



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
AND ECONOMICS

2023/24 College Decolonisation  
Committee Newsletter

# *Decolonial Coloniality*

The Future  
Reimagined

## Message from the College Decolonisation Committee Chairperson, Naiefa Rashied



Coloniality is deeply entrenched in the “post-colonial” world. This is, in part, due to the legacy of colonialism itself and the perpetuation of neo-colonialism under the guise of Western democracy and capitalist values. As Kwame Nkrumah (1965:ix)<sup>1</sup> said, *“The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside”*. This newsletter aims to help position the implementation and operationalisation of decolonisation in a world heavily entrenched in neo-colonialism and coloniality. We hope you enjoy reading it and that you volunteer to write for us soon.

Sebonkile Thaba begins with an enlightening tribute to and reflection on Kgoro, a meeting venue at one of her former workplaces.

Kgoro reminds us of the beauty and wisdom of the African culture.

Thereafter, Colin Reddy explains what decolonisation might mean for business and economic thinking in the College of Business and Economics at UJ. He offers practical suggestions for implementation, most of which relate to the importance of identifying underlying assumptions of the theories dominating our syllabi. He also argues that as educators, we need to empower ourselves to develop a deeper understanding of theory and history in our respective disciplines. Subsequently, Mubanga Mpundu argues that decolonisation of the curriculum should be about bringing Africa fully to the center of knowledge in African universities. There is also a need to create opportunities for African content and knowledge so that they have a legitimate space in this center of knowledge. Lastly, and very importantly, Lebogang Lebudi outlines the importance of the African identity and emphasises its deficiency in our curricula.

As I write this, I am deeply saddened by the brutality against Palestinians by the Apartheid State of Israel, and I strongly condemn every act of occupation, violence, war, and genocide around the world. Since 7 October 2023, which is in no way the starting point of the brutal Israeli Occupation, we have witnessed a genocide of 26 792 Palestinians and the killing of 1 139 Israeli settlers<sup>2</sup>. Parallel to this, other genocides and occupations are currently underway in Myanmar, Sudan, Congo, China, Syria, West Papua, Ethiopia, Armenia, and other parts of the world that receive far less media coverage and public attention. For additional insight into the latest genocides, occupations, and crimes against humanity around the world, I urge you to visit Human Rights Watch<sup>3</sup> and Amnesty International<sup>4</sup> websites. For more context on the Palestinian Occupation, I urge you to read the works of Steven Friedman, Norman Finkelstein, Ilan Pappé, and Susan Abulhawa, among so many others. I wish I was writing under more peaceful circumstances as you read this message.

---

1 Nkrumah, K. 1965. *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. New York: International Publishers New York.

2 These numbers are as of 29 January 2024. For the latest death toll, visit <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

3 <https://www.hrw.org/>

4 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/>



# Kgoro, Areyeng Kgorong: How I view Kgorong or Kgoro

By **Sebonkile Thaba**

**Lecturer in Transport and Supply Chain Management, College of Business and Economics,  
University of Johannesburg**



My understanding of Kgoro before the colonial legacy was that it was mainly based on communism. We need to tell stories of our own to decolonise all forms of colonial influence. Kgoro is a former committee of the Bapedi people, consisting of villagers. In a Kgoro meeting, the committee gathers to share ideas, diagnose problems, and set goals that best benefit all the villagers. It does not matter the background, age, gender, or whether the royals were or were not; back then, blood was red. All ideas and contributions were treated equally.

Kgoro committee with the following eight values:

1. **Accountability:** All villagers, being involved in every decision-making process and aware of the current status of their village, take accountability for their actions. As members of Kgoro, they are accountable for delivering what is expected of them and being responsible at all times. The Bapedi committee is accountable for our daily tasks, and each individual goes the extra mile to deliver what is expected of them. Most importantly, they were guardians of all stakeholders in the village.
2. **Diversity:** Kgoro was blessed with different skills and knowledge due to its unity, as every villager is welcomed into the Kgoro meeting. It does not matter the background, the clan, gender, or whether one was royal or non-royal (back then, blood was just red). Decision-making was decentralised, which I believe is the reason every family could find daily food through any means they could use. Everyone felt like they were part of the whole community but still had the opportunity to make their own decisions. Everyone is given an equal opportunity, as there are many rooms to practice and express their skills and knowledge. It was so diverse because young people and elders shared and contributed to their communities.
3. **Innovation:** In Kgoro meetings, great ideas were born. Goals were set, and people used their skills and knowledge to strive to achieve them. They came up with things that never existed and found more effective and efficient ways of tackling challenges. Kgoro lived innovatively every day of its existence.
4. **Integrity:** In the Kgoro meeting, honesty comes before everything. Kgoro is respected, and everyone knows that "what is needed is nothing but the truth." Villagers at that time tried to practice humanity (Ubuntu) at all times. With Kgoro, some guardians cared for each other and respected one another. Villagers followed Kgoro policies and procedures.
5. **Teamwork:** Kgoro meetings always seek people to think, communicate, and come up with decisions that benefit everyone. I will say the purpose of the Kgoro committee was to make the villagers proud of their village, which we see as their overall goal. By then, they were gathering together to set objectives to achieve their goals. Very excitingly, they were a team, putting energy and all they had into their daily duties and doing it as a team.

6. **Communication:** Within Kgoro, there was very good open communication, and all matters were discussed openly in the Kgoro meeting without excluding anyone. The elders, as well as the young people, were all involved in the Kgoro meeting to resolve matters and come up with good resolutions that benefited all the villagers. Kgoro ensured open communication among its members, resulting in good interpersonal relationships among the villagers. They also had open communication with the villagers and stakeholders they were serving.
7. **Ethical:** In the Kgoro meeting and within the communities, there was fairness, morals, and honesty among all the people. All matters were treated as equally important, and at the same time, democratic decision-making was used on each matter discussed in the Kgoro meeting. Kgoro ensured it treated all matters fairly and respected all the circumstances within the communities it was serving.
8. **Commitment to Success:** The Kgoro meeting never left any matter without resolutions; it always came up with the best decisions that better tackled the challenges the village was facing. It was always done for their people. Kgoro was committed to ensuring the success of the Kgoro committee, which was determined by the success of the villagers. Kgoro is considered successful, as there was no poverty or unemployment during its existence.

Kgoro is not just an inspiring story to tell about good leadership skills but also shows the coordination and cooperation of people who would come together to work for a common goal. Therefore, if we are to decolonise, we will need to research our history before the colonial legacy.

## Business and Economics: Thinking and Behavior

**By Collin Reddy**

**Associate Professor in Business Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg**



The decolonisation project can benefit from critically examining the assumptions underlying business and economic thinking and behaviour we teachers and scholars impart to our students. This can be narrowed down to whether we perceive our reality as separate or connected. I argue that CBE scholars and teachers will likely address the decolonisation project superficially if they leave these assumptions untouched.

Assumptions of separateness tend to dominate our business and economic thinking because the theoretical frameworks we lean on rely on philosophical and religious traditions that emphasise that individuals and objects in the universe are fundamentally separate from one another. This perspective often aligns with dualistic and materialist worldviews, where there is a clear distinction between the self and the external world. In such a view, separateness may be seen as an essential aspect of reality. Linked to this worldview is the assumption that humans have dominion over nature. In the media, this view regularly manifests in the reported management or organisational behaviour. For example, managers do not heed the limits of resources possessed by Mother Nature. Current business education has led managers to treat fellow humans as Mother Nature's resources. Consequently, a separateness mindset sees entrepreneurs, who sympathise with the unemployed, see job creation as a solution, but their transactional approach—emphasised in management theory—to their fellow humans see them being helpful but remaining emotionally distant. The separate rational mind is a stronghold in business and economic theory.

While assumptions of connectedness are slowly coming to the fore in business and economics, they do not take centre stage. We can learn more about connectedness by reading literature informed by

philosophical and spiritual traditions emphasising all objects' interconnectedness. This perspective often aligns with holistic worldviews, where everything is considered part of a larger, interconnected whole. It suggests that separateness is an illusion and that all things are connected at a fundamental level. Individuals, communities, and ecosystems are seen as part of a larger, interconnected whole, and there is an emphasis on recognizing the relationships and interdependencies (as in systems theory) that bind everything together.

We at CBE must investigate which of the two perspectives dominate economic and business thinking and behaviour and whether this has helped us educate students to deal with the problems in our South African context and the world more broadly. We must ask: "which one will serve South Africa better?" Perhaps neither assumption should be emphasised, but there can be a healthy balance between the two. In modern scientific inquiry, theories and observations suggest that separateness (e.g., the discrete nature of particles) and connectedness (e.g., quantum entanglement) can coexist, adding complexity to this philosophical question. Again, in ecological or environmental contexts, the interconnectedness of ecosystems is widely acknowledged. Both individual autonomy and our interconnectedness as a society are considered necessary in human relationships and social contexts.

The work ahead is vast: We must begin studying the assumptions behind the theories that have most influenced economic and business behaviour before attempting to "decolonise" them. The implications are twofold for academics: realise the importance of identifying underlying assumptions of the theories dominating our syllabi and that the current business and economic education is path-dependent. For those of us who want to contribute to the decolonisation of business and economic education, this means not only upskilling ourselves to develop a deeper understanding of existing theory but also learning about the history of business and economic thinking and behaviour.

---

## Decolonisation of Economics Modules in South African Universities: A Contextualisation of the Curriculum View Approach<sup>5</sup>

**By Mubanga Mpundu**

**Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Western Cape**



The current pressure and centrality of Higher Education transformation in South Africa on decolonisation of the curriculum arguably suggest that it is the solution to all Higher Education dilemmas. Bechuke and Emekako (2022) point out that the outcomes from a series of debates on the subject have brought out various views. Some of the views highlighted vary from changing the content to fully deconstructing and reconstructing the curriculum to have a different approach to knowledge foundations. The call for a change in the curriculum by students and other stakeholders seems to point towards redemption whereby once the curriculum is decolonised, depending on what it means, all other curriculum-related challenges associated with design, development, implementation, and management such as technology integration, low throughput, access,

---

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from an existing peer-reviewed book chapter. The full chapter is available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368757165\\_Responding\\_to\\_the\\_call\\_for\\_higher\\_education\\_transformation\\_in\\_South\\_Africa\\_Beyond\\_decolonisation\\_to\\_contextualisation\\_of\\_the\\_curriculum](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368757165_Responding_to_the_call_for_higher_education_transformation_in_South_Africa_Beyond_decolonisation_to_contextualisation_of_the_curriculum)

student performance, student retention, and employable graduates, to mention a few, would be issues of the past.

It is necessary to consider that the curriculum in Higher Education, as with other levels of education is highly inclined to the social, physical, economic, and cultural environment, both nationally and globally. This implies that the context of these influencers affects what is incorporated in the curriculum design and development and subsequently determines how the curriculum should be implemented for it to be relevant. This suggests the need for curriculum contextualisation which is a concept beyond curriculum content for those who own it. This would then lead to a re-analysis of content substantiation and pedagogic methodologies which is simply not enough for transformation.

It is vital to note that some schools of thought view decolonisation of the curriculum as bringing Africa fully to the center of knowledge in African universities (Mbembe, 2018). This perspective highlights the need to create opportunities for African content and knowledge so that they have a legitimate space in the center (Ruddock, 2018). An expansion of African worldviews would then make Africa's life worlds the center of African universities (Ngugi, 1981). Worth noting would be the shortfall of the availability and applicability of African life-worlds to the economics discipline, considering the strong debate on the lack of documentation of Africa's life-worlds in the economics discipline.

When it comes to adding new content on African worldviews to the existing curriculum and reducing Western worldviews, challenges arise as the solution to decolonising the curriculum in South African universities does. The approach is foreseen as promoting the already existing state of affairs (Garuba, 2015; Heleta, 2016). In other words, it is considered as keeping Eurocentric views and adding bits and pieces of African worldviews.

Heleta (2016) is against this approach and regards it as embracing no breakthrough under the pretense of reforming and transforming. Finally, the approach of mixing the curriculum content is very challenging since it becomes complicated to agree on the volume of African worldviews to be included considering the focus has not been on the goal of education but the composition of the content.

Contextualising the curriculum at a global level ensures that South Africa and Africa's tertiary education maintains a high standard of teaching and research thereby being inclusive of the needs of domestic and international audiences.

## REFERENCES

- Bechuke Andre L-A., Emekako R. 2022. Responding to the call for higher education transformation in South Africa: Beyond "decolonisation" to the contextualisation of the curriculum, A scholarly approach to student success in Higher Education Volume 2: Transformative Pedagogies. Potchefstroom: Axiom Academic Publishers.
- Garuba, H. 2015. 'What is an African curriculum?', Mail & Guardian, 17 April, viewed 15 June 2018, from <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-04-17-what-is-an-african-curriculum/>
- Heleta, S. 2016. 'Decolonisation of higher education: Dismantling epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa', Transformation in Higher Education 1(1), a9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/the.v1i1.9>
- Mbembe, A. 2016. Decolonising the university: New directions, Arts & Humanities in Higher Education 15(1), pp. 29–45. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1474022215618513>
- Ngugi, W.T.O. 1981. Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Limited.
- Ruddock, P. 2018. Decolonising education in South Africa. IOL News, March 9, 2018, viewed February 5, 2024 - <https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/decolonising-education-in-south-africa-13679313>

# Decolonising the Mind of Education in South Africa and, by extension, Africa

By **Lebogang Lebudi**

Scholar of Economics, College of Business and Economics, University of Johannesburg



It has long been a topic of interest for as long as decolonisation has been a conversation. No more was it brought into focus than when the #FeesMustFall protest in 2015/16 happened in South Africa. Although the main issue was the fee-paying structure of institutions of higher learning, it also brought up the effects of colonisation on South Africa's higher education sector, and by extension the larger African continent. Education in post-colonial Africa not only has to keep up with the changing global dynamics but also the ever-changing needs of its inhabitants and economies. There is a larger responsibility placed on its educational structures to produce output that is of quality and can compete in the global labour markets.

However, before higher education, there is primary and secondary education, which is often overlooked and disregarded in this conversation. According to the Department of Basic Education's website, the current curriculum for Grades R-12 is the *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)* which is a "single, comprehensive, and concise policy document" that guides the way that lessons, assessments, and teaching is done. Phillip Higgs had the following to say: "...a curriculum is designed to ensure that knowledge is conveyed in a systematic and planned way to impart an amalgam of knowledge and skills that are determined to be appropriate and necessary to society". A curriculum is there to guide the methodology of learning and teaching in classrooms so every government must invest thoroughly in curating the most appropriate and efficient curriculum in keeping with global standards. This is where a lot of African states tend to struggle the most.

Outside of the structural challenges like lack of appropriate educational facilities, toilets, classrooms, textbooks, and stationery, the reality is that we are still operating within the same colonial educational system that was created to uphold the notion that the colonised are inferior to the coloniser. This greatly impacts on the offering of education because there remains an erasure of the African context. In South Africa alone, one can argue that the narrating of history is Eurocentric, especially in primary and secondary education. There seems to be a lot more emphasis on European history but not on African history, evident in the lack of understanding that so many South Africans have towards other African nationals which contributes to issues like xenophobia and Afrophobia. There is a clear trickle-down effect to this problem as education also frames our mindsets and how we view the world around us.

The influence of modern and Westernised standards of education is putting Africans in a position where there is a constant pursuit to meet those said standards, thereby perpetuating colonial systems. The African identity is not entrenched deeply into our curricula, and there is therefore a mismatch created because children are not seeing themselves reflected in their classrooms. If we have no understanding of who we are, where we come from, and how we got here, we will continue to look outside for solutions to our problems. We are not becoming our point of reference with our rich and storied history. What came with colonisation was the idea that people are not created equally. That others deserve more than others. We see this reflected in the genocides and civil wars that many African nations have had to struggle with and still struggle with to date. Tribalism, racism, sexism, classism, and xenophobia- all issues that are deeply rooted in Africa's colonial past- are very much present in our educational systems.



The decolonisation of education starts with the mindset. How do we view education from an African context? What do we believe we can do with this tool and the wealth of information it offers us? What is education? These are all important questions to think about when we begin to deconstruct colonial mindsets. It starts with primary and secondary education because the quality of young adults we transfer to higher education matters. In their research paper, Mampane and Omidire (2018) mentioned that what the #FeesMustFall protests did was allow students to be the ones that presented the demand for transformation to higher institutions of learning and the government, further, it exposed the "*centralised authoritative management style of some institutions*". The problem with this is that higher education is a problem where upper-level management is not in tune with the needs of their students nor makes an effort to tailor their offering based on the needs of the individual. One way this has colonial undertones to it is the harmful assumption that all students are coming from the same place, have been exposed to the same opportunities, and are coming in with access to the same type of resources. Although this applies specifically to South Africa, we can also extend it to other African countries that have higher education institutions that were formed pre-independence like Nigeria, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

These institutions which were formed mainly by the colonisers, still carry the same systems and ideologies of their colonial predecessors, which is why they are unlikely relatable with most of their students and are not awake to the reality that they are operating in Africa, which means a unique set of challenges, poverty, lack of information, among other challenges. We need thorough transformation within universities in Africa so that they carry the African DNA, which is certainly lacking. The idea that excellence cannot be achieved the African way must be done away with. Framing the African mind starts with the way that we offer education. It must be Afrocentric and must celebrate the African story and the African people. We can produce quality while being our authentic selves. We must transform the mindset of Education and that requires reviewing curriculum, methodology, and the culture of classrooms and lecture halls alike. Without a conversation around transformation, the conversation of decolonisation is likely to remain a conversation. Steps must be taken to review the policies of our universities against the backdrop of the social circumstances and realities of the recipients of education. We must forge a new path forward and reinforce African pride.

## REFERENCES

- Department of Basic Education, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), [https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/CurriculumAssessmentPolicyStatements\(CAPS\).aspx](https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/CurriculumAssessmentPolicyStatements(CAPS).aspx)
- Amnesty International. Broken and Unequal: The State of Education in South Africa (February 2020). Available at: <https://amnesty.org.za/research/broken-and-unequal-the-state-of-education-in-south-africa/>
- Higgs, P. 2016. Africanising The Curriculum. African Sun Media. Viewed 19 November 2023 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv21ptz4x.6>
- Mampane, R.M. and Omidire M.F. 2018. Decolonising higher education in Africa: Arriving at a glocal solution, South African Journal of Education, 38(4), pp. 1-9
- Oluwatoyin, A. and Gamede, B. 2021. Decolonising teacher education curriculum in South African higher education, International Journal of Higher Education, 10(5), pp. 121-131



# COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE (CDC) 2024 CDC REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL	CDC Representative
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY	Ms Daryl Hewson Mr Mxolisi Masina
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE	Dr Eric Niyitunga Dr Victor Halalisani Mlambo
COMMERCIAL ACCOUNTING	Mr Lesego Khumalo Ms Segopotje Malatji
INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PEOPLE MANAGEMENT	Dr Joyce Toendepi ( <b>Secretary for 2024</b> )
APPLIED INFORMATION SYSTEMS	Dr Shopee Dube
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	Mr Ridwaan Roberts
ACCOUNTANCY	Ms Kamogelo Hlangwani Mr Zaakir Ally
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT	Dr Musimuni Dowelani Mr Tanyaranzwa Gandanhamo
INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	Mr Lucian De Koker
ECONOMICS	Prof Samantha Ashman Ms Naiefa Rashied ( <b>Chair 2024</b> )
MARKETING MANAGEMENT	Dr Mthobisi Nhlabathi
TRANSPORT AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT	Ms Sebonkile Thaba

Interested in contributing to our newsletter?

Email [naiefar@uj.ac.za](mailto:naiefar@uj.ac.za) or [ridwaanr@uj.ac.za](mailto:ridwaanr@uj.ac.za)

Editor: Naiefa Rashied

Graphic design and layout: UJ Graphic Design Studio

Front cover image: [La lune lila/www.shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)