re the only ones, knowing full well that they’re not”.

Yvette insisted that it would be helpful to clarify what exactly is meant by decolonisation of the curriculum. She posed some questions to this dilemma:

> Does it simply suggest replacing one set of content with another? Is it about the kinds of problematics that underpin this? Is it in the actual structuring itself of the curriculum? Does decolonisation mean an Africanised curriculum? And lastly, do we want it?

Yvette feels that many students would not like any of the abovementioned choices. In her opinion, what students want is on the one hand to see themselves in the curriculum and on the other hand to go to university not to see themselves, but rather “to become anew, to be re-socialised, to become an engineer, to become a doctor, or to become a historian, not simply to be reflected in the curriculum”.

Natasha explain that if we want to talk about decolonisation, it is really important that “one has to look into the history of what the term and movement has looked like”. She noted that “in our instance, it is both resistance to oppression in the world and in this instance, oppression is colonialism”. Natasha strongly believes that if we just using the term decolonisation “to describe what you think you are already doing, then it is a co-optation of a fairly radical idea”. Natasha continued by stating that, “decolonisation, like many other progressive ideas, like democracy, can get co-opted for conservative means or to do what you are already doing under the name of this new thing decolonisation”. According to Natasha, this is evident in South Africa and in other places. She explained that there is a range of texts that people can draw on, and like Catherine, Natasha claims you have to pay serious attention to the people who have written around decoloniality. She added that people should not confine themselves to just “two decolonial research searches”. This is simply because everyone started writing about decolonisation when the resistance came because “that is where the funding went”. But there is an abundance of research available and you must do a “deep literature review on decoloniality”.

Catherine referred to a “strident” article by Tuck and Yang, holding the view that

“decolonisation is not a metaphor”. She believes that you cannot just “fling around” the term decolonisation. Catherine defined decolonisation as “undoing the economic relations of inequality and you are not going to a unit attached to a university”. She explained that if one is to do that, then it means you are using “decolonisation as a metaphor” because “it takes it down to something that’s acceptable, rather than something that’s radical”. Catherine believes a more “respectable” thing to say would be “we’re not going to decolonise – but we are going to change”. She said that it would be the “honest” thing to say, rather than to “label something decolonising”. For her “it’s just an equity move that people should make with regards to other people, it has nothing to do with decolonisation” Catherine pointed out that although,

> decolonisation does require us to recognise – not ourselves individually, but in the big processes of colonialism and change, it damaged people and damaged lives and damaged languages and cultures and legacies, and we just couldn’t pretend it hasn’t happened.

Catherine continued that because decolonisation has become a metaphor, “rather than a really substantive change”, she labels decolonisation as a “slogan” and for this reason she does not see the debate on decolonisation “going anywhere” and that the term has already been “muted down”. She explained that people have become so familiar with it, and they “don’t want the radical edge, they want the easy version”, but she maintained that the “hard version is always there to be fought for”. She elaborated that it is with that “broader sense that decolonising is about working with this incredibly entangled border situation that we’re in”, and “just trying very hard to understand and push forward for something better all the time”. She described it as an “ethical stance” and believes that if it is not that, then “it’s not going to do anything much”.

Natasha also referred to Tuck and Yang’s article and, according to her, decolonisation “has become a metaphor for everything”. She reasoned that “this question of decolonisation”, immediately says, “colonisation is over”. She explained that if you are to read some of the “South Africans and the Latin Americans and people on the continent who have been writing about decolonisation”, they talk about “decoloniality and coloniality as the ongoing event after the picking apart and the ending of formal apartheid and colonialism”. She expressed that “it’s really important to note that one can’t talk about decolonising the curriculum or an institution without looking critically at coloniality and

colonialist”.

Stanley held that decoloniality, not decolonisation, is about “moving to a new open mindset, a mindset which isn’t dependent on a centred sense of history, either a white centred sense of history or a black centred sense of history or not even a yellow centred sense of history”. This centeredness is what “decoloniality is fundamentally all about”. Stanley also stated that one of the reasons he is critical of the unfolding of this decolonisation thing, “is because people are taking the term on board but actually doing very little with it” and when they do, they use it in “superficial kinds of ways”. Similar to that of Catherine and Natasha’s views of decolonisation as a metaphor, Stanley referred to it as a “smokescreen” and added that this behaviour is almost to be expected, because “our dominant way of looking at things is so deeply ingrained and embedded, it won’t be easy for people to do things differently”.

Natasha concluded that “the question of decolonisation” is to “recognise the powers operating everywhere” and to be more critical of these powers. A person has to “figure out how to set up processes of relationship building with each other and the classroom is a primary place, where you are forced into relationships with your professors and your classmates”. She claimed, “you must figure out how to use those processes” in order for you to “build different kinds of relationships that are more loving, that are more caring, that are more critical”. She pointed out that, in her opinion, the way to do that is to “ensure that the university is connected to the context and the society in which it finds itself, which we are even less connected to now because of COVID and the shutting down of universities”. She described it as “an ongoing project” and notes that there are “different ways of talking about radical change”, such as “abolition, decoloniality, the question of thinking about power through intersectionality; the critical and radical tradition is another”, However, she concluded,

> we need to find all of those people and fight less about what’s the best thing to call it and whose paradigm is better than the others, to try to get us to move into modes and more just forms of relationships with each other.

This theme highlights the canon of decolonisation within the context of the university and its curriculum as a very complex matter. Participants all seem to have different understandings and opinions of the concept. One participant expressed that there is too

much uncertainty about what it means to decolonise the curriculum. In contrast, three of the participants advocated using decoloniality, as opposed to decolonisation, because decolonisation has become a “metaphor” (Catherine, Yvette) and a “smokescreen” (Stanley). It could, however, be argued that even though participants have different views on the concept of decolonisation, there seems to be a mutual understanding that whether you call it decolonisation, decoloniality or transformation, ultimately, it does not matter as much as, *inter alia* keeping an “open mindset” (Stanley), having a “deep respect for the other” and taking an “ethical stance” (Catherine). Next, I will review the participants’ impression of task teams and transformation initiatives formed to support the complex concept of decolonising the curriculum.

4.5.3 Curriculum transformation committees, the *Curriculum Change Framework* and the notion of academic freedom

In an attempt to address the student outcries in 2015, some universities responded by appointing task teams or curriculum transformation committees to explore how South African universities can decolonise their curriculum (Le Grange *et al.,* 2020). UCT, which was at the forefront of this event, did just that. In the light of this, for this theme, I will reflect on the responses of the participants based on their opinions of the task teams put together by the university and the initiatives they have taken to assist academics in decolonising their curriculum.

Stanley firmly elucidated that all universities in South Africa should follow UCTs example and set up task teams on curriculum reform. He believes that it is essential to have discussions within the university around decolonisation, to discuss the “blind spots of their curriculum” and how their curriculum could be more inclusive. He continued that although you “cannot force people into these things”, you can undoubtedly have “stimulating discussions within all the disciplines, including the Mathematics, Physics and Engineering disciplines, which seem the most removed from the decolonisation discussion”. One task team put together by UCT is the Curriculum Change Working Group (CCWG), described by Yvette as a group of people motivated by the *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* movement. One of the group’s initiatives was an attempt to set out a framework for curriculum change at UCT in the form of a formal document. The document titled the *Curriculum Change Framework* was tabled and it received a lot of critique. Natasha also mentioned the document and confirmed that it received many responses and

commentary once it was released. She described the *Curriculum Change Framework* as a write up of a process that happened, “unlike any process that we’ve had at this point”. Natasha pointed out that for her, the document meant the start of a process to start thinking about what a potential intervention could look like at a more institutional level. The document, according to Natasha, however, did have its limitations because it was written at a “very heightened time”.

Catherine is cautious of the document that dealt with decolonising the curriculum, released by the university and described it as a “shocking piece of work”. She stated that she would completely understand if none of her colleagues or any other academic would want to do what they set out in the document. I asked Catherine to motivate and it became clear that it came down to academic freedom. She maintained that you cannot tell academics to think and teach in a certain way – “you don’t get transformation in that way”. Catherine also believes that the document has limitations, because if there is only a small base of literature available on decoloniality, “you cannot think that you know what the whole university should be doing to change. This is what humanities people do and “I’m one of them”. She elaborated on this

> the humanities people think they know what a decolonised university looks like and frankly, we don’t. Why? – because you still have to create it, we have to shape it, we have to build it. A university is a complex place and nobody is going to come with a curriculum document, wave a wand and say this has to be done. It will never work like that.

Catherine concluded her argument and recommended “inviting people onto new grounds and new ways of thinking that are enriching for them, rather than taking from them”.

Yvette expressed that she would not want to be told what she could and could not teach. Similar to that of Catherine and Stanley’s view, Yvette feels that it is good to have debates and discussions around the topic to note down “ideas and proposals” but, ultimately, it should remain the “choice of the academic whether they want to get on board or not”. Stanley agreed with Catherine and Yvette about the importance of academic freedom and believes that academics should not be “forced” into what they should be doing in their teachings. She added that academics “must have a desire” for change. But, unlike Catherine, Stanley does not believe that that was the intention of the curriculum change

document. He is of the opinion that “neither UCT nor any other university will stipulate to its lecturers what they should teach”. He comments that

> statements about curriculum reform will be released from university councils and senators, stating that they are in fact committed to curriculum reform, but that is as far as they would, formally and officially, interfere with the curriculum.

Natasha argued that because the *Curriculum Change Framework* document has the name “framework” attached to it, many academics get “very touchy-feely about who’s telling them what they can and can’t do”. However, Natasha stated that academics often use academic freedom as a way to justify so that “they can only do what they want to do”. For her, academic freedom should be used to “protect people who are working towards a form of justice against oppression”. She thinks that people tend to get “sticky” when suggestions are given from a collective project about what could be a better way of doing something. Natasha maintained that this refers primarily to “white people, but not only white people, who have worked their way up the hierarchy of the university”. Natasha concluded her argument and remarks that having the document and having had the process was essential, but other than those few critiques written and uploaded on the document, and apart from the curriculum in her department, she does not see any profound changes to the curricula at the university.

Yvette stated that her department had a few conversations and staff meetings closer to 2015 but expressed that there is no explicit programme, committee, or document which frames what it means to “construct decolonial learning courses or teach in terms of decolonised thinking”. Contradictory to the views of Yvette, Natasha stated that each faculty has a transformation committee and that each department is supposed to have a committee as well. They are responsible for engaging with issues around curriculum, student exclusion, racism, employment equity, etcetera. Natasha is, however, of the opinion that these committees “don’t really have much teeth” and are limited to what change they can implement at the university. She explained that the reason for this is first of all, because the people in the committees, “and I am one of them” she declared, are usually the people who are “already doing transformation and even decolonial work in what they teach”. According to her it is “the people who don’t want to change that don’t come to those things”. According to Natasha, this is not

> a simple black and white thing, although, in general, it is; there are also black academics who have been at UCT, who have climbed the ladder, who are not interested, necessarily, in the kinds of radical change that some of us are talking about, because they feel they suffered through and made it, so why must they now make it different for black people.

Secondly, she believes that the university only has these committees to broadcast about having transformation committees. She clarified this and remarked that these committees "make suggestions into the ether, but whether it makes a difference is another question".

Catherine believes that certain issues cannot be changed from the top. Issues, for example, on curriculum pedagogy, "can only be changed from the bottom". She explained that you have to "allow for people to exercise their own agency, you have to allow for everybody to make the changes along the way", because "policies never get implemented as anticipated, because people change them along the way".

This theme highlights the participants' views on how the university responded to the 2015 student movement by establishing committees and the development of frameworks, as well as the impact it has on teaching and learning and academic freedom. From the responses of the participants, it is evident that in an attempt to address curriculum reform, one of the initiatives of UCT was the establishment of a task team known as the Curriculum Change Working Group. The group was put together after the 2015 student movements to facilitate curricula engagement. This brought forth the initiative of the *Curriculum Change Framework*. Conflicting views on this framework were evident from the responses and the notion of academic freedom was highlighted by the participants. One participant strongly feels that the framework was there to tell academics what to do and how to teach and another feels academics have to have a "desire to change" (Stanley). Another participant believed that the university would not interfere with the teachings of academics, and the third said that some academics are exploiting "academic freedom" (Natasha) to their own advantage. Participants seem to all agree that it is vital to have the initiatives of forums and discussion around curriculum change and decolonisation, but it was pointed out by one of the participants that even though there are and should be committees in all the faculties and departments, they do not carry much weight for implementing change and some change that does take place is coming from the "top" (Catherine) when it should be implemented from the "bottom" (Catherine).

Based on these responses, the next theme was revealed and the subject of transformation within the university, as a result of the student movement as perceived by the participants, will be reflected on in the following section.

4.5.4 Transformation following the 2015 protests

Drawing on Manamela's (2018) definition of decolonisation within the context of the South African higher education landscape, as the transformation of the curriculum and institutional culture, in this theme I reflect on the findings that emanated from the participants' responses based on how they have perceived the transformation within the university as a result of the 2015 student movements.

Natasha believes that if we look at "the figures six years down the line from the protests, the statistics are still dire" and people will be "shocked to see that the racial demographic at UCT, as an institution, has not significantly changed from that time". Even though UCT, as a historically white, liberal institution employed "some of us blacks at academic level, and a lot of administrators, because that really pushes the equity numbers really well" and though the student demographic has changed somewhat, "the institutional culture remains white and liberal". Natasha continues,

> if one were to think about UCT, in particular, just looking at #*RhodesMustFall*, not even talking specifically about the curriculum, while UCT was willing to recognise that there was a problem, then it's a problem that there are still so many white professors, white academics, white people in senior positions, in the context of a country that is majority black. Are they willing to accept that and say so?

Catherine is of a similar opinion to Natasha, describing UCT as a "bastion of privilege" and saying there are so many "micro ways" in which privilege is maintained. She provided me with an example and referred to the Vice-Chancellor, Mamokgethi Phakeng. Catherine explained, "she's the black Vice-Chancellor" and according to Catherine, the "old white professoriate - they don't want that". She elaborated that what they value at UCT is that you

> must have done your undergraduate degree at UCT, had done your postgraduate degree there and it must have been your first job. And then you

> must have got to be a professor. So, you have nothing else.

Catherine exclaimed, “that’s how difficult it is to change universities”. She concluded by saying, “there will be those who represent the sort of established power” and they are not going to have “somebody like you, just come in and tell them what to do”.

Natasha believes that when talking about “changing the institutional culture, UCT is being pulled in multiple directions”. Students, who are the majority in the university, took control and had their voices heard by screaming and protesting in 2015 and then again in 2016/ 2017 with the *#FeesMustFall* movements. But the university quickly went back to its old hierarchical ways. She provided me with an example that confirmed Catherine’s notion of change,

> within UCT, the highest academic decision-making body in the universities is the Senate. At UCT, the Senate is still majority white and will remain so because the way to become a senator is to become a full professor. And 27 years’ post-apartheid, I think there’s less than 1 percent of senators that are not white.

She concluded by saying “that if no changes are made about those who are representing society at large, then you are actually missing quite a bit”. Stanley also believes that universities generally struggle with change and they “will always struggle”. He motivated this and provided me with an example about the library at UCT. Stanley claims it “is a wonderful place”, he describes it as an “art gallery” and “there are hundreds of extraordinary pieces of South African art on those walls”. But he maintained that “students don’t even notice them any longer” and with “only pictures of dead white men, that’s problematic”. Stanley added that there is also this type of “alienation” present in universities, which is “exemplified” in the attitude of professors and lecturers to their students. He stated that professors “look down on the students, they patronise their students”. Academics do not realise the immediate and direct relationship between what they teach and how they live, “they’re not separate things”. This “attitude” that Stanley described was highlighted when Catherine, notably stated that what needs to transform is “this kind of attitude” of “better than others” and that “transformation should be about culture, language and the proper valuing of people”.

Catherine raised another concern and express that “there’s so much of this privilege being

passed on, this sort of wilful ignorance". She pointed out that there are many cultural shifts that also need to take place. She elaborates once more,

> it used to horrify me at UCT, who almost virtually subsidised Jessica's caterers. A little white man would come in and cater for all the big events, inaugural lectures and gatherings. So, for the retiree, you have this splendid meal and down the road in the very university residence, students are starving.

She concluded that for a moment, people can "have that split consciousness and then everybody's kind of saying, but we stand for equality and we care about the students". However, they "don't actually make a connection between that and paying the caterer to eat fancy food at a special event". But despite these types of issues, she claimed that there are "radical scholars in universities that do important work. This statement made by Catherine resonated with Natasha when she voiced that "there's some of us who believe that we are operating in a way that is promoting decolonisation". She, however, does not believe that "decolonising is a destination", because "we're not going to get to a point where there's a decolonised university". Natasha explained this point she is referring to is the point of decolonisation being "education and our classrooms, our curriculums and even academics", she elaborated that because:

> Power is operating and we are wielding power in various kinds of ways through our curriculum through our classrooms throughout the way we engage each other and that is a project that's not confined to the university. So you can't come into your decolonised university and behave one way and then go home and do something different.

Yvette agreed with Natasha about the changes in student demographics, but she, however, experienced transformation in a "number of other things". She provided me with an example on a more "superficial level" of a graduation ceremony that she attended shortly after 2015. According to her "Gaudeamus" wasn't sung at all, but she does recall "the musical instruments and praise singers at the graduation". She remembers that "the whole sense of celebration was completely different", calling it "culturally transformed". Another example she gave is the "ongoing process of changing the names", for example, the "Jameson Hall" that is now called the "Sarah Baartman Hall". According to her, these "symbolic changes" began to change with more "urgency". Yvette voiced that "on the

minor side, what happened was that everything became highly racialised" and for her "that was difficult". She claimed that it "continues to be so". She also believes that "there's been a lot of silencing as well" but stated that if "that's the way the scales must tip, in order for things to achieve some kind of balance, some kind of fair way of proceeding", then so it must be.

Natasha claimed that the call for decolonisation "made people wary about what they were doing and their curriculum". From a personal viewpoint, Natasha explained that "some people at UCT and other places have been teaching the same thing for the last 20/30 years". She stated that "there has been change, but no significant change" and she believes that is has do with the "institution of the university". Natasha does, however, feel that "academics control and should control the curriculum because they often bring what they are reading and what they have studied into the classrooms". Unfortunately,

> the problem is that academics, in particular, white academics are too comfortable, having not been challenged in the very limited worldview, which is Eurocentric and that's another critique of the kind of Eurocentric canons that remain in the South African context and in other places.

Yvette proceeded to tell me that there have been "new proposals for changes in actual programmes and there's been quite a lot of different initiatives around changes in actual pedagogy and teaching and learning". According to Yvette, these initiatives are mostly "focused more on an undergraduate level" and because she is at the postgraduate level, any changes to her particular course or the curriculum "happened at an individual level". She explained:

> It's what I decide to do and it is not framed by any particular framework, I haven't been given any suggestion of directives or anything like that to work from.

Catherine noted that the universities are "not the pillars of change" and "that it is such a wrong image". She explained that universities only "produce people who become the agents in society". These people then help people to think critically and in disciplined ways, and "they will do the changes, but not universities". She continued to tell me about a "fabulous academic development programme" at Wits that was preparing black students for university. However, it was closed by a black Vice-Chancellor because he said, they

are “patronising courses”. Catherine believes that universities “can do better,” and she makes a few suggestions: “they can offer more interesting courses, they can be more rigorous, always more careful, they can have bridging programmes and not resent it, they can open up their languages”.

This theme highlights the participants’ impression and knowledge of the transformation in the university as a result of the 2015 student movement. One participant acknowledged the employment of more black academics and administrators, while the others agree that student demographics have changed. Examples of superficial and symbolic changes were also provided. However, participants continue to refer to UCT as being a “bastion of privilege” (Catherine) and stated that these changes have not made a significant difference because the “institutional culture remains white and liberal” (Natasha). This could support why another participant voiced that even though the students made themselves heard from 2015 until 2017, the university quickly went back to its “old hierarchical ways” (Natasha) and the notion that universities “struggle with change” (Stanley). Regarding curriculum, one participant expressed a personal thought, and stated his/her belief that some people have been teaching the same thing for the last 20/30 years, while another expressed that most of the curriculum initiatives focus more on the undergraduate programmes and not the postgraduate programmes. Notably, two prominent aspects regarding transformation within the university emerged from this theme, namely curriculum reform and institutional culture, which I will reflect on in more depth next.

4.5.5 Foundation for a transformative university

This theme was derived and inspired from the participants’ responses in the previous theme indicating there is a need for more change within the university. I will start by drawing on the notion that the primary function of higher education is knowledge production and transmission and that curriculum reform should be used to steer away from curriculum used as a tool of exclusion to a curriculum that is democratic and inclusive (Department of Education, 2008). This speaks to Natasha’s view that the formal curriculum at the university can be the starting point in the decolonisation process, simply because the university is understood “to be a place of formal curriculum and qualification”. Therefore, Natasha is not convinced that merely changing “people’s individual curricula” or changing the academic staff “by appointing more black people will substantially change

the university", "it's much more than that" and if people are serious about decolonising the curriculum, they cannot only look at the superficial elements.

Stanley also argued that universities "should be open in many more ways than simply the formal curriculum". He draws on the work done by Carl Newman, a professor who started a new university called University College in Dublin, Ireland. According to Stanley he wrote "an incredible tract piece". Inspired by his work Stanley said, "the university should be a space of people from all quarters and bringing with them knowledge from all the four corners of the world". For Stanley this is the "embodiment of capturing that a university should be a space of unconditional hospitality". Stanley, however, concluded that "changing the actual curriculum won't be easy", simply because "people can't be forced into what they should be doing in their teachings".

Yvette agreed with both Natasha and Stanley and maintained that decolonisation should focus on the culture, social aspects and the formal curriculum. Similar to Stanley's opinion, Catherine too believes that "changing the curriculum is a difficult process" and points out that in education "policy governance always gets more attention than anything else, across the world in all levels, it just does". She explained that we can interfere with it and see the results, but "changing the curriculum is an immense task". The enormity of this task was again highlighted when Catherine explained that experts on this say it will "take three to five years to change the curriculum of a primary school and five to seven years to change a high school curriculum". This could imply that changing the university curriculum would, in fact, be an enormous task.

Catherine raised another issue. She said, that in South Africa, there is no tradition of "full concentration and consultation on curriculum matters at school or at university". She continued that "if you talk about curriculum transformation at university, you have to look at the different faculties and their contexts". Confidently, she pointed out that, in her opinion, "the Engineering Department at UCT has transformed its curriculum quite a lot". Catherine, utters that transformation is something "that people have to experience and we have to engage respectfully with people, with lecturers". According to her, they are not going to change if you say, "look, let's do some curriculum transformation here" and suggests rather asking, "Do you include this point in your curriculum? What do you find the students are interested in?" She explained that this means you must try to get the lecturers to understand themselves and the students "in a relationship of reciprocity, that

is somewhat different to the old transmission mode". Catherine claimed that once you have that, "you've already done a shift, and then other things happen". Catherine concluded that this "big sense of changing the curriculum, it's a folly, it's a complete folly and it will not produce the results that people want".

Stanley argued that the culture of a university ought to be, "stimulating, protecting and cultivating". He continued, "nobody should come into university and after three years, leave unchanged, right?" Furthermore, what is important is that "people feel represented at a university", for Stanley this is what this decolonisation and transformation thing is about. No university should stand for and "be representative of any single social phenomenon, form of exclusion; it should be open to anybody". However, this does not mean that the university should be "uncritical", because it must be "critical about anti-social behaviour". He elaborated that the university should not be a space in which

> people are forced into any form of way of being and it is really crucial to try to think of how to get to that particular point, because it not easy, because universities are in social spaces and we must acknowledge that they are very particular social spaces.

Stanley continued that when it comes to the social environments, "what we ought to be protecting inside of our universities, is caring for people". He believes that it would be good if a university can be a place where you "care critically". For him, the university, from a physical space, is formative, which "builds, nurtures and encourages, all the time, physically". He argued that students need spaces that are available for them "to meet together in ways that are productive, in ways that help them fulfil themselves in positive, pleasurable kinds of ways". He elucidated that "critical spaces within a university, such as the library, cafeteria, lecture halls and residences, should also be decolonised". He explained that these places need to be places that invite people and make them feel stimulated.

This theme highlights the participants' opinions on what they believe ought to be the foundation for a transformative university. Two main aspects, the formal curriculum and the university's institutional culture, were identified. Participants agreed that the formal curriculum could be the starting point in the decolonisation process but agreed that only changing the content would not transform the university. Therefore, the culture of the

institution also needs to change. Noted by some of the participants is that changing the curriculum is an “immense task” (Catherine) and will not be “easy” (Stanley). The culture of the university should be “stimulating, protecting, and cultivating” (Stanley) and the “critical spaces” (Stanley) in the university such as the library and lecture halls should also “be decolonised” (Stanley). These responses inspired the following theme in which the participants' responses reveal what they regard as a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy. This will be discussed next.

4.5.6 Approaches to a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy

In the previous theme, it was highlighted that transformation should include the institutional culture as well as the formal curriculum and its content. In this theme, I will reflect on the participants’ responses, which highlight what a possible decolonised curriculum and pedagogy would entail.

Yvette believes that there is a place for “revisiting content”, she describes it as a “moment of truth” where what is being taught needs to be “justified”, something, which according to her, “has not been done for a very long time”. She motivated this with an example and says, “it is a process of handing down and often people will take on courses that they taught previously and it goes without a moment”. She continued, “maybe that’s a decolonial moment”, when a “person actually has to justify what they teach and why they teach it, and to what extent it is appropriate for their context, for their society in which they are living and working in”. Yvette, therefore, instead, advocated for a “decolonised pedagogy”. She explained that in terms of content, teaching and learning, a person needs to be much more “cognisance of the varied life experience that people bring to their classroom, the different linguistic experience and academic experience that learners have been exposed to and just different ways of approaching this thing called academic study”.

Natasha expressed that for “anyone to make a claim” that “we are decolonising our curriculum”, they must be well-read on different literature. Resonating with Yvette’s notion of a “decolonised pedagogy”, Natasha once again stated that

> decolonising our curriculum is not just adding one black author, although we do need to do more of that and it’s not simply making your whole curriculum black authors, or texts written by black people, because how you teach those texts will also determine whether what you’re doing, is decolonial or not.

Natasha continued and stated that “most white academics are not prepared to recognise that coloniality is alive and well and that they are privileged”, for her, if you are not prepared to do that, then when you say, ‘I’m decolonising my curriculum’, or have written about decolonising the curriculum, “that needs to be taken with a pinch of salt”. Because if someone is saying they are doing decolonial work, and “they’re not engaging how power is operating in their classroom, in the university, in the world that we find ourselves, then they’re not doing decolonial work”.

Catherine described the notion of a decolonised curriculum as a “textured engagement with learning”. She believes that if the universities can “focus on student learning and less on the curriculum as content, but the curriculum as pedagogy as well as content, then there’s a lot of room for things to shift”. However, it is essential that lecturers in universities feel that they have some “agency in doing the shifting”. She held that those lecturers are not looking for somebody to come in and tell them “How to do what they feel very well qualified to do already” and posits “you don’t get transformation in that way”. Catherine continued,

> If you focus on your mindset, then your pedagogy changes and, in a way, the curriculum changes. You start a huge shift from knowledge in the curriculum. you shift from teaching to learning of the students. Asking: How are they learning? Once you really are trying to teach the actual people in front of you, as opposed to some ideal – then that is transformative.

For Stanley, decolonisation is “not static”, he explained that when he was at university in South Africa, in the 1970s, they were already being taught “differently, in more progressive ways, by certain lecturers”. He noted that decolonisation does not move in a “straight line” and elaborated that we are not in a “straightforward situation where you can say the curriculum is one thing in the country”. Some people are teaching “different things, and teaching them in progressive ways, in some institutions, and maybe not in others”. But more importantly, for him, is to “keep the impetus going on the good things that are unfolding”. Stanley explained that decolonised teaching approaches should include a lot more “experimenting with what could work and to be able to unlock thinking amongst young people”. Stanley advocated for people who “make mistakes, people trying things out and if something works to persist with that”. He believes that lectures have to sometimes be “didactic and other times, you have to leave students to work out a problem

by themselves". You must "recognise that different students learn differently". He explained it is about "acknowledging the differences amongst us and trying to teach to those differences. That's pedagogically for me critical". Stanley also feels very strong about anti-racism and held that it is a "key part of curriculum decolonisation". Stanley particularly prefers the work of Achille Mbembe and express that "being aware of racial classification is hopefully going to grow". He thinks it is essential for people to look at what they are doing and their curriculum and decide for themselves.

Yvette believes that decolonising the curriculum in the context of "History" is different from for example "Physics or Engineering". She finds it fascinating how people across different disciplines, particularly, think about decolonisation issues around pedagogy and, to varying extents, issues around the curriculum. She believes in taking "a historical approach to disciplines and courses",

> to look at what we teach and think about how is it that those courses come to look the way the way they do and whether that makes sense, whether it makes sense to ourselves and our own research and thinking, whether it make sense to the students that we teach, and whether it makes sense to the context of modern South Africa in which we teach in, and whether those are the best contents that we can use to teach what we teach.

She concluded that her concern lies with the implications of the "curriculum on the students who need the curriculum the most", in other words, the most "educationally marginal". She stated that maybe that could be classified as a "decolonial move".

This theme highlights the participants' ideas on approaches to a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy. Participants explained that what is being taught needs to be "justified" (Yvette) and that it is crucial to look at curriculum as both "content and pedagogy" (Yvette, Natasha, Catherine, Stanley), because a decolonised curriculum is not simply replacing the curriculum and its content with black authors and text, but how you teach will define whether it is decolonial or not. One participant explicitly expressed that if we focus on changing our "mindset", then our "pedagogy changes" and "in a way the curriculum changes" (Catherine). Throughout the previous themes, the participants brought up the concept of language. They expressed the importance of being aware of "different linguistic experiences of students" (Yvette), that "colonialism damaged languages"

(Catherine) and “transformation should include language” (Catherine). In the next theme, I will build on these responses of the participants based on their view on language as a barrier to decolonisation.

4.5.7 Dominance of English as a linguistics barrier in the transformation process

I derived this theme by drawing on the work of Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020), where he defined linguicide as killing and displacing the languages of people and imposing your own. Participants all depicted similar concerns and viewpoints about the dominance of English as a medium of instruction and how it is hindering progress within the South African education system.

Natasha believes that in the world we live in, “colonial powers from Europe continue to dominate other parts of the world” and that Africa is still “completely hierarchised and problematic”. Like Natasha, Catherine strongly believes that within the current framework of Western modernity, “power, distribution of wealth and resources are involved”. She stated that, for this reason, we will “never be able to get the kind of progress that people might think we will get”. In South Africa, it is highlighted how central language is to all of this. Both Catherine and Natasha referred to work done by Wa Thiong’o. His concept of securing the base is about what language has done to discriminate and oppress people. Catherine explained that it is a “cultural bond if you strip language away from people”, because you “take away from them their way of understanding the world, their metaphors, their whole viewpoints, and you split off”. She elaborated that if you have English as a medium of instruction in schools, you “split off that mental development from people’s personal inner language they speak to themselves”. Catherine emphasised, “the damage done is enormous”. She believes that Africa has not yet come to terms with this. Stanley too asserts that English is hegemonic and finds it very interesting that “the decolonisation thing in South Africa hasn’t really looked at language”. For Stanley, this is half the reason why the children are failing in schools and explained that children have to make this big language switch and that a language switch is a traumatic thing for them. Catherine goes on to say that though there are some cases where universities are promoting scholarship in African languages and though that is important, what is more important is that we “understand that languages are not bounded systems that they are independent of each other”, we need to understand more of the fluidity of translanguaging. Catherine defined translanguaging and explained that languages open a vista to knowledge and ways of

knowing things. If you take mathematics or science, for example, “it is not that you have to translate every mathematical concept into 11 languages”, but more about allowing the students to explain the concepts or work together to solve an equation using their own language, “now that’s translanguaging!”, it speaks in a way that makes sense to the individual so that there is meaning.

Yvette explained how she tries to be mindful of who is in her classroom and pay attention to linguistic differences, mainly when one works in the Social Sciences. Much of the learning is about inducting students into a different theoretical language. Therefore, she is much more explicit in how she teaches that language. This point was motivated by an example a person could call ‘decolonial’,

> in the last few years, I speak almost with subtitles, so I’ll speak and then I’ll explain and as I go along, I speak and explain, I’m constantly defining and using theoretical language all the time, but always mindful of the fact that there are people who are (a) second language speakers, and (b) have not had the kind of academic preparation that other students in the class have.

Stanley acknowledged his Western and European frame of mind; he described it as his formation, his intellectual history. For him, the most important thing is to come to terms with that intellectually. He reasoned that because he cannot speak an African language, “I am outside of the capacity to deeply get into a frame of mind, which is outside of the way in which I’ve been brought up, but I have to try, I have to be deeply aware of that every moment of my life”. He concluded by saying that when he encounters difference, he has to come to a sense of awareness of his limitations in countering that difference and not the limitations that he would project onto other people, because “it’s not their problem, it’s my problem”.

Catherine highlighted that the Health Sciences at UCT, for example, “problematic as all sorts of things are, they’re now realising that they have to, that the language competence of their students means that they can’t necessarily examine patients properly” and that is the reason why they have to have translators. Catherine’s idea of curriculum transformation is for universities to “set one of their entry requirements as having an African language”. This would force the schooling system to “rejigger” themselves and advantage the majority of the population who speak an African language. People tend to

see language or multilingualism as a problem rather than a resource. However, if you take Europe, everybody there speaks French, German, Dutch, English. Catherine thinks that people who speak only English or only Afrikaans “have to see themselves as deficient”. In South Africa, English and Afrikaans speakers and particularly, like herself, an English speaker, “we are lazy to learn other languages, I’m definitely guilty, very guilty”. She argued that how can people with less education than us be expected to speak our languages. She said there is an attitude around language – that it is too complicated, so we (Afrikaans and English speakers) will not speak an African language, but they (the speakers of an African language) must speak ours. Catherine, continued that it can be a phased-in initiative for everybody to speak an African language. She stated that UCT has isiXhosa classes for staff, and many of her colleagues have done those classes. Inspired by the work of Neville Alexander, Catherine added that it is a matter of finding the primary language in your area and running conversation classes, “it makes a huge difference”.

Stanley, likewise, referred to the work of Neville Alexander and that people should think about the main languages in the regions of the country and familiarise themselves with those languages. This point was motivated by an example:

> In the Western Cape it’s really necessary for me to have a grasp on Xhosa, I’ve tried twice and I failed, but I will try again. Wherever people are, we must try and get close to the dominant language in that part of the world. You don’t need to be totally fluent, but at least have a little bit of background.

Catherine, again referred to Neville Alexander and the work he did on the boys at Bishop’s Primary School in Cape Town, she enlightens me with an example:

> The boys are all learning, isiXhosa as a subject. Then there’s one little boy in the class, this is his home language. They do this experiment, which they film and they bring an isiXhosa speaking person in to teach the science class. The boys are trying to respond and they can’t actually get it. The little boy whose home language it is, he of course knows everything. Then the kids were reflecting on it afterwards, that that’s how it must feel to people. They sit there, and they say, ‘I don’t know how to answer that question. I think I know what he was asking, but I didn’t have the words to answer it’. And suddenly the roles reverse. And it’s that kind of experience that one really wants everybody to

> have. I mean, the centre for most other people is – if it's my medium of instruction, and my culture that's being reflected, then I'm very comfortable. And the problem is that we view people as deficient when, in fact, they're not. Because you take two people who are very unequal in the same language and we treat them as if they're actually equal and you teach them in the medium of instruction of one of them and you treat them as if they're equal, they are bound to come out unequally. When they come out unequally and you don't recognise that there is a cultural, or social or a background gap, then you say, 'Oh, well, that person is brighter than that person'. But they're not necessarily.

For Catherine, "transformation should be about culture, language and the proper valuing of people". She concluded by saying that this type of experience such as with the boys at the Bishop's Primary School in Cape Town is so "profound" and believes that "if more people had that experience and owned it, a lot of things would change".

In this theme it became evident that English as a medium of instruction stood out as problematic in the responses of the participants. Given that colonial powers from Europe continue to dominate and in South Africa it is highlighted in how central language is to all of this, one participant is shocked that the decolonisation debate within South Africa has not done much to look at the linguistic barriers. It would appear from the responses of the participants, that none of them speak an African language. One of the participants admitted she is guilty of being too lazy to learn an African language, while another participant remarked they tried and failed, but will try again. Also mentioned is that some universities promote scholarships in African languages, while UCT offers isiXhosa classes to staff members.

This theme highlights that the participants believe, English as a medium of instruction is obstructing the transformation process in universities. From the responses of the participants, it seems that two of the participants strongly believe that people should identify the main African language in their region and if you are not able to be fluent, then at least become familiar with the basics. Recognising the language barriers in the classroom and being sensitive towards them is another solution suggested by a participant. The concept of translanguaging also came up as a solution and at an institutional level, it was recommended that universities should consider making African languages an entry requirement, which meant that the change would already have to start

at school level. In the next theme I will reflect on the responses of the participants that revealed their personal experiences and transformation journey.

4.5.8 Participants personal transformation journey

This theme is derived from the participants' responses based on their experience of the decolonial moment and reflects on their journey to transformation, both personally and within their teachings.

Natasha realised as a result of 2015, the extent of her personal change was connected to asking herself, "What were the students doing?", and "What were they saying?" that made her think "differently" about her intellectual work. For her, this is "beyond the readings that exist by many academics and activists around what decolonisation is". She expressed that "white people are so guilty, but they don't do anything about the guilt". She believes that the first step is for a person to recognise their position in this "unequal and violent society", then only will they be able to do something different, and not "simply uncritically repeat the same thing over and over again". She learned this from those students in a "very powerful way" and it is not something she could have learned by "just reading someone's reflection on that struggle". She motivated this by saying, "there's some things that you can definitely get from texts, but there's some things that you get from being in critical conversation with other people, in particular, people who have different perspectives from you and different life experiences".

Stanley said that he does not describe himself as being "decolonised", but he does like to believe that he is "very aware of difference". For him, difference is a "wonderful thing", and not something that should be "feared". He explained that he focuses on being "receptive and being open to seeing differences" that he has never been aware of before, such as "gender, language, style, the way you dress, the way you express yourself, the way you just carry who you are". It is about not sitting in "judgment on other people, from an educated, privileged position". However, "we must judge sometimes if people are bad, we must judge them" and all the "nonsense" in the country "should not be tolerated". Just because you look "white, doesn't mean that you can't say that things are bad simply because it's politically correct".

Catherine said that she "witnessed Rhodes fall" and as an academic she feels that "it was my responsibility and duty to understand the literature". Catherine is of the opinion that

students can teach a person a lot but argues that because she is the “scholar” she has to meet them “equally”. Therefore, after the 2015 protests, she and group of colleagues at UCT formed a “little reading group”. This group “systematically read through literature on decoloniality”, and they even “ran some seminars across the university”. Again Catherine expressed being influenced by Latin American decolonial scholars and highlights the importance of “working with the definition of decoloniality as opposed to decolonisation”. However, like Stanley, she doesn’t see herself as being decolonised, she shared,

> I wouldn’t call myself decolonial. I think that would be a presumptuous thing to do. I work with the theory, and I tried to see what I can do with it. All my academic life and before that, I wanted things to change for the better. I’m always motivated by justice and ethics and those kinds of things.

For Yvette, 2015 had a radical impact on her in terms of how she thinks about approaching her teaching and the students in her class. She continued to say that, in terms of her teachings, before 2015, she feels that the best way she “could serve students was to maintain very strong boundaries, high expectations, and be quite rigorous and almost uncompromising” in all kinds of aspects. She elaborated “with examples such as instructional aspects, like “the tests and assessments that I set” as well as the more “regulated stuff, such as hand-in dates”. In her pedagogy, she attempts to be “mindful of who is in her classroom of different life experiences of representations and to be more flexible”, because “people are coming from very different backgrounds with very different life experiences. She stated that it makes no sense to be “so unrelenting, in terms of how to approach individual students”. Yvette referred to Achille Mbembe, that talks about decolonialism as “almost a reimagining, this idea that it is about thinking about our context and reimagining what we doing” and states that she has developed a kind of “sensitivity to how she represents and uses her research in her teaching”. She also tries to understand that, for many students, “particularly coming into an environment like a UCT, there is a shame attached”. She explained that shame is a very “powerful emotion” and whether you think someone should feel shame or not, “is irrelevant”, because “it has to be acknowledged”. This has greatly impacted Yvette and she concluded by saying, “I still have a lot to learn and a lot further to go”.

Catherine claimed that in South Africa, “we’re impatient to put something in place that takes time”. She stated that we must be prepared to succeed slowly. “I was at UCT at the

time of boycotts", and a group got together and developed a programme. They supported both the students who chose to boycott and those who chose not to boycott. Catherine very excitedly proclaimed, "we had a wonderful time, we did a wonderful thing, actually, without having too much pre-thinking, we moved some classes outside". She explained that they had a series of informal lectures outside the classroom. But then they "handed over to the students" to do the "privilege game" and they put the students into groups to lead those "informal discussions". Catherine explained that they made use of some of the same methods they used in the 70s and 80s, "it was great to see that it's in the spaces of the institution that fun things can happen and important decolonial moments can take place".

Yvette explained that within her curriculum, her "problematics are very much local" and mean something in terms of the "South African population person and not the settler population". She also stated that "indigenous research concerns inflect my teaching in terms of the examples that I use and the kinds of arguments that I make". So, in those terms, she would say it is decolonised. In terms of the actual texts that she draws on, theoretically, she does not draw on "African theorists", and she is still looking for "people who are big proponents of decolonial theory, who draw on theorists that are not of the West". She concluded that she does, however, make "a lot of effort in her readings to use local academics or academics from contexts of the South".

Natasha shared some of the approaches in her department around curriculum transformation. She started off by explaining that the curriculum that gets implemented is "controlled largely by the academics". She called it "team teach" and "team curriculum". She elaborated and said colleagues "curriculate each other, and some academics share what they do and ask for feedback". Another example she gave was that colleagues would "go and sit in the teachings of other colleagues". This is "not set up for a collective project". Yet, they try to make it more "collective", because more "people's input, eyes, hearts and critiques make it a richer process and it adds to this idea of focusing on broader structures for curriculum". She expressed that "identity and its relationship to your curriculum is important" and a person needs to be "critical of what they do, so that when someone critiques you, you are not so offensive about it". This is a form of "auto self-critique, which is another orientation towards a more collective educational project".

Natasha further provided me with some insight on how they deal with the students. She

maintained that, in her department, it is important that those they teach and train look "critically at their own position" so as to understand "privilege and oppression" so that they can better understand their students. She believes that if you are not able to look critically at yourself, you are just going to assume that "everyone in the classroom is the same" and then you will treat everyone "exactly the same without a consciousness of how society has produced people very differently". Another aspect that they focus on is recognition of prior learning (RPL), because they value that

> anybody who comes into a classroom environment, might not have specialised knowledge, or have trained or gone to schooling or higher education, but they have a wealth of knowledge that they gain through the experience of work, for example. And our education system doesn't necessarily easily translate that.

She explained that they must translate the work experience and although it is not the only thing, it is very "subjective", meaning the subject, "who you are and how you have been produced influences how you can and cannot think". Natasha described it as a more "decolonial approach" and they take it very "seriously". They encourage those they teach and train to be able to

> see difference, to use a pedagogy of discomfort by parallax in balance, we get them to really feel uncomfortable about the fact that they thought very little about the experience of the other people sitting around them critically. And when that starts to open up, we start to make an attempt to say, well, if this is the work as an intellectual, if you're just facilitating someone else's knowledge, that's a particular kind of teacher, where you give me the curriculum, I read it, I put some assessment and then I deliver it to you. As Freire says, banking education. That's what our high school mostly do. Some university professors do the same thing.

Natasha concluded that the content in her programme is "already progressive and focusing on challenging power".

This theme highlights that all participants have different opinions on varying aspects within the decolonisation realm, be it the motivation behind the 2015 student movements, the meaning of decolonisation, transformation committees, or the transformation that took place in the university as a result of the student moments. But, regardless of the opposing

views on many aspects, it is evident from the participants' responses that the 2015 student movements influenced and transformed them in many ways. One participant expressed "it had a radical impact on me" (Yvette) and while the other would not call himself "decolonised" (Stanley), but rather that he is "very aware of difference" (Stanley). Although one participant has always been motivated by justice, she also would not call herself "decolonial" (Catherine). Participants believe that students "teach a person a lot" (Natasha), and one can learn things from them in a "very powerful way" (Natasha). One participant feels that, as an academic, "it was my responsibility and duty to understand the literature" (Catherine), and during the protest in 2015, they supported the students "who chose to boycott and those who chose not to boycott" (Catherine). During that time, they made provision for classes to continue outside the classroom, where "important decolonial moments can take place" (Catherine). One participant explained that in certain terms, she would say that her curriculum "is decolonised" (Yvette) and evident from all the illustrations and examples expressed by another is that their curriculum and pedagogy is "already progressive and focusing on challenging power" (Natasha).

4.6 Reflecting on the main findings

The 2015 student movements that started at UCT shuddered not only the education sector but also the entire South Africa. Many universities around South Africa eventually faced the same uproar as UCT, as students across the nation seized the opportunity to stand up for what they believed to be fair and just. However, the participants' responses revealed their varying beliefs about the reasons behind the protests. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that whether they think it was asking for a decolonised curriculum (Catherine), or protesting against "fees and exclusion" and calling for "recognition" (Yvette) and "respect for differences" (Catherine), or the acknowledgement that learning can take place outside the classroom and curriculum (Natasha) it all falls under the same account to some extent. A noteworthy aspect of the protests was highlighted during the interviews, which is the influence it had on the participants. Self-discovery seemed like a common denominator, as participants shared, it had a "radical impact on me" (Yvette), or "I would not call myself decolonised", but "very aware of difference" (Stanley). Catherine said, I am not "decolonial", but motivated by justice, while Natasha said students "teach a person a lot" and one can learn things from them in a "very powerful way". Furthermore, advocated by the participants is the value and worth these protests brought and even

though universities closed down, property was destroyed and teaching and learning were affected, it brought consciousness to issues that undeniably existed for years, but were possibly ignored until 2015. Therefore, it can be argued that the protests were necessary and that sometimes such drastic measures are needed for issues to be resolved. For me, the question now stands: Have those issues been acknowledged and attended to, or were those protests all in vain?

To elaborate on this question, I bring attention to concerns raised about “alienation” (Yvette) that is still present in universities, which is evident in the “attitude of professors and lecturers to their students…they look down on the students, they patronise their students” (Stanley), as well as “privilege being passed” (Catherine), evident in the example of a catering company, providing food for the events at the university, while students down the road in the residences are starving (Catherine). More responses of participants illustrated further trepidations about the lack of transformation. Natasha, for example, believes that since the 2015 protests, statistics at UCT are “still dire” and that the university “has not significantly changed from that time” and even though student demographics have slightly changed (Yvette, Natasha), “the institutional culture remains white and liberal” (Natasha). I was provided with numerous examples to support these claims: (a) The numbers of white professors, academics and white people in senior positions; (b) the account of a black Vice-Chancellor, which, according to Catherine, the “old white professoriate”, did not want and she (the Vice-Chancellor) was “forced to leave or resigned”; (c) Senate that is still majority white (Natasha); and (d) that some academics, not only at UCT but at other places too “have been teaching the same thing for the last 20–30 years” (Natasha). Based on these examples, it could be argued that even though students made their voices heard starting in the 2015 protests, things at UCT and possibly other institutions too, quickly went back to their old hierarchical ways (Natasha). This claim is congruent with Stanley’s statement that universities generally struggle with change and will always struggle.

Some participants are not entirely convinced that any significant transformation has occurred since 2015. However, a few examples were provided of some positive transformation that has taken place and though it is on a more superficial and symbolic level, they cannot be denied. I will now specifically bring attention to the curriculum transformation committees and the *Curriculum Change Framework* that was inspired by

the 2015 student movements. Stanley believes that all universities should follow UCTs example of forming task teams to address the demands of the 2015 student movements. One of the appointed task teams brought forth a *Curriculum Change Framework* document. For Natasha, the framework meant the start of a process to think about what a potential intervention could look like at a more institutional level. Catherine, however, is completely against such a document and believes that such a document is not the way to foster transformation as it takes away from academic freedom. For her, curriculum pedagogy should be changed from the bottom and not from the top and she states that policies cannot “magically” change things. Yvette and Stanley also feel strongly about academic freedom; however, Stanley is of the opinion that universities would not tell their academics how to teach. Natasha explained that the document's title with the word “framework” is what caused the academics to have such an apprehensive attitude about it. Conversations turned to the committees and fora within the university. Natasha strongly held that committees are only formed to “broadcast” about having transformation committees. It also appears that those who are part of the committees, like Natasha, believe that these committees don’t have actual “teeth” to make a difference. They do indeed try, by making suggestions, but “whether it makes a difference is another question” (Natasha). This is very similar to the opinion held by some participants that decolonisation has become a “metaphor (Natasha, Catherine) and a “smokescreen” (Stanley), which I discussed in Section 4.5.2. Furthermore, it would appear that most of the participants who are part of these committees are actually the ones who are “already doing transformation and even decolonial work in what they teach”. These statements raise the question about the dedication to the intellectual project of curriculum transformation of the university, because when referring to committees, according to Natasha, it seems that it is “the people who don’t want to change that don’t come to those things”. This could be problematic, first, because: How will the teaching and learning environment actually change if only the people who have already transformed their curriculum and pedagogy are part of the committees and the ones who keep to their old ways do not partake in these discussions nor show interest to change? Secondly: How will those same academics try to enforce change within the universities' committees or bring about change, if those committees don’t have actual “teeth” (Natasha) to do so? However, despite these issues, fears and apprehension shared by the academics, which still exist within the higher education landscape, what was significant to me is that the academics strongly believe that, regardless of the lack of commitment and actual change, there are

“radical scholars in universities that do important work” (Catherine) and that there are academics who believe that they are “operating in a way that is promoting decolonisation” (Natasha). Unarguably, it seems that transformation is actually coming from the academics and not the institutions, which is consistent with Catherine’s statement that universities claim to be the “pillars of change”, but they are not. It is the people “they produce” that end up doing the changes and “not the universities”.

Through my research, I discovered that the term decolonisation is very complex. This was evident when it surfaced that decolonising the curriculum means very different things to different academics. The term decolonisation was claimed to be confusing and “poorly theorised” (Yvette) and that calling ourselves decolonised is incorrect because “we can be transformed, we can be changed” and “be attuned to colonial legacies” (Yvette), but she does not think “it's possible to be decolonised” (Yvette). This is akin to Catherine’s belief that the more “honest” thing to say is we are going to “change” instead of saying we are “going to decolonise”. Even the term transformation seems to cause disagreement and was referred to as a “watered-down version of decolonisation” (Natasha). For her transformation refers more to “structural things” such as committees and representation in each department, which, as mentioned before, is only there to create the illusion that there is an infrastructure, but once again, it seems the real transformation, such as supporting the students falls to the academics who are enforcing change (Natasha) and not the university that claims to do so (Catherine).

A few other concerns were raised about decolonising the curriculum, for example: Does it mean replacing all the content? or, Does it mean adding more black authors? The list goes on. Very interestingly, what surfaced is the notion of working with the term decoloniality as opposed to decolonisation and the work of Latin American scholars who worked on this concept became very prominent during the interviews. It also became very clear that due to the complexity of the term decolonisation, many participants believe it has become, as mentioned above, a “metaphor” (Catherine, Natasha) and “smokescreen” (Stanley). This implies that people and universities use the term to publicise that they are doing something to transform and create the illusion of change when that is not the complete truth. People take the term on board but then use it in “superficial kinds of ways” (Stanley). The complexity of a decolonised curriculum became clear and even though the academics might not agree on the definition, nor use the same

terminology to describe what they are doing in their curriculum, it does seem that participants collectively all have a similar perspective on what in fact needs to be done for the curriculum and pedagogy, to promote more inclusive education. It can be argued that what it is called, either transformation, decolonisation or decoloniality, is not as important as having an open mindset (Stanley, Catherine) and recognising the “powers” operating in the classroom (Natasha) to create a space that caters for all students, allowing them to learn and reach their potential.

Throughout the interviews, academics mention that there is still a significant need for change. A pattern emerged and two main aspects were identified: the formal curriculum and the university's institutional culture. Once again, I was aware of the reference made about superficial changes, for example, just changing individual curriculum or adding more black staff is not going to make a difference (Natasha); it goes deeper than that. Mutually, the participants agreed that the formal curriculum, such as the content could be the starting point in the decolonisation process, but they all pointed out and agreed that, in order to truly transform the university, the culture of the institution also needs to change. It needs to be a place of “unconditional hospitality” and people have to feel “represented” (Stanley). Furthermore, changing the curriculum is not an easy task and, for Catherine, the reason is that in South Africa, there is not a “full concentration and consultation on curriculum matters at school or at university”. More so, it again comes back to academic freedom and forcing lecturers to change what and how they teach will not work. Lecturers need to be open to change. They should review the curriculum and ask themselves whether the students can relate to the content. This relates to Yvette’s notion, which sees this curriculum review process as a “moment of truth” where what is being taught needs to be “justified”. Yvette used the term “decolonised pedagogy” to describe this moment.

Another important aspect of pedagogy was highlighted and the participants referred to the complexity of language, especially English, as a medium of instruction. It would appear that it remains a contentious topic because South Africa is such a multilingual country, which creates tremendous challenges for teaching and learning. Participants all feel that language obstructs the transformation process and they provide numerous possible solutions to this problem. It became evident that formal curriculum and the culture, including pedagogy, cannot operate in isolation from each other. Therefore, it is crucial to see curriculum as both “content and pedagogy” (Yvette, Natasha, Catherine,

Stanley), as a decolonised curriculum is not simply replacing the curriculum and its content with black authors and text, but how you teach will define whether it is decolonial or not. For example, if the curriculum of a lecturer's programme changes or is transformed to being more "decolonised" by whatever definition or means, but the culture and environment remains unchanged, what good will that do if that lecturer does not have a transformed and open mindset and does not recognise difference? That means they might teach decolonised content, but what they convey to the students might remain "alienating". One participant explicitly expressed that if we focus on changing our "mindset", then our "pedagogy changes" and "in a way the curriculum changes" (Catherine).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the second and third sub-research questions in the presentation of the main findings. More specifically, it discovered the significance of the 2015 student movement and the decolonial moment from the perspective of the academics I interviewed. In addition, it revealed that the concept of decolonisation within the context of the university is very complex and perceived differently by the participants. By bringing the data sets into conversation, I was able to reflect on the type of transformation that took place in the university following the 2015 protests as experienced by the participants. Further discovery revealed what participants perceive to be the foundation for a transformative university, the notion of English as a barrier to the transformation process and their idea of a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy. Lastly, the participants' personal transformation journey was revealed and some insight into their own decolonised curriculum was shared. In Chapter 5, I draw on the main findings and the limitations of this research to make suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 5
REFLECTING ON THE MAIN FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the concluding thoughts on this study to explore the main research question: How are academics engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation? I begin by presenting an overview of this research study (5.2) before reflecting on the main findings (5.3). Next, I highlight the possible limitations of this research study (5.4) and offer suggestions for further research (5.5). I end with my concluding reflections (5.6).

5.2 Overview of the research study

Chapter 1 mapped the context of this research study by providing the background, highlighting the intellectual conundrum and stating the research questions and aims. This chapter also provided a brief description of the research design, the methodology and the research processes which led this research study to address the research topic.

Chapter 2 addressed the first sub-research question (1.3) by providing a scholarly review of the literature centred around exploring the discourses that are influential in understanding decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation. It highlighted historical events (pre-1994) and current events (post-1994) and explored different perspectives on decolonisation and decoloniality. This chapter also investigated two significant interlinking concepts of decolonisation, before it unlocked some complexities of decolonisation, namely phases, strategies, possibilities and conceptions. I concluded this chapter by exploring decolonisation through *Ubuntu-currere* to unlock the importance of becoming.

In Chapter 3, I provided a detailed account of how this research study was conducted. This includes how qualitative phenomenology was employed as a methodology, how idealist interpretivism was selected as the paradigm and how the purposeful sampling of participants was conducted. It also described the research environment. Next, I explained how data were generated through, semi-structured one-on-one interviews and how IPA was used to analyse the transcribed interviews. Furthermore, in this chapter, I also

explained the steps I took to ensure that I met the ethics committee's requirements by obtaining ethical clearance from NWU and UCT, informed consent from the participants and permission from UCTs HR department. I also ensured that the validity, trustworthiness and ethical requirements were met throughout the research process.

Chapter 4 addressed the second and third sub-research questions (1.3) by presenting the main findings based on the data generated and analysed and also by providing the interpretations of the findings. First, I provided a brief background of the interviews, such as date, length, chosen online platform and discussing two key ethical considerations. Second, I provided the life histories of the academics who participated in the interviews. The eight themes that emerged from the participants' voices and experiences were presented in Section 4.5. Chapter 4 concluded by reiterating the main findings that were derived from the transcribed interviews. It highlighted similarities and differences; approaches and suggestions; concerns and the personal journey of the academics and how they are engaging with the decolonial moment in the development of curriculum transformation.

Chapter 5 addresses the primary research question (1.3) by reflecting on the main data findings. I discuss the possible limitations of this study and make suggestions for future research.

5.3 Reflections on the main findings

This section reflects on the entire research study as an attempt to address the main research question and aim. In doing so, I present five reflective statements as representative of the main findings that emanated from this research study.

- Reflective Statement 1: The 2015 #Fallism student movements revived dormant decolonisation conversations (5.3.1)
- Reflective Statement 2: English, as a medium of instruction, as counterproductive to the ideals of decolonising the curriculum (5.3.2)
- Reflective Statement 3: The challenges of fostering curriculum transformation (5.3.3)
- Reflective Statement 4: The absence of cultural and curriculum transformation at the university (5.3.4)

- Reflective Statement 5: Engaging with curriculum decolonisation, as a becoming, through learning to unlearn (5.3.5)

5.3.1 2015 #*Fallism* student movements revived dormant decolonisation conversations

Jansen (2017:12) (see 2.3) refers to the 2015 student protests as “the decolonisation moment”, while Badat (2017:3) (see 2.3) terms it “the decolonial turn” in the struggles for institutional transformation. For Natasha (4.5.1), because the 2015 student protests hit the South African landscape in such a “very explosive way”, it can in some ways be described as a “decolonial turn”, but she does not believe that it was “a moment” and certainly not a “2015 moment”. The reason for this is highlighted by Stanley (4.5.1) when he said, “we were into this thing a long, long time before that”. This is also evident from the scholarly research, that students have long been part of steering and shaping the higher education landscape through institutional governance mechanisms and student protests (Badat, 2016) (see 2.3) and that the call for the Africanisation of curriculum is “at least as old as the Republic of Ghana” (Jansen, 2017c:1) (see 2.2).

Based on research, it appears that the nation-wide student protests that started in 2015, known as the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, were a revival of the Black Consciousness discourse (Sikhosana, 2017) (see 2.3), which is relevant to the contemporary society and it is evident that it inspired many other movements such as #ScienceMustFall, #PatriarchyMustFall, #OutsourcingMustFall and later collectively became known as the #Falllism or #MustFall student movements, where students protested against different forms of domination in South Africa’s higher education institutions (Steyn Kotze, 2018) (see 2.3). These movements signify how academics and students use their agency to think and act on social matters that concern all people, it inspired an acknowledgment of intersectionality and incited the action to take into account any form of marginalisation, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etcetera. Further research confirms that these protests induced more conversations about curriculum decolonisation and decolonisation in the country (Lange, 2019; Le Grange *et al.*, 2020) (see 2.3). Natasha (4.5.1) had a similar opinion and posits that 2015 opened the “possibility for a different kind of conversation”. Du Preez *et al.* (2017) (see 2.3) points out that these student movements add value and motivate the initiation of change and drive that change in the higher education sector. Yvette (4.5.1) similarly believes that the

protests “created a heightened awareness of the need for change” and developed a “consciousness” in people, herself included, of what it could mean to “be a black student or student of colour at UCT”. Stanley (4.5.1) is of a similar opinion and voiced that the “value” of 2015 is that it “accelerated and sharpened the cultural and intellectual landscape”.

For some, the 2015 student movement asserted the need for transformation and the decolonisation of the higher education curriculum, which has been centred along the idea of western epistemology (Du Preez, 2018; Murris, 2016) (see 2.3). This is also true for Catherine (4.5.1), who believes the catch cry of the 2015 protests was “a free decolonised education”. While Yvette (4.5.1) believes the students protested because institutions of higher education are “alienating places”, and “the lived experience wasn’t recognised nor represented in the kinds of course offerings and in the social experience”. This is similar to another of Catherine’s (4.5.1) notions that the students want institutions “not to be so Eurocentric”, to make more space for “other views and other people to create things” and be a place where there is “respect for differences”. This is also evident through scholars like Disemelo (2015) (see 2.3), who claim that the student protest movements were concerned with equal and quality access to education, the dismantling of complexities of class relations in South Africa, and eradicating hostile and negative verbal and physical abuse encountered by black students. Natasha (4.5.1) also believes that students “exposed and amplified” that learning is not confined to only the curriculum and the classroom, but also that, in the context of “a white liberal, Eurocentric University, like UCT” (Natasha) (see 4.5.1), students wanted the acknowledgement that “black academics have something very important to say about knowledge” (Natasha) (see 4.5.1). The motives and outcries by the students were expressed in banners, public speeches, daily conversations and even in the media, and the message was clear the “formerly white institutions needed to be decolonised” (Jansen, 2019:51) (see 2.3).

To summarise, it is evident from the scholarly research and the responses of the participants that even though the 2015 student protests, which later became known as the *#Fallism* movements, were not a new occurrence, nor bound to South Africa. The protests are described as the resurgence of the *Black Consciousness Movement,* which called for, amongst many things, a decolonised university curriculum. Although 2015 was a “painful moment” (Yvette, 4.5.1), we cannot deny the significance that arises from

student movements, as they add value and motivate the initiation of change (Du Preez *et al.,* 2017) (see 2.3). These protests, raised concerns about equality in education as well as access to education. (Disemelo, 2015) (see 2.3). But, more importantly, I argue that these #*Fallism* movements, revived dormant conversations about curriculum decolonisation and decolonisation in the country (Lange, 2019; Le Grange *et al.*, 2020) (see 2.3). They opened the "possibility for a different kind of conversation" (Yvette, 4.5.1) and put the issues of curriculum decolonisation back in the spotlight.

5.3.2 English as a medium of instruction as counterproductive to the ideals of decolonising the curriculum

Before 1994, there were many injustices in the South African education system (Prinsloo, 2006) (see 1.2). In the 1970s, curriculum studies scholars revealed the inequalities and injustices of educational opportunities and one of those factors was the language used for teaching (Schubert, 2010) (see 1.2). This is similar to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (cited in Omanga, 2020) (see 2.4) concept of linguicide, which refers to the killing and displacing of people's languages and imposing your own. This is further echoed in Catherine's (4.5.7) argument about how people with less education than us are expected to speak our languages. She explained that Afrikaans- and English-speaking people are too "lazy" to learn other languages. She believes that there is an attitude around language, "that it is too complicated", therefore, Afrikaans- and English speakers will not speak an African language, yet they expect the speakers of an African language to speak our languages. Stanley (4.5.7) also asserted that English is hegemonic and finds it very interesting that "the decolonisation thing in South Africa hasn't really looked at language". For Stanley, this is half the reason why the children are failing in schools and explained that children have to make this big language switch, and that language switch is a traumatic thing for them. Catherine (4.5.7) claimed that in the Health Sciences Department at UCT, "the language competence of their students means that they can't necessarily examine patients properly", which is the reason why they have to have translators.

Smith (1999) identified seven strategies for decolonisation. Two of those strategies are language and history. Language is concerned with the importance of teaching and learning in indigenous languages in response to the anti-imperialist struggle, while history is concerned with the recovery of, amongst other things, languages of indigenous/ colonised people and then used for future redress. This is highlighted by both Stanley

(4.5.7) and Catherine (4.5.7) who are inspired by the work of Neville Alexander and believe that people should think about the main languages in the regions of the country and that people should familiarise themselves with those languages. Catherine highlights that UCT has isiXhosa classes for staff, and many of her colleagues have done those classes. For Catherine, that is what transformation is all about, “culture, language and the proper valuing of people”.

Catherine (4.5.7) and Natasha (4.5.7) referred to Wa Thiong’o and his work on human oppression and discrimination caused by languages. Catherine explained that it is a “cultural bond if you strip language away from people” because you “take away from them their way of understanding the world, their metaphors, their whole viewpoints”. She elaborated that if you have English as a medium of instruction in schools, you “split off that mental development from people’s personal inner language they speak to themselves”. Catherine emphasised that “the damage done is enormous” and provides an example from Neville Alexander’s work at a primary school, where boys are learning isiXhosa as a subject. The work done by Neville Alexander illustrates exactly how language oppresses students. Catherine provided the detailed scenario in Section 4.5.7. Catherine further believes that,

> if you take two people who are very unequal in the same language, and we treat them as if they’re actually equal and you teach them in the medium of instruction of one of them and you treat them as if they’re equal, they are bound to come out unequally. When they come out unequally and you don’t recognise that there is a cultural, or social or a background gap, then you say, ‘Oh, well, that person is brighter than that person’. But they’re not necessarily.

This implies that we tend to think that people who do not have English as a first or second language are lacking intellectually if they do not understand or respond back correctly when we explain or ask them something in English, yet that is not true. It is merely that they cannot use their inner language to entirely comprehend, to speak out or formulate a response.

To summarise, it is evident from the scholarly research and the responses of the participants that replacing the languages the students speak and imposing English as a medium of instruction causes an obstacle in decolonising the curriculum. One aspect

hereof is the hegemonic and Western dominance placed on English and the possibility for English to been equated with the contentious issue of being educated. A quote from Khayri Woulfe expresses this point by stating: “English is a language, not a measure of intelligence”. This is a powerful statement that I believe depicts the danger of prioritising one particular language. Although as it stands it is evident that English as a medium of instruction is counterproductive to the ideals of decolonising the curriculum, simply moving English abruptly from higher education institutions, is not an option nor viable. I acknowledge that this remains a source of tension and not a problem that will be solved overnight, but rather something that requires, as suggested by Catherine (see 4.5.7), for example a phased-in approached, such as translanguaging or for universities to “set one of their entry requirements as having an African language” (Catherine, 4.5.7) so as to advantage the majority of the population who speak an African language. I do, however, believe that is important to find solutions for the present and until a more permanent solution has been implemented in higher education institutions, that the role of English as a mode of instruction, as part of a decolonised curriculum, is something that requires experimentation and creativity on part of the academics, to improvise and think outside the traditional context, which could help overcome the current impact of language hegemony to the classroom.

5.3.3 Challenges of fostering curriculum transformation

In response to the outcries of the students I discussed in 2.3 and 5.3.1, Minister Blade Nzimande spoke at the 2nd Higher Education Transformation Summit, which was held in October 2015, and gave a directive for all universities to Africanise and decolonise (Nzimande, 2015a) (see 1.2). Earlier, in the 2008 *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions*, also known as the Soudien Report (Department of Education, 2008), the importance of curriculum transformation was highlighted. Given that higher education’s primary function is knowledge production and transmission, curriculum reform should be used to steer away from a curriculum that is used as a tool of exclusion to a curriculum that is democratic and inclusive (Department of Education, 2008) (see 1.2). Dating even further back is the *White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, wherein the Ministry expressed their concern and stressed that transformation must take place in the higher education sector (Department

of Education, 1997:3) (see 1.2). Based on the scholarly research, it is evident that the pursuit of curriculum transformation started decades ago. Yet, Lange (2017) reasons that most curriculum developments were interested in the exoskeleton of the curriculum and very little has changed in terms of content, pedagogy and assessment of curriculum (Lange, 2017); therefore, there is still a vast need for change within modern-day South African higher education institutions.

Although I acknowledge the epistemological shift in curriculum transformation and, more importantly, that this means different things in different disciplines, professions and the academic identities that these form, however, without disregarding these important aspects, for the purpose of this study I have identified three challenges I believe to be hindering academics' pursuit of curriculum transformation, namely, complexity of curriculum transformation and identifying decolonisation as an important element thereof (5.3.3.1); lack of influence of transformation committees within the university (5.3.3.2); and unwillingness of some academics and the university to change (5.3.3.3). These challenges are reported on in the following section.

5.3.3.1 Complexity of curriculum transformation and identifying decolonisation as an important element thereof

Nzimande (2015a) (see 1.2) emphasises that the concept of transformation is a complex and multi-dimensional term, while Majola (2017) (see 1.2) states that the different interpretations of the term transformation are a challenge universities face. He says some institutions have a very narrow interpretation of the term, limited to only demographic changes. In contrast, others extend their understanding to institutional culture and general reform of the institution. Yvette (4.5.2) mentioned "transformation" as part of her elucidation of decolonisation, yet Natasha (4.5.2) argued that "transformation" is another misrepresented term and believes it to be "a watered-down version of decolonisation because it is trying to deal with the more structural things by setting up committees and having faculty representation in each department and so on". Majola (2017) (see 1.2) further emphasises that transformation must involve addressing all aspects of curriculum and teaching and learning together with the support elements such as funding, housing and making academia attractive to a new generation of academics. I have identified decolonisation of the curriculum as one of the elements of pursuing a transformative curriculum. This is also emphasised by Manamela (2018) (see 1.2), who expresses that

“in the context of South African higher education, decolonisation is the comprehensive transformation of the curriculum and institutional cultures to primarily reflect and promote African context”.

It is important to note that there is some controversy around defining curriculum decolonisation. This was evident when Yvette (4.5.2) asked what exactly a decolonised curriculum means. Does a decolonised curriculum “simply suggest replacing one set of content with another”? “Is it in the actual structuring itself of the curriculum?”, or does it perhaps mean “an Africanised curriculum?”. She is, therefore, of the opinion that it would be helpful to clarify what exactly is meant by decolonisation of the curriculum, as she strongly feels that decolonisation is “poorly theorised”. She believes that the reason for this is that prominent decolonial theorists, like Maldonado-Torres, Walter Mignolo and other Latin-American scholars are essentially concerned with knowledge production, not with curriculum (Yvette, 4.5.2). Following the *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* student movements of 2015 and 2016, decolonisation and decoloniality have received much attention in South Africa (Le Grange, 2021) (see 2.4). Contradictory to Yvette’s opinion, the other three participants, Stanley, Catherine and Natasha (4.5.2), are all influenced by the works of the abovementioned Latin-American curriculum scholars and believe in using the term decoloniality as opposed to decolonisation.

In the works of Jansen (2017a) (see 2.7.4) and his six conceptions of decolonisation, the fifth concept, the repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society), is referred to as the hard version of decolonisation, in which curriculum is assigned with a great deal of power to impact the settler society and the settled knowledge. This approach is akin to Tuck and Yang’s (2012:3) (see 2.7.4) view, which maintains that “decolonisation is not a metaphor” and argues that when we talk about decolonisation, it must refer to the repatriation of indigenous land and life. Unfortunately, participants believe that curriculum decolonisation has become a “metaphor” (Catherine, Natasha, 4.5.2), “a slogan” (Catherine, 4.5.2), and it is used in superficial “ways” and as a “smokescreen” (Stanley, 4.5.2), which is their argument for using decoloniality instead of decolonisation.

Although these are only a reflection of the views of four academics and not the entire academic staff within the university, based on the participants’ responses and scholarly research, we cannot deny the intricacies of curriculum transformation. Furthermore, decolonisation of the curriculum is identified as one of the important elements of the

transformation process, however, the need for defining curriculum decolonisation is evident by the responses of the participants and one could argue that the questions posed by Yvette (4.5.2) are possibly something that many academics at the university grapple with within their pursuit of curriculum transformation.

5.3.3.2 Lack of influence of transformation committees within the university

Based on the directive given by Minister Blade Nzimande, universities responded by appointing task teams, which some universities appointed curriculum transformation committees to discover ways South African universities could decolonise their curriculum (Le Grange *et al.,* 2020).

However, the participants' responses elucidated the transformation committees' lack of influence within the university. Natasha stated that transformation committees are supposed to be in every faculty and department and are responsible for engaging with issues around curriculum, student exclusion, racism, employment equity, etcetera. However, in Yvette's (4.5.3) department, it is noted that only a few conversations and staff meetings were held around 2015 and she points out that there is no explicit programme, committee, or document which frames what it means to "construct decolonial learning courses or teach in terms of decolonised thinking". Yvette's opinion on the absence of a formal committee in her department could be due to the perception that these committees do not have much power to create actual changes. Natasha (4.5.3) explained that these committees "don't really have much teeth" and are limited to what change they can implement at the university. She further held that these committees are only formed to create the illusion that there is structure. However, they do not have the power and authority to make fundamental changes.

Based on these responses, it is evident that although present in the university, the transformation committees are not aiding much in academics' pursuit of curriculum transformation.

5.3.3.3 Unwillingness of some academics and the university to change

From the responses of the participants, it was evident that the committees created to promote curriculum transformation are mostly made up of people who are already doing "decolonial work in what they teach" (Natasha, 4.5.3) and academics who believe that "we are operating in a way that is promoting decolonisation" (Catherine, 4.5.4) and the

“people who don’t want to change, don’t come to those things” (Natasha, 4.5.3). This has proven to be a severe challenge because, as Catherine (4.5.3) believes, specific issues, for example, curriculum pedagogy, “can only be changed from the bottom” and not the “top”. This implies that change should come from academics, yet not everyone is willing to be part of the change. For Natasha (4.5.3), this is not

> a simple black and white thing, although, in general it is, there are also black academics, who have been at UCT, who have climbed the ladder who are not interested, necessarily in the kinds of radical change that some of us are talking about, because they feel they suffered through and made it, so why must they now make it different for black people.

Lange (2017:49) takes the stance that role players in the institution must be actively involved in the curriculum transformation process because it is not the responsibility or the role of the government “to develop a blueprint for the transformation of the curriculum” but rather the role of the academics. This is echoed by Natasha’s (4.5.4) statement that “academics control and should control the curriculum” because they bring what they read and learn into the classroom, but unfortunately, “academics, in particular, white academics are too comfortable, having not been challenged in the very limited worldview, which is Eurocentric”. It could be argued that the unwillingness of some academics to be more open to curriculum transformation stems from their belief in academic freedom. This is evident from Yvette’s (4.5.3) notion that she would not want to be told what to teach, while Stanley (4.5.3) said that academics should not be “forced” in their teachings and for Catherine (4.5.3), academics should not be told to teach in certain ways. It comes down to “academic freedom”, Catherine emphasised, because “you don’t get transformation in that way”. These viewpoints of the participants are similar to Badat (2016:8), who stated that issues relating to curriculum and pedagogy such as epistemological and ontological questions have not received enough attention because there is a “refusal on the part of academics to do so”, which is sometimes in deference to “academic freedom”.

I argue that academics play a powerful role both as the producer of knowledge and as curriculum designers. Academics are invaluable in curriculum transformation and without their willingness and openness to change, the dreams of a transformative curriculum seem even more difficult to achieve. To capture the essence of this statement, I conclude with a quote from Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, who said:

The only person who is educated is the one
who has learned how to learn and change.

To summarise, from the scholarly research and participants' responses, it is clear that academics face complex challenges in their pursuit of promoting curriculum transformation. With the debate around transformation and decolonisation being so multifaceted and so many prominent scholars in the field with opposing views of which definition to use, as well as those of the participants, I argue that there cannot be only one single definition as to what it means to decolonise the curriculum as part of curriculum transformation and that any number of perceptions are correct within right mindset and approach. I will discuss this in more detail in 5.3.5. The participants are adamant that there are indeed academics committed to bringing change. Unfortunately, there are many academics not interested in change. It also does not seem like change is coming much from the universities or the transformation committees, as Stanley (4.5.4) pointed out that universities generally struggle with change and they "will always struggle". Even for Catherine (4.5.4), the universities are "not the pillars of change" as universities only "produce people who become the agents in society" and "they will do the changes, but not universities". These last few views have inspired the next statement, which explores some instances of transformation, or the lack thereof, that are experienced at the university.

5.3.4 Absence of cultural and curriculum transformation at the university

The former Minister of Higher Education (now the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation) states that there is still an urgent need to drastically change our professoriate's demographics and transform research agendas to eliminate all forms of unjust discrimination, increase student support and improve academic success rates. He states that some institutions had made progress in transforming themselves, but others had not (Nzimande, 2015b) (see 1.2). This is true for Natasha (4.5.4), who expressed that in 2015 students made their voices heard, but UCT quickly went back to their "old hierarchical ways". This is evident from the numbers, and if we look at "the figures six years down the line from the protests, the statistics are still dire" as "racial demographics at UCT as an institution has not significantly changed from that time". She said, "I think there's less than 1 percent of senators that are not white". Catherine (4.5.4) referred to the Senate as the "old white professoriate", and that they excuse anyone who tries to

bring change because “that’s how difficult it is to change universities”. Another concern was raised when Natasha (4.5.6) explained that “most white academics are not prepared to recognise that coloniality is alive and well and that they are privileged”. According to her, if you are not prepared to do that, then when you say, ‘I’m decolonising my curriculum’, or have written about decolonising the curriculum, “that needs to be taken with a pinch of salt”, because if someone is saying they are doing decolonial work, and “they’re not engaging how power is operating in their classroom, in the university, in the world that we find ourselves, then they’re not doing decolonial work”.

Transformation is a process rooted in fundamental change that is meant to re-evaluate our thinking, attitudes, ethos, belief systems, policies and behaviours (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015) (see 1.2). This is similar to Stanley’s (4.5.5) idea of decolonisation and transformation, which means the university environment should be “stimulating, protecting, and cultivating” and people should “feel represented at a university”. He elucidated that “critical spaces within a university, such as the library, cafeteria, lecture halls and residences, should also be decolonised” (Stanley, 4.5.4). He explained that “these places need to be places that invite people and make them feel stimulated” (Stanley, 4.5.4). However he, feels that UCTs library, is “problematic” , because, although it is a “wonderful place”, it is filled with “only pictures of dead white men”, (Stanley, 4.5.4). Similar to the abovementioned voice of the former Minster of Higher Education, that there is a need to drastically change the demographics of the professoriate is that of the Council on Higher Education (2016) (see 1.2), who released a report, noting that although progress has been made in the structural domains of higher education curriculum through policy-related improvements, “it has made very little progress in the arguably more important cultural domain of ideas and theories” (Council on Higher Education, 2016:171) (see 1.2). This is also true for Natasha (4.5.4) when she explained that “the institutional culture remains white and liberal”. For Stanley (4.5.4), there is a type of “alienation” present in universities, which is “exemplified” in the attitude of professors and lecturers to their students. Professors “look down on the students, they patronise their students”. This “attitude” that Stanley describes was highlighted when Catherine (4.5.4) stated that what needs to transform is “this kind of attitude” of “better than others” and that “transformation should be about culture, language and the proper valuing of people”. Catherine (4.5.4) also voiced that UCT is a “bastion of privilege” and there are so many “micro ways” in which privilege is maintained. Yvette (2.5.4) mentioned

a few examples of changes that took place since 2015, however, they are more on a "superficial level", such as the "ongoing process of changing the names", for example, the "Jameson Hall" that is now called the "Sarah Baartman Hall". She noted that everything became "highly racialised", it "was difficult" and it "continues to be so". She also believes that "there's been a lot of silencing as well".

Further scholarly literature shows that regardless of the various initiatives, policies and developments towards transforming curriculum in higher education, it is still "lacking in its approach to innovative ways of curriculum intellectualism" (Ramrathan, 2016:2) (see 1.2). This is, in part, due to the nature of institutions (such as universities) to reproduce themselves and their core ideals to the detriment of wider and deeper forms of societal transformation beyond the parameters of the institution. As a result, very little has changed in terms of content, pedagogy and assessment of curriculum (Lange, 2017) (see 1.2). Heleta (2016) (see 1.2) also articulates that regardless of the many transformation policies and commitment at various levels to fast track the radical educational transformation of South Africa's higher education sector, knowledge systems and the curriculum at most South African universities, have not transformed much. For Natasha, this is true and she shared her personal view by saying "some people at UCT and other places have been teaching the same thing for the last 20/30 years". She stated that "there has been change, but no significant change", and she believes that it has do with the institution of the university". She, however, believes that call for decolonisation "made people wary about what they were doing and their curriculum". Yvette (4.5.6) believes that there is a place for "revisiting content", which is something that, according to her "has not been done for a very long time". Yvette explained that there have been changes around "new proposals for changes in actual programmes, and there's been quite a lot of different initiatives around changes in actual pedagogy and teaching and learning". According to Yvette, these initiatives are mostly "focused more on an undergraduate level".

To summarise, scholarly research shows that since 2015, various comments, reports and statements were made about the lack of transformation that has taken place in universities. This is still true years down the line and is evident from the participants' responses as based on their current lived experiences of the university's environment. Participants believe that the culture in the university is still lacking diversity and

recognition and that even the curriculum has not changed significantly. I refer back to Lange (2017) (see 1.2), who pointed out the importance of the need to change the professoriate demographic, while emphasising on academic identity and the plea of black academics at historically white universities. However, I argue that given the responses of the participants and the scholarly research, it is debatable whether changing the demographic profile of academic staff is going to be enough to effect transformation because, as Stanley (4.5.4) pointed out, universities generally struggle with change, and they "will always struggle". Even for Catherine (4.5.4), the universities are "not the pillars of change" as universities only "produce people who become the agents in society" who will then "do the changes, but not universities". I, therefore, further argue that transformation does not lie solely with universities and their management but rather with the academics and the role players, as reiterated by Lange (2017) (see 1.2), because regardless of what changes are made or not made, true transformation comes from the transformation of student and academic identity and for academics to understand the importance of pedagogy, of relationality and of the capacity to engage with one's students, to understand their contexts, cultures, language and frame of thinking. The argument made here is rooted in the next section, where I discuss engaging with curriculum decolonisation as a becoming, through learning to unlearn.

5.3.5 Engaging with decolonising the curriculum as a becoming, through learning to unlearn

Natasha (4.5.5) explained that because the university is understood "to be a place of formal curriculum and qualification", the formal curriculum at the university can be the starting point in the decolonisation process. Similarly, Le Grange (2019b) (see 2.6) emphasises that for as long as institutions exist, they will form part of the curriculum. However, changing only the formal curriculum is not enough to transform it, and "if people are serious about decolonising the curriculum, they cannot only look at the superficial elements" (Natasha, 4.5.5). Consequently, Le Grange (2019b) (see 2.6) emphasises the need for an extended understanding of the curriculum.

Le Grange (2019b) (see 2.6) believes that curriculum should not only be viewed in the conventional way, such as the planned activities, but academics should instead make room for unplanned activities in teaching/learning spaces to give "legitimacy to students' lived experiences and to experiment with new ways of doing that open up pathways for

students to become", as opposed to limiting students' desires and potential to create newness in the world, by favouring a fixed curriculum (Le Grange, 2019b:41) (see 2.6). Aoki (1999) (see 2.6) does not disregard the curriculum-as-planned but advocates for the curriculum-as-lived and Le Grange agrees with Aoki (1999) (see 2.6) and states that legitimating the curriculum-as-lived could highlight how the current university curriculum is experienced by students and could, therefore, be used as a basis for decolonisation. The concept of the curriculum-as-lived is akin to the views of Yvette (4.5.6), who advocated for a "decolonised pedagogy", as well as Catherine (4.5.6), who described a decolonised curriculum as a "textured engagement with learning". She believes that if the universities can "focus on student learning, and less on the curriculum as content, but the curriculum as pedagogy and content, then there's a lot of room for things to shift".

Yvette (4.5.6) further described her idea of a "decolonial move", as being concerned about the implications of the "curriculum on the students who need the curriculum the most", in other words, the most "educationally marginal". Yvette, explained

> we need to look at what we teach, and whether that makes sense, whether it makes sense to ourselves and our own research and thinking, whether it makes sense to the students that we teach, and whether it makes sense to the context of modern South Africa in which we teach in, and whether those are the best contents that we can use to teach what we teach.

This means we should ensure that what we teach is within the modern-day South African context and that it truly speaks to the students' desires and potential.

Similarly, for Le Grange (2016) (see 2.8), decolonising the curriculum entails the liberation of the present South African curriculum. He coined the concept *Ubuntu-currere,* which portrays an active conceptual force that enables decolonising the curriculum and in so doing has the potential to alter our frame of reference from a focus solely on the human being to include that of 'human-human-nature' (Le Grange, 2019a:222) (see 2.8). Ramose (2009: 308–309) (see 2.8) states that "[h]umanness suggests both a condition of being and the state of becoming, of openness or ceaseless unfolding". Le Grange (2014:221) (see 2.8) agrees with Ramose (1999) (see 2.8) and asserts that decolonising the curriculum must involve freeing one's thoughts from the Cartesian way of thinking and he argues that subjectivity is ecological rather than individual and the subject is always

in-becoming (Le Grange, 2015) (see 2.8). This implies that a decolonised curriculum will promote a shift in subjectivity from the arrogant 'I' of Western individualism to the humble 'I' to the 'I' that is "embedded, embodied, extended and enacted" (Le Grange, 2016:9) (see 2.8). This notion is highlighted through the ways in which the participants are engaging with promoting a decolonised curriculum and pedagogy.

Yvette (4.5.7 and 4.5.8) explained that in her pedagogy, she attempts to be "mindful of who is in her classroom of different life experiences of representations and to be more flexible" because "people are coming from very different backgrounds with very different life experiences". Much of the learning is about inducting students into a different theoretical language. Therefore, she is much more explicit in how she teaches that language. This point was motivated by a "decolonial" example,

> in the last few years, I speak almost with subtitles, so I'll speak, and then I'll explain and as I go along, I speak and explain, I'm constantly defining and using theoretical language all the time, but always mindful of the fact that there are people who are (a) second language speakers; and (b) have not had the kind of academic preparation that other students in the class have.

Stanley (4.5.6) expressed that you must "recognise that different students learn differently". He explained that it is about "acknowledging the differences amongst us and trying to teach to those differences. That's pedagogically for me critical". Stanley also feels very strong about anti-racism and held that it is a "key part of curriculum decolonisation". Stanley particularly prefers the work of Achille Mbembe and expressed that "being aware of racial classification is hopefully going to grow". He thinks it is essential for people to look at what they are doing and their curriculum and decide for themselves.

Le Grange *et al.* (2020:25) (see 1.2) bring our attention to decolonial-washing, meaning institutions resort to "instrumentalist and quick-fix solutions to decolonise curricula" in an attempt to adhere to the curriculum transformation mandate. The outcome of this is decolonial-washing or the impression that decolonisation has taken place instead of actual fundamental change. This resonates with Natasha (4.5.6) who believes that engaging with curriculum decolonisation does not just mean changing the content by, for example, "adding one black author" because she believes "how you teach those texts will

also determine whether what you're doing is decolonial or not". She encourages looking "critically" at your own position so as to understand "privilege and oppression", because if you cannot look critically at yourself, you are just going to assume that "everyone in the classroom is the same" and then you will treat everyone "exactly the same without a consciousness of how society has produced people very differently". Both Yvette, Stanley and Natasha's approaches to engaging with curriculum decolonisation also speak to Le Grange's (2016) (see 2.7.3) 4Rs of a decolonised curriculum. Specifically referring to respectful representation, the participants are concerned with recognising the voices and knowledges of the different students in their classroom and focus on creating spaces for those student voices and knowledges. Reciprocal appropriation, another of Le Grange's (2016) (see 2.7.3) 4Rs asserts that the benefits of various indigenous knowledges are given voices by both universities and communities. This is similar to how Natasha (4.5.8) further engages with curriculum decolonisation as she explained, within her department, they focus on RPL. She noted that it is important for them to translate the students' work experience. For her, it very "subjective", meaning the subject, "who you are and how you have been produced influences how you can and cannot think". Natasha described it as "decolonial approach", and her department takes it very "seriously". This recognition of prior learning also gives "legitimacy to students' lived experiences, which open up pathways for students to become", as explained by Le Grange (2019b:41) (see 2.6)

Le Grange (2021) (see 2.8), furthermore, posits that *currere* as a form of decolonisation resonates with Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (cited in Omanga, 2020) (see 2.8) argument that we must learn to unlearn in order to re-learn, which is also in agreement with DeCarvalho and Florez-Florez's (2014) approach to decolonising curriculum. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (cited in Omanga, 2020) (see 2.8), what is a necessity is a decolonial attitude based on the principle that all people should be accepted as human beings and that all people are born into knowledges that are both valid and legitimate. This notion of learning to unlearn resonates with Catherine's (4.5.6) notion of how an academic should engage with curriculum decolonisation, she stated,

> If you focus on your mindset, then your pedagogy changes and in a way, the curriculum changes. You start a huge shift from knowledge in the curriculum. You shift from teaching to learning of the students. Asking, how are they learning? Once you really are trying to teach the actual people in front of you,

as opposed to some ideal - then that is transformative.

To summarise, it is evident from the scholarly research and participants' responses that the formal curriculum will always form part of decolonisation. However, I argue that decolonising the curriculum cannot be enclosed in isolated assessments and outcomes. Instead, for it to be more inclusive, it is imperative that curriculum decolonisation focuses on the approaches to teaching and learning. I recognise the importance of new knowledge production from the South and how this new research needs to be legitimated and transformed into curriculum knowledge and content and that this means different things in different academic disciplines. However, I am of the opinion that by focusing on teaching and learning, where we have altered our frame of reference and shifted our focus from the arrogant Western "I" to the humble "I", is what is invaluable and what should be at the centre of the current curriculum decolonisation journey in higher education institutions in South Africa In this new frame of mind, we recognise differences, we respect those differences and we teach to those differences; thus, always being aware that decolonising work is dynamic, constantly shifting and an ongoing process, that does not have a fixed end and, therefore, is a continual process of learning to unlearn in order to re-learn.

5.4 Possible limitations of the research study

My study has two possible limitations:

- The first limitation of this research study was the online interviews. Due to the distance of UCT from myself and keeping with COVID-19 regulations, the participants were invited to participate in online interviews. Three of the four interviews were almost completely without disturbances, but one of the interviews had many interruptions due to weather affecting the Wi-Fi connection. Eventually, the video function needed to be turned off, which made the connection better, but it affected the element of personal interaction between myself and the participant.

- The second limitation of this research study was the sample. Only four participants participated in this study, which could have prevented me from gaining a broader understanding of participants' perspectives on curriculum decolonisation. However, I believe this did not affect the research study as the data generated

from my four participants provided the in-depth rich descriptions needed to reveal the essence of the lived experiences of the participants on the topic under study.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

I suggest four possible avenues for further research:

- First, for further research to be conducted that involves students. A similar study that focuses on students at UCT could provide a different perspective on the curriculum issue. It would be interesting to explore whether students believe academics are embracing the decolonial moment and how.
- Secondly, that further research be conducted that involves the university's management. This will allow for exploration of the perspectives of the management and the decolonial moment as well as to get some insight into the claims made by the participants in this study.
- Thirdly, that this research study be conducted at a national level. This will allow for further exploration of how academics are embracing the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation from a more diverse context.
- Fourthly, further research could be done to explore how our thinking of the curriculum decolonisation process could be further transformed by the aspirations of universities to be glocally excellent.

5.6 Concluding reflections

I consider the work presented in this research study as a significant contribution to the discourses that are influential in understanding decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation. It further contributed to understanding how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment through their curricula. I do, however, acknowledge that much more can be said on the topic of decolonisation and, in my study, I have merely attempted to add to the ongoing conversation by opening pathways to rethink curriculum decolonisation.

I argue that curriculum should be inclusive and democratic and should, therefore, be motivated by the active force of Pinar's (1975) autobiographical method *currere*, and enforced by *potentia* (Le Grange, 2019a). Hence, I advocate for the notion of Le Grange's (2019a) *Ubuntu-currere* and the importance of becoming as an emancipatory substitute

to the conventional, hierarchical approach to designing outcomes, teaching, assessing and curriculum. In my research and from the participants' responses, a significant discovery highlighted the necessity of approaching teaching and learning with a decolonised frame of mind as the foundation to decolonising the curriculum and pedagogy. I believe education is a lifelong pursuit and a true reflection of transformation is when decolonisation is not perceived as an end destination. It is an infinite journey of becoming, an inner quest that drives the evolutionary development of an individual and an ongoing process of learning to unlearn. It is the transition of humanity to become individuals free from limiting Western worldviews, recognising and respecting differences, where academics views are underpinned by democratic thought, that is reflected in a transformed, decolonised curriculum.

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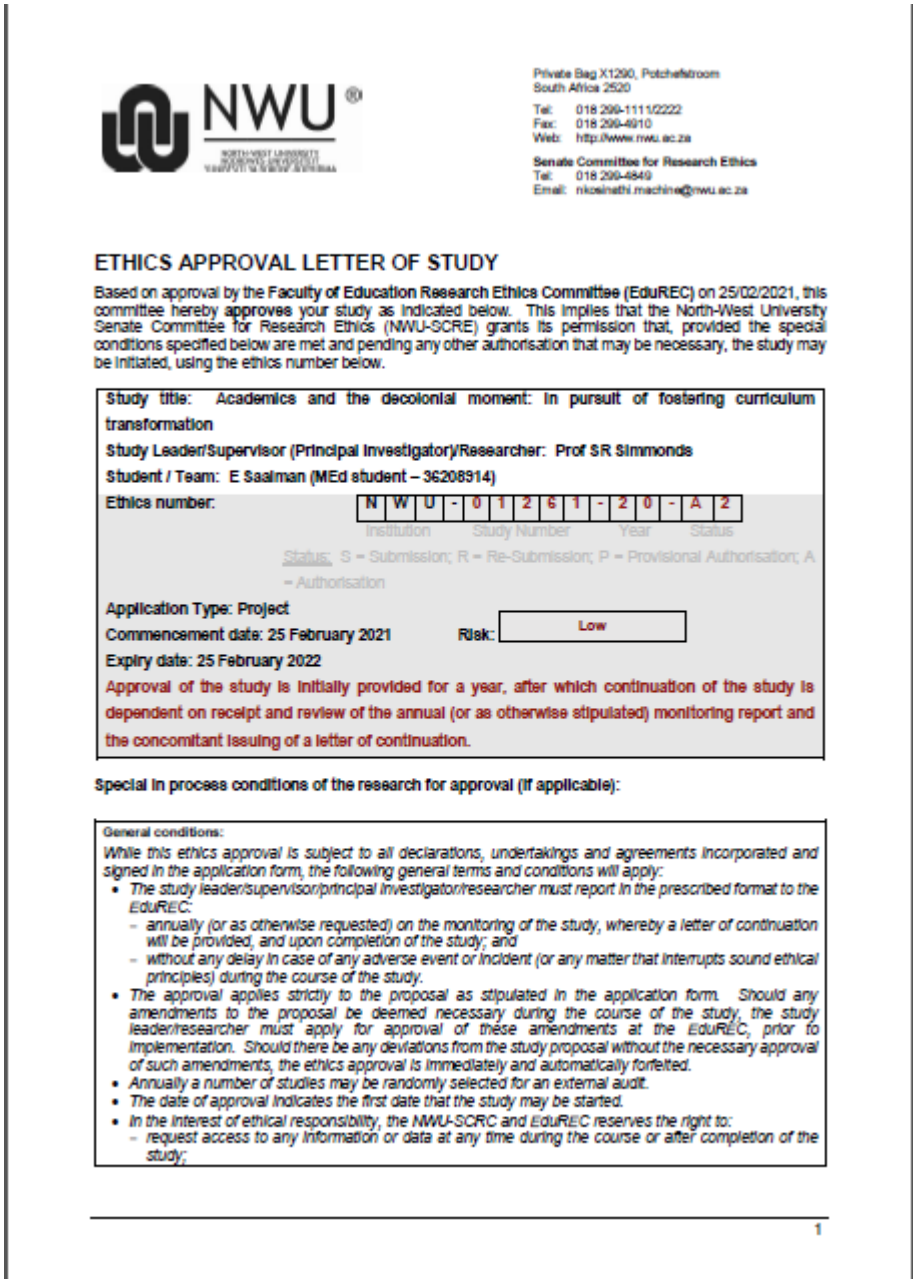
ADDENDUM A – ETHICS CERTIFICATE FROM NWU



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Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 25/02/2021, this committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof SR Simmonds

Student / Team: E Saaiman (MEd student – 36208914)

Ethics number: NWU-01261-20-A2

Institution | Study Number | Year | Status

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Project

Commencement date: 25 February 2021 **Risk:** Low

Expiry date: 25 February 2022

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor/principal investigator/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EduREC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EduREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.*
- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRC and EduREC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*

1

- *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
- *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
  - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
  - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EduREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
  - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
  - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*

The EduREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EduREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

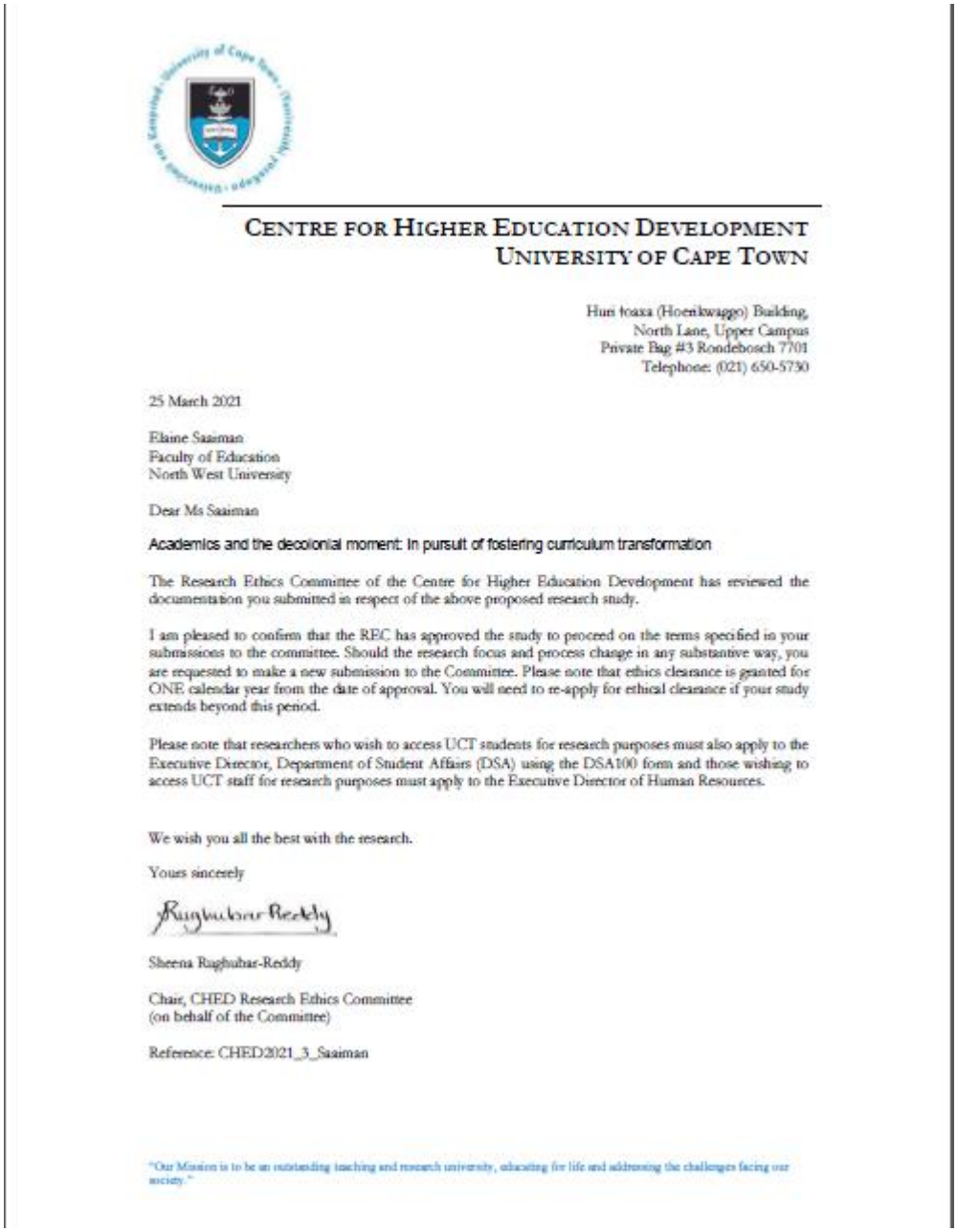
Prof JAK Olivier
Chairperson NWU Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
6 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\CS\91\0533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethical\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ER-REC Ethical Approval Letter.docm
5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

ADDENDUM B – ETHICS APPROVAL FROM UCT



CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
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25 March 2021

Elaine Saaiman
Faculty of Education
North West University

Dear Ms Saaiman

Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation

The Research Ethics Committee of the Centre for Higher Education Development has reviewed the documentation you submitted in respect of the above proposed research study.

I am pleased to confirm that the REC has approved the study to proceed on the terms specified in your submissions to the committee. Should the research focus and process change in any substantive way, you are requested to make a new submission to the Committee. Please note that ethics clearance is granted for ONE calendar year from the date of approval. You will need to re-apply for ethical clearance if your study extends beyond this period.

Please note that researchers who wish to access UCT students for research purposes must also apply to the Executive Director, Department of Student Affairs (DSA) using the DSA100 form and those wishing to access UCT staff for research purposes must apply to the Executive Director of Human Resources.

We wish you all the best with the research.

Yours sincerely

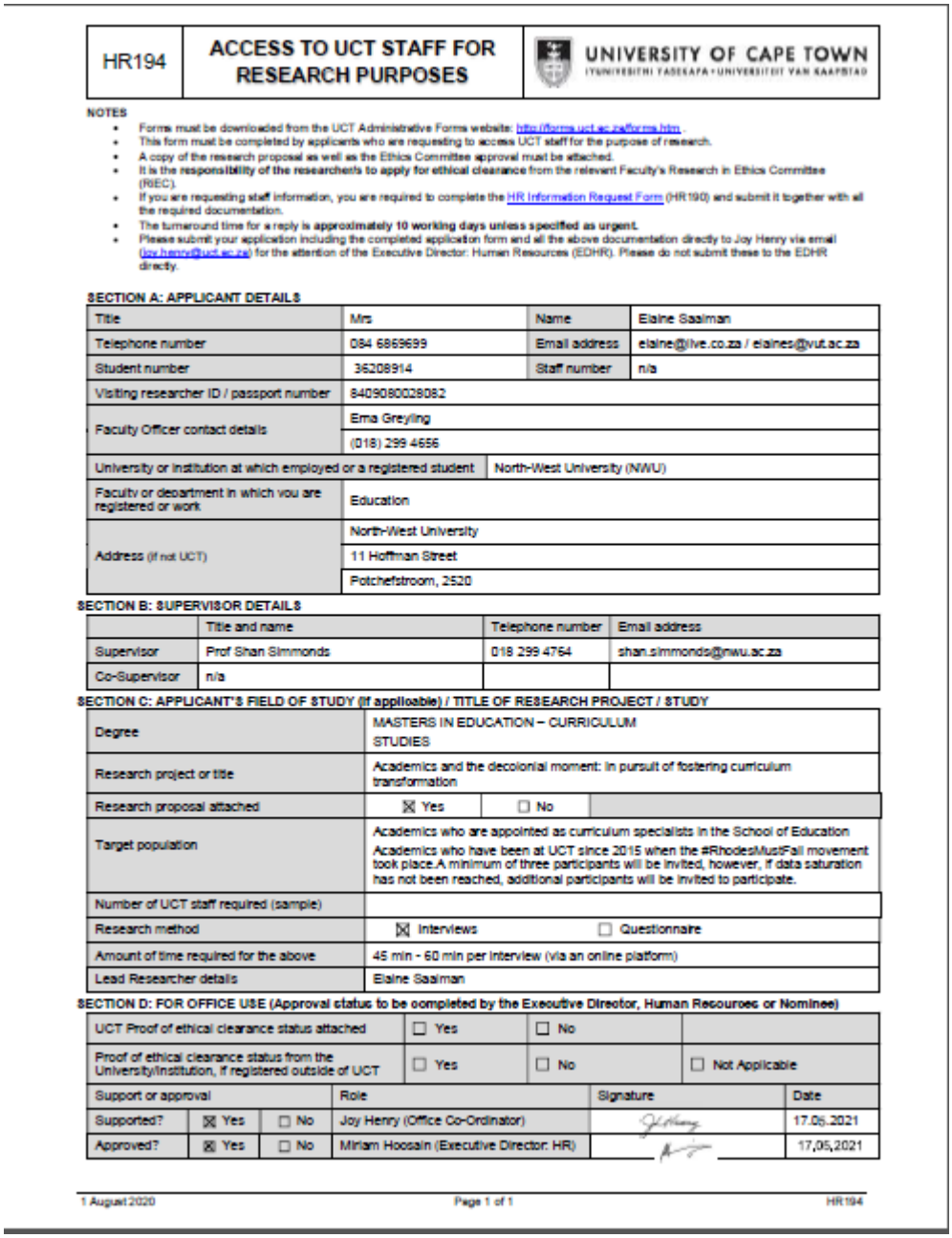
Sheena Raghubar-Reddy

Chair, CHED Research Ethics Committee
(on behalf of the Committee)

Reference: CHED2021_3_Saaiman

"Our Mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society."

ADDENDUM C – APPROVAL FROM UCT'S HR DEPARTMENT TO ACCESS STAFF



HR194	ACCESS TO UCT STAFF FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES	UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

NOTES

- Forms must be downloaded from the UCT Administrative Forms website: http://forms.uct.ac.za/forms.htm .
- This form must be completed by applicants who are requesting to access UCT staff for the purpose of research.
- A copy of the research proposal as well as the Ethics Committee approval must be attached.
- It is the **responsibility of the researchers to apply for ethical clearance** from the relevant Faculty's Research in Ethics Committee (REC).
- If you are requesting staff information, you are required to complete the HR Information Request Form (HR190) and submit it together with all the required documentation.
- The turnaround time for a reply is **approximately 10 working days unless specified as urgent.**
- Please submit your application including the completed application form and all the above documentation directly to Joy Henry via email (joy.henry@uct.ac.za) for the attention of the Executive Director: Human Resources (EDHR). Please do not submit these to the EDHR directly.

SECTION A: APPLICANT DETAILS

Title	Mrs	Name	Elaine Saaiman
Telephone number	084 6869699	Email address	elaine@live.co.za / elaines@vut.ac.za
Student number	36208914	Staff number	n/a
Visiting researcher ID / passport number	8409080028082		
Faculty Officer contact details	Erna Greyling		
	(018) 299 4656		
University or institution at which employed or a registered student	North-West University (NWU)		
Faculty or department in which you are registered or work	Education		
Address (if not UCT)	North-West University		
	11 Hoffman Street		
	Potchefstroom, 2520		

SECTION B: SUPERVISOR DETAILS

	Title and name	Telephone number	Email address
Supervisor	Prof Shan Simmonds	018 299 4764	shan.simmonds@nwu.ac.za
Co-Supervisor	n/a		

SECTION C: APPLICANT'S FIELD OF STUDY (if applicable) / TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT / STUDY

Degree	MASTERS IN EDUCATION – CURRICULUM STUDIES		
Research project or title	Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation		
Research proposal attached	☒ Yes	☐ No	
Target population	Academics who are appointed as curriculum specialists in the School of Education Academics who have been at UCT since 2015 when the #RhodesMustFall movement took place.A minimum of three participants will be invited, however, if data saturation has not been reached, additional participants will be invited to participate.		
Number of UCT staff required (sample)			
Research method	☒ Interviews	☐ Questionnaire	
Amount of time required for the above	45 min - 60 min per interview (via an online platform)		
Lead Researcher details	Elaine Saaiman		

SECTION D: FOR OFFICE USE (Approval status to be completed by the Executive Director, Human Resources or Nominee)

UCT Proof of ethical clearance status attached	☐ Yes	☐ No	
Proof of ethical clearance status from the University/institution, if registered outside of UCT	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Applicable

Support or approval			Role	Signature	Date
Supported?	☒ Yes	☐ No	Joy Henry (Office Co-Ordinator)		17.05.2021
Approved?	☒ Yes	☐ No	Miriam Hoosain (Executive Director: HR)		17,05,2021

1 August 2020 Page 1 of 1 HR194

ADDENDUM D – INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Faculty of Education
Edu-HRight research unit
Tel: 018 299 4764
Email: shan.simmonds@nwu.ac.za

(Recipient name)
(Recipient address)
(Recipient address)
(Recipient address)

Date

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM - ACADEMIC

I herewith wish to request your consent to participate in this research, which involves a once-off semi-structured one-on-one interview via an online platform. Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

NWU-01261-20-A2

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Prof. Shan Simmonds
ADDRESS: North-West University
CONTACT NUMBER: 018 299 4764

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Elaine Guglielmi
ADDRESS: 29 Vaalrivierstret, S.E., Vanderbijlpark, 1911
CONTACT NUMBER: 084 68 69 699

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE:

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Ethical clearance was also obtained from the participating institution, UCTs Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Centre for Higher Education Development as well as approval from UCT's HR Department to access staff for research was granted.

What is this research about?

This research is about how academics are embracing the decolonial moment in pursuit of curriculum transformation. The following aims guide the research project:

- To review what discourses are influencing the understanding of decolonisation and its role in curriculum transformation.
- To explore how academics are engaging with the decolonial moment through their curricula.
- To explore how curriculum transformation can be fostered through academics and their curricula.

Participants

You have been invited because you meet the inclusion criterion for this study. The inclusion criterion is:

- Current UCT academics, specialising in curriculum studies or education as their area of scholarship during the #RhodesMustFall movement.

What is expected of you as a participant?

As a participant in this study, you will be expected to:

- Provide informed consent to voluntarily participate in this study, you do this by signing this letter.

Benefits to you as a participant

Participation will enable you to promote and implement curriculum transformation by engaging with the decolonial moment, as well as critically review your approach as a curriculum leader in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation.

Risks involved for participants

This is a low risk study.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Any information derived in this study with which you can be identified will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your approval or as required by law. No other party will gain access to the information for any reason whatsoever. Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. Also, any personal information pertaining to you or the raw data will be kept confidential. As an additional safeguard, the data will be coded and presented in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. A copy of the recording of the interviews as well as the transcriptions will be transferred to the supervisor' and the researcher's computer hard drives and external hard drives, which is also password protected.

Dissemination of findings

Please note that your words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs, but your name will not be used. The findings of this study will form part of a MEd dissertation and other research outputs, making it accessible to you and the public.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

Yours sincerely,
Elaine Guglielmi (the researcher)

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:

By signing below, I ……..……. agree to take part in a research study entitled:

Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher, and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressured to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interests or if I do not follow the research procedures as agreed to.

Signed at (place)_____on (date) _____/_____/20____

_____ _____

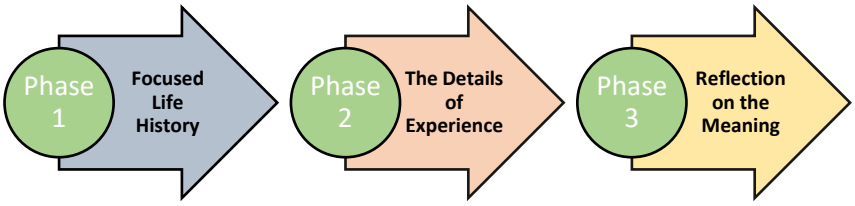
Signature of participant **Researcher**

ADDENDUM E – ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This study explores how participants are engaging with the decolonial moment in pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation. Purposive sampling will be employed for selecting four academics at the University of Cape Town who are deeply involved in decolonising curriculum discourse, as they will generate rich data that will best inform the researcher of the phenomenon being explored.

I have opted to use semi-structured one-on-one interviews that will last between 60 – 90 minutes with each participant. The interviews are informed by Seidman's (2006) in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach. This method combines life-history interviewing and focused in-depth interviewing, informed by assumptions drawn from phenomenology. The main goal is to get the participant to reconstruct their experience with the topic under study. In this study, it would be the participant's experiences regarding decolonisation and curriculum transformation.

One of the most distinctive features of the in-depth, phenomenological interviewing approach is to conduct a series of three separate interviews with each participant (Siedman, 2006). The reason being, that "People's behaviour becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them" (Siedman, 2006,16). However, for the purpose of this study, I have adapted this approach to three phases within a once-off, semi-structured interview. ***The first phase*** establishes the context of the experiences of the participants, the ***second phase*** allows participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurs, and the ***third phase*** encourages the participants to reflect on the meaning their experience holds for them.



Due to the location of UCT, the once-off, one-on-one semi-structured interviews will take place through the participants chosen online platform, such as ZOOM or Microsoft Teams. This automatically then also complies with the current COVID-19 pandemic rules and regulations. Each interview will be recorded for accurate transcription purposes.

Interview Questions: Academics

<u>Phase 1:</u> Focused Life History

(focus on the life history of the participants; how did they get to their profession?)

1. How did you end up in the education sector as a scholar specialising in education / curriculum / policy?

<u>Phase 2:</u> The Details of Experience

(current lived experiences as an academic / curriculum specialist)

As academics and researchers, we are well aware of the iconic event that took place in March 2015, which resulted in the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue. This event was a national and international focus point, which sparked debates on decolonisation around the globe.

2. Do you think that decolonising higher education should include only the **formal curriculum**, or should it also include the transformation of the **cultural and social environment** of the institution? Motivate.
3. Based on your answer in number two:
    a. Do you think that South African higher education institutions / UCT have changed in this regard? (*formal curriculum / culture / social environment)*
    b. What approaches are you aware of that Higher Education institutions / UCT have taken to promote decolonisation, since the 2015 #*RhodesMustFall* movement?
    c. Are you aware of a policy and/or any formal documentation released by Higher Education institutions / UCT with regards to decolonising the curriculum?
4. Would you say that you are engaging with the decolonial moment within your research, and if so, in what ways? (epistemologically, methodologically or decolonising the mind)
5. Have you always been interested in engaging with discourses on decolonisation within curriculum studies **OR** do you feel that your scholarship changed after the #*RhodesMustFall* movement, in the sense that this iconic event inspired your research?
6. As a scholar that engages with the scholarship of curriculum studies, have you ever felt obligated (as a curriculum specialist) to do research on decolonisation, simply because it is such a major topic of discussion in Higher Education?

As a Masters student, my research has revealed that decolonisation is not a concept that can be seen in isolation, but that it interlinks with other concepts, such as internationalization, Africanisation and indigenisation, to name a few.

7. Do you think that it is important for curriculum studies and curriculum at a university level to think about decolonisation in a more interconnected way?
8. As a curriculum scholar, what theories or philosophies do you regard as influential for engaging with debates on decolonising the curriculum?
    a. **Probing:** Please motivate your answer in question 8 by focusing on the roles that these theories or philosophies could have in transforming the curriculum?

In 2016 the CHE released a report noting that although progress has been made in the structural domains of higher education curriculum through policy-related improvements, very little progress was made in the cultural domain of ideas and theories.

In 2017 Lange reaffirms this by noting that curriculum transformation has been overlooked and overshadowed by higher education policies, which have been more interested in the exoskeleton of the curriculum, such as structure and accreditation, rather than focusing on the actual curriculum.

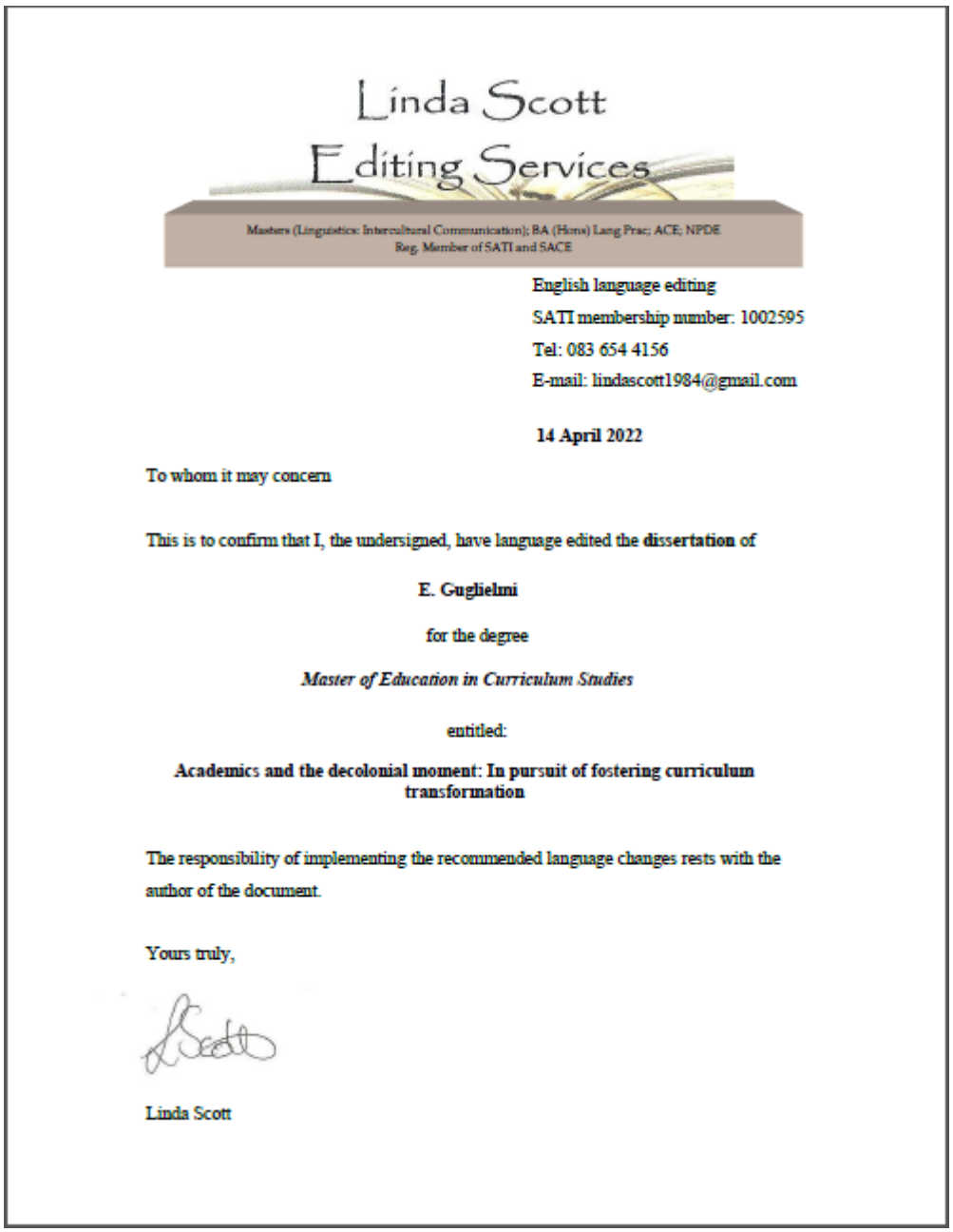
9. Do you agree with Lange's stance? Please motivate your answer by elaborating on what your stance is on decolonising the curriculum in light of this statement?
10. Given the fact that 27 years after democracy we are still asking the same questions, and still experiencing revolts, movements and struggles in the name of curriculum transformation, **do you think that a decolonised curriculum is achievable or could it possibly only be a pipe dream for South Africa**?
11. Are you of the opinion that the current calls for decolonising the curriculum are justified and within reason?
12. What teaching approaches do you think academics should promote in the name of decolonising the curriculum?
13. In your view, what could be possible limitations or challenges that higher education institutions and academics should take heed of when decolonising their curriculum?

<u>Phase 3</u>: Reflection on the Meaning

(reflection on the things the participants have shared)

14. Where do you see the national debates on decolonising the curriculum going in the future?
15. Where do you see your scholarship, with regards to decolonisation debates and discourses, going in the future?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me on this topic?

ADDENDUM F – LANGUAGE EDITOR CERTIFICATE



Linda Scott
Editing Services

Masters (Linguistics: Intercultural Communication); BA (Hons) Lang Prac; ACE; NPDE
Reg. Member of SATI and SACE

English language editing
SATI membership number: 1002595
Tel: 083 654 4156
E-mail: lindascott1984@gmail.com

14 April 2022

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, the undersigned, have language edited the **dissertation** of

E. Guglielmi

for the degree

Master of Education in Curriculum Studies

entitled:

Academics and the decolonial moment: In pursuit of fostering curriculum transformation

The responsibility of implementing the recommended language changes rests with the author of the document.

Yours truly,

Linda Scott

ADDENDUM G – TURNITIN DIGITAL REPORT

turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

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Assignment title:	ELAINE GUGLIELMI TII 2022
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File size:	619.23K
Page count:	142
Word count:	53,521
Character count:	295,692
Submission date:	11-May-2022 06:04AM (UTC-0700)
Submission ID:	1833796786

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The oppressive and racist apartheid system came to an end in 1994, however, "epistemologies and knowledge systems at most South African universities have not considerably changed; they remain rooted in colonial, apartheid and Western worldviews and epistemological traditions" (Heleta, 2016:1). Higher education curricula remain largely Eurocentric and continue to reinforce the Western dominance. We have, however, experienced several campaigns by South African students and progressive academics calling for the decolonisation of the curriculum at universities "by ending the domination of Western epistemological traditions, histories and figures" (Molefe 2016:32).

In line with Heleta (2016) and Molefe's (2016) observations, this chapter commences by providing in-depth background on the transformation that took place in South Africa's higher education landscape post-1994, as well as elucidating the intellectual conundrum of my study (1.2). To offer a further basis overview of the positioning of my research study, I present my research questions (1.3) and the aims of the study (1.4). Furthermore, to address my research questions and achieve the research aims, I discuss the research design and methodology chosen for this study (1.5) and the data generation methods (1.6). This is followed by the strategies I utilised to ensure trustworthiness (1.6) as well as the ethical considerations to which I adhered (1.7). Thereafter, I briefly discuss my role and responsibilities as a researcher (1.8). Lastly, I conclude this chapter with the division of chapters (1.10).

1.2 Background and intellectual conundrum

The dawn of the new democratic era was well received by many South African scholars, as it triggered tremendous attention to the history and development of South Africa's higher education sector (Hay & Monnapula-Mapesela, 2008). Before democracy, South Africa had an education system that was "racially differentiated, with fragmented departments organised along racial lines" (Presidency of South Africa, 2014:4). The apartheid laws imposed forced segregation at established universities and other tertiary institutions, which was why the offerings of further education and training differed

1