



Addis Ababa University  
College of Social Sciences  
Center for African and Asian Studies

The Need for Decolonization:  
A Case Study of Addis Ababa University

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “The Need for Decolonization: A case study of Addis Ababa University” prepared by Kidus Gezahegne and submitted to Center for African and Asian Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts Degree in African Studies, Specialization in Human and Economic Development in Africa, complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to Originality and Quality.

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## **Abstract**

*In the wake of South Africa's universities call for decolonization, several African universities started scrutinizing their curriculums and world's knowledge production. Their attempt is to identify epistemic injustice and treat it with a proper decolonial framework. One of the foremost African universities, Addis Ababa University, stands under-represented in this decolonial dialogue. The following case study, using the perspectives of College of Social Sciences' academicians, investigated Addis Ababa University's College of Social Sciences' need for curriculum decolonization and the academic potential to do the work. The academicians' perspectives were captured through six semi-structured interviews and analyzed with the help of a conceptual framework which emanated from Jansen's (2017a) and Woldegiorgis's (2021) decolonization conception. The findings revealed that there is a need for a soft decolonization in college of social sciences and positive academic attitude to do the decolonial work. The study concludes admitting the diverse nature of decolonization conception and the necessity of further researches.*

### **Key Concepts**

Decolonization; Knowledge Production; Epistemology; Curriculum; Indigenous Knowledge

## **List of Acronyms**

<b>AD</b>	<b>Anno Domini</b>
<b>CODSERIA</b>	<b>Council for the Development of Social Science in Africa</b>
<b>EPRDF</b>	<b>Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front</b>
<b>IMF</b>	<b>International Monetary Fund</b>
<b>OAU</b>	<b>Organization of African Unity</b>
<b>PMAL</b>	<b>Provisional Military Administrative Council</b>

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Overview of the Decolonization Call

African Union was officially launched in two thousand and two. This Pan-African organ is the result of its predecessor OAU – the older dissolved and gave birth to the latter. The new fraternity came into force because African heads of states and governments agreed that there needs to be a refocus of attention from decolonization to solidifying the continent’s cooperation and integration in order to bring “An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena” (African Union [AU], n.d.). Thus, it delivered a new set of aims – some of them, an inheritance from its forerunner and a few new ones of its own.

The aspiration is commendable but the stand to take the treatment of decolonization to the periphery is unwarranted. It is true that politically speaking the continent is liberated from militant colonizers which in the past took the continent’s land with power. However, the lack of colonizers physical presence does not signify a successful decolonization. In fact, colonialism continues to function assuming another face and mutating into a more subtle ways in post-independent Africa (Nkrumah, 1966). Nkrumah argued that Africa is still under the grip of another scheme called Neo-Colonialism. This new method is utterly indirect. Altbach (1971, p 2) describes neo-colonialism as a “planned policy of advanced nations to maintain their influence in developing countries, but it is also simply a continuation of the past.” Continuation of the past implies a clear domination of the “advanced nation” over the “developing” ones.

Instruments of neo-colonialism could be numerous but, their eventual destination is the same i.e. the dependency of “developing” nations especially Africa. Taking the worse off countries’ Economy, Politics and Social life under captive is a main device neo-colonial forces use. In doing so and using different institutions, they will eventually undermine the freedom of the countries and then reduce them only to a nominal independence (Nkwocha, 2008). A country or continent which resides in these circumstances is not capable of calling itself free – in Africa’s case, decolonized. Africa is currently under this state. Furthermore, the status-quo is continuing

to exist in Africa because the afflicted countries themselves are contributing to it either knowingly or unknowingly (Babatola, 2014).

One of Africa's institutions which continue to be heavily criticized for harboring colonial legacies is the education system. A solid educational system must try to inculcate the values and culture of the society it seeks to serve (Wa Thiong'o, 1992). However, in Africa, the moves away from the colonial inheritance of Eurocentric views are insignificant (Shizha, 2013). The heavily influenced education system is keeping on producing students that are alienated from themselves and the environment – natural and social – that they reside on. The twenty-first century decolonization protests across many African universities are products of the realization of this reality. The underlined meaning behind the universities' quest is what Kebede (2004b) identifies as a challenge towards the colonial imposed African discontinuity – decolonization.

The knowledge outputs and governing epistemologies in African Universities are the yields of Eurocentric views. An understanding of the world which gives primacy to European views and in turn undermines other competing perspectives is a Eurocentric view. It is a canon that is far from being holistic and only legitimizes the western way of knowledge production (Mbembe, 2016). This tradition that resides in African higher institutions brought about the detachment of African universities from their own reality (Mamdani, 2018). The result is an education that failed to produce a remedy to the multi-faceted problems that Africans are witnessing today.

Historically, Ethiopia managed to stay free from colonial servitude. However, concerning the subject of knowledge production, it is as colonized as any African country that is in search of decolonization (Ferede & Haile, 2015). The multitude culture and tradition that resides in the country are not reflected in the education system. A meaningful connection – between the culture and education – that should have been there is absent. Ferede and Haile believe that this de-Africanized and de-Ethiopianized reality is the result of Ethiopia's education system decision to sideline Indigenous epistemologies in preference of imported western education system. Accordingly, this Eurocentric education tradition that also resides in the Ethiopian universities alienated the people from their own culture and as a result, it brought the need for subversion (Woldegiorgis, 2021).

Today, decolonizing the university, its knowledge production and curricula is an endeavor that is being carried out by a significant number of universities across Africa. However, the diverse

conception of decolonization by different groups and individuals posed challenges in responding to the demand per se. In South Africa universities where the decolonization movement – Rhodes Must Fall – reached its ultimate recognition, the pleas were a change for pedagogical, architectural and ideological traditions of the university which perpetuated a Eurocentric heritage (Hendricks, 2018). In contrast, there are also others who perceives and recommends the decolonization movement to be a strive for an alteration of the Eurocentric academic content and its methods (Le Grange et.al., 2020).

The pursuit to decolonize universities’ curriculum faced other impediment too. An implementation/application method which matches the theory is not forwarded yet – a transparent method which clarifies the theory/praxis dualism (Morreira et al., 2020). This condition may limit the performance of decolonization and makes its execution difficult. Moreover, Jansen (2019) suggested, “the decolonization moment is destined to pass because it underestimates the power of a settled curriculum” (p. 73). The assertion is that the curriculum established to date is not easily penetrable. Furthermore, the academics treatment of the western knowledge forms as an indisputable means of knowledge production is another constraint that holds back decolonization of curriculums (Vandeyar, 2020). This calls for an investigation on the ability of educators to decolonize the curriculum. It is factual that decolonization of African Universities and their curriculum can only be made possible if the Academics first carry a decolonizing attitude (Mahabeer, 2018; Maserumule, 2015). This study thus thoroughly examines Addis Ababa University College of Social Sciences Academics’ capability of decolonizing their curriculum and their stances towards decolonial need.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The oldest university in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University, was founded in 1950. Before adopting its current name in 1975, it subsequently held the name University college of Addis Ababa and Haile Selassie I University. Its first appointed administrators were Canadian Catholic Jesuits. In order to fulfill its academic purposes, the university chose to adopt a curriculum that is replica of the western model. In an effort to Ethiopianize the institution, the university appointed its first Ethiopian president Lij Kassa Woldemariam in 1962 (Ahmed, 2006). Since then all the university presidents are Ethiopians. This is a humble beginning in decolonizing a university – Ethiopianizing/Africanizing the personnel – but, the university did not further extend its

Ethiopianizing project to its epistemology and curricula. Thus, Haile Selassie I university kept on producing Eurocentric and alienating knowledge – failure to decolonize (Kebede, 2008).

The fall of the imperial regime introduced Addis Ababa University to a new demand. A military group known as Derg (PMAC), which ousted the Emperor, requested the University to design a curriculum that is in line with its ideological orientation (Shaw, 2018). This is the first time since its establishment that the university was asked to adopt a state ideology as a base for its curriculum development. Derg was a socialist regime; thus, its ideological preference was Marxism-Leninism. Accordingly, all the departments, especially social sciences departments, revised their programs in order to conform to the request (Kenaw, 2003). This Hegelian-Marxist scheme further hardened the Eurocentric education tradition in the university. The residing Eurocentrism in turn detached the intellectuals from the values their ancestors erected (Tibebu, 2008).

Post-Derg Addis Ababa University embraced the new EPRDF government with full of hopes. However, it didn't take them to long for these two parties to fall out. In 1993 the government terminated the contract of 41 lecturers and professors on the ground that they are not fit for the intended new university structure. After some time, the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi stated that the reason for their termination was actually because the teachers according to him, used the institution as their “political headquarters” (Assefa, 2008). Although the teachers’ political orientation was not stated at the time, the incumbent’s need for a complete hegemonic dominance decided the fate of the university. An alien ideology – Marxist-Leninist – that drew its inspiration from a foreign culture significantly altered the institution’s arrangement. EPRDF later on espoused a capitalist paradigm which in turn required the government to conform to market demands. Therefore, the university’s departments were requested to tailor their curricula in a way that best fits the job market (Kenaw, 2003). The demands were met with confusion. Departments like linguistics and philosophy found it hard to prove their need for existence in the framed market demand which was hostile to humanities and social sciences. The demands originated from the implicit global interests of IMF and World Bank (Kenaw, 2003). These organizations are often criticized for being extended hands of the west.

In addition to these historical developments, what is common in all of the regimes and during the entire existence of the university is that the university’s medium of instruction remained English.

Just like the countries which were previously colonized, the historically independent Ethiopia adopted English to be its medium of instruction by eliminating the possibilities of its numerous indigenous languages coming forward. The country's official language Amharic, having its own alphabet, didn't even receive the nomination. Thus, the native's mind product, like its fellow Africans, "remain folkloric, shut out of the world of science and learning" (Mamdani, 2018). It is in light of these facts and amidst a huge portion of foreign university trained academicians that the need for curriculum decolonization is discussed.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The idea of a university is a moot case unless it is defined in terms of its purpose and/or function (Alemu, 2019). African historical records show that the presence of a university defined as a center of scholarship and learning goes back to the first century AD. The Sankore University of Timbuktu, Egypt's Al-Azhar and Morocco's Al-karaouine were centers of excellence for Islamic teachings during that time and except for Sankore, they are still functional (Walters & Openjuru, 2014; Zeleza, 2006). Ethiopia, using its own alphabets, also nurtures a Christian knowledge production tradition that dates back to the third and fourth century AD (Binns, 2005).

Despite a long tradition of knowledge production in the continent, the modern African university started as an extension of European institutions' framework (Woldegiorgis & Doevenspeck, 2013). Mamdani (2016) argues "neither the institutional form nor the curricular content of the modern African university derived from pre-colonial institutions; their inspiration was the colonial modern" (p. 70). He further argued that both the social sciences and humanities of the continent's universities are a by-product of the European Enlightenment experience. African scholars believe that this has made the knowledge that is being produced in the universities alien to the African men and women. According to Ogom (2007), African higher education in its current posture only maintains an insignificant connection with the society it intends to serve.

Historical accounts attribute the birth of social science to Europe. Wallerstein observed that the discipline begun its existence "in response to European problems" (1997, p. 21). This implies that social science starting from its inception was shaped in order to address challenges faced by European society. As a result of its historical development, the vast accumulated knowledge and theories that seats in the discipline are mainly the reflection of that particular society. This has brought the question of relevance and an earnest call for the field's decolonization. It is in line

with this thoughts, Connell (2007) suggested that in order to produce universally viable social science content, there needs an extensive and expensive work in order to incorporate epistemology, curriculum and pedagogy of the global south.

African scholars have always been working to come up with the best possible way to decolonize social science and its curriculum. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is one of the first initiatives that scholars made to counter the Eurocentric knowledge dominance in Africa (Chen & Ikegami, 2016). Scholars who advocate for decolonization of social science argue that the current African curriculum lacks the necessary tools to comprehend the African society challenges and experience. Moreover, they believe that it perpetuates the already existing inequalities. Accordingly, they recommended for epistemological errors and knowledge production that settled in curriculums to be rectified (Amin et al, 1978; Reiter, 2020; Keita, 2020). Moreover, Minga (2021) stressed “the immense danger in speaking of decolonizing knowledge, but failing to encourage small projects, such as the use of African languages, or not developing research in essential indigenous matters where the decolonization process has to start” (p. 2).

Decolonization skeptics believe the project to decolonize social science and its curriculum has its own bottleneck. They emphasize that this continental decolonization proposal is not a well-timed task. Tonda (2012) argues the effort will be unsuccessful because globalization is a strong force that will not be impacted so easily. According to him, it is an impossible attempt, “withdrawing from the global knowledge market” (para. 7). This is to say that the complexity of current knowledge production will have an upper hand over the work of decolonization. According to Jansen (2017b), it is not only the project but, the unavailability of professors and academic staffs that are capable of doing the decolonial work is a condition that will block the project.

The academic conversation and debate surrounding decolonization is far from being done. In fact it is still fresh and ongoing. Discussions from different corners of the globe are defining and redefining the perception of the concept. From South Africa Universities’ “Rhodes Must Fall” decolonization movement to University College of London’s “Why is My Curriculum White” campaign, it is a subject area both the colonized and colonizer world works to contribute and refine. In regard to this conversation, what the decolonization literature profoundly lacks is the perspectives of non-colonized Ethiopia.

Ethiopia holds a unique location in African history. It preserved its independence and stayed free during the colonial period and “scramble for Africa” (Ram, 1977). This historical position held back Ethiopian Academicians from engaging on the conversation of decolonization because decolonization is closely tied to colonial experience. Due to this, Addis Ababa University’s College of Social Sciences’ academic contribution to epistemic and curriculum decolonization is very limited when compared to global south’s social sciences theorists and departments. This provides a good reason to research the topic. Therefore, this research aspires to fill this knowledge gap by interviewing the academicians in Addis Ababa University Social Sciences College so in order to better understand the need for curriculum decolonization and the academic potentials for it.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Bearing in mind the research problem, this research attempted to investigate the need for decolonization of social science and the academic potentials using the perspective of the Academics in the college. The following specific research questions emanated from that premise.

1. How do the academics understand decolonization and a decolonial quest in Ethiopian context?
2. Does the curriculum decolonization need fits with the college?
3. What does a decolonized social science signify according to the Academics in the college?
4. Do the Academicians posses the necessary knowledge to do the decolonial work?

### **1.5 Objective of the Study**

The General Objective of this study is to explore whether there is a need for decolonization and the capability of doing the decolonial work in College of Social Sciences at Addis Ababa University.

The specific objectives of this study are the following.

1. To explain the Academics perception of decolonization and decolonization in Ethiopian context.
2. To explore whether decolonization is compatible with the college.

3. To investigate what a decolonized social science mean to the college.
4. To provide a knowledge on the academicians' capability of doing a decolonial work.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

There is a little or almost none has been said about the epistemic violence in Ethiopian education (Woldeyes, 2017). Woldeyes also said that addressing this gap will have a multi-faceted positive ramification on the overall progress of the country. In addition to the limitation of a decolonial literature in Ethiopia, a holistic understanding of decolonization is yet to be achieved. The significance of this study, therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap. The study may also prompt other researchers in undertaking further decolonization research that will focus on Ethiopia.

Moreover, since Ethiopia is one of the founding members of African Union and a prominent advocate of Pan-Africanism, this research hence is a quest to integrate Ethiopia in to the Pan-African decolonization project. By doing so, it also helps in mapping Ethiopia in the global south decolonial debate. Furthermore, the attempt of the research – through interdisciplinary conversation – in analyzing decolonization is, in the spirit of the proposed decolonization methodology. This will help develop the minute decolonial dialogue across the university's disciplines and the construction of further conceptualization.

Above all, the research will be a good contribution in the scrutiny of world knowledge production, epistemic injustice and African identity.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

Decolonization is an intricate and multilayered concept depending on the context of discussion. Hence, this study focused on the decolonial need of Addis Ababa University's College of Social Sciences based on the interview of six staffs from the college. The study would have been more comprehensive if there were an involvement of more staffs. Moreover, the study could have also assumed a better completeness if the entire university's colleges were participated in the study. However, due to the limitation of familiarity and expertise of the theme, the above intentions were not possible. Engaging other sources which are not staffs but expertise of the subject was

impossible because it was cost-ineffective, unmanageable and inconsequential to a university analysis.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

There were various shortcomings encountered when conducting the research. The novel Coronavirus pandemic posed a great challenge when trying to access research informants. The researcher would have also loved to engage the vast university community in the research but the pandemic made it impossible. The other challenge was the unwillingness of possible informants to participate in the study. Aside from unwillingness, there were a proposed interview dates which could not fall in the researcher's timetable.

The main limitation was the availability of literatures that discuss epistemic colonization from an Ethiopian perspective; they are infinitesimal. This made contextualization of the decolonial literature challenging. The other important limitation is the trainings of the researcher per se. The researcher limited knowledge of the boundless social science, restricted the academicians to expound the intricate realms of both their departments and their own knowledge.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study consists of five major chapters. The first chapter is this chapter per se. The second chapter is related literature review. It provides a detailed overview of colonization and decolonization. It also consists of a detailed discussion of decolonization of knowledge production and an African University. In addition, it reviews Africa's and Ethiopian Indigenous knowledge.

Chapter three discusses the rationale behind the research's qualitative method adoption. The chapter also incorporates further discussions on research design, sampling technique, sample size, data collection, data interpretation and analysis, and the ethical considerations that were enforced during the research. Chapter four presents the findings in line with the research questions and an analysis that links up the findings with the conceptual framework. The last chapter furnishes the conclusion and recommendation of the study.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Related Literature

#### 2.1 Colonization and Decolonization

Industrialization revolution brought with it the need for raw material and an opportunity of investing accumulated wealth which was amassed prior to its existence. Following this 19<sup>th</sup> century revolution, European imperial forces gazed into Africa in order to fulfill the revolution's demand and their aspiration of expanding their domain of influence. The ultimate result was the Colonization of Africa. The term colonialism is used to refer to the unequal relationship of a colonial force and colony. This has often happened between a colonist and an indigenous people. Ziltener and Kunzler (2013) defined colonialism as “a form of temporally extended domination by people over other people and as such part of the historical universe of forms of intergroup domination, subjugation, oppression, and exploitation” (p.2). This policy left a long standing and multi-faceted adverse effects on the continent and its people's life (Bayeh, 2015).

The indigenous people of Africa, prior to their continent's colonization, had a legion different state, autonomous group with distinct customs and languages. It is the imposition of colonialism that has changed the people's cultural development, modes of thought and ways of life (Kaya & Kale, 2016). The justification behind the colonial mission was the philosophy known as the “Three C's” – Commerce, Civilization and Christianizing Africa (Craven, 2015). This philosophy devastated traditional African societies and economy. Due to colonization, the African society lost its freedom to develop its own institutions; with it, the freedom to develop and produce knowledge was also halted (Taiwo, 1993). By repressing the native's ways of life, the colonizers managed to block Africa's right to holistic development. Africa's post colonial decolonization effort is an effort which searches to reclaim Africa's own voice.

In the colonial era, the only African country which successfully resisted European colonial attempts was Ethiopia. The win against invading Italian force at the battle of ADWA made Ethiopia the only non-colonized African country. The victory made Europeans to reevaluate their prejudice toward Africans and led them to acknowledge Africa's indigenous achievements (Levine, 1996). Four decades after the battle, the Italian fascist again invaded Ethiopia. This

time, the fascist managed to occupy the land from the year 1936 to 1941. Demisse (2018) states that the legacy of the Italian rule during those five years is overlooked because the time of the occupation is perceived as a rupture rather than a colonial rule. The measures – rejecting the tribalization policy and politicization of religion – that were taken by the Emperor upon his return were the Emperor’s own ways of decolonization (Demisse, 2018).

Decolonization is therefore a term which describes a major historical development. Scholars defined it in many ways but the substantial meanings behind it are two. The conventional understanding is decolonization refers to a process by which a previously colonized country regains its political independence; the other conception is it is a process of reversing an all encompassing ambitions of imperial forces (Von Bismarck, 2012). Imperial aspirations are political, economical and socio-cultural dominance. Datta (2018) states that decolonization is unending process which recognizes indigenous approaches and anti-colonial struggles. Decolonization is not a fanatic movement which excludes rationality. Chenweizu stated that “decolonisation does not mean ignorance of foreign traditions; it simply means denial of their authority and withdrawal of allegiance from them” (Chenweizu, 1988, p. 6).

There are two intellectual traditions which examine the legacy of colonialism and decolonization efforts. These two traditions are Postcolonialism and Decoloniality. Their difference emanates from the geographical place that they were born and the colonial period that they want to cover. Diasporic intellectuals from the Middle East and South Asia gave birth to the paradigm of postcolonialism; decoloniality is also the result of diasporic scholars; but this time, the scholars who developed the perspective are from South America (Bhambra, 2014a). Bhambra (2014a) states that the first finds its root on the writings of Edward W Said, Gayatri C Spivak, and Homi K Bhaba and the latter is developed on the works of Anibal Quijano, Maria Lugones and Walter Mignolo. The other noticeable difference is that postcolonialism examines the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century but, decoloniality prefers to stretch its investigation from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward (Bhambra, 2014b). One other major difference is that postcolonial studies mostly address issues that have to do with culture when the other focuses on power relation. Other than the above mentioned and a few insignificant differences, these two perspectives offer much to the study

and examination of colonialism. Both of them are heavily critical of the dominating Eurocentric knowledge production tradition which became intolerant of other epistemologies.

## **2.2 Decolonizing Knowledge Production**

Today, decolonization is a global quest. There are many social movements which associates themselves with the word. The decolonial demands are numerous. Almost everything that has to do with colonialism is now on the altar for examination. It is a broad movement which tries to investigate the multifaceted impacts of colonialism and the political, economical and socio-cultural relation it created as a result of its introduction (Jansen & Osterhammel, 2017). The knowledge decolonizing movement, however, mainly focuses on today's governing epistemological and knowledge production tradition. Nokkala (2007) stated that "knowledge production primarily refers to explicit communicable knowledge aimed to be disseminated to a wider audience" (p. 4). Knowledge production is also defined by Cloete and Bunting (2013) as the "cluster of related activities in the university that has to do with producing new knowledge" (p. 8). Kumar & McLaren (2009) explains:

The production of knowledge entails, therefore, a variety of processes which involve the whole educational complex. The way our curriculum is framed or the orientation of the whole mechanics of pedagogy is historically determined, the dominant mode of production uses it, as Gramsci would have argued, for consensus creation. (p. 12)

This shows that the search for a decolonized knowledge production can touch different themes. Epistemology, language, feminism, identity and race are some of the recurring themes that are discussed under the decolonial investigation (Jansen, 2019).

Colonialism operated not only through force but also using epistemicide. Epistemicide was a key component behind the implementation of colonialism (Masaka, 2018). The introduction of new language, laws and worldviews were epistemic tools of colonialism. The installment of new knowledge made the native a receiver of knowledge than a creator. Due to this interaction, the

colonized become dependent on the colonizer. Current knowledge production of the south perpetuates this dependency. Decoloniality is a resistance action which effort is to de-link from this imperial knowledge engagement (Mignolo, 2009). A global democratic and equal knowledge production transaction can best be achieved if the global south is able to break the epistemic dominance that undermines other knowledge traditions.

The episteme of the south can challenge the imperial knowledge production in two frontiers. The first one is it can raise the question of epistemic relevance i.e., the validity of knowledge and the ways of knowing that follows it (De Sousa Santos, 2018). A strong south episteme can question the current production and its capability of representing the society it tries to communicate. It is also possible to bring forth a diverse knowledge which methodology doesn't follow the conventional methods – oral systems can be one. The other frontier is scrutinizing the relationship between the knowledge that is being produced and the knower (De Sousa Santos, 2018). It will be practical to challenge the authority of the knowledge producer if a well developed south episteme is in disposal. This way the dominant north centered knowledge production will have a litmus test for its content.

Scholars and institutions of different backgrounds and disciplines are working on developing alternative knowledge production systems which are critical of the western tradition. Counter discourses are being constructed in order to end the domination of Eurocentric worldviews (Akena, 2012). One of the harms that come out of western knowledge production domination is its ability to make us dismiss the knowledge that is produced from different corners of the world. It is this injustice that came from this knowledge production that called for decolonization. Crawford et al. (2021) stated that it is an injustice that the global south scholars do not have unequal access to resources and opportunities. Besides the inequalities, their perspectives and voices also remain unnoticed due to their institutional power.

The knowledge production decolonization movement is hence a movement by Africa and the south to become knowledge producer than a mere consumer. Producing one's own knowledge helps enrich the producer's customs, values and cultures (Akena, 2012). Development is very likely to happen in a society which is deeply in connection with its roots. The knowledge

produced in Africa and the global south has failed to lift the continent's population from poverty and its unwanted consequences. It is by developing an afro-centric knowledge which is not hostile to other knowledge systems that African development could only be possible (Chukwuokolo, 2009). It is this relation that knowledge production has with development that makes it a power enterprise. Africa's and the global south's quest for a potent knowledge production then can be referred as a quest for regaining power.

Kebede (2004b) explained that "So long as the African mind is bogged down by Western representations, no development policy, however thoroughly contrived and however skillfully planned, can initiate a sustained process of development" (p. 112). The message behind this notion is the precedence of mind's liberation over policies. The emancipation of mind is a direct result of a proper education. The education in Africa is a subjugating force that imprisons the values and mind products of the native. Liberation from an epistemic subordination can be accelerated by challenging the current epistemological status-quo (Masaka, 2018). It is with this realization that the movement for decolonization persistently works for an emancipatory knowledge. Africa's failure to produce an education which embodies its own future made it an accomplice to its own failure.

There are many things that are hindering the progress of a strong African and southern knowledge production. One of them is the strength of the north economy which made its knowledge production hegemonic (De Sousa Santos, 2018). The dissemination of ideas and their diffusion capability have a direct relationship with the economy they are centered in. The north economic muscle gives it a higher power to diffuse its produced knowledge. It is the strong political economic standing of the north, stretching from renaissance to neo-liberal America, which made the knowledge production domination less difficult (Mignolo, 2009). Africa's and the entire south epistemic struggles are faced with this long standing challenge. Understanding this reality, De Sousa Santos (2018) asserted, "Decolonizing thought and action won't be an efficacious cultural intervention if they are not an intervention in political economy as well" (p. 117).

Globalization is the other challenge. Globalization is a force which tries to mold the world in the features of the west and America (Collste, 2019). In doing so it propagates the western epistemic tradition and knowledge production. The news, advertisement and movies are subtle forces which work in favor of the already established western epistemic dominance (Collste, 2019). The act could be both intended and unintended but the end result is the same – it is the domination of the world and imposition of hegemonic agendas on the rest of the world. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) asserts that “the signature of epistemic hegemony is the idea of ‘knowledge’ rather than ‘knowledges’” (p. 8). He is trying to signify the world knowledge system’s failure in recognizing the diverse nature of knowledge sources.

In today’s globalized world, Africa’s work is more of a raw data provider rather than a center of analysis; the north is the place where the data will be turned into concepts and theories (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This is why much of the world’s produced knowledge traces its root back to Europe and North America. The nature of the relation Africa has with world’s knowledge management made it sons and daughters to seek for western’s validation in order to prove their scholarship (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). The relation also made possible the migration of a huge portion of southern scholars to north. Due to the aforementioned globalization posed difficulties, the decolonization of African knowledge production and the effort of building a robust African knowledge system encounter a significant challenge.

It is factual that the southern hemisphere and its scholars see globalization as a threat to their home grown knowledge production, epistemic traditions, values and cultures; however, alternative views from other scholars are also forwarded on what would be a possible solution after giving globalization their due attentions. They begun by challenging the notion that Africa and the south are incapable of resisting globalization’s effects. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) explains such arguments are “a reincarnation of the defeatist Thatcherist– Reagomonics imperial discourse of ‘There is No Alternative’ (TINA)” (p. 247). It is clear that there has been a counter-hegemonic globalization but it is not progressing as it is expected. De Sousa Santos (2018) also asserts that “The epistemologies of the South aim to promote counterhegemonic globalizations” (p.264). Decolonization, therefore, can thrive in a counterhegemonic globalization since the two are two sides of the same coin.

The main thing that needs to be done in order to cope with the effects of globalization is to rediscover one's own intellectual and epistemic tradition (Collste, 2019). It is central to the resistance of hegemonic western knowledge production. Resistance is possible if there is already a clear idea of where the effort is going. Counterbalancing globalization driven western knowledge production necessitates a regeneration of the lost and faded intellectual and epistemic traditions. Globalization can help to fasten the decolonization process because it would allow scholars who are interested and expert on the issue to work together despite their territorial locations (Mbembe, 2015). On the part of the west, it is a service to justice to recognize these epistemological efforts (Collste, 2019)..

### **2.3 Decolonizing the African University**

History proves that there were many higher institutions with different purpose that used to exist in different parts of the world. Regardless of other universities age, the university which we recognize today and the model that managed to survive is the medieval European university (Alemu, 2019). Some of the earliest institutions are University of Bolgna, University of Oxford and University of Paris (Kenaw, 2003). However, the holistic university which integrates the study of Art and Science coupled with research is a replica of Humboldt's University of Berlin model. This model also aspires to achieve an all-inclusive goal by blending general learning with cultural knowledge. Modern African Universities rather than reflecting inward and inspired by their own internal heritages, they have found their institutional form from Humboldt (Jansen, 2019).

The influence of European universities was not only in institutional form but also in the teaching contents that shaped the social science and humanities (Jansen, 2019). The way we understood African civilization, Culture, the continent history and how its political economy developed were heavily influenced by European scholars. African universities played a significant role in disseminating this European conception of Africa and also the world too. Due to this nature of African universities, the continent's portrayal is profoundly distorted. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) assertion about African Universities is that, "what exists up to today is best understood as

universities in Africa rather than African universities because they did not germinate from the African cultural soil and ideological climate” (p. 162).

Universities are centers where knowledge will be acquired, communicated and advanced. By doing this activities, they promote scholarship. What defines them most is the epistemological paradigm that they transfer beyond their physical domain (Gwaravanda, 2019). Decolonization has been a critical subject of interest in southern universities due to universities’ given role and right in the creation, reproduction and validation of knowledge. Ndlovu (2018) explained that “institutions of higher learning such as universities are currently targeted for decolonization, since they are important producers and repositories of knowledge” (p. 100). The goal is to push African universities to ask themselves if they are truly an African university or a western university on African soil.

Today, the content African universities transmit to their students convinces the students to assume that there is a hierarchy of knowledge in which Africa holds the lower rung of the ladder. The epistemology they deliver holds a message that there is a solid knowledge and an inferior one – the inferior being anything that grows at home. This tradition hardened the assumption which accepts that African knowledge or an epistemology of the south is products with limitations and in turn believes a western knowledge is something universal. A decolonial university in Africa works to cultivate a university community which questions this believe of western objectivity (Ndlovu, 2018). The truth is there is also a better opportunity to develop a decolonized university in Africa because there still is an African way of knowing and indigenous knowledge (Ndlovu, 2018).

African hopes and development are heavily reliant on its universities. It is the universities which produce the continent’s future leaders, academics and many graduates who are decisive on their continent and country’s future. As a result, it is crucial to investigate the knowledge those universities convey to their students and community. Decolonization of higher learning institutions is an effort to examine and repair the epistemological link between the universities and the society that they are serving (Gwaravanda, 2019). It is a quest to appropriate knowledge

before it reaches the people. Decolonization of the university is a fight for the African mind. The key for an all-inclusive development is rested on African's mind.

Africans, starting from their early schooling to university, the education they were thought ended up alienating them. As a result, they couldn't become a solution to their continent's multi-faceted challenges. Decolonization of the university can play a significant role in returning Africa's children eyes to their home and bringing the development their society seeks. The society's expectation from the university and the institution's decolonial aspiration goes hand in hand. In fact, Manthalu & Waghid (2019) states "the responsibility to meet the social and economic functions of the university encourages students, academics and intellectuals to decolonise education" (p. 80). It is such reasons which make the decolonization movement relevant and timely.

The call for a decolonized African university and its epistemology is not something which can be realized overnight. It needs a mammoth scale work. However, there are some key areas which can speed up the process if they are given proper acknowledgment and the necessary work which follows the acknowledgment. The academic elements are medium of instruction (Language), research, publishing and citation.

### **2.3.1 Medium of Instruction**

Language is a tool which helps human beings to internalize and express the world around them. It is this tool that was taken from Africans during colonization when they were forced to communicate using the colonizers' language. Colonialism left many legacies at the end of its tenure. One of those legacies is language. Africans continue to speak their colonizers' language even after the absence of colonialism. Fanon (1967) asserts "to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of civilization" (p. 17). When Africans decided to continue using their colonizers language, they decided to support the weight of western civilization. This helped the European metaphysical empire to stay when the physical empire leaves. It is decolonization of language which should be the starting point of the decolonization need (Wa Thiong'o, 1992).

African Universities are the main consumer of European languages. It is a continental affair. It was mentioned earlier that, even in the continent's non-colonized country Ethiopia, universities use English as their means of instruction. Accordingly, they have been an agent of western civilization and epistemology than their own people's mind products. Their choice works against their self definition. It kills their cultural heritage. Major European languages have been committing epistemicide on other world languages and they also led to the development of a European conception of knowledge (Mignolo, 2009). However, it is with these languages that African students construct meanings. The established European language empire persuades one to believe that anything that is produced on local languages is less of a solid knowledge. To remove this presumption, there needs to be an epistemic disobedience like civil disobedience (Mignolo, 2009).

Language is hence one of the key factors in attaining epistemic liberation and justice. Manthalu & Waghid (2019) stated "the absence of African languages in higher education as mediums of instruction and of conducting and disseminating research undermines the possibility of meaningful African appropriation of knowledge" (p. 30). This doesn't mean that decolonization of language is not without its challenges. Globalization and the western hegemonic power concentration within it will challenge the implementation. There are also critics who question if African languages are developed enough for academic purposes (Manthalu & Waghid, 2019). Despite the challenges, there is deep a desire to decolonize it since language is critical for knowledge dissemination and acquisition.

### **2.3.2 Decolonizing Research**

The academia is one of the decisive custodians of knowledge production. This privilege grants the academia the power to approve and advance researches. By extension, this authority also gives the academia the right to examine cited works and scrutinize references and bibliographies which will be used in academic literatures. This makes decolonization of research an academic affair. Decolonizing research is having a critical understanding of the process which makes up the research practice (Smith, 2021). It is an action which challenges the long established research methods, the theories which generates them and world view that informs them. Decolonizing research, therefore, is a struggle to incorporate other world perspectives (Keikelame & Swartz, 2019).

Due to their Humboldtian institutional nature, African universities have a long research tradition. Their content, however, is a reproduction of eurocentrism. The research works done in these universities are heavily reliant in Euro-American scholar's literature. The works they cite plus references and bibliographies they use in order to prove the rigorousness of their research is that of the western intellectuals. The epistemic disobedience which will lead to decolonization must challenge these Eurocentric citation practices (Kessi et al, 2020). African universities need to encourage their communities to cite African intellectuals' work during their research in order to reduce the western epistemic dominance. This does not mean that there will be preferential treatment based on race; it just means that African intellectuals' work which are capable of explaining the African experience better will be given priority.

The language of research also needs to be liberated. Researches in Africa are still dependent on European languages (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). African researchers need to learn how to conduct their researches without the usage of western terminologies. The university needs to integrate African languages for its research purposes (Manthalu & Waghid, 2019). Writing and researching using African languages could enable researchers to form new theories. It will also help study spirituality and oral traditions of Africa which hitherto are neglected knowledge domains due to their incompatibility to European languages (Chilisa, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). The deep interest of researchers to attain international acceptance could raise a challenge to realize this decolonization goal. Researchers, however, need to understand to whom they are writing and whose challenges they want to solve.

## **2.4 African Indigenous Knowledge**

The concept of indigenous knowledge is very diverse due to the multitude voices the term represents. At the core of its multiple interpretations lies a common understanding that perceives the term as a non-western and non-mainstreamed knowledge. This knowledge is mostly unique to a given society or culture. The knowledge is not produced through universities or a complex network of research institution. Emeagwali & Dei (2014) states:

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) may be defined as the cumulative body of strategies, practices, techniques, tools, intellectual resources, explanations, beliefs, and values accumulated over time in a particular locality, without the interference and impositions of external hegemonic forces. Indigenous Knowledge Systems are not confined to the material sphere, but often interconnect with spiritual and nonmaterial realms of existence. (p. 1)

There is, thus, noticeable differences between indigenous and the western hegemonic knowledge. One of the differences is that most indigenous knowledges are transferred orally, through legends, and folklores when their western counterpart survives through writing (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019). In terms of approach, indigenous knowledge cultivates and absorbs its knowledge through indefinite years of interaction with the environment and other phenomenon. It is not the same for the west; the west dominantly relies on mathematical model and quantitative analyses for its accumulation of knowledge (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019). The other character is that indigenous knowledge generally treats the world as an interrelated entity – treating the natural and supernatural as one and whole. This is not true for the western model. A western knowledge system breaches the association and often treats each one of them as a distinct element (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019).

The holistic perception of world – interrelation between the non-material and material realms – that indigenous knowledge holds in turn grants it a different understanding of the domain of life. According to Hoppers (2005, as cited in Osman, 2010) African indigenous knowledge functions on two interwoven levels labeled as empirical and cognitive level. Hoppers stated that within the empirical level there reside three spheres. Natural sphere which possess biodiversity, soil, medicinal and pharmaceutical, ecology, and agriculture aspects; the second sphere entitled technological and architectural sphere includes crafts such as textiles, metallurgy, food, basketry, building, and processing etc; the last sphere called the socio-cultural sphere consists the social welfare, conflict resolutions, governance, art, music etc dimensions of life. She added that in the cognitive level of African Indigenous Knowledge, we will find a form and structure which helps to understand and conceptualize perceptions and theories of both culture and nature. African

indigenous knowledge stresses the value of a harmonious interdependence and interrelationship of all these spheres.

In African indigenous Knowledge, Asante and Mazama (2004) also states “there is a fundamental connection between the male and female, the living and dead, the visible and invisible realms, the spiritual and material spheres, the human and divine realms, humanity and the natural world, and so on” (p. 43). One is said to have mastered this indigenous knowledge when he grasps the interrelatedness of life. It is for people who understood this interconnected reality that Africans give the label of a sage. The work of the sage is holistic; he is an architect, spiritual master, philosopher, psychologist, artist etc at the same time. Due to the nature of this holistic approach to knowledge, African knowledge demands ethical standards, measure of responsibility, and sets of rules and practices (Asante & Mazama, 2004).

African people survived millenniums because they possessed a knowledge which made existing possible. If the knowledge African people accumulated through ages were not potent, they would have not survived at all (Kebede, 2004a). Human existence is possible because man continues to find solutions to his challenges. The same works for Africans. Akan, Bantu, Ethiopian, and Yoruban people epistemologies are some of the African Indigenous knowledge which made sure the survival of their people (Asante & Mazama, 2004). African Indigenous knowledge are not only the sources of their people survival; they are also a means of development. The knowledge contains a key to the understanding of the continent’s history and perception of world. By giving it a proper space, it is also possible to secure an enduring African identity.

This knowledge is often times regarded as “primitive” and “unscientific”. It is also marginalized based on that argument which says that it lacks “universality”; a quality which is historically reserved for western knowledge. Depicting this knowledge as a lower form of knowledge implicitly argues for the superiority of European worldview (Emeagwali & Dei, 2014). The African academia often dismisses this knowledge due to the academia’s deep rooted Eurocentric nature. Today, however, there is an earnest demand for the integration of this knowledge in Africa’s universities curriculums because it is a reflection of the African ways of thinking. Decolonization is a search for regeneration of this disregarded knowledge (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Education and life cannot be understood separately; education per se is life. The content that it holds should assist society to understand its leaved experience. The imposition of a foreign knowledge system which is repressive to indigenous knowledge alienated people from reflecting upon their own reality (Akena, 2012). The integration of indigenous knowledge in the modern academia is an attempt to anchor society's leaved experience in a curriculum. Decolonization will break the hegemonic Eurocentric education in Africa by allowing indigenous African knowledge to occupy a significant space in the academic content (Emeagwali & Dei, 2014). By doing so, African education will become an agent of positive change. Education thus will play a vital role in preparing the African mind for the challenges it faces in its soil.

It is clear that the revitalization of African indigenous knowledge will face many impediments. Besides the academia and policy makers, there are other challenges too. Yesterday, it was colonialism and its extended elements which weakened the evolution of African indigenous knowledge. Today, the force which works at the scale of colonialism and is posing a grave challenge is globalization. Cultural globalization is now silencing and subjugating African indigenous knowledge due to its homogenizing nature (Abidogun & Falola, 2020). Multiple cultures with their own integrated unique epistemologies are fading due to globalization's homogenizing effect. The powerful in economy stays powerful in the culture production because they are capable of shaping the voyage (Abidogun & Falola, 2020). This, however, doesn't mean that nothing can be done. If governments take proactive measures, there is a good possibility centering indigenous knowledge itself in the globalization phenomenon.

The other challenge is the nature of indigenous knowledge itself. Because indigenous knowledge mostly transmits orally, when someone who mastered the knowledge dies, a significant essence of it also dies with him (Hoppers, 2002). The African believes the death of an old man is equivalent to the burning of a library. The death signifies the death of the African memory which holds the people's knowledge and history. This made preservation of African indigenous knowledge challenging. As a result of this character, the collection of this knowledge is arduous and also difficult to work with, when it is needed (Hoppers, 2002). This challenge and also the one globalization posed can be dealt with methods like digitization.

## **2.5 Ethiopian Indigenous Knowledge**

Ethiopia is one of the few oldest countries in the world. It has existed for thousands of years going through both territorial expansion and loss. In this ancient land, various kingdoms arose and fall, the most well-known is the Axumite Empire; there were also influential dynasties which ruled the land (Adejumobi, 2007). These kingdoms and dynasties nurtured a home grown civilization. The civilizations in turn cultivated many indigenous knowledge and systems (Kebede & Belay, 2017). Writing systems, philosophy, art, terracing, socio-political orders, music, art, architecture, metallurgy, and pottery are some of Ethiopian indigenous knowledge's creation which served their people through ages (Ferede, 2016). The knowledge is the result of a repetitive and continuous effort and research of the native.

This knowledge is an integral part of the day to day lives of Ethiopians. It still influences the life of the people and inspires further researches. The traditional Ethiopian education system, for example, has taught a legion number of people equipping them with the knowledge of history, philosophy, medicine and astrology (Demssie et al., 2020). This education is mainly produced inside the realm of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and it ultimately helped the nation to preserve its culture and history. It also helped the country to conserve its indigenous alphabet Ge'ez and calendar. Ethiopians, using indigenous knowledge, have also managed to conserve their environment. Konso's terracing system is an engineering that helps to protect the people's land from soil erosion (Sumner & Yimam, 2002). The terracing is a 400 years structure.

Another well-known indigenous knowledge which stretches itself as far as building an institution is the Oromo Gada system. Gada is an indigenous philosophy and system which has fashioned the socio-political, socio-cultural, moral and religious order of Oromo people (Negari, 2018). The aforementioned and other indigenous knowledge which emanated from the nation's numerous ethnic diversities helped the cohesion of Ethiopian societies. The age-old production of indigenous knowledge, however, did not get the chance to be integrated in modern day Ethiopian education because contemporary Ethiopian education from its inception was Eurocentric (Demssie et al., 2020). Indigenous knowledge is repressed for more than a century but the demand for its inclusion in the academia is now growing.

The recognition and integration of this knowledge in the curricula will advance the understanding of Ethiopian society. Adding to that, the integration will reproduce and facilitate the promotion of skill and knowledge that enables fitting to the culture and nature (Demssie et al., 2020). It will also help the multi-ethnic country to produce a more cohesive society because it will allow students to understand their fellow country man and women's background and culture. With this comprehensive episteme, the evolved education system produces a more sustainable and holistic development (Demssie et al., 2020). This is possible because integration of appropriate indigenous knowledge will enable students to think more broadly when exploring both social and natural problems.

There are also indigenous institutions in Ethiopia which are refined by indigenous knowledge and that are currently gaining attention in the development literature and discourse. A couple of the well-known indigenous financial institutions, for example, are *Equb* and *Edir* – they subsequently mean rotating funds and funeral societies. These informal institutions serve their members in times of financial need despite the members' ethnic, political and religious difference (Weldemariam, 2017). If these organizations are encouraged, they are capable of serving a wider population side by side with the formal financial institutions. Because they do not need any sophisticated financial knowledge or structure, they are easily accessible.

There are however challenges that are hindering the realization or mainstreaming of indigenous knowledge. Almost all of the problems faced – which are mentioned earlier – are identical with all African Indigenous knowledge. The only difference is that when other African indigenous knowledge calls the lingering legacies of colonialism for their deterioration, Ethiopia has to look inside because such a predicament was not in its realm.

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

The decolonization literature is inarguably intricate. Decolonization is often per se treated as a conceptual framework (Oelofsen, 2015); and also as a theoretical framework (Abawi & Brady, 2017). The theory's complexity emanates from the colonial experience different countries and different continent's faced. Different colonial experience brings different decolonization conceptions. Introducing Ethiopia – the non colonized country – to the decolonial debate can

bring a further complex discourse. Although this is the case, it is possible to situate Ethiopia in the decolonial debate when analyzing Eurocentric epistemic traditions. After analyzing what a Eurocentric and colonized academic tradition means, different scholars also came up with different notions and theories of what a decolonized higher education and curriculum would mean. This research will use a fusion of Woldegiorgis's and Jansen's conception of decolonization in order to frame its analysis.

Woldegiorgis (2021) forwarded four practical measures that could refine Ethiopia's Eurocentric higher education. These are:

1. A fundamental transformation of mindset

This measure suggests that a transformation of a mindset is a requirement for a possible decolonization. It means the perception of a Eurocentric education as modern and anything other than that as traditional, needs to be transformed as a prerequisite for a decolonized education. This can have a significant efficacy if it is allowed to surface in the nation's policy debates.

2. Identifying, documenting, and institutionalizing indigenous epistemologies

Ethiopian decolonization is essentially attainable by institutionalizing the country's multitude ingenious epistemologies after they are thoroughly investigated and documented.

3. Constructing and integrating indigenous epistemologies into higher education curriculum

When the marginalized indigenous knowledge finds a way to be integrated into Ethiopia's higher education, the decolonial endeavor meets its goal. Indigenous epistemologies will be accommodated in the curricula through already established disciplines and interdisciplinary epistemologies. This move grants a social responsiveness – hence, decolonization.

4. Diversifying the infrastructures of knowledge production

Solidifying and widening the capacity of the nation's knowledge production is imperative in the decolonization process. The system needs to penetrate knowledge sources like churches and mosques, elders, traditional leaders etc. It needs to renounce its one-dimensional Eurocentric and academicians favoring approach to knowledge.

Jansen (2017a) in the context of higher education provided six ways of decolonization. He categorized them as soft and hard decolonization. The first four are soft and the other remaining two are hard. They are:

1. Decolonization as the decentering of European knowledge

In this context, decolonization refers to putting Africa and African knowledge at the heart. It is a work of uprooting beliefs which hold European knowledge, values and accomplishments in superiority. Curriculum decolonization in this approach will try to move away the center of knowledge from eurocentrism to other knowledge spheres like Africa. Here, indigenous knowledge is not considered as a complement to the already existing knowledge. They stand by themselves authentic and prioritized.

2. Decolonization as additive-inclusive knowledge

This involves a mere addition of African knowledge to the already existing curriculum. Jansen (2017a) states decolonization at this point “recognises and values existing canons of knowledge and its addition to established world knowledges” (p. 160). The addition could be African authors or studies.

3. Decolonization as critical engagement with the settled knowledge

This conception provokes decolonial workers to examine from where the settled knowledge comes from. It also provokes them to ask why it is there and in whose favor. It critically engages with the knowledge rather than accepting it as supreme. This means the standing problems will be seen through new theories and methods. It also empowers students in these critical engagements.

4. Decolonization as encounters with entangled knowledges

Such understanding of decolonization renounces the dichotomy of knowledge – ours and theirs. It prefers to understand knowledge as intertwined. It assumes there is no colonizer and colonized knowledge. Jansen (2017a) explains “our knowledges are intertwined in the course of daily living, learning and loving” (p. 162).

5. Decolonization as the Africanization of knowledge

According to this perspective of decolonization “Africanisation is about the displacement of colonial or Western knowledge and its associated ideals and achievements as the standard against which to measure human progress” (Jansen, 2017a, p. 160). This, for example, means all teaching and learning activities will be held using an African language.

6. Decolonization as repatriation of occupied knowledge (and society)

This decolonization necessitates the repatriation of knowledge that was stolen and land that is taken. This notion of decolonization totally rejects accommodation; both settler knowledge and settlers themselves would not find a space in the curriculum.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Design and Method**

#### **3.1 Research Method**

Inference is not the intention of this research – unlike quantitative researches. That is why the research method used for this study is qualitative method. A qualitative research helps to understand how people experience events and the questions that comes forward seeks to “uncover the perspectives of an individual, a group, or different groups” (Agee, 2009, p. 434). These characteristics informed the researcher to select the method because the research aimed to understand how Addis Ababa University College of Social Sciences Academicians perceives decolonization, the need and, its possibilities in their departments and college. The method also allows a researcher to take up an in-depth analysis of a data that is collected from a small number of respondents using an interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Following this essence of the method, the researcher held an in-depth interview with key informants who are selected purposefully from college of social sciences.

A qualitative research stresses the researcher’s involvement as an active actor in the study (Maxwell, 2012). Accordingly, the researcher was a key factor in the collection of data and analysis of the findings that comes out of the data.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Durrheim (2006) stated, “A research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research” (p. 34). This research in line with the research problem employed a case study. As indicated above, the study deals with ‘the need for decolonization and the academician’s potentials’ by taking Addis Ababa University as a case study. Case study is one of the five well know qualitative research designs which qualitative researchers often use – the other four are Phenomenological studies, Ethnographic studies, Grounded Theory and Biographical Studies (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Yin (2017) notes that “Case studies...are relevant the more that your questions require an extensive and “in-depth” description of some social phenomenon” (p. 35). This research is a search for a profound understanding of decolonization in Ethiopian context.

A case study is also seen as "an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena" (Merriam, 1988, p. 2). The research design that is chosen thus fits with the theme of the research because epistemological decolonization is particularly an education phenomenon. Moreover, case study is also relevant "where little research has been conducted" (Merriam, 1998, p.38). The study falls in that category because there has never been a profound decolonial debate in Ethiopian academia.

The reason behind the selection of Addis Ababa University as a case lies on the fact that it is the first Ethiopian University. In addition, although many universities have their own academic traditions, studying this university can be equated as studying Ethiopia's major universities. This assertion is made because Addis Ababa University through the years trained a huge portion of the nation's academicians who are working in the country's multitude universities and that are still shaping the academic attributes. Above all, almost all the country's universities curriculums trace their inspiration from Addis Ababa University. This, however, does not suggest that the findings are directly applicable to universities and departments outside of this case study.

Due to the temporal requirement of the study, the study will adapt a cross-sectional design. Primary data collection through an in-depth interview and open ended interviews will be held at a single point in time.

### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

Guest et al. (2013) explained, "Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of items from a defined population for inclusion into a study (p. 72). They added that they have chosen the word item because the choices will not always be people. The notion that supports a certain sampling approach differs significantly, and also reflects the questions and purposes that instruct the study (Punch, 2013). The sampling technique that is employed in this research is purposive sampling. It is a non-probability sampling method and according to Robinson (2014, p. 5244), "Purposive sampling is intentional selection of informants based on their ability to elucidate a specific theme, concept, or phenomenon." Patton (2002) further explained, "Purposeful sampling focuses on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (p. 230). He further stated that purposive sampling involves selecting participants who stand-out from others due to their uniqueness. This sampling technique is chosen because the

stated features and characteristics of this sampling techniques best accommodates the objective of this research.

### **3.4 Sample size**

A sample is a small proportion of a population which is selected for the purpose of observation and analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In a qualitative study where a researcher selects a sample through purposive sampling, unlike quantitative methods, researchers are not required to come up with a statistical representative sample. However, a sample size is as crucial as the sampling technique per se. Within a research that employs purposive sampling, a research's main goal is to find a sample from which most can be learned (Merriam, 2009). This research purposefully selected 6 informants with different academic backgrounds from different departments which reside in the college of social science. The selection is based on their prior expertise and exposure to the theme of decolonization.

### **3.5 Data Collection Method**

Data collection is a vital stage of a research in the process of replying the research questions. Kabir (2016) explained that, "Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes" (p. 202). This research – in order to capture quality evidence which can be translated into an analysis and in turn answers the research questions – used a semi-structured interview. In comparison to structured interviews, semi-structured interview allows the researcher to have an in-depth examination of a topic. This method, thus, fits best with the nature of the research and its questions.

All the interviews were audio recorded in order to generate a verbatim transcript later on. This helped the researcher to concentrate on the interview rather than taking notes. The shortest interview was 32 minutes and the longest one is an hour and twelve minutes. Moreover, the interviews were held in a place where it is convenient for the respondents; most of them were in their office. It is this way the primary data is collected. For a secondary data, works of different authors and scholars plus other essential texts were consulted.

### **3.6 Data Interpretation and Analysis**

The data that is collected from the interview is analyzed using thematic framework. A thematic analysis uses codified qualitative data which makes similar themes to come up with an explanation of a phenomenon in the study (Figgou & Pavlopoulos, 2015). The aim of a thematic analysis is to establish themes i.e., patterns in the data which are essential or interesting or important, and utilize these themes to respond to the research questions. Braun & Clarke (2006) identified a six-phase procedure which is a vital framework for conducting such type of analysis. They are:

1. The researcher familiarize himself with the data

They stated that the first step is to reading and re-reading the transcripts. At this stage the researcher familiarize himself with the entire data and takes notes of his early conceptions.

2. Produces initial codes

According to them, at this point the researcher organizes the data in a systematic and meaningful way. By doing so, the data that is transcribed finds codes in line with the research questions.

3. Search initial themes

In here, the coded data is filtered along a theme. When this stage is done, the codes are already organized in broader themes which eventually will address the research question.

4. Review themes

At this phase, the preliminary themes will be questioned if they make sense. They will be further scrutinized for their coherence. It is also at this stage that the researcher identifies whether sub-themes emerged from previous phase or not. Moreover, the researcher examines if there is an overlap between the themes and their potential to stand alone.

5. Defining themes

This is the step where the themes faces final refinement and the main themes interaction with sub-themes will be established.

## 6. Writing the report

In this final stage, as the name suggests, scholarly analysis will be produced.

In line with this method, data collected from the informants is accordingly analyzed. In addition to the thematic framework analysis, documents relating to the subject of the study were examined. On top of that, the primary source was triangulated along with theoretical and empirical evidences and also with the researcher's set of knowledge so that a conclusion could be reached and a refined outcome would emerge at the end of the process.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations are concerns in relation to research ethics and revolve around the issue of consent, harm, privacy, and confidentiality of data during the research process (Punch, 2013). Hence, following Addis Ababa University's rules and regulation when conducting a research using human subjects, the researcher took into account these ethical considerations during the course of this research.

#### *Permission*

I obtained permission from the head of the department of African and Asian Studies in order to conduct this research. I showed this letter of permission to my informants prior to holding the interview.

#### *Confidentiality and Privacy*

Confidentiality means managing the information which has to do with the respondents in a confidential manner. The researcher assured with austere confidence that their names and personal details wouldn't be discussed.

#### *Informed consent and voluntary participation*

The consent form that is attached with the interview guideline is provided to the informant prior to the interview. This maintained the rule of voluntary participation. Informants were also made aware that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time. This was done both in written form and orally.

## Chapter Four

### Data Findings and Analysis

#### 4.1 Data Findings

##### 4.1.1 Framing Decolonization and the Global South's Higher Education Decolonization Movement.

###### *Failure to approve*

The informants, in relation to the first question, stands on a different ground. They believe that decolonization could hold different meaning in different spaces. For them, the colonial experience frames the decolonization call. One informant even believes that – regardless of the multiple decolonial calls – it is hard to frame the global south decolonial call as a movement i.e., in a global manner. For him, a movement is a collective and organized act. Moreover, he said that there has never been potent intercontinental academic dialogue on decolonization (Informant 6, personal communication, June 6, 2021).

###### *Decolonization is a power quest*

Three informants believe that decolonization is a search for power – a search for the regeneration of a southern voice. One informant said that the contribution of the south in molding the global culture has been denied through ages. The history of the world was and is still hostage of a Eurocentric view (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). Similarly, the other added that today's modernity is an extension of the past's colonial domination. The south effort to decolonize is an effort to re-center and establish itself on world's discourse and culture. It is a search to find a proper place in world's cultural and knowledge evolution. Decolonization is a coordinated attempt to stop northern dominance (Informant 4, personal communication, May 22, 2021). Colonialism ended potent civilizations and cultures by imposing western values and culture on places it occupied. The attempt to decolonize is an attempt to revive a lost power; a work to rectify the un-equal relationship that has emanated from colonialism and everything that perpetuates that state today (Informant 6, personal communication, June 6, 2021).

### *Call for integration*

The common understanding and consistent theme between the informants was when discussing southern higher education and its call for decolonization. They believe that decolonization is a call for integration and the academia is the best place for a decolonizing work. For them, the higher education decolonization movement signifies an attempt of integration. One respondent stressed that decolonization can halt a further death of south based knowledge. He added that, for him, the movement doesn't mean a total abandonment of a Euro-American knowledge. It rather means, integrate southern knowledge in a way that properly represents that hemisphere of the world:

“A lost time cannot be returned. But, it doesn't mean that southern universities are incapable of still reflecting their society's age-old values and knowledge systems. They still can reconnect today's students to their ancestor's heritages and conception of knowledge using the integration of indigenous knowledge in curriculums” (Informant 2, personal communication, June 24, 2021).

Decolonization for the south is a means of “ending the metaphysical and epistemological empire of the west; challenging the systematic distortion; bringing emancipatory discourse that diagnoses reality” (Informant 4, personal communication, May 22, 2021). Another informant stated that decolonization is a strive to create a space which will allow all university communities in the south to incorporate different knowledge systems and cultures in their curriculum and discourses. It helps to declare that we were all born in organic knowledge systems (Informant 3, personal communication, June 11, 2021). He added that the process aims to bring an education that is relevant to the society which that education aspires to serve. On this same point, other informant stated that, decolonization will secure a “socially responsive institution with competent curriculum” (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021).

#### **4.1.2 Decolonization in Ethiopian Context**

##### *Self-imposed Colonization*

All of the informants stated that, in Ethiopian context, decolonization only refers to emancipation from a self-imposed colonization. They believe this self-imposed colonization brought a passivity which turns the nation into a mere importer of western knowledge and culture. For this status-quo, they mainly blamed the education system. Ethiopia's epistemic and cultural colonization started when the western education was introduced without any scrutiny (Informant 2, personal communication, June 24, 2021). Another informant added "we rejected our traditional education system without even knowing it; we were highly dismissive" (Informant 5, personal communication, June 2, 2021). He added that this ignorance found its ultimate crystallization with the start of European led university education. The university began its work with white personnel who are oblivious of the country's value. Hence, they were imparting a totally foreign knowledge to the country's first ever university students. In line with this, another informant expounded, today's university education is a continuation of that old tradition – with Ethiopian teachers, and an insignificant curriculum and content alteration (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021).

##### *Resistance*

African countries faced a forced upon Eurocentrism due to colonization and the legacies that pours from it. However, these have helped African nations to identify the damages because they were actively witnessing the annihilation of their knowledge systems and cultures. These manifestations initiated the resistance and decolonization movements early on. Unlike other African countries, Ethiopia was not wide-awake to the metaphysical colonialism that it dormantly accepted. For informant 1, 5 and 6, decolonization in Ethiopian context is a rejection of this dormancy. Another informant believes the call must also examine the effect of the five year Italian occupation on Ethiopian academic identity because the years are overlooked conceived as a mere rapture (Informant 3, personal communication, June 11, 2021).

##### *Incorporating indigenous knowledge*

Ethiopia has a multitude language and its own alphabet too. However, the knowledges that were produced through these means haven't received the proper attention of the academia. The

Ethiopian Orthodox church is one of the largest reservoir for world's oldest history, philosophy and theological manuscripts. Yet, they were not studied sufficiently; hence, they are rare in curriculums (Informant 5, personal communication, June 2, 2021). The informant added, this failure is due to language barrier. The alphabet that this manuscripts were written is in Ge'ez. He believes the language must be taught widely in the academia to revive indigenous epistemology and redefine the Ethiopian identity. Informant 3 asserted that the indigenous political systems like Gada must be mainstreamed in the curriculum because they are still shaping the country's socio-political sphere.

### *Remembering Pan-Africanism*

Two informants stressed that revitalizing the Pan-African discourse is in the realm of Ethiopian decolonization work. Informant 2 believes that the modern day development goals themselves must be seen in Pan-African terms that which will be centered in a decolonial framework; he believes that the Eurocentric development discourse which Africa is highly engaged with, must cease to exist by working together with African brothers and sisters. For him, Pan-Africanism and Decolonization are synonyms. The other informant stated "this generation and the coming one must know the role that Ethiopia played in establishing African Union – a Pan-African organ; It is one of the earlier and crucial African decolonization efforts" (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). He also added "Ethiopia's engagement with the first African and Afro-American intellectuals is also her early contribution to decolonization" (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). According to him, reviving and remembering this discourse by itself is a decolonization work.

### **4.1.3 A Curriculum Decolonial Need in the Departments and the College.**

The answer to this question was unanimous. They all believed that there is a decolonial need in their departments and college. In social science, they asserted, speaking about one department is also indirectly talking about the other. Despite the need, three of the informant reflected that there will be an enormous challenge when doing the decolonial work. They believe that when decolonizing social science and doing a decolonial work, the bifurcation of knowledge as Eurocentric and other will be a clear challenge. They infer, in some knowledge realms, the distinction will become vague (Informant 2, 4 & 5).

### *Different voices from the departments*

The informants based on their expertise and researches reflected on the theme of decolonization from different disciplines perspective. The different voices are reflected down below. The informants with multiple backgrounds discussed the theme from different domains.

#### *Philosophy*

Informant 4 stated, “We don’t have our own intellectual tradition; the work we are doing is mostly synthesizing. The department doesn’t have a unique African identity” (personal communication, May 22, 2021); the analytic and continental division still shapes knowledge production in the department. He added that, as an African philosophy department, the department shares the same challenges other African philosophy departments encounter i.e., the “uncritically imported Eurocentric philosophical traditions” (Informant 4, personal communication, May 22, 2021). Moreover, he stated that, the mono-epistemic curriculums that have dominated philosophy departments must evolve into epistemologically plural tradition. Another informant added that the department shuns indigenous knowledge like church education; it has not allowed “the occupied space to open-up” (Informant 5, personal communication, June 2, 2021). He also said “because local languages are not taught in the college, the department’s research toward indigenous epistemology and worldview is very limited” (Informant 5, personal communication, June 2, 2021). What is common for both of them is the mandatory examination of European conception of Ethiopian philosophy and what is introduced as an Ethiopian philosophy. They believe there is inconsistency between the nation’s philosophical tradition and western led researches of Ethiopian philosophy.

#### *Political Science*

The department’s decolonization could be best achieved if the department produces extensive research that focuses on local challenges across all academic ranks. In addition, researches that focus on African topics must flourish. There still has not emerged an abundant authoritative body of political science works from the department. This reality “has led to the continuity of dependency on external literatures for examination of critical Ethiopian and African issues” (Informant 3, personal communication, June 11, 2021). He added “both Africa and Ethiopia are not still theorized.” Ideologies that are foreign to the continent are still in the governing seat;

both political and political economy theories of the country mirrors this dependency. He emphasized as an example “doing researches in the political values of Gada and Siinqee doesn’t require the knowledge of Oromiffa and the same goes for the study of different political cultures; multilingualism is one of the major decolonial need of the department” (Informant 3, personal communication, June 11, 2021). By and by the department can theorize Ethiopia. Moreover, he stated the department must boost researches on post-colonial nationality and ethnic issues of Africa in order to feature Africa in the department properly. This for him is the decolonial needs of the department.

### *Anthropology*

Informant 1 said “the discipline and deductively the department will face a methodological, philosophical and practical decolonization” (personal communication, May 19, 2021). He stated the discipline will do an epistemic justice not only by adding the voice of marginalized scholars but they have to be read in juxtaposition – the work of non-white scholars with their white counterparts. This way, he said “the discipline will be reconstructed” (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). He further added that works and cannons that are done with a political agenda i.e. creating a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority – looking the south as an inferior subject – must be disowned by course curriculums. He reminded that “the wrong thesis of a hamitic hypothesis brought a genocide in Rwanda” (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021)

This is one of the known failures of anthropological assumptions. Continuing on this subject, he expounded that anthropological literatures concerning race also needs to be challenged. Inferring on the matter he said “this is both the work of students and teachers” (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). He stated that the classification of race itself doesn’t profoundly reflect the researches of the south.

Informant 2 said, “a hierarchy of civilization is heavily featured in anthropology. This is in the literature” (personal communication, June 24, 2021). He stated that the global south needs to be compensated by correcting this. Informant 1, in relation to this has stated that, even “the language classification called Afro-asiatic itself needs to face a decolonizing critics” (personal communication, May 19, 2021). Methodological wise, both of them emphasized, Ethnographic studies’ characterization of a “researcher as the knower and the studied people as the known

needs to be rethought” (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021& Informant 2, personal communication, June 24, 2021)

### *Sociology*

Informant 6 stated that, “the essential content of sociology itself is established around three European thinkers - Durkheim, Marx and Weber; anything that remains is also the result of western thinkers” (personal communication, June 6, 2021). For him, this pushed the discipline to sideline non-western thinkers. He believes, due to the original construction of the discipline itself, integrating Africa and Ethiopia at the heart of sociological theorization is non-existent. He claims the department is the result of this long standing tradition and the curriculum reflects that and needs to be recalibrated. Informant 1 stated “decolonization of sociology must also challenge the dichotomy of modern and traditional society; this always puts anything African as a traditional output” (personal communication, May 19, 2021). For him, sociological theories are uncritical of colonialism itself. He said “European modernity itself is the outcome of colonial quest.” He added that, students leave the program without understanding this European relationship with the rest of the world. One of the department decolonization need, thus is, situating this historical development in the curriculum.

Both of them emphasized the need for integration of indigenous knowledge breaking the sociological dichotomy of modern and traditional society. More literatures from Ethiopia and Africa as a whole, both from the past and present, must find their way in to the discipline. When specifically addressing Ethiopia, they stressed on the inclusion of a contribution that Ethiopia’s independence made in the development of African identity, African literature and the world as whole. They insisted on its study and theorization.

### *History*

The analysis of Ethiopian history is heavily dependent on the works of travelers and foreigners. This has its impact on the understanding of Ethiopian history. (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). The informant added, most of the works lack the cultural and societal context of the Ethiopian people historical evolution. However, “these people have received an authority when constructing Ethiopian history.” The department major work is “decolonizing such historiography” (Informant 1, personal communication, May 19, 2021). He

further explained, when decolonizing the works however, such scrutiny must give an opportunity for a survival of relevant works.

In terms of an Africa, the department needs to teach and produce more knowledge which reflects the proper African historical posture and that challenges the African related Eurocentric narrative of the past. The dominant literature out there which portrays Africa's history as if it started with the introduction of colonization needs to be subverted with the help of all African history departments (Informant 3, personal communication, June 11, 2021). Informant 1 added that the colonial history and the aftermath it brought in relation with the cultural heritages of the slavery system must be studied; this will be a decolonization contribution of the department because it will challenge the reductive portrayal of Eurocentric historical literature.

Both of them agreed that the history of Africa should be written in a way that recognizes African society. They said the African history which is dominated by European adventures must be sanitized in a way that recognizes Africans.

#### *African and Asian Studies*

Informant 2 stated that “the department must teach and produce knowledge which is essentially African and that goes beyond the European notion of “Orientalism” (personal communication, June 24, 2021). He added that there still are methodological dependences despite the department's aspirations and he admitted that they are not easy to recalibrate. He added “Afrocentric methodologies must be constructed in order to study the African society. And a transcontinental intellectual engagement must be made in order to study and produce Asian related knowledge” (personal communication, June 24, 2021). Informant 1 said “course contents must be re-appropriated; there are still unexamined Eurocentric contents in mandatory readings” (personal communication, May 19, 2021). He stated that this would limit the students and the teachers from the engagement of decolonial conversation. Moreover, he believes the interdisciplinary engagement of the department is in its early phase. He explained “this itself is detrimental to the departments decolonial aspiration and theory construction” (personal communication, May 19, 2021).

The consistent themes between the two respondents were the theme of critical engagement with western canons and a leadership role in decolonial conversation. They believe the department

needs to critically engage with the governing African and Asian political, ideological, developmental, and societal theories. They affirmed that the department lags behind in these commitments. The other thing is they expressed that the department in its knowledge production must make a way for a decolonial conversation in the university.

#### **4.1.4 Perception of a Decolonized Social Science**

One of the consistent themes when responding the above question was the evolution of social science towards social studies. For three respondents, a decolonized social science will evolve to social studies.

##### *From Social Science to Social Studies*

Informant 2, 3 and 4 believes decolonization is both a humanities and social science effort. Informant 2 explained that the ongoing decolonization discourse and debates shows that these disciplines houses the prominent decolonial scholars and influential literatures. Therefore, according to him, a decolonized social science will naturally evolve to social studies – the effort itself is merging humanities and social science. Reflecting on Ethiopia and Africa, he said the human achievement of these people resides in their literature and folklore. He also added the language of these people holds a key to the understanding of their worldview. For him, these significance of humanities will ultimately lead it to merge with social science because social science, in order to do its decolonial work, will pull humanities intensively.

Informant 4, in line with the previous informant expounded that social studies will allow both scholars and students to theorize their existence better. He added, in this way, both the students and scholars will be grounded in theories which could explain both their societies and the challenges they face. He thinks decolonization is an inter-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary work and an endeavor to bring a southern theory. He believes it is through an inter-disciplinary unlimited debates that a decolonial literature will evolve. In addition, he feels that it is through an inter-disciplinary conversation that the Eurocentric resemblance of the disciplines can be identified and rectified. Thus, he stated that a decolonized social science will ultimately grow into social studies.

Informant 3 in line with his colleagues stated that the alteration of social science to social studies will usher the decolonial goal of building a pluriversity – the beginning of a university which fosters epistemic diversity.

### *Methodology*

Informant 1 and 4 believe that a decolonized social science will transcend the Eurocentric methodological traditions. Both of them believe that social science is deep rooted in positivist tradition. A decolonized social science according to informant 1 “must transcend this barrier in order to promote other worldviews” (personal communication, May 19, 2021). According to him the residing tradition of a positivist value-free social science will not allow a development of diversified epistemic tradition. The tradition’s quest to be more like natural science in search for a truth marginalizes the understanding of indigenous knowledges. Hence, he believes, a decolonized social science is a discipline that solved these challenges. He proposed, when necessary, positivism must be thrown out in its entirety. Informant 4 emphasized, the mere decolonization itself won’t produce epistemological emancipation. He stressed that the strength of Global south’s universities in their knowledge production will allow the decoloniality to settle. For him, a decolonized social science is a globally competent southern knowledge production.

### *Recognition*

According to informant 5 a decolonized social science will subvert the literature dependency on the west. He explained that when social science is decolonized the research and education tradition in the discipline will be more comprehensive – it will better include the works of other scholars who are less recognized by the dominant western knowledge production. He believes the research citation tradition itself will become more inclusive; students and scholars will have the courage to use the works of the less known.

### *South-South Dialogue*

Informant 1, 2 and 4 stated, when social science is decolonized, it will yield a better south-south epistemic dialogue. Informant 4 believes that the nature of the decolonial work is based on the shared epistemic experience of the south. He stressed that, the global south has been historically encountering a continuous epistemicide due to north’s epistemological empire. A decolonized social science for him expresses emancipation from this empire through an integrated south-

south effort. Informant 2 and 4 expressed that there is a diverse worldview in the south in comparison to the north. Both of them believe these views can be more developed if they have a cooperative epistemological dialogue. Informant 4 believes the historical anti-capitalist and anti-colonial struggle coupled with the quest for a multiple modernity discourse will give a decolonized social science an identity of a south-south dialogue. For informant 2, a decolonized social science will regenerate and promote the historical Asia and Africa which today is referred as the south-south cooperation.

#### **4.1.5 Decolonizing Capability**

All of the respondents had an identical theme when discussing this issue. They are sure that it is an important task but do not think anyone possesses the ultimate knowledge. Moreover, they believe that it will not be an easy work both for the college and for themselves. According to them, the search for decolonization will face an obstacle within the departments and college. They believe the residing Eurocentric tradition and trainings of the academicians may pose a danger to a decolonial project. Informant 4 added that the historical influence of Marxism in the college may work against the decolonial effort. Informant 6 pointed that the institution's slow adaption of change and new ways will be a challenge in dealing with Eurocentric world knowledge production. However, they were not pessimistic.

#### *Decolonization is a process*

Informant 2 and 5 had a matching voice in relation to their own and their colleague's decolonizing ability. They think decolonization is a process and everyone will find a way relying on the long established academic culture of studying. Informant 2 stated that the main factor is building potent discussions. He believes the decolonial capability will build following the discussion. For informant 2, the possession of knowledge is not a problem; he thinks there is enough. In addition, he believes that the important thing is acknowledging that there is a need. He strongly believes that if the consensus prevails, the decolonial process won't be fruitless. It is the same for informant 5. He thinks if the academicians are convinced that there is a need, the work is attainable through time.

### *Decolonization needs power*

Informant 3 believes that the decolonization process could not be achieved without power. He thinks the mere ambition and knowledge would not transform into action. According to him, a power needs to be involved. He thinks the idea won't be realized unless it is enforced with authority. He stressed that authority doesn't mean repression of voices. He said "there needs to be a political willingness to do such a huge project" (personal communication, June 11, 2021). In addition, he believes, it is when the college and department's level of decolonization is assessed and helped that the endeavor will bear fruits. He stressed the institutional barriers must be eliminated in order to have an effective decolonization. And, to him, this is impossible without powerful leadership.

#### **4.1.6 Challenges Inside World's knowledge Production**

The academicians had consistent themes under this discussion. They all witnessed at one point in their life a funding problem when they or someone they know proposed a defiant proposal to the mainstream Eurocentric knowledge. According to them, it impacted their academic experience both in their writings and the teaching works. They explained that the knowledge production system of the world and the culture of most influential journals are resistant to new voices from the south and are less welcome to integrate alternative epistemologies. All of them believe that Africa and the southern hemisphere must work to solidify their own knowledge production and research journals.

## **4.2 Analysis**

### **4.2.1 Framing Decolonization**

The first theme *Lack of recognition* cannot be situated in the decolonial literature. Although it is a single academician perspective, it adds a significant point to the decolonial dialogue. The perspective that a movement needs to be an organized act will provoke and shape the decolonial debate which aims to achieve a collective emancipation. The second theme *decolonization as a power quest* is in line with Jansen (2017a) *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge*. The notion of rectifying a North-South relationship and regeneration of southern voice classifies as decentering.

The third theme a *call for integration* clearly identifies with Jansen (2017a) *decolonization as Additive-Inclusive knowledge* and *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge*. The ideas of integration and stopping southern epistemologies death coupled with a preference of no total abandonment of western epistemology aligns themselves with those conceptions. The academician's framings of decolonization are far from radical recommendations of decolonization considering it is a discussion of the entire global south movement. Their entire reflections are in preference of a soft approach to decolonization.

#### **4.2.2 Decolonization in Ethiopian Context**

The first two themes *self-imposed colonization* and *resistance* are in position with Woldegiorgis (2021) *transformation of mindset* and Jansen (2017a) *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge*. In *self-imposed colonization*, the reflection voiced emancipation from a passive foreign epistemic receiver tradition. And *resistance* voiced an awakening from dormancy, – acknowledging the metaphysical empire. Both themes are in alignment with *transformation of the mind*. In addition, the notion of tradition dismissive attitude that was reflected in *self-imposed colonization* is closely related with *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge* because it recognizes Ethiopian knowledge systems as authentic.

The other theme *incorporating indigenous knowledge* proposes the incorporation of knowledge system, language and socio-political value in curriculums. This makes it go along with Woldegiorgis (2021) *Identifying, documenting, and institutionalizing indigenous epistemologies*, and *Constructing and integrating indigenous epistemologies into higher education curriculum*. The academician's responses in that specific theme can also be aligned with Jansen decentering (2017a) because it identifies indigenous knowledge as an authentic knowledge. The remaining theme *pan-Africanism* is an interesting theme that emerged out of the discussion under Ethiopian decolonial context. It cannot be specifically situated under any conception of decolonization. However, it can be read together with Jansen (2017a) *decolonization as Additive-Inclusive knowledge* because it recommends the recognition of African knowledge. Here again, the decolonial conceptualization falls under a soft decolonization.

### 4.2.3 Decolonial Need in the Departments

When discussing the decolonial need in the departments and doing a decolonial work, the academicians stated that bifurcation of knowledge as Eurocentric and others would become a challenge in some knowledge realms. This suggests that the academicians view in relation with some of the decolonial work subscribes to Jansen (2017a) *decolonization as encounters with entangled knowledges*. In this conception of decolonization, all knowledge is intertwined due to the functions of our daily life.

All the academicians from their department perspective explained that there needs to be a more representation of Ethiopian and African content in the curriculum. Academicians from philosophy and political science recommended the integration of local languages for a better understanding of non-Eurocentric epistemologies. This aspiration falls in line with both Jansen's *decolonization as additive-inclusive knowledge*. However, when discussing them, there is a recognition of this indigenous knowledge as authentic and this also qualifies as *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge*. This suggests an overlap of conceptions which Jansen (2017a) believes is bound to happen. The other recommendations were the recognition of *epistemic plurality, methodological and philosophical emancipation, primacy of African and local challenges, rectifying historiography* qualifies as *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge* because all of them intends to move the epistemic center from Eurocentrism. The responses in consideration of Ethiopian situation were, in summation, in line with Woldegiorgisi's practical measures. Moreover, the academicians in the departments are consistent with their alignment with soft decolonization.

### 4.2.4 A Decolonized Social Science

The academicians stand on what a decolonized social science would mean is in line with the decolonization literature but a couple of them deviates from the conceptual framework. The idea that a decolonized social science will transcend into *social studies* is not in proper alignment with the conceptualization. However, it can stand in relation with *decolonization as additive-inclusive knowledge* because the stand is a call for an interdisciplinary transformation of the discipline like what is suggested in an *additive-inclusive* approach. The same deviation can be witnessed with *south-south* epistemological dialogue. The fact that these themes are not in the

frameworks doesn't suggest that they are irrelevant. It only proves the intricate nature of the ongoing decolonial dialogues and the diversity of its conception.

However, the remaining two themes can be positioned with two of Jansen's conception. The theme transcending *positivist methodology* as a result of a decolonized social science mirrors Jansen's *decolonization as decentering of European knowledge*; it again reflects a search for a shift from a Eurocentric knowledge sphere. The theme *recognition* on the other hand can be lined up with *decolonization as additive-inclusive knowledge*; it says a decolonized social science eliminates the literature dependency on the west by appreciating non-northern scholars and encouraging the university to cite this scholars. In a nutshell, it says, a decolonized social science will be more comprehensive.

#### **4.2.5 Decolonizing Capability and Challenges in Knowledge Production**

This research questions was raised to understand the college's potential in teaching in a decolonial way and the academician's challenges in the already established world knowledge production system. The result for a decolonial potential shows that the academicians believe in the possibilities of teaching in a decolonial way acknowledging the challenges. For two of them the main thing is building a potent discussion and having a consensus on the need; they are not in doubt about the capabilities of themselves and their colleagues because decolonization is a process. A single academician emphasized on the importance of enforcing authority and strong leadership. His point – even though he is alone- shows how knowledge alone does not work the entire emancipator work. All in all, the answers suggests, the academicians believe there is a capacity to start the work.

In terms of the knowledge production challenge, they believe in the construction of an alternative system which better accommodates a southern scholarship.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The research findings showed that the academician's conception of decolonization inclines toward a more inclusive and accommodating decolonial work. Their perception associates decolonization with decentering of Eurocentric knowledge production, recognition of a southern and African epistemologies, and adding the product of these epistemologies dutifully in the knowledge productions and curriculums of their country's and global south's institutions. The research revealed that they have the same stance when evaluating what an Ethiopian decolonization would mean. A priority was the transformation of the mind which was made captive by a self-imposed colonization. And, the approach they subscribed is the recognition of an indigenous knowledge system, Ethiopian's worldview and contributions. The ultimate recognition results in institutionalization. Both Woldegiorgis practical measures and Jansen's conceptualization did mirror their perception. A radical conception of decolonization did not manifested in the findings.

The research findings also revealed that there is a curriculum decolonization need in the College of Social Sciences and the departments that were discussed. A need for emancipation from Eurocentric cannons and methodological dependency; a need for integration of indigenous languages and focus on local challenges were demonstrated. It is indicated in the findings that the academicians recommends a softer decolonization both to individual departments and the college as a whole. The needs they recognize mainly reflects Jansen's *Decolonisation as additive-inclusive knowledge* and *Decolonization as the decentering of European knowledge*. In addition, there was an acknowledgment of *Encounters with entangled knowledges* – the challenges of dichotomizing knowledge as southern and northern. A consistent preference of soft decolonization is reflected throughout the findings. This may emanate from Ethiopia's non-colonized status; the harder decolonization conceptions clearly align themselves with an extreme colonialism related annihilation of the African subject possessions. That kind of experience was not faced by Ethiopians. Hence, the academician's conception of decolonization is in line with their country's historical experiences.

According to the academicians, a decolonized social science identifies and reproduces the works of non-western scholars and transcends the Eurocentric positivist tradition. This utterly reflects the decolonial literature. They also had a unique perspective of what a decolonized social science would mean – they believe social science would transcend into social studies if decolonization succeeds in its endeavor. Following their perception, it is possible to commence a decolonial work creating a platform for a humanities and social science dialogue. In addition, their assertion that a decolonized social science features a robust south-south dialogue shows how the conception of decolonization is intricate.

Examining the findings shows that the academicians are hopeful about their capability. They think it is realizable despite the challenges. They are sure that the Eurocentric training academicians passed through will pose a challenge. However, they had faith in the diffusion power of knowledge – decolonizing their disciplines by studying the multifaceted decolonial calls. This positive attitude is described in the decolonial literature as a crucial ingredient for doing a decolonial work.

The research also showed that a single or two conceptual frameworks could not accommodate the perception of decolonization. The findings made it evident that decolonization will continue to be debated so it can incorporate as many voices as it can.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

This research is a discussion of university decolonization in a non-colonized country. The absence of colonial experiences in Ethiopia made the discussion of epistemological decolonization infinitesimal. There needs to be a better academic debate and knowledge production to address the issue. The university must engage itself in the development of a framework which can address the epistemic violence the country encountered in its historical evolution.

The findings showed that there are multiple themes that falls outside of the conceptual frameworks. This suggests a need for development of a more comprehensive curriculum decolonization framework. Doing so can help strategize a decolonial work.

The study is conducted relying on the perspectives of six academicians from college of social sciences. A more broad and extensive research using diverse academicians from different

colleges and institutions should be made in order to have a better understanding of the phenomenon.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Consent Form for Interview

**RESEARCH: The Need for Decolonization: A Case Study of Addis Ababa University**

**RESEARCHER: Kidus Gezahegne**

I have been given information about “The Need for Decolonization: A Case Study of Addis Ababa University” and discussed the research project with Kidus Gezahegne who is conducting this research as part of a Master’s Degree in the department of African and Asian Studies at Addis Ababa University.

I have a complete understanding that my participation in this research is voluntary; I am free to refuse to participate and free to withdraw from the research at any time. My refusal to participate or withdrawal of consent will not affect my relationship with the Department of African and Asian Studies or my relationship with Addis Ababa University. If I have any enquires about the research, I can contact Kidus Gezahegne. In addition, if I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research has been conducted, I can contact the Department of African and Asian Studies.

Interviews – with you the lecturer – will take 45 – 60 minutes. Your responses to this interview will be confidential. The researcher will assign code names/numbers which will be used in the research notes and documents. Moreover, all information and electronic data will be saved secured and encrypted.

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for the research purpose only, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

Date

.....

...../...../.....

Name and Title

.....

## **Appendix B: Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews**

1. What do you know about the decolonization movement of the global south and its calls for a decolonized higher education?
2. How do you understand the decolonization quest in Ethiopian context?
3. Do you think there is a decolonial need in your department and in the college overall?
4. What does a decolonized social science mean according to you?
5. Do you think you and your colleagues in the college possess the necessary knowledge to do the decolonial work?
6. How are you challenged and impacted by the knowledge production and management in the world as a whole?

### **Appendix C: List of Interviewees**

Informant	Academic Rank	Interview Date
Informant 1	Associate Professor	May 19, 2021
Informant 2	Assistant Professor	June 24, 2021
Informant 3	Assistant Professor	June 11, 2021
Informant 4	Assistant Professor	May 22, 2021
Informant 5	Associate Professor	June 2, 2021
Informant 6	Assistant Professor	June 6, 2021

Academic Backgrounds of the Interviewees – In no particular order for the sake of Anonymity

Asian and African Studies, History, Philosophy, Political Science & International Studies, Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Studies