



Decolonization And Higher Education Curriculum: Repositioning Public Administration In South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the decolonization of higher education curriculum by the way to repositioning public administration in South Africa. Repositioning public administration in the context of decolonization requires a critical examination of its foundations and a re-evaluation of the knowledge and theories on which it is built. This paper considers and cross-examines literatures aligned to higher education curriculum decolonisation in the field of public administration in South Africa. It discusses the role higher education institutions could play in decolonising curriculum in the interest of repositioning public administration in South Africa. To understand the decolonisation of public administration curriculum, this paper includes diverse perspectives from various literature and research from non-Western scholars and practitioners. Ultimately, decolonizing the higher education curriculum with a focus on public administration requires a comprehensive reimagining of the field, as well as challenging dominant narratives, acknowledging diverse knowledge systems, and centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities. By embracing and considering public administration curriculum decolonization in higher education, in the South African context, complex challenges of the present and work towards a more just and equitable future can be better addressed.

Keywords: Decolonization, Higher education, Curriculum repositioning, and Public administration.

1. INTRODUCTION

The colonial system of education in Africa continues to have a significant impact on schools and society, perpetuating inequalities, limiting access to quality education, and reproducing colonial power structures. The colonial system has left a legacy of Eurocentric curriculum which prioritizes Western knowledge and perspectives, while marginalizing African indigenous knowledge (Kallaway, 2021). This has led to a lack of relevance and cultural sensitivity in the education system, perpetuating a sense of inferiority among African students. Many African countries still use the colonial languages as the medium of instruction in schools, creating a barrier for students who do not speak these languages fluently and limiting access to education for marginalized groups. The colonial system has contributed to high dropout rates and devalued indigenous knowledge systems and traditional practices, leading to a loss of cultural identity, and eroding the social fabric of communities. This system has contributed to a sense of disconnection and alienation among Africans and created a hierarchy of schools with different levels of resources and quality of education, based on racial and socio-economic status. Until today, Africans are experiencing disparities in access to quality education, perpetuating inequality in society given that the system was designed to produce a docile and compliant workforce for colonial powers, reinforcing authoritarian structures and a lack of critical thinking skills among students. This has had long-lasting effects on society, with a legacy of corruption and lack of accountability among leaders.

Therefore, addressing these challenges requires decolonizing the education system and centering African perspectives and knowledge in the curriculum. However, numerous authors have contributed to the ongoing conversation about decolonizing education and curriculum in higher education institutions. They highlight the importance of interrogating and challenging Eurocentric and colonial frameworks that shape educational systems, and emphasize the inclusion of diverse voices, epistemologies, and perspectives. Ajani and Gamede

(2021) suggest that decolonization is an essential concept in post-colonial societies, aiming to challenge and transform the Eurocentric perspectives that have historically dominated various aspects of society, including education and curriculum development. According to Shahjahan et al., (2022), decolonization of curriculum refers to the process of intentionally re-evaluating and reorganizing educational content to challenge and dismantle the dominant colonial perspectives, theories, and frameworks that have historically shaped higher education curricula. Kallaway (2021) reviewed the work of Christie (2020) on decolonisation of education, and postulates that decolonization involves dismantling colonial systems of power and reclaiming indigenous knowledge, culture, and identity, as well as incorporating perspectives from marginalized communities, indigenous knowledge systems, and non-Western traditions into the curriculum. This paper addresses the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in the curriculum, educational methods, and institutional structures in the South African setting, in an effort to examine and assess the process of decolonizing higher education.

In order to establish a more inclusive, representative, and egalitarian educational system in the country, the decolonization of higher education is imperative. Thus, in particular, this paper examines the decolonization of public administration curriculum in South African higher education. This may seem to be a complex and ongoing process that seeks to address historical inequalities and biases in the education system. In the context of public administration, decolonising curriculum required efforts to rethink and reshape the curriculum, teaching methods, and institutional practices that need to be more inclusive, representative, and responsive to the diverse needs of South Africa's population. According to Fataar (2018) and Bhambra et al., (2018), repositioning public administration in South Africa within the context of decolonization will require a fundamental re-evaluation and restructuring of the educational content and methodologies used to teach public administration. A more inclusive, diverse, and contextually relevant approaches to public administration and management will need to be promote. Accordingly, this paper embarks on contributing to the decolonisation of public administration curriculum in South Africa, by addressing key motivations and benefits of repositioning it.

2. THEORIES AND DEBATES DISCUSSING CURRICULUM DECOLONISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The term "decolonization" has been used since 1853, according to Shahjahan et al. (2022), and its original meaning was "removing a place from colonial status." Globally, educators have been using the phrase "decolonization" with exponential increase in the last few years. Ajani and Gamede (2021) using the writings of Blyden (1872), Mustapha (1995), Ake (1982), Shivji (1993), Mamdani (1990), and Bathily et al. (1995) argued that decolonization is not a novel notion in Africa. They disagreed over whether the processes of decolonization are called "Africanization" or "Indigenization of Knowledge." However, colonization and its after-effects are present in all aspects of society (Nzewi and Maramura, 2021). Theories and debates surrounding curriculum decolonisation in higher education highlight the complexity of the issue and the need for ongoing dialogue and action to address colonial biases and inequalities in the curriculum. Mignolo and Walsh's (2018) explanation and theory of what decolonizing entails and looks like in many fields and academic institutions worldwide was cited by Shahjahan et al. in their 2022 study. They went on to say that curricula and universities have a significant role in supporting, legitimizing, and/or marginalizing knowledge production systems. Higher education institutions have seen numerous changes throughout the years as a result of the persistent counter hegemonic work of academics, community activists, and students. However, a number of writers, including Andreotti et al. (2015), Battiste (2017), Kuokkanen (2011), and Stein (2019), who were referenced by Shahjahan et al. (2022), have questioned whether or not these developments have truly "decolonized" higher education. Shahjahan et al. (2022) state that two trajectories, however related, have sparked more extensive discussions about decolonizing the academy in the effort to decolonize curricula at higher education institutions. First of all, due to national policy initiatives, academic collectives, and student movements in the Global North and South, there has been an increasing focus on decolonizing curriculum and education in the last ten years, according to academics. These student movements believe that it is imperative to confront the issue of decolonizing curriculum and education at their universities and colleges and raise important concerns about whose knowledge counts in higher education (Bhambra et al., 2018). Moreover, scholars from the Global South have demanded that their universities decolonize and prioritize non-Eurocentric perspectives. National policies that decolonize have also been demanded by activist communities (Shahjahan et al., 2022). Second, a number of academic disciplines—including political science, sociology, anthropology, education, philosophy, women's studies, and other STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines—have called for the decolonization of these fields. However, the majority of these conversations have lately moved to questioning their academic and curriculum, having previously concentrated on the level of research methodologies and disciplinary ideas (Sanchez, 2018). Settler-colonial dynamics are crucial to decolonization as the anticolonial Fourth World fights for sovereignty, territory, and/or cultural self-determination, since many indigenous movements are ongoing today. Given the preceding understanding, various theories such as critical theory, critical race theory, critical pedagogy theory, postcolonial theory, indigenous knowledge systems, feminist theory, queer theory, intersectionality, and so on are debating and discussing curriculum decolonization in higher education (Held, 2019).

- Critical theory examines power dynamics and social structures that perpetuate inequalities within education. From this perspective, curriculum decolonisation involves challenging dominant ideologies and recentring marginalized voices and perspectives.
- Critical race theory is a theoretical framework that views racism as ingrained in societal structures and institutions. In the context of curriculum decolonization, critical race theory emphasizes the need to confront and dismantle systems of oppression and inequality that perpetuate colonial narratives and biases in higher education curricula.
- Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach that encourages students to question and challenge dominant ideologies, power structures, and social injustices. In the context of curriculum decolonization, critical pedagogy promotes the deconstruction of colonial narratives and the exploration of marginalized histories, voices, and experiences.
- Post-colonial theory focuses on the ongoing impacts of colonialism on culture, society, and education. Decolonising the curriculum means acknowledging and addressing the colonial legacy in educational practices and content.
- Indigenous knowledge systems emphasize the importance of centering Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing in education. Curriculum decolonisation involves integrating and valuing Indigenous knowledge, histories, and languages in the curriculum.
- Feminist theory highlights the intersections of gender, race, class, and other forms of oppression within education. Decolonising the curriculum involves challenging gender norms, stereotypes, and biases, and promoting gender equality and social justice in education.
- Queer theory: Queer theory examines the ways in which sexual orientation and gender identity shape experiences of education and society. Decolonising the curriculum includes addressing heteronormativity, promoting LGBTQ+ representation, and creating inclusive and affirming learning environments for all students.

These perspectives and theories offer valuable insights and strategies for decolonizing higher education curricula and creating more inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students. Therefore, in the context of education, colonisation refers to the ways in which the curriculum of a particular institution or country reflects the values, norms, and perspectives of the colonising power (Kessi, 2021). On the opposite, decolonising the curriculum in higher education involves critically examining and challenging the ways in which knowledge is produced and disseminated within academic institutions (Held, 2019). This process involves decentering the Eurocentric perspective that has historically dominated academic disciplines and including diverse perspectives and voices, particularly those that have been marginalized or excluded. One way to decolonise the curriculum is to incorporate more perspectives from non-Western cultures and traditions, as well as voices from historically oppressed groups such as Indigenous peoples, people of colour, and LGBTQ+ communities. This can involve revising course readings, rethinking the focus of lectures and discussions, and reevaluating the criteria for evaluating student work. In addition, decolonising the curriculum also involves confronting and addressing the ways in which power dynamics and colonial legacies continue to influence academic disciplines and structures (Collins, 2021). This may involve challenging the idea of a universal, objective knowledge and recognizing the inherent biases and limitations of dominant discourses.

Ultimately, decolonising the curriculum in higher education is about creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment that values a diversity of perspectives and experiences. It is a transformative process that requires ongoing reflection, dialogue, and collaboration among scholars, faculty, and administrators. By decolonising the curriculum, higher education institutions can better prepare students to navigate a complex and interconnected world and contribute to building a more just and sustainable society. Therefore, there are various "trajectories" of decolonization, with a wealth of theorists worldwide. The decolonization argument was categorized by Nzewi and Maramura (2021) using three different lenses or points of view: traditionalists, radicals, and innovators. The three categories of the decolonization discussion or theories are explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Classifications of the decolonization debate or theories

Theorising decolonization	Understanding decolonisation theories
Traditionalists	Since the traditionalists have been advocating for the necessity to evaluate the curriculum from the perspective of the colonizer, the radicals have emerged. According to traditionalists, the act of decolonizing the planet itself gives rise to a new kind of human being and new personhood, separate from the impact of the colonizer. It is acknowledged that traditionalists seemed to have a narrow understanding of what decolonization meant in its entirety from the perspective of the colonized. So, categorizing the conventional methods of approaching the subject starts with the early discussions of decolonization. The traditionalists only discussed how the curriculum of today is shaped by the colonizers and how an attempt should be made to incorporate reflections of the post-colonial age into the curriculum of today.

Radicals	In order to foster an independent way of thinking from the influence of the West, the radicals' strategy is based on their support for the introduction of African studies into universities. Similarly, the radicals are influenced by the normative, who claim that the colonizers are resisting change in the post-colonial era. As a result, they fight to decolonize the curriculum by emphasizing the value of using the African language as a medium of education. Moreover, the concept of decolonization is one of the most radical ideas in the decolonization of curriculum discussion. Thus, it is appropriate to understand African decolonization theorists' arguments at the level of other radical intellectuals. Thus, by upholding the elimination of subject emphasis, hierarchical structure, and pedagogical isolation, the radicals promoted the dismantling of the institutions and created what they called "Pluriversity," criticizing the university.
Innovators	The innovators look for any viable decolonization alternatives that depart from the widely acknowledged traditional and radical approaches. Instead of just disregarding the English language because it is the language of the colonizers, innovators argue that a greater focus should be placed on the African language, which facilitates communication and understanding of the curricula. The innovators go one step further in embracing inclusivity by acknowledging that Pan-Africanism, alterity ideologies, multiculturalism, and perspectives on the dynamics of modern globalization can all be pushed within a framework that unites these global discourses of decolonization.

Source: Adapted from Nzewi and Maramura (2021).

Table 2 illustrates the classification of theories debating about decolonisation. Given this brief contextual history of theories of decolonization, next, this paper examines the decolonisation and repositioning of public administration in South Africa.

2.1. The core arguments and pitfalls of the traditionalist regarding decolonisation.

According to Bhambra (2018), traditionalists argue that decolonisation is a threat to national identity and cultural values. They believe that decolonisation undermines the history and traditions of a nation and erases the legacy of colonization that has shaped its identity. Traditionalists often argue that decolonisation is a form of cultural imperialism, as it imposes Western values and ideals on non-Western societies. One of the main arguments of traditionalists is that decolonisation leads to the loss of traditional customs, practices, and languages. They believe that decolonisation weakens national unity and cohesion by erasing the shared history and experiences that bind a nation together. In addition, traditionalists also argue that decolonisation can lead to the marginalisation and oppression of minority groups within a society. However, there are several pitfalls to the traditionalist argument against decolonisation. Firstly, it ignores the fact that colonization itself was a form of cultural imperialism that imposed Western values and ideals on non-Western societies. Decolonisation seeks to undo the harm caused by colonization and empower oppressed groups to reclaim their cultural identity and autonomy. Furthermore, traditionalists often fail to acknowledge the systemic inequalities and injustices that have been perpetuated through colonialism. Decolonisation is necessary to address these historical injustices and create a more equitable and inclusive society. It is important to recognize the diversity and richness of non-Western cultures and allow for their autonomy and self-determination. Ultimately, the traditionalist argument against decolonisation is based on a narrow and ethnocentric view of culture and identity. Decolonisation is a necessary process to address the legacy of colonialism and build a more just and inclusive society for all. It is important to engage in dialogue and collaboration with diverse communities to ensure that the process of decolonisation is respectful and empowering for all.

2.2. The core arguments and pitfalls of the radicals regarding decolonisation.

There are different core arguments of the radicals regarding decolonisation. While radicals advocating for decolonisation bring important perspectives and critiques to the discussion, it is important to consider the complexities and nuances of decolonisation and work towards inclusive and collaborative approaches that address the diverse needs and experiences of affected communities. The radicals argue that colonialism has resulted in the exploitation and marginalisation of indigenous peoples. Therefore, decolonisation is necessary to address centuries of injustice and restore the rights and sovereignty of oppressed communities (Nyamnjoh, 2022). Furthermore, decolonisation is seen as a means of challenging and dismantling systems of power and privilege that perpetuate inequality and oppression. Radicals believe that decolonisation is essential for creating a more just and equitable society. They believe that decolonisation is a process of undoing the cultural, political, and economic legacy of colonialism. This may involve reclaiming language and culture, rethinking national identities, and seeking reparations for historical injustices. However, there are also pitfalls and challenges associated with the radical approach to decolonisation, including (Nyamnjoh, 2022):

- Essentialism: Some critics argue that radical decolonisation movements can essentialise identity and overlook the diversity and complexity within communities. This may lead to exclusion and marginalisation of individuals who do not fit into narrow definitions of indigenous or colonised identities.
- Ideological purity: Radicals advocating for decolonisation may insist on a particular ideological framework or agenda, which can alienate potential allies and limit the effectiveness of the movement. This may lead to infighting and division among activists.
- Lack of concrete solutions: While radical decolonisation movements may highlight the need for systemic change, they may struggle to offer practical and feasible solutions for achieving decolonisation. This can make it difficult to mobilise broader support and translate radical ideas into tangible policies and practices.

2.3. The core arguments and pitfalls of the innovators regarding innovators decolonisation.

There could be various arguments of the innovators regarding decolonisation. According to (Govender, 2023), specific key arguments made by innovators advocating for decolonisation include:

- Recognition and acknowledgement of the role that colonialism has played in shaping existing power structures and knowledge systems.
- The need to challenge and dismantle colonial legacies that continue to perpetuate inequalities and injustices.
- Emphasis on the importance of centering indigenous and marginalized perspectives and knowledge systems in the process of decolonisation.
- Promotion of diversity and inclusion in innovation processes to ensure that a wider range of voices and experiences are represented.

However, Govender (2023), emphasised that some potential pitfalls to be mindful of when engaging in decolonisation efforts include:

- Tokenism: Including marginalized voices and perspectives without true engagement or empowerment.
- Simplification or essentialization of diverse experiences and knowledge systems.
- Failure to address underlying power dynamics and structural inequalities that perpetuate colonial legacies.

Resistance and pushback from those who benefit from the status quo and may feel threatened by decolonisation efforts.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. METHODS

The approach to discuss and analyse curriculum decolonisation in higher education considered and compared the literature in the field of public administration in South Africa. In an effort to realign public administration in South Africa, this study explored the part that higher education institutions could play in decolonizing curricula. Snyder (2019) asserts that the literature review as a research methodology is more important than before. Regardless of discipline, the foundation of all academic research activities is the development of research and its relationship to current knowledge. According to Paré and Kitsiou (2023), literature reviews are essential to scholarship because science is still primarily a cumulative endeavour. Paré and Kitsiou (2023) distinguish between two main types of literature reviews. Furthermore, literature can serve as a theoretical basis for the proposed study, confirm that the research problem exists, support the research's claim that it adds to the body of knowledge, or validate the methods and approaches for the proposed study, according to Paré and Kitsiou (2023) and Snyder (2019). For professionals seeking cutting edge data to inform their choices and work procedures, it is a valuable information resource.

In this study, the literature including indigenous literature, postcolonial literature, critical race theory literature, feminist literature, queer literature, environmental literature, and critical pedagogy literature supported the discussions and analysis regarding the decolonization of higher education curricula and the repositioning of public administration in South Africa. In order to reposition public administration within the framework of decolonization, one must critically analyze the literature in order to comprehend its tenets and reassess the theories and body of knowledge that support it. This report featured research from non-Western scholars and practitioners as well as unique perspectives from numerous sources to explore the decolonization of public administration curriculum. In the end, a thorough investigation and analysis of the literature was necessary to review and describe the decolonization of higher education curricula with a focus on public administration. This literature calls for reimagining the field of public administration and helps us comprehend the complex dominant narratives, varied knowledge systems, and the perspectives and experiences of marginalized communities. The literature review, investigation, and discussion of the decolonization of the public administration curriculum in South African higher education are covered in the following part.

3.2. MATERIALS

This work addresses a particular aspect of the investigation process, concentrating on one facet of the larger decolonizing endeavour: the decolonization of higher education curricula through the realignment of public administration in South Africa. Aspects discussed in this paper consider the decolonisation and repositioning of public administration in South Africa; key aspects of the decolonization process within higher education in

South Africa; challenges in creating a more equitable and effective public administration system in South Africa, as well as approaches to creating a more decolonized, equitable and effective public administration system in South Africa.

3.2.1. Background on the decolonization of higher education curriculum in South Africa

The African continent saw the emergence of calls for decolonizing education during the anti-colonial movements of the 1950s and 1960s (Fataar, 2018). Its basis is a rejection of modern colonial education, which sought to turn the colonized into subjects of the colonizers in order to rob them of their humanity and potential. Decolonization of higher education curriculum in South Africa is a process that aims to address the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in the country's education system. The decolonization movement in South Africa gained momentum in the post-apartheid era, with calls for a more inclusive and diverse curriculum that reflects the indigenous knowledge and experiences of all South Africans. Historically, the higher education curriculum in South Africa has been heavily influenced by colonial and apartheid-era ideologies and perspectives. This has led to a lack of representation of African and indigenous knowledge systems, as well as a Eurocentric bias in the content and teaching methods used in universities and colleges (Nyamnjoh, 2022). Therefore, calls to decolonize higher education have become stronger even after years of democracy were experienced on the continent. In an attempt to decolonize higher education, Fomunyam (2017) suggests redesigning academic courses to reflect the mental and psychological prowess of a nation. Ajani and Gamede (2021) describe the decolonization of higher education in South Africa as a diversely complex situation characterized by a variety of challenges and limitations, such as financing scarcity, inequality, and a demanding curriculum. Seekings (2020) asserts that colonialism in South Africa, particularly that of the Dutch and British, had a profound and enduring negative influence on a variety of domestic problems, including governmental administration. A few of the negative impacts of colonization on South Africa's governmental administration are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Negative effects of colonization on public administration in South Africa

Negative effects	Description of the effect
Institutionalized discrimination and inequality	Colonization introduced and entrenched racial hierarchies, leading to systemic discrimination against indigenous African populations. Public administration systems were designed to favour white settlers, creating unequal access to resources, services, and opportunities based on race.
Erosion of indigenous systems	Traditional African governance systems and administrative structures were disregarded or suppressed by colonial powers. Indigenous systems that had existed for generations were disrupted, which often resulted in a loss of local knowledge, customs, and practices.
Bureaucratic centralization	Colonizers introduced centralized bureaucratic systems that were often detached from local contexts and needs. This centralized approach ignored the diversity and complexities of local communities and hindered effective governance at the grassroots level.
Cultural assimilation	Colonizers imposed their own legal and administrative frameworks, which often clashed with local cultures and norms. This led to a loss of cultural identity and a sense of alienation among indigenous populations.
Economic exploitation	Colonial powers exploited South Africa's resources for their own benefit, leading to economic inequality and dependency. The extraction of resources and wealth accumulation were often controlled by colonizers, leaving local communities with limited economic agency.
Limited participation and representation	Indigenous populations were excluded from decision-making processes and administrative roles. This lack of representation hindered the development of policies and practices that aligned with the needs and aspirations of the majority of South Africans.
Educational disparities	Colonizers prioritized education for white settlers, while limiting access to education for indigenous populations. This disparity in education perpetuated social and economic inequalities and limited the potential for upward mobility within public administration.
Land dispossession	Land was taken away from indigenous communities and allocated to white settlers. The dispossession of land had far-reaching consequences, including displacement, loss of livelihoods, and social disintegration.
Legacy of corruption	Colonial administrators often operated without proper oversight, which sometimes led to corruption and exploitation of power. This legacy of corruption and lack of accountability continues to affect public administration in post-colonial South Africa.
Social fragmentation:	Colonization led to the fragmentation of traditional social structures, resulting in the breakdown of communal bonds and the weakening of social cohesion. This fragmentation has posed challenges to building a unified and inclusive public administration system.

Source: Adapted from Seekings (2020)

It is significant to remember that South African society, particularly its public administration, has been negatively impacted by colonization for a very long time. Decolonizing higher education institutions, and the public administration curriculum in particular, is crucial in the setting of South Africa. Decolonization and the realignment of higher education curricula have been major challenges in South Africa since apartheid ended in 1994, according to Du Plessis (2021). Decolonizing schools and universities meant taking into account those who had been excluded from apartheid in the past, choosing to embrace and acknowledge their own cultures, narrating their own histories, reading books written by African authors, and managing institutions using

African values rather than Eurocentric ones. Du Plessis (2021) also emphasized that the decolonization of these institutions will initiate a much wider reform process that will ultimately impact the entirety of South Africa. Universities and educational institutions need to set the groundwork for addressing emerging issues such as shifting demographics, rising migration, evolving knowledge markets, new technologies, and quickly expanding fields of study. In order to actualize decolonization in higher education, it is thus intended to "promote continued dialogue and reflexivity" (North, 2006, p. 507) through an examination of the decolonization of higher education curriculum through the process of repositioning public administration in South Africa. In addition, we hope that this review will stimulate thought and innovation among educators, learners, administrators, scholars, and policymakers on the decolonization of curriculum and pedagogy, as well as the obstacles encountered in this process.

3.2.2. Decolonising and repositioning public administration in South Africa

In recent years, South African higher education institutions have taken steps to decolonize their curriculum through various initiatives, such as curriculum reviews, the development of new courses and programs, and the inclusion of more diverse voices and perspectives in teaching and research. The decolonization movement advocates for a curriculum that is more reflective of the diversity of South Africa's population, including its history, culture, languages, and social experiences. This includes incorporating the perspectives and contributions of marginalized groups, such as women, people of colour, and indigenous communities, into the curriculum (Ajani, O.A & Gamede, 2021). However, there is still much work to be done to fully decolonize the education system and ensure that all students have access to a curriculum that is inclusive and representative of their own identities and experiences. According to Shahjahan et al. (2022), questions of Indigenous sovereignty, knowledge/power relations, cultural autonomy and erasure, economic and public administration dependence, exploitation, and underdevelopment gained more traction in the decolonization process after many colonized nation-states gained their independence between the 1940s and 1960s.

Furthermore, during this time, intersections between the growth of Garveyism, Rastafari, and Négritude in the Anglophone and Francophone spheres, respectively, gave rise to the question of Pan-Africanism, which was later informed by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. Therefore, in South Africa, the decolonization and repositioning of higher education curricula have become a significant debate since the end of apartheid in 1994 (Ajani & Gamede, 2021). Mostly, academic debates are emerging about the decolonisation and repositioning of public administration from several schools of public administration in the country. As a result, efforts to decolonize higher education have accelerated, with a particular focus on the curriculum. Higher educational institutions in South Africa appear to place a great value on decolonizing and repositioning public administration along with the minds of its students. Sayed et al. (2017) emphasized that students' current political activism throughout South Africa has revitalized the decolonization of the curriculum. According to Ajani and Gamede (2021), decolonizing university curricula and academic culture may lead to the intended social reform at the institutions. Nelson Mandela famously said, "The most powerful weapon we can use to change the world is education" (Du Plessis, 2021). Decolonizing colleges and universities are therefore necessary to provide students with the skills they need to survive the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

There have been demands to decolonize universities, reshape the curriculum, and try to do away with the socioeconomic class system since the turn of the century. These programs aim to give all students, regardless of race, inexpensive access to a top-notch education and to decolonize the curriculum and institutional culture (Du Plessis, 2021). Given the foregoing, decolonizing educational institutions means reading literature written by African authors, sharing personal histories, appreciating and celebrating local cultures, and creating policies and procedures based on African cultural values rather than Eurocentric ones (Du Plessis, 2021). Decolonizing the public administration curriculum, according to Nzewi and Maramura (2021), is about acknowledging that there are other legitimate approaches to studying and practicing public administration, not about discounting Western expertise or viewpoints. It's about recognizing past wrongs, encouraging diversity, and giving pupils a more well-rounded and pertinent education. Furthermore, Nzewi and Maramura (2021) contended that conventional theories of public administration have frequently been grounded on Western viewpoints, with minimal attention paid to non-Western societies and their particular difficulties. Recognizing how power relationships and colonial legacies have shaped public administration practices is essential to decolonization. Examining the historical background of public administration in colonized countries as well as the ways in which colonial structures still affect public service delivery and governance are part of this. Indigenous knowledge systems can also be incorporated into the curriculum to counter the individualistic and profit-driven emphasis of many Western theories. These systems place a high weight on collaborative decision-making and sustainable practices (Ajani & Gamede, 2021).

Accordingly, the significance of curriculum decolonization in the local context is for understanding and resolving challenges facing public administration. This requires rejecting universalizing procedures in favor of context-specific techniques that account for small distinctions in the political, social, and cultural characteristics of different civilizations (Nzewi and Maramura, 2021). It is essential to include indigenous scholars, practitioners, and community leaders in the curriculum building process when repositioning public administration via a decolonial lens (Du Plessis, 2021). Their viewpoints and experiences can offer insightful guidance that will help public administration education change to become more diverse, inclusive, and sensitive to the needs of underserved areas. Consequently, it's critical to recognize that South African culture,

particularly its public administration, has been permanently impacted by these detrimental repercussions of colonization. There are various justifications for the significance of decolonizing the public administration curriculum in South Africa. The justifications for decolonizing South Africa's public administration curriculum are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Reasons for decolonizing the public administration curriculum in South Africa.

Incentive for Decolonizing public administration curriculum.	Understanding Reasons for decolonizing the public administration curriculum in South Africa
Historical Legacy of Colonization	Due to the long history of colonization and apartheid in South Africa, racial and socioeconomic inequality was maintained through the use of public administration and educational institutions. The goal of decolonization is to address the injustices and biases that were ingrained in these systems. South Africa's social, political, and economic systems have been greatly impacted by the country's complicated history of colonization and apartheid. Because of these colonial and apartheid legacies, there may be historical injustices and current imbalances that are not sufficiently addressed in traditional curricula.
Representation, diversity, inclusivity and	Decolonization seeks to ensure that the curriculum reflects the diversity of South Africa's population, including marginalized groups such as Black South Africans, women, and indigenous communities. This can lead to more inclusive and representative public administration practices. Traditional curricula often reflect Western perspectives and fail to adequately represent the diverse voices, experiences, and knowledge systems of indigenous and non-Western communities in South Africa. Decolonizing the curriculum can help incorporate a broader range of viewpoints and approaches, giving a more accurate representation of the country's population.
Relevance to local context	A curriculum that is decolonized takes into account the specific challenges, needs, and aspirations of South Africa. It ensures that public administrators are better prepared to address local issues and contribute to the development of the country. Many traditional curricula are designed in Western countries and may not be fully relevant to the specific challenges and needs of South Africa's public administration. By decolonizing the curriculum, educators can ensure that the content and methodologies are tailored to address the unique context of South Africa.
Critical thinking and multicultural awareness	Decolonization encourages critical thinking and the examination of historical narratives, power structures, and biases. This helps students and future public administrators become more aware of the complexities of South Africa's history and society, fostering a multicultural and empathetic perspective.
Global perspective	A decolonized curriculum can equip South African public administrators to engage effectively in international contexts while representing their own unique perspectives and experiences. It helps bridge the gap between global and local knowledge.
An African curriculum	Encouragement of higher education institutions to adopt a decolonizing strategy that recognizes the pedagogical value of indigenous knowledge in public administration is crucial to change the narrative of the African curriculum in the twenty-first century. The aforementioned statement validates the fundamentals of education within the framework of indigenous knowledge, serving as a transformative instrument that advances alternative educational concepts.
Acknowledging the indigenous knowledge systems	Knowledge was established throughout the colonial era, influenced by the historical experiences of the major Western countries. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) aim to question the West-dominated processes of knowledge formation by decolonizing the curriculum. IKS also want to promote the discussion of existential boundaries between democracy and epistemology. Indigenous knowledge is specific and informed by the local conditions since it is produced around the particular conditions of people in a given geographical area. Indigenous knowledge systems have played a significant role in facilitating the transformation of scientific discourse and in igniting the fruitful discussion of how knowledge systems can be sustainable in a post-colonial era. Furthermore, indigenous knowledge systems are grounded in personal and historical experiences that have been established over time and are continually developed with every incoming experience.

Social justice and equity	Decolonization is fundamentally linked to the pursuit of social justice and equity. It seeks to challenge and dismantle structures that perpetuate inequality and discrimination, both in education and in public administration.
Empowerment	Through a decolonized curriculum, students are empowered to question, challenge, and transform existing systems and policies. They become active agents of change in the public sector, advocating for policies that promote equality and justice.
Sustainable development	Public administrators play a critical role in implementing policies related to sustainable development. A decolonized curriculum can encourage a more holistic and locally informed approach to sustainability, taking into account environmental, social, and economic factors.
Global recognition, citizenship and collaboration	As decolonization efforts gain recognition, South African public administrators may find it easier to collaborate with international partners who value diverse perspectives and equitable practices. Decolonizing the curriculum can foster a sense of global citizenship by promoting an understanding of how colonial histories have shaped not only South Africa but also the broader world. This can lead to greater empathy and cooperation across cultures.
Long-Term transformation	Decolonizing the public administration curriculum is not just about changing course content but also about transforming teaching methods, assessment practices, and institutional culture. This transformation contributes to the long-term development of South Africa.
Empowerment and Agency	Decolonizing the curriculum can empower students by giving them a deeper understanding of their own history, culture, and agency. It encourages critical thinking and the ability to challenge existing power structures and inequities.
Addressing Power Dynamics	The colonial experience often involved the imposition of power dynamics that favored certain groups over others. Decolonizing the curriculum can help challenge these power dynamics and create a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.
Policy and Governance Innovation	By incorporating diverse perspectives and local knowledge systems, decolonized curricula can lead to more innovative approaches to policy and governance that are better suited to South Africa's unique challenges.
Social Cohesion	In a diverse country like South Africa, a decolonized curriculum can contribute to social cohesion by promoting understanding, respect, and collaboration among different cultural and ethnic groups.

Source: Adapted from Nzewi and Maramura (2021), Du Plessis (2021) and Ajani & Gamede (2021).

Table 3 shows that decolonizing the public administration curriculum is about acknowledging historical injustices, fostering inclusivity, and creating a more balanced and relevant educational experience for students.

3.2.3. Understanding the key aspects of the decolonization process within higher education in South Africa

According to Gram-Hanssen et al. (2021), decolonization is the ongoing process of identifying and destroying exploitative and oppressive relationships between colonizing and colonized societies in ways that strengthen the latter's ability to uphold cultural integrity and exercise political and socioeconomic self-determination. It also alludes to the dismantling of colonial beliefs and presumptions among colonizing as well as colonized individuals and organizations. Indigenous worldviews, knowledge systems, and paradigms must be acknowledged and given legitimacy in order to address such an issue. Consequently, it is important to recognize that African chiefdoms, kingdoms, cultural institutions, economies, and knowledge hubs were deconstructed and decentred by colonialists. This deconstruction involved formalizing the creation of a knowledge hub that propagated the idea that "Africans will always lack history, strong economies, democracy, and intelligence" (Hansen 1977). According to Nzewi and Maramura (2021), Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) have been influential in enabling the transformation of the scientific discourse and piloting the productive engagement of how knowledge systems can be sustainable in a post-colonial era. Therefore, the core of IKS, which is a crucial component of curriculum deconstruction, stands for the notion that home cultures ought to be nurtured and preserved in order to facilitate the decolonization of Africa. To do this, alternative knowledge systems that derive their correctness from the historical development of the oppressed—rather than the oppressor—would need to be formed and adopted. According to Nzewi and Maramura (2021), the rationale behind the resurrection of African IKS is that, while being persistent, African knowledge systems have been mostly overlooked in contemporary knowledge circles. As a result, incorporating IKS will be crucial to decolonizing the curriculum by offering substitute frameworks for knowledge that break with the Western conception of knowledge. Nzewi and Maramura (2021), for example, claim that the sense and meaning of an indigenous African perspective demonstrates the ongoing legacy of knowledge transfer and skills in African knowledge systems.

As an example, the mother musicians demonstrate the explicit theory and systematic knowledge transfer possibilities visible and needed in African IKS by showcasing the formal, systematic, and compositional principles of the tuned drum row music kinds. The question then becomes, can this be mirrored in Public Administration? Nzewi and Maramura (2021) argue that it can; to be sure, there has to be a strategic refocusing of the Public Administration curriculum, starting with the intellectual protection of existing culturally relevant history and uniquely local practices of governance. In this case, the knowledge base exists, albeit in need of acknowledgement, intellectual protection, funding, and infrastructure for knowledge transfer. Table 4 gives an overview of the main elements of the decolonization process within South African higher education. It also emphasizes the need to provide the infrastructure for knowledge transfer by providing knowledge strands and governance settings grounded in indigenous knowledge.

Table 4. Key aspects/factors of the decolonization process within higher education in South Africa.

Key aspects of the decolonization process	Understanding the Key aspects of the decolonization process within higher education in South Africa
Historical Context and colonial legacy	South Africa has a history of colonization and apartheid, which has left a legacy of racial and social inequalities. The process of decolonization in higher education acknowledges this history and seeks to redress its effects. Understanding the historical context of colonization and apartheid is essential to identify how these systems have influenced the development of the curriculum. Scholars emphasize the need to acknowledge the perpetuation of Western epistemologies, narratives, and structures that have marginalized indigenous knowledge and experiences.
Contextual relevance and application	A decolonized curriculum should connect theory to practical realities. Integrating case studies and examples from South African public administration can help students apply theoretical concepts to real-world challenges.
Inclusive epistemologies and knowledge systems	Decolonization involves incorporating indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems into the curriculum. This requires recognizing the value of oral traditions, indigenous languages, and local practices as valid sources of knowledge. Integrating African philosophies and worldviews can enrich the curriculum and provide alternative perspectives.
Critical pedagogy and reflexivity	Decolonization requires critical pedagogical approaches that encourage students to question existing power structures and knowledge hierarchies. Educators should promote reflexivity, enabling students to critically analyze their own biases and assumptions.
Curriculum Transformation	Decolonizing the curriculum involves revising course content, reading lists, and teaching materials to incorporate diverse voices, perspectives, and knowledge systems. This may include incorporating indigenous knowledge, African scholarship, and post-colonial theories.
Language and communication	Language: Language is a critical aspect of decolonization. In South Africa, the use of indigenous languages alongside English and Afrikaans is promoted to ensure that education is more accessible to a broader range of students. Language plays a pivotal role in decolonization efforts. Promoting indigenous languages in education can foster better understanding and appreciation of local knowledge. However, challenges related to language proficiency and availability of resources should be addressed.
Representation	Ensuring that the faculty and staff are diverse and represent the demographics of South Africa is crucial. This promotes different viewpoints and experiences within the education system.
Research and scholarship	Encouraging research that addresses local issues and contributes to the development of South African society is a key component. This includes supporting research on public administration topics that are relevant to the country's specific needs.
Community engagement	Higher education institutions are encouraged to engage with local communities and address real-world challenges. This not only provides students with practical experience but also helps in building stronger ties between academia and society.
Student Involvement (Engagement and participation)	Students often play a vital role in advocating for decolonization and pushing for changes in the curriculum and institutional practices. Their voices and activism are influential in this process. Involving students in curriculum design and decision-making processes can enhance their sense of ownership and agency. Student input can ensure that the curriculum is relevant and responsive to their needs.

Interdisciplinary and intersectional approaches	Decolonization efforts should encourage interdisciplinary and intersectional perspectives. Exploring the intersections of race, gender, class, and other identities can provide a more comprehensive understanding of public administration dynamics.
Evaluation and Assessment	Developing fair and inclusive assessment methods that don't perpetuate bias is essential. Decolonization efforts often involve re-evaluating how students are assessed and ensuring that these methods are culturally sensitive. Traditional assessment methods may not align with decolonized pedagogies. Rethinking assessment to value diverse forms of knowledge presentation, such as oral presentations or storytelling, can support decolonial learning objectives.
Representation and diversity	The curriculum should reflect the diverse experiences, cultures, and histories of South Africa's population. This includes including content on various ethnic groups, gender identities, languages, and socio-economic backgrounds to counteract Eurocentric biases.
Policy Frameworks (Faculty development and training)	The South African government has played a significant role in promoting decolonization in higher education through policy frameworks and funding initiatives that support transformation efforts. Educators need support and training to effectively decolonize the curriculum. Professional development programs can help faculty members reorient their teaching methods, update their content, and create inclusive learning environments.
Challenges	Decolonization efforts in South African higher education face various challenges, including resistance from some quarters, resource constraints, and the need for ongoing commitment and investment.

Source: Adapted from Nzewi and Maramura (2021) and Ajani and Gamede (2021).

The important elements to take into account when decolonizing South Africa's public administration curriculum are shown in Table 4. According to Ajani and Gamede (2021), decolonizing education is a multifaceted, difficult task. Table 4 lists some of the most important features of South Africa's decolonization process in higher education. Decolonizing education, then, to represent the different settings of South Africa, is a process that involves clarifying and comprehending essential difficult ideas that can impact decolonizing education, such as de-racialization, Africanization, Eurocentrism, Westernization, Colonialism, and Coloniality. Decolonizing higher education, as previously mentioned, entails rediscovering and decolonizing the bodies of knowledge that have evolved into immutable institutions and learning experiences (Sayed et al., 2017). Mheta, Lungu, and Govender (2018) assert that the Eurocentric curricula being taught in South African colleges mean that the time for decolonizing education is long overdue. Thus, in order to use their own reality as teaching opportunities, South African academics and students must have the ability to theorize their own circumstances in intricate relationships to others (the outside world). It is imperative to acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy to decolonization in South African higher education. There may be variations in the approaches and implementation schedules amongst universities. The overall goal is to establish a more inclusive and fair educational system that takes into account the various cultural and socioeconomic settings found in the nation while equipping students to deal with the particular issues that South Africa will face in the twenty-first century. Thus, the decolonization of higher education curricula may have an impact on how South Africa's public administration changes. Table 5 presents an overview of the potential effects of decolonizing higher education curricula on public administration in South Africa.

Table 5. Decolonization of higher education curriculum impact on public administration in South Africa

Decolonization of higher education curriculum	Impact public administration in South Africa
Incorporating Diverse Perspectives	Decolonizing the curriculum involves incorporating diverse voices and perspectives that were previously marginalized or ignored. In the context of public administration, this would mean recognizing and integrating African, indigenous, and other non-Western theories and practices of governance, leadership, and public service. It would challenge the notion that Western models are universally superior.
Contextualizing Knowledge	A decolonized curriculum would emphasize the importance of understanding the local context. Public administration practices should be taught and adapted in ways that take into account the unique history, culture, and challenges faced by South Africa. This might involve case studies, examples, and discussions that are relevant to the country's specific circumstances.
Addressing power dynamics	Decolonization involves questioning power dynamics and hierarchies. Public administration education should encourage critical thinking about

	how power is distributed and exercised within administrative systems. This includes analyzing the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, and how they continue to influence structures of authority and decision-making.
Critical pedagogy	Adopting critical pedagogy principles encourages students to think critically about the content they are learning and its implications. This could involve questioning traditional assumptions about governance and exploring alternative paradigms that emerge from African philosophies and experiences.
Language and cultural relevance	Language is a powerful tool for both communication and cultural preservation. Incorporating local languages and terminology in teaching materials and classroom discussions can make the curriculum more accessible and relevant to South African students. It also recognizes the importance of indigenous knowledge systems.
Community engagement	Decolonizing public administration education could involve partnerships with local communities. Students could engage in practical projects that address real community needs, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in a meaningful way and fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the people they will serve.
Interdisciplinary approach	Decolonization often calls for an interdisciplinary approach. Public administration education could draw from history, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines to provide a more comprehensive understanding of governance and public service within the broader societal context.
Ethics and social justice	Decolonizing the curriculum in public administration should emphasize ethical considerations and social justice principles. Students should be encouraged to critically examine the ethical dimensions of policy decisions and administrative actions, particularly in relation to historically marginalized groups.
Decentering Eurocentrism	Traditional Eurocentric perspectives may have dominated administrative theory and practice. A decolonized curriculum would challenge this dominance by presenting a more balanced view that integrates contributions from various cultures and regions.
Empowerment and agency	Ultimately, a decolonized curriculum in public administration should empower students to become agents of change within their communities and institutions. It ought to provide them with the means to confront systematic injustices and make a positive impact on more inclusive and equitable political structures.

Source: Adapted from Makiva et al (2022), Nzewi and Maramura (2021) and Gram-Hanssen et al (2021)

It is therefore argued that a decolonized curriculum could emphasize the importance of understanding the local context. Public administration practices should be taught and adapted in ways that take into account the unique history, culture, and challenges faced by South Africa. This might involve case studies, examples, and discussions that are relevant to the country's specific circumstances. In addition, decolonizing public administration education could involve partnerships with local communities. Students learning public administration could engage in practical projects that address real community needs, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in a meaningful way and fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the people they will serve. However, the challenges in creating a more equitable and effective public administration system in South Africa is a profound endeavour.

3.2.4. Challenges in creating a more equitable and effective public administration system in South Africa

According to Ajani and Gamede (2021), decolonization of higher education is a controversial subject that needs more discussions and well-known contributions from academics in South Africa. Therefore, efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness, particularly with regard to decolonizing and repositioning public administration, may encounter significant obstacles in South Africa's quest to establish a more equal and effective public administration system. The implementation of policies could be one of the major obstacles to decolonizing higher education curricula and repositioning public administration in South Africa, according to Wessels et al. (2021) and Twala (2017). According to Du Plessis (2021), there are still many obstacles in the way of building a more equitable and efficient public administration system in South Africa that genuinely meets the varied needs of the country, despite efforts having been made to address some of the issues related to such a system since apartheid ended in 1994. In South Africa, the process of decolonizing public administration curricula and higher education is still continuing and intricate, involving tackling the historical legacies of apartheid and colonization (Christie, 2020). Decolonizing curricula, according to Ajani and Gamede (2021), is a methodical

process that could be challenging. As a result, even while progress has been made, there are still a number of obstacles to overcome. Table 6 lists a few of the difficulties decolonization has brought to South Africa's public administration curriculum.

Table 6. Potential challenges facing decolonization and repositioning of public administration curriculum in South Africa

Potential challenges facing decolonization and repositioning of public administration curriculum in South Africa	Description of challenges facing decolonization and repositioning of public administration curriculum in South Africa
Legacy of colonization and apartheid	South Africa's history of colonization and apartheid has left a deep imprint on its education system and curriculum. Decolonization efforts face the challenge of dismantling deeply ingrained Eurocentric perspectives and biases that continue to shape the curriculum.
Lack of diverse perspectives	The curriculum in higher education, including public administration, often lacks diverse perspectives from African and indigenous knowledge systems. Decolonization aims to incorporate these perspectives to provide a more comprehensive and contextually relevant understanding of governance and public administration.
Institutional resistance	Many institutions may resist change due to concerns about the disruption of established curriculum structures, potential loss of prestige, and resistance from faculty members who are accustomed to traditional teaching approaches.
Lack of representation	Both faculty and students from marginalized backgrounds might be underrepresented in higher education, including public administration programs. Decolonization efforts should aim to increase representation and ensure that diverse voices are heard and valued.
Resources and training	Implementing decolonized curricula requires appropriate resources and training for educators. This might include curriculum development, pedagogical training, and opportunities for educators to engage with decolonial theory and practices.
Standardization and accreditation	Integrating new perspectives and content into the curriculum can raise questions about how to maintain educational standards and ensure that graduates are equipped with the necessary skills. Balancing decolonization with accreditation requirements is a challenge.
Balancing global and local relevance	Public administration is often taught with global frameworks in mind. Decolonization efforts must strike a balance between incorporating global best practices and addressing the specific needs and contexts of South Africa and other African countries.
Decolonization as a token gesture	There is a risk that decolonization efforts might be seen as symbolic gestures rather than substantive changes. Meaningful transformation requires more than just surface-level changes and should involve a re-evaluation of teaching methodologies, content, and institutional practices.
Community engagement	Decolonizing higher education and public administration should involve engagement with local communities to ensure that the curriculum aligns with their needs and priorities. This requires building strong community partnerships and incorporating their feedback.
Political and economic pressures	The higher education landscape is influenced by political and economic considerations. Decolonization efforts might face challenges from competing priorities and limited funding.

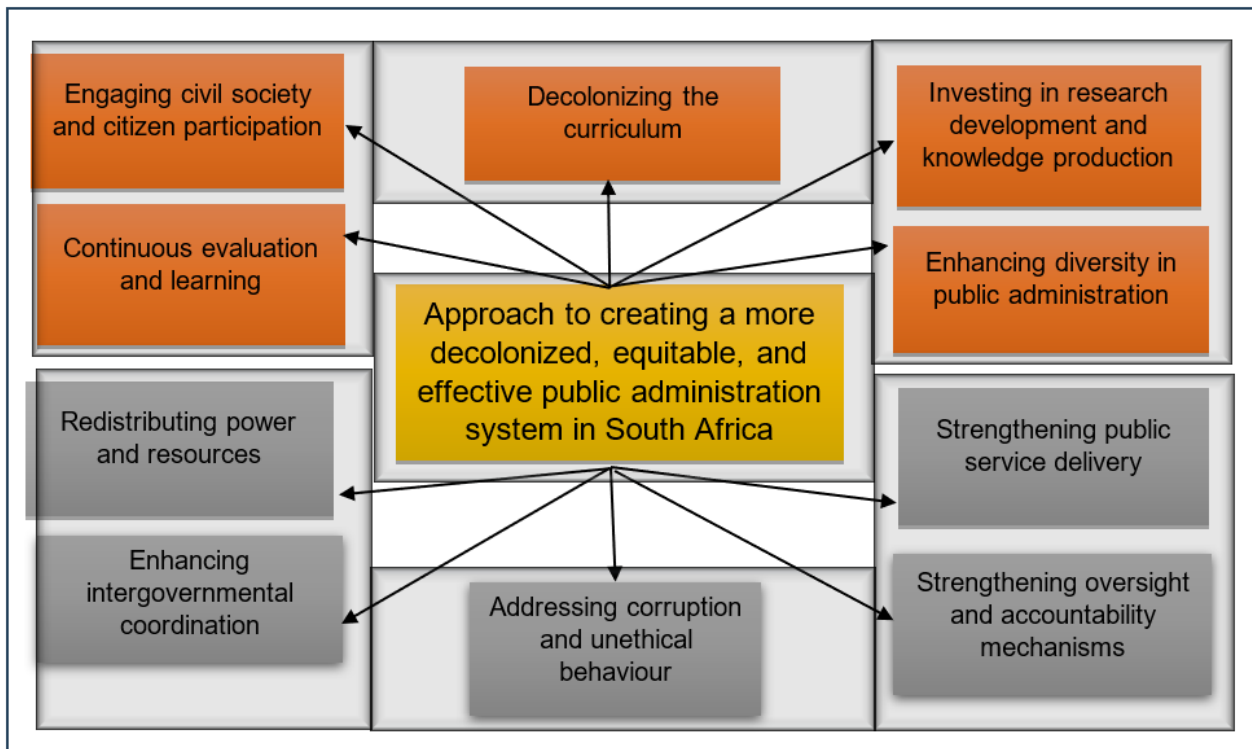
Source: Adapted from Du Plessis (2021), Christie (2020), and Ajani and Gamede (2021).

To address the potential challenges facing decolonization and repositioning of public administration curriculum in South Africa. To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed that involves collaboration between institutions, government bodies, educators, students, and communities. It requires ongoing dialogue, engagement with decolonial theorists, and a commitment to reshaping education to be more inclusive, relevant, and reflective of the country's diverse history and identity (Nzewi and Maramura, 2021). Decolonizing the public administration curriculum in South Africa is a complex and multifaceted process that requires careful consideration of various factors. The legacy of colonialism and apartheid has left a lasting impact on education and knowledge production, and efforts to decolonize the curriculum aim to rectify historical injustices, promote inclusivity, and foster a more representative and contextually relevant education system (Ajani and Gamede, 2021).

3.2.5. Approaches to creating a more decolonized, equitable and effective public administration system in South Africa

Creating a more decolonized, equitable, and effective public administration system in South Africa would require a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach. Here are some potential strategies:

Figure 1. Approach to creating a more decolonized, equitable, and effective public administration system in South Africa



Source: Adapted from Du Plessis (2021), Christie (2020), and Ajani and Gamede (2021).

Earlier in table 5, the impact of decolonising the higher education and repositioning public administration curriculum in South Africa was illustrated. Accordingly, the approach to creating a more decolonised, equitable, and effective public administration system in South Africa will require investing in research and development and knowledge production; continuous evaluation and learning; engaging civil society and citizen participation; and enhancing diversity in public administration. Consequently, an effective best practice of this approach could result in strengthening public service delivery; strengthening oversight mechanisms; enhancing intergovernmental coordination; addressing corruption and unethical behaviour and ensuring equitable and effective redistribution of power and resources. The process and understanding the ways in which a more decolonized, equitable, and effective public administration system could operate in South Africa are described as follow (Du Plessis, 2021; Christie, 2020; and Ajani and Gamede, 2021):

- **Decolonizing the curriculum:** Integrate indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the education and training of public administrators. This will help disrupt the Euro-centric bias and ensure a more diverse understanding of governance and administration.
- **Investing in research and knowledge production:** Promote research and scholarship in public administration, with a particular focus on decolonial and equitable practices. Support the development of local research institutions and capacity-building initiatives to generate knowledge that is relevant to the South African context.
- **Continuous evaluation and learning:** Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of public administration reforms and policies. Regularly review and revise strategies based on evidence and feedback from stakeholders to ensure continuous improvement and responsiveness to emerging challenges.
- **Engaging civil society and citizen participation:** Foster active citizen engagement and involvement in the decision-making processes of public administration. Encourage civil society organizations to play a greater role in monitoring and evaluating government programs, as well as holding public administrators accountable.
- **Enhancing diversity in public administration:** Actively promote diversity and inclusivity in the recruitment and selection processes for public administrators. Adopt affirmative action measures to boost historically underrepresented groups' representation at all levels of public administration, such as women, individuals with disabilities, and black South Africans.
- **Addressing corruption and unethical behaviour:** Strengthen mechanisms to tackle corruption within the public administration system. This could involve the establishment of an independent anti-corruption

body, stricter enforcement of existing legislation, and whistleblower protection programs. The focus should be on transparency, accountability, and creating a culture of ethical behaviour.

- **Redistributing power and resources:** Evaluate and reform the existing structures and systems of governance to ensure a more equitable distribution of power, resources, and decision-making. This could involve devolving power to local and community levels, promoting participatory governance processes, and implementing policies that address historical injustices and socio-economic disparities.
- **Strengthening public service delivery:** Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery through the use of technology, data analytics, and evidence-based decision-making. Invest in training and capacity building programs for public administrators to enhance their technical and managerial skills.
- **Enhancing intergovernmental coordination:** Improve coordination and collaboration between different spheres of government (national, provincial, and local) to ensure coherent policies, effective service delivery, and resource allocation. Strengthen communication channels and streamline administrative processes to avoid duplication and promote efficiency.
- **Strengthening oversight and accountability mechanisms:** Establish stronger oversight mechanisms, such as an independent ombudsman office, to monitor and enforce compliance with ethical standards, legislation, and administrative procedures. This will help ensure public administrators operate in a transparent and accountable manner.

By considering the above, it is important to note that implementing these approaches will possibly require political will, financial resources, and sustained commitment from both government, education institutions and civil society. Collaboration and partnerships between different stakeholders will be vital in shaping a more decolonized, equitable, and effective public administration system in South Africa. Therefore, repositioning public administration in South Africa after decolonizing higher education institutions could involve a range of strategies and considerations. Figure 2 illustrates some key steps that can be taken.

Figure 2. key steps to repositioning public administration in South Africa after decolonizing higher education institutions.

Policy reforms	Advocate for policy reforms that prioritize decolonization and transformation in public administration. Engage with government agencies, policymakers, and professional bodies to shape policies that promote inclusive and contextually sensitive public administration practices.
Strengthen community engagement.	Establish stronger ties between public administration programs and local communities to ensure meaningful collaboration, learning, and development. Encourage students and faculty to engage with communities, identify their needs, and work together to address them through practical and contextually relevant projects.
Decolonized curriculum	Develop a curricular framework that critically examines the historical context of public administration in South Africa, including its colonial and apartheid legacies. Introduce African and indigenous knowledge systems, theories, and practices to challenge Eurocentric assumptions and address local contexts and challenges.
Inclusion and diversity	Ensure that public administration programs and institutions embrace diversity and inclusivity in their curriculum, faculty, and student body. This involves incorporating different perspectives, knowledge systems, and voices from various racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
Redefining leadership models	Promote leadership models in public administration that are based on African values, ethics, and Ubuntu principles. Emphasize servant leadership, community engagement, and participatory decision-making processes, which are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.
Expand research and knowledge production	Encourage research and knowledge production that critically interrogate the impact of colonialism and post-colonialism on public administration in South Africa. Foster research collaborations and partnerships with indigenous communities, civil society organizations, and government agencies to generate context-specific knowledge and solutions.
Stakeholder engagement	Establish platforms for regular dialogue and collaboration between higher education institutions, government agencies, civil society organizations, and communities. Engaging stakeholders in the co-creation of policies, programs, and initiatives ensures that public administration aligns with the needs and aspirations of the broader society.
Faculty transformation	Enhance faculty diversity by attracting and retaining individuals from diverse backgrounds, including scholars with expertise in decolonial and indigenous perspectives. Invest in faculty development programs that promote critical pedagogy, cultural competence, and research that challenges dominant paradigms.

Source: Adapted from Nzewi and Maramura (2021) and Ajani and Gamede (2021)

Figure 2 presents the key steps to repositioning public administration in South Africa after decolonizing higher education institutions. The question that most researchers could be asking is that **how can public administration** be repositioned in South Africa, after decolonizing higher education institutions? The attempt to repositioning public administration in South Africa after decolonizing higher education institutions will involve a range of strategies and considerations illustrated in figure 2. The understanding of the key steps that can be taken in that process is as follows (Nzewi and Maramura, 2021 and Ajani and Gamede, 2021):

Step 1. Policy reforms: Advocate for policy reforms that prioritize decolonization and transformation in public administration. Engage with government agencies, policymakers, and professional bodies to shape policies that promote inclusive and contextually sensitive public administration practices.

Step 2. Strengthen community engagement: Establish stronger ties between public administration programs and local communities to ensure meaningful collaboration, learning, and development. Encourage students and faculty to engage with communities, identify their needs, and work together to address them through practical and contextually relevant projects.

Step 3. Decolonized curriculum: Develop a curricular framework that critically examines the historical context of public administration in South Africa, including its colonial and apartheid legacies. Introduce African and indigenous knowledge systems, theories, and practices to challenge Eurocentric assumptions and address local contexts and challenges.

Step 4. Inclusion and diversity: Ensure that public administration programs and institutions embrace diversity and inclusivity in their curriculum, faculty, and student body. This involves incorporating different perspectives, knowledge systems, and voices from various racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Step 5. Redefining leadership models: Promote leadership models in public administration that are based on African values, ethics, and Ubuntu principles. Emphasize servant leadership, community engagement, and participatory decision-making processes, which are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse communities.

Step 6. Expand research and knowledge production: Encourage research and knowledge production that critically interrogate the impact of colonialism and post-colonialism on public administration in South Africa. Foster research collaborations and partnerships with indigenous communities, civil society organizations, and government agencies to generate context-specific knowledge and solutions.

Step 7. Stakeholder engagement: Establish platforms for regular dialogue and collaboration between higher education institutions, government agencies, civil society organizations, and communities. Engaging stakeholders in the co-creation of policies, programs, and initiatives ensures that public administration aligns with the needs and aspirations of the broader society.

Step 8. Faculty transformation: Enhance faculty diversity by attracting and retaining individuals from diverse backgrounds, including scholars with expertise in decolonial and indigenous perspectives. Invest in faculty development programs that promote critical pedagogy, cultural competence, and research that challenges dominant paradigms.

Inconsidering these steps, South Africa can reposition public administration after decolonizing higher education institutions, creating a more inclusive, responsive, and effective public sector that reflects the country's diverse heritage and challenges.

3.2.6. The necessity of decolonising higher education curriculum and repositioning public administration in South Africa

The demand for decolonizing education has grown to be a pillar of university students' campaigns for recognition across the continent. Students throughout the university sector mobilized around their demand for free education and stated that, given what they perceived to be their exposure to Eurocentric, racist, and sexist knowledge at untransformed institutions, university knowledge and curricula needed to change (Fataar, 2018). Accordingly, decolonising higher education curriculum and repositioning public administration in the South African education system is imperative for ensuring a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally relevant learning environment for all students. The effects of colonialism and apartheid continue to be felt in South Africa, and decolonising the curriculum is a crucial step towards addressing the historical injustices and biases that have shaped the education system. By decolonising the curriculum, we can challenge the Western-centric perspective that often dominates academic discourse and incorporate indigenous knowledge systems, diverse perspectives, and local experiences into the curriculum. This will not only provide a more holistic and inclusive education for students, but also help to empower marginalized communities and promote social cohesion.

Repositioning public administration within the education system is also essential for preparing students for careers in the public sector and equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to address the complex challenges facing South Africa. Public administration plays a critical role in governance, policy-making, and service delivery, and a curriculum that is tailored to the specific needs of the country can help to produce competent and effective public servants. Furthermore, by repositioning public administration in the education system, we can also promote greater accountability, transparency, and ethical leadership within the public sector. This is particularly important in a country like South Africa, where corruption and maladministration have been widespread in the past (Ajani and Gamede, 2021). By emphasizing principles of good governance,

accountability, and ethical leadership in the curriculum, we can help to foster a new generation of public servants who are committed to serving the public interest. Thus, decolonising higher education curriculum and repositioning public administration in the South African education system are crucial steps towards creating a more inclusive, equitable, and effective education system that is better equipped to address the challenges of the 21st century. By embracing diverse perspectives, promoting indigenous knowledge systems, and fostering ethical leadership, we can help to build a more just and prosperous society for all South Africans.

3.3. CONCLUSION

Decolonizing the mind, decolonizing higher education curriculum, and repositioning of public administration in South Africa are essential aspects that were examined in this paper. From the decolonization of higher education curriculum and the repositioning of public administration in South Africa, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Recognition of historical inequalities: The decolonization of higher education curriculum and the repositioning of public administration in South Africa reflect the recognition of historical inequalities and the need to address them. These initiatives aim to rectify the skewed representation of knowledge and power structures that have perpetuated colonial narratives and excluded marginalized perspectives.
- Emphasis on diversity and inclusivity: The initiatives highlight the importance of embracing diverse voices and perspectives in education and public administration. By decolonizing the curriculum, they seek to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and promote understanding and respect for different cultures, experiences, and ways of knowing.
- Empowerment of previously marginalized groups: The decolonization of higher education curriculum and the repositioning of public administration aim to empower previously marginalized groups, including Black South Africans, women, and other minority communities. These initiatives create space for their knowledge, experiences, and expertise to be recognized, valued, and integrated into the education system and governance structures.
- Redefinition of knowledge and research: Decolonization efforts challenge the dominant Western-centric knowledge paradigm and promote alternative ways of knowing and conducting research. They encourage scholars to explore and value indigenous knowledge, local contexts, and different epistemologies, ultimately enriching the academic discourse and informing policymaking.
- Transformative social change: The decolonization of higher education curriculum and the repositioning of public administration ultimately aim to bring about transformative social change. By challenging colonial legacies and promoting inclusive practices, these initiatives seek to create a more equitable society, eradicate systemic inequalities, and foster greater social justice.
- Addressing the needs of a diverse and multicultural society: South Africa's diverse and multicultural society requires education and public administration that are responsive to its unique challenges and aspirations. The decolonization of curriculum and repositioning of public administration aim to ensure that education and governance systems cater to the needs of all citizens, irrespective of their background, and contribute to nation-building and social cohesion.
- Addressing challenges and holistic approach of public administration in a post-apartheid: In a post-apartheid, higher education institutions were expected to produce graduates who are better equipped to address the unique challenges of public administration. Decolonizing the public administration curriculum in South Africa requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that takes into account historical, cultural, linguistic, and epistemological dimensions. It necessitates collaborative efforts among educators, students, policymakers, and communities to transform education into a more inclusive and relevant experience that addresses the unique challenges and opportunities of the country.

Thus, the decolonization of higher education curriculum and the repositioning of public administration in South Africa demonstrate a commitment to rectify historical injustices, promote inclusivity, develop a curriculum that is more relevant to the needs of South African society while honouring its diverse heritage, empower marginalized communities, reconceptualize knowledge, and bring about transformative social change. In addition, it is essential to note that decolonizing higher education curriculum, especially in the field of public administration, is a complex and ongoing process. It requires collaboration between educators, scholars, students, and communities to redefine the content, methods, and objectives of education in a way that reflects the values and aspirations of post-colonial societies in South Africa. Decolonization of higher education and the repositioning of public administration in South Africa will have to go hand in hand.

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