#FEESMUSTFALL AND DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM: STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' AND LECTURERS' REACTIONS

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ABSTRACT

In South African higher education institutions, the student protests of 2015–2016 called for the decolonisation of higher education spaces and equal access to these spaces. We collected data from students and lecturers over the period of one year in order to better understand the reactions of students and lecturers and the effects the protests had on their experiences. Perspectives of affective theory, decolonisation and social justice were used. It was discovered that the protests had a great affective impact on participants. Strong emotions and beliefs affected the relationships between students and lecturers and African centrality was suggested as a framework for curriculum change. Some settler perspectives emerged and polarisation was evident. It is our hope that lecturers could use this research to assist them in decolonising their spaces of teaching and learning.

Keywords: decolonisation, social justice, lecturers, student protest, affective theory, African centrality

INTRODUCTION

Early in 2015, the University of Cape Town (UCT) campus saw the student movement called #RhodesMustFall, which demanded the removal of the statue depicting Cecil John Rhodes from campus due to the disenchantment with colonial figures and colonial culture at higher education institutions (HEIs). By late 2015 and early 2016, issues such as the decolonisation of universities, the low number of black South African scholars and colonial institutional culture were raised at UCT, Rhodes University and Stellenbosch University. These issues were

overtaken by demands of students at the University of Witwatersrand and elsewhere to decrease/eliminate tuition fee increases and student debt towards the ideal of free higher education (HE) (Badat 2016). This led to the protests named #FeesMustFall. Badat (2016) names a myriad of problems in HE:

> "... debt burdens, high drop-out rates, poor throughput rates, inadequate facilities and accommodation, largely unreconstructed epistemologies and ontologies, questionable quality of learning and teaching to ensure meaningful opportunities and success, and alienating and disempowering academic and institutional cultures that are products of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy."

Racism is not divorced from the structures of historically entrenched power; it is about dispossession and involves many areas, including land ownership and public space (Phala 2016). White, privileged students and lecturers tend to experience the campus culture of historically white universities as natural and they feel at home (Badat 2016). Black and/or disadvantaged students and lecturers tend to find this culture discomforting, alienating, disempowering and exclusionary (Badat 2016; Biscombe et al. 2017).

Real and imagined racial differences and similarities between groups of students and lecturers have consequences within HE contexts (Jawitz 2016). Jawitz (2016) investigated the experiences of white male academic staff at UCT and found that they grapple with the privileges and limitations that accompany their white identities. He discovered that a stigma exists linked to being white and that lecturers resort to distancing themselves from the "white" stereotype by remaining silent about injustice and by "not interfering" with issues regarding race and protest due to guilt. This selective silence could enforce the normality of dominant white discourses. At a historically privileged university such as Stellenbosch University, lecturers could be especially sensitive to these stigmas and prone to selective silence due to feelings of guilt.

When HE does not fulfil the promise of contributing to social justice, economic and social development and democratic citizenship, it becomes an organisation of social exclusion and injustice (Badat 2016). We aimed to explore decolonisation and social justice within teaching and learning in different faculties and departments of Stellenbosch University. This moves towards improving social justice teaching and learning by listening to lecturers and students and creating a space to deal with transformation.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

We sought to frame the student protests of 2015–2016 and the responses of lecturers and students within three theoretical perspectives. Affective theory allows us to understand the

initial reactions of participants. Decolonisation theory helps us to understand the need for change as well as the need for introspection. In order to decolonise HEIs it is necessary to explore social justice perspectives which allow us to think about ways to address problems in HEIs.

Affective theory

Affect is often loosely defined as emotion, but it is more than that. According to Massumi (1995), affect is a matter of autonomic responses that are occurring below the threshold of consciousness and cognition, and rooted in the body. Affect can be guardedly described as the way we "feel things in our bodies" – a visceral and unnameable "sense" and "experience" of which we may not fully be aware, but that affects us.

There is, however, no single, generalisable theory of affect (Gregg and Seigworth 2010). Rather, affect can be viewed from multiple perspectives. One such perspective involves the affect of persistent, repetitious practices of power that oppress bodies and provide them with the potential for realising a world outside of these practices of power (Gregg and Seigworth 2010). This relates to the oppression of certain groups within HEIs. Another perspective views the affective nature of crowd behaviours, belonging and postcolonial, hybridised and migrant voices (Gregg and Seigworth 2010). This relates to the experiences of students and lecturers who do not feel a sense of belonging and who do not feel that their voices are heard. Affect relates to the bodily experiences regarding student protests and decolonisation.

Decolonisation

The student protests called for the decolonisation of HEIs, which is expanded on in the following sections.

African centrality

Colonial education places Europe (and/or the West) at the centre of the world. Education is a means of self-knowledge, starting from within (the local) and radiating outwards to discover more knowledge of the peoples and worlds around us (Wa Thiong'o 1986). Therefore, for African curricula, Africa should exist at the centre, not as an appendix or extension of Europe and the West (Wa Thiong'o 1986). A Eurocentric canon that attributes truth only to Western ways of knowing needs to be decentralised (Mbembe 2016a). African centrality is a necessary move towards decolonised knowledge production.

Knowledge production

Africa is still described as a lacking, failing, plagued continent, while the destruction of African social and cultural resources by colonial powers is seldom acknowledged (Ferguson 2006, cited in Luckett 2016). The binary opposition of a primitive or traditional Africa to a modern and enlightened West continues to be present in academic discourses and journalistic accounts of Africa and its peoples (Creary 2012; Luckett 2016). We should be concerned with the invisible dynamics of colonialism, as it influences compulsory learning as well as how colonial perspectives are set up as knowledge, research, data and findings to rationalise and maintain the unjust social structures of colonisation (Tuck and Yang 2012). Universities in South Africa emerged from the colonial project and therefore research was specifically focused on promoting the colonial agenda (Magubane 2015).

Transformation calls for research that critically deconstructs the historical development of the academic disciplines such as the colonial archives and canons (Luckett 2016). Yet African knowledge systems cannot exist in isolation from global systems (Chirikure 2016). Dei (2000, cited in Le Grange 2016, 6) points out that bodies of knowledge continually influence one another and that rendering indigenous knowledge as "good" and Western knowledge as "bad" creates a false dichotomy. Therefore, decolonised curricula give indigenous African knowledge systems an equal and valid place among the array of knowledge systems in the world (Higgs 2016). Africa needs knowledge that addresses its needs and challenges (Chirikure 2016). The university classroom and the way knowledge is taught need to be decolonised (Mbembe 2016a). Decolonisation has to do with knowledge production, but also with the lived experiences of students.

Student experiences

Ribeiro (2014) proposes that HEIs focus on counselling and information dissemination for first-generation students while fostering empowerment, confidence and educational capabilities. She notes that this type of curricula requires more research on students' perceptions and experiences of HE. Black, coloured and Indian (BCI) students often experience a contradiction between the policy that admits them to HEIs and the cultural and linguistic demands placed on them by the institution (Luckett 2016). This leads to repeated failure and eventually academic exclusion (Luckett 2016).

Subreenduth (2012) elaborates on the importance of student-centred teaching and learning. If we take student-centredness seriously, we should see the student protest as a call for help, and we as academics should act. Today, many black middle-class students are enabled to take their place structurally (economically) as citizens in the academy, but they must still

work against the institutional environment that makes them feel devalued and misrecognised (Luckett 2016). For access to HE to increase, South Africa must invest more in its universities and HEIs. Access also includes cultural access for BCI students and lecturers where they feel a sense of belonging in the spaces of teaching and learning (Mbembe 2016a). In order to lessen trauma felt by lecturers and students, we need to investigate the ideas which hold institutional colonialism in place: settler perspectives.

Settler perspectives

The terms "settler" and "native" may be unsuited for building a unified South African identity, but they allow us to speak about decolonisation from a certain perspective – that is, the settler perspective. By "settler perspective" we mean the viewpoint of white South Africans. We found it necessary to address settler perspectives apart from student experiences in order to understand the responses of specifically white lecturers and students, who formed the majority of this study's participants as well as Stellenbosch University's demographic.

Settler perspectives on decolonisation implicate and unsettle everyone (Tuck and Yang 2012). Leibowitz (2016) notes that in some current debates settlers/white people in South Africa are asked not to talk on behalf of the colonised. Although white South Africans cannot remove themselves from their colonial heritage, they may (if they are willing) be able to humbly and carefully work towards recognising and dismantling colonial structures. Part of this work is uncovering the settler perspectives we have. Settler perspectives include anxiety, a desire to remove the "native" and moves towards innocence (Tuck and Yang 2012).

The easy adoption of decolonisation as a metaphor is a premature attempt at reconciliation driven by "settler anxiety" (Tuck and Yang 2012, 9). Settlers are disturbed by their own settler status and try to escape the complicity of "having harmed others just by being oneself" (Tuck and Yang 2012, 9). In South Africa, this settler anxiety is expressed as white guilt experienced by white students and lecturers.

The settler's strong desire to "disappear the Native" is a method to avoid dealing with the problem of true decolonisation (Tuck and Yang 2012, 9). The desire to disappear the native can be seen when white students suggest that BCI students should attend "other" universities if they are unhappy at historically white universities.

Settler "moves to innocence" are popular due to the uncomfortable reality settlers experience when they realise that they are directly and indirectly benefiting from colonial structures and systems (Tuck and Yang 2012, 9). According to Leibowitz (2016), "decolonising the curriculum cannot happen outside of the pursuit of social justice. It cannot happen outside

of a view that sees power and privilege as of central importance."

Social justice

Social justice requires a focus on the rules and processes through which inequality and injustice occur in educational settings (Hill et al. 2012, cited in Bozalek and Leibowitz 2012). A commitment to social justice highlights the need for decolonisation. We investigate a trivalent view (Fraser 2007) of social justice and teaching for social justice in order to understand these aspects within the HE context.

Fraser's trivalent view of social justice

Nancy Fraser's (2007) major goal of social justice is "participatory parity", where all can interact as peers in an equitable manner in their social lives (Bozalek and Leibowitz 2012). Fraser highlights distribution of resources, politics of representation and belonging, and politics of recognition as fundamental aspects of social justice. Bozalek and Leibowitz (2012) set South African HE within a frame of social justice. The three areas of concern are redistribution and maldistribution, recognition and misrecognition, and representation and misrepresentation.

HEIs should consider how participatory parity is prevented by economic structures that institutionalise deprivation; exploitation; and gross disparities in wealth, income, labour, leisure time, etc. through maldistribution of resources. The #FeesMustFall protest was a cry for eliminating the economic barriers to HE for students without the necessary resources. Misrecognition involves institutional hierarchies of cultural value that cause certain groups of people to suffer from status inequality. This misrecognition prevents equal participation and equal respect of students and lecturers in HE settings. BCI students call for recognition within HE spaces. Recognition and misrecognition include the level of comfort people experience in certain spaces. Ribeiro (2013) notes that creating access for students who do not come from backgrounds parallel to higher institutional culture without changing that culture and environment ignores the very causes of exclusion for these students. Misrepresentation occurs when political and social belonging are unequal and where certain groups of people do not count as citizens. In HE settings, some groups and communities are framed to have more agency, voice and rights to claim social justice than others. Often BCI students and lecturers are misrepresented in historically white HE contexts such as Stellenbosch University.
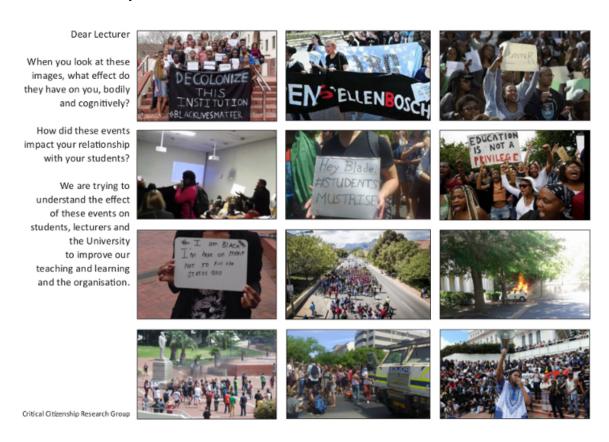
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A case study (cf. Creswell 2003) was chosen as the research design for this research project. One of the most important aspects of a case study design is the context in which the case being studied is situated (Denscombe 2007, 37). Inductive content analysis was utilised to guide the

analysis (cf. Creswell 2005).

The data collection for this research spread over 12 months. At the end of 2015, we sent surveys to all lecturers in the faculties of AgriSciences, Arts and Social Sciences, and Theology to determine how they incorporate social justice into the courses they teach. Thirty-two lecturers responded that they incorporate it explicitly and implicitly. In March 2016, a one-day seminar on social justice and decolonisation was held, to which all lecturers from all faculties on campus were invited. Twenty-eight lecturers attended. This seminar was recorded and transcribed and certain quotes were selected for the data presentation.

Pages with photos of the protests (Figure 1) chosen to reveal affective reactions from respondents were used. These pages were handed out by lecturers to students in their classes and fellow lecturers in their faculties and they were encouraged to share their reactions. The Transformation Office at Stellenbosch University also handed out the photo pages at workshops that they facilitated. Respondents were therefore invited to participate on the basis of their involvement in the respective faculties and the Transformation Office workshops. There were 56 respondents to the photo page; 11 from lecturers, 6 from postgraduate students and 39 from undergraduate students. Further information about these participants is not known, since the feedback was anonymous.

Figure 1: Example of a photo page given to students and lecturers (all photos were publicly available on social media platforms)

In November 2016, a discussion group with lecturers from various faculties at Stellenbosch University was held and the authors of this article facilitated the discussion. The authors are part of a Critical Citizenship research group that existed since 2014 and are from various departments and faculties: Visual Arts (Arts and Social Sciences), Conservation Ecology and Entomology, and Wine Biotechnology (AgriSciences), Chemistry and Polymer Science (Science) and Theology.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

During the period of data collection, the reactions of students and lecturers changed. Some reactions became more aggressive, while others became more avoidant. Polarisation was evident. The participants were afraid to share their opinions publicly for fear of worsening the situation. Many lecturers indicated that they want to speak about the protests and about decolonisation, but the affective reactions caused them to remain silent. This in turn caused some participants to become more outspoken due to others' silence. The quotes used in this discussion were chosen to support the themes that emerged from the inductive data analysis and to include a variety of voices of participants. The data from this research are presented below in terms of affect, relationships, decolonisation and social justice.

Affect

The student protest and calls for decolonisation of the university caused affective reactions. Many lecturers responded negatively to the presence of violence on campus. Other affective responses were translated into feelings of doubt and confusion, anger, powerlessness and disappointment.

Violence played a large role in the protest movement. A lecturer noted that the violence increased from the end of 2015 to 2016. A student mentioned: "It makes me angry because violence and destruction do not help". Lecturers were opposed to the violence used:

> "I want to hear when students are not comfortable with what we teach, but when they resort to violence I think it moves beyond the values we espouse."

> "I draw a line regarding violence. How do you convince your department that a student who had been involved in violence should be accepted as a postgraduate student?"

One lecturer argued that the focus on violence negates the "real issues". By concentrating only on the violence, Stellenbosch University is missing the opportunity to change, almost as if the violence justifies a move away from decolonisation. Perhaps the violence could have been

avoided. As one lecturer said, "We should have engaged with students during the past year".

Students and lecturers expressed doubt, confusion, anxiety and conflicting feelings. Students who responded to the photographic survey said the following:

> "These events made me question if I have made a right decision or not by coming to Stellenbosch University."

> "[I'm] frustrated that we are blinded by our feelings which does not allow us to gain perspective on the situation."

> "The images have different effects on me, both bodily and cognitively. I feel tension and fear, but also sympathy and pain for the people who had to protest to make their voices heard."

Lecturers also mentioned the difficulty of dealing with these affects:

> "I suddenly feel that my words are not compatible with the experiences and world around me."

> "It is difficult and we are not used to it."

> "I was not prepared."

Lecturers were "surprised at the intensity of anger". Angry feelings were also joined by feelings of powerlessness and disappointment:

> "I feel anger towards both the protesting students and towards the institutional powers. The experience of not hearing, listening and understanding is a huge cognitive challenge. It seems as though the rational competencies of academic training is of no help in developing a way forward."

Lecturers noted that they experienced "lots of feelings of powerlessness". One lecturer also mentioned having a "feeling of failing the students – that we brought them to the edge to react". This is linked to the disappointment a student felt:

> "I have mentioned that I am angry at the students but I am also disappointed in the lecturers. I am disappointed in the faculty of [name]'s lax approach to this issue. I acknowledge their attempts to start a discussion and the various meetings held and yet I cannot shake the impression that we are distancing ourselves from important issues."

The student protests affected participants affectively and it impacted the relationships between students and lecturers.

Relationships

At the heart of education is the relationship between students and their lecturers and this

relationship could have decolonising potential (Martin and Pirbhai-Illich 2016). The relationship between lecturers and students was affected by the protest movement in different ways. From the group discussion with lecturers at the SoTL conference, lecturers noted a "... mutual disillusionment by both lecturers and students where no-one is really listening to each other and both sides [are] frustrated". In general, the reactions of lecturers and students can be summarised as uncertainty, anxiety and powerlessness, togetherness and care, and a need for change. One lecturer noted:

> "These events did have a huge impact on my relationship with my students. The impact is however both positive and negative. On the one hand I have a feeling of discomfort and uncertainty. On the other hand I have the experience of excitement while I feel that my understanding of students is shattered, I also feel excited by the challenge to try to understand and to put myself in the shoes of the students."

Students who took part in the photographic survey mentioned the following:

> "These events place stress on my relationship with lecturers, as I want to see them actively partake ... Sometimes it even appears that they do not care at all."

> "I think in many ways we still want something from the lecturers' side – where do they stand within all these happenings? They need to take a stand so that we know where we stand with them."

Lecturers' experiences included feelings of anxiety, fear and powerlessness. A lecturer said:

> "One of my students is one of the expelled students. It caused a lot of anxiety for me because I did not know how to deal with it if the student came into class. This student was one of my best students."

Another lecturer noted on the photographic survey that "I am dealing with students who are determined to challenge even my position as a lecturer. My attitude to them is one of respect but also fear". A lecturer also told of her/his feelings of inadequacy:

> "Students warned me against protests. [I] felt like a failure because they were looking out for me – I wanted to do something for them so they could finish [their] studies, but I felt powerless."

Combined with these feelings of anxiety and powerlessness were feelings of unity and care. A lecturer mentioned that #FeesMustFall brought her closer to her students. A student's comment on the photographic survey confirms this: "It brought us closer together, as we could have open discussions around what was happening around us and not merely have a student–lecturer relationship, but now be more understanding of our circumstances, backgrounds and

perspectives". Some lecturers felt that more care, support and effort should be put into relationships with students – that students want a sense of safety. However, lecturers were aware of the temptation to enter a parent–child relationship with students. They noted that the best method would instead be to treat students as adults, to engage with them and to allow them to voice their concerns. Concerns from lecturers and students echoed a need for change.

One of the lecturers responded by saying: "Something is wrong. Something has to change". A student commented on the photographic survey: "We need something more radical". During the group discussion at the SoTL conference, one lecturer said: "Thank God something is happening! This was brewing for many years and this is opening up the space to talk ....' The change that needs to occur is the decolonisation of the university.

Decolonisation

Although this research as a whole should be viewed through a lens of decolonisation, it is worth discussing specific elements that surfaced during the data analysis.

Defining decolonisation

During the group discussion on decolonisation, lecturers agreed that the term has not been defined well enough. Many students and lecturers do not know what decolonising the university means. Lecturers asked: "What does decolonisation stand for? Who is asking it? Can we move to decolonisation if we don't have a shared way of thinking about where we want to go?" Lecturers called for the creation of a unified definition of decolonisation within each institution and faculty, which must be communicated to other institutions and faculties.

Responsibility and openness

There was also a sense of responsibility and ownership and a need for openness regarding the decolonisation of the university. One lecturer said the following:

> "We should not externalise the responsibility for decolonisation. We should start with ourselves. Each of us should look at what we as individuals can do. Instead of generalising we should be personalising."

African centrality

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's (1986) centrality of Africa was echoed by lecturers:

> "We need to create new concepts that are more African."
> "For science this is challenging, but at a university level we should realign ourselves to be

Afrocentric. The National Research Fund has funds available to use for indigenous knowledge research, but we never look at it."

Decolonising the language used at HEIs also presents challenges. A lecturer remarked:

"I am English, female, white, middle-class and well educated. The language thing is so fraught, I understand the need to preserve Afrikaans, to keep an Afrikaans-medium university. My industry is completely Afrikaans. It will take decades for it to become mainly English. How can I train students in English when they will go into Afrikaans workplaces with Afrikaans workers?"

Another lecturer asked: "How does English fit in with the decolonisation process? Perhaps it's a question of convenience? How are we not leaving our 'own' languages behind?"

Suggestions

Several suggestions and solutions were aired during the group discussion with lecturers. A more flexible degree structure, grants towards appointing staff to help renew curriculum courses and an increase in reading decolonisation texts were suggested. The experience in terms of the protest movement was new for many lecturers. Lecturers recognised a need to prepare future academics for experiences in terms of protests, violence, questions and emotional responses. Suggestions included better use of existing opportunities such as transformation workshops and discussion. While lecturers realised the urgency for change, they emphasised that the changes required time. Democracy within the university was also mentioned.

Settler perspectives

Our research was conducted in a context where the majority of academic staff is white. As a result, some settler perspectives and white perspectives emerged. It is necessary to expose these perspectives in order to work towards decolonisation. Settler perspectives included ignorance and distance, fear of regression, racism, guilt and exclusion.

Some participants distanced themselves from the protest movement and from decolonisation. One method of distancing oneself is ignorance (conscious or subconscious). According to lecturers "[s]ome students and lecturers were surprisingly unaware of what was going on" and "[white students] live in a bubble that they are okay. They need to be made aware of the other side". A lecturer admitted that he "feel[s] like sitting on the fence and wait[ing] for it to go away". Another lecturer noted that "many people find themselves in incubators – they speak to people who think like them". This can be considered as another form of ignorance that causes distance. A familiar opinion surfaced when a lecturer said: "Is it not something that

started in primary school – is that not where it must be addressed?" While primary school education desperately requires attention, it is not useful to shift the focus (and thereby the responsibility) away from HE. Yet another method of distancing was seen in the polarisation of "us and them" reasoning, evident in this student's response: "If students do not understand Afrikaans/English, then they should take extra language classes, otherwise they should not be here in the first place". This comment implies that language struggles of certain groups of students are "their" problem and that "those" students should leave the institution. Removing oneself from the action (sitting on the fence), distancing oneself, shifting the focus or adopting a polarised view could be protective instincts, but they are not useful for engaging with the urgent problems regarding decolonisation at HEIs.

The fear of chaos and regression at HEIs was communicated by some participants. One lecturer wondered: "Will we not move back and deeper into being a Third World country?" Another lecturer felt concerned: "I came from Zimbabwe and when the protest started at Stellenbosch I remembered what happened in Zimbabwe, and it did not end well". Some lecturers were aware of their own fear, but also aware of the need to overcome this fear:

> "We need to stop being afraid that the entire world is going to be taken over by chaos and madness. We need to stop being so afraid that academic standards are going to crash. At the bottom of it, I am so Eurocentric and terrified that it will all fall apart, the centre will not hold. And I have to ask myself why?"

This fear is linked to an unwillingness to decolonise the institution, because it will dislodge those power structures and cultures from which some greatly benefit. It is the fear of loss. The implication that a decolonised university "will not hold" could imply that African knowledge and ways of doing are inferior to Western knowledge and ways of doing.

Feelings of guilt were evident in white participants' responses. This guilt relates to what Tuck and Yang (2012) call "settler anxiety". One student mentioned: "For some or other reason I have this feeling of guilt that should be named – I am privileged. It makes me want to do something, to change the ideas of my friends, even family." White lecturers were concerned about the way in which BCI students see them. Some lecturers admitted as follows:

> "[The protest movement] does bring about feelings of white guilt."
> "Guilt, I represent the 'bureaucracy' and Afrikaans by association."
> "... fear, shame, guilty as charged, this shouldn't be happening after the riots – it was fought for already."

Jawitz (2016) notes that white guilt at HEIs can cause academic staff to withdraw from the

decolonisation debate. The white identity and associated guilt also result in feelings of exclusion. As some lecturers put it:

"When you are told that you are too white to be part of decolonisation, how do you then do your job?"

"I feel disconnected because 'you are privileged', I feel excluded, disallowed, I can have empathy, but I'm not allowed [to participate]."

"My agency as a white man is under suspicion. I cannot engage in dialogue because of who I am and what I am perceived as having done."

Social justice

Nancy Fraser's (2007) trivalent view of social justice is applicable to the HE context of this research. Specifically, the three points of social justice, namely redistribution, recognition and representation, are relevant because they provide a framework from which decolonisation can be planned. Decolonisation in HEIs should address all three areas of social justice.

Redistribution

Participants echoed a sense of dissatisfaction with the lack of distribution of resources by government. These resources include economic resources and resources to support change. A student commented: "The fact that they are black does not give them the right to study for free, me as a coloured has the same circumstances when it comes to money, but we have to pay without complaining". Another student said: "Personally the images remind me of the past where protest had to be the only language that the government could listen to. I wish this can change." Lecturers mentioned: "I'm disappointed that our leadership did not ensure a change happens" and "Government is leaving universities to fend for themselves". The redistribution of access to education and success in education should also be addressed. Students who experienced a poor quality of school education do not have the same opportunities for reaching success as students who attended well-resourced schools. HEIs could increase courses designed to bridge the gap between school education and university education. Additionally, more bursaries should be provided for students from under-resourced schools and free services such as Writing Laboratories and Language centres should be used to create a more just distribution of opportunities for academic success.

Recognition

Equal recognition of different identities and equal valuation of these identities are a challenge within the debate on HEIs. Strong binaries between African/Western cause a problem for those

who find themselves in a globalised and complex reality where binaries are useless in promoting multiple identities (Creary 2012). Plurality is essential in understanding one's own culture and identity where differences are revealed through relating to others. A lecturer said: "I am coloured and I am proud of it. I give black and coloured students a space to feel at home in my classes." Unfortunately, misrecognition was evident in most of the comments made by lecturers and students. Lecturers felt that BCI students feel invisible in the classroom and that they feel they only contribute to the diversity profile, while white students do not need that recognition. Lecturers stated: "black students need affirmation", whereas "white students have forgotten their whiteness and feel safe".

A lecturer from a mixed racial background explained the challenges of being "other":

> "As mixed person I have difficulty in communicating with some of my colleagues because I cannot associate with their opinions. Some of these students feel the system failed them. The underlying problem is universal. I always felt as the other, I think of [myself] as the other."

A white lecturer experienced powerlessness in supporting some of her students:

> "I could feel my Afrikaans-speaking, coloured students' frustration. They were caught in the middle, and I could not speak for them. I am white and could not engage with them from my own perspective. It was difficult to deal with their obvious fear. I don't have the answers. It is difficult to support them."

With regard to feelings of recognition and misrecognition, a lecturer from the discussion group asked: "Should higher education be a place of comfort?" The answer is yes. The "comfort" that students seek is not an apathetic "comfort zone". Instead it is a feeling of belonging. Another lecturer argued that talking about "welcoming" students assumes that they are still visitors. Instead we should ask how we can turn the institution into something with which students can identify, where they feel recognised, and of which they can take ownership. Recognition should be purposefully addressed at HEIs. A space should be created where BCI students and lecturers can freely communicate with each other and with the management team of the university. BCI students and lecturers need to feel that a true effort is made to accept, encourage and value them within the HE system. Recognition is also needed in the spaces where BCI students and lecturers move. Visual redress is therefore necessary.

Representation

Representation has to do with participation and voice. Decolonisation must involve

representation and conversation, as silence and invisibility of colonialism are a key method of perpetuating the colonial project (Magubane 2015). Tronto (2010) notes the need for discursive spaces where the needs of all members of an institution can be communicated, understood, negotiated and evaluated. A student responded to the photographic survey with: "I feel we need to listen to each other so that we can begin to understand each other and deal with the underlying trauma". Another student said that these events "made me realise that there is always a room for discussion, where you can sit down with your lecturer and share whatever you want to share with him/her. Now I know that I can speak freely with my lecturers".

Unfortunately, not all students and lecturers experience this freedom. According to lecturers who were part of the group discussion, "massive misunderstandings and assumptions" have been made regarding the protest movement due to a lack of communication.

Subreenduth (2012) argues that some students have theories with which they can associate, or that speak to their own culture, while others do not have that privilege. Not only do some students not have theories to explain their lived experiences, but they also do not have the cultural capital to speak. This misrepresentation causes frustration and alienation. Lecturers noted that various groups of students struggled to voice their opinion, questions and concerns:

"Black female students in my class have no voice."

"I'm concerned about white male students because they do not have a safe space. White students are not allowed to ask questions."

"Black students will not raise their opinion because of patriarchal culture."

In the post-apartheid context of South Africa, where racism and inequality affect conversations in subtle and overt ways, groups of people may remain silent because of different reasons. The immense discomfort and trauma associated with speaking about past and current problems in South Africa ensure volatile conversations.

"Things explode when people feel they are not heard. We need safe spaces to have uncomfortable discussions."

"#FeesMustFall last year told me that they have already tried all avenues of conversation. It makes me wonder if [the protests] are not just an expression of their frustration."

"We want students to voice their concerns to us, but the traditional distinctions in SA will prevent students [from] voicing their concerns across race barriers."

Lecturers who participated in the group discussion considered whether staff are adequately trained to facilitate these uncomfortable discussions. They exposed a need for guidelines on how to open the space in the classroom and to set the rules of engagement. Conversations should

start with vulnerability and should be open and honest. One lecturer advised: "We should listen to understand and not listen to respond". The idea of "creating a culture" of respectful conversation and debate within faculties was presented.

While open conversations are vital in order to represent all groups of students and lecturers, there is a danger in over-emphasising conversation at the expense of action. While the suggested conversations are uncomfortable, actions resulting from these conversations are arguably far more so. One lecturer agreed:

> "We actually need to do something. We know we need to decolonise, we know we need to change the space, now we need to do this. I do not want to talk anymore – I want to start doing."

One of the ways in which we can "start doing" decolonisation is to pay attention to the spaces at HEIs. Representation also has to do with how certain groups are presented in spaces and which groups are allowed to speak in which spaces.

The transformation of buildings and public spaces is vital for decolonisation (Mbembe 2016a). There is a great need for mutual safe space at universities. Lecturers at Stellenbosch University stated the following:

> "The current spaces are the lecture rooms (SU institution in power) and the [large campus quad] (students in power). Have we found a space where the power is not vested in one or the other?"
> "[I often] walk the corridors with a need to speak to someone, but doors are closed."

According to the following lecturer, the concept of safe space may be idealistic and hindered by class sizes:

> "It is difficult to break down [oppressive] structures when there are 300 students in front of you. Maybe a simple solution is just to create opportunities to engage with students in smaller groups."

Suggestions for safe space included a virtual space such as anonymous forums, spaces outside of the classroom and suggestion boxes. Artworks and signage should be addressed. Students should be involved in discussions about this and disproportionate links to the past to satisfy the alumni should be dismantled. Two lecturers noted:

> "[We need] situations where what you say is acted upon, and not reacted to – we're not there yet. It's uncomfortable and we don't talk about it because we want to keep the peace. There should be spaces for people to say certain things."
> "We need a kind of fearlessness – be able to honestly share opinions. But how do we become fearless? It's time to be bold as academia."

At historically white HEIs, socially just representation will involve accepting many more BCI students and employing many more BCI lecturers. Vitally important to the decolonisation of the curriculum is those who teach it. Additionally, BCI students should be represented on the Student Representative Council (SRC) and other student committees, because this is a requirement for the development of discussions around decolonisation.

Incorporating social justice into the curriculum

Decolonisation starts with the recognition of the importance of social justice. We investigated whether social justice is incorporated within curricula in order to gauge the decolonising potential of curricula as well as to create awareness of the importance of social justice within curricula. The surveys completed by lecturers included questions about whether and how they include social justice in the content they teach and whether they apply teaching strategies that reflect social justice.

Some examples of subject matter that topicalises social justice included slavery and the impact in the wine industry, popular wisdom from traditional proverbs in the Old Testament and the impact of economics on human suffering and equal access to services. Further examples included topics on gender, poverty, violence, slavery in ancient cultures and South African politics (political tolerance, human rights and gender-based violence). Lecturers also mentioned rape as a weapon of war, global issues of justice, language and politics, gated communities, gentrification and socially just urban societies.

Teaching strategies that address social justice included class discussions on climate change, apartheid, racism, poverty, justice and inequality. Lecturers used examples based on South African history as a teaching strategy to highlight social injustice, for example the baptism of slaves in the early Cape and the 1857 synod decision to legitimise separate worship for different races. Additional teaching strategies included inviting persons involved in social justice work to the classroom, creating safe spaces for students to discuss difficult issues such as black economic empowerment and enabling students to attend workshops and conferences on social justice topics.

One lecturer focused on open discussion and conversation: "As long as one allows for questions to be asked and there is an atmosphere of understanding and openness, I think this helps towards a sense of personal 'justice'!" Further comments by lecturers addressed inclusion, awareness and the role of universities: A lecturer remarked that "[s]tandard English is taught as one accent among many and not the ultimate norm. It is my hope that no student feels excluded in our department because of accent." Another lecturer said, "How does our awareness of gross

inequality affect our everyday practices?" A lecturer commented:

> "During apartheid universities were critical sites that legitimated the dominant form of power. I think it is important to reflect on the role of universities in our society and their place in the reproduction of the dominant social order that remains one of radical inequality."

One lecturer showed great enthusiasm for challenging social and political orders as well as students' deep-rooted prejudices. However, this lecturer noted:

> "I have not found teaching in the [name of department] at Stellenbosch University to be a supportive environment for engaging in this sort of work. While I have had positive responses from students and staff, I have also met with some significant challenges."

CONCLUSION

Knowledge production and curricula should be decolonised. Decolonisation will include a focus on African languages in HE (Mbembe 2016a). HEIs should foster the horizontal process of knowledge production that is open to epistemic diversity (Mbembe 2016a). Mbembe (2016a) suggests that South African universities embrace their location in Africa, entirely redesign their curricula and tuition systems, improve the immigration policy and open universities to citizenship for those from other countries. Investing in transnational engagement will foster the process of decolonisation (Mbembe 2016b).

Reactions of students and lecturers to student protests and calls for decolonisation were affective and influenced the relationships between students and lecturers. Feelings of doubt and confusion, anger, powerlessness and disappointment were experienced. There was also a sense of uncertainty and anxiety combined with a desire to see change. Participants identified the need to define decolonisation, take responsibility, foster openness and promote African centrality.

In responding to the student protests and demands for decolonisation of the university, we believe in a bottom-up approach, meaning the initiatives should come from the lecturers instead of management. We have to realise that we are immanent to the problems around us (Braidotti 2013). Braidotti (2013) argues against the idealisation of philosophical meta-discourse and for a more pragmatic task of self-transformation through humble experimentation (Braidotti 2013). The use of social justice in teaching and learning is the starting point for this decolonisation project. We therefore encourage lecturers to experiment with decolonising the spaces at HEIs (mind, body, classroom, curriculum). The decolonisation of space includes cyber spaces, symbols, offices, buildings, architecture, artefacts, photographs and statues. Approaches to these spaces can be to erase, replace, or re-interpret them. We need to realise that some spaces

are inherently unsafe. It is crucial for historically privileged universities to participate in this process.

During the research process there was urgency amongst members of staff to talk within and across academic environments regarding decolonisation. The longer we take to respond to that urgency, the more we lose momentum for authentic change and the easier it is to lapse into apathy, potentially fueling likely disruption in the future. A response to the student protests and calls for decolonisation is the responsibility of everyone in the system. The situation calls for: awareness, vulnerability, courage, honesty, willingness to engage and ownership of processes. Existing structures are limited and in order to respond, we need to be creative. Change needs to be authentic, inclusive, and underpinned by relationship.

The struggle for decolonisation is an ongoing process across a range of spaces, and both African and non-African academics have a significant role to play in this process (Creary 2012). It is important to note the variety of reactions to the student protests and decolonisation. It is important to allow individuals and groups to speak about their experiences and to listen. Mind and body learning is involved in this process. We suggest that the learning inside and outside the classroom becomes more integrated when social issues are linked with academic content. We hope that this research contributes to lecturer and student relational development in a time when activism has the potential to serve as a wake-up call, but also to create a division between lecturers and students.

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