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**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

decolonization, knowledge, students, deco, curriculum, decolonize, policy, science, academics, epistemic, people, programme, document, concepts, indigenous knowledge, question, western, transformation, epistemological, uncritical

**SPEAKERS**

R4, Luqman Muraina

**Interviewee** 00:00

I record to my computer, I know where it will go on my computer and then I'll send you the I'll send you the recording straight after the meeting. Okay.

**Luqman Muraina** 00:14

Okay. So let me start by introducing myself. Yes. Okay, my name is Luqman Muraina. I'm from Nigeria. Yeah, I'm from Nigeria. So my I'm currently a second year master's student at the Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town. So my research is a is a is on decolonization of higher education curriculum. So I'm looking at the spaces between research, policy and practice, especially in University of Cape Town.

**Interviewee** 00:50

Oh, interesting. Okay, so Policy Research policy and practice. Yeah. So and you're looking at the actual implementation acts at UCT. INJ - Exactly. Right. That's going to be a very important useful thesis, it's a really important issue. Yeah. Okay, sorry. Carry on. Yeah. Okay.

**Luqman Muraina** 01:25

I don't know, if you want to see what a few one or two words about yourself, or do I've read?

**Interviewee** 01:33

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And then I've always been an associate member until last year, in d department. Nice. Yeah. That's me

**Luqman Muraina** 03:26

so I'm sure you also research on decolonization and curriculum.

**Interviewee** 03:34

Yeah, I'm trying to. I'm actually trying to write another editorial. I wrote one last year for a special issue. And I'm trying to think of something new, something new to say. But yeah, I am still very interested in the topic. And I think **that the topic is difficult as it moves from a sort of negative moment of critique to a positive moment of implementation**. I think it's, it's a different challenge.

**Luqman Muraina** 04:05

Yeah, yeah. So my first question, is that what is motivating your research on decolonization?

**Interviewee** 04:14

Okay, what motivates my research was really because I was for 10 years. At UCT, I was director of the \*\*\*\* Programme. And you may or may not know that, that was a kind of it's, I mean, it was an apartheid left over the conceptualization of it. So it was conceptualised in an assimilationist assimilationist deficit model of black students when black students were a minority coming to an historically white University. And I think you know, my time there I very quickly realised that this programme wasn't working because it wasn't properly recognising who the students are, and it wasn't properly recognising what they bring. So it was they were framed as deficit and that impeded their progress. So that that was my motivation, that experience.

**Luqman Muraina** 05:26

Nice, nice, nice. So, so initially, like you do not you're not used to researching on decolonization before the start of that programme?

**Interviewee** 05:37

No, no, I was more doing educational stuff. Like I was interested in. Long ago, I did language policy bilingualism, Academic Literacy, kind of equality, you know, issues more around access. Yeah, exactly. inclusivity diversity, more of those things at a policy and a practical level. I mean, I remember I grew up being at least a generation older. So I grew up you know, sort of thinking of decolonization as a political movement. You know, I was always interested in African history. So I was familiar with the works of, you know, the old greats, like Kwame Nkrumah, Nyerere, Ghandi. You know, that cobrar s**o I always thought decolonization was a political movement. I didn't think of it as an epistemic movement**. Okay, okay. So what has changed? What has changed, I think is the sort of the translation of the Latin American decolonial theorists into English was, I think some of them might write straight into English, but I think the, the Latin American school, I mean, they started writing in the 80s 90s. And it's, and I suppose, of course, I mean, I was aware of their work, because people in African Studies like Nick shepherd, and Harry Garuba, were already teaching this stuff. And I went to some of these seminars, so I was aware of it. And I thought it was really interesting. But of course, it was the student protests. And, you know, for most of us, including myself that, you know, they got it, I think, from people like Harry and from the African Studies centre, and they really put it on the table as a real issue for black students in South Africa. **And I mean, at one level, I think we should be a bit ashamed that we hadn't really taken it up earlier**. I mean, we just knew it was a problem, but we couldn't. I think the problem was too big for us. You know, I think we didn't know how to take on all the academics and all the disciplines, it just felt too powerful. You know, we always thought we were working sort of on the, on the edges on the margins of disciplinarity. We didn't have the guts to take on that power of the disciplines, the western disciplines head on in the way that the students did. You know, they, they went where we should have gone, but we never had the also because we weren't doing it through extra. I mean, the students used what could I call it, they use protest methods, activist methods, you know, us being old, quiet academics, we were always working in committees. We were always working within the formal structures, right. Which they just said To hell with that, you know, so we were a reformist sort of approach, which didn't really begin to go far enough, didn't change much.

**Luqman Muraina** 09:07

Okay, I understand. Thank you. So the next question here is what is your own understanding about decolonization? Sure.

**Interviewee** 09:20

I wish I had a clear, sharp answer. Let me try and be succinct. I think that I understand that as a political and an epistemological challenge. And particularly the epistemological challenge is what is salient in the recent wave. I don't know if it's a second or third wave of decolonial thinking. The epistemological challenge is the challenge about the control, hegemony, arrogance ] of European scholarship, European knowledge production. I mean, you could call it northern white, they all use global north. And the role of the English language of course, so. So my understanding is it's it's that challenge. And so that's the one half that as I called it, the negative moment the critique the ideology critique, which I think is very timely and completely valid. I think what is more challenging is, how do you undo it? How do you undo the dominance of Western knowledge? And what do you put in its place? I think those are challenges that I'm still working through, in my own mind, and I find it not easy to answer those questions.

**Luqman Muraina** 11:02

Oh, nice. Nice, okay, in extention, how do you think, you know, curriculum can come to be on decolonization your while attempting to transform you know, the inbalance and unequal, you know, way of knowledge production the money, so how can this tell in the curriculum,

**Interviewee** 11:28

right. So the way I see it is like this, that in the normal course of events, the way things work normally in the academy is that you first have the knowledge production, so you have to produce the research, you have to produce the knowledge, you know, like a story. And so let's go to the archives people must write people must do research, people must develop new concepts, new theories, new ideas, and then that get that knowledge gets institutionalised or not, okay? So in the normal way, by institutionalisation, I mean, it gets published, it gets collected, stored in the library, it gets legitimated and authorised, and the curriculum is normally the the teaching the communicating of that authorised institutionalised knowledge to learners to students. So you first have the knowledge production, and then you have the curriculum to communicate it down to to the next generation, right. And, of course, then you have the individual teacher in their little classroom or not online webinar or whatever, kind of making it more intimate for particular groups of students. So that's how I see it. So it's almost a hierarchy, from knowledge production, to curriculum, to pedagogy to teaching. I think that what what is happening, which is very challenging, and not easy is because let's just talk about South Africa, because I think every context is different. In South Africa, and say, at UCT, we have a cohort of mostly monolingual, white, English speaking academics, and they don't have the cultural resources to actually produce the new knowledge that decolonization would require. So they can't actually go to the archives and do a search on the black archives or very few of them can. So people like me, we're not qualified, we can read about them in English, right? We can go back. And I mean, we don't even I'm not even talking about the fire now. And you know, what's, what's happened there to the research possibilities. But the point is that we're not the right people to produce the new knowledge as a general statement. And so now we have to rely on the students. But they not yet knowledge producers, Well, certainly not at undergraduate level. And so the hierarchy from knowledge production to curriculum to pedagogy is being that also is being challenged. Because often, if you're serious about decolonizing, you have to ask the students to participate in curriculum design development, you have to ask them to, to participate in using their own languages in the pedagogy, and so on. So it's, it's about a loss of control for the academic, right. They have to give up power to make space because the students have the cultural resources for the to legitimise excluded knowledge. And so the only way you can get it to be brought in is to give more power over, you have to give your power to the students, or share it with the students. And there are lots of complications around that. I mean, you know, assessment is one and so on. But it's a very interesting phenomenon in this country, I think. I think it's different. I mean, in, in the North Americans, the North America's I mean, places like **Canada, the US, they're going crazy about indigenous knowledge. And in Australia, they're going completely, in my view, crazy about indigenous knowledge**, because they've pretty much exterminated it, you know, there's hardly any of it left. And now there's this great kind of guilt trip to find some indigenous elder to come in, and they even creating posts in universities, you know, directors of indigenous knowledge. And I think what worries me is that there's there's a conflation of decolonization with indigenous knowledge, people think that decolonization is the same as bringing indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. And what I would like to do more research, but it's, it's politically very tricky. Is you know, I'm not uncritical, of indigenous knowledge. I mean, it's all different. But I think we can't say that this is great, good, useful knowledge, just because it's indigenous, right? So, so to me, what I'm picking up in places like Canada, with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, they have that call to action for education is, so far, they might, I mean, it might still come. But right now, what I'm reading is a very uncritical approach to indigenous knowledge. Which I think is one of the challenges. It's difficult, because now here I am, you know, of Northern descent, or white settler. And I'm now saying, Oh, you got to be critical about your yoke, you know, to mean that about subordinated knowledge. So it's it's very tricky, and I'm waiting for I think the indigenous groups need to be self critical about their own knowledge. You know, that would be the ideal process. I don't think it's for me to say, how is your knowledge legitimated? Why is it secret? Why does it oppress women? What what what is, you know, it's difficult for me to ask those questions, right? Yeah. Yeah.

**Luqman Muraina** 17:57

Look, yeah. Thank you so much. So in another context, what do you understand as transformation? Sure. Institutional? Yeah. Yeah, yeah higher education, transformation

**Interviewee** 18:11

education. Yeah, it's, that's a difficult question. Luqman, because **it's been such an overused word**. You know, the ANC kind of policymakers grabbed onto it right back in this country. As part of, you know, ever since 1994, even before we were supposed to be trying to transform the system, I think you have to take it as sort of a layered approach. I think that at a policy level, we've got lots of policies about transformation. And at the most personal level, I mean, I'm just telling you my own personal belief, that might not be worth writing down. But if you don't transfer from a person's consciousness, if you don't get a person to think and develop a different worldview, we have to transform consciousness else, at the end of the day, you can have all the policies in the world, you can have all the black faces in powerful positions. But you might even have the, you know, the frightening situation of reproducing the myth of the racialized subject, right, which I think happens in a lot of nativist discourse, discourses. I mean, Steve Biko saved it from happening in black consciousness, but it's easy to go there. Right? I mean, he had a political definition of blackness. But if you shift into a racial definition of blackness or an ethnic definition, in my view, it's no better than a colonial metaphysics, right. So it's So if you can't transform the consciousness of a person not to think racially gendered, whatever, you're not going to transform anything at the end of the day, because you've still got a racialized subject.

**Luqman Muraina** 20:14

Yeah, what model or What i don't know what to call it? What? What opportunity? Maybe does decolonization offer us the opportunity to transform people's conscience, as you put it.

**Interviewee** 20:37

Sorry, just say the question again.

**Luqman Muraina** 20:39

So you are like transformation does not so far has not allow us to like transfer people's consciousness? Yeah, so does decolonization offer us that opportunity?

**Interviewee** 20:52

Thanks. Yes, I get it. No. No, not necessarily. I think I think that's the danger is you. I mean, if you read, which I'm sure you have seen the deco literature, they all people are using a very modernist, strangely enough, what would I call it a modernist conceit. They conceptualising decolonization in a modernist way, because you're starting to get all these hierarchies. If you look at the work of \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*, I mean, they just come to mind that they're the others. They're setting up, you know, like, Oh, this is deco light, this is deco Deep, or they talk about sort of real. So they're starting to sort of set up judgments about what is pure Deco call, and what is superficial Deco call, and they sort of setting up a hierarchy of who's doing it properly and who isn't. And so, I mean, I understand these are serious scholars who are trying to push, they're trying to push against the whole project being corrupted, you know, by neoliberal University managers, or by opportunistic, white academics who kind of want to, you know, sort of gain street credibility by claiming to Deco, and everybody, **I mean, it's become almost ideological, where everybody sort of wants to claim to be decolonizing, to keep on the right side, or to be politically correct, righ**t. So I understand what they're trying to do. But the funny thing is that they already standing in judgement, they already on a kind of scale of purity. And once you set up a hierarchy of purity, like, you know, I'm more white than you are, once you get into that kind of thinking, or you could inverse it, you could say, well, you know, I'm more black than you are, therefore, once you get into that, like, we know, what is pure decolonization? And, and, and you set yourself up as a judge of what is pure deco, and what isn't? I think we're into, we're into modernist thinking again, you know, with a kind of hierarchy of development. And it's the same old model, and it's problematic. And I'm, I'm worried that I'm seeing this coming into decolonial scholarship. And the trouble is, as I said earlier, I think that obviously, there are stages of an institution, I understand that you know, that you might just start reforming on the edges or, you know, you could contain deco as an extra curricular little outing for the engineers to go and meet a community you know, so I understand they they want to reject that. And they want to say true deco you actually see the indigenous knowledge being taught seriously in the classroom as part of the curriculum. I understand that and I think they make an important point, but when they start I don't know, like, sort of making a morality out of it and a purity. I get worried. Yep. Okay, let me stop there. Because I think that's, that's my point here.

**Luqman Muraina** 24:30

Okay. So what do you think what model would allow her to actually you know, get people's consciousness, especially in terms of, you know, something that can also stop these modernists, way of ordering and hierarchizing you know, you know, like levels of purity of consciousness and all of that. Does any model allow us that opportunity at all?

**Interviewee** 25:03

Sure! That's a very difficult question. Because if there is such a model, we haven't developed it yet. Because the trouble is, as I say, if you go to change people's consciousness, you have to do some inner personal work. You know what Steve Biko called? The inward looking process? I think he called it if we don't have the inward looking process, you know, if we don't have an obviously I think a lot of whites, there's quite a lot of kind of whiteness, self critique reflexivity going on, which is good. But I think it's got to go deep. So that's the one thing is it's not, it's not the normal thing that academia does. And it's not what we good about. You know, we don't I mean, you know, if **I think that the RMF students were being exorcise for whiteness, okay, they were trying to vomit out the whiteness that they felt was contaminating their souls or their spirits**. You know, that's quite crazy stuff going on there. That, to me is, it's, I mean, there's a lot of psychological healing that's needed, that universities don't, that's not what universities are about. It's not what we're good at. So that psychological healing is one thing. The other thing is, I don't think we've done the serious epistemological work. I think that your generation of scholars, particularly scholars, who can speak indigenous languages, and can sort of, you know, working across cultures and languages, there's a lot of work to do. And I'm talking about not the social political work about, you know, ranting on about unequal power structures, because that's been done. And we, you know, to me, that's now boring, **we need to get on with a serious intellectual work of looking at concepts. Where are the new concepts in indigenous knowledge? How do you translate those concepts? Can you translate them? What is the cosmology that those concepts make sense in? And then, how do you bring those concepts out of the original contexts? Which is not easy?** I mean, let's be honest, the West, long ago got rid of a lot of stupid, dumb, traditional concepts that were part of, you know, religious culture in Europe, right? It was, you know, so like superstitions about black cats. I mean, you know, I know, because I've got those old you know, and Christianity's full of strange nonsense. So I think **all cultures have to decide what to keep and what to jettison from indigenous knowledge is not as I say, and that work has to be done**. You know, but it can only be done by people qualified to do it. So I think that Western science has done that work in the West. And we had, there are certain principles, what let's call them **epistemic norms, epistemic norms about truth about deciding what's true, what's legitimate, what's valid, what what knowledge is worth preserving. Okay, and what knowledge is worth putting into the curriculum**. And I don't think we've done that work with indigenous knowledge, or we haven't done it in relation to what does that mean for decolonizing the curriculum, right. So there's, there's epistemic work to be done. I mean, I believe that there's a lot of rich wisdom in indigenous in old let us call it old knowledge across the world that's been hidden lost damage that that needs to be recovered. But how do you bring it into a modern framework? You know, we have science kind of rules today. So let you know, I think, as a model, there's a lot more work to be done in knowledge production. We have to open up the cannon so we could get rid of the old cannons in the curriculum. I think that's already happening. But then what are our criteria? I think that's what I'm trying to get at. That's the issue. What are the criteria for deciding what should what is legitimate? What knowledge is worth passing on to the next generation and what knowledge isn't, you know. And then, as I said before, there's all that inner work to be done which is a different story. But they all challenging. Yeah, but we all have to change. And I think we have to, we have to learn to. I like and Mbembe puts it well, and I just can't remember his words, but he says something about singularity being only a fold. In other words, differences are sameness, we have to see difference as sameness. In other words, we have differences in common. Our differences cannot be dualistic and they cannot be essentialised. Right. So, we have we have to work with difference in common. And obviously, I think that the deco the good decolonial scholars talk about pure reverse epistemic diversity. I mean, they've got the concepts, but they haven't. They haven't implemented them. They just like empty concepts that they kind of throw around. They haven't given them content, not yet. So, what do we mean by epistemic diversity? in practice? There's a huge challenge.

**Luqman Muraina** 31:06

Okay, thank you so much proof. Okay. The next question I'm going to ask now is, in the context of the rhodes must fall event, which advocated for decolonization? And, you know, so the the thing that currently, transformation is, has been more favoured by University management and even the DHET, do you think this is proper. And so does decolonization, does it encompass what is advocated in transformation?

**Interviewee** 31:42

Right. So you're putting those two concepts against each other? Yeah, I do think that they're not the same, I think transformation. Well, initially, you could get away with a sort of a demographic transformation. You know, the government started off by asking universities to report on numbers of black students, numbers of black staff, and they even reproduce the old apartheid categories. I mean, we still report according to white, Indian coloured and African, which is quite disgusting, in my view. So it was a demographic transformation, which is a very crude measure. And then I think the students were trying to say, Look, that's not enough. We want the curriculum to be meaningful. We want to see ourselves and who we are in the curriculum. So they were talking about identity issues, lived experience, relevance, the kinds of things that Nguigu Wathiongo was talking about way back in the 80s.

**Luqman Muraina** 32:56

Okay, thank you. Prof. What do you agree that the management has kind of preferred to adopt transformation over decolonisation?

**Interviewee** 33:09

Yeah, I think that's a safe generalisation. I think that they didn't know about decolonization. I don't think they knew about deco theory too be honest, I don't know, not in South Africa, I don't think it was widely read. Or they would have known as I mentioned earlier, about political decolonization, you know, handing over political power change of government and so on. And, and white governments handing over power, but I don't think I knew the theory, I don't think they actually knew exactly what it meant to be honest, except for Students put it on the table. I mean, it was only a few academics and students who were reading in African Studies, for example, who really read the text, you know?

**Luqman Muraina** 33:59

So that's my, that's my account for why the term why the term is not popular in South African higher education contest. But subsequent on students demand, don't you think that decolonization should now be more preferred over transformation? In terms of even maybe names of committee presently, we do have transformation committee, and students keep asking that aopting, the word transformation is not enough. This should be called decolonization committee. And, you know, decolonization should continually be used.

**Interviewee** 34:37

Yeah, I would support that because I think decolonization has a deeper meaning it has the epistemological challenge, which, and transformation, it might or might not, I mean, as I said, it's been such an overused concept. It's almost become meaningless. You can make it mean whatever you want. Right. So I think, I think it would be good to get rid of that concept right now. Also, because it's failed to deliver what was intended, right? So I would support that. And particularly if we understand decolonization as the decolonization of knowledge.

**Luqman Muraina** 35:14

Hmm. Okay, thank you Prof. So, I want to ask, what do we have possibilities of decolonizing? You know, knowledge, especially in this current contestation of globalisation neoliberalism, and all of that and, you know, South Africa being friends, with, you know, Western countries.

**Interviewee** 35:48

Look, if you want my honest opinion, I suppose I wouldn't, I'd be quite nervous or saying this in public, “but I think there's a danger that decolonization is just going to be a little blip that happens in the humanities”. And what is considered powerful knowledge, ie technology, science, applied science? You know, those, those forms of knowledge, those disciplines are so powerful. I mean, they drive the global market. I don't think they need to even To be honest, why should they even bother with decolonization? I mean, at UCT, there are now because it's become an institutional issue. But I mean, I can't imagine in the global north that a high powered nuclear physicist is going to give one fig about decolonizing nuclear physics, right? Why would he or she? So that's why I think the epistemological work is important, because we need to be able to say, we need nuclear physicists to keep doing their research. And we need to understand do or do they not? Or if so, how? is a nuclear physicist going to decolonize? What is a rational reasonable demand on a nuclear physicist? Because I don't think we've got the answer yet. I mean, there was at one student shame, you know, that's, that's stupid, that silly thing that went viral, that little workshop where she said, Oh, let's throw out Western science, let's decolonize, a call, and we'll bring we have our own science. And she became the laughingstock of the world, right? with good reason, because that's the simplistic, naive approach, which is not going to get us anywhere. So I don't think we You see, I think what we forget, and what I feel is that some of the, not some, it's a bit like Foucault, Foucault brought in a paradigm shift in the social sciences, but he never touched the sciences, he was intelligent enough to leave the sciences alone. **And I think that the the decolonial theory is actually attacking an outdated view of science**. They attacking this, you know, they almost attacking a Descartes account. No, their view of the rational subject in Western philosophy is no longer adopted by science. They don't need all that stuff. They long digit. Do you know what I'm saying? A lot of science is not about you know, because they, they critique this ergo sum. And they're always critiquing Descartes will actually science long ago got rid of Descartes. I think a science will say, for God's sake, what are these guys on about? You know, we don't need Kant's philosophy. We don't need Descartes to do what we do. We focus on method. And we know that our knowledge is always contingent, we never think it's absolute. So I **kind of think some of the deco, social scientists need to wake up and understand the philosophy of science a bit better**. And the philosophy of science has moved a long way from some of the critiques that are made by decolonial. Kind of raves, you know. So there's, as I say, there's a lot of epistemological work to be done. How did I get onto that? Sorry? We were talking about globalisation. Yeah. So, I do think that you see, the trouble with deco is it's all about the subject. It's all about the knower, who is doing the knower Are they from the excluded dominated subaltern groups or the dominant and actually in science, that It's become irrelevant because science is all about the method and the procedure. I mean, you could be, you're just you know that it doesn't matter if you're Chinese, African, French Russian, you still are a scientist. Okay. And your lived experience is irrelevant to the quality of science that you produce. So we have to think about that very carefully. Okay. Yeah, it's a different kind of knowledge. Okay, and we need to understand that.

**Luqman Muraina** 40:29

Okay, thank you, Professor, if I'm understanding you very well, you're saying, like, the powerful knowledge as you as you used it, these are maybe the STEM, you know, they provide less opportunity for decolonization work, because, you know, their approaches, you know, are just universal all over the world, and never considered maybe your, your context, your lived experience, your own community? Am I correct?

**Interviewee** 41:00

Yeah, I mean, I think I'd like to new onset a little bit, but I'm not, I mean, they're dealing with the natural world, and the natural world is much more generalizable than the social world. So that's the point. So if they find a law in physics, it's going to be the same. If you're in the north of the South, it's the same flipping law in physics, right? They can decolonize their practices, they can decolonize their institutional practices. I mean, I think that a lot of white male physicists might be bullies in the laboratory. Okay. So, you know, they assume power, and they might be exploiting women or black, you know, black junior staff, we don't, you know, so I'm not saying that they're untouchable, I'm just saying that we need to look at their practices. And we could decolonize the practices. **But I think when we talk about decolonizing, the knowledge, we need to do some homework**, I think it's, you know, there could be more to be done. And I don't know enough, not being a scientist, I don't know enough about the epistemological assumptions, foundations, what I'm saying is that what I pick up from what I know, which is limited is that I think some of the critiques by the decolonial scholars is actually a bit naive when they critique. I think the philosophy of science has moved on. I think that's what I'm saying.

**Luqman Muraina** 42:29

Okay, It has moved on past their own critic,

**Interviewee** 42:33

exactly, they critiquing the wrong notion of Western knowledge. Okay,

**Luqman Muraina** 42:39

okay. Thank you very much, bro. Because this is actually a very huge argument. You know, some scholars have said that, you know, it is impossible to decolonize stem, some have said, No, no, no, it's not impossible. It's just the same as, as humanities. Some are said that it's the same, but it's easier to decolonize humanities than STEM, but yet still need to be decolonized. You know, all of these, you know, arguments, they are just over all over the place. Well, thank you for your, it's...

**Interviewee** 43:12

interesting. You say, I think as just one thing, I didn't say it's the application of STEM, you can decolonize the application, like, who has a say, where you build a bridge, you know, shouldn't just be the engineers, you could ask the community where the bridges going, you know, so it's that kind of thing. You can decolonize application, but the actual building of the bridge is probably going to be based on it would be better if we just based on, you know, good physics and not on some indigenous theory about I don't know, I'm just saying. Yeah, it's application you can decolonize sure about the physics of the bridge.

**Luqman Muraina** 43:54

Okay. Okay. Thank you so much. So Prof, I'm going to ask that, do you hear the perception that, you know, white people continue to say that, you know, Eurocentric knowledge have been overly used, you know, it has become oppressive. People are now saying we need to make relevant indigenous knowledge and you know excluded people. Usually the notion that the baby must not be thrown away with the water. That is the useful Western knowledge must be combined. And, you know, we must find a balance between Western knowledge and indigenous knowledge, the indigenous decolonized knowledge. You share that solution?

**Interviewee** 44:37

Yeah, I do share that, I think. I think that there's a danger in making risks making the west or whites or the North to powerful. I mean, we mustn't think that it's, it's our knowledge that it's European knowledge. I mean, if you look into the history of mathematics, it wasn't It came from the Middle East and from India, and the Europeans came to it very late through the Islamic Revolution, right? in the, in the 10th century. So, you know, I think we have, I think we impoverish ourselves by getting into a dualistic view of whose knowledge, I think that our knowledge is much more cosmopolitan than we realise. So that's the first thing. Let's not call it Western knowledge. It's cosmopolitan knowledge, let's not exclude people. I mean, Sanskrit, you know, the Chinese. You know, the, the Rishi masters, they had written they had literacy way before the Europeans, before the Romans and the Greeks. So let's not kid ourselves that its western knowledge, first point. So let's, let's all own it, let's share it. Let's, let's be honest about its origins. Yeah, and let's reclaim it for everyone. And in so doing this, it's I mean, I think, obviously, the power relations have to be sorted out, but not the not the internal relations. You know, maths is a good thing. We don't want to kick out maths. And as I say, in any case, maths was not a Western invention. So let's keep maths For God's sake, you know? Yeah,

**Luqman Muraina** 46:35

I think I appreciate the idea. You're sharing with me. So basically, if I understand you, like, there is like, not only as Western knowledge, this is they are global knowledge, you know, from different, different sources. So we need to reclaim it and make it relevant for every body.

**Interviewee** 47:00

Exactly. And one way to do it is to bring in the languages, we need to use more languages in modern university education. If we could start using the languages of the students, that process would have been much better

**Luqman Muraina** 47:21

Let me go on and ask another question. Which is that? Do you think that to decolonize, We need a policy?

**Interviewee** 47:32

I do. I think that you need top down and bottom up. If you only have bottom up. It's voluntary. It's messy. Some people do it. Some people don't. Yeah, so I think we do need policy, but it's not going to solve everything.

**Luqman Muraina** 47:49

Okay, but some people have actually said that if we have a policy, then then we we pervade we prevent what decolonization means, which is the plurisersality of approaches of ideas and all of that.

**Interviewee** 48:06

Yeah, that's also a good point. I think it depends how the policy is framed. I think the policy should leave open wide spaces for discretion on the ground. So I think individual academics should have a lot of discretion about what it means to decolonize in a particular discipline and curriculum. And I think they should be asked to work that out with, with their students, or certainly their post grad students. I'm not so sure about undergrads.

**Luqman Muraina** 48:42

Okay, thank you, Prof. So do you think, you know, in this decolonization project, which students' continually Oxford, the DHET they have a role to take in it? I'm sorry, just repeat the last bit the Department of the Department of Higer Education &. Do you think they have a role to take in the decolonization? Yeah, that's

**Interviewee** 49:05

a very interesting question. Sure. I think that it would be great if they incentivized it that the trouble is once the government starts doing things that it starts. I mean, all governments do is they, what people really interested about the government is money, resources. And so if you have a policy, it's gonna have no teeth unless you link it to resourcing. So, unless the government say you know, you can get an extra 10,000 Rand per programme that is decolonized. Then you get into trouble because then you have to have criteria to say this programme is decolonised and that one isn't right. And then you get into a bad situation, and you lose all their creativity and the diversity so I think I would prefer they've just put out a good language policy for discussion about bringing in indigenous South African languages into much more consciously and formally into teaching and learning. I think that's probably enough right now. Because I think that's going to help. I'd like to just see what happens to that language policy. I forget the exact title of it, but I'm sure you can find it. Yeah, I'm not keen on on tight legislation from the government, because they don't normally do it well. And I think there's a problem of one size fits all right.

**Luqman Muraina** 50:45

Okay, fine, fine. So prof, what efforts do you know, you know, the University of Cape Town what efforts have they taken to decolonize? Their curriculum?

**Interviewee** 50:57

Right. Okay, so what I know is that in 2018, I think, maybe 2019, you must have you must know hold out for (UC). curriculum change framework? document? Definitely! - INJ. Right. So that was developed in the heat of the protests with student participation. And I think predictively, that document had mixed reception. Because it was quite a challenging document. I also think that it was, it was more like a set of case studies. **So that document actually got downgraded from a framework to a discussion document**. So formally, it got, I would say, downgraded. And I think that was the right thing to do, because I don't think it had the, the right kind of discourse for a framework, you know, to be applied across the institution. So then the DVC, of teaching, set up a different process, which was called taking curriculum change forward. So you need to look at that document taking curriculum change forward. That happened in the \*\*\*\* committee. And they produced a document where they weighed up the responses to the curriculum change framework document, which were positive and negative. And they also made some quite sensible, but less radical proposals for how to take curriculum change forward as it was called. So that was a senate teaching and learning document which got approved at Senate. And I think it was that document, which actually downgraded the framework to a discussion document. I think there was a lot of bad political contestation behind, you know, obviously, which we don't know about between the individuals concerned and so on. But, I mean, I think it was a difficult political process. **But I think that the taking curriculum change forward document is much more palatable and much more acceptable to a wide range of academics. And in that sense, it's a good document.** And, yeah, so I would support it, because the other one was, it was just too difficult for people who'd never heard of who didn't know what decolonization was, or sitting in science or engineering. I mean, they just, it was also quite high flow, in theory, they couldn't get their heads around it, you know, this other documents, much cleaner, more simple, less ambitious, less political. So there's that document. And now I think **what they trying to do is, they now realise that they have to move to implementation. And one way is to have a closer look at all the courses and all the programmes**. So I know that they are in the process of looking at a major curriculum reform process, which will be programme review, underpinned by course evaluation. And they're going to set up, I think they're also going to develop graduate attributes, which is a bit of a neoliberal thing to do, but the \*\*\*\* has already put this idea of graduate attributes in the vision 2030 in her document, so I think they've got to bring that in as well. **So there's the vision 2030 with graduate attributes, there's a student's call for decolonizing the curriculum, and then there's the shift to online learning created by the pandemic. So there are three big drivers for curriculum change those three things, the VCs vision, the shift to online or blended whatever, low low density campus** There's the call for deco, they're going to put all those three things together and set up some criteria to review all the programmes across the whole institution is going to be a major exercise, they're going to start with humanities and science, because they feel those are the least surveyed the least regulated faculties, you know, the other faculties have professional councils. And they have external accreditation processes. So they're going to start with \*\*\*\*, which is going to be very interesting, because you're going to have the science, you know, the scientific voice coming out. It's going to be peer reviewed. But what's interesting is that I've seen the proposal. They want to put post grad students nominated by the student faculty councils, onto the review panels. So they want equal students to external academics, internal students, external academics to review all of UCT programmes. I mean, that's a proposal. I don't know if it'll get through. I mean, even the SRC and the academics have to still come into on it. But I think that's the kind of thing that they thinking about. So they are serious about decolonizing. To what extent the deco agenda in the way that the students imagined it will get watered down. You know what I mean, it could get **watered down** in this very big institutional process. Because it will say using the principle of peer review, so they're getting external academics to come and look at the panels. Hi, are you still there? Hi, yeah, i'm here. Okay, good. I think something had a wobble. Yeah. Anyway, I think that's I'm pretty much finished now. So let's see. I mean, they they serious about the process. Whether the process delivers, you know, is it's far too early to say it's still it still hasn't even become policy yet. It's got to go to Senate. Okay. Yeah. Yeah.

**Luqman Muraina** 57:23

Okay, prof. A quick question, because this is, we've spent one hour already. I dont know if you're willing to go along for a few additional minutes.

**Interviewee** 57:36

Yeah, five minutes or so is fine.

**Luqman Muraina** 57:39

Okay, okay. So I'm going to ask quickly, this the proposal, like what is the title, maybe I can try to have access to it. And then I already have access to the taking curriculum change forward document already; so I have access to it.

**Interviewee** 57:55

Okay, so that document is not published yet. It was on the agenda of the \*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*, it was on the agenda of that committee, which is a Senate committee. At its last meeting in May, on the 11th of May, that's where I saw it. And it's now gone, the Dean's took it and the deans are supposed to take it to the faculties. And the student reps are supposed to take it to the SRC, etc, etc. so that it's only a discussion document. It hasn't got a status yet. Oh, okay. It's a bit early days, I think. I don't think you'll find it you won't find it on a website or anything yet. Eventually, it will come back from the faculties and then it will go to Senate. And once senate approves that, it will become official.

**Luqman Muraina** 58:54

Okay, thank you. So I'm going to ask do you think there are gaps between research on decolonization? And what is happening in practice?

**Interviewee** 59:07

Yes, I do. I think there are big gaps. Because I don't think anyone really knows what decolonization means in practice. And I don't think that the theory gives enough guidelines for practice.

**Luqman Muraina** 59:25

So there is there should actually be more, more should be done in terms of research and theorization, you know, to really look at how practice of decolonization can or should be.

**Interviewee** 59:40

Yeah, I think I mean, obviously, it's a process and it's good to start the process, but I think it's going to be a long time before we really get it right. And I think as I'vesaid, there needs to be more theory development, more theoretical development. I think that as I said, we need to engage with the philosophy of science. up to date contemporary philosophy of science better. I think that we need to much more do much more work on the black archive and actually produce the knowledge and much more work on indigenous concepts. What? How do they articulate? Or talk back to modern concepts? So And the key thing, I think, is norms or criteria, what are the norms for legitimating knowledge? I mean, you can't I'm not happy with the idea that, you know, because some elder in some tribe says this is true that it's okay, that we have to accept it as true. I'm not happy with that, because I'm a modern person. I want public debate. I want public scrutiny, right? I want the public use of reason. I don't want some magical society to tell me, you know, if you don't believe this, you in for the chop? laughs. Are we going to kick you out of the tribe? Because you don't believe this? Because we told you it's true. I'm not I'm not buying into that. And I don't see why we should I think we've, we've lived those days behind. We don't want to go back there. You know, we don't want a chance (UC).

**Luqman Muraina** 1:01:15

I agree. So prof I'm going to ask quickly. So decolonization should you should be like a democratic model? Like, if you are willing to assert the idea, then you are fine. If you don't see any reason. If you don't like the idea, then, you should also be fine.

**Interviewee** 1:01:34

Yeah, but give your reasons. And it's, you know, they have to be public, they must come for public scrutiny, you know, if a nuclear physicist could articulate a good reason why it's impossible to decolonize his or her curriculum, I want to see those reasons. And we could have a public debate. And we may accept the reasons right, or we may not, but we need a public, I want to see the public use of reason. Because that's what's important in a in a, in the way that we have developed and not just the West, that's come as I say, it's come up through the ages. And that's how we, at the moment, that's our best way of functioning democratically is through the public use of reason. Okay, where everybody has a voice, that's the issue. Everyone can have a say. But at the end of the day, there's public scrutiny. It's difficult. It's difficult, because, you know, some voices are more powerful than others and all of that stuff, but I don't see any other better way. Not yet.

**Luqman Muraina** 1:02:43

Oh, okay. Okay. Okay. So, so do you think that students, you know, for continually, you know, pushing decolonization? Like we should actually, they should be careful with the way they push it?

**Interviewee** 1:02:57

I think they shouldn't be naive. I understand where they're coming from. It's a political, angry motivation. But the danger is that it just becomes ideological and therefore critical. Okay, yeah. I understand where it's coming from, but I think it's often a very naive call/approach. Yeah, yeah. It's not surprising. I mean, undergrad students, you know, why would they know about philosophy of science, you know, you can't expect it to say in humanities and understand how they feeling they talking about their feelings, right. And, you know, we have to listen to their feelings, we have to do something, we have to respond. That's an ethical issue. But the epistemic answer to an ethical issue is not that simple.

**Luqman Muraina** 1:03:52

Okay. Okay. Thank you so much. So we should not be uncritical of decolonization.

**Interviewee** 1:03:59

No, Not we should not be uncritical of anything.

**Luqman Muraina** 1:04:05

So thank you so much, Prof. I'm going to ask you at this moment, perhaps you have any question for me.

**Interviewee** 1:04:10

And what I would love to do is keep in touch with you Luqman; I'll be very interested in anything that you write. And I think your project is really important, and I'm very pleased that you're doing it. And I think coming in as an international scholar is quite interesting, because, you know, you've you've got all the African, I mean, you come with the black pain, but you also I would assume have a bit more objectivity. So, I'm very interested to see how you; I can tell from your questions that you're not emotionally carried away with us you thinking very clearly. And I think I think you I think it's really important to have not critical black voices, but Yeah, I suppose that is what I mean, critical black voices because I can't there's a limit to a, what is legitimate for me to critique and be? I don't think I have the voice I wouldn't be heard because I would be written off as white. Okay, defensive. So I feel, I think that it's really I think it's fantastic that you're doing this work, I think it's very important. And I really wish you well. And I hope you produce something that is widely publishable. And just to finish off, I think that the African intellectuals who we really should learn from, and I'm talking about, you know, you know, old ones like Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Archille Mbembe, Mudembe, hmm, there a lot, and they're not, they going into deco with their eyes wide open, they're not uncritical. And I wish we would read more of them than kind of selected snippets from Fanon and Biko, you know. Yeah. Thank you so much. Last parting shot.

**Luqman Muraina** 1:06:19

Yeah, I could even read many things from your last parting shots. Actually, it seems you've kind of being criticised for being, you know, defensive being a white person and all of that.

**Interviewee** 1:06:31

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, of course. I mean, I think one should expect that. And I think it is important for whites to get on with sorting out their whiteness. And maybe that's what we should just like to limit ourselves to, but yeah, I mean, I think we've been avoiding it. You know, we can try and become, it's, it's much more sexy to become a decolonial scholar and deal with your own whiteness, right. Job shorts. Yeah. Anyways,

**Luqman Muraina** 1:07:08

okay. Prof Enjoy your day and the new month as well. I wish you success ahead.

**Interviewee** 1:07:28

yes. And I wish you all the best. I think it's very important work. And yeah, lots of luck. And I'll send you by email the recording, okay. Okay, thank you so much; have a beautiful month.. Bye bye. Cheers. Bye, Luqman. Nice to meet you. Bye. Same here, bye ma.