From Nancy Fraser and Participatory Parity: Reframing social justice in South African higher education (Vivienne Bozalek, Dorothee Hölscher and Michalinos Zembylas eds)

Chapter 10: Neoliberalism, Coloniality and Nancy Fraser's Contribution to the Decolonisation Debate in South African Higher Education

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Abstract

This chapter explores the ways in which Fraser's work might assist in making sense of the different manifestations of coloniality in South African higher education. In particular, this chapter considers the possibilities and limitations of Nancy Fraser's contribution towards recent calls and efforts to create a free, decolonised higher education in South Africa. To accomplish this, the chapter reviews a range of approaches that have been proposed for a decolonisation of higher education in South Africa and, against this background, it identifies and discusses a selection of some key concepts and issues raised in Fraser's work. All these issues and concepts inspired by Fraser's work demonstrate new theoretical and conceptual openings for rethinking the complex parameters of decolonisation in South African higher education and beyond. As it is argued, Fraser's scholarship points not just to gaps in the emancipatory claims of the decolonisation debate, but to the dangers of essentialising contexts and knowledge systems, and of seeing them as bounded rather than as entangled.

It is suggested, then, that in the absence of an understanding of decolonisation as a justice project in the nuanced way in which Fraser has viewed justice over the years, it might be difficult for the decolonisation movement to accomplish more than mere soft reforms.

People like me, who came out of the New Left, inherited a kind of Marxism that we found too restrictive, too orthodox, and we sought to develop alternative Marxisms that could make visible forms of domination and social suffering which orthodox paradigms occluded: issues of gender and sexuality; colonialism and postcolonialism; ecology and political exclusion and marginalisation. It seemed to me then, and still seems to me now, that to take in these matters requires not the rejection, but the reconstruction, of Marxism. What was needed, in my view, was (and is) synthesis: a synthesis of Marxism, feminism, ecological critique, postcolonial critique, etc. (Interview with Nancy Fraser, Fraser 2014b, p.7)

As we have indicated in various chapters of this edited collection, and more particularly in Chapter 1, Nancy Fraser has built on her original ideas in the 1980s, which were influenced by French, German and US philosophers such as Foucault, Derrida, Habermas and Rorty, to develop a bivalent view of justice - or participatory parity - incorporating economic and cultural dimension. To this she later added a political dimension to develop a trivalent concept of justice. From this emerged her current work, which comprises a multidimensional, critical-theoretical critique of twenty-first century capitalism (Bernstein 2017). This critique now also pays the necessary attention to colonialism - thereby attending to a set of grievances that are of particular concern to emancipatory movements of the Global South - and to the depletion and destruction of ecological resources, which have emerged as a shared, if differently experienced, concerns both in the Global North and South. Fraser's work can be seen as a contribution to reconfiguring Marxism by adding a gendered perspective and proposing an enlarged understanding of marginality and political exclusion, as well as post-Westphalian postcolonial and ecological perspective on capitalist crisis, in which economic, cultural, political, geographic and environmental injustices are shown up as interlinked and mutually reinforcing, over time, at a global scale (see Arruzza, Bhattacharya & Fraser 2019; Fraser 2014a and 2014b; Fraser 2016a and 2016b; Fraser 2017;

Fraser and Jaeggi 2018). In this regard, Bernstein (2017, p.35) notes that 'Fraser's most recent work represents a return to the 'spirit' of her 1960s radicalism – but now mediated and informed by what she has learned since that time' - such as her renewed concern regarding social reproduction and its role in imperialism.

In the wake of student uprising in South Africa and beyond its borders in 2015/2016, and in the face of current global environmental crises, higher education has been called upon to focus on issues of social reproduction, decolonisation and ecology. Ecology is focused more fully in Chapter 3 of this edited collection where Carstens argues that capitalist crisis is in fact a crisis for all life on the earth and how neoliberal capitalism has been responsible for the Anthropocene. Social reproduction is addressed in Chapter 1, where Fraser's earlier work is referred to, and returned to in this chapter. Elsewhere, we argued that the continuation and deepening of structural processes of maldistribution, misrecognition, misrepresentation and misframing - formed under colonialism and apartheid - into post-apartheid South Africa's higher education system may in fact be interpreted as indicative of the crisis of social reproduction to which Nancy Fraser has been drawing attention to in her most recent work (Hölscher 2018). The focus of Chapter 10 - this chapter - is on decolonisation. Various perspectives have been used both to inform and to trouble the decolonial debate in higher education. Yet, while Nancy Fraser's work can make an important contribution, it has not featured much in South African debates on this topic. Thus in this final chapter, we explore the following question: in what ways might Fraser's work assist in making sense of the different manifestations of coloniality in South African higher education? In other words: can Nancy Fraser's scholarship be shown to be transformative by way of helping to address the impact of coloniality in South African higher education?

This chapter was conceived in the wake of a wave of student protests towards a *free, decolonised higher education* that swept South Africa's public universities in 2015 and 2016,

in response to widespread student experiences of poverty, racial tensions, alienation from teaching and learning processes, and financial and academic exclusions (Badat 2016; Mbembe 2016). These protests have given rise to numerous scholarly debates and publications around the meaning, scope and history of struggle towards a decolonial higher education (see for example, Hendricks & Leibowitz 2016), as well as the collation and production of what are conceived as decolonial teaching and learning resources (see for example, Qalinge & van Breda 2018). In this context, the relevance of Nancy Fraser's scholarship – writing as she does from an entirely different locus of enunciation – cannot be treated as a foregone conclusion. Our aim is thus to consider the possibilities and limitations of Nancy Fraser's contribution towards these recent calls for, and efforts to create a free, decolonised system of higher education in South Africa.

We begin with a brief review of the concepts of (de)coloniality and (de)colonisation, and of a range of approaches that have been proposed for decolonising higher education in South Africa. This discussion highlights the extent to which these debates are a multifaceted and contested terrain, and that the use of a decolonial language and concepts need not necessarily imply a commitment towards a participatory, inclusionary, and emancipatory approach to higher education. Against this background, we identify and discuss a selection of concepts and issues raised in Fraser's work, which we consider to be most relevant to this chapter's purposes: participatory parity; affirmative versus transformative approaches to injustice; counter-public spheres; capitalist crisis in the 21st century; as well as her recently articulated multidimensional propositions in relation to current decolonisation debates. We conclude that Fraser's contribution to understanding of imperialism, neoliberalism and the current crisis of capitalism as an important formation of coloniality is considerable. Her scholarship can also help to tilt contemporary debates about decolonisation in an emancipatory, radical democratic, direction.

I. Neoliberalism and the Decolonisation Debate in South African Higher Education

In this section, we explore the extent to which the idea of decolonisation provides an intellectual and political space for imagining, and working towards, the university as a *just* space. Although decolonisation is a distinct project from other justice projects (Tuck & Yang 2012), there is a space where these two projects can join forces to promote larger transformative politics. To this end, we explore the idea of neoliberalism as a condition of coloniality in South African higher education, followed by a brief discussion of the notions of decolonial thinking and decolonisation, and thereafter, by an overview and critical discussion of some of the key arguments that have been put forward in contemporary debates around the decolonisation of South African higher education.

Achille Mbembe (2016) argues that subsequent to the end of direct colonial rule, relations between universities of the Global North and those in the Global South continue to be characterised by considerable power imbalances. Particularly under the deepening and widening conditions of neoliberalism during the past four decades, universities have been 're-founded' and 're-scaled' for the purpose of delivering such types of research and graduate 'outputs' as are required by evolving global markets, the demands of which remain, however, differentiated along disciplinary and geopolitical lines (Mbembe 2016, p. 38). These differentiations are structured increasingly by global ranking systems as a means of mediating exchange relations between differently positioned universities. In the face of such power imbalances, it is perhaps unsurprising that Bongani Nyoka (2013, p. 3) expresses concerns about the prevalence of 'academic dependency' between educators and scholars of the Global South on theorists in the Global North. Using Fanon's terminology, Mbembe (2016:38) calls this differentiation a form of *zoning*, which he characterises as 'global Apartheid in higher education'. In addition, Saleem Badat (2016) observes how neoliberal

modes of governance have turned South African universities into businesses-like entities, characterized by consumerism, profit-making and the pursuit of commodified knowledge. As elsewhere, this has come with devastating consequences especially for students originating from historically marginalized and vulnerable groups. Thus, neoliberalism can be regarded as a mode of *coloniality*: it is constituted by ‘invisible threads of power that emerge[d] in colonial situations but extend well beyond a strictly colonial setting and period’ (Giraldo 2016, p. 161), and thus comprises the kinds of ‘relations, structures, and processes which reproduce colonial modes of domination and exploitation in the present’ (Tilley 2016, p. 68).

Decolonial thinking (Mignolo 2011), as part of a broader, everyday and ongoing movement to challenge persistent forms of coloniality, can be a valuable way of considering how to challenge this model in the higher education sector, and what should come in its place. This should be seen as a contribution to an overarching, ongoing process of *decolonisation* as an ideal that we are always working towards (la paperson 2017). As such, it stands in the tradition of the different modes of resistance that Indigenous, colonised and enslaved peoples have performed since the inception of colonialism more than 500 years ago (Maldonado-Torres 2008; Mignolo 2011). While decolonisation takes on different meanings in different contexts, it highlights two important ideas (Mackinlay and Barney 2014; Tuck & Yang 2012): firstly, it resists Eurocentrism and acknowledges the contributions of colonised populations to knowledge, culture and the world in general. Secondly, it emphasises a moral imperative for righting the wrongs of colonial domination and an ethical stance in relation to justice for those who continue to be affected socially, economically, politically and culturally by persistent forms of coloniality. In other words, the process of decolonisation entails both substantive and epistemic imperatives. Importantly, it requires an interrogation of how Eurocentric thought, knowledge, as well as power relations, structures and practices are implicated in the contemporary forms of coloniality (Maldonado-Torres 2008; Mignolo 2011; Smith 1999). Such interrogation must extend to higher education as a system of

subjugation, domination and oppression, that from the onset has been integral to, complicit in, and benefitted from, the colonial project (Keet 2014; Stein & Andreotti 2017).

While there are different ways of looking at the requirements and goals of decolonisation in higher education, here we want to highlight three perspectives. There is, firstly, a view which holds that decolonisation must pay attention to the material effects of coloniality. For example, Isis Giraldo (2016), Tuck and Yang (2012) and Maria Lugones (2010) are among those authors who emphasise that decolonial resistance involves the analysis of racialised, capitalist, and gender oppression. With specific reference to higher education, Felix Maringe and Emmanuel Ojo (2017) assert that for a decolonisation agenda to be sustainable, it must, among other things, be *pro-poor*. Finally in the field of social work, Hölscher and Chiumbu (in press) raise the issue of structural violence as an important concern for the decolonisation debate.

Then, there is a view which foregrounds issues of disruption and transformation of institutional cultures. Here, a broad range of agendas are apparent. The one end of the spectrum is represented well by Mbembe (2016) who argues that disrupting and transforming prevailing institutional cultures are about reversing systems of bureaucratization, accountancy, the exercise of authoritative control, standardisation, classification, and the commodification of higher learning - all associated with the notion of *neoliberalism-as-coloniality*. By breaking 'the cycle that tends to turn students into customers and consumers' (Mbembe 2016, p. 31) and staff into service providers and producers of measurable outputs, this approach would aim to create a more open, critical and cosmopolitan 'pluriversity', based upon a 'radical re-founding of our ways of thinking', including a 'transcendence of our disciplinary divisions' and - we would add - of prevailing divisions between educators and students. Located on the other end of the spectrum is a nationalist/Africanist agenda, well exemplified by Malegapuru Makgoba and Sipho Seepe (2004). Based upon the notion of an *African identity*, Makgoba and Seepe (2004) argue for

an *Africanisation* of higher learning, a view that has been criticised, among others, by Vishanthie Sewpaul (2007) as essentialist and exclusionary in that it effectively conflates notions of being *native to Africa* with being *African*, and with being *Africanist* in identity, outlook, and orientation. The implication of this Africanisation approach to decolonisation has been an assumption that a policy of increasing the number of African scholars would, in and of itself, constitute a disruption and transformation of South African universities, apt to give rise to further epistemological reforms almost as a matter of course. We would argue that this approach does not necessarily entail any critical engagement with neoliberalism-as-coloniality at work in South African higher education.

Linked to this is a line of argument that follows from scholars such as Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), for whom decolonisation is not an end point, but rather an ongoing struggle over *what Africans* should be *teaching themselves*. This call is about decentering European, and re-centering African knowledges. As such, it may be regarded as instrumental to reversing some of the ways in which the system of higher education has been integral to the colonial project (Keet 2014) - from the colonial cataloguing of non-Western knowledges over the production of knowledge in support of scientific racism and other racialised and colonial classifications, to claims about the universality of Western knowledge (Stein & Andreotti 2017). However, it also gives rise to concerns about the extent to which it might contribute, if inadvertently, to a continuation rather than the disruption of such racialised and essentialist notions of identity and knowledge as were imposed on societies of the Global South as part of the colonial project. That this dilemma is far from resolved, is exemplified by Mbembe (2016, p. 34), who expresses concern about the notion of 'decolonisation-as-Africanisation' but seeks to overcome this by holding the tension between contending on the one hand that 'recent scholarship on *Black* internationalism and ... [its] intersections with various *other forms* of internationalisms could help in rethinking the ... politics of decolonisation' (Mbembe 2016, p. 36; emphasis added), while maintaining on the other, that 'true decolonisation ... necessarily centres on 'the destiny of humankind''

as a whole (Dubois, cited in Mbembe 2016, p. 36). As such, questions about the ways in which higher education processes could become more attentive and oriented towards modes of being, relating, knowing, and doing things that previously have been denied relevance, are important ones to ask (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Against the background of these multifaceted viewpoints, concerns and agendas, Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew and Hunt (2015) provide a valuable cartography of a range of commitments to decolonisation in higher education: on the first level, there is a lack of recognition of decolonisation as a desirable project. On another level, labelled *soft reform*, is the idea of decolonisation as a project that could be accomplished in an add-on fashion, that is, by such means as increasing the numbers of Indigenous scholars and students, awarding some financial support to some indigent students, or by adding Indigenous epistemologies onto existing teaching and learning activities and processes. A third level is constituted by a *radical-reform* orientation, which seeks deep, structural transformations of the university system in the direction of affording members of marginalized groups opportunities for representation in power structures; recognising, validating and allowing of their previously unacknowledged epistemologies to alter mainstream teaching, and learning assumptions and processes; as well as redistributing societal resources to enable all its members to participate on a par in the higher education process. Finally Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew and Hunt (2015) propose an orientation that lies *beyond reform* in that it is directed towards dismantling of modernity's systematic violences (capitalism, colonialism, racism etc.) through subversive educational use of spaces and resources. We find these different possibilities valuable in identifying the varied, sometimes contradictory yet overlapping commitments and agendas at play in contemporary debates about what the call for *free, decolonised higher education* might mean in practice.

In sum then, debates around the decolonisation of higher education - in South Africa and beyond - are a contested terrain, and arguments that rely on decolonial language and

concepts are not necessarily arguments towards a more participatory, inclusionary and emancipatory approach to higher education. Indeed, as argued by Nancy Fraser (2013), a narrowly defined, essentialist identity politics might inadvertently support, rather than contesting, the narrowing down of radically democratic spaces (see Chapter 1 in this volume and Section II below). As such, a version of decolonial politics, which is centred on a notion of *decolonisation-as-Africanisation*, might in effect undermine, rather than contributing to a rethinking of contemporary South African universities as inclusionary, participatory, and emancipatory spaces in which those who have borne the brunt of colonisation, apartheid and contemporary forms of coloniality, can participate as equals. The question that arises at this point, then, is to what extent Nancy Fraser's scholarship might contribute towards tilting the debate around the decolonisation of South African higher education in the direction of *radical*, or indeed *beyond, reform*.

II. Nancy Fraser's Scholarship - A Useful Contribution to the Decolonisation Debate?

Nancy Fraser's work demonstrates her consistent concern about justice, especially with how global capitalism's evolving faces have given rise to changing dynamics of injustice, and with the responsibilities that flow from her analyses for people committed to a radically democratic project. Throughout her writing, she has sought to engage with a wide range of debates, concerns and issues affecting and inspiring emancipatory social movements, including, most recently, with the idea of decoloniality. In order to interrogate the potential of Nancy Fraser's contribution to a decolonisation of higher education in South Africa, we now present a selection of her work which we regard as being the most relevant in these respects. From the second phase of her work, we consider her conceptualisation of justice as participatory parity (see for example, Fraser 2009). Closely linked to this concept are Fraser's ideas around affirmative versus transformative approaches to injustice, and around

the role of counter-public spheres in addressing the structural processes underlying contemporary forms of (in)justice. From the third phase, we highlight Fraser's (2012, 2013, 2014a and 2014b, 2016a and 2016b; Fraser 2017; Fraser & Jaeggi 2018; Arruzza, Bhattacharya & Fraser 2019) understanding of emancipatory movements and global expressions of solidarity in the context of capitalist crisis in the 21st century, including her response to the recent decolonisation debates.

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this volume, the principle of *participatory parity* refers to people's ability to interact on an equal footing with other members of a polity within the context of that polity's governance structures and processes (Fraser 2009). For Fraser, participatory parity serves as the central norm of justice, at the same time as it is a substantive condition that can be enabled or constrained in the economic, cultural and political spheres – or dimensions – of social life. According to Fraser, the economic dimension of justice concerns the *(mal)distribution* of material resources, and for participatory parity to be possible, disparities in terms of wealth, income, labour and leisure time need to be addressed. The cultural dimension denotes ways in which people's attributes and their ways of being in, understanding, and acting upon the world are valued or devalued or, in Fraser's terms, *(mis)recognised*. The political dimension is concerned with issues of in- and exclusion, *(mis)representation*, and voice. This entails the extent to which the terms of engagement in a given polity accord its members equal voice in its deliberations and fair representation in decisions concerning the issues affecting them. Justice also requires *just framing*; that is, a polity's boundaries must be drawn in such a way that everyone who is subjected to its governance structures and processes, can have a political voice and be included in its decision-making processes. These dimensions have been extensively referred to in Chapters 4-9 of this volume in various applications to higher education, such as social policies (Chapter 4), students' reported experiences of their lives at university using various participatory learning methods in a community psychology course (Chapter 6), in Women's and Gender Studies courses (Chapters 5 and 7), students'

experiences in a university residence (Chapter 8), and the question of epistemological access in an extended curriculum programme at a University of Technology (Chapter 9).

For each dimension, Fraser (2009) distinguishes between affirmative and transformative approaches to addressing injustice. She views *affirmative approaches* as those which correct some of the unjust outcomes of prevailing social arrangements, but which fail to disturb the underlying structural processes that generate them. An example of this would be what Andreotti *et al.* (2015) calls soft reform, in that it does not address the workings of coloniality in higher education, but merely ameliorates its effects (see Section II above). In contrast, *transformative approaches* address underlying root causes, that is the generative framework, of social injustice. This is exemplified by the idea of radical reform, which would seek to disrupt the workings of coloniality, and to generate more just forms of distribution, recognition, representation and framing in higher education structures and processes (see Section II above). For radical reform to be possible, and transformative approaches to justice to be effective there need to be *counter-public spheres*, that is, spaces of public discourses and practices that serve to critique and have the capacity to resist dominant modes of engagement and are, thus crucial to imagining, exploring, and pushing for the mainstreaming of more just structures, relationships, admission rules, forms of engagement, and decision-making processes (Fenton and Downey 2003; Fraser, cited in Nash & Bell 2007; Thompson 2009).

Fraser (2013, p. 226) contends that ‘the neoliberal onslaught’ of the past four decades has succeeded in narrowing the emancipatory politics of the 1960s and 1970s down to a point where many of the struggles for recognition fought by feminist, anti-racist, anti-imperialist and other emancipatory movements have morphed into an increasingly essentialist and individualised identity politics. This development cannot but undermine and diminish the capacity of emancipatory movements to exercise solidarity in response to the myriad of overlapping and mutually reinforcing modes of domination, exploitation, marginalisation

and violation experienced by the wide range of historically oppressed groups (Fraser 2012, 2013). Against this, Fraser (in Fraser & Jaeggi 2018, p. 7) maintains that it remains necessary to retain the double lens of class and status:

I've always insisted on a "both/and" approach – both ... redistribution and recognition. It is also why I've insisted that we ... must ... complicate, deepen, and enrich ... [our] critique by incorporating ... feminist thought, cultural theory and poststructuralism, postcolonial thought and ecology, at the same time avoiding their blind spots).

Furthermore, the notion of Africanisation-as-decolonisation cannot address important aspects of the colonial heritage in that it is impossible to negate and reverse the resultant cross-pollination of ideas between societies of the Global North and the Global South. In her conversation with Rahel Jaeggi, Fraser rejects the binaries implicit in this idea, regarding it as a simplistic response to the complexity and scale of colonialism's effects:

At least some proponents of ... [decoloniality] seem to imagine that it is possible (and desirable!) to "purify" indigenous culture, to purge the "Western" influences that have "contaminated" it, and thereby to return to something "pristine." And that seems unhelpful to me (Fraser & Jaeggi 2018, p. 189).

Instead, Fraser expresses sympathy for an application of neo-Marxist theories which interpret colonialism as an extractivist practice by which land, resources and people were plundered, expropriated and exploited for use by the Empire (Fraser 2016b). According to Fraser (2016a, p. 166), 'expropriation works by confiscating capacities and resources and conscripting them into capital's circuits of self-expansion' which include 'territorial conquest, land annexation, enslavement, coerced labor, child labor, child abduction, and rape' (p.167) and which translate into racialised forms of exploitation.

This, she says, is a useful way of examining the motives and dynamics of past colonial and contemporary neoliberal regimes in southern contexts (including, we would add, in universities of the Global South). Neo-Marxist theories have regained salience particularly as the current neoliberal order has entered what Fraser referred to as *capitalist crisis of the 21st century*, that is, a set of systemic crises of unprecedented brutality and complexity in

the spheres of finance, ecology, and social reproduction, which are interlinked at a global scale (Fraser 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2016a, 2016b, 2017; Fraser & Jaeggi 2018). This crisis requires different emancipatory movements to forge alliances and to 'galvanise struggles of sufficient breadth and vision to transform the present regime' (Fraser 2016a, p. 117), so as to 'bend the arc' of global historic developments back 'in the direction of justice' (Fraser 2013, p. 226). Rather than assuming the homogeneity of ideas within the confines of clearly demarcated contexts and societies therefore, we should harness a cross-pollination of ideas and actions as powerful ways of working towards more conducive living conditions: As Fraser (in Fraser & Jaeggi 2018) notes, in many Australian, US and Latin American contexts, activists and scholars have begun bringing Eurocentric frameworks such as Marxism or posthumanism into conversation with Indigenous ideas in democratising, ecological, nature/culture and anti-neoliberal ways. In all these respects then, Africanisation-as-decolonisation appears to have little to contribute towards reforms that are radical enough to challenge and resist neoliberalism-as-coloniality. In fact, it might work to counteract radical reforms towards transforming South African higher education in a direction of equal participation among the descendants of the colonised and enslaved.

In a seminar entitled *Imperialism: Is it still a relevant concept?* organised by the The New School for Social Research in May 2017, Fraser (2017) defines imperialism in terms of the concurrent disadvantaging of certain geographical contexts through the privileging of other geographical contexts - such as the Global South and the Global North. She makes it clear that the contemporary capitalist system still benefits from geographically located and entrenched power inequalities through its appropriation of resources from the Global South to the Global North to prop up its system. More specifically, she identifies four dimensions where the so-called 'underdevelopment' or disadvantage of one geographical area feeds into 'development' or privilege of another area. The first is the economic dimension – where wealth in one region is accumulated and confiscated leading to impoverishment in another area. The political dimension is how what is considered to be freedom and democracy in

one area is related to subjection in another area. The third ecological dimension is where solutions to ecological difficulties in one geographical area actually create or else exacerbate ecological difficulties in another region. The final dimension, an important emphasis which Fraser has gone back to after some time, is the social reproductive dimension of imperialism. Here she is referring to how unwaged activities such as caregiving work are used to look after those who are dependent in some geographic areas at the expense of others, where one would find a deficit or drainage of care. As with Fraser's previous dimensions - the economic, the cultural and the political, she insists that all four of these dimensions are intertwined, and that none of them can be understood in isolation from the others. She also remarks that the ecological and social reproductive areas are currently under-studied and need further analysis and elaboration in the critique of imperialism. As she puts it:

The present salience of those dimensions – of ecological dumping, land grabbing under the guise of environmental finding offsets for carbon ... global care chains, the importing of migrants to do low wage precarious care work that is being abandoned in the so-called two-earner family, where everybody is scrambling to offload care work so that they can get more hours of very poorly paid work in order to simply tread water - these are things that are crying out for inclusion in a theory of imperialism. Given that we are now in a position to see these dimensions, we might also be able retrospectively to identify the role that they played more or less unnoticed in earlier imperialisms (Fraser, 2017).

Still, this does not address decolonial concerns about the epistemic dominance of knowledges emanating from the Global North, about how European knowledge traditions and tenets might be decentred, and about how higher education processes could become more attentive and oriented towards modes of being, relating, knowing and doing things that previously have been denied relevance. As a historically specific power formation that serves to divide the higher education space globally into core and peripheral zones, neoliberalism-as-coloniality strips institutions of higher learning in the Global South of access to desperately needed material resources, equal recognition, representation and voice. It also marginalises entire institutions and groups of researchers, educators and

students within global exchanges and relationships. Nancy Fraser's main locus of enunciation is the United States, a contemporary, global hegemonic power. This cannot but affect the focus, substance, and the mode of reasoning of her work. Yet, as demonstrated in *Scales of Justice* (Fraser, 2009), and in the detailed attention Fraser (2012, 2013, 2014a and 2014b, 2016a and 2016b; 2017; Sichieri Moura 2016; Fraser & Jaeggi 2018; Arruzza, Bhattacharya & Fraser 2019) recently paid to the changing dynamics and its deepening and widening reach of capitalism over time; to the role of (neo-)colonialism in this context; and to the relevance of anti-imperialism within emancipatory movements at large, Fraser is clearly not oblivious to, nor does she disregard, the power imbalances and their disastrous world-wide effects, denoted by the term coloniality. Thus, Fraser's Northern socio-geographic positioning notwithstanding, her critical theorising is well placed to provide insights into the workings of coloniality, and possibilities of resistance, which emancipatory movements located in the Global South would disregard to their own disadvantage.

In short, to the extent that coloniality is regarded as a form of injustice, and to the extent that neoliberalism is regarded as still dependent on and benefitting from coloniality within South African institutions of higher learning (albeit differently across the historically advantaged/white and historically disadvantaged/black institutions) the potential relevance of Fraser's work for emancipatory struggles in the sector is threefold: firstly, her idea of justice contributes important conceptual tools to articulate an in-depth analysis of those structural processes that have contributed to frequent student uprisings, including the 2015-16 protests calling for free, decolonised higher education. Secondly, Fraser dedicated the most recent phase of her work to developing conceptual tools which could enable a wide range of emancipatory movements to analyse the intricate dynamics and scale of contemporary capitalist crisis from the perspective of imperialism and colonialism. Finally, her work can serve to encourage these movements to (re-)create, revive, and further develop, effective counter-public spheres to match this intricacy and scale. To the extent

that this work is interrogated, adapted and applied critically, it might well make an important contribution towards struggles for a free, decolonised higher education in South Africa.

III. Conclusions

This chapter - as well as all the previous chapters in this compilation - have considered the possibilities and limitations of Nancy Fraser's contribution towards recent calls and efforts to create a free, decolonised higher education in South Africa. In this chapter, we sought to accomplish this, firstly, by reviewing a range of approaches that have been proposed for a decolonisation of higher education in South Africa and, against this background, by identifying and discussing a selection of some key concepts and issues raised in Fraser's work. In other chapters, the authors have addressed issues of time and subjectivity, multispecies relationalities, students' experiences of participatory parity, economic constraints affecting student learning, and pedagogical implications of paying attention to participatory parity. All these issues and concepts inspired by Fraser's work demonstrate new theoretical and conceptual openings for rethinking the complex parameters of decolonisation in South African higher education and beyond.

It is evident that contemporary debates around the decolonisation of higher education are a multifaceted and contested terrain, and that the use of a decolonial language and concepts need not necessarily imply a commitment towards a participatory, inclusionary, and emancipatory approach in this field. In fact, we found considerable tension between our view of neoliberalism as a key form of coloniality and that strand in the debate which regards Africanisation as synonymous with the idea of decolonisation on the other: we view the latter as a potentially essentialist form of identity politics, which risks dovetailing with, rather than resisting, the current neoliberal regime that is at the centre of our concerns about South African higher education. In this context, Fraser's scholarship, especially the

third phase of her writing, points not just to gaps in the emancipatory claims of the decolonisation debate, but to the dangers of essentialising contexts and knowledge systems, and of seeing them as bounded rather than as entangled. Her emphasis on expropriation, extraction, and exploitation as important motives and dynamics of past colonial and contemporary neoliberal regimes is a useful way of examining historical continuities in how relations between the Global North and South continue to be played out in the field of higher education (including, we would add, in differently positioned universities of the Global South). Furthermore, key concepts from the second and third phases of Fraser's work - such as her multidimensional understanding of justice (economic, political, ecological and social reproductive) and her notion of transformative versus ameliorative practices - can assist with capturing important nuances of the 2015-2016 student protests which, to the extent that the decolonisation discourse lacks an explicit justice orientation, might escape our attention. In this way, Fraser's scholarship can contribute substantially to an analysis of some of the dynamics that account at once for the inequalities and injustices that are endemic to the South African higher education system itself, for the inequalities and injustices that prevail between the Global South and North in higher education, and for the protests' successes and failures. Fraser (2017) has pointed out that the implications of the economic, political, ecological and social reproductive dimensions of imperialism, particularly the latter two dimensions, are understudied, and further analysis and critique in these directions may provide fruitful avenues of analysis for the decolonial debate in South Africa.

We suggest, thus, that in the absence of an understanding of decolonisation as a justice project in the nuanced way in which Fraser has viewed justice over the years, it might be difficult for the decolonisation movement to accomplish more than mere soft reforms. How under such conditions we might protect, replicate and strengthen transformative scholarly, pedagogical, policy and other needed interventions so that they might contribute more to the creation of a sustained and effective counter-public sphere within South African higher

education, remains a conundrum. What is clear, however, is that to the extent to which a decolonisation movement regards itself as independent - even oppositional - to emancipatory movements that formed in response to other forms of domination, it might be that much poorer and less likely to succeed. This would be especially unfortunate at a point when capitalism is facing a crisis that calls for intersecting forms of solidarity and alliances, so that, in the words of Nancy Fraser, 'the arc' of global historic developments may be bent back 'in the direction of justice' (Fraser 2013, p.226).

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