Chapter 2: Rethinking Africa's Higher Education Systems: Pathways to Indigenous Knowledge Beyond Colonial Legacies

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Abstract

This article examines the discourse of decoloniality in South African higher education and the importance of the indigenous knowledge system in the post-colonial epoch. The main aim is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the decolonial project in African higher education, examining its theoretical underpinnings, current challenges, and potential pathways forward. It draws on the challenges of transformation from Eurocentric curricula to decolonised frameworks. Discourse analysis is used drawing on recent scholarship to explore the theoretical underpinnings of decolonisation. On this note, the article focuses on the decolonised framework's manifestations in academic institutions of higher education and the potential pathways for implementing decolonial practices. The article used secondary data sources. A multifaceted approach was implemented incorporating the salient theoretical arguments from Fanon, pedagogical research, and pertinent case studies of recent decolonial initiatives. Key findings from the literature highlight the persistent influence of colonial legacies in African institutions. Against this backdrop, the article advocates for the importance of integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), augment-ting it with Fanon's discourse and the Freirean Humanising Pedagogy in fostering decolonial praxis. The main argument herein is that a comprehensive approach to decolonisation requires not only curriculum transformations but also structural changes in research methodologies, the production of knowledge

systems, and institutional framework. Against this backdrop, central to this article is the development of a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education. At the center of this model is acknowledging the sociocultural, historical, and political dynamics in Africa that have profoundly shaped knowledge production. The model shows how colonial legacies created post-colonial structures in academic institutions which con-tinue to dehumanize and marginalize the African Knowledge system. It dis-regards the Western models who view the African knowledge system as unscientific, retrogressive, and inferior.

Keywords: Colonial legacies, Curriculum, Decolonisation, Freirean Humani-sing Pedagogy, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), Transformation

Introduction
In recent years, the call for decolonisation in higher education has gained momentum. This follows recent protests such as the #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, and many others. The post-Apartheid protests reflect the ongoing struggles with colonial legacies in Africa which shows that political independence failed to translate into full liberation of economic, academic, and cultural spaces. The postcolonial Eurocentric knowledge systems and pedagogical approaches in African universities have raised questions about the very foundations of higher education in the continent. The article argues that decoloniality is not just a conceptual framework but also a political act of decolonisation. There are contested epistemological and ontological assump-tions that are challenged by decoloniality. These assumptions shape post-colonial knowledge production and dissemination. In the context of Africa, as shall be discussed in this article, decoloniality attempts to dismantle all forms of colonial power matrix that marginalize the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) in favour of Western epistemologies. Against this backdrop, this article seeks to provide a nuanced analysis of the decolonial project in African higher education by examining its theoretical underpinnings, current challenges, and potential pathways forward. We argue that true decolonisation of African universities requires a multifaceted approach that addresses not only curricular content but also pedagogical practices, institutional structures, and the broader socio-political context in which these institutions operate.

The decolonization discourse in African higher education institutions has raised alarm on epistemic injustices that are mainly exacerbated by the legacy of the colonial knowledge system. Against this background, we developed a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education. The model shows the historical roots of marginalization, a manifestation of epistemic injustice, power relations, knowledge marginalisation, and resistance and transformation. The analysis of this model builds on decolonial thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. These thinkers propose the urgency of dismantling Western-centred dominance in African higher education institutions to foster social transformation. The model developed also explains the forms of epistemic injustice which it argues are reinforced through different institutional mechanisms viz curricular inflexibility, power in knowledge production and dissemination, Global North and South divide, and hierarchical knowledge system. The majority of African institutions of higher learning use neocolonial curricula imposed by Western institutions.

Aim
The article aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the decolonial project, its theoretical basis, and develop a multilayered model to address epistemic injustice in African higher education institutions.

Objectives

i. To provide a comprehensive analysis of the decolonial project in African higher education, examining its theoretical underpinnings, current challenges, and potential pathways forward.

ii. To develop a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education.

Methodology
The research methodology in this article integrates discourse analysis, seconddary data analysis, and thematic analysis. The main aim is to investigate the role of epistemic injustice in the decolonization of higher education. There was an extensive review of current literature on epistemic injustice, African higher education, and different themes on decolonization. The dataset used in this

article consists of books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and material from higher education institutions. Following Maxwell (2013), secondary data sources allowed the study to synthesise existing theories, models, and empirical studies. The study used purposive sampling. Literature was selected using focusing on key themes of decolonization, epistemic injustice, and higher education. These key themes were discussed drawing on cultural, geographical, and discipline context-specific ensuring that key debates around decolonization and epistemic injustice are addressed. Following Sutrop, Parder, and Juurik (2020) ethical considerations were observed to ensure that academic integrity is achieved. The researchers ensured that all sources used were correctly cited. Given that the article is literature-based, there was no participant consent or fieldwork ethics. concerns. However, it was important to ensure that the voices of the marginalised and colonised African countries were adequately represented.

The article used discourse analysis as its primary methodological approach. Discourse analysis was used drawing on recent scholarship to explore the theoretical underpinnings of decolonisation. On this note, the article focuses on the decolonised framework's manifestations in academic institutions of higher education and the potential pathways for implementing decolonial practices. The main aim of this article is to develop a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education using discourse analysis.

Following Gee (2014), discourse analysis was relevant because of its ability to analyse how power, knowledge, and identity are constructed and reconstructed in educational spaces related to epistemic injustices and decoloniality. This methodological tool assisted the study in exploring the challenges created by the dominant epistemologies in higher education and how they manifest through language in African higher education institutions.

Following Foucault (1972) and Said (1978), discourse analysis explains how education institutions and academic communities engage with the discourse of decoloniality and how this affects marginalized groups. Thus, a multifaceted approach was implemented incorporating the salient theoretical arguments from Fanon ([2004; 2008), Paulo Freire ([1952] 2004; [1961] 1986), Ndlovu-Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Fricker (2007), pedagogical research, and pertinent case studies of recent decolonial initiatives and other decolonial thinkers.

Theoretical Contexts of Decolonisation
In the context of South Africa, Steve Biko shares the same sentiments and con-

tributes to the decolonial thought focusing more on psychological liberation as a tool to challenge the apartheid and colonial legacies in education (Smith 2019). Building on the works of Steve Biko and Paulo Freire, Smith (2019:113) maintains that *'the failure of decolonisation as a process to rid postcolonial contexts of ongoing complexities and structural dynamics of coloniality has led to the emergence of a vibrant movement for epistemic Decoloniality'*. This implies that by tolerating an education system that is still grounded in Western Eurocentric hegemony and without bringing into question the discourse of coloniality and knowledge paradigms, the education system remains an oppressive act.

Fanon's ideas on decolonisation can be viewed as a violent and oppositional force against deep-seated colonial power structures that have continued to resonate in contemporary decolonial movements. Fanon (2008) emphasised the psychological dimensions of colonialism which he believed has informed efforts to address the internalized oppression that persists in postcolonial societies, hence he calls for psychological liberation. Complete decolonisation is not only about political independence but it also entails the restructuring of social and economic relations.

Fanon used Gramsci's theory of counter-hegemony to critique the intellectuals' role in transformation in the postcolonial colonial contexts. Fanon (2004:145), describes two types of intellectuals, those who may 'fulfill', or 'betray' the needs of the decolonial revolution. Gramsci refers to these as organic and traditional intellectuals. Borrowing from Fanon and Gramsci, the article synthesizes two types of decolonial intellectuals. First are the intellectuals who are committed to decolonial humanism. Gramsci refers to these as Organic intellectuals. Secondly, its intellectuals facilitate colonialism's totality, rather than reformation and decoloniality. Gramsci refers to these as traditional intellectuals.

In addition, to the two types of intellectuals, Fanon's work on *Black Skin, White Masks* (*BSWM*) is an example of his decolonial work (Fanon 2008; Leonardo & Singh 2017). This work advocates for humanizing know-ledge that can transcend Western thought. Fanon (2008:12) challenges the dehumanization caused by colonialism, arguing that 'running the risk of angering my black brothers, I shall say that a Black is not a man'. This quote meditates on the challenges and experience of inhumanity that was brought on by the West, colonialism as well as the experiences of otherness. His work serves as an intellectual tool that delves into the lived experience of blackness and works towards decolonial humanism (Maldonado-Torres 2005; 2008).

Intellectuals must not only facilitate a culturally relevant reform but instead play an important role in the decoloniality project and the struggle for freedom. This argument finds complementarity in Fanon (2004) who argues that decolonial intellectuals strive for the destruction of the colonial regime. Fanon (2004: 159) describes the ways through which organic intellectuals emerge from the masses.

> *During this phase a great many men and women who previously would never have thought of writing, now that they find themselves in exceptional circumstances, in prison, in the resistance or on the eve of their execution, feel the need to proclaim their nation, to portray their people and become the spokesperson of a new reality in action.*

According to Dei (2010), Fanon's role as an intellectual is important in understanding the colonial interaction. Coloniality continues and it is tucked away effectively within the discourse of neoliberalism. As such the Fanonian concepts, like anti-blackness are a way to explain contemporary African race relations and education. Fanon theorizes the role of the intellectual as set against the background of the struggle against colonialism. Singh and Leonardo (2023) examine Fanon's intellectual work and his writing on the 'colonized intellectual' to describe the decolonial intellectual. The authors state that it is important to highlight the importance of Fanon's contributions to the intellectual for educators of color, who presently find themselves compromised by a hegemony characterized by neoliberal multiculturalism in education. In the African context of higher education, the theoretical foundations of decoloni-sation are grounded in the tradition of African philosophy and anti-colonial thought. Biko's Black Consciousness (BCM) and Frantz Fanon's work on anti-colonial violence. These have been influential in shaping the ideological framework for decolonisation.

Fanon (2004:6) argues that the World is like a 'Manichaean world,' which means a world that is divided in two. This is a division between the coloniser and colonised and has created what Fanon (2004:14) calls the 'great lie of the colonial situation.' This is the belief that a natural white superiority justified the brutal acts of colonialism. To this effect, Fanon develops models that explain his decolonial intellectual's role in challenging the cultural violence of colonialism through a decolonial humanism rooted in new ways of seeing the world through the use of the Indigenous Knowledge System. As Maldonado-Torres (2005) puts it, the dominant psychological feature of the colonised is to

resist and withdraw any invitation from the conquerors. Decolonisation in this context thus necessitates a break away from Western standards, philosophy, and objectivity. In this respect, the intellectual's goal of humanization cannot be preoccupied with measurement and essential Western truths but intellectuals should bring about its end. This means that decolonisation is also a cultural and humanizing project in which epistemological foundations are guided by intellectuals toward decolonial futurity.

In addition to Fanon, the Freirean Pedagogy and the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) Paulo Freire offers a transformative framework for addressing the injustices created by the colonial system. Freire emphasises problem-posing education and is aligned with African communal learning traditions (Mbembe 2016). Shizha (2025) concurs and adds that Freire's pedagogy is compatible with IKS since they both reject the banking model of education, where students are passive recipients of knowledge. Thus, the Freirean pedagogy resonates with IKS and African epistemologies that value collective knowledge production. The Freirean pedagogy challenges the oppressive hierarchies by introducing a student-centered approach where students are also co-creators of knowledge. According to Mavhunga (2021), this is in line with a principle echoed in *Ubuntu* which emphasizes interconnectedness. As an illustration, in Zimbabwe, the government has introduced efforts to incorporate oral histories and traditional ecological knowledge into curricula (Shizha 2025). However, the implementation remains difficult due to lack of resources. In post-apartheid South Africa, post-#FeesMustFall initiatives similarly draw on Freire, challenging Western universalism (Walsh 2022).

However, integrating IKS into Africa's higher education system presents many challenges. For example, Heleta (2019) notes that there is resistance from academic elites who propagate the values of Western norms, while for Mavhunga (2021), there seems to be a lack of funding for research into Indigenous epistemologies. Despite these challenges, the article argues that the complementarity of Freirean and African decolonial thought has undoubtedly offered unique pathways to reclaim narratives sidelined by colonial education. This argument finds complementarity in Mbembe (2021), who advocates for the need to decolonise institutions of higher learning, including buildings and public spaces, and change those colonial names and iconography.

Epistemic Injustice in African Higher Education

The colonial legacies are still endured in African higher education systems in

the form of epistemic injustice. This is a concept developed by Fricker (2007). According to Fricker (2007), epistemic injustice refers to how individuals are wronged in their capacity as knowledge producers, and their voices are marginalized within institutional structures. In the context of African higher education, the structural and cultural dimensions of the life of academics are shaped by colonial legacies that perpetuate different forms of epistemic injustice. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), epistemic injustices are a barrier to the full participation of academics in knowledge production. Mignolo (2009) adds that the colonial and historical frameworks continue to influence the postcolonial academic environment, and this shows an intersection of colonialism, racism, and educational inequalities.

To put it in plain words, the article argues that the existence of epistemic injustice in African universities affects academics and students in a dehumanizing way. It continues to be reproduced through the use of Western structures that privileged colonial powers and the implementation of educational policies, practices, and structures that privilege Western knowledge systems. This does not put African epistemologies and IKS at the center of knowledge production in African institutions of higher education. African institutions of higher learning still experience the dominance of European languages (such as English, French, and Portuguese) as the mode of teaching and continue to rely on academic models of teaching and research (Bhambra 2014 Banda 2019; Chakawa 2020). In so doing, they have failed to foster an academic environment that promotes the diversity of knowledge systems. In addition, these structural barriers negatively affect the development of a decolonized system resulting in an academic environment that is not inclusive. The article therefore suggests that the decolonization of African higher education, must involve an (re)examination of these colonial injustices and create spaces where IKS and African knowledge traditions are integrated into the academic mainstream. There is a need to create a new academic mainstream which includes changing teaching pedagogies, revisiting the curricula, and creating an academic environment that promotes diversity of the knowledge system and the integration of IKS (Bhambra 2014; Chakawa 2020).

Multilayered Model of Epistemic Injustice in African Higher Education

Diagram 1 below shows a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education. The model developed offers a multi-layered framework that

challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies. At the center of this model is acknowledging the sociocultural, historical, and political dynamics in Africa that have profoundly shaped knowledge production.
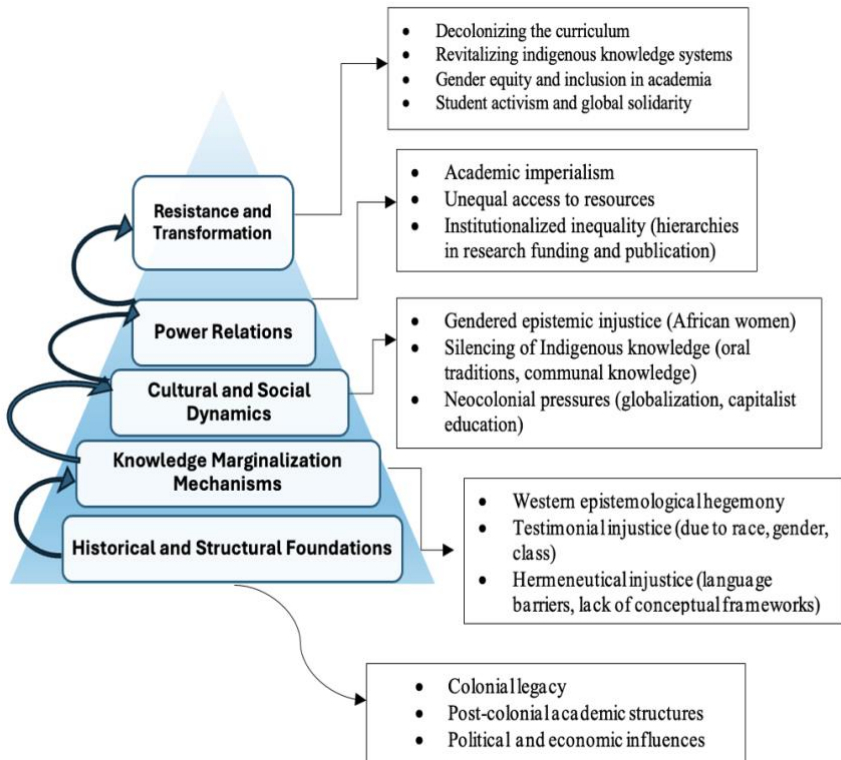

Diagram1: Multilayered Model of Epistemic Injustice in African Higher Education. Source: Authors

The multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education shows the historical and structural legacies of colonialism, which exacerbates the dominance of colonial knowledge systems and structures in a way that marginalizes African epistemologies. Western epistemological hegemony and hermeneutical injustice are examined to highlight all forms of knowledge marginalization, emphasizing more on the power dynamics within global academic hierarchies. In this model, we also discuss the intersectionality of

gender and ethnicity in so far as the process of academic exclusion is concerned. To this effect, the model advocates for a decolonization of the curricula where intellectual autonomy is prioritized. Lastly, the model advocates for resistance through a radical transformation of the African higher education system in a way that challenges neo-colonial influences and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems and gender equity. In short, the 5 key points highlighted in the multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education are historical and structural foundations, knowledge marginalization mechanisms, cultural and social dynamics, power relations, and resistance and transformation. These are clearly explained below.

1. *Historical and Structural Foundations*
In African higher education systems, the historical and structural foundations of epistemic injustice are rooted in the colonial past. This is where the colonisers imposed their knowledge systems and blueprint educational models onto African higher education institutions. This has left most African higher education institutions to continue using the colonial administration system instead of the needs of the local societies. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) maintains that the colonial education system was designed to dehumanize African academics and to teach students to be submissive and to understand that their knowledge systems were inferior. This continues to dominate African universities where the curricula emphasize Western-centric models of knowledge, neglecting indigenous scientific practices and practices. This historical background has created epistemic injustice in African higher education systems. Academics in Africa continue to be affected by the structural inequities created by the colonises hence their knowledge production is overshadowed by Western intellectual hegemony. The main argument herein is that the historical and structural foundations of colonialism shape African higher education in a way that favors the Western-centric models creating a system that marginalizes African academics and their intellectual contributions.

2. *Knowledge Marginalization Mechanisms*
Western-centric models of knowledge use different mechanisms to marginalize African academics in higher education. The institutional practices and cultural biases suppress African epistemologies. In this model, we argue that Western epistemological hegemony is used to demonstrate that the Global North

knowledge is considered universal, while African knowledge is unscientific. This process, which we refer to as epistemic marginalization, is shown by the absence of representation of African scholars in global academic publishing. African-centered perspectives are also absent in mainstream journals, showing how the indigenous knowledge system is neglected in academic curricula. African scholars who use indigenous knowledge systems, African traditions, and African-centred ideologies to challenge the dominant hegemony often face skepticism. In some instances, their ideas and scholarly contributions face outright dismissal. In addition, the focus on Western theories, methodologies, and epistemologies that are observed in many African university curricula appears to marginalize African scholars. This exacerbates testimonial injustice through which African scholars working with local languages, knowledge, and perspectives, are seen as less credible compared to their Western counterparts. Hermeneutical injustice is also another mechanism of knowledge marginalization. This often occurs when African scholars lack the tools or frameworks necessary to interpret their own experiences. It is important to note that African epistemologies are rooted in their oral traditions, storytelling, and indigenous knowledge, and therefore are not easily translatable into text-based models of knowledge that are Western-based. As the multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education would argue, this creates a hermeneutical gap because African scholars are unable to express their experiences in the dominant Western-centred academic discourse. Using foreign epistemic frameworks does not adequately explain the lived realities, of African scholars, further perpetuating epistemic injustice.

3. *Cultural and Social Dynamics*

The intersectionality of cultural and social dynamics is important in providing a classical understanding of epistemic injustice in African higher education, especially when focussing on gender and ethnicity. As an illustration, African women academics face a different form of epistemic injustice than their male counterparts. The kind of epistemic injustice they face is both gendered and racial. According to Smith (2021), women's academic contributions are often dismissed, in some instances undermined, rather than being integrated into mainstream academic spaces. This is also supported by Mignolo (2011), who notes that gendered epistemic injustice is worsened by societal expectations which are double standards. The role of women in some African cultures and public intellectual spheres is often seen as secondary to those of men. To this

effect, African women have a higher probability of facing institutional barriers that limit their opportunities for professional advancement and publication. Women's voices are undermined in this regard which is a dynamic reinforcement of a patriarchal academic environment where men's voices are superior and dominant to women's voices are marginalized. This is not only in African academic spaces but also within the global academic space.

In Africa, ethnicity and class are crucial factors that aid in understanding the marginalization of knowledge within higher education. Academics from disadvantaged backgrounds, low-income communities, and rural African institutions often face systemic biases that prevent their ideas from being taken seriously. This situation has created a rural-urban intellectual divide, where urban elite scholars frequently dominate academia while the majority of the population remains disconnected from higher education. In certain African countries, ethnic politics has led to minority groups struggling to have their voices heard against dominant groups. This has resulted in intersectional injustices, where specific African academics and students are marginalized because of their backgrounds and ethnicities. They are oppressed not merely due to colonial injustices but also because of their sociopolitical backgrounds. The effect of these epistemic injustices is the exclusion of their voices from mainstream academic spaces, which reinforces the social inequalities.

4. *Power Relations in Knowledge Production*

The fourth issue at the centre of the **multilayered model** of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education is power relations in knowledge production. This is key to the epistemic injustice in African higher education. Scholars and academics from the Global North are always positioned in a hegemonic authority which results in the marginalisation of African based knowledge system. As we have argued in knowledge marginalization mechanisms, Global North academics are always put in positions of authority while Global South intellectuals are recipients of knowledge. This is similar to the Freireian banking concept of education and it often results in the marginalization of African knowledge. The model refers to this as academic imperialism, where Global North institutions dominate the global academia space controlling all aspects including research, curriculum development, and funding. Global North institutions and academics impose external standards on African institutions. This imposition makes it difficult for African institutions to reinforce their African knowledge. The Global North-South power imbalances are also

worsened by unequal access to resources. In Africa, there are significant resource constraints which include inadequate funding opportunities, lack of access to research facilities and international journal databases. These resource constraints limit African scholars to fully participate in the global knowledge economy. This continues to reinforce the epistemic injustice faced by African academia.

5. *Resistance and Transformation*

In light of the challenges, structural issues, and colonial and epistemic injustices discussed above, resistance and transformation in African institutions of higher education is inevitable. The multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education advocates for both transformation and decoloni-zation of the curriculum. The model advocates for a radical transformation of intellectual traditions and existing Western frameworks. The outcome of this transformation should be able to genuinely recognize African epistemologies and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as central to the academic enterprise. As an illustration, oral traditions should remain an important tool of African knowledge systems and should form part of academic knowledge production. Following Mignolo (2011) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), incorporating African epistemologies and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) should provide pathways that challenge the epistemic hierarchy that was imposed by Western knowledge at the center of academia.

Women should not be silenced in academia. The model calls for gender equity as an important to in the transformation. African institutions of higher education must challenge the epistemic silencing of African women in acade-mia where their intellectual contributions to the development of knowledge are not recognised. As women break through the glass ceiling and glass wall, they should become more visible and their valuable work should be integrated into broader academic discourses. In this way, African institutions of higher education can dismantle the gendered epistemic injustice that exists within their institutions (Mignolo 2011). The challenges created by neocolonial influences should not go unnoticed, especially regarding the increasing commercialization and privatization of education in Africa. Africa is facing serious market-driven models of education that are only interested in profit maximization at the expense of the intellectual and cultural needs of African academics and scholars. The emphasis should be placed on intellectual independence and self-sufficiency instead of Western ways of knowledge production.

Addressing Knowledge Bias Using the Multilayered Model

Diagram 1 above illustrates a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education. This framework challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies. At the core of this model is the recognition of the sociocultural, historical, and political dynamics in Africa that have profoundly shaped knowledge production. The model highlights how colonial legacies established post-colonial structures in academic institutions, which continue to dehumanize and marginalize the African knowledge system. It portrays the African knowledge system as unscientific, retrogressive, and inferior. Drawing from Fricker (2007), the process of marginalization manifests through testimonial injustices. According to Mignolo (2003; 2011), this refers to African academics being denied credibility due to biases surrounding their blackness, race, and class. The concept of blackness, as applied in this model, is derived from Biko's works, which conceptualize it as encompassing all Africans previously disadvantaged by the colonial regime, including Africans, Indians, and colored people. As argued by Fricker (2007), the process of marginalization also appears as hermeneutical injustice, where African academics have limited tools, as they primarily depend on Western knowledge systems. They are excluded from knowledge production, curricula, and scholarly discourse, fostering epistemic oppression.

A key element of the model of epistemic injustice in African higher education is its recognition of power dynamics in knowledge production. Neocolonial economics and political relations have worsened the Global North - South divides, shaping the creation of knowledge that is used in the African academic environment (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2016). To this effect, the model of epistemic injustice in African higher education shows the overrepresentation of Western literature in African academic institutions. This argument is supported by Mkandawire (2014) who opines that the research publications and curriculum design in Africa reinforce Western ideologies. This is why neoliberal pressures on African universities appear to prioritize market-driven agendas that favor Western models of education. The autonomy of African scholars in this regard is compromised by the need to adhere to international funding and research standards that are determined and set by Western institutions. Also, the pursuit of rankings, research grants, and international publications has created a dependence syndrome of African scholars on global academic trends. This limits ways in which they engage with pertinent issues relevant to the African context. In this model, we, therefore, argue that the

reliance on Western models perpetuates epistemic injustice by maintaining intellectual coloniality. The process of knowledge creation is grounded in colonial paradigms.

Finally, the model of epistemic injustice in African higher education suggests ways for resistance and transformation. To decolonise curricula, African universities must incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and opinions that reflect local socio-political and cultural realities. According to Smith (2021), there is a need to challenge deep-seated epistemic hierarchies that have historically thwarted African knowledge. This model seeks to ensure that African scholars are empowered and able to reclaim their intellectual autonomy and become centres for knowledge production without perpetuating historical injustices. It is important to advocate for a transformative approach that is more radical in so far as the inclusion of African perspectives is concerned.

Conclusion

The article has examined the discourse of decoloniality in South African higher education and the importance of the indigenous knowledge system in the post-colonial epoch. It argues that the existence of epistemic injustice in African universities affects academics and students in a dehumanizing way. These injustices continue to be reproduced through the use of Western structures that privileged colonial powers and the implementation of educational policies, practices, and structures that privilege Western knowledge systems. Central to this article is the development of a multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education. At the center of this model is acknowledging the sociocultural, historical, and political dynamics in Africa that have profoundly shaped knowledge production. The model developed offers a multi-layered framework that challenges the dominance of Western epistemologies. The model acknowledges the sociocultural, historical, and political dynamics in Africa that have profoundly shaped knowledge production. The five (5) key points highlighted in the multilayered model of epistemic injustice in African Higher Education are historical and structural foundations, knowledge marginalization mechanisms, cultural and social dynamics, power relations, and resistance and transformation. Finally, the model of epistemic injustice in African higher education suggests ways for resistance and transformation. To decolonise curricula, African universities must incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and opinions that reflect local socio-political and cultural realities. Another key element of the model of epistemic injustice in African

higher education is its recognition of power dynamics in knowledge production. Neocolonial economics and political relations have worsened the Global North-South divides, shaping the creation of knowledge that is used in the African academic environment. The model calls for gender equity as an important vehicle for transformation. African institutions of higher education must challenge the epistemic silencing of African women in academia where their intellectual contributions to the development of knowledge are not recognised.

Funding information

Data availability
There is no restriction on the data available. We confirm that there are no web links for publicly available datasets.

Disclaimer
The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency, or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's content.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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