CAPACITY TO DECOLONISE

BUILDING FUTURES LITERACY IN AFRICA

THE CAPACITY TO DECOLONISE: BUILDING FUTURES LITERACY IN AFRICA
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A Short Glossary

The glossary contains working definitions of key words and fundamental concepts used to frame the project. The objective is to formulate these definitions in a simple, clear and easy-to-share language. These definitions are neither better nor more valid than other definitions, but they form the basis on which the project was designed collectively, using a shared language.

Anticipation	Involves activities where living organisms integrate temporality into their functioning. All living organisms anticipate (Rosen, 1985), and humans manifest many different anticipatory systems and processes (ASP). Conscious human anticipation occurs in symbiosis with our ability to imagine. The fact that humans can imagine the future for different reasons, using different methods, in different circumstances enlarges the range of ASP. In particular, imagining the future for different reasons gives rise to two distinct kinds of anticipation: anticipation for future and anticipation for emergence.
Anticipation for Future (AfF)	"The 'being' of AfF is the future as a goal — a planned/desired future that people bet on. [...] AfF is [path-dependent] and the overwhelmingly prevalent form that the future takes when people use it in their everyday life." (Miller, 2018: 20)
Anticipation for Emergence (AfE)	"The future of AfE is one that is not a goal or target meant to structure the making of preparatory and planning bets. The later-than-now imagined in AfE is a disposable construct, a throwaway non-goal that is imagined without being constrained by probability or desirability."(ibid: 20)
Anticipatory Assumptions	Anticipatory assumptions define the frame and models that are used to invent the content of the fictions that are conscious human anticipation. They are "fundamental descriptive and analytical building blocks for understanding FL and 'using-the-future'." (ibid: 24) A person who is futures illiterate is unaware of the existence or meaning of anticipatory assumptions and their role for sensing and sense-making in the present.
Anticipatory Systems and Processes (ASP)	Systems and processes that enable humans to imagine the future. ASP are what give humans the capacity to invent and create, sense and make sense of imaginary futures.
Capability	A feature, faculty or know-how that can be developed or improved. Capabilities are largely social, and created and enabled by context. They include collaborative systems/processes that can be used and through which individual competences can be applied and exploited.
Capacity	The extent to which an entity, person, group or organisation can contain, receive or produce. This potential can be fulfilled (or not) through a combination of capability and environmental conditions.
Colonising the future	From the perspective of ASP, a person or group who wants to see their current image of the future imposed upon the future.
Decolonising	The process of deconstructing, delinking from dominant structures, worldviews, anticipatory systems, and ways of thinking, knowing, doing and being, and reconstituting them, so that no particular or single one predominates or is centred. The process is informed by

	postcolonial and decolonial literature, on decolonisation and decoloniality respectively.
Future	The time that is later-than-now. Hence, the future does not exist in the present. What exists in the present is anticipation expressed, in conscious human thought, as 'images'/descriptions of imaginary futures.
Futures	When used in the plural, the term indicates the plurality of 'images'/descriptions of the later than now. This does not cover the diversity of temporal viewpoints and frames that intermediate our relationships/perceptions of time in all of its dimensions.
Futures literacy (FL)	FL is a multi-dimensional capability that begins with an awareness of the imaginary nature of the future, thereby opening up a learning frontier as people explore: the diversity of reasons and sources for imagining the future; and the role of imagined futures for what we see and do, perception and choice, fears and hopes.
Futures Literacy Laboratories-Novelty (FLL-N)	FLL-Ns are one technique, among others, for detecting and working with people's anticipatory assumptions. The design principles informing the actual implementation of FLL draw on theories of collective intelligence and ASP.
Public good	A resource that cannot be depleted by the use of it, and whose use or payment by someone does not affect its use by someone else. That is, a resource that is both non-rivalrous and non-excludable.

Executive Summary

For decades, the essence of decolonisation themes and works has mostly stayed the same, being the dismantling of colonial structures and systems that support them. However, these works evolve from generation to generation of researchers and writers, as the dimensions and forms (or domains and meanings) of coloniality itself evolve.

Over the years, the decolonisation literature has often drawn attention to the destruction or foreclosure of alternatives to colonial forms. It has hinted at stolen futures in which individuals, groups, peoples and nations are denied other trajectories and what could have been in the absence of coloniality. Yet the literature has paid little attention to coloniality's impact on our capacity to anticipate and our anticipatory assumptions, and our capacity to use the future and our imaginations, which are the images of the future that we can, will and do hold. Our research explores this area.

The research attempts to delve into — and make explicit — the new areas of coloniality brought about by existing and emerging social, economic and geopolitical structures; as well as new tools and technologies, ways of learning and of creating/reproducing knowledge etc.

Of course, exploring coloniality of the present, including its current forms, history, and workings cannot wash away its implications on the past and current realities of nations and peoples. These must be highlighted and used to understand the link between the past and the present and the newer forms of coloniality. This paper underscores the new forms of coloniality and provides a unique contribution to the decolonisation body of work, by exploring the intersections between decoloniality, anticipation, use of the future, and futures literacy as a capability. It shows how a more profound understanding of anticipatory systems through building futures literacy contributes to our capacity to decolonise.

The early sections of the research expand the scope of colonisation, from the geographical and the epistemological to the colonisation of the future, and from space to time and space. The expanded scope also addresses how colonisation of the future is perpetuated through various knowledge creation and reproduction traditions, and exclusive epistemic associations that control or filter who is able or allowed to have access. In these analyses, the paper attempts to provide the fodder and alternative mental frames for discourses and actions that can lead to shattering the coloniality of power in knowledge creation.

After focusing on the need to shatter epistemic coloniality and the importance of moving to a broader frame of knowledge creation, the later sections look at endogenous knowledge production and participatory action research, through democratising knowledge production and distribution, co-designing knowledge production mediums or activities, and co-creating knowledge in an inclusive, collective-intelligence manner around the future.

In sum, the research advances decolonisation from the point of view of liberation. Here, liberation is not a physical (or verbal) call to arms against a perceived or real dominant 'other'. It is instead liberation from imposed ways of sensing, seeing, understanding, doing, and of using the future, which forecloses alternatives and bends reality through a single or few dominant frames and narratives. This liberation results in a pluriversalist approach, which embraces new ways of thinking, understanding, doing, sensing and sense-making that are open to emergence and resilience.

Keywords Futures Literacy; Decoloniality; Resurgence; Anticipatory systems; Participatory action research; Collective intelligence

Paper type Project research paper

Introduction

Context. The evolution of development studies has alerted international and African practitioners and researchers to the relevance of detecting resistance and hybridity in past and new forms of self- and community-expression in African communities. This search is fuelled by a desire to decolonise not only the content but also the methodological and teleological (finality) implications of development projects. The main critique is that these projects imply, by and of themselves, predetermined future paths that Africa should take in order to sustain and nurture well-being in Africa.

Local actors working with UNESCO and civil society organisations have used the future's plasticity (Ramos et al, 2019) to renew how these projects are designed and implemented. The paper's objective is **to situate futures literacy as a relevant capability** for decolonising futures in Africa and worldwide. The 20th and 21st century literature reviewed examines the connection between futures and human agency, through adopting a capability-based approach to well-being and resurgence in Africa. By defining coloniality as a set of oppressive systems, this decolonial pursuit has significant implications and grounded applications which come from and transcend the African continent.

Purpose. The literature review examines the thinking on decoloniality, anticipatory systems, and the evolution of futures-oriented knowledge creation in Africa and worldwide. It also identifies design principles for futures literacy initiatives, as a way of contributing to decolonising thinking in African countries and communities, and beyond. The aim is to support the design of an action research project for building local capacity to rethink why and how people imagine the future, and to explore how this contributes to empowerment and agency.

Structure. The paper is organised into four sections. The first section outlines the evolution of research that seeks to define, initiate and process political and cultural decolonisation structures, which highlights ways in which the human imagination has been stolen, usurped or oppressed. These findings are explored in the second section, in the context of anticipatory systems and processes that enable the decolonisation of uses of the future. The third section looks at how a capability-based approach that empowers communities to imagine their own futures can contribute to decolonisation, and the fourth section assesses the potential for a wider application of decolonial research principles and techniques.

Methodology. The methodology consisted in a rapid review of the literature covering postcolonial theory, decolonisation/decoloniality, anticipatory systems, futures thinking, futures literacy, participatory action research and collective knowledge creation. Relevant writings — from past and present writers — and thoughts on these themes were explored. This paper is thus nourished by the literature from African independence, Africana studies, critical indigenous studies and feminist theory, and as such is sensitive to the critique of indigenous essentialisation. It aspires to avoid taking either a strictly past-inspired or a future-driven perspective on the paths towards "resurgence" in Africa.

Ideas from the relevant literature were synthesised to lay the groundwork for thoughts on how coloniality and decolonisation are connected to anticipation and anticipatory systems and the capacity to use the future, beyond the conventional views and use of the terms.

At the "Capacity to Decolonise" workshop in May 2020, a draft of the paper was presented to selected experts in futures thinking and related areas, for their critique and review of a project that they all carried. This paper condenses the research, expert views from the workshop, and the various critiques and reviews of experts consulted.

1 Fighting Coloniality of Power: Disentangling African imaginations for renewed agency

For over a century, colonialism and the 'coloniality' matrix in its many forms have nurtured thoughts and been documented and theorised (1.1), situated in history through political struggles for renewed institutions and affirmation of African cultures (1.2). The persistence of the 'coloniality of power' is deeply rooted in African imaginaries. This calls for renewed agency, which could be fostered by disentangling African imaginations from the dominant tropes and diversifying the images that shape those imaginations through reclaiming and broadening narratives (1.3).

1.1 The different layers of coloniality and postcolonialism

1.1.1 Acknowledging different forms of coloniality

Decolonisation references, and indeed acknowledges, past or present colonisation. Therefore, to bring perspective to the research requires a brief appraisal of what colonialism/postcolonialism was and is now.

Historically, colonialism was as an act of domination and subjugation of an entity, state, country, or group of people by another (Shaefer, 2015). This act was rooted in and mostly driven by imperialism. At its height, imperialism was the use of superior military force to exert a state's influence over another, or to extend a state's political authority and control over other states and peoples. Typically, the aim of colonising other states was economic and geopolitical. Yet long after the colonial projects have stopped, the impacts of colonisation continue to linger, through the prevalence of race as an omnipresent social construct in local and global power dynamics. For decolonial thinker, Maldonado-Torres (2007: 243), these lingering impacts imply that colonial projects are articulated around a series of overlapping layers.

> Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged because of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, inter-subjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. [...] In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day.

In addition to the physical colonial empire and structure, colonialism also embodies a fundamental violence that invades and destabilises the mental universe of peoples, by ridding them of pre-existing knowledge (epistemicide), language (linguicide), and culture (culturicide) (Duncan, 2020; Oelofsen, 2015). Peoples' knowledges, languages, cultures, mores, values, imaginations and mental frames, and their anticipatory systems together with their futures are viewed as inferior or secondary, and effectively replaced with those of the colonisers, or at the very least relegated to the background (Oelofsen, 2015). The violence is threefold: macropolitical, micropolitical, and economic (Mbembe, 2020). It takes the form of centralised governments with surveillance and monitoring devices structuring our Nation States, as well as market economies based on extraction and debt (Kisukidi, 2020).

Coloniality emerges from the domination of reason, more specifically of lazy reason. This paper focuses on three of the four lazy reasons identified by de Souza Santos (2014: 165):

- arrogant reason, which is thought so "unconditionally free [that it forgets] to prove its own freedom";
- metonymic reason, which is claimed as the only form of rationality and the only lens to knowledge creation; and
- proleptic reason, which is "a kind of reason that does not exert itself in thinking the future because it believes it knows all about the future and conceives of it as linear, automatic, and infinite overcoming of the present".

In that sense, coloniality of power is an accomplice to both the hegemony of epistemological research methods and findings, and the invention of time as a linear, predetermined object (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012). The predetermination of future(s) imposed by dominant epistemologies is one of the most prevalent and fundamentally problematic forms of colonial legacy that is challenged by decolonial literature.

1.1.2 Embracing decoloniality

The label 'postcolonialism' is often used when analysing the lingering effects or lasting impact of colonialism on the structures, institutions, systems, worldviews, bodies, psyche and development of societies that have just emerged from a colonial experience. Postcolonialism is the consequence of a significant shift in both substance and methodology. Re-owning the ability to define one's claims in one's own words means finding and identifying new words (Edward, 1993). Postcolonial (and later decolonial) studies focus on both transcultural approaches and interdisciplinarity, based on the premise that colonialism affects all aspects of life and understanding of the world, and so decolonising attempt(s) should do the same (Mestiri, 2018). Also key is to interrogate personal experiences, similar to the shift observed in Black feminist movements from the 1970s, and to engage with other knowledge sources, such as intuition, emotions and literature or stories (e.g. Harris-Perry, 2011).

From a development perspective, postcolonialism is the study of the relations between nations and those other nations (or areas) they once ruled. The sustained relationship poses a development question that asks whether, going forward, the colonised should control its own development (Mann, 2012). Postcolonialism seeks to dissect the multifaceted legacies of former empires/colonists on the trajectories, present conditions and futures of the societies they once colonised. It provides one of key theoretical frameworks for analysing the developmental pathways of former colonies (Gomba, 2015).

Postcolonialist analyses have focused on understanding how peoples from formerly colonised societies have adapted to their colonisers' cultures and worldviews; what impact such adaption has had on the 'original' cultures and worldviews; what aspects of the 'original' cultures have survived; and how these independent and postcolonial societies can retrieve 'themselves' — in other words, how they self-express in ways that are not dictated or limited by the confines of their inherited colonial reference frames, or that retrieve substantial and useful parts of their pre-colonial reference frames. As Roy (2008: 1–2) explains:

> [D]espite postcolonial theory's conceptual fluidity, the major project of the discourse remains coherent: first, investigating the extent to which European history, culture, and knowledge were part of the practice of colonization, and its continuing aftermath; second, identifying and analyzing the causes and effects of continuing international exploitation; and third, transforming those epistemologies into new forms of cultural and political production, and enabling the transformation of global material injustice for disempowered.

However, postcolonialism and the body of works generated (and still being generated) also appear to be a means to an end, rather than an end in itself — at least from the viewpoint of writers/intellectuals whose perspectives have been shaped by deep interaction with the mores of former colonised states and peoples. The primary purpose of postcolonial analyses seems to be to provide the discursive framework for analysing colonial legacies, and holding up alternative mental frames. While this work is essential for the decolonisation of *being(s),* it still refers to Western-influenced systems of knowledge production even as these analyses question the current matrices of power.

Pushing this work to a more holistic frame, decolonial theory pursues 'the openness and freedom of thought and ways of life; the cleanliness of the coloniality of being and knowledge; the detachment of the rhetoric of modernity and its imperial imaginary"(Mignolo, 2011: 30). Decolonial theory questions the ontology and axiology of current systems of thought, including postcolonial studies. It offers grassroots-based discourses, epistemologies and methodologies around the decolonisation of land, cultures, institutions, systems and reference frames of the formerly colonised peoples and states, and the embrace of alternatives (Mbonda, 2019; Falquet & Espinosa, 2019; Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012).

1.2 Decolonisation — from the Afrocentric frame to a shared frame

1.2.1 Reclaiming African institutions, bodies, and cultures

Since before independence, decolonisation has been on political agendas. It manifests in various processes, purposes, and finalities behind said ideologies and writings, and the people who advocated for its pursuit.

Conversations about what decolonisation means in and for Africa — and perhaps those of African ancestry — largely started with the need for self-reclamation and self-ownership after the colonial experience (Thiong'o, 1986; Fanon, 1952, 1963). Early on, decolonial activists and philosophers stripped away de-Westernisation concerns that were considered irrelevant in an already-influenced environment (Mbembe, 2015), although they were not always followed by politicians who had divergent interests in the matter. One of the earliest proponents of decolonisation is Frantz Fanon, who believed that "struggles for decolonisation are first and foremost about self-ownership" (ibid: 12). They are also struggles to repossess and take back, if necessary by force, those tangible and intangible things that belong to peoples of formerly colonised states and peoples. Fanon also believed that decolonisation is about self-appropriation and is not — and should not be — about design or tinkering with the margins of structures handed over by colonial projects. Rather, it is about reshaping, recrafting and recreating without looking to the pre-existing models or using them as paradigms (ibid).

For Ngugi wa Thiong'o, one of Africa's early thinkers on the subject decolonisation is essentially a "re-centering project", which puts Africa and Africans — the peoples, their original worldviews, values, anticipatory systems etc. — right back at the centre, where they belong in matters pertaining to Africans and in the relations of Africans with people from other parts of the world (ibid: 15).

Influenced by Latin American decolonial voices Walter Mignolo and Nelson Maldonado-Torres who described the 'colonial matrix of power', Baba Olubanjo Buntu (2019) also brings an Africa-centred perspective to the decolonisation debate. His view is that decolonisation (or

decoloniality as he presents it) can be premised on three concepts, as developed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (ibid: 51):

- coloniality of power: studies the asymmetrical power structure of current global politics
- coloniality of knowledge: questions who generates knowledge and for what purpose, and how it has been used to assist imperialist development
- coloniality of being: investigates how whiteness has gained extreme ontological density and the dehumanisation of "the other".

Other concepts include the coloniality of gender (Lugones, 2008), or even Bolivarian activist Julieta Paredes's *entronque de patriarcados* (interlocking patriarchies, or heteronormativity) which precedes the arrival of Spanish colonisers in the 15th century; and coloniality of Western democracy (Mendoza, 2019). An Ecuadorian jurist even adds "coloniality of earth", defined as the prevalence of "Western cartesian separating the subject from the object while rejecting alternative 'decolonial world sensing' that privileges fluid relations between entities within Mother Earth" (Dolhare, 2020: 3; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 135).

This articulation around the notion of power and commodification of the world reflects early evolutions of decolonial literature. From Frantz Fanon (1952; 1963) to Donna Haraway (2016), decolonial thinkers have gone beyond the cultural or economic frame to challenge the ontological consequences of capitalist imperialism, not only in the global South but also globally (Haraway, 2016).

Under all forms of colonialism since 1500, coloniality emerges as the logic affecting the consciousness and subjectivity (Fanon's psycho-affection); racial identity (Ndiaye, 2009); economy (Mehmet, 1999); gender (Butler, 1992; Mestiri, 2018); and thinking, social and political processes (Foucault, 1966; Mignolo, 2009, 2011) of groups declared as peripheral. This axiological and epistemological logic discursively shapes our global coloniality resulting from, but not limited to, Western imperial expansion. Thus coloniality is seen as the other façade of modernity that it constitutes. The simultaneous and continuous colonisation of time (linear history from the East to Hegel's West, to end in Fukuyama's US) and space (discovery of new territories) is one of the key features of the colonial matrix, to which decolonial thinkers and activists propose alternatives.

To deal with the three areas of coloniality mentioned above, Buntu proposes three counter positions: rethinking, re-envisioning and rebuilding what it means to be (a decolonised) African. In this context, rethinking means to go against the status quo and what is considered the norm and the standard, and "to draw knowledge from outside of what has been positioned as the main theoretical frame" (Buntu, 2019: 49). Re-envisioning is about drawing inspiration from other (local) sources, to see with native eyes and to give voices to indigenous knowledge in places of discourse, knowledge creation, research, conception, policymaking, planning and implementation. It is about exploring and finding answers to foundational questions such as: what is 'African'? What makes an idea, a worldview or an anticipatory system 'African'?

1.2.2 Reclaiming our imaginaries

By adapting some of Buntu's key questions for re-envisioning, we can come up with our own human questions, such as what does decolonising an anticipatory system, worldview or episteme mean? And why does the created knowledge, anticipatory system become decolonised? Is it because:

- it is produced outside of the established centres of dominant and supposedly colonial or imposed epistemes, or

- it was produced by peoples of/from formerly colonised societies (irrespective of where they are located), or
- it represents or fits within the indigenous (and decolonial) ways of thinking and imagining the futures of these 'other' — formerly colonised — societies, or
- it is produced using their 'original' epistemes and worldviews (even if not produced by them)?

Buntu (2019) believes that the answer lies somewhere in between a combination of all the answers to these questions.

Moreover, decolonisation as a concept, aspiration, and practice has evolved from a cultural perspective to an epistemological matter, which allows room to interrogate our thoughts and knowledge-production systems (Odora Hoppers, 2000). These learnings are of interest to modern societies and their peoples whose ways of being, knowing, imagining and of sense-making have been dislocated. Their mental frames and imaginations have also been invaded or overrun by the traditions, narratives and worldviews inherited from dominant past structures and supported by present hegemonies. The colonial matrix is intrusive and pervasive, and does not provide a shared frame for belonging — put simply, it is otherness. The revelation and critique of this alterity made African thinkers and practitioners examine their decolonised, resurgent, self-reflective anticipatory systems and processes.

For Madlingozi, decolonisation is a bifocal framework that should be both backward- and forward-looking. It should look back in order to identify the past that it criticises and strives to undo or break away from. It should look forward by laying the foundation for the post-decolonial, all-inclusive system in which a diversity of epistemological foundations, worldviews and anticipatory systems are embraced, and the norms are belongingness and pluriversality (not universality). Decolonisation does not 'centre' any particular or single worldview, episteme, and anticipatory system (Madlingozi, 2018a; hooks, 1984). No one predominates anywhere, and the 'Others' are at all times acknowledged and represented (Mbembe, 2015).

For Akomolafe, decolonising is not about compensating what was lost by the colonised. It is about reclaiming collective imaginaries, hopes and alliances that have been forgotten in the ensuing malformed relations and interactions between the former colonisers and colonised. Decolonisation is not about re-centring or attempting "to return to a pure image of what it means to be indigenous (an image that may no longer be true)". It is about opening up liberally/unreservedly to new means and ways of knowing, doing, defining and sense-making that acknowledge the intertwining middles and entangled epistemic traditions of the colonised and the coloniser — without ascribing centrality or dominance to any — and realising that nothing is ever completely broken or completely whole (Akomolafe, 2015, 2017; Césaire, 1950).

Herein is drawn the distinction between resurgence (redefinition of the self, reconstruction of the Oppressed) and essentialisation, which is an intellectual and political trap that Mphahlele warns against (Madlingozi, 2018b). 'Auto-colonising' can entrap those seeking to decolonise, by fixating efforts on colonialist discourses (e.g. Mobutu's authenticity politics), which again centralises what genuine decolonising work aims to undo.

The way in which decolonial literature tends to revolve around coloniality denotes entrapment in our otherness and the loss of power to define ourselves and our surroundings. Decolonisation implies a struggle against the resistance to oppression that has overdetermined

us as Africans and shaped our understanding of our own authenticity entrapped between cliché and assimilation. Legacy systems are challenged if values and codes to anticipate tomorrow are predefined, and so Africans are urged to create new reasons for and ways to articulate and imagine the future of the past. Thus decolonising the works and conversations about decolonisation (and the misconceptions around decolonisation itself) has become imperative (Madlingozi, 2018b).

1.3 Captive imagination(s)

> Perhaps we have not sufficiently demonstrated that colonialism is not content simply to impose its rule upon the present and future of the dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing precolonial history takes on a dialectical significance today. (Fanon, 1963: 210)

Postcolonial literature has focused largely on the role of colonisation in past narratives and narratives of the past and yet, given its continued prevalence, colonisation may linger because of its hold on narratives of the future. At first glance, this may appear to be contradictory.

The future is imaginary, as it does not exist yet. Future Studies examines why and how we use our imagination (WFSF, 2019). Imagination deals with the power of the mind to see and to hold/form images, concepts, descriptions and representations that do not exist or have not been physically experienced (yet). This ability to see and perceive with our minds phenomena that do not yet exist is essential to creating new forms, recreating/reforming old paradigms, and thinking about and (re)inventing our futures.

However, our imaginations are shaped by various factors, such as our cultures, mores, values, physical and social environments, technologies, worldviews, education, political systems etc., and those of others with whom we have interacted. These factors were also shaped by the imaginations of people before us.

One of the challenges in decolonising our imaginations is that our built systems — education systems, political systems, physical and social environments, cultures, worldviews etc. — are based on, or were heavily influenced by, the systems and values inherited from the past and the conditions and forces that shaped that past. Therefore, what is very important is to extricate our imaginations from the confines of these established norms and structures, and think about or rethink our own futures in a manner that is not determined nor restricted by the inherited structures and does not perpetuate their existence, thereby opening them up to emergence.

Another challenge — beyond the impact of inherited structures on the imagination of societies and their peoples — is the effect on our collective imaginations of the globalised world and the post-normal times in which we live. For instance, recent Afrofuturist visions depicted in mass media, especially from the United States, often fall short of this larger aim of decolonising our imaginations and futures. Instead, their central aim has often focused on the decoloniality of power (not of self nor knowledge) and the centring of African Americans and their imaginations of the future. These Afrofuturist visions, themselves, are often constrained or limited by the dominant images and optimised futures disseminated by the mainstream media. They tend to magnify and expand the reach and scope of these dominant tropes in our own domains, and are often an extension of the mainstream, technocratic imaginations of the future, albeit with the centring of African American versions of these narratives being the main difference, and perhaps disseminated in ways that are more palatable to many who have long

been perceived as the 'Others' in dominant narratives. This creates viral replications that further perpetuate the dominant tropes and enable them to further colonise our imaginations. Therefore, what is important and urgent is to decolonise our collective and individual imaginations, to open up to alternatives, and to see beyond the dominant but limited narratives continuously held up to us as the only relevant images. Again, the aim should not be to replace one form of coloniality with another.

This, perhaps, then raises the question: if decolonisation is about forming and emerging new words and new imaginaries that characterise power, how do we decolonise our collective and individual imaginations? How do we reclaim and diversify our images of the future beyond those fed to us during colonial times and preserved by the global media and mainstream narratives?

2   Decolonising Anticipation

As established in Section 1, our imaginaries (the kind of images that we now hold) and how they are formed influence our expectations, views and use of the future. In short, they influence our anticipation and the systems that sustain or limit that anticipation. Therefore, decolonising our anticipatory systems requires reframing and broadening the cornucopia of images to which our minds and senses are exposed, and the processes through which they are created or sourced (2.1). It is also useful, even essential, to reframe our understanding of decolonisation beyond the geographical and epistemological to the coloniality of the future itself, and our anticipation (2.2). This can help to identify and build the critical capabilities, including futures literacy, needed to decolonise our anticipation and our futures (2.3).

2.1 Defining decolonisation as the (re)framing of our anticipatory systems

Robert Rosen (1985: 339) defined an anticipatory system as a "system containing a predictive model of itself and/or its environment, which allows it to change state at an instant in accord with the model's predictions pertaining to a later instant". It has also been defined as a "special class of adaptive control systems" (Louie, 2010: 26).

The concept of anticipation covers sensing, producing, understanding and making sense of future evolutions, future possibilities, and the appreciation of emergence. 'All efforts to 'know the future' in the sense of thinking about and 'using-the-future' are forms of anticipation'. Anticipatory systems and processes can thus be defined as the systems and processes that enable, ground, and support this "combination of capacities" (Miller et al., 2013: 52–53).

"Evoking and exploring [the] anticipatory systems" of a group of people provide an "effective way to unpack [the images of] the future" and the imaginations of that group and, perhaps more importantly, to understand how the members of the group use the future (Miller & Poli, 2010: 1).

For decolonisers to reclaim themselves or others, to retrieve or bring themselves back from their lostness in the future, requires certain questions to be answered:
- How can they (and we) reclaim, retrieve, bring back or unearth the anticipatory systems and processes of modern societies that have been buried for a long time, under the rubbles of past dominant structures and present hegemonies?
- How can they (and we) be sure that the unearthed anticipatory systems and imaginations are not embedded with significant elements of the rubbles under which they were buried?
- How can they (and we) be certain that what is unearthed is not weathered beyond recognition, and that reclaiming or retrieving will simply bring back more of the same?

And, in reclaiming or retrieving, are they (and we) not ignoring how ideas circulate, are redefined and re-owned over time, depending on contexts, temporalities and cultures? (Femenias, 2019).

Such interrogations reflect Fanon's comments on reaffirming African cultures beyond their past and Canadian Native American Leanne Simpson's desire not to dismantle Audre Lorde's master's house but to build our own houses (Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2011; Fanon, 1963).

When framing decolonisation as the quest for the right to reclaim our own futures, the gaze shifts from the rigid authenticity often used in postcolonial contexts to a renewed understanding of what it means to be human and express our humanity. Reclaiming, also called 'resurgence', becomes the process of recreating, which gives the subjects the power to define or redefine themselves through their own eyes, and their chosen frames. This requires realising that our imaginations are in captivity, as highlighted in Section 1, and being able to reactivate and expand our imaginations in order to build new images of *the future*.

2.2 Reframing (de)colonisation: a geographical and epistemological decentralisation

2.2.1 Colonising the future

For over two centuries, colonisation has been experienced worldwide as the systemic imposition of particular, exclusive or definite ways of sensing, knowing, understanding and surmising that precludes or discredits all others. Influencing policymakers (from Thomas Sankara to Aminata Dramane Traoré), decolonial thinkers have embraced the economic and political implications of colonialism, and foreseen the consequences of systemic impoverishment and North–South interdependency. This holistic understanding of colonisation has opened up methodological alternatives and motivated societies (and their peoples) to shift away from, and refuse to conform to, a single image of what is true, believable and real (Akomolafe, 2015; Césaire, 1950).

2.2.2 Exploring a renewed 'old' question

As early as 1975, Future Studies were asking questions about the future being subject to colonisation (Dator, 2005). For some authors, futures studies were "becoming the tool for the colonization of the last frontier — the non-Western future itself" (Sardar, 1993: 187). There is evidence that Western thinking has shaped the practice of using the future as an established stream of knowledge (Son, 2015). The Westernisation of mind-sets and behaviours has resulted in the marginalisation of several parts of the human society, particularly non-Western cultures, women, and all categories of people whose future is determined by others — for example, farmer organisations whose futures are often determined by international agricultural research and development actors (Bourgeois et al., 2017; Gunnarsson-Östling, 2011).

When the future is seen as a resource, it has the same characteristics as the air we breathe — it is a public good: a resource that cannot be depleted through use, and whose use by someone does not affect its use by someone else. In practice, this means that using the future does not prevent others from using it and will not reduce the quantity of the future used by them. However, the colonisation of the future means that the public good nature of the future may be changed by limiting or impeding others from using it. This is not new. In the past, the use of the future was usually restricted by institutions, such as social castes (pythonesses,
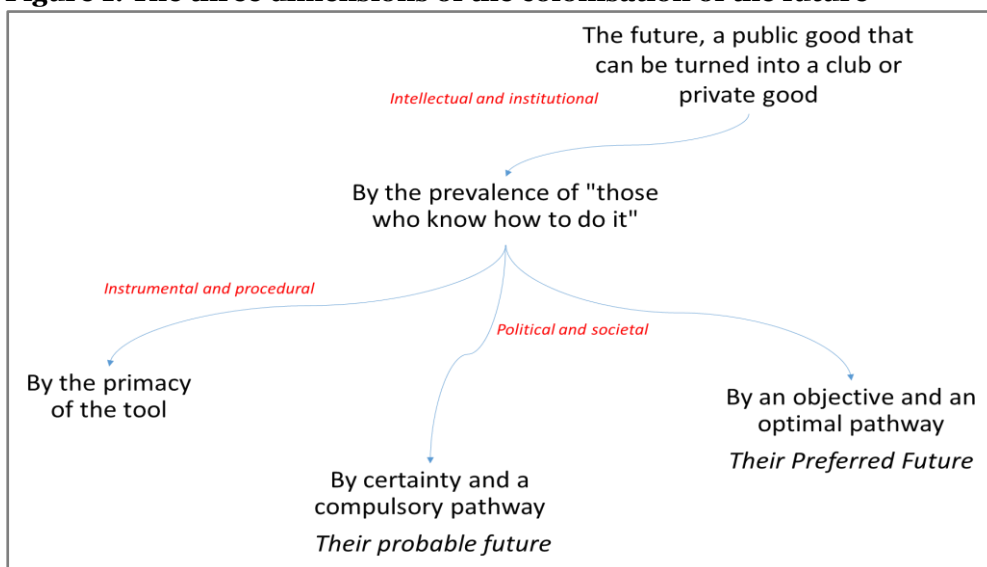
shamans) or religious organisations, or by specialised professionals (oracles, fortune tellers, soothsayers, mediums). Such exclusion occurred often through technology and alleged mastery (crystal ball, trance, tarot, bones reading).

The future becomes a club good when its use is restricted to a certain group of people, be they individuals or organisations, and a private good when others have to pay to access it, meaning that those who cannot afford it cannot use it (Appadurai, 2013). In the contemporary world, things have not changed. The transformation of the future as a resource, from a public to a club or private good, is on-going and is how the future is being colonised.

2.2.3 Dimensioning the colonisation process

The colonisation of the future connects three dimensions: intellectual and institutional, instrumental and procedural, and political and societal (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The three dimensions of the colonisation of the future

The future, a public good that can be turned into a club or private good

Intellectual and institutional

By the prevalence of "those who know how to do it"

Instrumental and procedural

Political and societal

By the primacy of the tool

By certainty and a compulsory pathway
Their probable future

By an objective and an optimal pathway
Their Preferred Future

Source: Authors (2020)

The intellectual and institutional dimension consists of the anticipatory systems and anticipatory hypotheses that are dominated by 'those who know better'; in other words, an elite (a club) or a profession (business) captures the use of the future. Sardar (1993: 179, 183) identified this elite as "white, mainly American, male scholars" who "control the discipline and decide who is and who is not important in, and what is and what is not important for the field". This elite colonises tomorrow by imposing its present vision of the future, as a target to achieve or something to be prepared for (Miller, 2015; Poli, 2015).

The future becomes a club good through established practices in futures studies, which follow established science standards that are shaped by Western epistemologies. Future as a public good tends to become a club good when norms and barriers of entry are established, such as being recognised by a community of peers or possessing a degree in futures studies/foresight or similar branding. The result is the creation of a group of people who abide by and reproduce the same dominant standards. For example, most associations of professional futurists have their own entry rules, with a common rule being the godfathering by association members or publishing in recognised journals. When professionals or organisations charge for the use of the future, as a service, the future becomes a private good — the development of private expertise is demonstrated by the proliferation of organisations and experts who make a living from using the future.

The instrumental and procedural dimension involves imposing exclusive technologies, dedicated instruments and specific vocabulary that allow members of the club to reproduce themselves and exclude others. The tool (technology) is an entry barrier that creates either a club (because of the ritualistic entry to the discipline and the initial mastery of the tool) or a business (because of the cost of learning the tool), which becomes marketable mainly in the form of expertise.

The *political and societal dimension* refers to how, after using their tools, 'those who know better' share their truth about the future with 'those who do not know'. This gives full meaning to the expression 'colonising the future'. When people are convinced that using the future is something that requires particular skills, knowledge and instruments, they are deprived from their capability to use the future and have imposed futures occupied by others. In particular, imposing an idea of the future as a target either for something that is going to happen (probabilistic future) or desirable (preferred future). In both cases, colonising the future separates the 'doers' and the 'beneficiaries', whereas this dichotomy does not exist when the future is seen as a public good.

2.2.4 Decolonising the future: thoughts on challenges and issues

Everyone has anticipatory systems, even if we do not use them explicitly. Coloniality occurs when some people impose their own anticipatory systems on others, so their overall structure of knowledge shapes all types of knowledge according to its values.

Therefore, "[d]ecoloniality means first to delink (to detach) from that overall structure of knowledge in order to engage in an epistemic reconstitution [...] [o]f ways of thinking, languages, ways of life and being in the world" that disavows the rhetoric of modernity and implements the logic of coloniality.[1]

Challenging the prevalence of this overall structure of knowledge means: (i) to characterise its features, (ii) to identify who and what is affected by it (Figure 2), and (iii) to decide the extent of the need and possibility to produce an alternative overall structure of knowledge (epistemic reconstitution).

Figure 2: Features of the current use of the future and the colonised

Features of the mainstream Western use of the future
• An elite of mostly Western educated practitioners
• Dominated by white males
• Futures studies as a specific field
• Dedicated journals with standard scholarship rules
• Dedicated professional organisations/units
• Dedicated curricula
• Professional associations and community of peers
• The use of the future for decision-making
• The future as a target to achieve
• Tool/technology based
• Reduction of uncertainty
• Determinism based on trends and quantification
• Linear time
• Lazy rationality (metonymic reasoning)

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[1] Quoted from an interview of Walter Mignolo referring also to Quijano: https://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/21/interview-walter-mignolopart-2-key-concepts/.

Who and what is colonised?
• Non-Western cultures
• Agency
• Women
• Non-recognised professionals
• The use of the future for emergence and novelty
• The capacity to determine our own future
• The capacity to become future literate
• The value of uncertainty
• Imagination
• Interdisciplinary knowledge creation

Source: Authors; Bourgeois (2020)

2.2.5 Decolonising anticipatory systems: the case for futures literacy

Given that some segments of the society want to impose their anticipatory systems and futures on others, the question is how to decolonise anticipation and our anticipatory systems.

What needs to be unearthed are anticipatory systems and alternative processes of using the future for sensing and making sense of the present, so that the present's potential can be more fully appreciated. To do this effectively, anticipatory systems must be seen as systems, which explore and support the 'combination of capacities' that enable us to be able to think through, assess and make sense of future possibilities, and be open to emergence (Miller et al., 2013).

Here, what comes into view is the relationship between understanding anticipatory systems and how we use the future and futures literacy, as a capability that enables us to better understand the sources of our fears, hopes and expectations, and to make sense and take advantage of complexity and uncertainty. And building and improving on our futures literacy capability is considered to be one of the best ways to understand and decolonise our anticipatory systems (Miller & Poli, 2010; WFSF, 2019). Consequently exploring futures literacy, how we can build it as a capability and to what end, becomes essential.

2.3 Futures literacy as capability

In simple terms, being futures literate means being able to understand why and how humans imagine the future. In this sense, it is a competence accessible to all, as everyone uses the future all the time. The most frequent examples are Miller's reference to a baby's cries for food, relief or attention (UNESCO, 2018), or maximising options when waiting for a bus of unpredictable timing. These examples reflect the role of anticipation in the present for decision-making —anticipation is a key feature of short- and long-term decision-making in the present.

To understand the correlation between futures literacy and agency requires taking a step back, returning to the relation between development and fear, and between development and images of the self in the eyes of the other and the self.

Our imaginaries are surrounded by images and representations. Using the example of Jews' overdetermined constituencies, Sartre (1974: 59–79) defined the authenticity of the Jew or of the Black as obeying the rules of the game, in a system that has set the "ensemble of limits and restrictions that form [the Jew] and determine his possibilities". Thus authenticity is associated with obedience to (a certain) representation(s) of the self, while inauthenticity is

abandoning this orthodox way of being as a subaltern in favour of assimilation.[2] You are either the vile 'lesser than a human' the majority wants to see (a subaltern), or an assimilated person who embraces modernity. What is striking here is not (only) the types of stereotypical behaviours, but the rigidity of the frame: binary linearity. In a settler-colonialist or colonialist environment, Leanne Simpson (2011: 51) refers to the "rigidity of colonialism" in opposition to the "fluidity around our [revisited] traditions". Overdetermined individuals, like those who determine them, evolve along two straight lines in the air, like two parallel uncooked spaghetti.

Imagine an individual or a community being determined by the eye of the other: already biased by a particular image of the other, we make our mark by opposing ourselves to this other. We conceive the world as composed of fragmented pieces (images) and yet wish to reveal the lens that brought them into existence, rather than question the images.

Anticipatory assumptions are the hidden correlations or overlooked lenses, which distort or shape the methods of (and reasons for) thinking about the future. And yet they are "what enable people to describe imaginary futures" (UNESCO, 2018: 24). For instance, an anticipatory assumption is that linguistic diversity is a problem when monolingualism is a feature of a preferred scenario for Africa in 2040. Formed in the present, assumptions directly implicate the future that we learn about (finality) when imagining futures that we can learn from (instrument). The conscientisation of this perception operates a shift in our use of the future as a finality to a more instrumental(ised) used of the future.

The term 'using the future' shines a light on the use of imagination as an instrument, in particular thinking about why (and how) we use this wonderful instrument. Being futures literate means understanding the nature and functioning of our anticipatory systems and processes (ASP), as the mental frames and support systems through which we imagine and then make sense of what we imagine in the present.

Awareness is one thing; another is competence, or mobilising our understanding and processing to determine which are the most adequate tools for thinking about the future. It is a reflexive and constructive capability: reflexive because becoming more futures literate redefines the ways we use the future, and so strengthens our futures literacy; constructive because the "constant use of the future plays a role in building up the world around us" (UNESCO, 2018: 17). Reusing Miller's Popperian analogy, by changing the conditions for using the future, we change the role that futures play in our present (UNESCO, 2018; Popper, 1990: 17):

> Our very understanding of the world changes the conditions of a changing world; and
> so do our wishes, our preferences, our motivations, our hopes, our dreams, our
> phantasies, our hypotheses, our theories. Even our erroneous theories change the
> world, although our correct theories may, as a rule have a more lasting influence.

An increased understanding, of why and how the 'other' influences our reasons, ways and contexts for creating images and narratives of the future, nurtures the resurgence of our consciousness. Our spectrum of possibilities, our bandwidth and our repository of actions in Durkheimian terms increase once the realisation sinks in: that we are capable of choosing the reasons why we use and how we anticipate the future, and what it could mean about who we are, how we express ourselves and what the world means to us.

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[2] We reuse the expression as defined by Gayatri Spivak (1988: 271–313).

This recovered freedom does not contradict recent evolutions of postcolonial/decolonial studies and futures studies, which urge for a humbler position, far from the hubristic instrumentalisation of the future that incarcerated our imaginations in the first place. The revelation that we can anticipate for the future (planning and preparation) and for emergence invites fluidity and allows the unknown, not as our doom but as a natural component of our ecosystems. These are not only the known unknowns (the so-called risks, in an anthropocentric approach to knowledge), but also the unknown unknowns — the unexpected, knowing our ignorance and admiring the surprises that Nature holds for Humanity and its surroundings (Sardar, 2015). By extension, futures literacy can be seen as the ability to integrate the future into making present decisions or making sense of the present (UNESCO, 2018).

Fluidity requires a **methodological playfulness** that opens the door for complexity and resurgence. In this sense, decolonisation is a transformation. More simply, our images of the future shape our agendas, and the inability to diversify the foundations of our imagination is at the core of our inability to transform. "More than a shortage of images, the African continent suffers from the absence of a thought of its own and from the inability to produce its own metaphors of the future."[3] (Sarr, 2016: 12). Imagination does not lack but is not used or is misused because of the orthodox and unauthentic processes used to create metaphors of the future. "For these African thoughts to be fertile requires an absolute intellectual sovereignty",[4] as the capacity to decolonise requires both instruments and specific capabilities to activate our understanding of its relevance and necessity (ibid: 17). In that sense, the means used indirectly shape the ends sought through decolonisation strategies (Alfred, 2005) — in short, method cannot be separated from the imaginaries. Thus the capability of futures literacy directly contributes to efforts pursued to decolonise.

Futures Literacy Laboratories (FLLs) are tools for creating knowledge using collective intelligence. Many different kinds of FLL exist and vary (in part) according to the anticipatory assumptions targeted by the Lab design. FLL-N refers to the Novelty version, which is a tool for cultivating the capability of futures literacy, where participants engage with both Anticipation for Future and Anticipation for Emergence. FLL-Ns are learning-by-doing processes aimed at developing futures literacy, by making the anticipatory assumptions of participants explicit and observable. FLL-Ns reveal and help to reframe these anticipatory assumptions, so that participants are able to rethink their assumptions and open up alternative ways of viewing or imagining the future in a particular area. This helps to strengthen their ability to use the future and improve their futures literacy capability (UNESCO, 2018).

If our imaginations are anchored in our contexts, then the methods used to expand our imaginations also need to be context-dependent, customised to fit purpose, and meet local champions' expectations (see Section 3).

Learning is a "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience", and so the "experience should be based on connection to the collective unconscious" (Jung, 1933: 233). Learning triggers different kinds of abilities, including the following four abilities necessary for experiential learning (Kolb, 1984):
   1) Concrete experience: to be full of, although not limited to, curiosity and openness.

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[3] Authors' translation of « Plus que d'un déficit d'image, c'est de celui d'une pensée et d'une production de ses propres métaphores du futur que souffre le continent africain. »
[4] Authors' translation of « Pour être féconde, une pensée du continent porte en elle l'exigence d'une absolue souveraineté intellectuelle.»

2) Reflective observation: to reflect on and observe experiences from different angles.
3) Novelty: to invent and detect novel phenomena, around a topic that they care about. [5]
4) Active experimentation abilities: to use their novel ideas to make decisions.

The result is the four outcomes of futures literacy action-learning/action-research experiences:
- Participants become more futures literate.
- New questions are posed regarding a specific topic that participants care about.
- The underlying anticipatory systems and processes of participants are revealed.
- The effectiveness of different FLL designs are tested.

Recent research, followed closely by futures literacy practitioners, hints at the need to develop existing or new tools to explore, build, strengthen and make use of our futures literacy (de Boer et al., 2018). The Capacity to Decolonise project at Wits University is exploring the customisation of futures literacy learning processes in this quest for self- and community-based decolonial resurgence.

3   Capability Building

Engaging the imagination of communities to strengthen their resilience is based on a philosophy of endogenous knowledge production (3.4), fuelled by the shattering of the coloniality of power rooted in the parameters of knowledge production (3.1). Such a postcolonial definition of knowledge production actors (3.2) also follows the evolution of the definition of learning as a life-long journey (3.3), made even more relevant by its capacities for healing, well-being and transformation.

3.1 The bio- and geopolitics of knowledge production

"I am invisible, understand, simply because they refuse to see me. […] When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination — indeed, everything and anything except me" (Ellison, 1965: 3). This famous passage, from a novel about a Black man in the United States, sets the stage for any discourse that subjugates one human being in the eyes of another. Historically, research is associated with European colonialism and is characterised as "knowledge about indigenous peoples […] collected, classified and then represented back to the West" (Smith, 1999: 1). Late 20th century critiques question the very epistemology of ethno-anthropology studies: who was studying whom; from where was knowledge drawn; how was knowledge collected and analysed; and, more generally, what knowledge was considered valuable.

Power resides in the ability to make such decisions, and thus determines the agency of the researcher (Nagar, 2002). Power is made even more ambiguous because the study objects then learn about themselves from the researcher, with Africa being relegated "to providing raw materials ('data') to outside academics who process it and then re-export their theories back to Africa (Mamdani, 2011: 6). As Scheurich and Young (1997: 7) remind us:

> When any group […] significantly dominates other groups for hundreds of years, the
> ways of the dominant group (its epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies), not only
> become the dominant ways of that civilisation, but also these ways become so deeply
> embedded that they typically are seen as 'natural' or appropriate norms rather than as
> historically evolved social constructions.

[5] Kolb's "abstract conceptualising abilities (AC)" is replaced by Miller's "novelty", as the phrasing behind Kolb's AC implies a quest for scientific theorisation whose rigorous narrowness seems to contradict the fluid decolonising approach embraced so far.

At the core of unlearning how research is conducted in Africa and worldwide is that certain epistemologies (ways of knowing) and ontologies (ways of being) have been universalised, normalised and naturalised. Having diagnosed our bias under 'racialisation', or more specifically 'coloniality of power', we now aspire to unlearn in order to construct a new spectrum of shared meanings. Liberatory epistemologies thus inform the research methods used to generate knowledges (Collins, 1990; Smith, 2000; Sarr, 2016).[6]

As enunciators, we can make "no form of affirmation without being involved and [thus] transformed in our act of affirming" (Tlotsanova & Mignolo, 2012: 10). Discourses shape learning (flux) and, therefore, knowledge (stock). Historically, the learning curve was left to the external researcher who lacked the necessary humility required for a more holistic grid of understanding of indigenous cultures (Mohanty, 1988). Building on the philosophy of the Freirean pedagogy of the Oppressed, postcolonial research rapidly assimilated the Batesonian notion of metalogue, the ability to "learn from actors without imposing on them an *a priori* definition of their world building capacities" (Freire, 1972; Bateson, 2000; Latour, 1999: 20). In doing so, the "geography of reason" shifts from the enunciated to the enunciator, to cite Lewis Gordon's expression (Gordon, 2011).

Following this principle, participatory action research emerged as an option for greater dialogue between researchers and their objects of study, especially in development practice (Schurr & Segebart, 2012). However, the bio- and geopolitics of the power of knowledge persisted, as participatory approaches were reduced to instruments for extracting and collecting data (Kapoor, 2005). Following Fanon's call for the dropping of the 'White mask', Mignolo (2009: 160) and Maldonado-Torres (2011) called for "epistemic disobedience", as a way to "delink" from the Western epistemological assumption of a "detached and neutral point of observation".

In that sense, decolonial studies engage with the politics of knowledge creation and the politics of self-determination (Nakata et al., 2012), which requires a "definitive rejection of 'being told' […] what we are, what our ranking is in relation to the ideal of humanitas and what we have to do to be recognised as such"(Catalani & Minkler, 2010: 445). Knowledge is seen as part of a circular learning process, and any learning curve should be designed around the needs of a community and its members, based on questions such as:
- What do we wish to liberate ourselves from?
- What do we wish to learn about ourselves?
- What do we wish to learn about the world that surrounds us and our relations with it?

A positive correlation can then be drawn between how much the community invests in the learning process and their level of empowerment, which promotes an "iterative cycle of research, discussion and action" (Catalani & Minkler, 2010: 445). Therefore, decolonised communities are not only subjects of studies and analyses, but also actors of learning who contribute to redefining learning experiences and their own empowerment (human agency).

3.2 From objects of study to actors of learning: participatory action research

Participatory research comes in many forms: the reality check approach (immersions into the households of the 'unheard'), photovoice (using photographic techniques to identify, represent and enhance the community (Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Wang & Burris, 1997), theatre for

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[6] Voluntarily using feminist theorist Waldby's plural form of knowledges as also reproduced by Tlotsanova and Mignolo (2012).

development (Abdullahi & Salaudeen, 2017), digital storytelling (first person voice-storytelling supported by technology combining art therapy with participatory media production, orality and creative writing), co-operative inquiry, participatory rural appraisal (Kapoor, 2005), participatory learning and action (PLA), participatory learning research and of course, participatory action research.[7]

Participatory futures cover a broad range of citizen-centred approaches to exploring possible futures, starting with acknowledging the plasticity of futures. Futurists at NESTA identified objectives, which include the "translat[ion] of collective images of the future into new collective actions and behavior in the present" that resonates the most with the objectives of participatory action research (Ramos et al., 2019: 15).

Participatory action research is sometimes distinguished into two formats: (i) collaboration between professional practitioners and academic researchers, or practitioners and professional researchers, and (ii) working directly and immediately with persons affected (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). This distinction has not been preserved in critical indigenous studies because it classifies the co-researchers' agency based on the given label: 'service user', 'practitioner' or 'patient'. Indeed, all — regardless of status — rightly embrace the desire to learn in order to know oneself, heal and transform.

Action research is a project for social justice and social change and, therefore, committed to "reciprocity, reflexivity, and reflection" (Robertson, 2000: 301). When structured around a community, these methods are referred to as community-based participatory research (CBPR). CBPR methodological principles emphasise empowerment and community (and individual) capacity-building, through balancing research and action, and ensuring shared reflection, critical dialogue, knowledge co-creation, and agency (Israel et al., 1998, quoted in Catalani & Minkler, 2010: 425). Action research is tailored to meet its participants or co-researchers' expectations. Their involvement means that the activity is contextualised, to nurture reflection on co-researchers' practices and on facilitating researchers' theories.

3.2.1. Dealing with exogeneity: from contact spaces to transformative spaces

Participatory approaches result from the perception of research contexts as "transformative spaces" (Schurr & Segebart, 2012: 150) or "contact spaces" (Askins & Pain, 2011: 803). Herein lies the source of tension within participatory research as practiced today: working and walking the fine line of the "indigene-colonizer hyphen"(Jones & Jenkins, 2008: 471).

Participatory research fosters renewed relations between different worlds, or "situated solidarities" in the midst of intersectionality (Nagar & Geiger, 2007: 269). Empowerment through creating knowledge emerges from the negotiation between the external researcher and the community addressed. Participatory research is inherently about external–internal relations, with a blurred identification of the initiating agent, as in the case of exogenous research funding sources but prospectively endogenous call for projects.

Even research aimed at promoting capacity-building reflects the power dynamics that are, ironically, the subject of study. Indigenist researchers are encouraged to emphasise the agenda at play, and to recall the early decolonisation theory that "Afrocentricity is a perspective which allows Africans to be subjects of their own historical experiences rather than objects"(Asante, quoted by Rigney, 1999: 110).

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[7] See more: https://participatesdgs.org/research-activities/the-sustainable-livelihoods-foundation/.

This form of Afrocentricity is different from the colonisation-centred definition of decolonisation. It is conceived as both resurgence and resistance. Resistance is viewed as the "emancipatory imperative for indigenist research" (ibid: 116). However, reading between the lines of work produced by indigenous researchers, resistance comprises context-induced practices and behaviours, which arise as a philosophy of being in the face of adversity. Context is situated in both time and space: "[t]he 'local' that localizes critical theory is always historically specific"(Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 12) and so is too restrictive to limit indigenous agency to their opposition to the dominant system; in brief, to reduce it to an epistemology of denunciation. In relation to the 'other' who could also act as a co-researcher, our thinking needs to go beyond primary resistance, as a reactive mechanism that defines our methods in opposition to Western models, and rather embrace resistance as fluid and adaptable resilience through reflexivity and reciprocity.

The embrace of participatory action research should not be considered a rejection of dominant forms of research axiology. European researchers, in fields such as development geography, have also had to address the global West/South divisions and to consider the distinctions between indigenous elite and non-elite groups, although without necessarily addressing Spivak's (1988) theory of subalterns (women, tribal people etc.). How do subalterns share ideas and paradigms with the rest of the world? Can the implantation or persistency of (neo-) colonising processes be prevented in our knowledge creation systems? Even when external researchers are not involved in the project, what can be done when our minds have already been colonised by methods and ideas of knowledge creation? How do we become subjects of research and knowledge? How do subalterns own their ideas?

3.2.2. A manifesto of participatory action research: learning-by-doing for learning-by-being

We acknowledge that the liberating power of participatory action research lies in the systemic challenge to any attempt to colonise the process, not in the absence of such attempts. Epistemological assumptions affect participatory research, which implies that forms of recolonisation continue to appear (see subsection 1.2.2 on Mphahlele autocolonising).

We acknowledge that the co-creation of knowledge is a negotiated process of cooperative design that must involve all actors. Maximum reciprocity induces trust and allows room for shared meaning and reflexivity, leading to collective reflection (Robertson, 2000). Therefore, empowerment stems from the humility of all parties — humility is a form of ethics and commitment, a responsibility, that is reflected in every step of the process, from initiating the inquiry to measuring the success indicators.

In designing the research experience, co-researchers are invited to acknowledge not only their doing (research), but also their being (identity) and the way they are perceived. This is because the researcher's identity influences "the type of information they are able to collect during fieldwork" even in South-South research — for example, a Nigerian mother conducting research work on and with women in post-conflict Liberia (Bob-Milliar, 2020: 6). Acknowledging that the involvement of several identities significantly changes individual identities reduces the gap between individuals, by revealing and rendering their differences common. It also creates a space where meanings can be negotiated through, but not limited to, *logos*, which de Souza Santos (2014) describes as the principles of intercultural interpretation.

We acknowledge that being at the forefront of the inquiry is essential for creating indigenous-led transformative knowledge, as "self-determination intersects with the locus of power in the

research setting" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 3). Participatory action research is initiated by and rooted in a collaborative participatory performative inquiry. When conducting participatory action research, Smith (2000) recommends asking eight questions:

1. What research do we want done?
2. Whom is it for?
3. What difference will it make?
4. Who will carry it out?
5. How do we want the research done?
6. How will we know it is worthwhile?
7. Who will own the research?
8. Who will benefit?

Participatory action research is more than knowledge production per se; it provides its direct beneficiaries with an opportunity to put words to their suffering. It enables the word to be matched with the wound (Ifowodo, 2010). Damaged by the erasure of their own relevance globally, altered by their imagination held captive, entrapping their agency, African co-researchers are searching to learn, act and heal — these three concepts are often wrongly captured under the notion of 'emancipation' or 'empowerment'. Common to all three is reflection, which requires humility, time and self-understanding through iterative experimentation. Learning can be seen as containing 'power to' (increased access) and 'power on' (what is known cannot enslave), 'power over' (ability to decide) in action, and 'power from' (self-positioning) in healing. All three concepts agree to a profound transformation of prevalent structures of power (Mestiri, 2018). While research is about power in its many forms, healing covers a subjectivity that escapes from interpersonal power relations. This is what an indigenous-led and indigenous-owned research inquiry can — and is invited to — capture.

We acknowledge that participatory action research is not 'made for Africa' knowledge. It is, for some, the "enlightenment and awakening of common peoples" (Fals-Borda & Rahman, quoted in Bergold & Thomas, 2012: 8) and aims to reconstruct "their knowledge and ability in a process of understanding and empowerment" (Bergold & Thomas, 2012: 8). That said, African action researchers are better situated to question the desire to invite the margin into the centre without questioning its codes. More bluntly, African actors are invited to escape the catch-up philosophy that leads to simply "add Africa [to the larger globalised soup] and stir" (Abrahamsen, 2016: 127). Capability-based approaches to knowledge provide researchers with a "potent tool to deprovincialise their object of study" (Bob-Millar, 2020:8). The research outcomes and methodological tools and approaches used should be freed from the 'we' and 'they' dichotomy, to unearth or create a transformative understanding of knowledge useful to its readers, without a need to capitalise on Western *répertoire d'action*.

We acknowledge that participatory research (as defined here) does not further the commodification of knowledge, and there is a direct correlation between empowerment and skill development and network-strengthening for resilience. However, the omnipresent danger is taking a transactional approach to skills development (as part of a productive economy) rather than a transformational approach (as favoured in indigenous literature). The reflexivity that is sought does not take the form of discovering an exogenous truth. Learning's transformative role is self-awareness — the knowers' understanding of the world in which they are immersed. Reflexivity as a mutual benefit can be assessed through critical inquiry. Gouldner asks the following questions: "How has this research transformed you? Has it penetrated deeply into your daily life and work? Has it varied your self-awareness of your work as a *["sociologist and researcher" purposely removed by the authors to leave room for any*

profession or status to be referred, not simply the main researcher's]?" (Robertson, 2000: 321) .

Co-researchers are invited to recontextualise their practice, as the "purpose of [decolonised] research is not the production of new knowledge per se" but the "production of moral discernment, a commitment to praxis, an ethic of resistance" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 18). Such efforts support and sustain process as a source of learning by itself: the notion of learning-by-doing grows in favour of learning-for-being.

The ethics of research complement the politics of resurgence. Admitting that knowledge is socially, historically and locally situated implies that learning is multi-layered. The liberation of learning is synchronous with the liberation of time, freed from its colonially preconceived linearity. Knowledge is not only vertical and transferrable, but also negotiated and circular — and emergent. Participatory action research provides a third dimension to knowledge that cannot be planned for, but should be accounted for. Decolonial resurgence is the emergence of a surrounding environment composed of and made for learning.

As discussed above, the investment of co-researchers' imaginaries as the source of relief for their wounds should not be neglected and should find adequate support systems. What is needed is (Schurr & Segebart, 2012: 152):

> structural transformations of both knowledge production and development
> cooperation [which includes] new funding schemes for research and development
> cooperation, a rethinking of evaluation criteria for both academic success and
> development progress, obligatory training in [...] [de]colonial thought, and reflexivity
> in academia and development practice.

3.2.3 Resurgent agency: the power of participatory futures

Participatory action research reintroduces "citizenship awareness" or "consciousness" into learning processes. The conceptions and conditions of learners should be integrated into decolonised education practices, and there is a "need to integrate consciousness as analytical category in the international scientific debate" (Barongo-Muweke, 2016: 274).

Participatory futures democratise long-term thinking and thus provide additional depth to participatory action research. Participatory futures should democratise futures tools, from predictive data production to scenario building, as empowerment cannot be 'power to' simply reduced to an increased access to knowledge production. The objective is both methodological and ontological because these futures tools abide by a specific episteme, which should not be imposed upon anyone seeking resurgence. The use of the future should empower by attribute and by impulse, not predefine a right way of using it. Futures are a playground, malleable, expandable and a perfect space for experimentation.

Aligned with the classification of 'power', participatory action research covers the desire to make informed decisions relevant to one's contexts ('power from'). It is also the opportunity to affirm oneself against all forms of oppression or reproduction, which first requires detecting pervasive expressions of inequitable power relations (Hollander & Offerman, 1990). Once again, detecting does not imply a pre-existing essence of the self in opposition to the other, but contrasts belonging (to a complex and uncertain multiplayer environment) with entrapment in the eyes and mouth of an enunciator that does not allow for other axiologies than its own.

In the quest for resurgence, negotiating the "indigene-colonizer hyphen" (Jones & Jenkins, 2008: 471) is necessary for acquiring 'power with', which is a capacity based on our ability to

experiment enough futures to understand the dynamics of heterogeneity (i.e. a flux), not on the essentialisation of our identities or differences (a stock).

In the meantime, negotiation also paves the way for discussions about the conditions of change in our agency and creativity framed in an inherited epistemic system of norms produced by violence (Kisukidi, 2015). Participatory action research is an inclusive, practice-enhancing process that recognises the agency of communities. In its design, local knowledge, social spheres and networks are crucial for the research process, as no learning can bloom in the absence of learners. The process is an open circle "based on complexity and relationism, complementarity and reciprocity" (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012: 14), which implies that community learning is a never-ending practice and that the object–subject model disappears in favour of the subject–subject model: practitioners proceed to the action research of their own practices, while "the researcher's actions become the practitioners' research" (Robertson, 2000: 324).

This type of research is rendered powerful and meaningful by the reference to an item that does not exist, e.g. futures. It challenges the laziness of orthodox reason, which is unable to fathom objects that it does not comprehend as part of its whole. The polycentricity of actors, sources and manifestations of knowledge creates non-hierarchical (heterarchical) communication and contributes to the blossoming and negotiation of shared meanings. They are attributes of re-exploring the conditions of change for reclaimed, resurgent agency and dissent from the predominantly abstract practices, "understood as mirroring the prevalence of top-down approaches to knowledge construction and the scientific relevance of bottom-up approaches" (Barongo-Muweke, 2016: 271).

Theory is not abstract but grounded to complement practice. Kemmis and McTaggart's notion of "ideas-in-action" or Glaser and Strauss's "grounded theory" reflect the evolution of the cyclical definition of learning through a reflective cycle of observation, reflection, planning and action (Roberton, 2000: 310). The latter is referred to as experiential learning and implies experimentation and learning-by-doing.

In learning-by-doing, first, the learning experience is multisensorial, encouraging both perception and action and, more specifically, acute perception for enhanced action and experimental action for novel perception. The iterative reciprocity between the two makes the learning both wholesome and holistic. Second, different research agendas are also at play, with as many agendas on the table as there are questions and voices. "[T]he aim of the inquiry and the research questions develop out of the convergence of two perspectives—that of science and of practice" (Bergold & Thomas, 2012: 2). Although Bergold and Thomas unnecessarily separate the two, such a distinction flags a multi-purpose stimulation, situated between optimisation futures (the desire to improve what we know) and novelty futures (the openness to the never-can-be-known).

Since learning-by-doing, as defined here, encourages process over product or process as product, building capability on the ground requires a careful layout of design principles.

3.3 Design principles of endogenous capacity-building

In defining endogenous capacity-building, a distinction needs to be drawn between indigenous and endogenous knowledge. As identified in Section 1, border thinking is a "specific epistemic response from the exteriority of Western modernity, a response from the outside created from the perspective of the inside" (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012: 7). The colonial matrix of power has subjugated the world, from Latin America to Oceania passing by Europe and Africa.

Therefore, the process of delinking from the matrix emerges from both outside and inside, acknowledging internal, endogenous solutions to issues from within the matrix itself.

Delinking does not imply rejecting all forms of non-indigenous knowledge. Indeed, history has blurred the line between strict authenticity and exogeneity, as records have been written by all parties. Rejection would only lead to competing with the West under the same epistemological rules that were denounced by previous post- and de-colonial thinkers. Here "delinking" means shifting the geography of reason to "subsume [all forms of knowledge regardless of its origins] within the vision, needs and life style of indigenous nations" (Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2012: 15). It is not about diving into indigenous knowledge per se, despite the importance of identifying the indigenous people, their systems of value and how they connect with the rest of the world. At the core of the knowledge to be produced will be endogenous knowledge-creation principles, regardless of its sources of influence.

Also embraced is the West African concept of Sankofa, which translates literally as "[i]t's not taboo to go back to the source and fetch what you forgot"(Bangura, 2011: 175). Comfort comes from the multidimensional temporality, which is the overarching principle of endogenous capacity-building, that can only emerge from re-appropriating both time and space. Hence the use of futures as a playground, i.e. as both time and space. Capacity-building is a never-ending pathway to wisdom as freedom, and can never truly be linear. It is like developing an unused or unknown skill that is mastered over time through effective teaching and regular practice.

Learning is healing and wholesome when the "emphasis is on being rather than doing. […] There is no sense of object and subject: all is one. Mind, body, emotions and spirit are not separate, and humans are not separate from the earth and everything on and in it". (Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996: 21).[8] This implies a pedagogy of hope and freedom, seeking the whole, which is the definition of an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

The whole encourages, nurtures and determines "difference between members of the same community", difference born from the relational rather than from mapping or classification (Fraser & Ploux, 2005: 33). Individualities are not drowned in the collective, but this methodology encourages an increased awareness of the "difference between women" in feminist decolonial studies, further apart from "discursive colonialism" implicated by the monolithic "us women" (Mohanty, 1988: 1510).

The notion of relationality (referred to in complexity theory) is essential for human agency at all levels. In participatory action research, this 'relational' takes the form of reciprocity, as the source of reflexivity: part of any critical pedagogy is dialogue that allows both remembering and networking. Dialogue never ends, and so learning is not about finishing stories but about continuing ideas presented on the floor. This dialogue embraces "social network approaches [that] have the potential to reach marginalised populations of society, given the centrality of networks to power distribution in African societies" (Bob-Milliar, 2020: 7). In that sense, it reflects power, as it requires understanding power structures that are being challenged through border thinking, as well as humility in our tendency to replicate them (Feukeu, 2021).

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[8] In the Aboriginal medicine wheel model depicted by Nabigon and Mawhiney, 'the purpose of the movement of (and between) the circles is learning and healing towards balance of the three circles and six dimensions of the wheel.' The Cree wheel resonates with the Kawsay fundamental principle of the 'inextricable link between the 'being', the 'existence' and the 'doing' (human agency) or the principle of relational-experiential rationality.' The inextricable link between the moral and the material forms a political principle: mutuality, or interdependence.

This is why the approach undertaken embraces the framework of servant leadership, which consists of six dimensions that correspond to these values: voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence (Eva & Sendjaya, 2013). Authentic self captures "leadership behaviours which flow from one's true self and manifest in his/her humility, integrity, and accountability" (ibid: 593), while reflexivity cycles through leaders and participants.

From this extensive literature, a series of decolonial research principles can be identified:
- Indigenous people-led initiation of the inquiry
- Interdisciplinarity
- Rigorous power reflexivity
- A pedagogy of hope and freedom
- The wholesomeness of life-long learning
- Servant leadership.

To ensure the fairness and sustainability of research efforts, the research inquiry should be "ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonising, and participatory" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 3). Only then can necessity, which results from the existence of a marginalised community — "being together" or *être ensemble* — be transformed into fate — "acting together" or *agir en commun*" (Mbonda, 2019: 316; Boulaga, 1977)

4 On the Research Approach

Democratising knowledge production and sources, and shattering the coloniality of power in knowledge production through research and development programmes would include embracing collaborative approaches, such collective intelligence knowledge creation and co-design methods (4.1). The action research method is also important, as it provides participatory, inclusive learning-by-doing, especially when its orientation is anticipatory (4.2). However, these approaches to decolonising knowledge production also present a paradox that must be understood and properly managed to fully harness the benefits and prevent another form of coloniality (4.3).

4.1 Collective intelligence knowledge creation and codesign

4.1.1 Two perspectives on collective intelligence

Collective intelligence is a term that has two quite different meanings. The first meaning is "a distributed form of intelligence, constantly enhanced, coordinated in real time, and resulting in the effective mobilisation of skills" (Levy, 1997: 14). In this sense, it is closely associated with technological development of networks, crowdsourcing and data mining. Examples of mobilising collective intelligence in futures thinking include:
- MIT's Climate CoLab, which establishes a contest platform for the emergence of proposals on climate change that aims to channel the collective intelligence of thousands of people.[9] It is a type of KnowLabs designed "to tap into the knowledge of a specific group of people at a specific time and place in order to sense and make sense of phenomena of all kinds"(Miller, 2015: 516).
- The case of Delphis, which is used as an instrument to engage citizens at large (civil society) in participatory policy-making processes (Hilbert et al., 2009).

[9]See:http://www.climatecolab.org/contests/2017/exploring-synergistic-solutions-for-sustainable-development.

- McGonigal's blended-reality, crowd-sourcing experiments.[10]

The implicit worldview associated with this first meaning is that collective intelligence on any topic exists in a raw form and is a resource that can be exploited, provided the appropriate means is used.

The second meaning is about the capacity of a community to bring together a plurality of knowledges and perspectives in order to achieve a common goal. This research project is essentially related to this second meaning with regards to creating collective intelligence. An important element of futures literacy is accepting that our perceptions of the future shape how we see and use future in the present and, therefore, limit our individual understanding of what can be seen and how it can be used. There are also no experts on knowing the future because no one knows the future. In this regard, the process is about creating knowledge from collective intelligence, as a tool to unveil what lies at the margins, what is specific and what is not immediately seen (Miller, 2015). The implicit worldview remains quite similar, but the scale of extraction is limited to a more specific, pre-defined group or community.

Associating futures literacy and the capacity to decolonise connects with a perception of integral futures,[11] which calls is for an academic self-contextualisation of integral futures theory "in the long history of integral philosophies, east and west" […] and a geographical self-contextualisation "within transnational, transcultural, planetary discourses that go beyond the Anglo-American integral discourse" (Gidley, 2010). In one scenario, where alternative futures of global governance are viewed from the perspective of the global South, creating collective intelligence as an inclusive process is a key to "enable the North and the South to create flexible, cohesive and synchronised structures, integrating and leveraging 'others' views and perspectives" (Cruz, 2015: 136).

Creating collective intelligence/knowledge requires recognising that everyone's perspective contributes equally to a collective perspective. This is because everyone has anticipatory systems and is directly involved in producing alternative futures by their actions in the present. This means that all members of a given community are on an equal footing in creating collective intelligence about integral futures (Slaughter, 2008). The expected result will not be the sum of the contributions, but something unexpected and different that comes from the transmutation of that knowledge. In academic language, the results may be seen as the production of transdisciplinary objects, as many contributors would also not belong to disciplinary fields and scientific/academic domains. Since all participants are experts and bring expertise and different perspectives, this process transcends conventional Western conventional concepts of 'expert' and 'expertise'.

4.1.2 The co-design quandary

When designing a project aimed at creating collective knowledge or intelligence related to using the future, one challenge is how co-design can take place. To be internally consistent with the notion of integral futures, co-designing has to take place at all stages of the process. The unsolvable question or tension that arises is that of the integral nature of the initiative at its emergence point, i.e. when the idea of such a project comes to the mind of a person or an organisation (but usually a person). Collective intelligence may be distributed knowledge with

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[10] https://www.iftf.org/future-now/article-detail/results-from-our-blended-reality-crowd-sourcing-experiment-or-more-than-300-ways-we-provoked-the/.

[11] Integral futures refer here to the recognition that the future exists as perceptions. Therefore, reflecting on the future requires recognising that different perspectives, types of knowledge and methods (i) are equal and (ii) are all needed to produce intermediate objects that are transdisciplinary and integrative.

an intrinsic capacity to self-evolve and transform, but the passage from that collective intellectual knowledge to actionable knowledge requires someone to suggest the interest of doing it. In other words, at least the topic, the intention and the way of doing it.

The Climate CoLab is an example of the co-design quandary, as even in this case the initial intention was not determined through a co-design process. Therefore, how can a co-design project be genuinely co-designed, or what is the minimum level of acceptable non-co-design in a co-designed project?

One possible, yet partial, answer lies in the iterative process of prototyping and designing the KnowLabs, where the objective is to create collective intelligence knowledge through experiments conducted with a diversity of people and topics, but all contributing to refining the concept. However, this still does not solve the question of whether the idea of developing Knowlabs was co-designed and to what extent the topics selected were the result of a co-design process.

Another partial, but necessary, approach is to be explicit about the ethical qualities of the co-design and promote a conscious reflexivity in the co-design process, as also indicated in Subsection 2.3 Futures Literacy as Capability. Co-design organisers and participants are more aware of their thoughts, feelings, roles and interests when the process is presented as one of continual learning, requiring critical attention to assumptions, values, influences, methods, interactions, choices, limitations, etc. (Steen, 2013).

Another challenge directly connects to creating decolonised collective intelligence in a future-oriented, transdisciplinary project. Theoretically, contributors from various fields and different perspectives are all experts on an equal footing, but the challenge is to ensure that this happens in practice. This challenge is not limited to co-design and includes co-production of knowledge and co-implementation (Lawrence, 2015).

4.2 Action research

4.2.1 In a nutshell: from definition to operation

In its broadest sense, action research can be characterised as a research activity that "seeks transformative change through the simultaneous process of taking action and doing research, which are linked together by critical reflection".[12] This reflective dimension is something that so far distinguishes action research from transdisciplinary research (Lawrence, 2015). Rogers et al. (2013: 32) see a direct connection between action research and future thinking. Action research brings people together in order to "define a desired future and undertake well-informed actions that will expand their knowledge, enhance their competencies, and overcome challenges for moving to that future".

The term 'action research' is often associated with different qualifiers, such as collaborative, participatory community-based or collective, all of which reinforce the inclusive dimension of this type of research. For example, participatory action research aims both to bring scientists together to solve a problem facing people and to involve them in action, operating in such a way that participants' expectations are fulfilled and validated results are guaranteed within a negotiated partnership, which recognises the roles played by different actors at different steps of the research process (Faure et al., 2010).

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[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research

In his analysis of the confluence between action research and futures studies., Ramos (2006: 3) identifies five characteristics of action research that suggest action research is a tool for decolonising research:

1. It generates "practical being and action for human betterment".
2. It is "inclusive of plural ways of knowing in the constitution of theory and practice".
3. It is "iterative and heuristic, a continual process of evolving inquiry and action, by learning from reflections on successes and failures".
4. It is "research by participants for participants, which addresses the fundamental question of 'research for whose benefit'?"
5. It operates with "a democratic ethos, which aims to critique power relations, address grievances of marginalised groups and achieve local empowerment in the face of entrenched institutionalised power".

4.2.2 Anticipatory action research

Ramos (2006) identified several futures studies with at least implicit references to action research by known practitioners, such as Bell, Bezold, Dator or Schultz. A few years later, action research was identified as one type of participatory futures methods (Gidley et al., 2009). Since then, more anticipatory approaches have claimed a direct connection with action research, such as causal layered analysis as an intuitive action research approach, the Futures Literacy KnowLabs, and co-elaborative scenario-building (Inayatullah & Milojević, 2015; Miller, 2015; Bourgeois et al., 2017).

Action research is a crucial component of decolonising using the future, as it seeks to break the domination of monopolies that characterise an inner circle of initiates (Ramos, 2010). For example, at the community-level, anticipatory action research entails deliberately devolving the leading role to local organisations, so that "local community organizations engage in, and use future thinking as producers of foreknowledge to reflect, and potentially act, on their own futures" (Bourgeois et al., 2017: 4).

Action research is "a process of inquiry that incorporates a heuristic movement through experimental action, concrete experience, empirical observation, personal and dialogic reflection, and can thus be considered a movement toward holism" (Ramos, 2010: 119). It responds to the call to add a transdisciplinary dimension to the participatory dimension in the practice of anticipation (Gudowsky & Peissl, 2016). Thus, action research also becomes a fundamental methodology for creating collective intelligence within a given community that share a common project. This happens because of action research's intrinsic local dimension, making it suitable for designing anticipatory approaches for development policy and planning at a local level (Karuri-Sebina & Rosenzweig, 2012). However, participants have to overcome various challenges, as they have to: (Rogers et al., 2013)

- acknowledge their own perceptions and frames of references;
- accept that those of others are as valid as theirs; and
- accept a transformation process that will modify all perceptions and frames of reference, bringing them into a new complex perception.

When such challenges are overcome, action research can be seen as a means through which capacity is acquired and turned into agency. Through this empowerment process, the recurrent gap between anticipation and action is bridged. This gap has been a recurrent question for foresight activities, particularly alternative futures approaches (the 'so what?').

4.3 Colonisation of the future, action research and collective intelligence: the conundrum

Figure 4 attempts to represent the challenges associated with connecting anticipatory endeavours focusing on action research, the creation of collective intelligence and co-design, with the intention of encouraging the decolonisation process, as represented earlier in its three components.

Figure 4. Dynamic interactions between colonisation processes and anticipatory action research
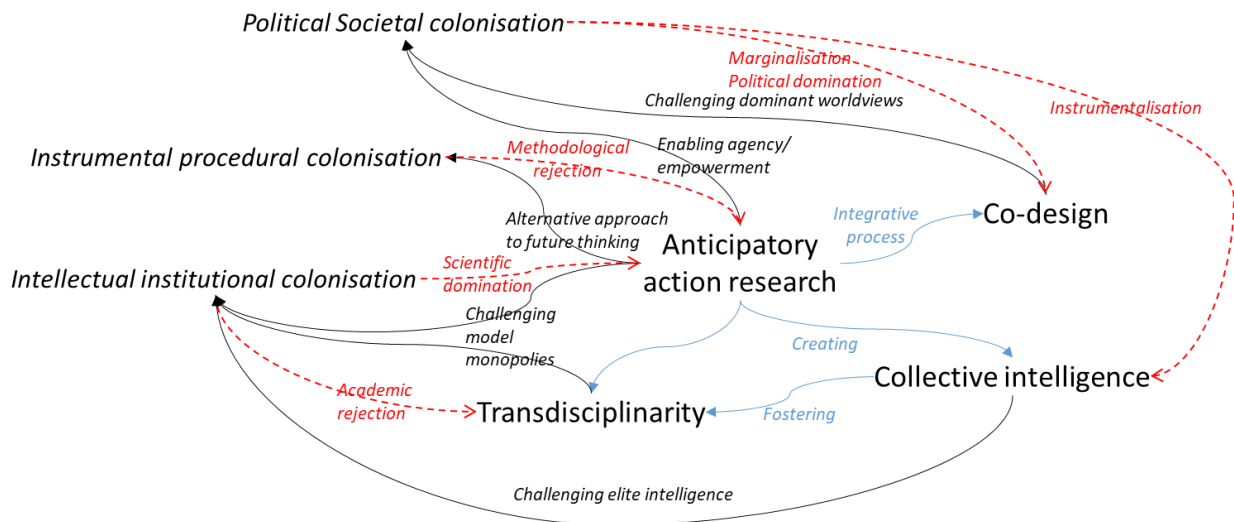
Source: Authors (2020)

- The blue arrows indicate positive interaction within the anticipatory action research–co-design–collective intelligence–transdisciplinarity complex (normal case).
- The black arrows indicate how the elements of this complex have the potential to counter the colonisation of the future in its three dimensions (italics case).
- The red arrows display potential reactive actions of the colonisation process on the development of this complex, on top of the current settings of the colonisation process, which operates against the development of this complex as indicated earlier.

Conclusion

This paper's goal was "to consolidate and extend […] manifestos for liberation in order to better identify and specify a mode of emancipation that is effective within first world neocolonising global conditions during the twenty-first century" (Sandoval, 2000). After a rapid overview of decolonial literature pioneered by the global South and Foucaldian/Fanonian thinkers who sought to renew research epistemologies worldwide, the paper reflected on the multidimensionality (in time and space) of the urge to decolonise futures for human societies. Colonisation emerges as a multidimensional process, affirming its rules over the many, imposing its tools and vocabulary, creating a realm of the 'haves' separating from the 'have nots', leaving the latter with no room to create, design and enact their own research inquiry. This situation is similar to the rapture of human futures, the abduction of our imaginations, by dominant systems of power — from racially-structured capitalism to dominant systems of power underpinned by present-day controversial development theories.

Border thinking, identified by decolonial theorists and embraced by people from the margin, has liberated scientific epistemologies, by re-situating humans at the centre of knowledge: why we search (and for whom) defines what we search and what we may find. In short, decolonial thinking has enabled discussions around power. However, discourses about inequalities in power distribution are very much rooted in representations of the past, especially in postcolonial literature. This is why decolonial thinkers have pursued alternative ontologies, embracing the invisible and the unknown that encompasses most of our daily lives. In that respect, futures appear as a self-evident example of uncertainty as understood in complexity theory.

Futures are indeed loci of power, spaces of inequalities and temporality of hope. Adopting a conscious understanding of why and how humans anticipate is part of the redistribution of hope sought by humans on their pathway to freedom (Feukeu, 2021). If resurgence (defined as the openness to the emergence of one's identity) requires a more holistic understanding of transformation, any project aware of the trap of the colonisation of our futures by our narrow conception of the present should adopt rigorous reflexivity, preferably using participatory methodologies (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). This implies a capability-based approach to the use of futures, to anticipate for both the future and emergence. Futures Literacy is a capability that responds to this methodological and substantive necessity.

The combination of futures literacy and anticipatory participatory action research produces a series of design principles: indigenous people-led initiation of the inquiry, interdisciplinarity, rigorous power reflexivity, the Freiran pedagogy of hope and freedom, the wholesomeness of life-long learning, and servant leadership. These principles will underpin the design and implementation of the 'Capacity to Decolonise' project that seeks the repossession of the "archives of our present" (Kisukidi, 2020: xii).

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