Interview 5.1.3 - R3 Decolonization Interview-20210526\_0904...

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decolonization, students, university, decolonizing, question, pedagogy, important, research, colonial, knowledge, happening, transformation, structures, lp, push, policy, academics, terms, speaks, talking

**SPEAKERS**

R3, Luqman Muraina

**Luqman Muraina** 00:20

Okay, nice. So we can start.

**Interviewee** 00:25

Sure.

**Luqman Muraina** 00:26

Okay, nice. I want to ask, you have not sent the consent form. Do that after the meeting

**Interviewee** 00:36

which I'll do it straight after the meeting.

**Luqman Muraina** 00:39

Nice. Nice. Okay. So the first question is, I have actually checked your profile on if i'm correct maybe research gate and a profile on a University of Johannesburg. Yeah.

**Interviewee** 00:54

So I'm at the University of Witswatersrand right now.

**Luqman Muraina** 00:58

Oh, maybe it's vizz, because it's been a while I checked it. Okay. Immediately, \*\*\*\* recommended you to me, I just searched for your name on Google, and then brought brought up some results, your studies about decolonization and even holding some positions? committees, you know, that is doing something on decolonization. And I'm so glad I'm speaking to you. Because I (INJ - excited) know experienced you are.

**Interviewee** 01:29

I hope I don't disappoint you. I mean, a lot of the things that I'm part of us are startup things like the the decolonization garden, at, Wits is relatively new, and has been kind of interrupted by COVID. But it's, you know, I mean, I think that that's come to the territory with those shouldn't use territory and decolonization together. But it's kind of part of the decolonization project is thinking things like always (LP - long breathes) my words are going away (INJ -laugh). Just always staying very connected to the kind of work on the ground. And constantly rethinking everything that you're doing in relation to that the work on the ground, not kind of, especially being in a university position, not losing touch with that. So so the things that are part of a new, but we're doing that kind of work.

**Luqman Muraina** 02:41

Oh, nice. Nice. Okay, let me get to the first question, which is what is motivating your research on decolonization? Why Why is decolonization so interesting for you? such that you are, you know, writing on it?

**Interviewee** 02:58

Okay, um, I mean, I think that decolonization is a really crucial project. And being in the university is a little bit of a conundrum, because I don't believe that we can completely decolonize within the university structures, because the, the University structures are very colonial. But while we, we are existing in these colonial structures, and we're interacting with students every, every day, every year new students, and we're having very genuine engagements for the students, there's hopefully learning that's taking place, there's maybe two (UC) things happening in terms of identity for the students for us. So my, my interest in doing research on decolonization is really thinking around what can we do within the university structures to try and disrupt the university structures and the hierarchies of knowledge? So it's kind of an I'm interested in decolonization in in two aspects. And I'm really interested in decolonization of pedagogy. Because I feel like if you we can change the content but it's still taught in a colonial way. Then we're not achieving anything because then we're reinforcing the the knowledge hierarchies, the power hierarchies and ultimately reinforcing a society which which still has the colonial structures.

**Luqman Muraina** 04:57

Also, what is the second way you are looking at decolonization aside pedagogy.

**Interviewee** 05:02

Yeah, so the second way is is decolonization of content. And I feel like they kind of go hand in hand. I am a history lecturer, but I teach history and history method. And I think that it's so so with history, the importance of decolonizing the content is kind of obvious. Because the the histories that we've learned for so long, our colonial histories with with colonial frameworks, and now really exciting work is starting to come out, like the book, The "the live 16152, to decolonize history of land", which kind of breaks open a lot of the myths about land, that have been propping up the colonial histories, so there's a book whose history counts that that, by it's acted by the Tabeze and Dam, and Dam looks at why we have the timeframes that we have, we talk about pre-colonial, colonial post-colonial, and obviously, colonial assented in that. And so, so there's really a lot of exciting work happening around decolonize inclusion. And also because I'm, I'm, I'm a history lecturer, I teach history method, I'm in the \*\*\*\*. So I'm teaching teachers. So we also work around decolonizing, the history curriculum for school level, and my students have really, really interesting and helpful input on that. Sooo

**Luqman Muraina** 07:04

not as great, that's great. I think I now understand why you are working on decolonization now. So I'm going to ask you, so what do you understand by transformation?

**Interviewee** 07:15

Hmmm, I, it's interesting, because I'm also on the \*\*\*\* committee at Wits. And this is a debate that we've had back and forth. My understanding of transformation is changing something that already exists. So I'm also not, this is a bit difficult to kind of go into, but I'm not. I don't believe that words themselves, individual words or concepts, magically have the power to do the work. So people can be doing really good stuff under, under, under the word of transformation. And people can be I mean, like the university has, really has co opted decolonization. And so, so it's kind of like, I want to look at the work that's happening under the guise of transformation. But for me, I prefer I prefer the concept of decolonization because I feel like it's addresses the roots of the problem much in a much clearer and much deeper way. Then transformation is kind of putting a new, a new shine on something that's already there. So transformation is important. But so like, if transformation is interested in the racial dynamics of the lecturers at a university, that's really important. But like transformation can happen. And there can be we can have, we don't have a university like this yet, but we could have a university with more black professors than white professors. But within the colonial structure of the university, those black professors would still be put under much more strain from a whole lot of different things, then the white professors so

**Luqman Muraina** 09:34

so aaaah, it seems, in your response, you're like, our universities have co-opted. Do you mean? transformation or decolonization?

**Interviewee** 09:46

Decolonization

**Luqman Muraina** 09:48

Okay, because here in UCT the management, you know, they kind of, you know, are more friendly with transformation. Using the word decolonization they host, decolonization conferences workshops and all of that, but, you know, within the framework of policies or regulations, they prefer transformation. What is the experience they at Wits?

**Interviewee** 10:12

No, you're right. Actually, decolonization is strictly seen as a, as a research LP (INJ - endeavour). As Yeah, as holding research possibilities. It is like, technically the transformation committee is called the transformation and decolonization committee. But the the kind of policy and the, the higher rank managers refer to it as the transformation committee. And a lot of the members in it hold the same ideas that I do about the limitations of transformation. But there's no policy framework for a decolonization endeavour. The, I mean, I think that when I say has co-opted, I mean, that it's a it's a word that they like to kind of bandy around and display. Have the decolonization garden is one of five different and they're called research thrusts. That's why we call it a garden because I'm like, I'm not going to have a thing called the decolonization thrust. Because thrust is just sounds very vile. I'm so so. And we have that because, because my colleague and I, Doctor \*\*\*, we're in a meeting, when I was when they were kind of deciding what needed to be research focuses. And so the, they're quite happy to have decolonization as a research focus. But But again, like, yeah, it mustn't kind of push up against policies, it mustn't push up against the kind of accepted norms in the school.

**Luqman Muraina** 12:11

Okay, okay. Let me just ask this question briefly. If universities have actually co opted decolonization, especially as a research focus. Why you personally think, you know, decolonization is more encompassing and looks at this is a look at this issue of our colonial, you know, colonial structures in knowledge production, and even, you know, in terms of pedagogy, teaching, and even content, do you think, you know, we should actually make the universities the management to see decolonization as more encompassing, or we should just make it as what is not really the concept or the model that matters? It is about what is happening? Which one do you think is necessary at this stage?

**Interviewee** 13:05

Hmmm (LP) It's a good question, my first, my first response to that, to my initial kind of impulse response is, they can't have it, they can't have the term decolonization because it's too important for that the work that is being done around decolonization in South Africa is too important for that. But I think that (LP) I mean, I'm talking kind of ideal world here. I think that it is very important that the decolonization kind of framework or frameworks is not a singular thing, and be brought to bear on the university. **And that it might that might be more powerful than transformation, because transformation has been around so long in universities. And I think that, that, yeah, the university is very happy with decolonization as a framework, but not when it pushes back on what the university is**, and that's research that I don't see people doing because it's cuts very close to, to home because it's challenging thing if what are you doing if you're doing decolonization recent research in a university? You have to kind of justify that. Yeah.

**Luqman Muraina** 14:46

Thank you. So I'm going to continue by asking that. Do you think the DHET you know, they have a transformation model that they are, you know, trying to encourage universities to adopt? Do you think decolonization is captured in the transformation model?

**Interviewee** 15:10

**I'm not very familiar with the transformation policy of the DHET**. But with my (LP) my experience of what, what has been changed, according to policy from the DHET, and what hasn't. And I would say that the mgt is more is more about transformation than about decolonization. Because the pressure that which is, again, a good thing, and important, but just not it shouldn't stop there is often around the kind of statistics of who is teaching who is what students are in the university. And also, I think the Department of Higher Education & training. If they're going to look at decolonization holistically, then they need to take into account who the students are. And to not have this this mess with NSFAS, and to really consider different funding models. So that so that the university isn't being exclusive.

**Luqman Muraina** 16:57

Nice. Okay. Thank you very much. So how do you think we can go about decolonizing? our curriculum, especially in terms of pedagogy, and content, which you are interested on?

**Interviewee** 17:17

Okay, let me ehh me start with content. No, let me start with the pedagogy. So the pedagogy is really important, because it defines how people see their identity in relation to knowledge with the way that it's taught. So, kind of thinking about epistemic access, epistemic justice. I think that holistically, there need to be programmes that support the kind of bridging from from matric to first year. But that pedagogy needs to, I don't want to say I don't want to say student centred, because that's very kind of cliche, but that is important. But I think that the, the, the focus for me that I use with pedagogy when I'm thinking around decolonization. And this comes from Bell Hooks, and then come from Sylvia Winter as well, is **to think about how the students are relating to knowledge how the students are relating to me**. So the important thing is that I'm not the repository of knowledge. I'm in a space with the students where I'm facilitating, maybe, maybe guiding maybe asking questions to, to delve deeper into into concepts, but they are interacting directly with the knowledge and they are producing their own knowledge directly. So I think that in academia, one of the things that can be useful is trying to assist students to while we have these flawed structures, to assist students to be present in the structures so as to assist students to publish for example, undergrad students even and but then if you're doing that, then making it a kind of collectives collective thing. So that as well you're pushing back against the kind of individual ownership of knowledge or individual The, the kind of individual isolating around around knowledge that we produce And I think also, **the pedagogy needs to be kind of human based**. I mean, this is where I draw on Sylvia Winter more. Because I find her kind of reprisal of the concept of the human important. I know that many people disagree with that. But when I'm working in class, there's a lot of back and forth, that's just students kind of asserting their identity in class, **figuring out their identity in relation to the knowledge**. And also acknowledging so it's acknowledging students as more than just like faces in a class and tests to mark, t**hat we can connect in kind of individual and collective ways**. I think vulnerability is important in a class. And I think, for students to be vulnerable that the lecturer has to be vulnerable. And obviously, in a managed way, but I think that electro (UC) who's kind of exposing themselves as human, facilitate students being fully present as as humans in the class, I think that **facilitating emotions, and allowing emotions in class is important**. And it's again, that's pushing back against the kind of dehumanising aspect of academia, where you have to add this very, like colonial point of you have to be objective, you have to be scientific, you have to the knowledge, you know, the knowledge doesn't have a position and you don't have a position, you're just interacting with the knowledge. So pushing back against that, I think it's very important. I think that **playing around with assessment** is important. Because that's one of the big kind of limitations on decolonization in higher education is that we always end up with with the exam. And exams are a horrible way to assess. They rely mostly on kind of rote memory. They're hyper individualised. They're like a moment where you prove yourself or you don't, so your whole kind of academic career hangs on these exams, which don't have anything to do with a decolonial pedagogy. So So I think, and I don't have any answers for what decolonizing assessment would look like, I have kind of ideas about more collective work. And obviously, that has its downsides as well. But also, for more work, like, in one of my classes, we had a play as an assessment. That allowed that allowed students to engage with the historical moment, they had to do all of the research for the play, they presented the play, and it worked really well. Because it was kind of inquiry based learning. But also, there was a there was a collective aspect to it. So it's, I mean, it's it's tricky, because you're trying to do all of these things inside a colonial institution. And I mean, I'm, I'm doing it as a white person as well, which is also Yeah, has its complications. But I think the most important thing is just to keep to keep pushing back in the way that you interact with learners, with students in the way that you that you find to teach students.

And yeah, okay, l**et me talk about let me talk about content**. Now, that said quite a lot about pedagogy. So content, I think, is maybe at face value more straightforward, but kind of the processes are in truth essence complicated. I think that there's a lot of basic decolonizing work to be done that like changing our canon. Like I, two years ago, I overheard one of my students saying, I'm so sick of it read, reading white men. And then the lecturer, then the other lecturer who was taking them was said that they just want enough black historians to read to, to kind of fill that gap. And of course, that's not true. We have really great South African, black, South African scholars, all of Africa, and scholars from the diaspora. And so **it's a mindset change more than anything, and a willingness to do the work of reading and of figuring out refiguring out your syllabus, I think that it's possible to if, if you're kind of thinking about the process as just switching out one thing for another**, I think that that's a problem. Because the way that like, I was talking about pushing back in pedagogy, you need to do the pushing back in, in content, as well. So, so you want to have things that are actively challenging the kind of colonial structures, but also not every, you know, it's important that like in the process of decolonization, the focus isn't always on the colonial, even if, if we're focusing to push back. So, I think, like, for me, the important things about decolonizing have been like, **just shifting the historical games**, and historical lens. So shifting from the French Revolution to the Haitian Revolution, shifting from a history of the US that focuses on settlers to a history of the US that focuses on indigenous peoples. So, yeah, I mean, we push back against the colonial episteme. And chain. Yeah, (LP); I mean, push back against the colonial episteme. And always allow for kind of new growth of knowledge. Try, try and be aware of what's happening in your field. And, and also what interdisciplinary debates you can bring into the class, I think that that's also really important. And also allow for, depending on what what level you're at, in higher education, allow for, for students to kind of bring new knowledge and new information and new things that they're reading and thinking about. And also that the kind of questions that you generate in the classroom that the students generate in the classroom, that then you'll need to go and find readings or, or things that speak to those questions. So it's a kind of a process of organic growth as well.

**Luqman Muraina** 28:44

Thank you so much. I think, you know, your response to this question is actually very wide. And I appreciate it. Because most times, you know, scholars have argued, when we talk about decolonization, how do we actually do these things? So you are especially touched on it, you know, you know, especially by focusing on pedagogy, and you know, the content, and thank you so much for that. So I'm going to ask, why do you know all of these, I'm sure, you must have faced some challenges. While you were speaking, you mentioned something briefly about being a white, white, white woman, you know, the decolonizing. What, what challenges have you faced, especially based on your identity as well?

**Interviewee** 29:28

Okay. Yeah, I mean, I'm very aware of that, of like, the fact that it's problematic that I'm doing decolonizing work, and I'm a white woman, but I think also that like, I'm here, and in the position that I'm in and I would like then I have a responsibility to do that work even though it's problematic. I, there have been so so students like sometimes in my classes, sometimes when I'm presenting have asked about Like, how can you be? How can you be doing talking about decolonization when you're white? And then it's actually proved to really generative conversation about where we are, about doing things rather than not doing things, but about kind of my positionality? And how that speaks to the how that holds back. Actually, the work that I do some sometimes it's just been, there's just been hostility, which is also fine. You know, I get that I understand that. And because I have those, those hesitations myself, I've also encountered, somebody asked me, or know, somebody told me that history can't be decolonized, because it's already happened. It's like, that's a very, this was a history professor. A very limited view of decolonization. And it's a very limited view of time. It's a very limited view of history. Because history is one of, I think, one of the most powerful disciplines in terms of coloniality. And decolonization because it constructs narratives of a country, as well as building individual narratives around identity. But it's used to wield power always!. (LP)

**Luqman Muraina** 31:53

I can't hear you word again.

**Interviewee** 31:56

There's just yeah, there's, is it okay? Yeah, it's okay, no, okay, there is this beeping, but I don't know where it's coming from. Okay, I'm in terms of the university, **I haven't received a lot of pushback, but that's because I've been publishing. So they're happy with me doing what I'm doing, if I'm publishing, which is really problematic as well**. And it's just haven't received pushback, but I haven't received support. So it kind of becomes heavy. When you're trying to provide support for students and students emotions and, and where students are, and the university, you just come up against the university as a very cold, hard immovable object. So I think that like we alluded to earlier, the, the, the university is, is happy with to use decolonization as a research objective, as long as it doesn't kind of taint what they are doing. And I think **I hope that that's the next wave of, of research that's coming is really, being critical of the university** as a colonial structure.

**Luqman Muraina** 33:21

Thank you. Thank you. In terms of hostility, have you kind of received any opposition, maybe from a black academic, you know, uh, you know, being hostile to you on why you are inappropriate, you know, to research or talk about decolonization?

**Interviewee** 33:41

I actually haven't, I mean, that I work very closely with \*\*\*\*\*, who would also be interesting for you to talk to if you wanted, but who we've got similar views of decolonization and, and the practicalities of it. So I've brought it up to him sometimes, like, me being a white research and the kind of inappropriateness of that. But that's, that's the kind of closest I've come and he's, he's been supportive of me, which is uncomfortable for me. I haven't had a conversation with a black academic that has been confro... like that has been hostile or confrontational. I mean, I suspect that those conversations happen between other academics. But I mean, also, you know, why must somebody kind of spend their energy telling me I'm problematic? But yeah, so I mean, it will probably happen at some point, but it hasn't.

**Luqman Muraina** 35:03

Okay, that is beautiful. So I'm going to ask one more question around these, which is that, you know, you said, you know, until now, there has not been any pushback from the university, probably because you continue to produce knowledge in terms of journals and all of that. And then there is no support as well. Yeah, what do you think would have happened? If it is a black woman? That is in this position?

**Interviewee** 35:34

Yeah. I mean, look, the, the (LP), the black woman who was in our \*\*\*, stayed for two years and then left went to UNISA. I think that, so our head of school is a black woman now!. So. So I imagined that maybe now, with Prof \*\*\*\* as our head, there might be more support, I think, with previous heads of schools. I mean, you know, the story of black black woman and academia are notoriously criticised, and and left unsupported, and also left with more of the work of holding and helping students. I think that's maybe somewhere where there would be a difference is that I, I open myself, for students, I try and support them how I can, but I think a lot of them are not comfortable. talking to me about personal issues. And I think maybe that would be different with a black woman. And that would, would be more on her shoulders (LP) Yeah.

**Luqman Muraina** 37:09

Thank you. Thank you so much. So I'm going to ask, there has been a debate about the possibility of decolonizing, you know, science subjects in terms of STEM. So what do you what perspective do you share in this regard?

**Interviewee** 37:26

I mean, I think that it's a that's a really important area, to decolonize. But I think that, um, I was actually talking about this with a colleague this morning. And I think that when I was when I was talking about content, and I was talking about kind of not just swapping one thing out for the other, I think we that's, that's an important attitude to have with STEM. And I'm not talking like, and I'm not taking a kind of assimilationist position. But I think that the the, the language, and the kind of knowledge debates that we have, in and have had in the humanities are not necessarily going to work for STEM. And I think many kind of knowledge debates and frameworks for decolonizing STEM are still kind of underway.

**Luqman Muraina** 38:38

To the eye just on that we would still need to conduct more research, and all of that.

**Interviewee** 38:44

I think so. I mean, I don't know very much. I wouldn't want to speak about this too much, because I don't I don't know too much about it. I mean, I do think that it's very important. Because Also, while stem remains so resistant to decolonizing, it kind of weakens the humanities position as well. Because then that's like, Oh, that's knowledge you can decolonize because it's not objective knowledge, because it's not. And then that that brings up the kind of debates between stem and humanities again.

**Luqman Muraina** 39:16

Ummm Umm Thank you so much. Thank you so much. So let's move on. The next question I'm going to ask is, is that do you think that decolonization, you know, has should have a policy background, like, should there be, should there be any policy, you know, telling us how to decolonize or what decolonial and what decolonization is? Maybe from stem or and from the university.

**Interviewee** 39:54

I think that that would defeat the purpose of decolonization. I You think that decolonization needs to be brought into policy, but to kind of push the the policies to the policies to decolonize. But I think if we have a policy that tells us this is this is how you decolonise, then it's really inserting the knowledge hierarchy, the power hierarchy, and then it's become kind of a thing that's completely within the colonial institution. And I don't think that I mean, I think there should be lots of research about how decolonizing can go. But also with decolonizing, you're always working with a different context. And, and I don't think that the university and that context can shift within within a lecture. I don't think that a policy from the university would be helpful.

**Luqman Muraina** 41:08

Okay, okay. Okay. Thank you so much. So I'm going to ask this question that what is actually the reality, you know, the, you know, the reality for us to decolonize knowledge, you know, especially when we look at the current focus of the globe, and then South Africa, in terms of neoliberalism, globalisation, and being, you know, friends with Western countries.

**Interviewee** 41:36

So just repeat the beginning of your question.

**Luqman Muraina** 41:38

So what is the reality? Okay, to decolonize when you look at the global challenges of neoliberalism, globalisation, and especially of South Africa itself, making friends from Western countries, more from Western countries?

**Interviewee** 41:57

Yeah. I mean, this is where it gets really depressing. I think that the global white supremacist, patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist order that we live in, makes mass, large scale decolonization, really difficult. I think that there are lots of movements that tie into decolonization in different ways, where people are being active and not doing the work, but at a huge price. So like defund the police, for example. With the ideas of, of what kind of community it would look like to not have the police and not have prisons. I think that that pushes back against a lot of colonial power structures. But I think that trying to have a decolonization movement or moment that speaks that that is trying to undo South Africa's position with regards to Western countries that tries to undo like west (MTK), south africa is in capitalism, where South Africa is in neoliberalism is really hard. And I think that that's why I I advocate for my students to always be aware of their own power within decolonization, and they have that that potential in their classrooms, there's a book by Rebecca Solnit "hope in the dark", and she talks about mushrooms. So like that mushrooms come from this big mother body of mushroom that underneath the soil all over the world. And so she speaks about kind of struggles like that as well, that there are individual small struggles that pop up in different places. But they're important and those winds are important. And it's, again, the kind of question of like, we can say that it's that it looks impossible in the global context. But if we say that it looks impossible in the global context, then what do we do? Do we just stop trying? Do we just do Nothing. So, so I think that the reality is, is that it's incredibly, incredibly hard. And also that, like, you know, some of the situations that we're in, in South Africa, our levels of inequality are, like, that could be solved through decolonization. But we're also deepened, so, so large, that it's, you take one look, and you do want to say, I'm not going to do anything. But so I think the reality is, is that it's, it's horrible, it's depressing, it's, it makes it seem like nothing's worth it, but we are all where we are. And either we give up, or we carry on trying to do the work where we are.

**Luqman Muraina** 46:00

Umm umm Okay, the up to a situation whereby, you know, academics, and maybe people, some few people outside academics, you know, continue to advocate and talk about decolonization, and even maybe academics, you know, ability to decolonize their classroom continue to happen. And then maybe the next century, next two centuries, next three centuries, no, decolonization is just limited to those species. No, we continue to shout under noting upwards, do you picture, kind of picture that kind of situation?

**Interviewee** 46:37

Ummm, It could definitely be like that, it could definitely stay like that. I think a lot of it depends on what happens in the rest of the country. And what happens with the students over the next few years, because because decolonization has been driven is driven by students has been driven by students, and as much as academics, have a kind of research get lens and can use it as practices. It's still something that that ultimately kind of stays with the students. So. So I think that that yeah, it depends.

**Luqman Muraina** 47:27

So basically, what you're trying to say is, it is what students, you know, how to make sense of decolonization depends on what would happen in the next century and on the future, generally.

**Interviewee** 47:43

I think, not so much how they make sense of, of, of decolonization, but how they push for decolonization? Where the decolonization? Because, yeah, the protests this year, the I mean, just I know about the one that fits the family (UC) one. We're talking about going to, and I mean, it went to Lithuli house and taking it to other power structures. So I think that if that continues to happen, and I mean, the taking to Luthuli house was completely co-opted, it was actually really distressing. Because there were, yeah, lots of ANC people who came to kind of populate and direct the march and that was, but but I think that's for pollination, to kind of, to make a difference it needs to be it needs to be tied to different kinds of infrastructures, and the different places in in South African society. And I think students have the power to do that, and hopefully, with academics will support the students, although the track record on that isn't great.

**Luqman Muraina** 49:03

Do you also think that decolonization to a large extent has be relegated to you know, educational spaces, universities and all of that? Do you see it happening? Maybe in politics and industries, in the work sector and all of the other spaces?

**Interviewee** 49:26

Yeah, I think you're right. It's been relegated to educational spaces. And I think that that's also why I'm thinking about, like, where the students need to push it away. We need to push it because it's, by I mean, it's absolutely not like limited to education, but I think that that's where where it is in those spaces. I haven't heard. I mean, the idea of hearing like business, talk about decolonizing just makes me I'm like unbelievable, so

**Luqman Muraina** 49:58

nice. So Let me quickly run through the the few questions that we have now I'm sure you will be thinking about ending the interview (Hmm INJ). Okay, so the next question is have you ever been been consulted by an organisation? You know, you know, seeking advice on how to go about decolonization?

**Interviewee** 50:28

No, no.

**Luqman Muraina** 50:31

Okay, what steps is the University of Wits or maybe the faculty currently taking over the in terms of decolonization? Aside from maybe establishing the decolonization garden, which you mentioned?

**Interviewee** 50:47

Yeah. I think that there is that a lot that that depends on individual lecturers. I think that there is an idea that that decolonization decolonizing content is important. And but like, there's no, there are no workshops or things to kind of support decolonizing in a practical way. So I actually don't think that they're doing much.

**Luqman Muraina** 51:31

Okay, key. Okay. Okay. Nice. Okay, the next question is, do you think that there is a gap between the research that is conducted on decolonization? And what is really happening in practice?

**Interviewee** 51:47

Yeah, definitely. I think that (LLP) last year, it was very hard. Are you still there? Are you there Doctor? Yes, I'm here. I'm here. Okay. Nice. Okay. And so I think that there's definitely a gap, I think that people are starting to do more things about with looking at practical examples in the classrooms. But I think that the the kind of ideas about power that decolonization has, are very scary for the university. So they don't, don't kind of want that gap to be bridged. But I think that people are working, working more for it to kind of active things. It's just like, last year, when I was doing research for one of my papers, **I couldn't find anything on pedagogy that was like, practical, practical, focused**, so I think it's good. But the gap is there

**Luqman Muraina** 53:12

okay, so basically, there is more research than what is happening? Yeah (INJ) I need to repeat the question.

**Interviewee** 53:24

No, it Are you asking me What's happening?

**Luqman Muraina** 53:28

No, no, no, no, no, no, no. So okay. So how can the gaps between the efforts of research and practice be narrowed? how can we bring them closer. You mentioned initially that, you know, the university is not supportive, and then maybe they are not allowing, you know, practic.. practicalities of decolonization. Maybe they just want to promote the research agenda. And then the theories should continue to proliferate all over, you know, the web.

**Interviewee** 54:10

Yeah. I mean, my first response to that was you have to hypnotise the VCs. But you have to repeat please hypnotise the VCs. OOkay (laughs mildly) But that's just very tongue in cheek. So I think, like, actually, the problem is with the structure of the university, that it's running a kind of managerial, neoliberal way where the all the focus is on research outputs. And teaching is very, very secondary. I mean, and that's true of my school of the Wits \*\*\*. And if, like you, you're teaching teachers and you're being told that you need to spend less time teaching. It's really, like it's very disheartening. So, I think, more focus on the teaching aspect of academics jobs, and then actively having the kinds of support that the university does do the, the workshops, or the programmes for academics to, to take part in. Maybe. I mean, this is a radical idea. And maybe, maybe we could have just groups thinking about pedagogy and decolonization and with no pressure to publish. So that the so that the focus can really be on reading, thinking through, engaging with students, and then like what you want to apply in your classroom. But I think it really would have to start with valuing teaching a lot more than that, then it's valued right now.

**Luqman Muraina** 55:58

Okay, okay. Just last, the last two questions. What can you say? Okay, please, he can also do what you want to do over there. Sorry. Just my cat. Oh, awesome. Awesome. Let me see the face please. Oh, very beautiful. Pleasue. What's the name? pitch I teach (UC)? Okay, nice. So what can you see, you know, the relationship is between the self and decolonisation? decolonization?

**Interviewee** 56:34

That's a really big question to leave for the end. So briefly, I think (LP) it's a it's an important relationship. It's a painful relationship. because it involves being very aware of your kind of historical roots where you are, and what your your present roots in society, in the relationship, your relationship to colonisation. And then trying to kind of be aware of that. And make sure like, in my case, make sure that that doesn't damage my students. That that doesn't doesn't damage my research. I mean, I wouldn't say it doesn't impact because who you are always impacts your research. And you're, it's a difficult question to, to answer. And I mean, I think, because I think the relationship is also about grappling with power, and your place in the power structures, and how you want to build a new world like, What what? What are you drawing on to build to build a world a world that is not infested with colonial structures? I don't know. I don't have a good answer for that (smiles)

**Luqman Muraina** 58:29

Okay, so I need time. Okay, just the last question, do you actually go with the idea that, you know, of mixing some, you know, some of the positives we have, from the western knowledge and structures with indigenous, you know, ways?

**Interviewee** 58:51

So, that's a complicated question for me. I, I generally, the arguments that I've read about that are generally very kind of assimilationist. So saying, we can, like we can have the best of both. But I think that we've had the worst of Western ideas and that they're so vested in power, that that it's difficult to keep them kind of at the same at the same level as the new knowledge. I also I would just say, we will be giving out to keep the western knowledge in like (INJ - repeat that question, please). Who are we leaving out to keep the western knowledge in? There's so much indigenous decolonized Yeah, there's so much knowledge. There's so many people To include that, so my I've got a friend, Danai, who we were travelling to a conference once and I was like, I'm going to go to it, we were I think we were in Holland. And I said, I was going to go to a museum, and she's like, I'm not going to go there, I'm not going to go to that place, because it completely negates me, negates who I am, I'm like, but I mean, we can just look at the paintings. She's like, no, the structure of the knowledge, there completely negates me, there was a big learning point for me. And so I think that trying, the problem with with keeping the kind of Western knowledge is like, looking at the structure of the knowledge, and who is allowed to be human in that knowledge who wasn't.

**Luqman Muraina** 1:00:44

Ummmm At this stage, I'm going to appreciate you for coming along, for coming around. And then I'm going to ask if you have any question for me as well. Um,

**Interviewee** 1:01:03

what's been the most interesting thing you've come across in your research so far?

**Luqman Muraina** 1:01:10

Interesting. I think this is interview number five. The most, okay, the most interesting in one word is that? I started from the idea that, in fact, the research topic is maybe I can just read it out is decolonization of higher educaiton curriculum in South Africa, get your research into policy and practice. So I started with the idea that research needs to move from, you know, decolonization needs to move from that area of continue of proliferation of studies of theories, you know, into policy and practice. But so far, the response I've got has shown that that decolonization is not a policy affair. It is not something that we have, you know, we have to like, you know, have a policy on like policy on decolonization, maybe either from the Department of Education and Training or from universities. And then, you know, it's, you know, most respondents or participant, I've actually said that it's negates the idea of decolonization itself, which you also mentioned, because, you know, decolonization is about pluriversality of knowledge of ideas of doings. So whenever we say there is a, there is a policy, then there is negation of that idea. So and then it is even said that maybe in the future, even if it will happen, then the policy must be bottom-up. So I think that has really been interesting, such that as I'm speaking to you now, what I'm going to finally, you know, complete the study, I might have to change the topic for maybe mention that in my research finding that these has, this is how we started, but based on you know, the kind of responses. It is not it is definitely it is not a policy up here.

**Interviewee** 1:03:18

Okay, that's interesting. Yeah, it's very interesting. Yeah. Would you like me to send you that the Dr \*\*\*\* details?

**Luqman Muraina** 1:03:28

Please doo doo doo. I'm going to check it out and see if I would be able to contact. Okay. Okay, well, thank you. This was very interesting. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Have a beautiful day. And anybody have any question or maybe have a follow up question based on your responses. I'm just going to send you via email. Yeah, sure. Okay, thank you so much. have a beautiful day ahead. Bye bye.