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Decolonising the future in the untransformed present in South African higher education

Abstract

South Africa as a nation became democratic in 1994 because of the end of apartheid. Since 1994, higher education has geared towards transformation and redress of the inequalities created by the inhuman policies of apartheid. While few applaudable steps have been taken towards this direction, South African higher education remains largely untransformed. For the past two years, a wave of student protest swept across the nation, calling for decolonisation of higher education in general and the curriculum in particular. This move brings to mind several questions about decolonisation and transformation. What is the state of South African higher education? Why has it remained untransformed since the advent of democracy? What should be decolonised to ensure transformation of the present and the future? This paper therefore ventures to answer these three questions using the theory of social transformation as a lens. The paper points out that funding structures, research politics, administrative structures and a lack of interest are amongst the reasons for the lack of transformation. The paper concludes that there will be no transformation until higher education institutions have been decolonised. Social transformation is therefore argued as the pathway for decolonisation. The paper recommends that transformation in higher education should go beyond the shelves where they are stored as policy to the classroom and university environment for practice and universities need to revise their understandings of transformation under the guidance of the DHET.

Keywords: *decolonisation, South African higher education, transformation, universities*

1. Introduction

The advent of democracy in South Africa brought with it a myriad of changes in the higher education sector. In 1997, the Higher Education Act was passed which necessitated change and access within an education system, which discriminated against people based on race and skin colour. To eradicate the ills of apartheid, transformation became a principal goal of South African higher education and this was enshrined in the White Paper of 1997 (DoE, 1997). However, transformation has been understood and theorised differently by various scholars and higher education institutions (Venter, 2013). Venter continues that transformation is supposed to address the challenges of the "present political landscape" while at the same time,

engaging with the teaching and learning context for sustainable educational solutions. A truly transformed South African higher education therefore will produce scholars who think and compete globally but are able to act locally and vice versa. By doing this South African higher education will be competing with the best in the world not only on paper but in practice. Transformation, especially within the context of South African higher education, has been greatly hampered by globalisation, internationalisation and the digital revolution especially in reference to technologies of education, which the world has seen in recent times. As a result, education is becoming more global in its appeal at the expense of social justice and community engagement. South African higher education according to Venter (2013: 175) is, "intellectually, culturally and religiously, a hybrid mix in constant flux". This hybrid mix is what the decolonisation movement aims at destroying, with the aim of establishing a unique contextual higher education system, which is grounded in African, believes experiences and values and anchored on indigenous knowledge systems. However, decolonisation is only possible in a transformed higher education environment. This paper therefore discusses the possibility of decolonising the future of South African higher education in a present, which remains largely untransformed.

Du Preez, Simmonds and Verhoef (2016) argue that some have construed transformation as a complex, open-ended concept with several interpretations, while others have dismissed it as vague and indistinct making it theoretically and practically inapplicable in the South African higher education context or anywhere else. DoE (2008: 38) argued that most higher education institutions created or developed different understandings of transformation, which they used in their mission statement. This diversity in the understanding and enactment of transformation in South African higher education is a principal reason for the lack of transformation all over the nation. Decolonising South African higher education within an untransformed space is a complex process, which requires a complex theory to understand it. To theorise on this issue, the paper tackles three basic questions: what is the state of South African higher education? Why has it remained untransformed since the advent of democracy? What should be decolonised to ensure transformation of the present and the future? However, to answer these questions, the paper engaged the theory of social transformation as a lens to understand the drive for transformation and the decolonisation movement in South Africa higher education.

2. Theory of social transformation

Developed by Fomunyam (2015), the theory offers a pathway for transformation and decolonisation in the university environment and the society as a whole. The theory offers four main key constructs that all work together for the transformation of the society. These constructs are resistance to change, advocates of change, alternative vision and nation building. Resistance to change in any society is the primary reason for change. Without resistance to change, there would be no force to drive change. It is often said change is the only constant thing in life but the very nature of change makes it (change) the only thing that changes and any other thing constant. What we experience as change therefore is simple: the effects of the changing change on all other things that are constant in life. Bellettini *et al.* (2014) define resistance to change as actions taken by people when they are contended with where they are or with what is happening around them. They add that such a threat might not even necessarily be real for resistance to occur. These individuals resist change by either praising the current situation in society or in the context where they find themselves or escape the call for change by focusing on something entirely different.

Advocates of change as opposed to the resistance to change think that society in the context in which they find themselves is in dire need of change. Those who advocate for change think the society is dilapidated and its structures should be changed. South African higher education was in dire need for change after apartheid because of the imbalances created by the discriminatory policies of apartheid. Though there is great need for transformation, most universities are still failing to transform. Change must therefore be championed by the individuals who want to see it in society regardless of what public opinion is at the time. Watony (2012) avers that education is supposed to bring transformation in society, academics who are pillars of knowledge or facilitators of knowledge in the university are supposed to pioneer the cause of change in society.

Alternative vision as the third key construct looks at different pathways for the society. From resisting change, and advocating for change comes a desire to create something different, a new pathway that the society can follow. When those demanding change cannot agree on whether what is needed is change within the leadership or change of leadership, the end game is always the emergence of an alternative vision. This vision, which is undoubtedly political in nature, always becomes a cause of disagreement amongst the individuals involved in the process. This alternative vision becomes the platform for social and political action. Nation building as the last key construct focuses on advancing the nation forward. Nation building is a drive by a dysfunctional or unstable nation seeking to rebuild its broken walls by reconceptualising its strategies and approaches to make the nation a better place. Nation building from this perspective involves conflict or dispute resolution, economic assistance and peaceful negotiations. Nation building is the solution to racial diversity since the challenges or potential challenges associated to or with racial diversity have constantly been propounded as a contributing reason for the poor economic and political performance of some countries (Ruming, 2014).
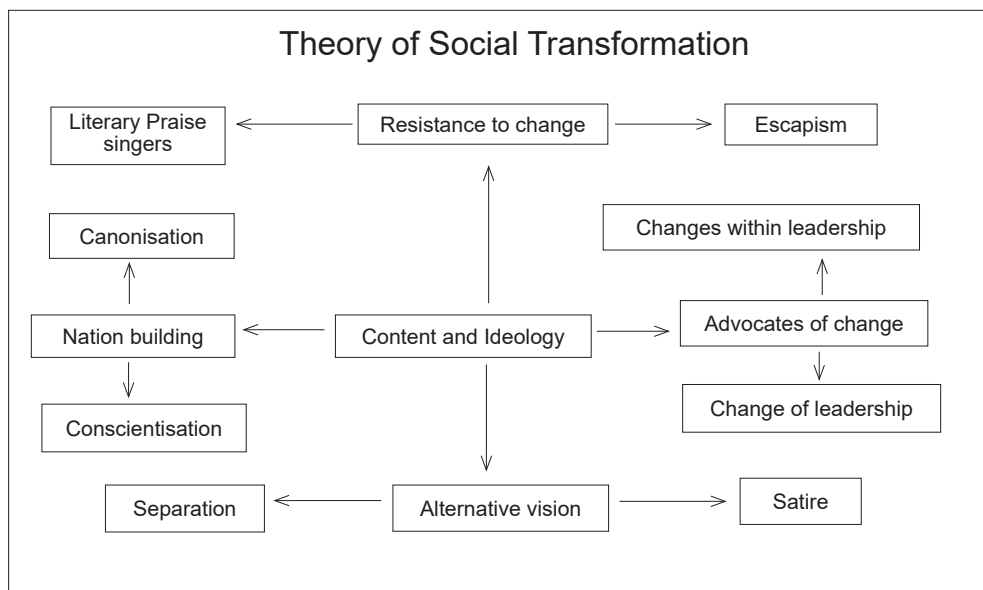
Source: Fomunyam (2015).

3. The state of South African higher education

The state of South African higher education is a debatable one, characterised by discordant voices and a variety of opinions. Karodia *et al.* (2015) argue that the quality of education in South African universities has been compromised for approximately two decades. They continue that since the advent of democracy, there has been no significant improvement because, of the over zealousness of the democratic government to engineer change for the sake of change or for symbolic purposes (Jansen, 2002). Karodia *et al.* (2015) further add most South African higher education institutions, especially traditional and historic apartheid White universities, claim that they are working towards the transformation of the racial demographics of their academic staff, though there is little or no evidence to support this claim. This suggests that there are several claims of transformative practice but with little or no accompanying proof to back up such claims.

Cloete (2016) argues that South Africa has the best higher education system in Africa in terms of numbers. For example, in the last (2008) country system ranking by the Shanghai JiaoTong Academic Ranking of World Universities, South Africa's higher education system was ranked between the ranges of 27 and 33 and South Africa consistently had at least four out of the five African universities in the Shanghai top 500. To make this more impressive, The Times Higher Education 2016 ranking of BRICS and emerging economies places three South African universities (University of Cape Town 4th, University of the Witwatersrand 6th and Stellenbosch University 11th) in the top 12 while Brazil and Russia has one each and India has none (Bothwell, 2015). The icing on the cake was the emergence of South African Universities at the top in Africa in the 2016 Webometrics world university rankings. This ranking saw eight South African universities place in the top 1200 universities in the world. In all of Africa, thirteen universities appeared in the top 1200 with South Africa having the first four positions (323, 473, 547, 561), the seventh (652), the ninth (985) and the last tying with an Egyptian university at 1110 (Aguillo, 2016). Cloete (2016) further adds that in the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa research programme, consisting of seven African flagship universities, University of Cape Town published 2 390 articles in the Web of Science in 2014 while the other six universities combined could only manage 1 476. Furthermore, University of Cape Town graduated 205 doctorates in 2013/2014, while the remaining six produced a combined 207 doctorates. DHET (2015) agrees with Cloete when they declare that South Africa had experienced a "revolution", especially because by 2013 74% of all higher education students were black. A substantial part of the revolution occurred at the doctoral level since African doctoral graduates increased from 58 in 1996 to 821 in 2012, while white graduate numbers between 1996 and 2012, only moved from 587 to 816. All over the world, there have not been any such changes in demographics in a nation's higher education system over such a short period (16 years).

However, this tower of excellence only exists at the postgraduate level, which constitutes only about 16 per cent in most universities in South Africa except in certain universities such as UCT where it is approximately 30 percent. Cloete (2016: 3) argues that, "from assessments of the South African system by the Harvard panel on Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa, the World Bank and the Centre for Higher Education Trust, South African higher education system could be characterised as low participation with high attrition rates, with insufficient capacity for adequate skills production". This means access to higher education is still a major challenge and the few who gain access end up dropping out because of high tuition rates. Cloete and Gillwald (2014) add that in Africa, economies with participation rates

lower than 10% fall within the category of "stage 1 factor-driven" economies and South Africa has a 16 percent participation rate. Meanwhile countries such as Botswana and Mauritius have 20 and 26 percent respectively and are in transition from stage 1 to stage 2, which are "efficiency-driven" economies. This is confirmed by CHE (2013) when it argues that the South African higher education participation rate has increased from 15 percent in 2000 to 18 percent in 2010, and hopefully the 20 percent target will be met by 2015/2016. Although there has been growth, the participation rate is still quite low compared to the average for Latin American countries (34%) or Central Asia (31%). The numerous transformation policies and initiatives have failed to achieve its desired effect. Decolonisation is supposed to follow transformation especially because transformation creates the structure and architecture for decolonisation. Nevertheless, before theorising on how to decolonise the future, thereby creating the architecture for transformation, it is important to understand why transformation has failed or why South African higher education remains largely untransformed since the advent of democracy.

4. Why has there been little or no transformation?

As articulated earlier, transformation is a fluid concept that has been interpreted differently by various individuals or institutions to mean numerous things. Several reasons may account for the lack of transformation ranging from institutional understanding of transformation, resources required for transformation, willingness to transform and the political and social capital of stakeholders within these institutions to drive transformation. The DoE (2008) argues that different universities understand transformation differently. The University of Cape Town for example sees transformation from four basic standpoints: making the university representative of all races and gender in terms of its student make up and academic and support staff, promoting rigorous intellectual diversity, transcending the idea of race and improving the institutional climate and an enhanced focus on African perspectives and its intellectual enterprise. While Stellenbosch University sees transformation as the promotion of diversity in terms of demographics of the campus community, a welcoming campus culture, accessibility, a multilingual approach to education, systemic sustainability, improving learning and living spaces and promoting entrepreneurial thought, innovation and relevance to society (DoE, 2008). The University of Pretoria (UP) on the other hand considers transformation to be "rectifying the demographic imbalances of the past and encompass[ing] relevant and meaningful change in the academic, social, economic, demographic, political and cultural domains of institutional life" (UP, 2008:10). These three universities amongst other things see transformation in the light of numbers; UCT's four key indicators of transformation have three focuses: on numbers and diversity which in effect caters for the same thing because racial diversity can only be effectively expressed in numbers.

Ramrathan (2016) argues that higher education transformation in South Africa has primarily focused on the domain of counting numbers and this stems from the transformation agenda for higher education, which set several goals that were mostly numerical changes. Although universities have been taking steps to address these numerical imbalances (as seen from their understanding of transformation), problems of throughput, dropout and academic support remain. These issues have been destabilising the transformation agenda, making it difficult for these institutions to emerge as transformed entities. Paphitis and Kelland (2016: 202) conclude that one of the most significant barriers to transformation "is a reticence on the part of the academy to let go of its own privileged position". The academia is therefore

resisting change, which explains why there has been little or no transformation. One of the key constructs of the theory of social transformation, discussed earlier, focussed on resistance to change. As such while universities propagate a culture of transformation by trying to shift demographics, little is being done to ensure the transformation of the individuals within such institutions. To this end, the site ends up being transformed while the people and the knowledge construction process remain untransformed. Paphitis and Kelland (2016: 202) add that academics who have embraced the call for transformation and are living it should "lead by example in order to dispel the misconception that the twenty-first century university can continue to operate as an ivory tower".

In the University of KwaZulu-Natal, transformation is understood as promoting the following: high quality research, excellent teaching and learning, responsible community engagement, African scholarship, socially and contextually relevant curricula, the wellbeing of everyone within the university, race and gender representation at all levels in the institution, collegiality, difference, diversity and African languages (UKZN, 2012b). UKZN (2012a) argues that there has been tremendous transformation in the university. Contrary to this believe of vibrant transformation in UKZN, Johnson (2012) writes that UKZN's administration has lost its entire institutional memory and has become chaotic, barely existing on life support and is nearly R2 billion in debt. He continues, stating that the government has refused to see the hideous damage done to the university as well as how rapid Africanisation has destroyed the university. Beetar (2013) adds to this by arguing that the project of transformation at UKZN has been successful in the sense that it has transformed into a model for what not to do at a tertiary institution.

The lack of transformation in South African universities is undebatable, as seen in the various examples. However, this situation is not only prevalent in universities but also in Universities of Technology. Ngcamu (2016) argue that in the Durban University of Technology(DUT), there are a variety of understandings of transformation amongst key personels in management. These include redressing past imbalances with mainstreamed operational activities, responding to students, employees, society, industry or business, government and global needs as the main cornerstones of transformation in higher education institutions. To one of the top management officials, transformation was all about "clear communication, roles and responsibilities to be clearly defined. Recruitment and selection in HR was operating without policies with timeframes and the HR interview scoring system was poor" (Ngcamu, 2016: 17). This peripherial understanding of transformation as well as equating it to demographic changes also helps to explain the lack of transformation. The DUT experience is not a unique one since the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) shares the same experience. Tyobeka and van-Staden (2009) argue that although TUT has made remarkable strides after the merger in addressing several issues facing the university and improving access, transformation still remains a problem.

Fomunyam (2015) argues that amongst the reasons for the lack of change or resistance to change is individuals feeling comfortable in their position or the direction the change is leading to is unclear. Several stakeholders within the university are failing to align with the changes being made and resisting it because of uncertainty in the future. In addition, little or no attention has been given to the transformation of the curriculum, making the initiatives of transformation more about the architecture rather than about the transformation of the people with the university. From the above examples, it is clear that there has been little progress made in South African higher education concerning transformation. Having discussed the

state of South African higher education and the reasons it remains untransformed, it is vital to forge a pathway to ensure the decolonisation of the higher education system and necessitate transformation. This last section of the article focuses on what should be decolonised to ensure transformation of the present and the future.

5. Decolonisation for transformation in South African higher education

Ngugı (2004: 88) argues that decolonisation is a complicated process that focuses on "the rejecting of the centrality of the West in Africa's understanding of itself and its place in the world". This means that decolonising is about shifting the balance of power in relation to knowledge hegemony and knowledge economy. It is about redefining African institutions from an African perspective in the bid to construct knowledge about Africa for Africans in particular and the rest of the world at large. Prinsloo (2016: 165) adds to this by arguing that decolonisation "is about re-centering ourselves, intellectually and culturally, by redefining what the centre is: Africa". African institutions or universities have foregrounded European experiences, cultural and social capital at the expense of unique African epistemological nuances. By making Africa the centre of teaching and learning in South African higher education, academics would be foregrounding the African experience and knowledge systems as well as empowering Africans to make contextual knowledge relevant contextually and internationally. To decolonise in the university or decolonising the South African higher education system from the above definitions will focus on three different constructs: a partial or complete makeover of institutional architecture, curriculum divergence and convergence and democratising university hegemony.

   A change in university architecture – be it partial or complete – is required for the decoloni-sation of South African higher education. A university's structure (both human and material), determine the direction the university goes. The MustFall movements (Rhodesmustfall and feesmustfall) in South Africa in the past two years have more than demonstrated that institutional structures need a makeover, be it partial or complete. Mbembe (2015) argues that decolonising the university or the higher education system begins with the de-privatisation and rehabilitation of the public space, which is the university. This means the process begins with a definition of what pertains to the realm of the common and does not belong to anyone in particular, otherwise referred to as the public. To this effect, buildings and of public spaces within higher education institutions require a makeover. This is especially true because South Africa had for many centuries defined, "itself as not of Africa, but as an outpost of European imperialism in the Dark Continent; and in which 70% of the land is still firmly in the hands of 13% of the population" (Mbembe, 2015: 13). Furthermore, since institutional architecture goes beyond the material structures to human resources and structures; giving a university a make-up or makeover would go beyond buildings to creating conditions that will make black staff and students say of the university: "This is my home. I am not an outsider here. I do not have to beg or to apologize to be here. I belong here" (Mbembe, 2015: 6). By making the university a safe space for all South Africans or all students and staff wherever they come from is a giant step towards decolonisation, which would ensure improved access and the breaking down of hegemonic structures. Disemelo (2015: 2) argues that decolonisation is not simply about one single issue, but "eradicating the painful exclusions and daily micro aggressions which go hand-in-hand with institutional racism within these spaces … And it is also about laying bare the failures of the heterosexual, patriarchal, neoliberal capitalist

values which have become so characteristic of the country's universities". A makeover of the university architecture would therefore, amongst other things, lead to the rebranding or change of those colonial names. Such initiatives would not only rebrand the university and give it a new face, structure, culture and architecture, but would also provide the platform for quality education and excellence, which Fomunyam (2016) argues is the basis for transformation. This would therefore ensure that the present and the future is decolonised, creating room for the transformation of the present and by extension the future for as Askell-Williams (2015) puts it to transform the present it is vital to take several steps that focuses on the future.

Curriculum divergence and convergence on the other hand would not only secure the transformation of South African higher education, but would also ensure freedom of the mind for students and staff. Curriculum divergence would be the separation or breakaway from a Eurocentric curriculum, which disempowers the African mind by foregrounding European or foreign experiences at the expense of local or contextual knowledge, which can easily be applied. However, a focus on local experiences would leave the student vulnerable and excluded especially in the current dispensation of globalisation and internationalisation. It is therefore about foregrounding local content and experiences, exporting it to the rest of the world and constructing knowledge on shared experiences. Furthermore, to effectively expand on this notion of decolonising the curriculum by diverging to converge, it is vital to look at three key notions of the curriclum that reveal that curriculum matters are intertwined with the cultural, political, social and historical contexts of not only the education system but the world in which they operate. These notions are curriculum as reproduction, curriculum as consumption and curriculum as transformation.

Curriculum as reproduction according to Barnett and Coate (2005) centres on the hidden curriculum and its ability to reproduce a social structure through hidden artefacts within the curriculum recognisable only to the hegemonic few or custodians of such knowledge. It suggests that the curriculum is political in nature and something is happening beyond what can be seen in the teaching and learning situation and in textbooks. This hidden curriculum therefore acts as a gatekeeper by ensuring only the privilege few can gain epistemological access, while the rest keep wondering around the corridors. Curriculum as reproduction aims at reproducing divisions in society, making sure that control remains with the few (Higgs, 2016). As such, the development of future African intellectuals on the very hinges of European views and experiences is simply another way of handing over control back to Europeans similar to what some African leaders did in the late 19th century. Curriculum as consumption on the other hand is premised on the continuous marketisation of education. Higher education institutions are constantly competing with one another for lucrative student populations, and this has forced curricula in higher education to be influenced more by external forces rather than internal forces (Barnett & Coate, 2005). The market currently dictates the direction of the curriculum based on what skills and knowledge is needed, and since every student wants to be employed upon completion of his or her studies, they see the curriculum as dictated. Since Europeans, Americans or foreign individuals own most of the biggest companies in Africa in general and South Africa, the individuals shape the direction of the curriculum. The higher education sector rather than construct knowledge with students simply turn the students into consumers who must go outside and reproduce what they have consumed to the rest of the nation (Higgs, 2016). The notion of curriculum as consumption reveals how social values have shifted towards the marketplace, leading to the development of students who are morally bankrupt, and this according to Paphitis and Kelland (2016), is a form of epistemic violence

which must be dealt away with if transformation must occur. Decolonising the curriculum by diverging to converge will give South African higher education the opportunity of developing a curriculum, which instils the kind of values and ideals (such as social justice, democracy, tolerance and Ubuntu) the nation desires in the students and the academics, so they can in turn transport this to the rest of the world. Curriculum as transformation sees the curriculum as having the potential to transform the nation. A redundant Eurocentric curriculum hinders the course of transformation because it keeps the students and the staff blinded about the socio-political realities facing the nation. However, if the curriculum is engaging, relevant and contextual, it has the potential to empower and transform the lives of students. In the dark days of apartheid, certain groups of people were excluded systematically from education and one of the ways of transforming this landscape and healing all stakeholders within the University of Bitter Knowledge is engaging a curriculum that is transformative. If South Africa is therefore going to control its own fate, it must control its curriculum, ensuring that it is South Africa's "vision of legitimate knowledge" and not a Eurocentric view imposed on her. Mamdani (1998: 71) crowns the call for indigenous knowledge systems when he argues that, "the idea that natives can only be informants, and not intellectuals, is part of an old imperial tradition. It is part of the imperial conviction that natives cannot think for themselves; they need tutelage".

Democratising university hegemony is the last step required to take for the decolonisation of South African higher education thereby ensuring transformation. Mbembe (2015) argues that universities or organisations are socially constructed spaces where knowledge creation and knowledge creation stakeholders constantly change organisational reality. This process of knowledge creation takes place in an environment where knowledge or meaning has to be negotiated and renogotiated to ensure the complexity of transformation, particularly in universities. But this can only happen if university processes are democratised to ensure freedom of speech and participation. For knowledge construction to be meaningful and progressive, especially in South Africa where the call for decolonisation has reached its peak, university hegemony needs to be broken down and power given to the people for local experiences to be grounded. With the current top-down hegemonic academic processes, transformation is impossible because the people feel alienated and therefore do not contribute to the transformation process. The famous Mamdani Affair at UCT demonstrates this more clearly. Barnes (2007) and Mamdani (1998) recount that Professor Mahmood Mamdani held the AC Jordan chair in the Centre for African Studies in UCT, at the time when the Faculty of Social Science was developing a foundation course which was being prepared for the teaching of Africa to first year students. A dispute began between other members of staff and himself over what should be taught on the course. The university and faculty management attempted to resolve the dispute by suspending Mamdani from the curriculum planning committee, thereby effectively denying him the opportunity to contribute further to the course planning. Mamdani responded by asking that the issue be resolved through a series of seminars where the different viewpoints could be debated by the university community. Mamdani made an incredible presentation, which devastated his interlocutors. These debates brought to the lime light several issues; "that the use of administrative fiat to stifle intellectual debate has no place in a university setting and secondly, what it means to study Africa is fiercely contested, and the academic project as a whole can only flourish if all viewpoints are enabled to contend freely" (Mamdani, 1998). Democratising university processes and dismantling the hegemony that has existed for years is vital. In South African higher education, several scandals that demonstrate the ills of academic hegemony and how it stifles the knowledge construction process as well

as university transformation have occurred. Decolonising the university hegemony is a step towards taking African experiences and perspectives to the rest of the world. Examples such as the Desai affair, the university's suspension of Professor Evan Mantzaris for criticising management, the suspension of Nithaya Chetty and John van den Berg for "not exercising due care in communicating with the media" demonstrates the destructive power of university hegemony (Karodia *et al.*, 2015; Patel, 2006). These affairs indicate that the era of university hegemony has past and a new era that heralds democracy and negates the "prevailing culture of incivility and racial stereotyping that further impedes the free exchange of ideas" (Patel, 2006: 231). Democratising university processes is a way of giving a voice to the masses, foregrounding their experiences in the construction of knowledge. The elite few can no longer drive academic discussions and decide what happens or does not happen in the university milieu. Democratising university hegemony is a step towards ensuring the decolonisation of the university, the curriculum and its architecture.

6. Conclusion

South African higher education is in dire need of decolonisation and transformation but the current institutional culture and architecture does not create room for this to happen at any level, beginning from the curriculum, student population, knowledge creation and university hegemony. The state of education is deplorable especially at the undergraduate level. Several steps have been taken to improve the quality of education at the postgraduate level. There are several reasons for the poor quality of education and ranges from a lack of political will to transform, a lack of congruent vision for transformation or institutional understanding of transformation, a lack of social and political capital for transformation, escapism, racism, funding and focus on policies on transformation rather than enactment of these policies. Several steps need to be taken to address these challenges. The university needs a partial or complete makeover of institutional architecture, curriculum divergence and convergence and democratising university hegemony to create the right atmosphere for decolonisation and transformation. This paper therefore makes the following recommendations for higher education institutions, the Council on Higher Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training and academics for the decolonisation and transformation of South African higher education.

The paper recommends that transformation in higher education needs to transcend the shelves where they are stored as policy to the classroom and university environment for practice. Universities also need to revise their understandings of transformation under the guidance of the Department of Higher Education and Training so that all universities can have a single understanding of transformation, which they can link to their mission. Once this is done, the department can develop a metrics, which can be used to measure transformation within universities. Although the context for universities is different, requiring different approaches to measure transformation, a nationwide understanding of transformation is vital if it is seen as a national project. Secondly, universities need a makeover in terms of their culture and architecture to create the right atmosphere and condition for the academic exchanges, demographic representation and eradication of sexual and racial discrimination. Decolonising the curriculum is vital for transformation, especially because it is through the curriculum that the students and staff would understand why transformation is needed and how transformation should unfold within the university. Diverging to converge is vital to put South Africa on the map through knowledge construction that foregrounds African experiences

and worldviews and the exportation of this knowledge to the rest of the world. University hegemony needs to be destroyed for academic freedom to be at its best. Stifling academic discussions through university hegemony is a way of making sure that indigenous knowledge is foregrounded. University structures need to be democratised to ensure that every stakeholder within the university has a voice and that their voice is heard. Decolonising the future in the untransformed present is the only way to ensure the transformation of South African higher education in the present and the future.

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