BERNSTEIN AND FOUCAULT ON EPISTEMIC DIVERSITY AND CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

Victor J. Pitsoe
Dept Education Leadership and Management, University of South Africa, Pitsovj@unisa.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3127-8198

Thulani Zengele
Curriculum Transformation Unit, University of South Africa, tzengele@unisa.ac.za
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3753-6146

Abstract

Both decolonization and curriculum democratisation have emerged as major talking points in discourses about higher education. The premise of this article is that curriculum change in higher education should be fueled by social context responsiveness, epistemic diversity, pedagogical innovation, classroom practises renewal, and an institutional culture of candour and critical reflection. The Fourth Industrial Revolution and post-COVID-19 pose problems for the existence of epistemic diversity and diversity management in the discourse of curriculum transformation in higher education, according to this conceptual article (4IR). Epistemic diversity and diversity management are concepts that, in our opinion, have the characteristics of an Althusserian Ideological State Apparatus that can advance the political objectives of the post-COVID-19 and 4IR spaces.

Keywords: diversity, epistemic diversity, diversity management, decolonizing curriculum, classification and framing, knowledge, power

"It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength." — Maya Angelou

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The above quotation sums up the rationale behind incorporating epistemic diversity into decolonizing the academic curriculum. Researchers in the global South and North have recently shown a heightened interest in the calls for a decolonizing higher education curriculum. "Calls around decolonising the curriculum have shown how the content of university knowledge remains principally governed by the West for the West," write Bhambra, Gebrial, and Nişancolu (2018);. Donovan, (2023), Zakharov, Tate, Law & Bernardino-Costa (2023), and Regmi. (2023). One interpretation of the calls is that they are a principled rejection of the Eurocentric and Western-centric knowledge orientations that permeate the colonised academic institutions. Calls for decolonization "first emerged on the African continent in the context of decolonizing struggles against colonial rule during the 1950s and 1960s," writes Fataar (2018). In light of this, a growing number of social scientists have turned to the concept of epistemic diversity in an effort to address the myriad concerns raised by the overhaul of higher education's syllabi. As a philosophical and conceptual piece, this article challenges the idea of epistemic diversity as well as diversity management. As a philosophical conundrum and a policy imperative in Human Resource Management (HRM), this occurs within the context of discussions about changing college curricula.

The article also suggests that Basil Bernstein's techniques of framing and classification can be applied to the study of epistemic diversity. It argues that different types of knowledge and different discursive practises are co-constructed through different power dynamics, and that this has implications for how we approach and manage epistemic diversity. It's worth noting that many researchers in the social sciences have turned to the concepts of epistemic diversity and diversity management in their quest to find solutions to pressing issues. In the wake of Covid-19 and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we argue that the concepts of epistemic diversity and diversity management can be used to guide and inform curriculum transformation in higher education (4IR).

In light of this, we contend that curriculum transformation, as a symbolic control construct, should incorporate and draw on regional and global contexts. Furthermore, epistemic diversity and its management should be understood as forms of knowledge and discursive practises co-constructed through power relations. Drawing on the works of Basil Bernstein and Michel Foucault, we explore meanings of the term epistemic diversity. We present the   perspectives on epistemic diversity and curriculum transformation in higher education. We also explore curriculum transformation through Bernstein's *classification* and *framing* lens. We then reflect on curriculum transformation through diversity management. We present critical reflections on knowledge as power. We then move to rethinking curriculum transformation through epistemic diversity framework. In the final section, we provide some concluding remarks.

CONCEPTUALISING EPISTEMIC DIVERSITY

Before delving into the concept of epistemic diversity, it is appropriate to state that knowledge does not exist in isolation. As a result, there is a call for decolonization of the African university curriculum as an epistemic process. Perhaps it is worth noting that, in this article, decolonization must be understood conceptually in the broad sense of multiple knowledge systems. The terms epistemic plurality and epistemic diversity are used interchangeably. Epistemic diversity will be used as a conceptual approach/tool in this article to understand multi-stranded, rutted, and multidirectional knowledge flows in the context of curriculum transformation. Furthermore, it will be used to critically examine the interaction of global and local knowledge of diverse space in post-Covid-19 and 4IR contexts.

While epistemic diversity has different definitions, connotations, and denotative meanings depending on the context, it should be noted that the concept is a paradigm, ideology, and philosophy. It frequently generates disagreement about the theories or strategies worth pursuing. We believe that epistemic diversity "promises either the completion of the anti-colonial struggle or the self-discovery of the formerly colonised and oppressed" (Matolino 2020:213). Epistemic diversity would then have the potential to do within curricula decolonization and transformation what intersectionality has done within feminist scholarship. This includes "conceptualising the relationships between multiple categorization processes" (Doytcheva, 2020).

Scholars of epistemic diversity have recently written and presented on various perspectives on the subject. "Among academic circles, interest in the concept of diversity has recently propelled the social sciences to consider a true "diversity turn" in the study of race, ethnicity, pluralistic societies, cultural heterogeneity, and multiculturality," writes Doytcheva (2020:1). 'Epistemic diversity,' according to Gobbo and Russo (2020:186), is the ability or possibility of producing diverse and rich epistemic apparatus to make sense of the world around us. They further argue that:

"Embracing a conception of knowledge as distributed and embodied cognition fosters epistemic diversity because we are forced to consider all sorts of non-propositional factors that may play a role at any step of the process of knowledge production: social and cultural relations, interaction with technology, the use of specific conceptual frameworks, and also the use of different vehicular languages."

This idea is also seen in Tobi's (2020:174) exploration of epistemic decolonization, in which she explores it as an important component. According to him, "epistemic diversity recognises diverse epistemic resources, that takes into consideration the social situatedness of the agent; and creating avenues for the revitalisation of 'fractured epistemologies,' thereby contributing to the global knowledge Economy." In the same vein, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017:51) writes that "epistemic diversity creates an avenue for the colonised to affirm their humanity that was called into question by colonialism, as evident in the colonizer's denial of African epistemic frameworks."

Epistemic diversity provides a means for the colonised to affirm their humanity, which was called into question by colonialism.

In conclusion, it is important to point out that the languages, cultures, and epistemic knowledge of indigenous people are essential to the process of decolonizing the curriculum of higher education. According to Ndofirepi and Gwaravanda (2019:582), "the production of knowledge and research in the African universities remains underpinned by Eurocentric ideals." This is the case despite the fact that Africa has been free from colonial rule for several decades. In addition, it has been argued (in the aforementioned source) that "the epistemic tension between the Eurocentric paradigm and the African epistemological paradigm give rise to issues of epistemic justice and the politics of knowledge."

PERPECTIVES ON EPISTEMIC DIVERSITY AND CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The process of transforming or decolonizing a curriculum is never carried out in isolation. Remembering that "the task of decolonizing the university is not ideological position but an epistemic stance that struggles against the ignorance of monocultural approaches," as Icaza and Vázquez (2018:116) put it, is important. Recently, Gurminder Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial, and Kerem Nişancolu (2018) wrote a book titled Decolonising the University in which they argued that "decolonising approaches seek a plurality of perspectives, worldviews, ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies in which scholarly enquiry and political praxis might take place" (p. 2). Furthermore, it argues that "decolonizing" is still a controversial term because it encompasses so many different theoretical orientations, methodological strategies, political agendas, and normative concerns.   Their analysis leads them to the conclusion that "the turn to decolonising as rubric for political organising in the global North is not rooted in a particular identity; rather, it emerges from shared historical trajectories of forms of colonialism" (p. 3). Higher education benefits greatly from incorporating a wide range of perspectives and worldviews into the classroom, and this epistemic diversity goes hand in hand with efforts to revamp curricula. Regarding the issue of what we ought to decolonize, we believe that incorporating African epistemologies into the curriculum is essential if curriculum transformation is to become a reality in South African higher education. Plans for curriculum should include opportunities for students to learn about and draw from local, national, and international issues. In this light, Eybers (2019:2) stresses the importance of remembering, reflecting upon, and incorporating principles and values that generate indigenous African institutions in order for South African universities to epistemically diversify curricula in mainstream disciplines.

Higher education in the 4IR is a complex, dialectical, and exciting opportunity that has the potential to transform society for the better, say Xing and Marwala (2017), who situate their argument in the post-Covid-19 and 4IR contexts. As many academics have pointed out, the topic of epistemic diversity and curriculum transformation in higher education is a hotly contested one. However, white, Euro-American-centered knowledge has been challenged as the norm in university curricula across the global South and North. Bhamber, Gebrial, and Nişancolu (2018) write in Decolonising the University that "the call to decolonize universities across the global North has gained particular traction in recent years, from Rhodes Must Fall Oxford's (RMFO) campaign for public reckoning with its colonial legacies to recent attempts by Georgetown University (Washington, DC) to atone for its past ties with slavery." Perhaps it is worth noting that the Eurocentric forms of knowledge are an insistence on positionality, the social and political context from which identities (in terms of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) derive, and plurality. There is a deep historical connection between epistemicides and the Eurocentric canon of knowledge.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has made a call for epistemic diversity as part of the transformation of the higher education curriculum in South Africa. This is both a philosophical and a policy imperative, and as such, cannot be negotiated away. We see epistemological variety as an important part of rethinking and enhancing the practical application of curriculum reform. Colleges and universities should encourage and support a willingness to incorporate new epistemologies and methods into their curricula. Alternate interpretations, values, and modes of knowledge should be encouraged through decolonization and Africanization of the university curriculum.

Philosophically speaking, decolonizing the curriculum aspires to be viewed as a Foucauldian discourse because it produces power; it weakens and exposes it; it makes it fragile; and it makes it possible to thwart it. That "power

is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere," as Foucault (1978) puts it, is a central tenet of his theory. Power, in his view, is not something you have or build or possess. We use the term to describe a society's intricate strategic environment. (Foucault, 1978:93) Foucault argues that we should stop using pejorative language to describe power's effects, such as "excludes," "represses," "censors," "abstracts," "masks," and "conceals." Power creates, it creates reality, it creates spheres of objects and truth rituals. This creation is based on the person and the information that can be gleaned from him (Foucault, 1977:194).

The Foucauldian concept of discourse serves to marginalise, silence, and oppress those who are different from the majority in our society by rejecting the existence of a "absolute truth" and weaving together power and knowledge. The article's central premise is that decolonizing the curriculum entails more than just renaming the concepts, modules, and structures of colonial education that support knowledge production. Rather, decolonization requires "changing its everyday social and epistemic practises and activities" (Gukurume & Maringira 2020:62). Despite the fact that decolonizing the curriculum is a complex topic with a wide range of definitions, perspectives, and approaches, we believe that official knowledge, how knowledge is organised, and the knowledge power discourse are the most important points of reference.

Nevertheless, George Orwell (37), in his Classic work Nineteen Eighty-Four, reminds us that "those who control the past, control the future," and "those who control the present, control the past." In this context, Fiore (2014) emphasises the importance of knowing what to expect by taking responsibility for the past. It should be made clear that the colonisers view the indigenous cultures and religions of the conquered people as backward, barbaric, and superstitious (Fiore, 2014). As a result, multiple forms of knowledge and various epistemologies have emerged as powerful forces in modernising educational programmes. We believe that different ways of thinking about the world can be found in the variety of epistemologies that exist. In the process of reshaping higher education's curricula, these tools are employed to learn about the world and plan, execute, analyse, and interpret research and its findings.

Many researchers have tried to answer the question, "What is epistemological diversity?" According to Siegel (2006), epistemic diversity includes "beliefs and belief systems; research methodologies and methods of inquiry; research questions; researchers; cultures and "cultural epistemologies"; perspectives on knowledge; modes of knowing; and "epistemologies," "epistemological assumptions," "epistemological premises," and "epistemological perspective," among other things. In light of the ambiguity surrounding the term "epistemology," it is assumed here that there is no universally accepted definition of knowledge. Knowledge is defined differently depending on the situation, and every facet of it is open to different interpretations. It's important to stress that different cultures, races, countries, and religious traditions have different standards for what constitutes knowledge.

In conclusion, it's important to remember that different cultures are frequently identified for their cultural diversity and are gradually becoming recognised for their epistemological diversity, despite the fact that knowledge is an integral part of a person's identity and culture. Most people agree that different social groups' customs and beliefs contribute to what is known as "epistemic diversity," or the diversity of knowledge systems. For instance, Fiore (2014) argues that while different types of knowledge each have their place in helping humanity, the current capitalist system necessitates the formation of a unified body of knowledge.

CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION THROUGH BERNSTEIN'S *CLASSIFICATION* AND *FRAMING* LENS

Higher education curriculum policies and epistemic ideologies are closely related. Therefore, the argument made in this article is in favour of alternative, decolonized, or demasculinized epistemologies as well as epistemic diversity in higher education curricula. We contend that in addition to providing higher education policies with an ideological foundation, the dominant and Eurocentric (epistemic) ideologies also serve a reproductive purpose. The classification and framing of knowledge, as well as the types of pedagogy that convey ideological messages, are key components of ideology's reproductive function. The curricula and policies in higher education are instruments of control and power. Both dominant instruments or codes and pedagogical practises share the qualities of categorization and framing, power reproduction, and symbolic control. They control how power, social groups, forms of consciousness, and practise are related.

In light of this, curriculum change in higher education is consistent with Mitchel Foucault and Basil Bernstein's writings, and it constantly promotes epistemic diversity. Epistemic diversity serves to distribute resources and

values as a tool for classification and pedagogy. The most significant point is that the relationships between power, social groups, forms of consciousness, and practise are governed by epistemic diversity as distributive rules. In higher education, the concepts of epistemological diversity and diversity management, also known as managing diversity in the post-Covid-19 and 4IR spaces, continue to be crucial.

Epistemological diversity and diversity management are concepts that, in our opinion, have the characteristics of an Althusserian Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) that can advance the goals of the post-Covid-19 and 4IR spaces. Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, which he published, Ideology, according to Louis Althusser (1970), is a system of representations governed by laws that further political objectives. In light of the diversity of the workforce and students in UNISA's ODeL space, we urge a paradigm shift in favour of epistemological diversity in this article. This shift would remove obstacles to diversity and capitalise on the benefits of a diverse workforce and student body. In our opinion, ODeL practitioners at UNISA should reconsider the predominate practises they use in favour of those that emphasise equal opportunity, fair treatment during the hiring process, and adherence to diversity policies.

There has been a lot of research on diversity management and epistemic diversity, but very little on curriculum transformation in higher education in the context of post-Covid-19 and 4IR. It is conceivable that the canonical writings of Michel Foucault and Basil Bernstein are essential for comprehending and analysing the social construction of curriculum transformation in higher education as well as the power issue in the 4IR. The higher education curriculum serves to normalise and regulate conduct and behaviour when viewed within a Foucauldian framework. Because of this, Bernstein's work provides a valuable conceptual framework for considering curriculum change in higher education as a controlling factor in the development of the subject and the student.

The concepts of classification and framing from Basil Bernstein's work are not alien to discussions of curriculum transformation in higher education. Bernstein (2000) gives a summary of "how the distribution of power and the principles of control translate into classification and framing values which select out recognition and realisation rules to create contextually appropriate text" in his book Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique. According to Bernstein (2000), classification establishes recognition rules that govern which meanings are pertinent in a context, and framing establishes realisation rules that govern how the meanings are to be combined to create the appropriate text. (p. 18). According to this perspective, in this article, we rely on the Bernsteinian premises that (a) diversity and diversity management produce certain "truths" in our daily lives as a power relations construct and normalising discourse, and (b) as a practise of symbolic control and cultural hegemony, diversity and diversity management have the characteristics of classification and framing.

According to Bernstein (2005:156), how a society chooses, categorises, disseminates, and assesses the educational knowledge it deems to be public reflects both the power structure and the tenets of social control. According to him, structural relations are produced by the distribution of power and the tenets of social control, but these relationships also contain the contradictions, ambiguities, cleavages, and dilemmas inherent in the symbolic realisations of structural relations. These become the seeds of change by entering mental processes in this manner (Bernstein, 2003:19).

In conclusion, from a Bernsteinian perspective, education policies construct and play a crucial role in the regulation of cultural reproduction through codes as a representation of social structures as well as power relations. According to Bernstein, the codes essentially transmit the culture and thus regulate behaviour (2005:96). Educational policies regulate what discourses are to be transmitted and/or acquired, as well as the manner in which they are to be transmitted and acquired, as pedagogic discourses and tools. According to Bernstein (1990:35), the manner of transmission acquisition or practise in fundamental communicative contexts for the reproduction of discursive and the production of physical resources is determined by the distribution of power and the principle of control of the dominant principle.

EXPLORING CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION THROUGH DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

As a starting point, it is important to recognise that "Western university is a key site through which colonialism — and colonial knowledge in particular — is produced, consecrated, institutionalised, and naturalised" (Bhambra et al., 2018:6). Thus, the transformation of curricula in the face of increasing diversity can be understood through the lens of classification and framing developed by Basil Bernstein; and is a very complex phenomenon requiring a multifaceted approach. In this article we will only use Michel Foucault's theoretical framework. We argue that

post-Covid-19 universities in the global South should restructure their diversity initiatives to include administrative staff at all levels. It's worth noting that appreciating diversity goes beyond simply recognising that indigenous knowledge systems, African ways of knowing, and alternative epistemologies are distinct from Eurocentric knowledge systems. By doing so, you are making an effort to integrate them into the newly independent culture. Decision-making and the formation of what Foucault calls a docile body depend on the transformation of higher education curricula that manages and values diversity.

While ODeL practitioners must introduce programmes on cultural diversity, as a way decolonising transformation, Wilson writes:

Diversity in the workplace is important because of its contribution to organizational decision-making, effectiveness, and responsiveness. Those from diverse populations have expectations, insights, approaches, and values from which can come many different perspectives on alternative approaches on and alternative approaches to problems, and knowledge about consequences of each alternative . . . Input from diverse work groups can enhance rational decision-making, and therefore efficiency. (p. 27)

To transform curricula, managing diversity "makes social behaviour predictable and manageable in such rule-governed environments" (Hoobler, 2005:52). It's crucial to stress that the diversity management paradigm includes "machinelike qualities of the work environment, including orderliness, precision, and routinization, extend to the human element" (p. 52). Additionally, we should point out that "staff members are chosen and trained to work predictably in order to [realise] objectives like efficiency and productivity" (p. 52). Therefore, our interpretation is that managing diversity requires diversity practitioners to subject the "body as an object power" to what Mitchel Foucault calls "discipline," establish rhythms, and regulate the cycles of repetition. This is because managing diversity is an organisational control and machinelike routinization.

The body, according to a Heideggerian perspective, is "personalised in a lived context or environment, and is an integrated bodily unit that is situated in a specific location and time" (Thoibisana, 2008). The body is disciplined or "docile," according to Foucault (1977). The "docile body" can only be attained, he says, "through a strict regimen of disciplinary acts." When viewed through Foucault's lens, the practise of diversity management as a construct of power relations has the potential to sustain docile bodies through cultural diversity programmes.

In contrast to being tortured, the body is "arranged, regulated, and supervised," according to Foucault (1977:135). The docile body is further emphasised as "something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the required machine can be constructed." A calculated constraint is applied slowly to each part of the body, mastering it, making it flexible, always ready, and silently transforming it into an automatism of habit as the posture is corrected. It is well stated by Foucault (1977:135-136) that "this body is unformed and willing to be shaped: it is 'pliable,' capable of being "manipulated, shaped, and trained." He comes to the conclusion that "training is a crucial aspect of the operation of power upon the docile body."

It is possible to draw the conclusion from this section that diversity management, as a linguistic construct, is an ontology, a truth, and a method. When combined with the existing view of efficiency and authority in future and post-Covid-19 universities, Foucault's theory of docile bodies is relevant and applicable to the discourse of decolonizing curriculum and can be used to show that true diversity management is an unlikely goal. In our opinion, "diversity initiatives can be defined as particular activities, programmes, policies, and other procedures or efforts designed for decolonizing curriculum.

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON KNOWLEDGE AS POWER

What counts as official knowledge is regarded as political. Perhaps, we should ask this question: *Whose experience frames what we know?*

The Foucauldian view sees the Eurocentric/colonialist curriculum prevalent in American universities as a tool of the powerful. Despite the fact that in a capitalist society, knowledge is often a source of power, we argue that there is no superior knowledge. According to Tobi (2020:256), "the harms of colonialism are reason enough to decolonise knowledge." According to him, "epistemic decolonization should involve an acknowledgement of the legitimacy and equal validity of different knowledge systems," along with the freedom to theorise from these various vantage points. Foucault (1978) offers a helpful reminder in this regard when he writes that no field of

knowledge can exist independently of the power relations that constitute it, and no power relation can exist independently of the presupposition and constitution of power relations.

The curriculum of universities is grounded in what have been called "culturally standardised discourses formed by constellations of talk patterns, ideas, logics, and assumptions that constitute objects and subjects" (Fairhurst, 2007: 7). Similarly, Foucault (1978:789) notes that power is not just a connection between individuals or groups, but also a way in which certain actions shape the experiences of others. It is also emphasised that power does not exist apart from its use, even if that use is part of a more complex set of possibilities that is applied to long-lasting structures (ibid).

Not surprisingly, one of the primary biopolitical functions of the standard university curriculum is the production of submissive individuals. The higher education system serves as a tool for the exercise of power. The higher education curriculum acts as a pervasive and all-encompassing power structure, permeating every level of the social body and making the exercise of power strategic and combative. Foucault (1978) argues that power is not something that can be taken from another, given freely, or even lost; rather, power is used in a web-like structure. Foucault (1978) argues that power is inherent in all social practises, from the most basic to the most complex, and that it can only be tolerated under the condition that it conceals a significant portion of itself. The extent to which it is able to conceal its own workings will determine how effective it is.

Let us, then, consider the transformation of curriculum against the backdrop of the idea of a Rainbow Nation (the name Archbishop Desmond Tutu gave to post-apartheid South Africa). To what extent do educational programmes embrace the multicultural and multiethnic values of a Rainbow Nation? The concept of the Rainbow Nation is deeply troubling to us because it perpetuates the idea that racial categories and frameworks still apply, that we are different but united. The Rainbow Nation has 11 official languages and a rich cultural diversity, but it still needs to create a curriculum that promotes the social and cultural reproduction of its citizens.

Although the debate over language has been ongoing in postcolonial Africa at least since the 1960s, we acknowledge that language is a potent tool for shaping the acquisition of knowledge and plays a crucial role in the discourse surrounding decolonizing the curriculum. Bandia (2006:373) claims that the colonisers' use of language to alter the African mind and identity was crucial. Therefore, he concludes, language played a crucial role in the colonial subversion of the African mind and personality. The cultural and ethnic diversity of the country, as well as alternative epistemologies, are not taken into account in today's standards-based curriculum praxis at the university level. The fact that "every human being is born into a valid and legitimate knowledge system" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017:51) is not enough to negate the fact that language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture, (Ngg, 1986:16). In Decolonizing the Mind, Ngg comes to the realisation that language serves as more than just a conduit for communication; it also preserves and propagates traditions and beliefs. Knowledge is shaped and grounded in language, making it an indispensable tool in the fight against colonialism.

European universities' curricula are too monolithic and lack epistemological diversity. Symbolic violence and social reproduction are central themes in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, whose theories find resonance in the Eurocentric canonical knowledge that perpetuates a dominant class hegemony. The colonial past and epistemologies (beliefs about what counts as knowledge, evidence for a claim, and a warrant for that evidence) remain intact in the call to decolonize and Africanize the curriculum and change the university's institutional culture, curriculum, and pedagogy (Gukurume & Maringira 2020:63). However, the appeal needs to be analysed in the context of the time and place in which it was made.

It is argued that knowledge production in South African higher education is still mediated through Eurocentric colonial modalities of power, even though the epistemological dominance of Western knowledge is the negation and devaluation of African indigenous knowledge systems (Higgs, Higgs, and Venter, 2003). Decolonization, as stated by Mazrui (1995:28), "does not necessarily follow from political independence." In his view, "decolonization" refers to more than just gaining independence from colonial rule, raising a new flag, and singing a national anthem.

Finally, this section could conclude that Africa is one of those epistemic sites that suffered not only colonial genocides but also historical theft, epistemicides (the killing of indigenous people's knowledges), and linguicides (the killing of indigenous people's languages). However, Eybers (2019) argues that "Africa's pre-colonial era contains rich sources of indigenous and epistemic knowledge required for social organisation during that era."

This information was deemed useful for those designing courses for standard university programmes in Africa, where more than one school of thought is typically taught within each course.

RETHINKING CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE EPISTEMIC DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

It might be helpful to preface this section by noting the close relationship that decolonizing the curriculum and epistemic diversity share. We see decolonizing curriculum discourse as a site where social power is exercised because it is the product of social interaction. It's crucial to emphasise the fact that incorporating a wide range of perspectives and experiences into the classroom helps students from all walks of life feel welcome. We believe that diversity as a social construct has the potential to affect who is taught, what is taught, and how it is taught in any given teaching and learning environment. This article challenges the assumption that epistemic diversity, responsiveness to social context, renewal of pedagogy and classroom practises, an institutional culture of openness and critical reflection, and decolonizing and democratising the curriculum should be the driving forces behind curriculum transformation in higher education. The dominant curriculum in universities may be seen as an injustice because of the way it devalues students' intelligence and expertise. Its goals include establishing or maintaining a Eurocentric social order, as well as transforming colonised people into "docile bodies" who can be used as a means to an end (or as objects of) authority.

A paradigm shift toward "epistemic diversity" and "diversity management"; and epistemic virtues that embrace the principles of diversity is necessary to contest such injustices and harms. As far as we're concerned, diversity is a moral and an epistemic good. To wit: "the epistemic virtues include intellectual humility, intellectual tenacity, carefulness, thoroughness, objectivity, honesty, and more" (Ridenour 2020). In addition, it is argued, these qualities are crucial because they characterise those who learn the truth, gain insight, and develop wisdom (ibid).

We argue here that the curriculum of a university, as an artefact of power relations, can never be neutral with regard to its underlying ideology. For Fiore (2014), epistemology appears to be an ongoing political struggle over which body of knowledge is superior to others and should be the body of knowledge used globally. To combat the myths surrounding the claims made by the Western canon of knowledge in the post-Covid-19 and 4IR spaces, the concept of epistemic diversity will be adopted as a deconstructive tool (Ndofirepi & Gwaravanda, 2019). Therefore, we advocate for integrating Eybers' work on the interaction between African, global, and Western epistemologies. African epistemologies and pre-colonial modes of organisation should be taught alongside alternative philosophies and theories that enhance understanding of disciplinary content, as argued by Eybers (2019).

Figure 1: Interplay Of African, Global And Western Epistemologies In The Curriculum
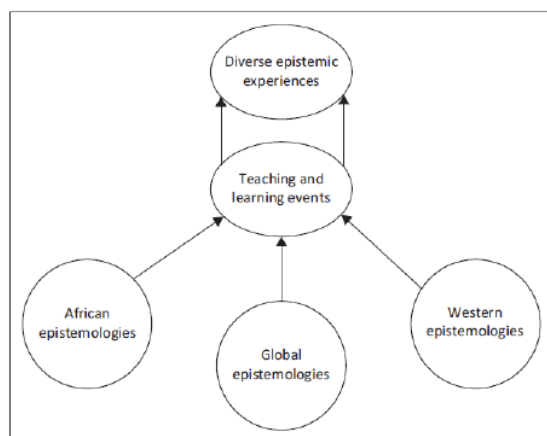
Adapted from Eybers (2019)

"Eurocentric curricula and methodologies in Southern African universities are unable to generate learning experiences that are multicultural in character and are epistemically just," writes Eybers (2019:6). Our argument is that changing the content of university courses requires a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. In an effort to foster a more inclusive and robust learning environment, epistemological diversity approaches encourage students to draw from a wide range of worldviews, ontologies, epistemologies, and methods. Asante (1990) argues that language, myth, ancestral memory, dance-music-art, and science all provide sources of knowledge, canons of proof, and the structures of truth in the Afrocentric enterprise and the search for truth.

It is worth commenting on the aspect of culturally responsive curriculum. Eybers' *Interplay Of African, Global And Western Epistemologies In The Curriculum* locates Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) at the centre. The CRT is not only about teaching but is also a political endeavour directed toward equity and justice. A culturally responsive curriculum, according to Gay (2000), should

- validate the values, prior experiences, and cultural knowledge of the learners;
- it should be comprehensive, transformative and emancipatory;
- it should build on what the learners already know;
- help learners understand that there is more than one way of knowing;
- encourage learners to embrace their different cultures and develop a love of learning; and
- highlight learners' strengths and give them confidence to confront their weaknesses.

In conclusion, successful curriculum transformation requires a multifaceted approach that includes a mix of African, global, and western epistemologies. As an added note, the planned curricula must include a focus on CRT. To employ culturally responsive pedagogical strategies, ODeL professionals must themselves be culturally relevant. They need to learn to see how factors such as socioeconomic status, language, and gender influence how people think, feel, and behave. Teaching methods that are culturally responsive take into account students' varied cultural experiences and learning styles.

Concluding remarks

It is fitting to wrap up this article by arguing that epistemic and diversity management are, in fact, complementary concepts. The decolonization and democratisation of the pedagogical principles discussed in this article are similar in this regard. South African universities' transformation will not be handed to them on a silver platter, but rather will require a long and difficult struggle on the part of those who want to see it happen. Adebajo says, "The transformation of South African universities will not be handed over but will have to be fought for," and he warns that this fight could be long and difficult (2019). We feel like there is a lot to do, but not enough time to get it all done. The ancestors may invoke a curse upon us if we do not make a concerted effort to incorporate African epistemologies, scholars, wisdom, and engagement with the rest of the world in intellectual scuffles into our own.

REFERENCES

Althusser, L. (1971). "*Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*," in Lenin and Philosophy, trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Asante, M. K. (1990). *Kemet, Afrocenticity and Knowledge*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Asante, M. K. (1991). The Afrocentric idea in Education. *The Journal of Negro Studies*, 60(2), 170–180.

Bandia, P.F. (2006). Decolonizing Translation, *The Translator*, 12(2): 371-378, DOI: 10.1080/13556509.2006.10799223

Bernstein, B. (2005). *Class, Codes and Control: Theoretical Studies towards a Sociology of Language*, Vol. 1. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (2003). Class, Codes and Control: Towards a Theory of Educational Transmission', Vol. 3 London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bernstein, B. (1990). Class Codes and Control: the Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse, Vol 4. London: Routledge.

Bhambra, G.K., Gebrial, D. & Nişancıoğlu, K. (2018). *Decolonising the University*. Pluto Press: London.

Donovan, K. P. (2023). Uhuru Sasa! Federal Futures and Liminal Sovereignty in Decolonizing East Africa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1-27.

Doytcheva, M. (2020). "White Diversity": Paradoxes of Deracializing Antidiscrimination. *Social Sciences*. 9, 50 doi:10.3390/socsci9040050.

Eybers, O.O., (2019), 'Applying Ayittey's Indigenous African Institutions to generate epistemic plurality in the curriculum', Transformation in Higher Education 4(0), a68. https://doi.org/10.4102/the.v4i0.68

Fataar, A. (2018). Decolonising Education in South Africa: Perspectives and Debates. *Educational Research for Social Change* (ERSC), 7: vi-ix.

Fiore, E. (2014). *Epistemological Diversity: Whose Knowledge Counts?* Available at: https://jchscardinal.wordpress.com/2014/06/19/epistemological-diversity-whose-knowledge-counts/

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: an introduction*. Hammonsworth: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish* (translated by A Sheridan). New York: Pantheon.

Foucault, M. (1998). *The history of sexuality: the will to knowledge*. London: Penguin.

George, O. (1992). *Nineteen eighty-four*. Alfred A. Knopf: New York.

Gobbo, F. & Russo, F. (2020). Epistemic Diversity and the Question of Lingua Franca in Science and Philosophy. *Foundations of Science*, 25, 185–207. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-019-09631-6

Gukurume, S. & Maringira, G. (2020). Decolonising sociology: perspectives from two Zimbabwean universities, Third World Thematics: *ATWQ Journal*, 5:1-2: 60-78, DOI: 10.1080/23802014.2020.1790993

Higgs, P., L. Higgs, & E. Venter. (2003). "Indigenous African Knowledge Systems and Innovation in Higher Education in South Africa." *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 17(2), 40–45.

Hoobler, J.M. (2005). Lip Service to Multiculturalism Docile Bodies of the Modern Organization. Journal of Management Inquiry, 14(1), 49-56.

Icaza, R. & Rolando Vázquez, R. (2018). Diversity or Decolonisation? Researching Diversity at the University of Amsterdam. In *Decolonising the University?* Gurminder K. Bhambra, Dalia Gebrial and Kerem Nişancıoğlu (eds.) Pp108-128.

Matolino, B. (2020). Whither Epistemic Decolonization. *Philosophical Papers*, 49:2, 213-231, DOI: 10.1080/05568641.2020.1779605

Mazrui, A. (1995). "The Blood of Experience: The Failed State and Political Collapse in Africa." World Policy Journal 12 (1), 28–34.

Ndofirepi, A.P. & Gwaravanda, E.T. (2019). Epistemic (in)justice in African universities: a perspective of the politics of knowledge. *Educational Review*, 71(5), 581-594, DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2018.1459477

Wa Thiong'o. N. (1986). Decolonising the Mind. London: James Currey.

Regmi, K. D. (2023). Decolonizing epistemologies of the global South: Perspectives from Canada. *Multicultural Education Review*, 1-19.

Ridenour, R. (2020). Ridenour to Discuss "Epistemic Virtues" During Philosophy Forum Oct. 9 https://www.okbu.edu/news/2020/10/ridenour-to-discuss-epistemic-virtues-during-philosophy-forum-oct.-9.html

Siegel, H. (2006). "Epistemological Diversity and Education Research: Much Ado About Nothing Much?." *Educational Researcher*, 35(2): 3 – 12.

Thoibisana, A. (2008). Heidegger on the Notion of Dasein as Habited Body. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 8(2), 1-5.

Tobi, A.T. (2020). Towards A Plausible Account of Epistemic Decolonisation. *Philosophical Papers*, 49(2), 253-278.

Wilson, P. A. (1994). Cultural diversity: An organizational asset. *Public Manager*, 23(3), 27-30.

Xing, B. & Marwala, T. (2017). Implications of the Fourth Industrial Age for Higher Education. *THE THINKER*, 17, 1-15.

Zakharov, N., Tate, S. A., Law, I., & Bernardino-Costa, J. (2023). South Africa and the Struggle for Racial Equality: Debating Deracialization, Non-racialism, Decolonization, and Africanization. In Futures of Anti-Racism: Paradoxes of Deracialization in Brazil, South Africa, Sweden, and the UK (pp. 15-67). Cham: Springer International Publishing.