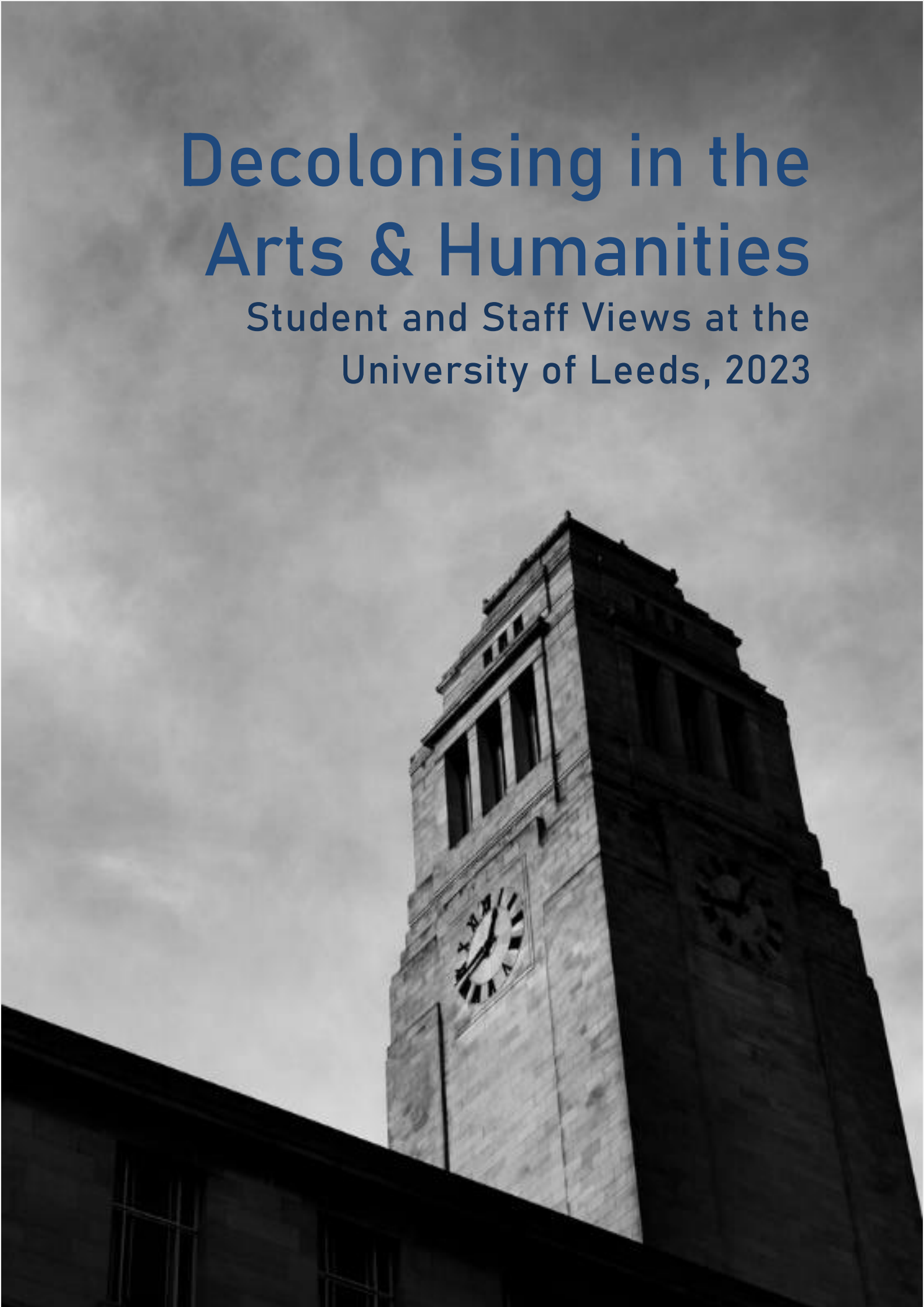
Decolonising in the Arts & Humanities

Student and Staff Views at the University of Leeds, 2023



CONTENTS

1 CONTRIBUTORS

Current notions of authorship within academic publishing are narrow and focus on those who design research, collect and analyse data, and write up the results. Especially when conducting participatory research this reinforces conventional power dynamics in which researchers are the sole creators of knowledge while research participants are relegated to mere objects to be studied. This overlooks that research subjects have situated experiences to which researchers do not have access without their help, and therefore should be understood as sources and creators of knowledge in their own right. Additionally, the narrow conception of authorship also risks underplaying the vital contributions that colleagues and collaborators have made throughout a research project. We should therefore consider whether we need to shift our current idea of authorship toward an understanding that focuses on the collaborative act of knowledge creation. It has been suggested that this shift could be put in practice by moving away from the notion of "authorship" to one of "contributorship", akin to the credit scenes at the end of a film (Sarna-Wojcicki, Perret, Eitzel, & Fortmann, 2017, p. 722). Throughout this report, I will frequently move between the use of "I" and "we" to indicate when decisions were taken by myself or in conjunction with others. Please see below for a list of credits for those who have contributed to this study.

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Survey Distribution

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Educational Engagement Team at the University of Leeds

Research Inspired by

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2 Background & Aims

In August 2022 I was appointed as one of six university-wide Decolonising Academic Leads, with a special responsibility for the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Culture at the University of Leeds. These roles were created to help implement the University's Decolonising Framework and Decolonising Key Principles on the ground. Because this position was new, the first step I wanted to take was to explore current staff and student understandings of and views on decolonising within their disciplines through a mixed-method survey. This will help me take an evidence-informed approach to the role going forward and serve as an opportunity for a large number of staff and students to have their say about the direction that we, as a Faculty, should be taking.

The first aim of this study is therefore to use the information gathered as a guide to understanding the kind of support and interventions at Faculty level that could be both meaningful and effective in practice. Secondly, by making more specific data available to individual Schools within the Faculty, it can also do the same on a more local level. Finally, by running a similar study again in a few years' time, the data gathered will be able to act as a baseline standard to evaluate whether any of the policies implemented were able to create positive change.

This study was inspired by and draws on the work of Arjan Gosal, Decolonising Academic Lead for the Faculty of Environment at the University of Leeds, and Laura Loyola-Hernández who explored the impact of decolonising practices on staff within their Faculty context (Loyola-Hernández & Gosal, 2022). I thought it important to include the student voice, too, so Gosal and I created a complimentary student survey which was run simultaneously in both our Faculties. By creating a cross-faculty comparison we also hope that we will be able to use the data gathered here to draw conclusions and make recommendations at a broader institutional level in future.

3 POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

Working on a project aimed at decolonising higher education, it has been paramount to reflect on my own positionality as a researcher, educator and someone who holds a leadership position. This is an ongoing process and constantly evolves as I continue to educate myself and critically reflect with others on my position within wider institutional and historical structures.

In the context of my role as Decolonising Academic Lead, first and foremost, I have to be mindful that I am a white researcher who grew up, was educated and is currently working in global minority Countries[1] (in particular Germany and the UK – two former colonial powers). As such, I have no lived experience of the racial oppression and marginalisation that permeates day-to-day life, and higher education more specifically. This carries with it the danger that through my work I amplify and re-centre, even if only inadvertently, the voices and experiences of those in historic positions of racial advantage. Additionally, by taking up this role, I contribute to the lack of racial diversity in strategic leadership positions across the institution. At the same time, however, it is important that the burden of working toward undoing the harmful legacies of colonialism and ongoing racial oppression does not fall primarily on global ethnic majority colleagues (Doharty, Madriaga, & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021).

Another part of my own positionality that is important to explore in this context has to do with the wider institutional make-up of the university that I am operating within. "Decolonisation" has become a buzzword and universities feel pressure to be perceived as responding to reports and campaigns highlighting the racial disparities that exist within higher education and beyond.[2] Often, however, such attempts remain superficial; "the 'decolonise' mantra has swiftly buzzed its way into acceptable institutional jargon" but "at times, references to 'decolonising' seem so capacious as to stand in for any form of critical engagement with race and representation, or indeed, the mildest of curricular reforms" (Gopal, 2021, pp. 875-876).[3] As a result, institutions can avoid having to make a commitment to the large-scale reform that would be necessary to achieve the radical change that an ongoing institutional process of decolonisation would require. After all "to truly dismantle the master's house means to overturn and not redeem it" (Andrews, 2018, p. 139). Within such a context, taking up a role entitled "Decolonising Lead" could feed into perpetuating surface understandings of decolonising and thereby help to shield the wider institution from the need to make more profound changes. At the same time, however, working within the constraints of the current system, even if they are imperfect and even if any initiatives are always at risk of being co-opted by the institution, can bring about important change that can have a concrete positive impact on our fellow staff and students (Tate & Bagguley, 2017).

I think that these tensions cannot be explained away and that, instead, I need to acknowledge them throughout my work. I continuously benefit from the social, political and institutional structures that disadvantage those from the global ethnic majority and I have a resultant moral responsibility to take active steps to make redress and create change. Following Frantz

[1] I have opted to use the language of "global minority" and "global majority" countries throughout this report to explicitly call into question currently prevailing power dynamics. For an overview of some of the advantages and disadvantages of particular terms see, for example, (Khan, Abimbola, Kyobutungi, & Pai, 2022).

[2] Examples include the "Closing the Gap" report (UUK & NUS, 2019), Why is my curriculum white?, Why isn't my professor black?, Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall.

[3] For a discussion on how "decolonisation" is often used as a mere metaphor see (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Fanon, this is not an act of charity but instead a fulfilment of the responsibility to make reparation (Fanon, 2004/1961, p. 59). But engaging in acts of solidarity [4] within the background and constraints of an unjust system means that I will inevitably continue to be complicit in the very oppression I seek to address. This is an uncomfortable truth, but one that we should not shy away from.[5]

[4] Until recently the term "allyship" was widely used to describe this stance. I am moving away from this language as allyship can involve a passive stance and performativity (think posting a black square on social media during the Black Lives Matter protests) and creates an "us" versus "them" mentality.

[5] It is worthwhile pointing out that feeling comfortable in one's day-to-day activities and interactions is a privilege often solely afforded to and taken for granted by white bodies. Questioning our right to feel comfortable can therefore be an important part of recognising our own privilege. For a more thorough discussion see (Ahmed, 2007).

4 Methodology

4.1 Survey Design and Distribution

This study[6] used an anonymous mixed-methods survey to elicit responses from staff and students across the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Culture at the University of Leeds about their understanding of and views on decolonising within their disciplines. The Faculty is made up of nine Schools: Design; English; Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies (FAHACS); History; Languages, Cultures and Societies (LCS); Media and Communication; Music; Performance and Cultural Industries (PCI); and Philosophy, Religion and History of Science (PRHS). The survey was available for four weeks (6th-31st March 2023) and open to all staff and students independent of their role or level of study. With the help of key contacts in each School, the survey was advertised through emails, newsletters and other regular communication channels. Posters and flyers in key areas were used to raise additional awareness. To gain a more representative sample of student responses, students had the option of entering into a prize draw for the chance to win one of ten £20 shopping vouchers. The platform used was Jisc Online Surveys and participants, on accessing the link, were presented with a participant information sheet and consent form before being able to complete the survey itself. The number and type of questions in the survey varied depending on the position and role of the participant but ranged from 7-11 closed and 2-5 open questions.[7] In addition, we collected some personal information about the respondents. In particular, we asked for the School that they belong to, their role or programme and level of study, and their ethnicity.[8] Ensuring anonymity while collecting this information was important. In particular, the job titles of staff members may be unique, so we left it up to staff to describe their job title in a way that they saw fit. Similarly, because of a lack of racial diversity in both our staff and student body, we left the ethnicity field as optional to avoid respondents having to indirectly reveal who they are. Where respondents included identifying information in their written responses, these have been omitted for the purposes of this report. Overall, I received 402 responses – 103 from staff and 299 from students.[9,10]

4.2 Survey Analysis

Answers to the closed questions, for staff and students respectively, were analysed for the overall number of respondents, respondents grouped according to job role or level of study, and ethnicity. Because information about both job roles and ethnicity were provided by participants in the form of a free text answer, it is important to make clear how these characteristics were grouped for the purpose of creating meaningful comparisons. For level of study, students were grouped into the three categories of undergraduate (n=219), postgraduate taught (n=47), and postgraduate research (n=30). In the case of job roles, I

[6] The study received ethical approval from the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures at the University of Leeds (reference number LTPRHS-044).

[7] See Appendix 1 for the survey questions.

[8] See Appendix 2 for the questions about the respondents' personal information.

[9] Two student responses have been excluded from the data set as they did not answer the questions and were submitted with the sole aim of gaining access to the prize draw.

[10] This equates to around 17% of AHC academic staff and 4% of AHC students. Because of the way in which some non-academic roles are centralised within the University, it was not possible to get an accurate percentage for this category of staff members.

divided the answers into three categories: early career academic staff (postgraduate teaching assistants, research fellows, teaching fellows and lecturers) (n=55), senior academic staff (senior lecturers, readers, associate professors and professors) (n=33), and academic-related and professional services staff (e.g. student education service staff or management and support services staff) (n=10).

In the case of ethnicity, we had made the conscious decision not to employ the commonly used list of ethnic groups recommended by the UK Office for National Statistics. We felt that the list, and any other list for that matter, would be arbitrary and unable to capture the way in which people self-identify in response to their lived experience of working and studying in the context of UK higher education. In order to analyse the free text data, some form of grouping was, however, necessary. Following Sara Ahmed's point that "spaces acquire the shape of the bodies that 'inhabit' them" (2007, p. 156), we can understand the Faculty as a white space; i.e. a space in which "white bodies are habitual insofar as they 'trail behind' actions: they do not get 'stressed' in their encounters with objects or others, as their whiteness 'goes unnoticed'" (2007, p. 156). One important avenue of enquiry for this particular study was therefore how understandings of and views on decolonising differ for those that self-identify as white and those who feel "uncomfortable, exposed, visible, different, when they take up this space" (2007, p. 157).[11] As a result I analysed data according to "global ethnic minority" (staff n=64; student n=149) and "global ethnic majority" (staff n=9; student n=52). As has been widely problematised in recent discussions of terms such as BAME and BIPOC (Khan, Abimbola, Kyobutungi, & Pai, 2022), however, it is important not to essentialise the experiences of diverse groups of people and re-centre whiteness by creating a homogenous "non-white" other when analysing data.[12] I therefore also decided, as far as the sample sizes allowed, to produce a more fine-grained analysis to understand the distinct views and experiences of various groups belonging to the global ethnic majority. In the case of students, the three largest group of respondents identified as "Asian/British Asian/Mixed (Asian & White)" (n=32), "Asian" (n=21), and "African/Caribbean/Black British/Mixed (Black & White) (n=12). Unfortunately, because these categories still combined the experiences of very distinctive groups of students and the sample sizes were fairly small, no discernible patterns resulted from this analysis. As such, these results have not been included for the purpose of this report. In the case of staff, this more fine-grained analysis was not possible at all as the number of global ethnic majority staff respondents was too low to break it down further.

Where closed questions asked respondents to indicate their answer on a five-point likert scale (strongly agree; agree; neither agree nor disagree; disagree; strongly disagree) the answers were analysed on a reduced three-point scale (agree or strongly agree; neither agree nor

[11] As much as possible we were lead in this grouping by the way in which respondents had chosen to highlight parts of their identity. For example, when someone chose to describe their identity as "white/other/latin american" we took this to mean that they understood themselves as white in the context of inhabiting the space of UK higher education. When someone, however, chose to describe their identity as "Latinx" we took them as foregrounding their experience of not being a habitual body within the white space of UK higher education.

[12] We ought to be wary of an over-reliance on what Edward Said has called a "binary opposition" which divides the world "into two halves, the developed and the developing countries" (Said, 1979, p. 46). A similar point applies to the context of race.

disagree; disagree or strongly disagree) to allow for the identification of broad trends of agreement and disagreement.

Answers to the open questions, for staff and students respectively, were analysed using an inductive thematic analysis. Responses were coded according to common themes that emerged from within the data set itself. We settled on this approach as it is useful in creating a structure to analyse large data sets while at the same time enabling the analysis to be guided by the responses themselves rather than by a pre-existing research hypothesis. Depending on the question, this process led me to establishing between six and eleven overarching themes to group the responses. In many cases, these themes have several sub-categories to allow for a discussion of the nuanced positions taken within that particular theme. Where a respondent's answer moved across several thematic boundaries, their answer was included under the heading of each of the applicable themes.[13,14]

[13] For example, if a respondent were to say "decolonising is about diversifying reading lists. Thinking about the types of assessment we set is important too", the first part of their answer would be included in the theme of "diversifying teaching content" while the second part of their answer would fall into the theme of "teaching/assessment methods".

[14] The exception to this are cases in which one theme of analysis indicated a broader understanding of decolonisation than its constituent components. For example, if a respondent were to say that decolonisation is about "changing both the curriculum and my research", their response would not be included under the themes of "decolonising research" and "decolonising teaching", but instead in the broader theme of "decolonising academic work" to indicate that the response suggested a wider understanding of the applicability of decolonisation.

5 RESPONDENTS

For the student survey I received 299 responses from students across all nine Schools within the Faculty (see Fig. 1).

- The distribution according to level of study was: 73.2% undergraduate, 15.7% postgraduate taught, 10% postgraduate research, and 1% pre-sessional or foundation year.
- The distribution according to ethnicity was: 49.8% global ethnic minority, 32.8% no answer provided, and 17.4% global ethnic majority.
- The distribution according to School (see Fig.1) was roughly representative of overall student numbers. The two most notable exceptions are: the School of Design, while making up around 16% of students in the Faculty, only accounted for 5.7% of survey respondents; the School of English, while making up around 9% of students in the Faculty, accounted for 18.1% of survey respondents.

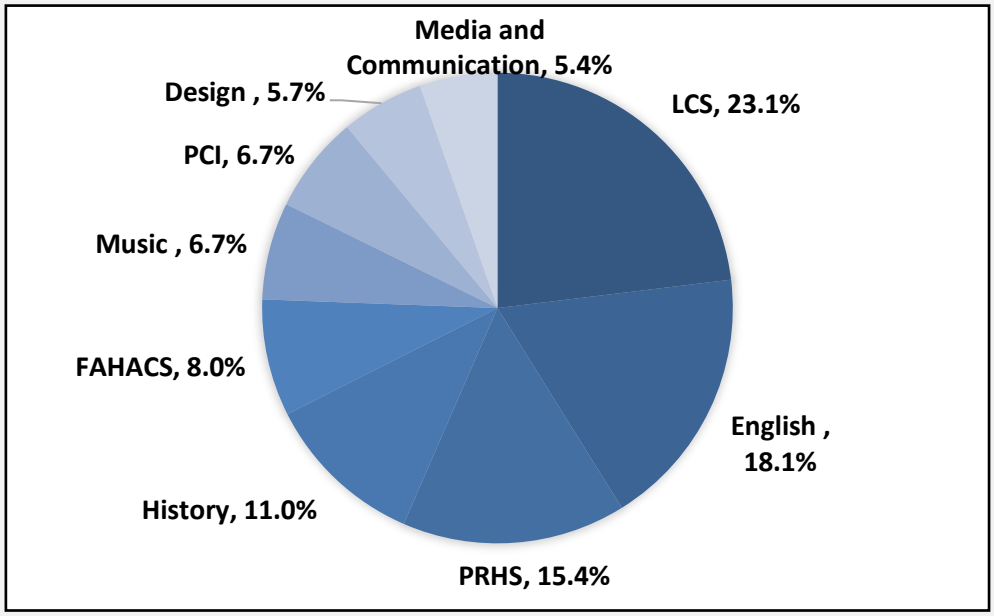

Fig. 1 Student Reponses by School

For the staff survey I received 103 responses from staff across all nine Schools within the Faculty and also some staff who work across the Faculty and are not situated within a particular School (see Fig. 2).

- The distribution according to role was: 53.4% early career academic, 32% senior academic, 9.7% academic-related and professional services, and 4.9% did not specify their role.
- The distribution according to ethnicity was: 62.1% global ethnic minority, 29.1% no answer provided and 8.7% global ethnic majority.
- The distribution according to School (see Fig.2) was roughly representative of overall staff numbers. The two most notable exceptions are: the School of Languages, Cultures and Societies, while making up around 30% of staff in the Faculty, only accounted for 7.8% of survey respondents; the School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science, while making up around 11% of staff in the Faculty, accounted for 23.3% of survey respondents.

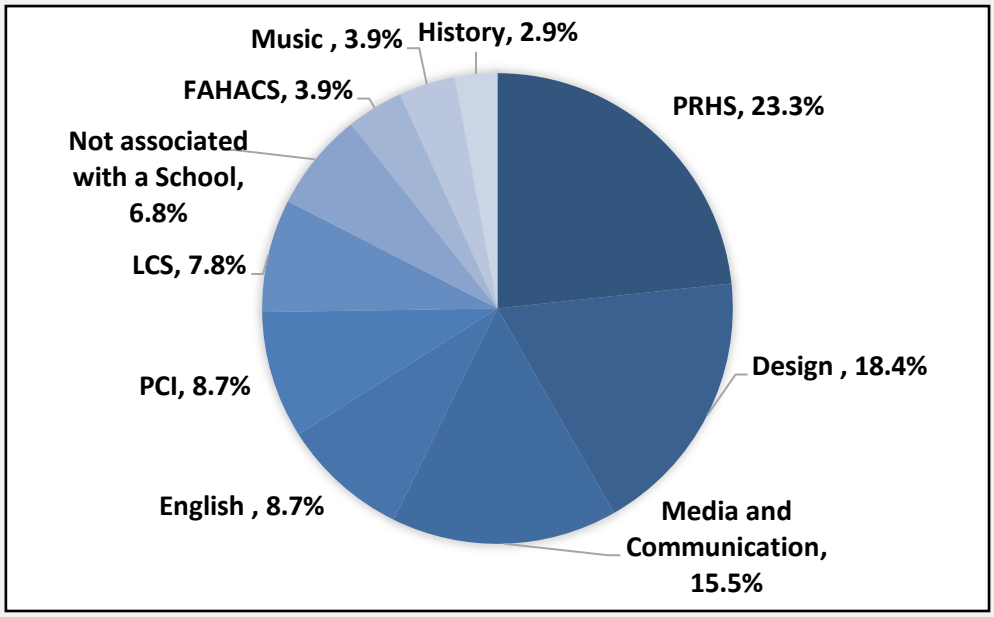

Fig. 2 Staff Responses by School

6 What is Decolonisation in Higher Education?

To begin with, it was important to understand the extent to which students and staff are familiar with the term decolonisation in higher education. In the case of students, over three quarters of students said that they were familiar with the term, around 17% of students indicated that they had heard of the term but were unsure what it meant, while only around 4% of students responded that they were not familiar with the term at all (Fig.3).

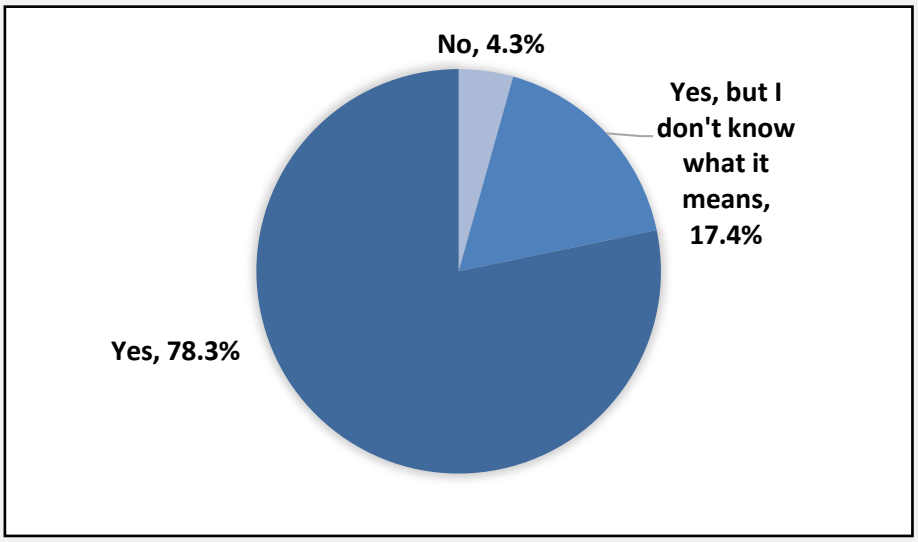

Fig.3 Student Response to "Are you familiar with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education?"

For students who indicated that they were from a global ethnic majority, the number of respondents who were familiar with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education rose to 82.7% while not a single global ethnic majority student indicated that they were unfamiliar with the term. The proportion of students who responded that they had heard of the term but did not know what it meant remained roughly the same.

Another point of interest are the results for postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students respectively. For undergraduate students, the proportions were broadly the same as in Fig.3. For postgraduate taught students, however, the proportion of students unfamiliar with the term, or having heard of the term but not knowing what it meant, increased significantly. Only around two thirds of postgraduate taught students indicated that they were familiar with "decolonisation" in higher education. In the case of postgraduate research students, however, the trend went into the opposite direction with 90% of respondents saying that they were familiar, and not a single respondent saying they were unfamiliar with the term.

We also wanted to understand the extent to which students are aware of already ongoing decolonising initiatives within their school, faculty or the university in general. Fewer than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were aware of such initiatives, while over a third of students either disagreed or strongly disagreed (Fig.4). It is interesting to note

that students' awareness of decolonisation initiatives rises from 41.7% for undergraduate students, to 51.1% for postgraduate taught and 63.3% for postgraduate research students.

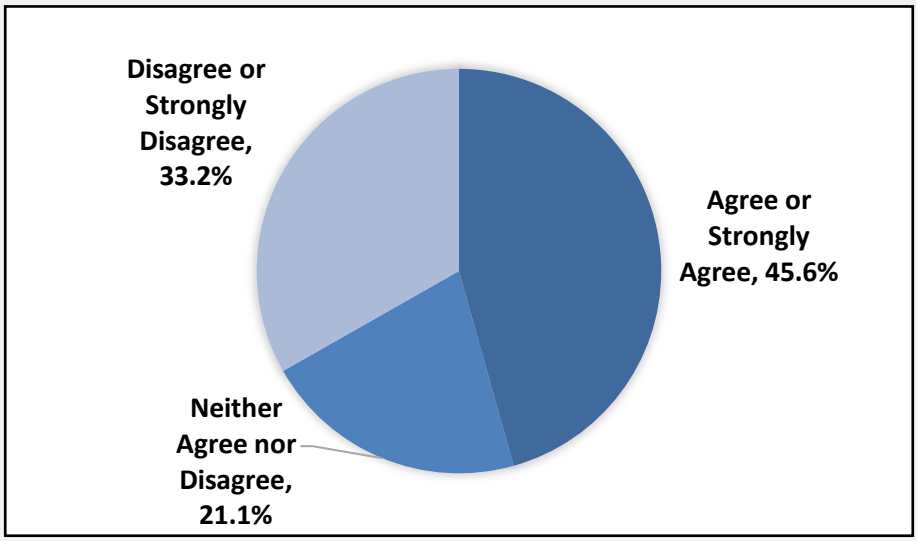

Fig.4 Student Responses to "I am aware of decolonising initiatives within the school/faculty/university."

With around one in five student respondents indicating "No" or "Yes, but I don't know what it means" to the question of whether they were familiar with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education, **there is a significant need across the Faculty of AHC to create resources and opportunities for students to engage with an introduction to the fundamental principles and aims of decolonisation within higher education**. In particular, the data suggests that **special attention should be given to targeting postgraduate taught students** – around a third of which indicated that they were unfamiliar with the concept.

What about staff familiarity with the term decolonisation in higher education? In the case of staff, just over 90% of respondents indicated that they knew what the term meant, while the rest had heard of the term but were unsure about what it meant (Fig.5).

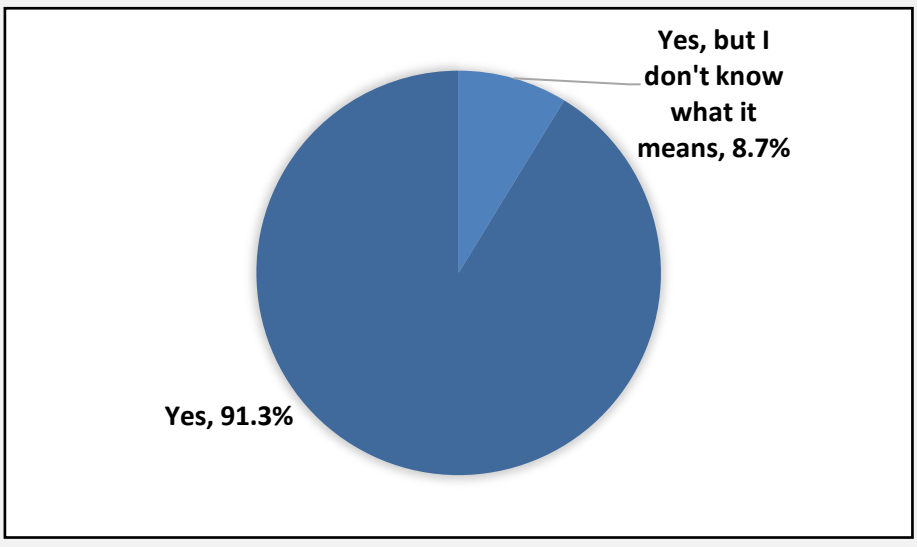

Fig.5 Staff Responses to "Are you familiar with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education?"

Similar to the student responses, the familiarity of global ethnic majority staff respondents with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education was higher, with 100% indicating that they knew what the term meant. A similar trend can be found when looking at the responses to the additional question directed at staff whether they had "read the University of Leeds Decolonising Key Principles". Overall, around half of respondents answered in the affirmative. When we look at the answers from global ethnic majority staff, however, a much larger proportion – 88.9% of respondents – had read the institutional decolonising principles.

The job role of respondents also appeared to have an influence on their familiarity with the concept of decolonisation. While the results in Fig.5 are roughly representative of early career academic staff, senior academic staff were significantly more likely – 97% of respondents – to indicate that they knew what the concept of "decolonisation" means. The reverse was the case for academic-related and professional services staff, where only 68.1% of respondents answered "Yes". This discrepancy is further underlined by looking at the number of staff who have read the University's decolonising principles. While the distribution for both early career and senior academic staff was roughly fifty-fifty, only 10% of academic-related and professional services staff respondents had engaged with the principles.[15]

The concept of "decolonisation" within higher education is complex and multi-faceted. One aim of the survey was therefore to assess the extent to which staff, in particular, were familiar with these complexities. For this purpose, we asked all staff who indicated that they were familiar with the term, to "briefly describe in your own words what this term means to you". Six broad themes arose from the answers provided (Fig.6).[16]

By far the largest proportion of comments understood decolonisation within higher education to be primarily about changing the way that we approach student education, curriculum and pedagogy. Responses in this theme defined decolonisation, for example, as

> "changing the way we frame and construct our teaching/learning through a variety of means including being aware of our own biases and how these impact on our thinking/worldview, by including a wider range of voices to include those who have been excluded or marginalised and by moving away from a European colonial lens/narrative".[17]

12.7% of responses indicated that decolonisation in higher education was not only related to student education, but also affected other areas of academic work such as research; for example, for one respondent decolonisation meant

> "ensuring that bias in teaching, learning, and research that has arisen as a result of the legacies of colonialism is actively acknowledged and countered".

[15] The number of survey participants in the category of "academic-related and professional services" was so small (n=10) that the results are much more tentative than for both early career (n=55) and senior academic (n=33) staff.

[16] 4.9% of respondents used this question to voice their criticism of decolonisation. I will leave these responses aside for the purposes of this section and will explore them in more depth in "Sources of Resistance".

[17] Within this theme there were several different understandings of what exactly decolonising teaching should involve, but I will explore these in more detail in the later section on "Diversifying or Decolonising?".

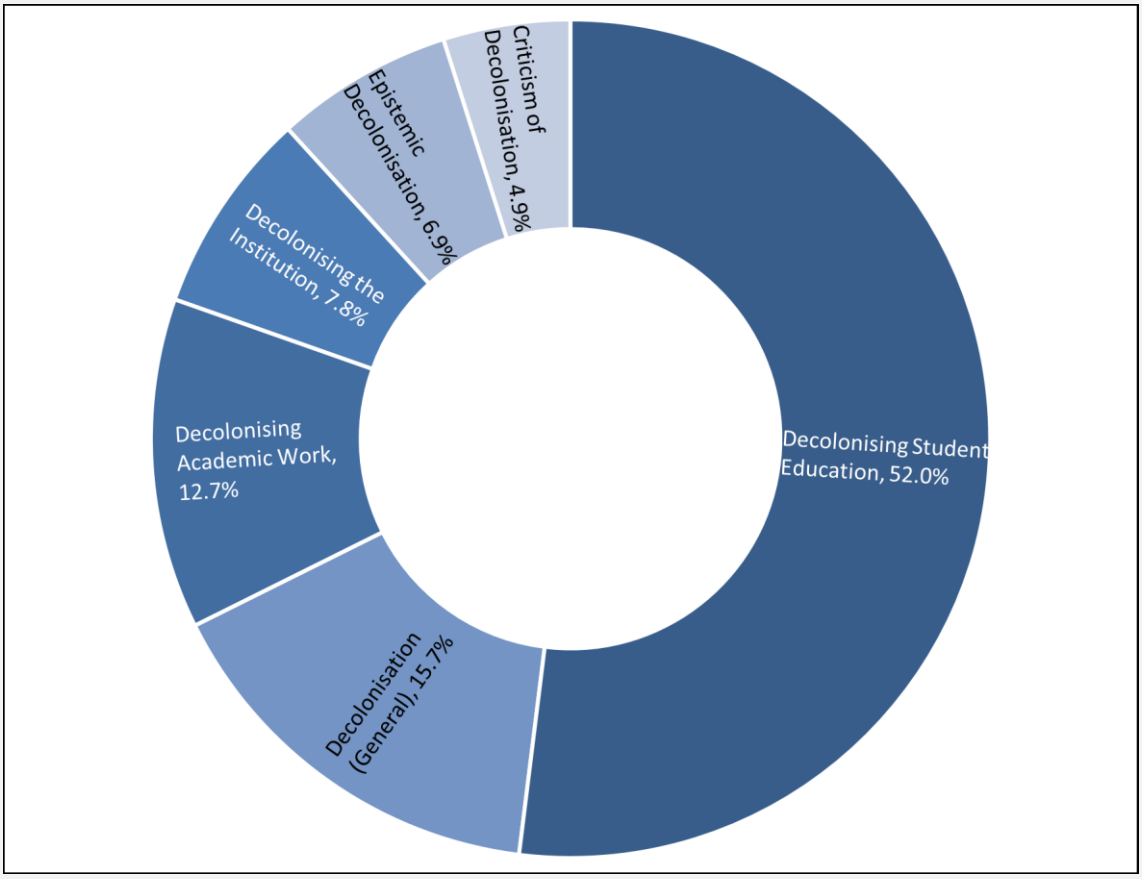

Fig.6 Staff Responses to "Please briefly describe in your own words what this term means to you."

7.8% stated that decolonisation in higher education ultimately needs to happen at the level of the broader institution. One respondent, for instance, answered that

> "in the context of HE [Higher Education], the term refers to an effort to recognise the ways in which the systems, practices and epistemologies that structure HE embody and perpetuate various inequalities and power imbalances. It also refers to the ongoing work to challenge and, ideally, eradicate, those inbuilt biases and inequalities by radically rethinking and restructuring how we think, teach and learn in HE".

6.9 % of responses focussed on the broader epistemic dimension of decolonisation. One respondent, for example, understood decolonisation in higher education as

> "ensuring that existing systems of knowledge production which are often situated in coloniality are critiqued".

15.7% of respondents provided a definition of decolonisation that was not specific to the context of higher education, but could be applied more broadly, for example,

> "decolonization means the equitable rearrangement of the world through the dislodging of violent structures, systems, legacies and institutions - especially as these continue to impact on the global majority".

Overall, staff were much less likely than students to say that they were unfamiliar with the term "decolonisation" (fewer than 10%). This suggests that there is a broad exposure of staff from across the Faculty to discussions or initiatives that relate to decolonising within higher education. But **the data tentatively suggests that there could be a gap in the way in which academic-related and professional services staff across the Faculty are exposed to**

discussions and initiatives related to the concept of "decolonisation" – nearly a third responded that they didn't know what the term meant.

Finally, another important trend could be found when comparing the responses of global ethnic majority and minority respondents. Taking together the findings from both surveys, it suggests that global ethnic majority students and staff are slightly more engaged with the concept of decolonisation than their global ethnic minority peers. They were more likely to indicate that they knew what the term "decolonisation" meant and, in the case of staff, significantly more likely to be familiar with the University's Decolonising Key Principles.[18] **In the Faculty of AHC it will therefore be important to especially target global ethnic minority students and staff and educate them on the concept of "decolonisation"**.

While we did not ask students to provide us with further details of their understanding of "decolonisation", staff responses here were illuminating. They suggest that, while a large majority of staff believe that they are familiar with the term "decolonisation", many of them have a very narrow understanding of it that primarily applies to the curriculum we teach. Coloniality[19] permeates society and higher education beyond the content that we teach to students and the pedagogies that we employ to do so. Our attempts at decolonising the curriculum, for example, are constrained by the coloniality of knowledge production that is continuously reproduced by research practices within higher education (Richardson, 2018) as well as by the wider stratified system of higher education that universities operate within (Holmwood, 2018). **One focus should therefore be to broaden decolonisation activities to move beyond the current focus on teaching and learning and to start thinking about what decolonisation entails for a broader set of areas within higher education such as research, recruitment and promotion, and institutional policies that the Faculty of AHC has the power to shape**.[20]

[18] The number of global ethnic majority staff respondents was very low (n=9) in comparison to global ethnic minority staff respondents (n=61). But, given that the trend from this small pool of respondents aligns with the trend in the more representative student sample, it suggests that the staff responses hint at a statistically significant difference.

[19] Anibal Quijano coined the term "coloniality" to describe the connection between historic practices of colonialism and their ongoing structural legacies. See, for example, (Quijano & Ennis, 2000).

[20] Each of these areas will be problematised in more details later on in this report.

7 Sources of Resistance

The previous section suggested that a significant number of students and staff may not, as of yet, be familiar with the complex nature and demands of calls to decolonisation in higher education. Additionally, throughout both the student and staff surveys, responses indicated a number of sources of potential resistance to decolonisation efforts.

The student responses to the question whether decolonisation should be an important part of studying their discipline will be a useful starting point here (Fig.7). Over 86.6% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while 7.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and only 6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Global ethnic majority students were somewhat more likely to agree or strongly agree with the statement (90.4%) though 3.8% of respondents still disagreed or strongly disagreed. While it is encouraging to see that a large number of students sees the importance of decolonisation within their discipline, it also shows that over 1 in 10 students do not (or are at least ambivalent about it).

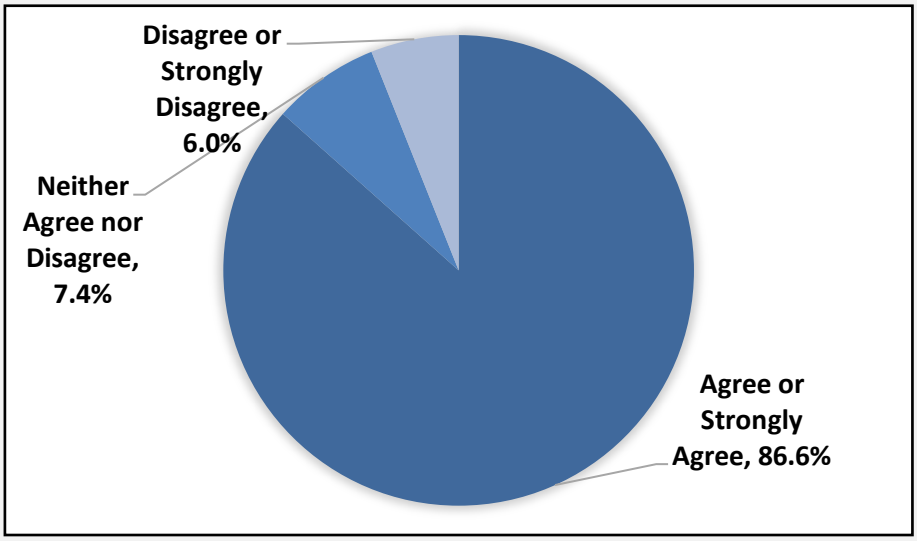

Fig.7 Student Responses to "Decolonisation should be an important part of studying my discipline."

Bearing this in mind, we can look at the different reasons that both students and staff provided throughout the surveys.

7.1 Decolonisation is unscientific

In the staff survey, one source of resistance that became obvious was that the concept of decolonisation was seen to be unscientific; one respondent, for example, said:

> "The project of decolonizing the curriculum involves turning education away from learning according to that which has methodological success and turning towards seeing methodological success merely as an unjust application of political power—specifically, 'colonialism' of knowledge, epistemology, and pedagogy. Decolonizing the curriculum is about dismantling the values conveyed in what is known as the 'hidden curriculum', these value[s] include methodological rigor, rationality, and liberal civics and ethics, and replacing them with other agendas. These agendas may include cultural traditions and witchcraft instead of empiricis[m]. Emotion, interpretation, and highly tendentious 'discourse analysis' is put forward as being at least as epistemologically sound as reason. These projects resist liberal civics and

> ethics, as these are seen as impediments, not the fundamentally necessary ingredients of an ideal democracy."

The quote above expresses the worry that decolonisation is the misguided agenda of wanting to supplant scientifically proven methods with alternatives such as "cultural traditions", "witchcraft" and "emotion". Such statements mirror the logic of colonialism which, as described by Aimé Césaire, holds "that the West invented science. That the West alone knows how to think; that at the borders of the Western world there begins the shadowy realm of primitive thinking" (2000/1950, p. 69). There is no room for even contemplating that legitimate knowledge and forms of knowledge production could come from those who have been formerly colonised. Edward W. Said has called this the "apogee of Orientalist confidence. […] On the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other there are Arab-Orientals; the former are (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things" (1979, p. 49). The opposition between "rationality" and "emotion" in the staff response in question is particularly instructive here. Whatever those aligned with the traditions and methods of academia in global ethnic minority countries say is classed as logical, rational and objective while any knowledges or methodologies from formerly colonised countries and peoples that challenge them are automatically tagged as illogical, irrational, subjective and emotional. This, by default, shields those in positions of global advantage from having to take seriously anything that calls into question their supposed superiority of thinking, doing and being. As Frantz Fanon has succinctly put it "for the colonised subject, objectivity is always directed against him" (2004/1961, p. 37). The existence of such an attitude within contemporary academia is reflective of what Rosalba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez call the "epistemic coloniality of the university" which reproduces "monocultural and extractivist approaches to knowledge that lead to the erasure and discrediting of other knowledges, and to the negation of the epistemic diversity of the world" (2018, p. 114). It exemplifies an attitude they call "'arrogant ignorance' because it is an epistemology that is at one and the same time pretending to be wide-ranging, or even claiming universal validity, while remaining oblivious to the epistemic diversity of the world" (2018, p. 112).

7.2 There is no structural racism in the present

The second reason for opposition to decolonisation, this time found in the student survey, was a denial of the existence of structural racism. One student said:

> "decolonisation isn't simply 'good' because the question-setters loathe the idea of 'whiteness', nor is Western society inherently racist against ethnic minority groups simply because you believe it to be"

This comment could be understood as an example of, what Robin DiAngelo has described as, "white fragility". According to her, white people live in an "insulated environment of racial privilege" which "builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress" (2011, p. 55). When this comfort is even slightly challenged, those showing white fragility will immediately get defensive through, for example, "outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviours such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-induced situation" (2011, p. 57). These defensive moves can result from a variety of triggers such as questioning the presumed objectivity of someone's views and the frameworks they employ, challenging the idea that

we operate within a meritocratic system, or pointing out that white liberalism, and the actions of those that operate within it, has racist impacts. According to Shauneen Pete we can expect to see push back to decolonising work because what the individuals in question are experiencing is a form of cognitive dissonance as a result of "the purposeful exposure of dominant views of whiteness and the disruption of the luxury of ignorance and the assumptions of rightness" (2018, p. 185).

7.3 Decolonisation endangers free speech

A third source of resistance to decolonisation, to be found in both the student and staff surveys, was the worry that decolonisation might have a chilling effect and stifle free speech and open discussion because people become too worried that what they are saying is perceived as politically correct. One member of staff, for example, argued that

> "decolonising as discussed here is based on (recent) postmodern theory and social justice activism that is authoritarian in nature. As a […] defender of open and free public debate, I find such an approach to be problematic, especially on a university campus where the exchange of differences in opinions should be front and center".

A student appeared to have a worry along similar lines:

> "As decolonisation is such a loaded but vague term […], I fear, rather than encouraging curiosity and discussion, it may make students more reluctant to voice their questions and opinions lest they appear (unintentionally) insensitive."

This worry appears to be supported by responses from both student and staff when asked about the extent to which they were worried about getting things wrong when it comes to decolonising.

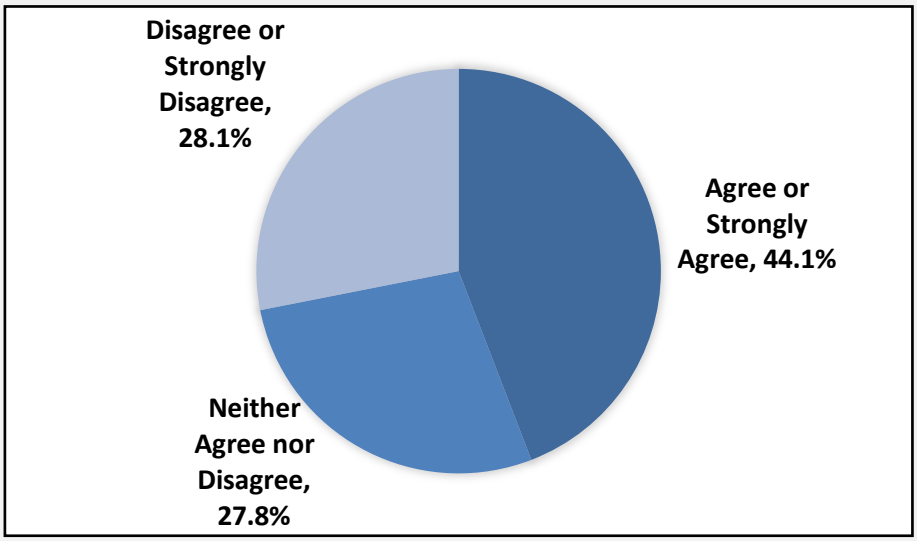

Fig.8 Student Responses to "I am concerned about 'getting it wrong' when it comes to decolonising."

Overall, over 40% of students and staff agreed that they were concerned about getting it wrong while only around 30% of students and staff either disagreed or strongly disagreed (Fig.8 and Fig.9).[21]

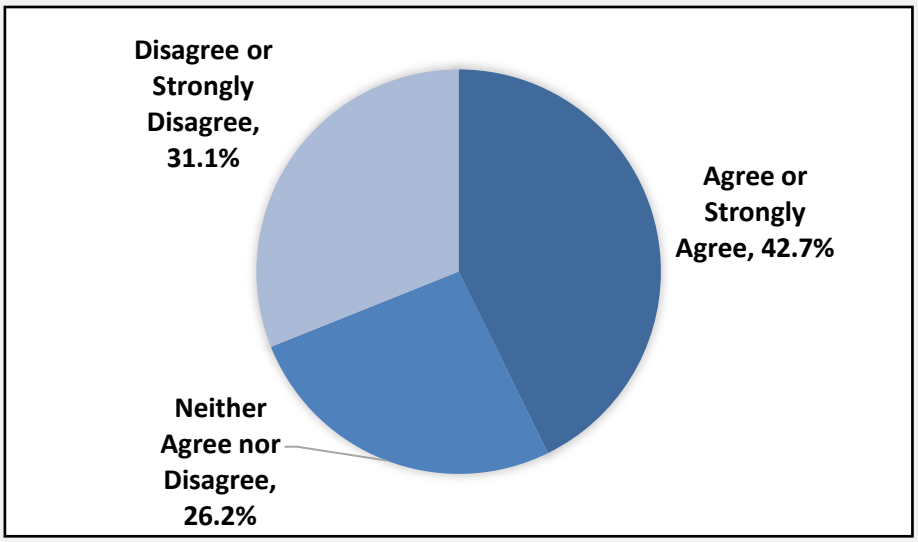

Fig.9 Staff Responses to "I am concerned about 'getting it wrong' when it comes to decolonising."

There are two points worth emphasising at this point. Firstly, the fear that decolonisation undermines freedom of expression is often rooted in the expectation of comfort described by DiAngelo above. To disrupt this expectation, Michalinos Zembylas (2018) has suggested that we should employ pedagogies of discomfort – i.e. pedagogies which invite learners, especially those in positions of social advantage, to critically examine their deeply held beliefs and self-image – to further decolonisation efforts within curriculum and pedagogy. Utilising discomfort within the curriculum is effective because, according to Sara Ahmed, "discomfort […] allows things to move by bringing what is in the background, what gets over-looked as furniture, back to life" (2007, p. 163). Secondly, such responses rightly point us toward the need, within such pedagogies of discomfort, to provide training and guidance to both staff and students on how to engage in discussions that they will find discomforting. When we increasingly start talking about challenging topics such as racism and coloniality, we need to ensure that both staff and students are prepared to constructively engage in these debates. The Faculty of AHC has already created a staff-facing resource on engaging with challenging discussions (internal resource only) and has delivered accompanying workshops to key staff in student education leadership roles across its Schools. In line with the discussion above, it explicitly states that "the purpose of this guidance is not necessarily to prevent situations of discomfort or controversy from arising, but to suggest strategies of minimising their potentially harmful impact on students (and teaching staff)". These strategies, in essence, centre around ways in which staff can "create an environment of trust and support, where every participant is considerate of others whilst also aware that learning is an ongoing process

[21] Unsurprisingly, global ethnic minority staff and students are a lot more worried about getting things wrong (by around 10% for the former and 25% for the latter). Across the board, for both staff and students, worries about getting it wrong appeared to decrease in line with level of experience and seniority. Senior academic staff were less likely to worry about getting it wrong than their early career academic colleagues. At the same time, academic-related and professional services staff were the most likely to say that they were concerned about not getting it right. Similarly, confidence in dealing with the subject of decolonisation seems to grow as students progress in their studies – the percentage of respondents worried about getting it wrong reduced by around 5% from undergraduate to postgraduate taught and then again to postgraduate research study.

that might involve making mistakes along the way, which is OK. This guidance outlines productive ways of engaging with such "mistakes" in a way that is conducive to learning". **So far there has been, however, no centralised effort to make similar guidance and training available to students across the Faculty – though there are likely pockets of good practice within individual Schools.**

Students suggested that integrating anti-racism training to help students understand how to handle such topics in discussion and the use of content notes to make students aware of potentially re-traumatising content can be important pedagogic interventions:

> "have a class or lecture in first year foundations of English module dealing with handling racial issues sensitively in seminars."
>
> "I think people have to be aware that this [discussing colonialism and racism] could trigger people who have been through these things and seriously damage their mental wellbeing."

In the same resource as above, the Faculty of AHC also published faculty-wide guidance aimed at staff on the adoption of content notes (internal resource only). According to the guidance published by the Faculty of AHC, the purpose of content notes is to "identify material which is challenging because it may be: [either] sensitive, unsettling, distressing or potentially re-traumatising [or] deemed offensive". In doing so, "content notes are not intended as a means to censor or delimit material to be discussed, but as a means to support student engagement with challenging material". The idea is that they can "support students to take ownership of their learning and are a way of facilitating critical thinking through conversations about the challenges that we face when dealing with difficult topics". **While an awareness of the need for such pedagogic interventions has been growing across the Faculty of AHC as a result, and the guidance has been adopted in some local contexts to good effect, there is still room for much more work in this area. Additionally, the use of content notes and the guidance aimed at staff for facilitating difficult discussion is, in and of itself, not sufficient and more thought needs to be given how this needs to be supplemented by integrating education on colonialism, coloniality, racism and anti-racism into degree programmes and for staff as part of continuous professional development.**

7.4 Decolonisation wrongly prioritises race

A fourth criticism of decolonisation in higher education stemmed from the worry that it wrongly emphasises race over other protected characteristics:

> "We should aim to address the origins of knowledge, hidden curriculum, undervalued voices etc. much more widely to include women, class, disability etc. There's no good reason to focus specifically on decolonising if we are genuinely concerned with discrimination, the hidden curriculum, undervalued voices and how our subjects have been framed and shaped".

According to such a view, while addressing racism, colonialism and its legacies is important, they should be dealt with as part of wider equality and diversity initiatives rather than as a separate agenda. What this fails to acknowledge is that the aim of decolonisation is much more radical than increasing diversity and ensuring that previously excluded groups are finally given equal access to and opportunities to succeed within the current system. Instead, decolonisation questions the validity of that very system in the first place. Because its nature

is this radical, Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2016) points out that "colonialism, decolonization and related concepts generate anxiety and fear" and "anyone who introduces the question about the meaning and significance of colonialism and decolonization most likely faces a decadent and genocidal modern/colonial attitude of indifference, obfuscation, constant evasion, and aggression, typically in the guise of neutral and rational assessments, postracialism, and well-intentioned liberal values". This is exactly what happens when the aims of decolonisation initiatives are watered down by integrating them into wider equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives. Shauneen Pete argues that such "neoliberal discourses of 'inclusion' are comfortable for members of the dominant group" (2018, p. 180) because it allows them to avoid acknowledging their ongoing complicity in the reproduction of a historico-political system of exploitation and domination. It exemplifies what Eva Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) have called a "move to innocence". Additionally, such views fail to understand that by focussing on decolonising we are not prioritising discussions of race over other protected characteristics. Instead, decolonisation can help us to understand how both historical and ongoing systems of oppression intersect. María Lugones, for example, argues that in the case of understanding gender oppression "without this history, we keep on centering our analysis on the patriarchy; that is on binary, hierarchical, oppressive gender formation that rests on male supremacy without any clear understanding of the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism, and racial classification are impossible to understand apart from each other" (2007, p. 187).

7.5 Decolonisation does not apply to my research

A fifth source of resistance found in responses by both students and staff stated that, while they are not entirely opposed to decolonisation, it simply did not apply to their area of study or work. One postgraduate research student, for example, explained that:

> "The study of Classics is not one that suffers from distortion through colonisation to any great degree".

Similarly, some members of staff argued that:

> "In the topics of my research, it is not the case that colonialism has impacted on the agenda or substance of existing approaches, so that there is really nothing to decolonise".

That this objection was primarily stated in connection to particular research topics could suggest that, when researching a narrow topic rather than thinking about a broader discipline, it can be harder for both students and staff to recognise colonial legacies in the work being studied. This reasoning may also be relevant to an interesting difference that we can observe between the responses from undergraduate and postgraduate taught students on one hand, and postgraduate research students on the other. While around 6% of both undergraduate and postgraduate taught students disagreed with decolonisation being an important part of studying their discipline, this number doubled for postgraduate research students. This suggests that, **in the Faculty of AHC, there may be a particular need to make it clearer to both student and staff researchers how the coloniality of knowledge production has had a more far-reaching impact on the research we pursue in the present than they currently recognise**.

7.6 The University's talk of decolonisation is performative

The final source of resistance to decolonising initiatives differs from the previous ones in that it is not grounded in a questioning of the importance of decolonisation itself, but is instead based on the worry that decolonising activity is always in danger of being performative and based on an over-simplified understanding of decolonisation. In particular, staff were very critical of this at a wider institutional level, with many of the survey respondents being

> "concerned about the institution reappropriating a term for a box-ticking exercise".

In particular, they identified repeated mismatches between the university's aspirations and its actual practice:

> "The ambition implied in the university's rhetoric over decolonising principles (like the initiative behind this survey, I suspect) is not matched - by any stretch - by its actual commitment to redressing racist legacies within the university itself: (e.g.) its racial and ethnic pay gap amongst staff; its huge underrepresentation of black and minority ethnic staff and postgraduate students; and its lack of BAME ring-fenced scholarships and job advertisements."

One respondent, for example, detailed how this negatively affects the ability of staff on the ground to enact meaningful change:

> "There is so much talk about it - and then massive blind spots. (These were revealed in a recent job search where sticking to the usual rigid criteria - to do with REF, for instance - really discriminated against efforts to decolonise the shortlist and staff body.) Also, our teaching structures are so inflexible - regarding what/how to put things on Minerva, adapting or experimenting with assessments, taking trips with students, changing content, etc - that it flies in the face of decolonising at any more advanced level".

The issue of institutional performativity was also a recurring theme in the student survey. For example:

> "the climate emergency and colonialism are intricately linked and the university must make large and quick movements towards being on the right side of history. how can a university be decolonised whilst still receiving support from and therefore supporting major oil companies and companies which make technology for extraction? how can a university be decolonised when it is wrapped in so many layers of bureaucracy that no change can be made and student and student voices are suppressed (in reference to recent occupations, trans rights issues, and staff disputes)? the university (management) has violently stuck its heels in over stopping exploiting its own staff and students, how are we supposed to believe it actually cares about stopping exploiting its position of power on a local and global scale? decolonising would have to include more diverse voices being bought into the decision making process but in my own experience management doesnt want to hear it, and they need to do more than just listen but actively seek out people that are alienated from it and rectify that".

The worry identified by both students and staff is that decolonisation efforts within the university will not actually serve the radical aim of critiquing and undoing the current unjust system. Instead, it is watered down by the wider neoliberal context in which we operate so that, rather than fundamentally critiquing and reimagining the current system, we are merely

making surface-level adjustments. This worry is echoed across the literature, which questions our ability to change the system from within. Folúkẹ́ Adébísí (2019), for example, asks us "how illogical is it that the structure we are attempting to decolonise is the structure we are attempting to use to decolonise?", while Priyamvada Gopal wonders how the university can do "more than tinker with its curriculum and broaden its hiring practices? Caught up in the structures of late capitalism, increasingly dependent on its public as well as private versions, on corporate funding and private philanthropy, how can the contemporary university hope to engage with anything resembling 'decolonisation'?" (2021, p. 888).

This is a legitimate worry that any decolonisation work in higher education will have to grapple with. Even when decolonising activities set out with the best intentions, they will inevitably run up against institutional structures and efforts by the wider institution to reappropriate the work done to paint itself in a more favourable light. Sara Ahmed's work is instructive on this point. She argues that "paradoxically, the recognition of racism can be taken up as a sign of commitment, which in turn blocks the recognition of racism. The work of such speech acts seems to be precisely how they function to hinder rather than enable action" (2006, p. 110). This, she continues, means that decolonising work is often turned into a tick box exercise, where "we create the illusion of being behind an action, even at the moment the action is not performed" (2006, p. 112). This lesson is one that I take seriously as part of this research because, following Ahmed, there is a real danger that "the work that goes into writing the document ends up blocking other kinds of action. Or, to make an even stronger argument: the orientation toward writing good documents can block action, insofar as the document then gets taken up as evidence that we have done the work" (2006, p. 117). It is therefore important to make clear that this report should not be taken as evidence that the Faculty is, as of yet, taking sufficient decolonising or anti-racist action. Instead, the purpose of this report is to uncover and examine processes, systems and attitudes that contribute to the reproduction of coloniality with the understanding that this will necessitate concrete action in practice.

Overall, the results from the survey indicate that **decolonising work within the Faculty of AHC will likely be met with various forms of resistance. In response, there is more work to be done on educating staff on the history of colonialism and opening up space to reflect on the ways in which coloniality permeates all areas of higher education**.

8 Diversifying or Decolonising?

While we have seen so far that the success of decolonisation activities will ultimately rely on the willingness of institutions to initiate far-reaching changes, students and staff throughout the survey recognised that the need to critically re-think teaching and research practices is a fundamental part of any decolonisation work in higher education.

8.1 Teaching

It is therefore worthwhile exploring whether staff feel ready to do so. I started by asking staff if they felt ready to "start applying decolonising principles to my teaching and/or student-related activities". A large majority (83%) agreed while around 17% either disagreed or were ambivalent (Fig.10).

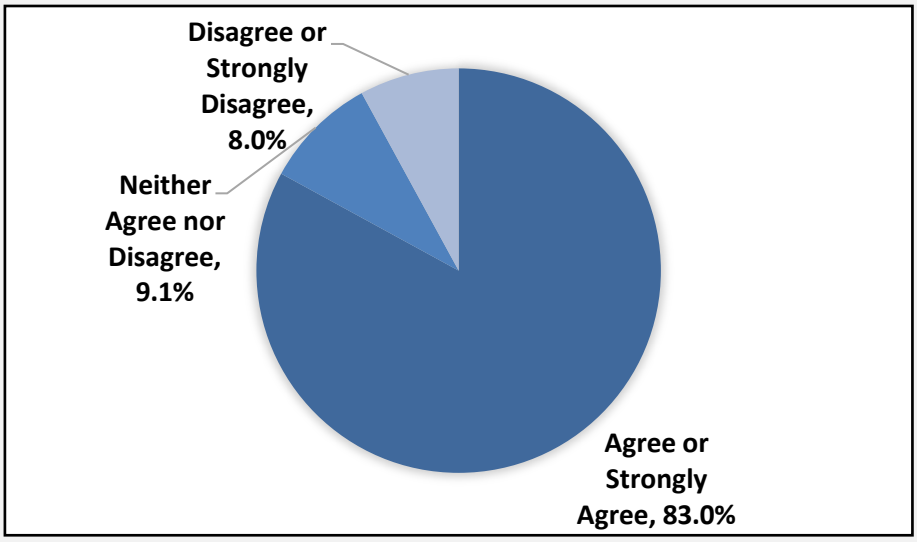

Fig.10 Staff Responses to "I know how to start applying decolonising principles to my teaching and/or student-related activities."

Staff were then asked to expand in their own words on how decolonisation is relevant to their teaching. Seven broad themes emerged from the responses here (Fig.11). Nearly half of staff responses understood decolonisation as a form of adding diversity to the curriculum. Within this theme, some responses simply equated decolonisation to the project of diversifying reading lists and topics taught. For example, one respondent wrote that decolonisation is about the

> "Design of teaching that includes [a] variety of voices."

Another version of the decolonising teaching as diversifying view explicitly acknowledged that the aim of diversification had to be highlighting the voices and knowledges of global ethnic majority scholars. One respondent, for instance, understood decolonisation as

> "helping students to interpret [the] context of 'western' / 'northern hemisphere' - centric scholarship and practice and embrace a broader global perspective. Representation of diverse cultural experiences and viewpoints."

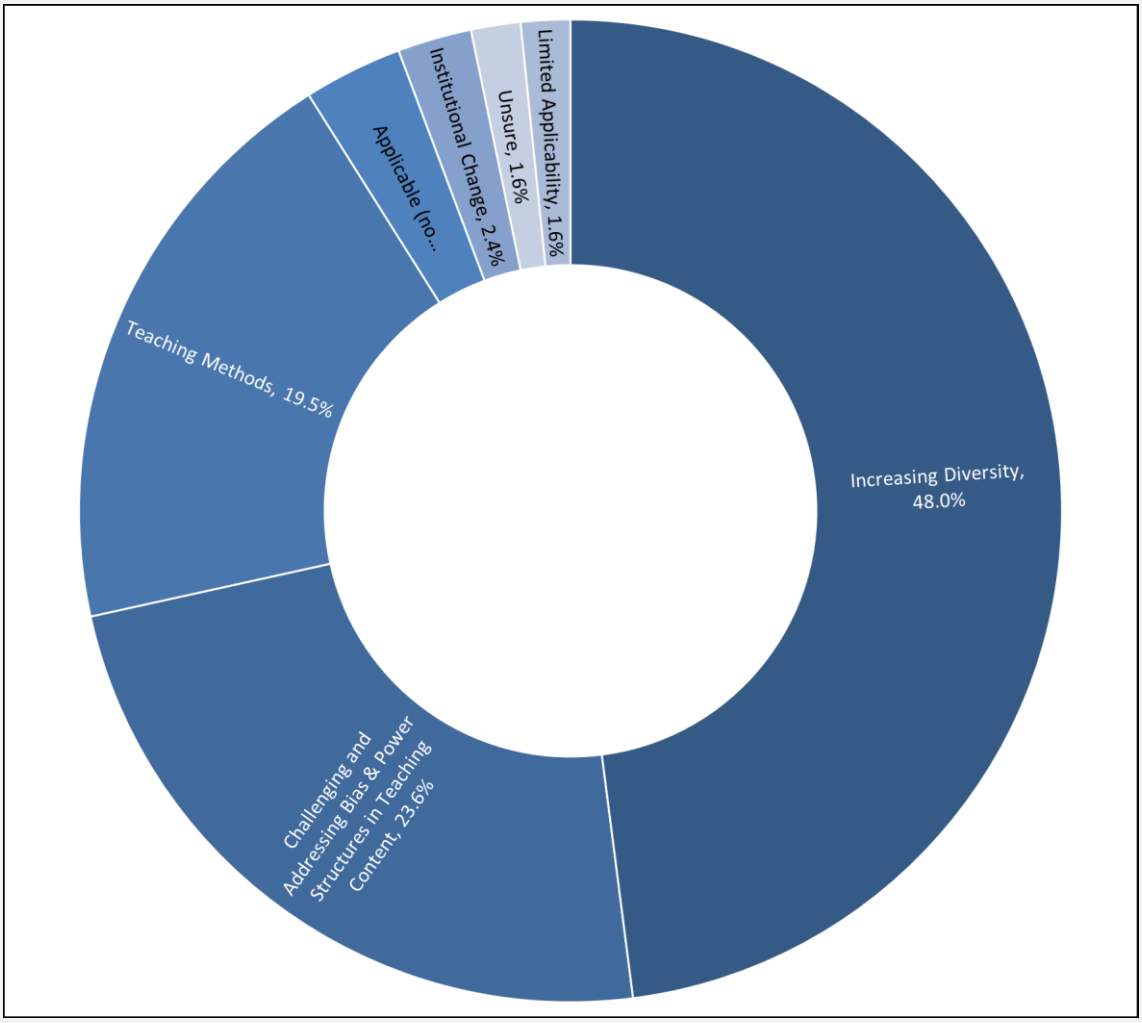

Fig.11 Staff Responses to ""In what ways do you think decolonising applies to your teaching and/or student-related activities?"[22]

A number of responses also pointed to decolonisation as a response to the needs of a diverse student body:

> "My student cohort contains a significant number of students from other regions and cultures, and we are seeking to recruit more students from additional regions and cultures. That project cannot succeed unless the students and potential students recognise themselves, their histories, and their cultures - in context - in the curriculum."

A second understanding of decolonising teaching, expressed in nearly a quarter of responses went beyond the notion of increasing diversity and instead focussed on unsettling the coloniality of knowledge production present in, and reproduced by, our curricula. For example, for one respondent decolonising the curriculum

> "begins by historicising the notion of race and taking in the fact that nobody is born a non-racist. We are all […] raced. The teaching involves not only the transfer of knowledge, but thinking about how the knowledge was constructed then and how

[22] This section will only focus on responses from the three most prominent themes. The issue of institutional change will be taken up again later, while views critical of decolonisation have already been discussed in some depth.

that knowledge is disseminated now, and why. It makes accountability clear (everyone) […]."

We also gave students the opportunity to expand on what they thought decolonising their curriculum would involve. We asked them at the end of the survey whether there were any particular topics or theoretical approaches that they would like to see in their curriculum, and we also gave them a box to let us know about anything else that they would like to add. Because many of the responses in this final box included comments relating to curriculum content, I decided to merge the answers. When analysing the responses, seven broad themes emerged (Fig.12).

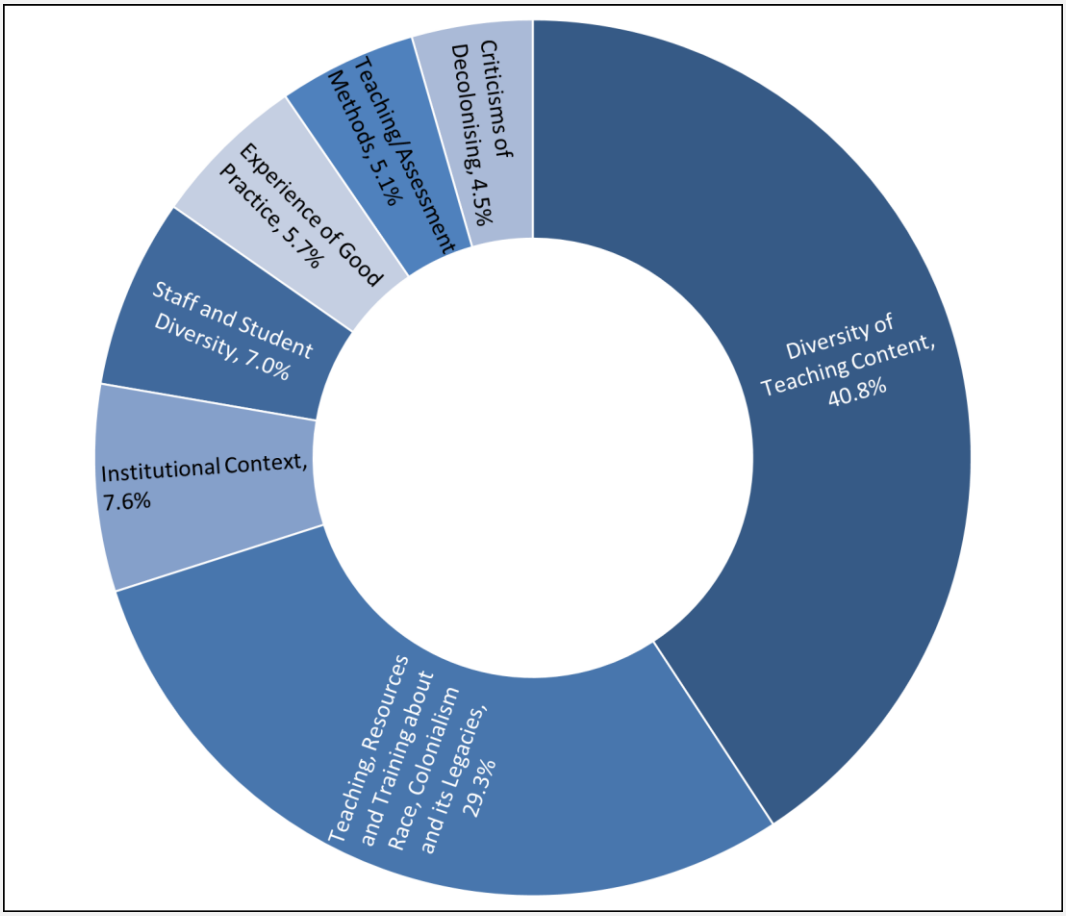

Fig.12 Student Responses to "With your answers to the previous questions in mind, are there any particular topics or theoretical approaches that you would like to see discussed more in your curriculum?" & "Please add any further comments you have using the box below." [23]

As expected, given the way that the first question was phrased, the largest proportion (around 40%) of comments from students related to the diversity of teaching content. The majority of responses under this heading made suggestions about specific topics and viewpoints that

[23] This section will concentrate on the two largest themes emerging as well as teaching and assessment methodologies. Answers relating to criticisms of decolonisation have already been discussed, while the issues of representation in the student and staff body, as well as changes to the institutional context will be taken up later.

they would like to see added to their programmes.[24] An interesting point that surfaced throughout these comments problematised how and when content was being integrated into modules:

> "Modules (unless specifically about a certain group/diverse perspective named in the module title) are White/Western apart from (sometimes) one week dedicated to 'diverse perspectives' where one week is meant to be sufficient to cover all non-White/Western perspectives."

This problem is further compounded by this single week then being relegated to the end of the module:

> "it's […] important to properly integrate these topics into the rest of the module. Whenever I've had the opportunity to study a feminist/race-centric/non-Western topic it has been crammed into the final lecture of the series, so no one comes to the seminars […]."

This is also reflected in the way in which global ethnic majority scholars are placed within reading lists:

> "I have noticed that across all of my modules, readings from authors of European descent tend to be in the core reading while scholars who do not fit that profile are either mentioned briefly in lectures or (very rarely) included [in] the supplementary readings. Or, in instances when another culture is being briefly explored, the author is not actually from that culture, but is instead someone of European descent […]."

One more interesting debate emerged under the heading of the diversity of teaching content that it is worth highlighting here. Several students noted that they would like to see more modules that specifically focus on approaches to or topics within the discipline that are outside the current framework that privileges the knowledge of the global minority.

> "I think there could be more modules focused on the experiences of those outside the main canon, especially in the earlier years."

The frequency of these comments suggests that, across the Faculty of AHC, we should consider a change in module offerings as part of any decolonisation efforts. But, as another student noted:

> "I would argue that it would be better […], instead of creating modules specific to decolonisation, to integrate literary works into modules […] for example, integrating Toni Morrison's work on contemporary modules."

Content that centres the voices and views of global ethnic majority scholars should therefore not be limited to specific modules but also needs to be integrated into already existing module offerings. We need this balance to ensure that, on the one hand, students have the opportunity to familiarise themselves in-depth with topics that they may have never encountered before (one students for example noted: "I'm currently on a third year module on slavery in Latin America. All of us are struggling a lot because most of us have never studied anything to do with any aspect of Latin American history before.") while, on the other hand,

[24] For the purposes of this report, I will not discuss the specific suggestions regarding module and programme content made by students. Instead, this information will be made available to the relevant Schools in question to assist them in making concrete changes to their curriculum.

ensuring that every student, independent of their module choices, will study perspectives that go beyond and challenge the white or Western canon in their discipline.

Around 30% of student comments, however, made clear that changes in the curriculum had to go beyond merely increasing the diversity of scholars and topics but also had to explicitly include opportunities to talk about race, colonialism and its legacies.

A few students, however, noted that focussing more on colonialism and its legacies has the danger of re-centering the agency of the global minority rather than focussing on the rich contributions made by scholars around the world prior to colonisation.

> "I think it's important to establish more that people of colour's lives don't just start becoming relevant because of the British Empire. […] e.g. Africa didn't just become relevant because of the Slave Trade […]".

A similar point was also made in the staff survey:

> "Some people seem to think that decolonisation means actually ramping up the teaching of colonialism, and just loading in moral judgement. What about the teaching of before colonisation, when the peoples now colonised had their own agency? But we've tried this and the students simply don't take those modules. They want their colonial subjects to stay victims".

Another recurring topic that emerged was students' desire to learn about colonialism and race through an intersectional lens. Students mentioned, for example, wanting to learn more about

> "disability and its connection to race", and "queer, trans and feminist theories from postcolonial/decolonial/critical race/womanist frameworks and scholars".

Several students pointed out that it is not just about adding such topics to the curriculum, but also about approaching already existing materials through a more critical lens, for example, by explicitly placing scholars and frameworks in the coloniality from which they emerge and to which they contribute:

> "in the way it is taught, we are not critical of how their views contributed to racism, sexism, classism, etc."

Finally, it is important to note that around 5% of students used the opportunity to report on some of the good practice that they have seen across the Faculty, for example:

> "I have taken three modules all centred around decolonisation and race so far in my two years at university. They have all been pivotal to my learning experience and my development as a critical thinker, and equally they have enriched my understanding of the intricate (and unequal) power structures that dominate our society. The teaching on these modules has always been sensitive, and seminar groups have always felt like open and non-judgemental spaces in which every voice will be heard."

As we have seen in both student and staff responses, a large number of respondents understood decolonisation to be primarily concerned with the diversification of reading lists and module content. This narrow understanding of decolonisation as diversification is, however, problematic. Saying this is obviously not meant to negate the fact that an important part of any wider decolonial effort has to include a reflection of the diversity of the world within our curriculum. But, importantly, as Rosaba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez emphasise,

"the question of demographic diversity falls short of addressing the question of decolonisation" (2018, p. 115). There are a variety of related reasons for this. As highlighted by the members of the University of Amsterdam's Diversity Commission, diversity can in fact function "to reinforce exclusion and discrimination by marking bodies and knowledges as 'the other'" (2016, p. 71). A focus on diversity always and inevitably re-centers the voices of the global ethnic minority; by considering their experiences as the core we come to classify experiences that do not conform as the periphary; i.e. that which is "diverse". Additionally, as Delia Gebrial argues, when we focus on mere diversification we often fail to interrogate how wider structures of knowledge generation and transmission "came to be, and the inquealities that are engendered and reproduced by and within them" (2018, p. 31). To wit, diversification invites a surface level engagement with decolonisation that obfuscates its more profound and radical aims. This in turn allows our curriculum "and its attendant orthodoxies, to remain unchallenged and unchanged" (Gopal, 2021, p. 877). The effect of this approach ripples beyond our curriculum to the institution as a whole. As Angela Davis has poignantly put it: "I have a hard time accepting diversity as a synonym for justice. Diversity is a corporate strategy. It's a strategy designed to ensure that the institution functions in the same way that it functioned before, except that you now have some black faces and brown faces. It's a difference that makes no difference at all" (Davis, 2015). The institution can then use the increased visibility of "diverse" voices in their curriculum to claim that it has made significant process; "diversity in this work becomes then a happy sign, a sign that racism has been overcome" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 164). "Ultimately, this is then used as evidence by both staff members and, crucially, the wider institution that they have successfully decolonised – that their job here is done – and thereby obfuscating ongoing reproductions of injustice. André Keet, for example points out how "the present 'chatter' and 'clutter' of decolonising talk within the academy – decolonising this, decolonising that – is intended to turn decolonisation into a metaphor and, thus, an ideological strategy to maintain epistemological orientations and justify existing positions. […] Such a game plan, more than anything else, aims to preserve disciplinary practices and their prevailing conditions of privilege and disadvantage" (2019, pp. 204-205). This suggests that **across the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures, much more work needs to be done to truly re-think the way in which we teach a topic, rather than simply adding in an additional week at the end of the module or an additional global ethnic majority scholar to the reading list**.

So what could a curriculum look like that critically engages with historical global power imbalances and their contemporary reproductions? **Firstly, our curriculum ought to explicitly problematise how the existing cannon has been shaped by and reproduces coloniality. In the first instance, this should involve explicitly situating the positionality of scholars within these structures**. According to Rosalba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez "practices of positionality are those practices that, even while teaching the canon, reveal the geopolitical location of knowledge. That is, knowledge is always taught in a situated manner, allowing the students to recognise the geo-genealogy to which they are being exposed and in which they are being trained, instead of assuming an abstract position of universality, of objectivity" (2018, p. 119). Earlier on in this report, I talked about the colonial logic of opposing the rational objectivity of "the West" to the emotional subjectivity of "the Rest". Incorporating practices of positionality within our curriculum can help to disrupt this logic by making it obvious that the presumptions of rationality and objectivity within the canon is itself rooted in a deeply subjective ideology that is at the root of the coloniality of knowledge production. Instead, as Carol Azumah Dennis concurs, by "putting the […] canon, the disciplinary founding fathers

[sic], in their place, that is, not a privileged place of neutrality which assumes a universal forefront […] the unmarked scholar is radically undermined once their scholarly contribution is appropriately named, dated and given a geopolitical location. […] Their capacity to assume a universal voice is dismantled" (2018, pp. 196-197).

A few students and staff, however, noted that focussing more on colonialism and its legacies has the danger of re-centering white Western agency rather than focussing on the rich contributions made by scholars around the world prior to colonisation and the role of resistance to coloniality as a crucial contribution to the formation of the current world order. In the words of bell hooks "no need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and you are now at the center of my talk" (1990, p. 343). Take Aimé Césaire's description of "societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out" (Césaire, 2000/1950, p. 43). It is not just the action of destruction, but also the very thing destroyed that needs to be centred more within our curriculum. Additionally, as Priyamvada Gopal highlights, "the enslaved and the colonised […] were not just victims but also agents in the making of another contradictory formation – modernity" (2021, p. 896). Here she is following writers such as Walter Mignolo who calls on us to take seriously the role of liberatory struggle and agency – understood as "projects of de-linking from the colonial matrix of power" (2007, p. 455) – as an integral part of understanding the making of the modern world. This suggests that, **as a Faculty, we need to not only make available more options to talk about colonialism and its legacies and race and racism, but also talk about the valuable contributions to our disciplines made across the globe prior to the start of colonisation and the agency found in liberatory struggles in response to the coloniality of power**.

Additionally, if we follow suggestions from our students, using an intersectional lens to understand various overlapping forms of oppression will also be crucial. Intersectional theory was introduce by Kimberlé Crenshaw as a response to the erasure of black women from existing feminist and anti-racist frameworks. The central tenet of her theory is that black women experience oppression on multiple axes – once in virtue of their race and once in virtue of their sex – that intersect so that their situation cannot be understood by analysing them in isolation. Including intersectional analysis in our curriculum is important because, following Crenshaw's analysis, by bracketing the experiences of "multiply disadvantaged class[es]", we undermine our ability to "restructure the distribution of opportunity and limit remedial [relief] to minor adjustments within an established hierarchy" (1989, p. 145). Without intersectional analysis, we run the risk of prioritising the experiences and voices of those who hold relative positions of advantage within marginalised communities, thereby risking that interventions will only scratch the surface rather than fundamentally re-imagining the system. **When considering topics such as race, experiences of racism, and the need to decolonise, it is important that we cover how these issues intersect with other sources of oppression that are relevant to the lived experiences of our students and society more broadly**.

The content of our curriculum, however, not only contains the subject matter itself but also the disciplinary conventions around which it is built and with which students have to familiarise themselves. In this context, several staff members raised the problem that our

curriculum, next to the content that is explicitly taught, also contains a hidden curriculum rooted within a paradigm that privileges the knowledge and experiences of students with prior experience of studying in global minority countries.

> [Decolonisation] should also address the hidden curriculum where staff may assume, based on their own experiences, that students bring certain types of prior knowledge and understanding to their learning.

Staff were rightly worried that, unless we address the underlying assumptions implicit in our curriculum, it will be difficult for a diverse student body with a variety of experiences and background knowledges to succeed. To clarify what is meant by the term "hidden curriculum" it will be helpful to briefly compare it to two other kinds of curriculum – the "explicit" and the "null curriculum". Lesley Le Grange explains that "the explicit curriculum is what students are provided with such as module frameworks, prescribed readings, assessment guidelines, and so on. The hidden curriculum is what students learn about the dominant culture of a university and what values it reproduces. […] The null curriculum is what universities leave out – what is not taught and learned in a university" (2019, pp. 37-38). Penny Jane Burke helpfully illustrates the barrier that the hidden curriculum can represent in day-to-day academic interactions for students: "becoming a university student demands the developing of a particular form of voice within the boundaries of the discipline, course or subject being studied. Ways of writing in sociology will be different from ways of writing in psychology or physics and this is not just simply about learning sets of skills but learning very particular ways of thinking, arguing, being critical, analytical and so forth". In turn, these conventions are "usually presented as neutral, decontextualised sets of technical skills and literacy" (2015, p. 21) rather than products of particular histories and ideologies. **Acknowledging the hidden curriculum underlying education within the Faculty not only entails that we need to uncover it and make it explicit to students in order to support the attainment of a diverse student body. Uncovering what is hidden must be accompanied by a phase of critical and public reckoning with the fundamental assumptions on which our curriculum and how to succeed within it have been built**.

So far, I have focussed on showing that decolonising requires more than just diversifying our reading lists and module topics, it also necessitates taking a more critical stance on the very things that we teach and how they are a result of and work to reproduce the coloniality of power and knowledge production. But, as around 5% of students (Fig.12) and 20% of staff (Fig.11) responses pointed out, decolonising the curriculum needs to go beyond content and also take into account the methodologies we use to teach. For one staff respondent, for example, decolonising student education was about

> "collaborative learning - decentring power dynamics in teaching settings - strategies that encourage free expression and empower students (e.g. flipping the classroom) - transparency regarding aims, methods - modelling inclusion - careful use of language and drawing attention to it."

A helpful starting point to understand existing power dynamics within teaching settings is Paulo Freire's notion of the "banking concept of education". According to this, the teacher "expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration" while "the student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what [it] really means" (2005/1968, p. 71). In Freire's view, "the capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students'

creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed" (2005/1968, p. 73). He opposes this to a libertarian conception of education in which teachers "must be partners of the students" and assume "the role of student among students" (2005/1968, p. 75). Decolonising the curriculum therefore is, fundamentally, about calling in question existing relations of power within our teaching settings and problematising how they are preventing both staff and students from engaging in a critical, open-ended process of re-evaluating our teaching content. This aligns with the recommendation by Rosalba Icaza and Rolando Vázquez that "the decolonisation of the university should include a transformation of the relationships established in the classroom and across the university" because "the classroom is a space in which power hierarchies and forms of exclusion often get reproduced" (2018, p. 119). One way, for example, in which it has been argued that such power relations manifest themselves within current pedagogic discourse is through the adoption of outcomes-based learning in which teachers unilaterally plan how learning content, activities and assessment align in order to supposedly lead all of their students to a pre-determined learning objective. Barbara Crossouard and Paolo Oprandi explain that "although ostensibly to support learners in becoming autonomous critical thinkers, such practices paradoxically act to disempower students" (2023, p. 187) by pushing them toward conformity. Lesley Le Grange, for example, suggests that instead we should start to "[shift] the attention away from the concept of a predetermined course to run to focusing on how the course is run by each individual, given each one's unique make-up, context, hopes, aspirations and interactions with other human beings and the more-than-human world" (Le Grange, 2019, p. 38).

Both students and staff pointed out that, when it came to methodologies employed in the classroom, the setting of assessment tasks, in particular, was an important area of concern:

> "People may not make research or generate new knowledge in forms that have been set out. Presentations or essays, and expectations [are] bended towards the UK understanding of producing knowledge […]."

> "I don't think nearly enough attention has been paid to structures and assessment; most of the focus has been on content so far. The decolonial and authentic assessment agendas should be combined."

Within scholarly discussions on how to decolonise curriculum and pedagogy, the issue of how to decolonise assessment currently only takes up a comparatively small space. As Sarah Godsell argues, the reason for this oversight is because assessment is "the seat of institutional power. Questioning the logics of knowledge creation, knowledge testing, and the validity and reliability of assessments (due to questioning ideas of logic, objectivity, and power) creates fear in stakeholders" (2021, p. 107). So, what would it mean to start a process of decolonising assessment? Barbara Crossouard and Paolo Oprandi suggest that, on the most fundamental level, "designing for the incorporation of student perspectives [is] vital for any move towards decolonisation. Rather than randomly happening during teaching and learning, this will benefit from a pedagogic design that includes more open-ended tasks that allow students more agency to define their contributions and introduce their own perspectives" (2023, p. 191). The aim of this practice is to open up space in which we can "listen and respond to students' agendas, rather than constantly privileging the alignment of students' texts with prescribed learning outcomes" (2023, p. 191). Given that discussions on what the decolonisation of assessment could look like are still very much in their infancy, **there is significant room for the Faculty of AHC to navigate this space in collaboration with staff and**

students by questioning dominant forms of assessment such as essays, exams and presentations and creatively exploring alternative forms of assessment.

Finally, an interesting point that emerged from several responses in the staff survey was related to the use of English as the primary language of instruction.

> "I teach English for Academic Purposes. In the view of some, I am inculcating students in the racist practices of a world-dominant language. I try to acknowledge and work with the very real benefits my students' bilingualism or multilingualism brings, and to show them how the academic literacies they need to develop to succeed at university are culturally encoded."

Additionally, they worried that

> "ESOL staff and students will always be disadvantaged and non-Anglophone scholarship left unconsidered".

The underlying problem identified in these responses is that, as Philip G. Altbach puts it "English is now the global language of science and scholarship" and yet, "English is also the language of academic neocolonialism in the sense that scholars everywhere are under pressure to conform to the norms and values of the metropolitan academic systems that use English" (2011, p. 18). This means that contributions from global ethnic majority scholars that do not conform with this system are relegated and not included on reading lists. This has an obvious impact on the worldviews and insights reflected within our curricula. Additionally, as the first quote points out, this also presents particular problems for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students and the language staff supporting them. Because of the predominance of the English language both in academia and society at large, having a good command of English is assumed to allow learners access to both social and educational opportunities and advantages. But while the English language promises the conferral of socio-cultural benefits, it simultaneously functions to reproduce existing global hierarchies. We are therefore torn between wanting to provide our students with access to these opportunities and advantages without, at the same time, further entrenching the inequalities that linguistic imperialism generates. As long as we continue to operate in a system where English is the global language of knowledge production, however, we cannot hope to reconcile these aspirations. The best we can do under these circumstances might be to develop and encourage "a deliberate consciousness that the learning of English remains always situated within and limited by the possibilities and boundaries of the context in which it is taking place. This includes […] the broader historical level at which it has taken place (that is, a history of English language spread that has been inseparable from coloniality and racial inequality)" (Motha, 2014, p. 9). What is required is "to interrupt and enter into conversations that represent English language learning in primarily linguistically mechanistic terms" and instead to highlight the role of "English in maintaining the current inequitable global economic order" (Motha, 2014, p. 15). To encourage critical dialogue on this issue, **there should be dedicated time and spaces for ESOL teachers and students to openly problematise these tensions**.

8.2 Research

So far, we have looked at the distinction between merely diversifying and more thoroughgoing attempts at decolonisation in teaching. What were staff understandings when it came to their research? To begin with, I asked staff to what extent they agreed with the statement that "I know how to start applying decolonising principles to my research and/or

research-related activities". Just over two-thirds of staff agreed, while just over one in five neither agreed nor disagreed, and around 10% disagreed (Fig.13).

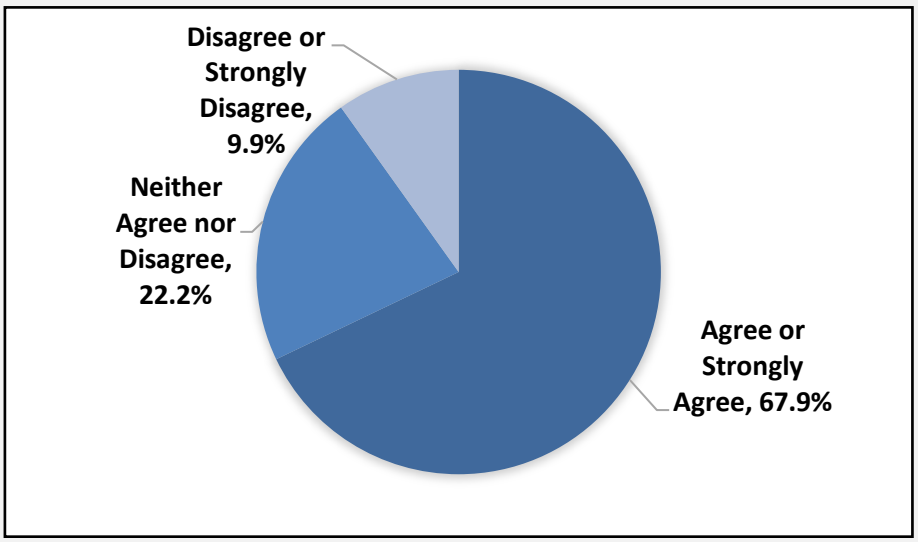

Fig.13 Staff Responses to "I know how to start applying decolonising principles to my research and/or research-related activities."

To analyse in more detail what staff understand the decolonisation of research to entail, I asked them to explain in their own words how decolonising applied to their research. The resulting responses could be grouped under seven different themes (Fig.14).

Around a third of responses understood decolonising research to involve challenging and addressing existing biases and power structures within the content of their research. While several colleagues noted that their research was directly related to themes that touch on colonialism and decolonisation, many colleagues for whom this was not the case were explicit that addressing the coloniality of knowledge was nonetheless imperative. One member of staff, for example, argued that:

> "While my research does not directly involve the history or legacy of colonialism, these impinge on it in the ways that it can be expected to impinge on any research in the humanities; they've determined who is represented in the academic literature, the priorities of the discipline, and who has a stake in the benefits of research".

In this light, colleagues noted that decolonising their research involved not only "rethinking research agendas" but also "critiquing my previous research practices".

Nearly one in five responses, however, argued that decolonising research was primarily about increasing the diversity of sources that they cite. Around half of responses in this theme were fairly general, for example:

> "It involves reading as diverse a range of scholarship as possible on the topics that I am working on".

The other half, however, made explicit that increasing diversity should be done with the explicit aim of increasing the representation of voices and views from global ethnic majority scholars and global majority countries while also interrogating the existing cannon:

"I'm keeping an open mind regarding non-western sources and on the look out for the possibility of racist / colonial attitudes within the literature".

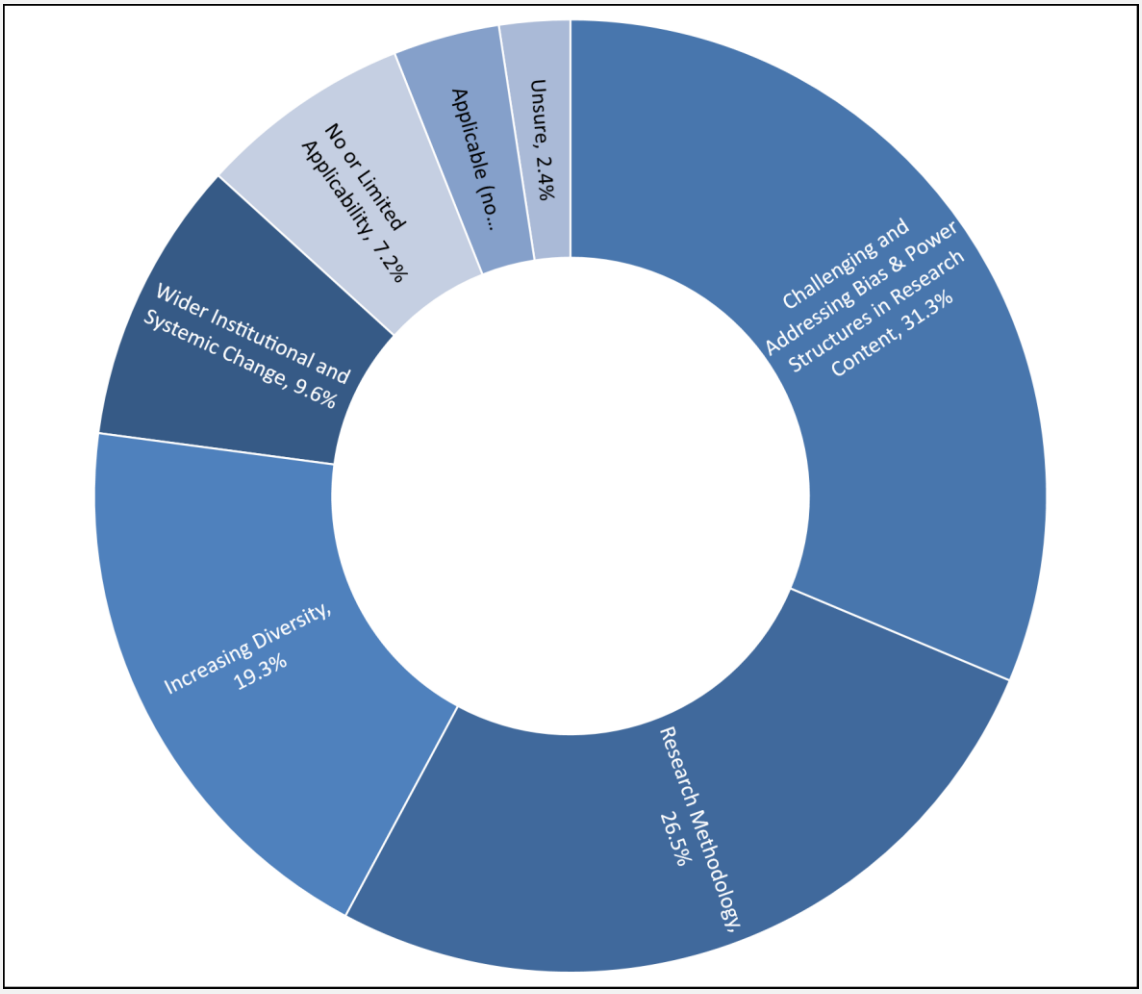

Fig.14 Staff Responses to "In what ways do you think decolonising applies to your research and/or research-related activities?"[25]

Firstly, it is interesting to note that staff were much more likely to report that they know how decolonising applies to their teaching (83%) than to their research (67.9%). At the same time, however, it was encouraging to see that, when it came to the topic of research, the proportion of responses that understood decolonising research to be about more than just increasing diversity was much larger than in the case of decolonising student education.

But, given that around one in five responses still focussed on diversification as the main way to decolonise research, it will be important to briefly explain why, just as in the case of curriculum reform, a more thoroughgoing change in our approach to research will be necessary. A helpful term in this context is that of "undone science". As "elites set agendas for both public and private funding sources […] there is a systematic tendency for knowledge production to rest on the cultural assumptions and material interests of privileged groups" (Frickel, et al., 2010, p. 456) which in turn can result in "areas of research identified by social

[25] For the purposes of this section, I will only explore responses related to either increasing diversity or challenging and addressing bias and power structures. Responses relating to the limited applicability of decolonisation to research have already been covered and the themes of methodology and institutional change will be discussed in more detail later on.

movements and other civil society organizations as having potentially broad social benefit that are left unfunded, incomplete, or generally ignored" (Frickel, et al., 2010, p. 445). Research agendas and the funding to pursue them routinely prioritise topics that serve the interests of those in social positions of privilege. Wiliam Jamal Richardson argues that the idea of undone science should be seen in the broader context of Eurocentrism which "is not only about how the focus of academic work tends to be on European societal phenomena, but also about how this focus on European social life leaves the social life and thought of other communities and nations understudied, unattended to or, worse, actively suppressed" (2018, pp. 232-233). Such knowledge, he argues, is then turned into what Karin Knorr-Cetina has called "negative knowledge", that is "knowledge […] of what we are not interested in and do not really want to know" (1999, p. 64). For Richardson "constructing colonised people as non-knowledge producers creates a geography of negative knowledge whereby knowledge that comes from or is influenced by that geography is always already inferior to European-derived knowledge" (2018, p. 234). **In our Faculty, decolonising research therefore will have to critically examine the types of projects that we currently pursue, what is being left undone as a result, and to what extent this serves to reinforce the coloniality of knowledge production. Additionally, decolonising research has to acknowledge the colonial logic underlying our act of relegating ideas and insights from the global majority to a form of negative knowledge**. What we need to aim for is, what Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni has called, "cognitive justice". Cognitive justice is "premised on the recognition of diverse ways of knowing by which human beings across the globe make sense of their existence". To achieve this, he argues, we will need to "[democratize] 'knowledge' from its current rendition in the singular into its plural known as 'knowledges'" (2018, p. 4). Knowledge produced in and by the global minority is not the only legitimate way of understanding the world around us and our place within it. Moving from "knowledge" to "knowledges" ensures that the insights from the global minority are not, by default and without critical interrogation, assigned higher credibility than those from the global majority.

Around a quarter of responses indicated that (as was the case for student education), decolonising research has to go beyond a critical assessment of the voices and viewpoints that form the current cannon and how they work to reproduce the coloniality of power and knowledge production, and include a re-evaluation of the research methods that we employ. Within this theme, the issue brought up most consistently was concerned with research partnerships and collaborations. In particular, respondents were concerned about power imbalances when collaborating with international partners and, as a result, how researchers from global minority countries create research agendas that are imposed on those in global majority countries and then used to accrue benefits for the former at the expense of the latter:

> "Within my research, there are considerations around power relationships 'in the field' (i.e. between academics and practitioners, or, as they used to be called, 'informants'). There is also a fundamental question over research as an essentially extractive industry in which the primary benefits accrue to people and institutions located in the Global North, which raises questions of whether/how we might conduct any kind of research ethically."

This mirrors how Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni has described the current epistemic hegemony of research produced in global minority countries; global ethnic majority scholars "have largely functioned as 'hunter-gatherers' or raw data as well as 'native informants'. Europe and

America have remained sites of processing raw data into concepts and theories. These concepts and theories are then consumed in" (2018, pp. 7-8) global majority countries. What then could equity in global collaborations look like in practice? It will be helpful here to highlight some of the suggestions from the recently released "Cape Town Statement on Fostering Research Integrity through Fairness and Equity". Firstly, we should aim to increase diversity and inclusion, for example, journals and publishers should critically examine papers which do not include local collaborators as authors. Secondly, we ought to foster fairer practice by, for example, ensuring that we openly acknowledge the global power imbalances at play. Thirdly, research collaborations should be based on mutual trust by, for example, not unilaterally imposing research agendas onto global majority communities. Fourthly, all parties involved should share accountability; for example, while governments in global majority countries need to acknowledge the value of investing in local research in order to diminish reliance on funding from global minority countries, where projects are externally funded, funders should make available resources for supporting the development of local research capacity. Finally, equitable research partnerships require researchers from global minority countries to value and appropriately credit indigenous knowledges (Horn, et al., 2023). **As a Faculty, we should evaluate the extent to which our processes and systems adhere to these principles and how we can disseminate appropriate guidelines to researchers**.

In this section we have explored what decolonisation in both student education and research would require. In particular we have problematised how many students and staff have, as of yet, a fairly narrow understanding of decolonisation that does not fully grasp its radical and far-reaching nature. It is therefore essential that, **across the Faculty of AHC, we communicate what it would take for teachers and researchers to start decolonising their work. Otherwise, we risk surface-level engagement that stops at adding more diverse voices and topics to the curriculum and our research. While this is, of course, an important part of a wider process of decolonisation, it cannot exhaust it. It is essential that, across the Faculty, we begin to critically examine the ways in which both the content and the methodologies we employ in our teaching and research result from and contribute to ongoing coloniality**.

9 Student Perceptions of Teaching and Learning

So far, we have discussed the nature of decolonisation in higher education. At this point, it will be helpful to take some time to understand how our students perceive the current state of their learning environment and curriculum.

9.1 Learning Environment

Firstly, we asked students to what extent they agreed that "staff have demonstrated a willingness to engage with questions of decolonisation raised by students". Over half of students agreed, around a third were ambivalent, while only around 10% disagreed. We then asked students to what extent they agreed that "contributions to the discipline from outside the dominant White/Western paradigm are taken seriously by staff and students". Around two thirds of students agreed, around one in five was ambivalent while just over 10% disagreed.

With just over half of students agreeing that their teachers have showed an openness to engaging with questions of decolonisation when they were brought up by students, and only just over two thirds of students agreeing that both teachers and fellow students have showed a willingness to engage with materials that challenge the predominant white/Western paradigm, there is significant room across the Faculty of AHC for both staff and students to improve the openness of the teaching and learning environment to perspectives that call into question dominant ways of thinking. This is further supported by some of the written comments from students who recounted experiences of working with fellow students and staff who were not sufficiently willing to engage with views they were less familiar with:

> "I sought to use a theory developed by an eminent and oft-cited African [scholar] in my essay but was discouraged to do so as the tutor was unfamiliar with his work. I ended up writing an essay that would suit their perspective. I still feel bitter about that module and essay […]."
>
> "When it comes to groups and collaborative work, which is a big part of our course, I think there might be reluctancy to engage with the non-western philosophies we get introduced to. People might feel that it is not their topic to speak on […]."

Additionally, a clear trend emerged when comparing the responses of global ethnic minority and majority students. Global ethnic minority students were much more likely to agree that their teachers were open to discussing decolonisation when questions were raised by students (61.5%) (Fig.15) than global ethnic majority students (51%) (Fig.16).

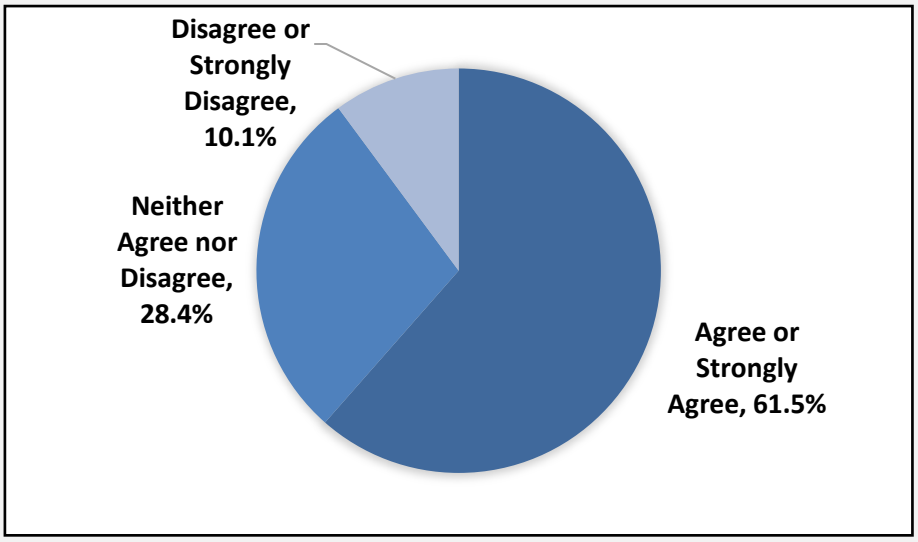

Fig.15 Global Ethnic Minority Student Responses to "Staff have demonstrated a willingness to engage with questions of decolonisation raised by students."

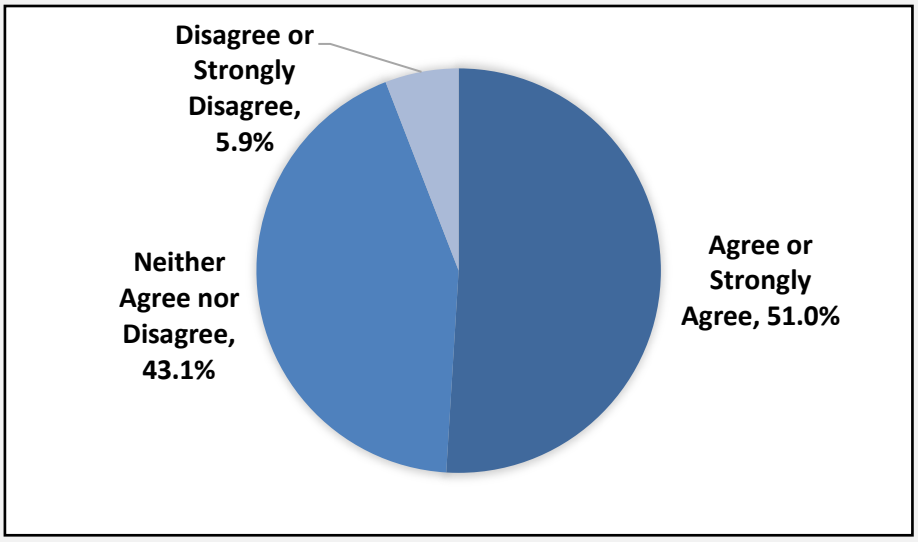

Fig.16 Global Ethnic Majority Student Responses to "Staff have demonstrated a willingness to engage with questions of decolonisation raised by students."

A similar trend could be found when looking at the responses to the second question. 73.5% of global ethnic minority students agreed while only 8.8% disagreed that contributions disrupting the current white or Western paradigm were taken seriously (Fig.17). For global ethnic majority students, however, only 57.5% either agreed, while the number of students disagreeing shot up to 23.1% (Fig.18).

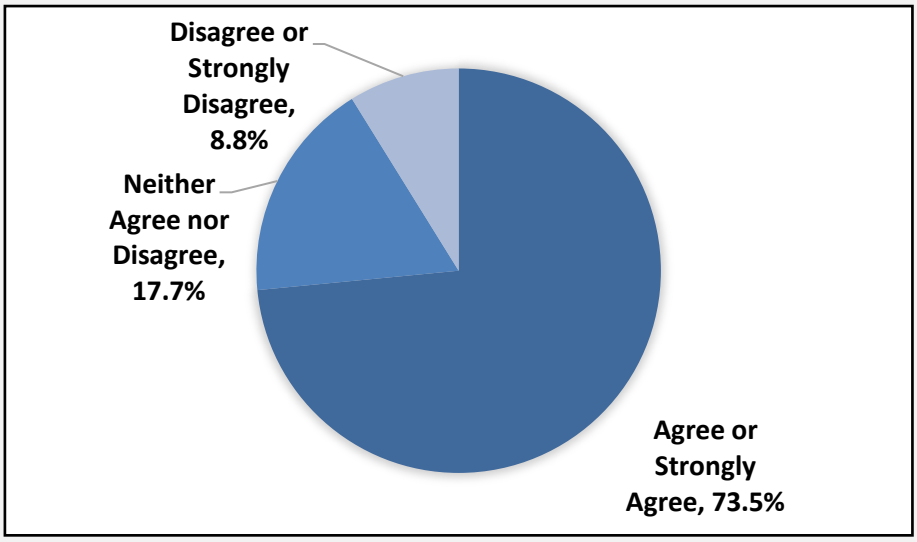

Fig.17 Global Ethnic Minority Student Responses to "Contributions to the discipline from outside the dominant White/Western paradigm are taken seriously by staff and students."

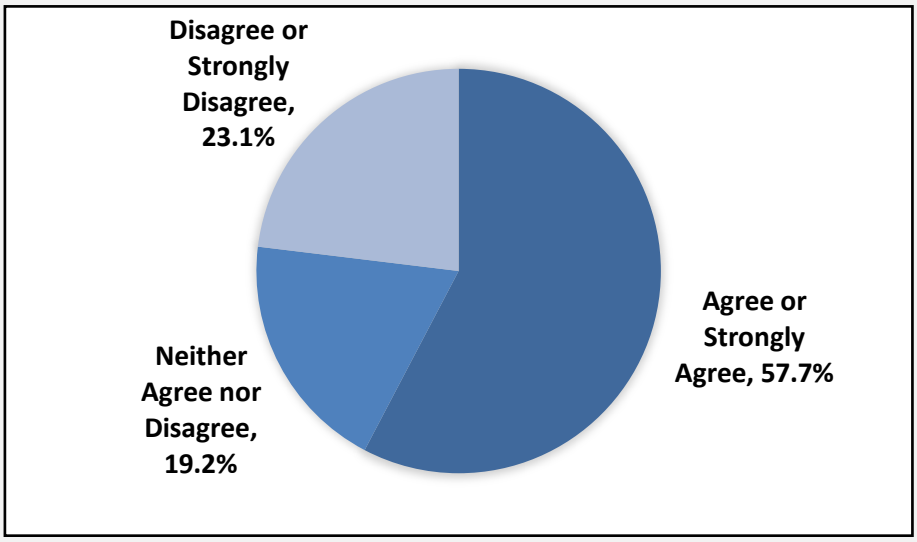

Fig.18 Global Ethnic Majority Student Responses to "Contributions to the discipline from outside the dominant White/Western paradigm are taken seriously by staff and students."

What this data shows, is that global ethnic majority students were significantly less likely to agree that their teachers were open to questions of decolonising when raised (around 10% less likely) and that teachers and students created an atmosphere that was open to approaches outside of the canon (around 15% less likely) than their global ethnic minority peers. This suggests that global ethnic majority students have a significantly more negative experience regarding the openness of their learning environment to decolonisation. I will offer some tentative explanations for this later on, once we have explored a similar trend that can be found in student perceptions of their curriculum. In the meantime, what this does, however, suggest is that there is likely much more work to do to improve the learning environment for our students than the overall results initially suggested.

There was also a notable difference between the responses of undergraduate and postgraduate students to the first question. The percentage of students across all levels who agreed that staff demonstrate a willingness to engage with questions of decolonisation raised

by students remained roughly the same (ranging between 53% and 58%). But, while the percentage for undergraduate students who disagreed with the statement was at only 7.8%, postgraduate students were significantly more likely to disagree – 19.1% for postgraduate taught and 16.7% for postgraduate research students respectively.

There was also a significant difference in the responses to the second question, regarding the openness of staff and fellow students to contributions from outside the cannon, between undergraduate and postgraduate students. While 72.5% of undergraduates agreed, only 53.2% of postgraduate taught students did so, while postgraduate research students sat in the middle at 65.5%. At the same time, while only 9.6% of undergraduate students disagreed, 19.1% did so for postgraduate taught and 20.7% for postgraduate research students.

This suggests that postgraduate, and postgraduate taught students in particular, appeared to perceive their learning environment as less open to decolonisation – nearly one in five postgraduate taught students disagreed that their teachers were open to discussing decolonisation when raised by students and only just over half agreed that staff and students were open to contributions from outside the white/Western canon. While it is not immediately obvious from the answers why there are these discrepancies between undergraduate and postgraduate student experiences, there are three factors that will likely play a role here. Firstly, postgraduate students tend to have a more in-depth knowledge of their discipline and are therefore more likely to be aware of what is included or excluded within their degrees. Secondly, because of the increasing focus of recruiting international students at postgraduate level, the absence of discussions and approaches that make sense of the lived experiences of global ethnic majority students may be felt more acutely here.[26] Thirdly, postgraduate students spend a significant part of their degree engaged in extensive research projects and, as we have seen in the previous section, staff seem to be more confident about the way in which decolonisation applies to teaching than research activities. This suggests that, **while undergraduates make up the majority of students within the Faculty, it is important to also focus on how decolonisation applies to the learning environment at postgraduate level and to explore how staff gaining a greater understanding of how to decolonise their research can also improve the experience of postgraduate students engaged in extended research projects.**

9.2 Curriculum

The final three questions about decolonising student education were aimed at taught students only. The first one asked students about the extent to which they agreed that their "module materials include a diverse range of voices". Around two-thirds of students agreed while around one in five disagreed. Next to the representation of different voices in learning materials, we also asked to what extent they thought that "learning activities allow for discussions related to a diverse set of topics". Students were slightly more positive on this question than the previous one with over 80% agreeing and only shy of 10% disagreeing. Finally, students were asked to what extent they agreed that their "assessments are relevant

[26] The survey did not ask whether students identified as "home" or "international" student, but around 37% of postgraduate respondents identified as belonging to the global ethnic majority, while this number dropped to around 23% for undergraduate students.

to [their] lived experiences".[27] Only around half of students agreed or strongly agreed, with around a quarter disagreeing.

There was a significant discrepancy in the perception of diversity in the curriculum between global ethnic majority and minority students that is worth spending some time unpacking. Around three quarters of global ethnic minority respondents agreed that their teaching materials represented a diverse set of voices, while only around 15% disagreed (Fig.19). In the case of global ethnic majority respondents, however, only just over half of students agreed while more than a fifth disagreed that their teaching materials included contributions from a diverse set of people (Fig.20).

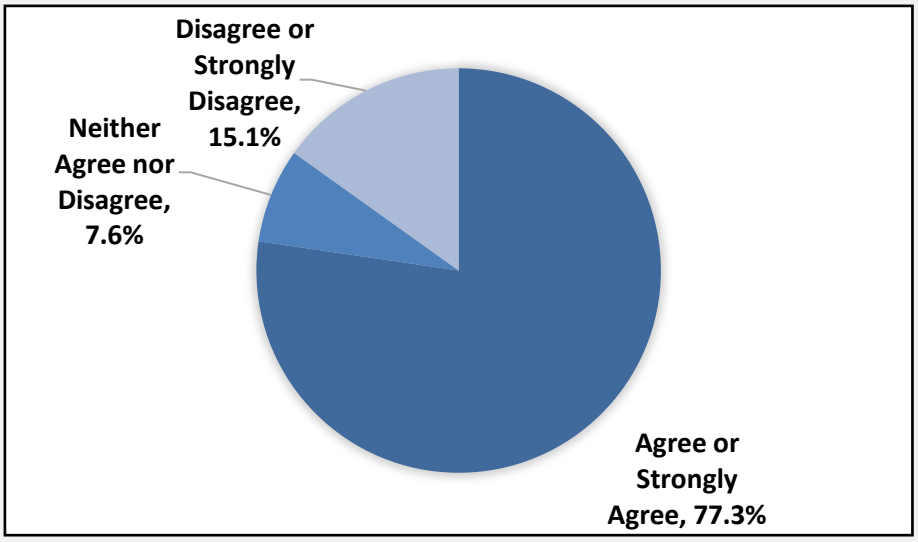

Fig. 19 Global Ethnic Minority Student Responses to "My module materials include a diverse range of voices."

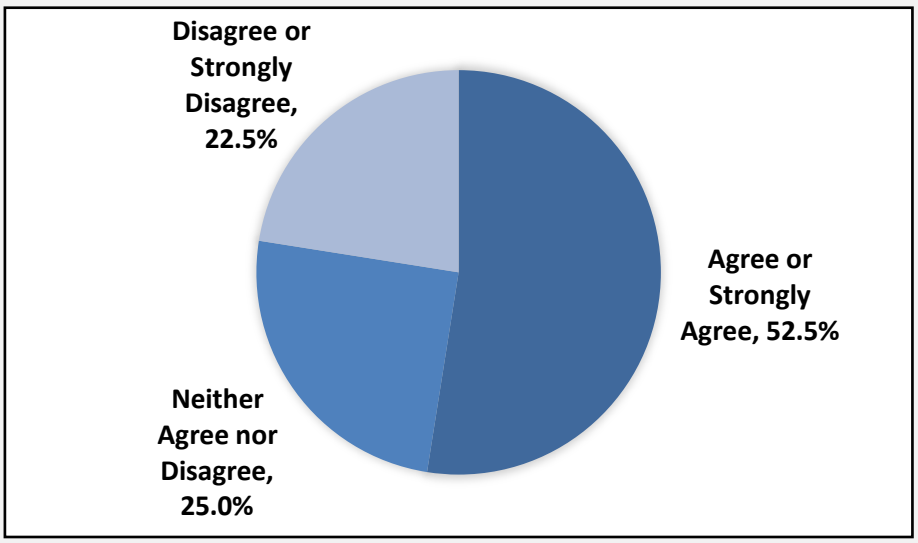

Fig.20 Global Ethnic Majority Student Responses to "My module materials include a diverse range of voices."

[27] The notion of "lived experience" has now become a common parlance. We trace this notion back to Frantz Fanon's (2008/1967) discussion of the "lived experience of the black man" in which he recounts the phenomenology of inhabiting a black body that is created and constraint as Other.

The results, when asking about the diversity of topics that students are able to discuss as part of their learning, mirrored this. Nearly 90% of global ethnic minority students agreed or strongly agreed that their learning activities allowed them to discuss diverse issues while only just shy of 6% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Fig.21). The number of global ethnic majority students in agreement with the statement was drastically lower with only 67.5%, while the number disagreeing went slightly up to 7.5% (Fig.22).

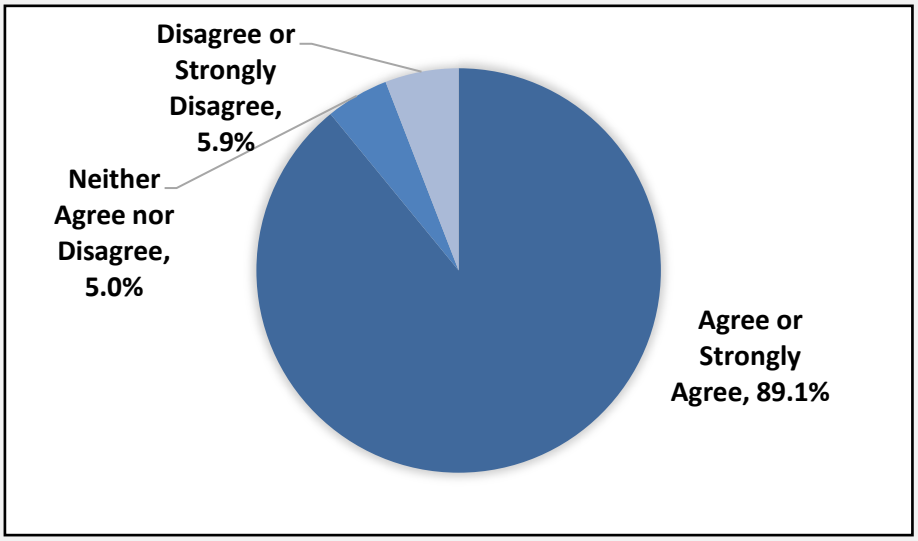

Fig. 21 Global Ethnic Minority Student Responses to "Learning activities allow for discussions related to a diverse set of topics."

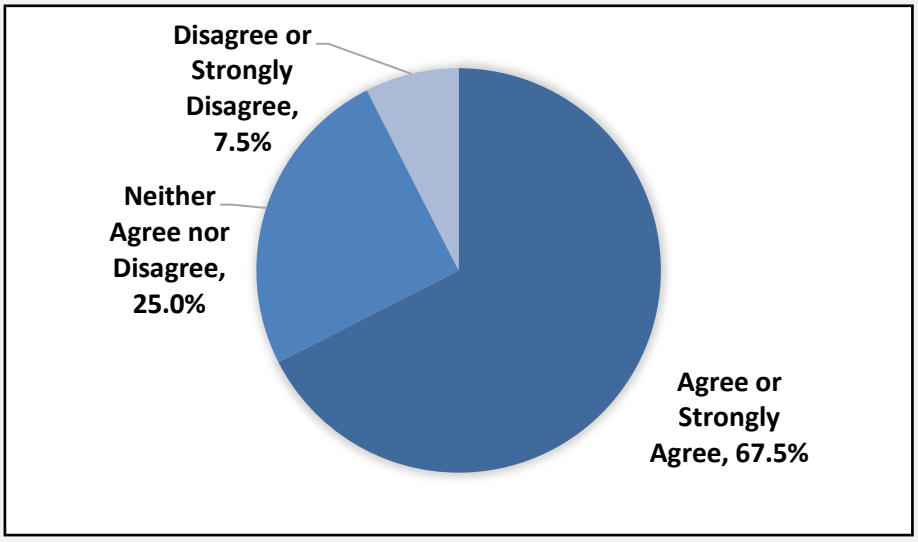

Fig.22 Global Ethnic Majority Student Responses to "Learning activities allow for discussions related to a diverse set of topics."

There was, however, also an interesting complication when looking at the responses to the question as to whether assessment allowed students to bring in their lived experiences. When divided by global ethnic majority and minority students, at first glance they do not neatly align with the conclusions noted above. For global ethnic minority students, the proportion agreeing dropped to 42.9% while the number of those ambivalent went up to 34.5%. The number disagreeing, however, also dropped slightly to 22.7% (Fig.23). The proportion of global ethnic majority students that agreed that their assessments were relevant to their lived

experiences rose to 55%. At the same time, however, the number of students ambivalent dropped all the way to 15% and the number disagreeing rose all the way to 30% (Fig.24).

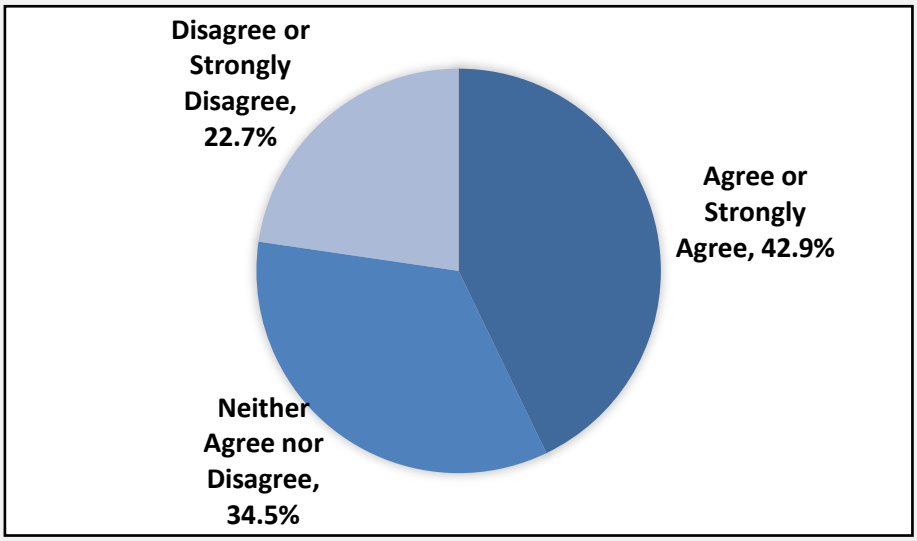

Fig.23 Global Ethnic Minority Student Responses to "My assessments are relevant to my lived experiences."

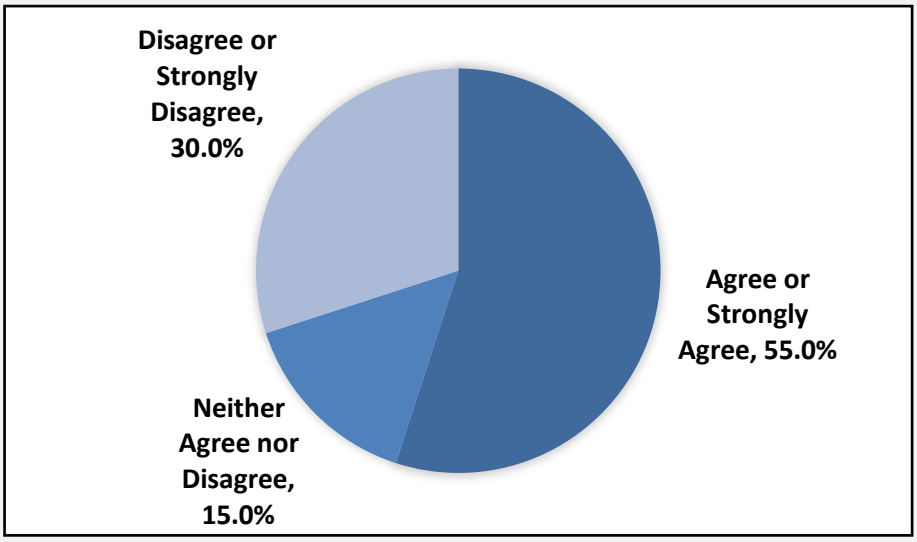

Fig.24 Global Ethnic Majority Student Responses to "My assessments are relevant to my lived experiences."

Summarising the results above, while over 80% of students agreed that their teaching activities allowed them to discuss a diverse range of topics and viewpoints, only around two thirds of students thought that their learning materials included a diverse range of voices, and only around half of students thought that their assessments were relevant to their lived experiences. This suggests that, **while overall, students across the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures positively perceive the wide variety of issues they are able to discuss as part of their teaching and learning activities, there is significant room to improve on the diversity of voices included when doing so and, in particular, to re-think the kind of assessment tasks that we set to make them more relevant to our students' lives and experiences**.

When it came to perceptions of the diversity of voices, viewpoints and topics in their curriculum, we could see a very similar trend to the one observed in the previous section regarding the learning environment. Global ethnic majority students were much less likely to perceive their curriculum as diverse than their global ethnic minority peers (around 25% and 21% less for each question respectively). This means that **there is likely much more work to do than the overall results suggest, to ensure that all of our students feel represented within our curriculum**.

Looking at the responses to the question of assessment, however, provides us with a more complicated picture. Over half of global ethnic majority students agreed that their assessments were relevant to their lived experiences while only slightly more than 40% of global ethnic minority students said so. At the same, though, nearly a third of global ethnic majority students disagreed that their assessments were relevant to their lived experience, whereas only around one in five global ethnic minority students thought so. How can we explain this? One suggestion might be that global ethnic minority students are less likely to disagree and more likely to be ambivalent because they perceive less of a need to express their lived experiences in their assessments and have given less thought to it. Carol Azumah Dennis' notion of the "unmarked scholar" may be helpful to understand this phenomenon; "the unmarked scholar requires no introduction. He does not need to explain his appearance in the text and he requires no further markers of qualification. What the unmarked scholar says is more important than who he is" (2018, p. 192). When global ethnic minority students write their assignments, they do not need to think about their lived experience in the same way as their global ethnic majority peers; the views, theories and case studies that students get to talk about in their assessments are by default reflective of their experiences and their identity can, as a result, comfortably stay in the background. Their lived experience is simply assumed; it is a given. Sara Ahmed uses the language of "trailing behind" to describe this phenomenon. She writes, "the body is 'habitual' insofar as it 'trails behind' in the performing of action, insofar as it does not pose 'a problem' or an obstacle to the action, or is not 'stressed' by 'what' the action encounters. […] White bodies do not have to face their whiteness" (2007, p. 156). This is not a privilege afforded to global ethnic majority students and this could explain why a much larger proportion of them think about how the phenomenology of being situated within a system of oppression is (or in many instances is not) made space for within assessment tasks.

This theory can also help us to better understand the picture painted by the previous survey questions according to which global ethnic majority students are much more likely to perceive their learning environment as less open to decolonisation, and the content of their curriculum and the voices represented within it as lacking diversity. When white bodies can move through spaces within the university without posing an obstacle and therefore do not have to confront their own whiteness, it is easy to see why they can lack an awareness of the experience of those who are not afforded that same privilege and struggle to identify the barriers the learning environment and curriculum puts in place for others.

Having explored student and staff understandings of decolonisation within higher education more broadly and teaching and research in particular, potential sources of resistance to decolonisation efforts, and student perceptions of the current state of their learning environment and curriculum, we can now move on to consider what students and staff think ought to change.

10 What Change is Needed?

I asked staff to identify both the barriers to decolonisation that they have encountered in their work and the types of support they would like to help them in decolonisation efforts. Staff were asked to state in their own words "any other challenges or opportunities you see when thinking about decolonising your research, teaching and/or other parts of your job?". While a few responses mentioned the potential for opportunities such as

> "to refresh perspectives and reflect more changes in the wider world. It's a great way to flush out old and limited ways of thinking",

the majority of respondents chose to focus on the barriers they faced. Ten broad themes emerged in this context (Fig.25).

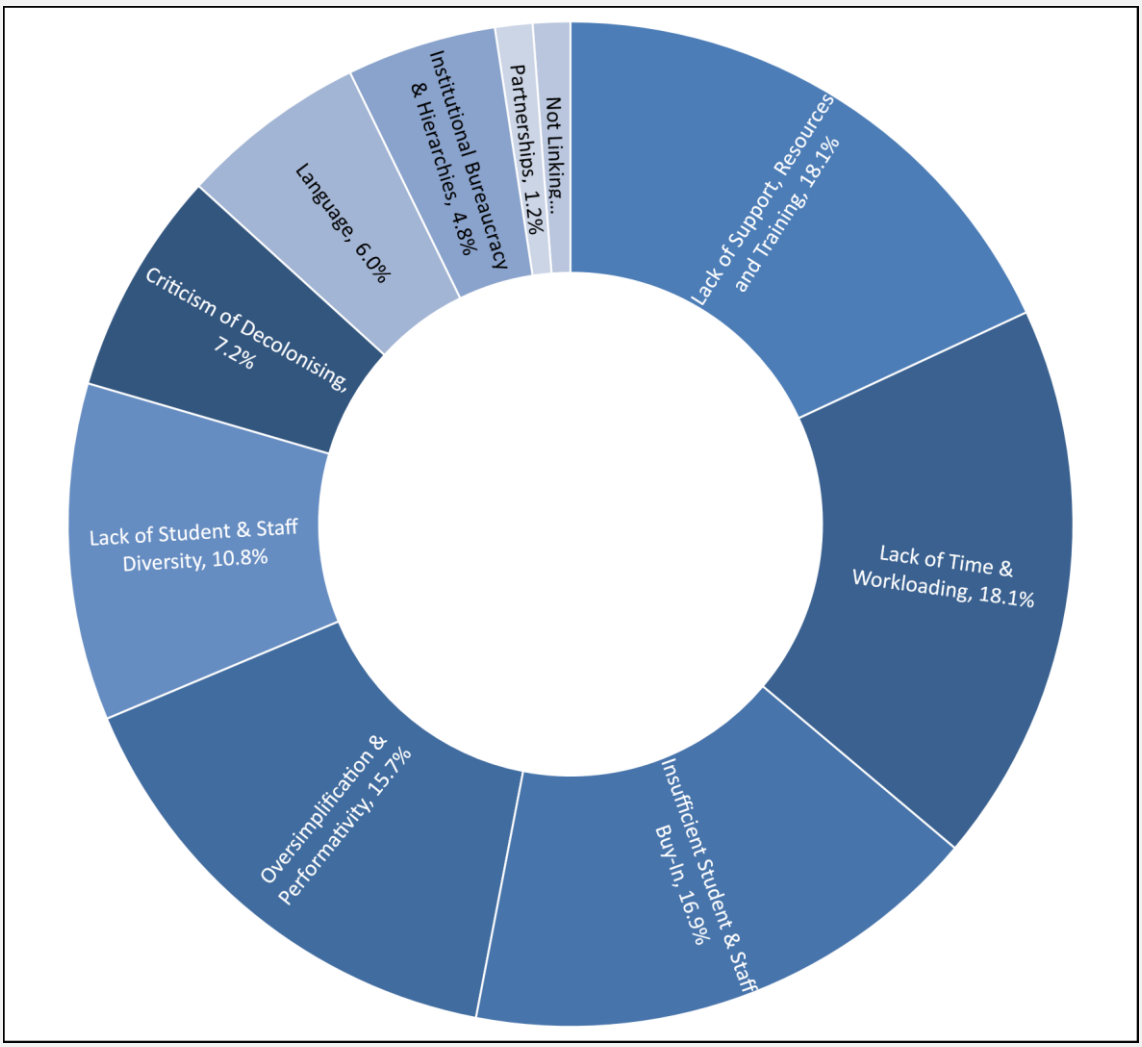

Fig.25 Staff Responses to "Are there any other challenges you see when thinking about decolonising your research, teaching and/or other parts of your job?"

Additionally, I asked staff to say in their own words what kind of support they would like. The suggestions made can be grouped into eleven themes (Fig.26).

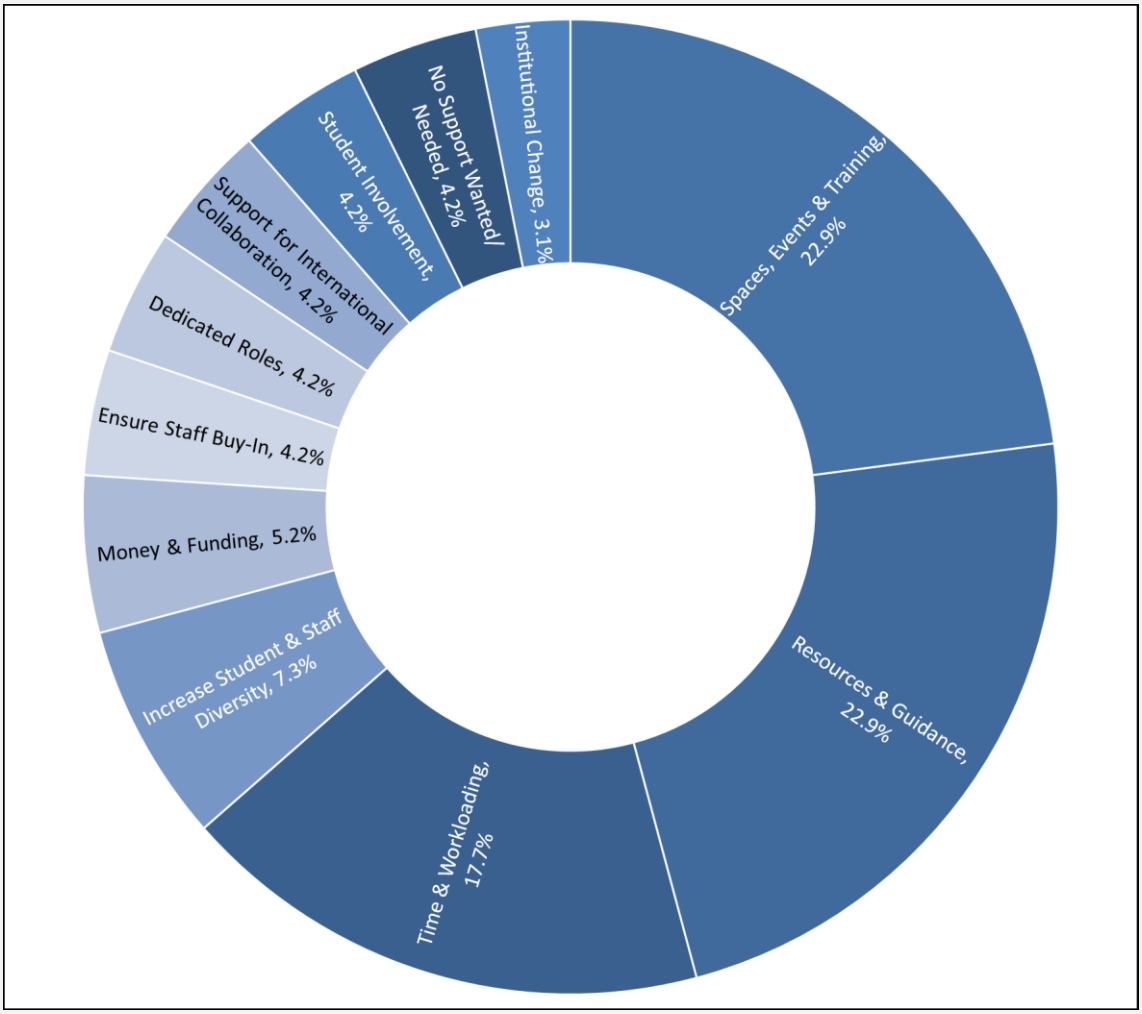

Fig.26 Staff Responses to "What types of support would you like from your School and/or Faculty to help you in decolonising your teaching, research or other parts of your job?"

As we can see, the most common barriers and sources of support related to the availability of time, resources and designated spaces, so it will be worthwhile to start by spending some time to analyse the responses in these themes in more depth.

10.1 Providing Time, Resource and Space

Firstly, staff were asked the extent to which they agreed that they "have the time necessary to engage in decolonising work". Overall, only around a third of staff agreed while over 40% disagreed (Fig.27). When it came to a lack of time, **the overarching theme that emerged was that staff want additional workloaded hours for engaging with decolonisation**:

> "Extra work-loaded hours really is needed whenever more work is being asked of us. Even if we agree with and support and endorse the goals being pursued, staff are over-worked as it is. It would be really helpful if we were explicitly given more time to pursue these educational projects that we believe in".
>
> "Time in the workload model for this would be good - demonstrating a commitment from the university to allocate staff time to this, highlighting its importance."

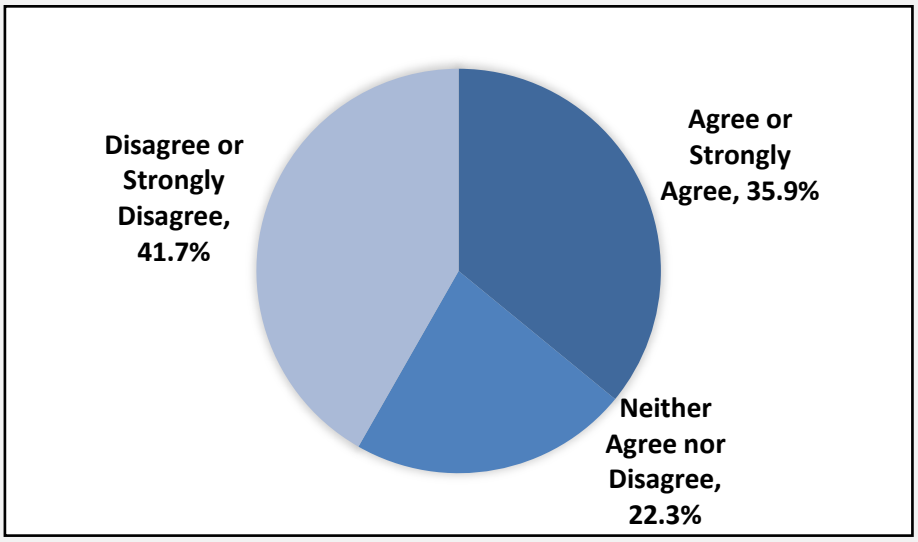

Fig.27 Staff Responses to "I have the time necessary to engage in decolonising work."

I also asked staff to what extent they agreed that they "have the resources necessary to engage in decolonising work". Results were similar when compared to the previous question. Overall, only slightly over a third of staff agreed with the statement while nearly a third disagreed (Fig.28).

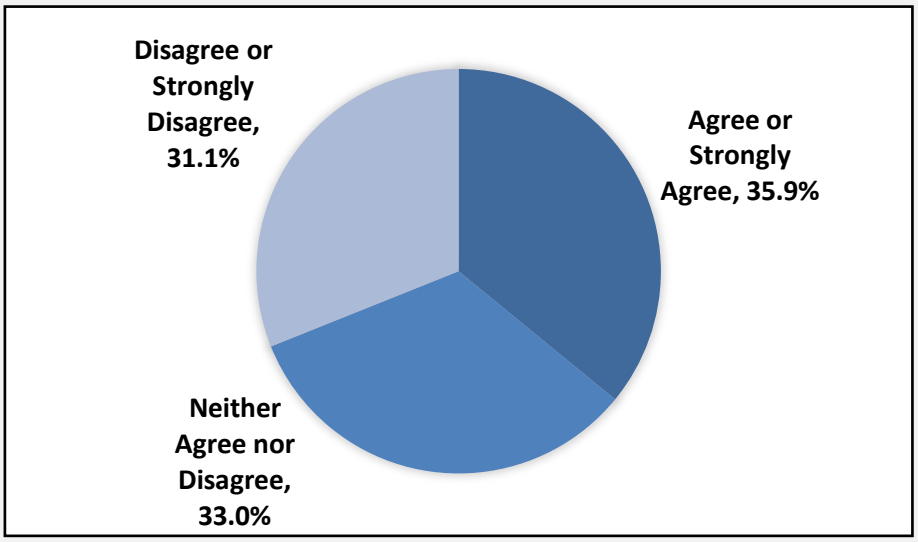

Fig.28 Staff Responses to "I have the resources necessary to engage in decolonising work."

One area that was repeatedly mentioned as falling under the heading of lacking resources were short-comings in the training provided to new and early career staff. One respondent pointed out that

> "Staff induction still seems very light on this issue",

while another noted that

> "there is a gap in terms of training and resources for non permanent staff. MUCH of the teaching is done by PGRs, and fixed term staff and they also need to be channelled into training and are minded of resources, encouraged to use them".

One early career member of staff made explicit how this lack of support was additionally problematic in light of changes to job market requirements:

> "Because of movements to decolonise the curriculum, new job positions […] often explicitly demand familiarity with other […] traditions, or with areas […] which are of obvious interest to the project of decolonisation. As a junior academic on a temporary contract, this makes securing work increasingly hard for me because these topics fall outside my area of expertise and prior academic training. In my experience, the policy of this University and similar institutions is simply to hire new staff with the relevant expertise rather than encouraging and helping existing junior staff to acquire the expertise needed to teach changing syllabuses (etc.)".

Several respondents asked for guidance that could provide them with quick solutions:

> "A check list of easy wins? Things that are practical to share with staff to support, so it doesn't appear to be an undoable task".

Across responses, there was a sense that staff want such guidance to be supplemented by case-studies:

> "I think if 'good practice' could be collated in a very practical guide (which might already exist), and promoted, that would be helpful".

Finally, several respondents highlighted the fact that such guidance will be most useful when it also includes resources that are very specific to their area of teaching and research:

> "Recommended reading on decolonizing very specific subjects - more targeted resources for staff would save time and improve take-up".

The Faculty of AHC has already created a guide to "Decolonising Student Education in AHC" (internal resource only) which collects good practice examples from across the whole Faculty in areas such as module design and delivery, assessment, and year abroad and year in industry.[28] It also includes an extensive glossary to introduce staff to key terminology to use – or in some cases, to avoid – in discussions on race, colonialism and its legacies, and decolonisation. As several of the survey respondents pointed out, however, there is a particular appetite for resources that are more discipline specific. **The Faculty should work with Schools to adapt the document into local guidance that provide resources tailored to individual subjects**.

The third major theme which emerged in staff responses was the need to have both formal and informal spaces available to share best practice, work together and find support from others. Having designated opportunities to talk and share best practice at a School level in particular was a recurring theme:

> "I think it would be helpful to have school-level discussions and practical workshops to give staff the tools and the confidence to engage in this kind of work".

Several respondents highlighted the need that such events and spaces include a variety of stakeholders. Firstly, it will be important to get all academic staff to engage, not just those with a prior interest in this area:

> "A quarterly event on the subject that brings the schools entire research community together and challenge them to engage on the subject".[29]

[28] The guide was created by a student intern employed for this purpose.

[29] This focus was echoed by a number of responses which argued that greater staff buy-in across the board was needed in order to support decolonisation activities (4.2%). For example, one member of staff explained: "we

Academic related and professional services staff noted that they ought to be part of such conversations, too:

> "I think it would be useful to reflect on how support staff can participate in this".

One respondent also mentioned the need to include students in such conversations:

> "More opportunities to speak to and with students and all staff. Initiatives can feel siloed and shunted towards those with an established interest, without involving the entire group of stakeholders".

Some respondents explicitly asked for more formalised training and CPD workshops:

> "It will be extremely useful if the University institutionalise a structured program for all staff, regardless of their pay grade, to participate in workshop[s]".

Decolonisation is a long-term project and starting to educate oneself is a major undertaking. Shauneen Pete, for example, described her journey as follows: "I learned about the colonial structures of education through my own volition. It was double-work to learn in this way because I still had to understand the dominant discourses of my field of study, and I took it upon myself to read beyond my area into feminist theory, anti-oppression, anti-racism, whiteness studies, as well as exploring the experiences of minoritised educators and administrators. Learning what is not taught requires effort" (Pete, 2018, p. 184). The problem is that "many educators feel too overstretched, underqualified and under-resourced to undertake such a decolonial revision of knowledge in their area" (Last, 2018, p. 213). **Providing time, resources and space to support staff in this process therefore ought to be a priority for the Faculty of AHC**.

10.2 Representation in the Student and Staff Body

Another theme that emerged throughout the survey was that a lack of representation in both the student and staff body presents a major barrier to decolonisation efforts and that changing recruitment and hiring practices will be necessary if we want to support staff in their work.

Before looking at the staff responses, it will be important to highlight that this was also a recurring theme in the student survey.

On numerous occasions, students noted how a lack of diversity in the staff body negatively affected their sense of belonging:

> "All of the lecturers I have ever had that I can think of have been white – as a person of colour I think it's important to have more lecturers of colour with a wider variety of lived experiences in what has historically always been and to quite an extent still is, such a white dominated subject."

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have a strong collective group dedicated to anti-racist activities in the department […] So far, the actionable plans we bring to the department have been consistently kicked back. Our department is 95% white staff-wise. When we face the white fragility, this energy becomes a formidable blockage that kills any possibility of transformation for a person as well as an institution". Another member of staff described "significant resistance in my school to work undertaken to develop a module that would address race and racism using decolonial and anti-racist pedagogical approaches. No other module in my experience has faced such specific and persistent resistance. Decolonial work was made to be seen as causing a problem, a burden on workload, taking resources away from programmes when in fact it was doing the opposite. The group of staff undertaking this work were framed unfairly as an obsessive cult who would not listen to anyone else".

The importance of students being able to see themselves represented in the staff that teach them has been well documented. The Closing the Gap Report, for example, found that 87% of their survey respondents thought that a "lack of HE role models representing all ethnic groups" was a contributing factor to the attainment gap[30] in UK higher education institutions (UUK & NUS, 2019, p. 22).

One interesting comment came from a postgraduate taught student who also noted a particular lack of diversity within the student body:

> "Whilst we have a large international diversity, I don't really meet many British students with ethnic minority backgrounds like myself - at least not in my school."

While the lack of representation in the staff body has been widely discussed, what sometimes gets overlooked is how the face of our student body is currently changing across higher education and the impacts that this has on home global ethnic majority students in particular. Reflecting on wider developments in the higher education sector, Rahul Choudaha notes that "the budget cuts faced by many […] higher education institutions have compelled its leaders to find alternative sources of revenue to ensure the financial sustainability of their institutions. In search for solutions, many spotted the opportunity of recruiting international students as a new source of cash flow to fund operations and fill the budget deficits." (2017, p. 5). John Holmwood has argued that, as a result of this shift in recruitment policies, "increasingly, the diversity of higher education is secured by the recruitment of overseas students from elite social backgrounds (i.e. those able to pay high fees), while domestic students from ethnic minorities remain disadvantaged" (2018, p. 47). While universities claim that they are creating a global and diverse student community, in fact, a large proportion of global ethnic majority students that are recruited come from a limited number of countries abroad where they represent some of the most affluent and privileged strata of society. **The Faculty of AHC needs to take this problem into consideration as part of their broader internationalisation strategy and has to find ways in which home global ethnic majority students, in particular, can be recruited and supported to a greater extent**.

These concerns about diversity were echoed in a number of responses in the staff survey, which also identified several problems with our current processes of recruitment and hiring:

> "There is still a tendency to appoint new staff in the image of the existing staff. The 'must have a PhD' culture that has developed for appointing university academic staff discriminates against many from different ethnicities who are supremely able but have not had access to existing academic structures. Decolonising admissions has a similar problem and I would like to see individual offers based not only on UCAS statement and expected exam results but overall profile - much more generous than the existing 'Access to Leeds' scheme. I would like to see a system for admitting refugees at UG level according to their ability and not their qualifications."

Another issue identified, especially in relation to staff hiring, were existing HR processes:

> "Shifting fully towards an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist work place needs the entire organisation to change, which is a challenge for such a large one. It doesn't seem that

[30] At the University of Leeds we use the term "awarding gap" instead. The change in terminology is supposed to signal a move away from a deficit model in which students are at the root of the problem and toward an acknowledgement that it is the institution that causes these inequalities.

HR is fully onboard with this yet (language, processes, imagery etc) which makes it harder to 'crack' the recruitment problem".

"We need to hire POCs […]. Money needs to be made available centrally to allow us to do so; time needs to be spent 'headhunting' in advance of advertising; and job descriptions need to do much more than say that we encourage applications from POCs."

It is important to understand some of the mechanisms that can explain the current systematic underrepresentation of global ethnic majority staff in higher education. William Jamal Richardson provides us with three contributing factors. Firstly, and unsurprisingly, hiring practices are part of the core of the problem. In particular, following findings by Lauren Rivera, he argues that "cultural matching" is a key aspect of the hiring process that serves as a barrier for global ethnic majority staff to gain access to jobs. Rivera understands cultural matching as the process of evaluating the suitability of job candidates, at least partly, based on "shared tastes, experiences, leisure pursuits and self-presentation styles" (2012, p. 1000). She argues that cultural matching is a key part of hiring processes not only because a shared culture can serve "as a powerful emotional glue that facilitates trust and comfort, [generate] feelings of excitement, and [bond] individuals together" but also because they are "fundamental bases on which we evaluate merit" (2012, p. 1001). We understand and value that which we already know and are therefore more likely to hire academics in our own image.[31] Secondly, a lot of global ethnic majority candidates are already filtered out of the candidate pool long before the hiring process. Richardson argues that the training of graduate students is another way in which the lack of representation in our staff body is reproduced. For him, global ethnic majority graduate students are presented with two options: either they assimilate "into mainstream (i.e. Eurocentric) patterns of behaviour and scholarship", or they will be "filtered out of academic all together for refusing to assimilate" (Richardson, 2018, pp. 238-239). What comes immediately to mind here is the student who, earlier on in this report, recounted an episode in which they wanted to follow a methodology from outside the established canon for their assessment but were told not to do so if they wanted to do well. Finally, Richardson suggests that beyond recruitment itself, a "culture of silence and politeness within academia" (2018, p. 238) prevents academics from speaking out against existing processes and actions that have racist implications for fear of being excluded and marginalised. This silence then allows problematic hiring, employment and graduate training practices to continue and prevents positive action for change. **We end up with a vicious circle in which racist training and hiring practices as well as working cultures mutually reinforce and reproduce each other. While this is by no means an exhaustive list, it provides us with a starting point to understand the kinds of mechanisms that we, as a Faculty, need to work towards dismantling**.

10.3 Challenging Hierarchies

But it is not only a culture of silence or politeness that can prevent students and staff from speaking out. Existing hierarchies and power structures within Schools, Faculties and the wider University can also act as barriers to change. To understand this, I asked staff two

[31] A similar thought can be found in the work of Ahmed who argues that "recruitment functions as a technology for the reproduction of whiteness." (2007, p. 157) because "some bodies more than others are recruited", in particular "those that can inherit the 'character' of the organization, by returning its image with a reflection that reflect back that image, what we could call a 'good likeness'" (2007, p. 158).

related questions; firstly, to what extent they thought it was their "responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising" and, secondly, to what extent they agreed with the statement that they are "concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising". We did not ask students the former question as we do not think that they ought to have a responsibility to change university structures. But we asked them the second question as we wanted to acknowledge that many students might nonetheless want to do so.

With regard to the first question, just over 70% of staff agreed while just shy of 15% disagreed that they had a responsibility to challenge existing power structures. There were, however, significant differences when analysing the data according to ethnicity and job role. Global ethnic minority staff were more likely to agree that it was their responsibility (78.1%) (Fig.29) than their global ethnic majority colleagues (66.7%) (Fig.30). Conversely, a third of global ethnic majority staff stated that it was not their responsibility, while less than 10% of global ethnic minority staff thought so.[32]

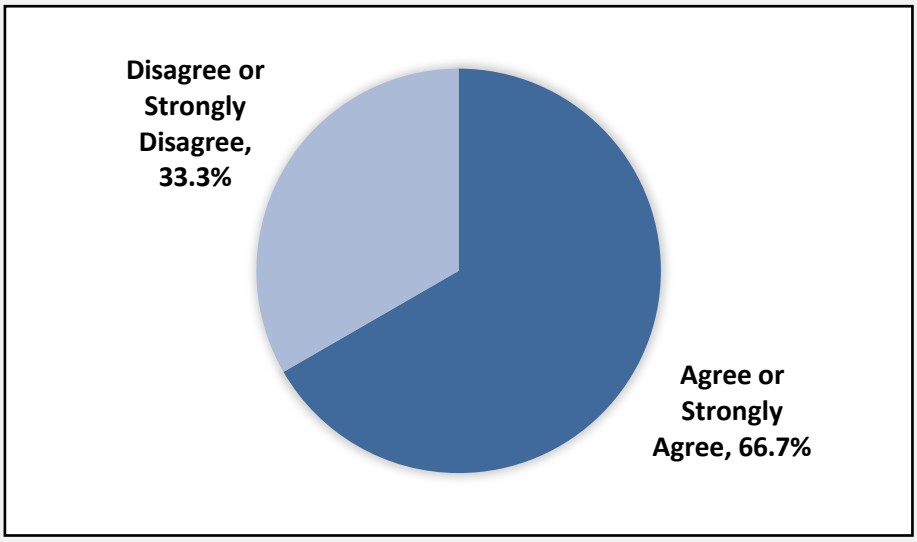

Fig.29 Global Ethnic Minority Staff Responses to "It is my responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

[32] As the number of global ethnic majority staff respondents was very low, and we do not have any students results for this question to compare overall trends, these results should be taken with caution. They do, however, align with common arguments provided in the relevant literature.

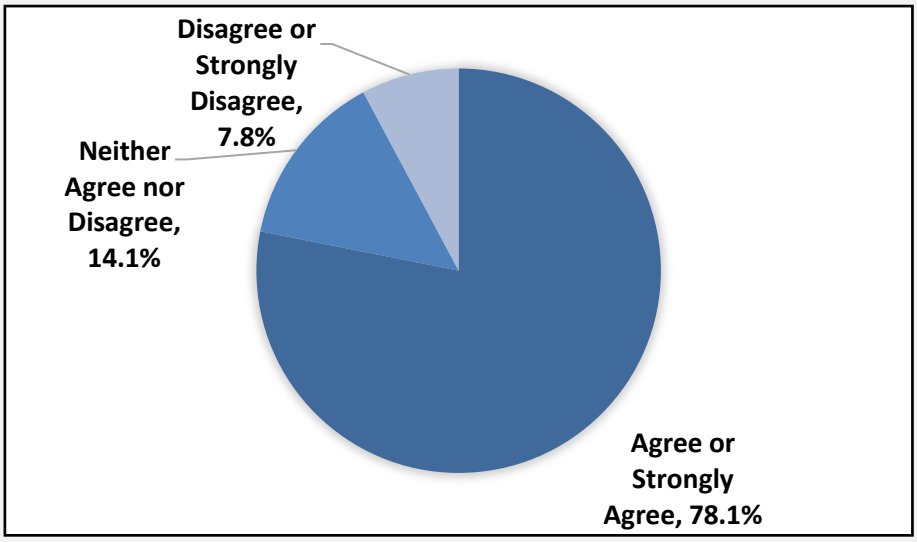

Fig.30 Global Ethnic Majority Staff Responses to "It is my responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

The data also showed that fewer early career academic staff as well as academic-related and professional services staff agreed that it was their responsibility to challenge existing power structures (65.5% and 70% respectively) (Fig.31 and Fig.32) than their senior academic colleagues (81.8%) (Fig.33).[33] Similarly, while around 16% and 20% of the former stated that it was not their responsibility to challenge such structures, fewer than 10% of the latter did so.

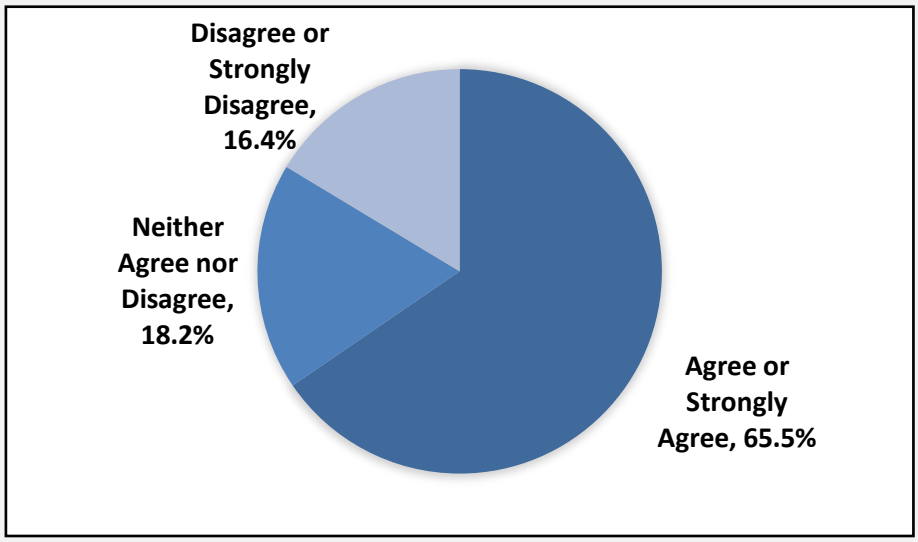

Fig.31 Early Career Staff Responses to "It is my responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

[33] Again, we are faced with the problem of a small sample size for academic-related and professional services staff. The results do, however, broadly align with those of early career academics and are generally reflective of well-known hierarchical structures within the Faculty and the institution more broadly.

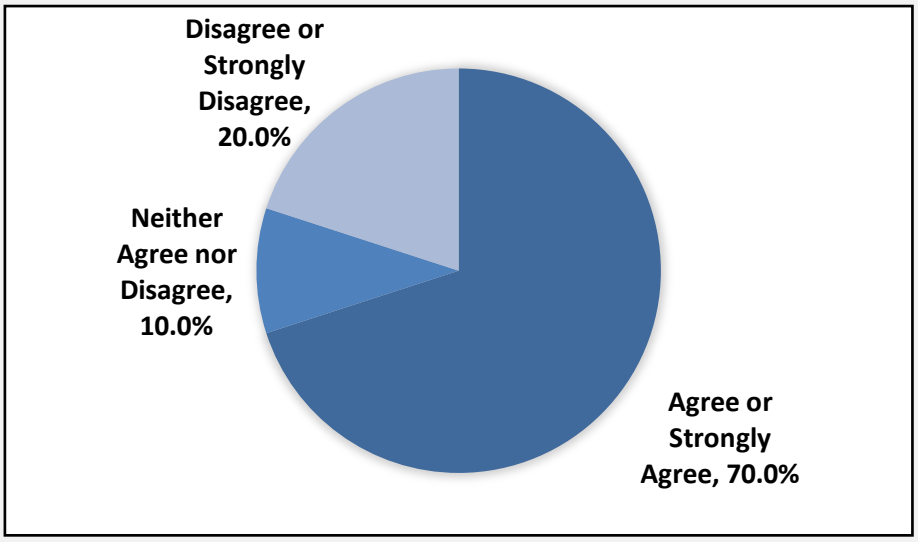

Fig. 32 Academic Related and Professional Services Staff Responses to "It is my responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

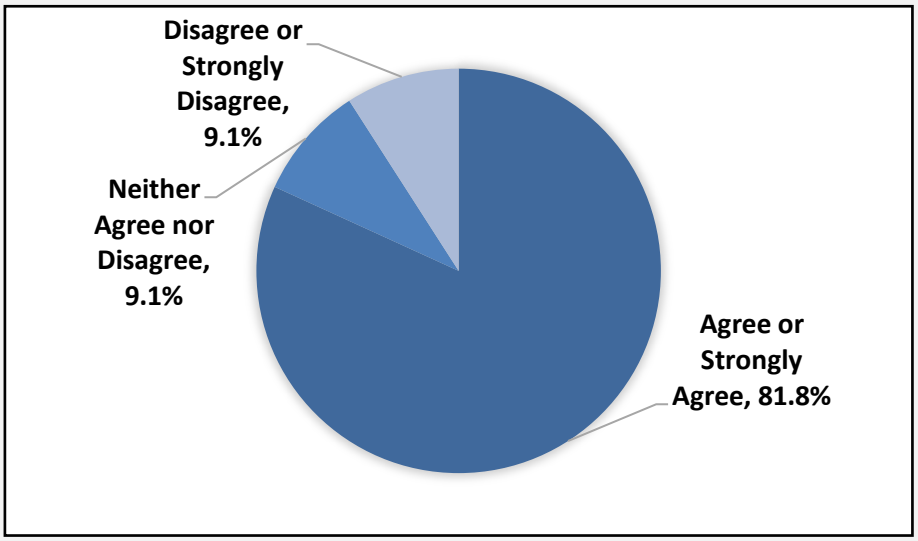

Fig.33 Senior Academic Staff Responses to "It is my responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

Overall, a lot of staff do think that it is their responsibility to challenge the status quo and advocate for change; this was, however, much more the case for global ethnic minority than majority colleagues. This result reflects sentiments in the literature that the burden of change should not fall on those who are already disadvantaged by the system. We need to be critical of the assumption that global ethnic majority colleagues "can be called upon, at will, to sort out the, Eurocentric mess FOR white people; that [they] have the resources, support, time within [their] workloads, and energy to do so" (Doharty, Madriaga, & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021, p. 236). Positively, senior academic staff were more likely than early career academic or academic-related and professional services staff to acknowledge that it was their responsibility to challenge existing power structures (by around 15% and 10% respectively). This is a reflection of the hierarchical nature of the Faculty in which senior academics tend to take on larger administrative and decision-making responsibilities.

With regard to the second question, around a quarter of staff agreed while around half disagreed that they were concerned about the consequences of challenging existing power structures. Some clear trends emerged again, when analysing the data according to job role. Academic related and professional services staff were most likely to be concerned about the personal consequences of challenging structures (40%) (Fig.34) in comparison to early career and senior academic colleagues (21.8% and 18.2% respectively) (Fig.35 and Fig.36). [34] Similarly, the percentage of staff who were not concerned about the personal consequences they may experience was lowest for academic related and professional services staff (30%), rose for early career staff to 41.8% and for senior academic staff all the way to 69.7%.

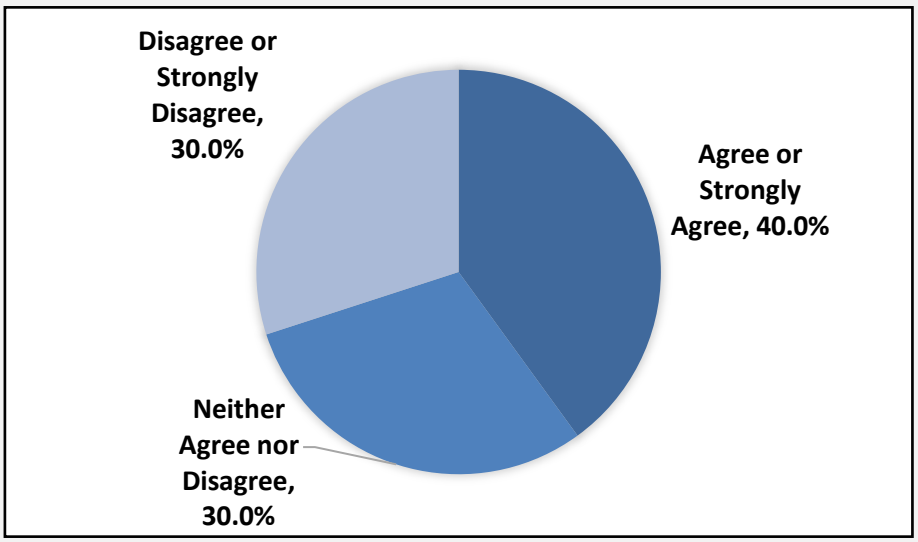

Fig.34 Academic Related and Professional Services Staff Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

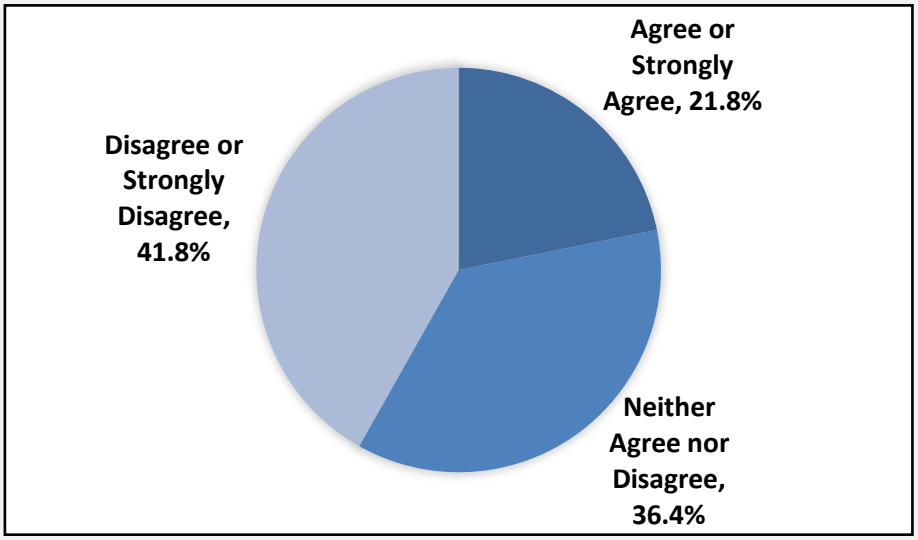

Fig. 35 Early Career Academic Staff Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

[34] While the problem of a small sample size for academic-related and professional services staff remains, the results are reflective of the aforementioned institutional hierarchies.

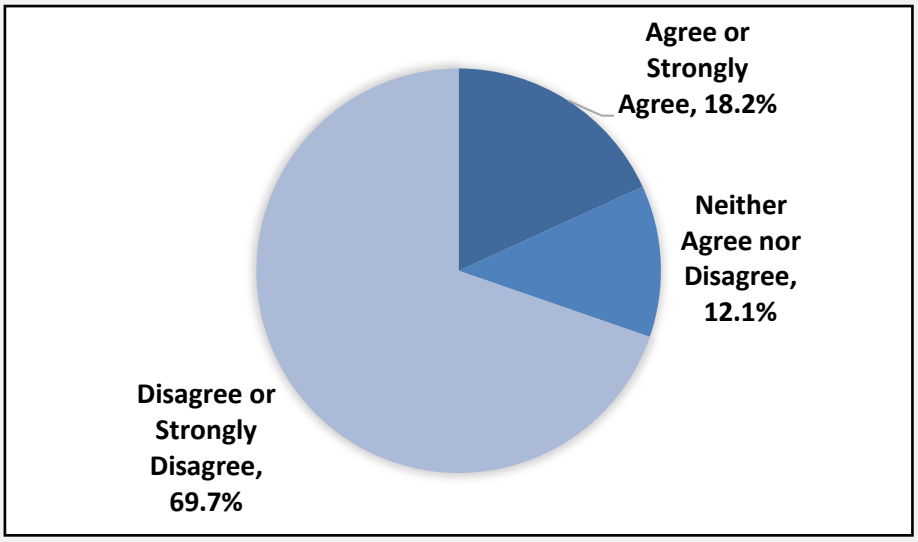

Fig.36 Senior Academic Staff Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

Looking at the results according to ethnicity also revealed important insights. While fewer than 10% of global ethnic minority respondents were worried about the personal consequences of challenging power structures (Fig.37) more than half of global ethnic majority members of staff were (Fig.38). Similarly, while nearly 60% of global ethnic minority staff said that they were not worried about the personal consequences of challenging power structures, only around 45% of global ethnic majority staff said the same. [35]

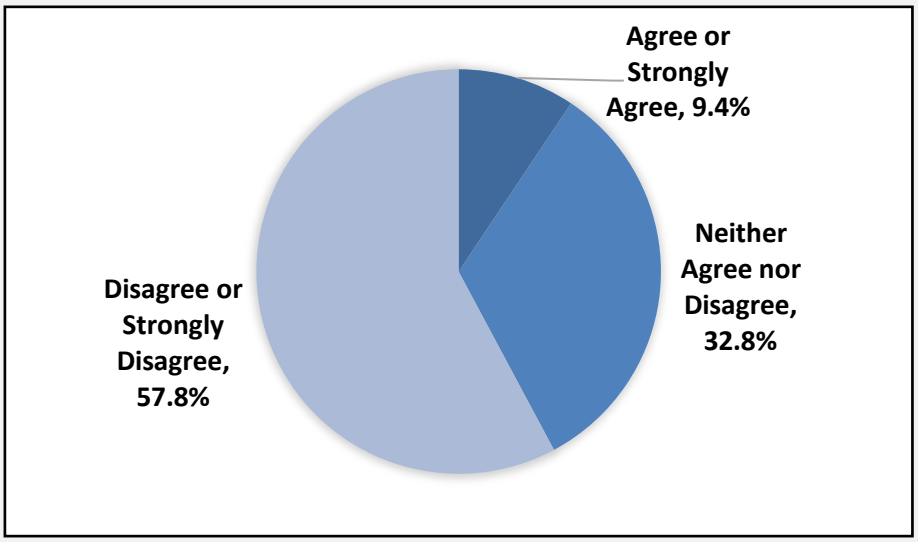

Fig.37 Global Ethnic Minority Staff Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

[35] While we again face the problem of a small sample size with regard to the responses of global ethnic majority staff, the overall trends found clearly align with those from the responses in the student survey. As such, they can be taken as indicative of a wider problem within the Faculty.

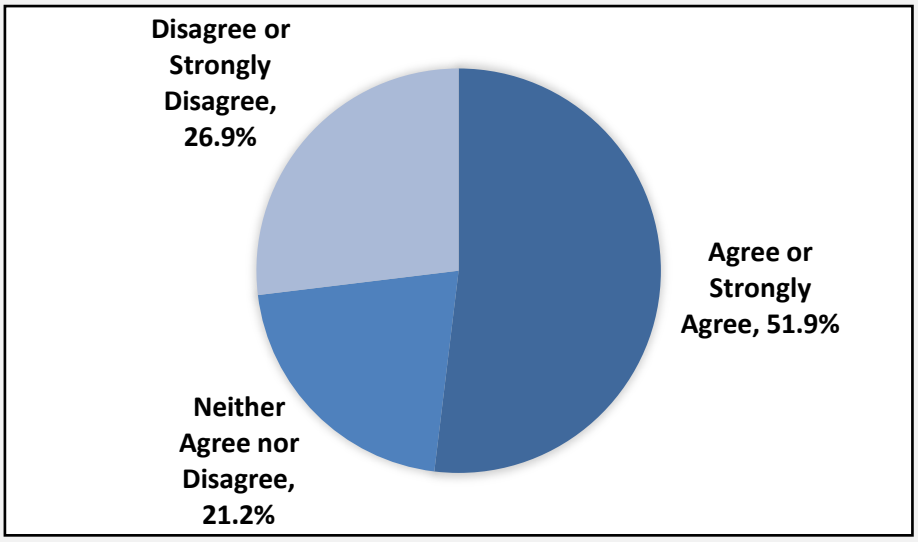

Fig.38 Global Ethnic Majority Staff Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

These results were mirrored in the student survey. Overall, around a third of students agreed while around 40% disagreed that they were concerned about the consequences of challenging existing power structures. Like in the staff survey, there was, however, a very significant difference in the response of global ethnic minority and majority students. While only around one in five of the former agreed or strongly agreed (Fig.39), over half of the latter agreed that they were concerned about the negative repercussions of challenging existing power structures (Fig.40). Similarly, while around half of global ethnic minority students were not concerned about such negative consequences, only around a quarter of global ethnic majority students felt the same.

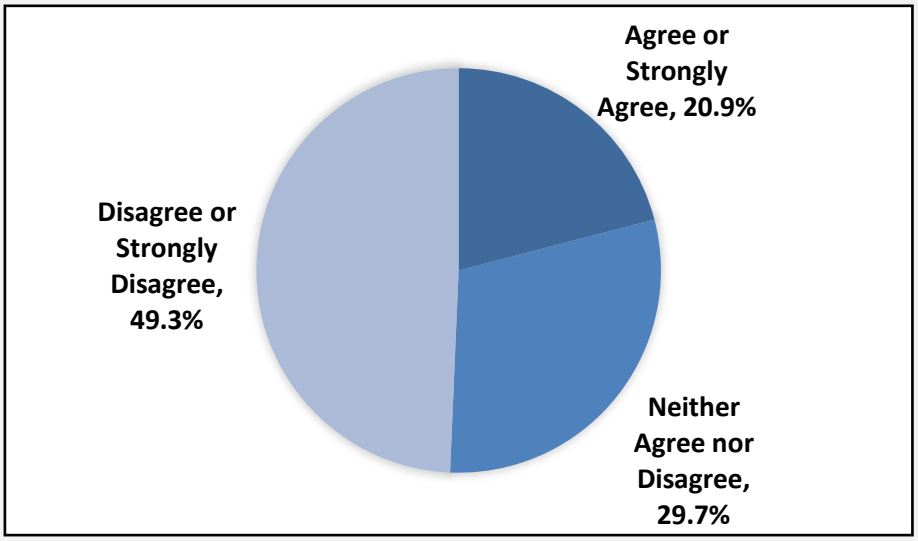

Fig.39 Global Ethnic Minority Student Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

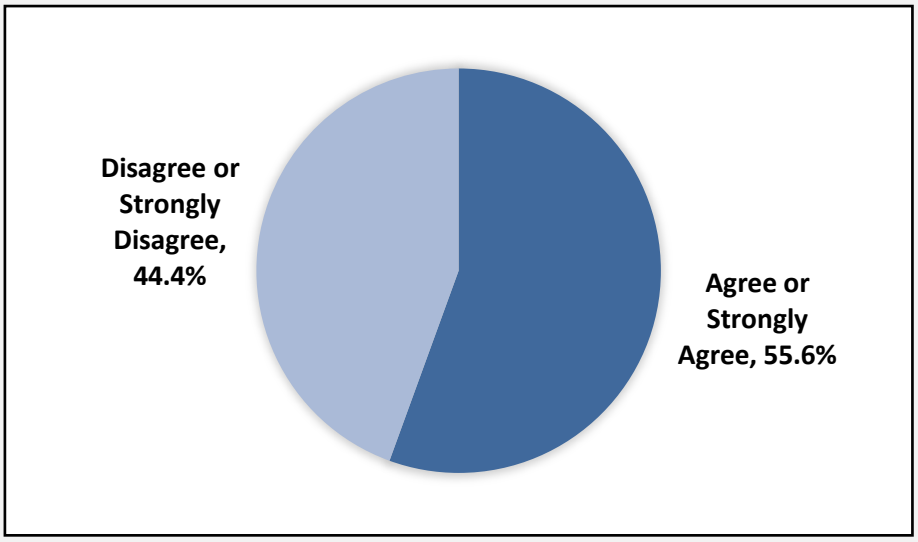

Fig.40 Global Ethnic Majority Student Responses to "I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising."

Overall, it is encouraging that around half of staff members did not express worries about experiencing negative consequences as a result of challenging existing power structures and hierarchies. Though the fact that around a quarter of staff and a third of students do, should make us think about **what we, as a Faculty, can do to change existing processes and systems to protect those who speak out**. These numbers are especially problematic as it is primarily global ethnic majority staff and students who were worried about the potential for negative repercussions when speaking out. To understand this, it will be helpful to consider some of Jason Arday's experiences of being black in British academia: "there had always been a feeling that survival needed to resemble keeping my head below the parapet and ensuring that I did not draw attention towards myself" (2018, p. 162); "there is an awareness of who maintains the power and privilege, whilst recognising the vulnerability of your position as a Black academic at the behest of senior White administrators who have the authority to make your position become untenable" (2018, p. 168). As a result, Arday recounts how he was always "mindful of my place as a minority ethnic individual, there are times where you visibly weigh up the consequences of challenging and confronting" problematic practices and behaviours (2018, p. 169). Speaking out again racist practices and policies can often result in the ascription of racial stereotypes such as being "seen as the angry black man" who blows "things out of proportion" (Doharty, Madriaga, & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021, p. 238). They are seen to violate norms of "politeness" and "collegiality that exist within many academic spaces" (Richardson, 2018, p. 238). The results, when analysed according to job role, also suggested that hierarchies of power within the Faculty crucially affected the extent to which colleagues were worried about the negative repercussions of speaking up, with academic related and professional services staff most likely and senior academic staff least likely to say they were concerned (a difference of over 20%).

10.4 Institutional and System-Wide Change

As argued earlier on in this report, the success of decolonisation initiatives will, ultimately, rely on the changes we can affect both at an institutional and wider system level. As an institution, staff identified several barriers and potential sources of support.

Some thought that **additional sources of funding should be made available to enable staff to pursue projects contributing to decolonisation efforts**. The types of projects proposed

varied greatly and ranged, for example, from building links with institutions in global majority countries and the ability to renumerate scholars from these institutions for their work, to increasing the availability of relevant research projects for staff within the university to apply to.

The issue of **enabling international collaboration** in particular was raised by a number of respondents. Next to a lack of funding, colleagues suggested that **changing current policies and procedures will be necessary to enable decolonisation**:

> "From school to faculty to university level, the institution is often unsupportive of international scholars and of knowledge exchange with the South. Administrative processes supporting international travel and international research have a strong UK/European bias and often end up discouraging productive exchange and learning from the South - which is central to decolonising".

In the student survey, the need to encourage more global collaborations was also identified by one respondent who suggested **the need for more diverse exchange programme offerings**.

Some respondents suggested that **having roles dedicated to supporting decolonisation work** would be crucial. These responses fell into two broad categories. On the one hand were those who advocated for having individuals in designated leadership roles to enable

> "Connectivity with 'champion's or 'agents of change' who can be called upon for conversation, recruitment, specific questions".

On the other hand were those who suggested that it would be useful to have

> "Someone who is employed specifically to decolonise our work in consultation with us of course".

Finally, some respondents linked staff working conditions more broadly to our ability to meaningfully decolonise. For example, one respondent suggested that

> "Ending the race and gender gap would be a good start".

This issue was also identified by a respondent in the student survey:

> "Surely one of the most impactful ways that the university could decolonise is by paying its staff fairly and equally. […] Staff showing solidarity with each other in the fight for equal pay is a far more meaningful and material act of decolonisation than the proposed "decolonisation training" programmes (such as "Whiteness in the Academy" and "Allyship"). This would also benefit students, and not just those looking to enter academia. Students will feel more confident in their university's commitment to "decolonise" if it takes action to rectify its own race pay gaps".

What these comments suggest is that, on a most fundamental level, the institutional culture at the University of Leeds would have to change if we want to engage in meaningful decolonisation work. No amount of tinkering with the content and form of our curriculum and research will amount to decolonisation as long as internal processes prevent global ethnic majority staff from receiving **appropriate opportunities for career progression and a fair pay**.

As a Faculty, it is therefore our responsibility to review current procedures[36] in place and to evaluate the extent to which they are negatively impacting on global ethnic majority staff. Additionally, Faculty leadership have a responsibility to advocate for changes to similarly problematic procedures at the broader institutional level.

As mentioned throughout, some of the systems that need to change to enable meaningful decolonisation will inevitably have to go beyond the institution itself. This came out most clearly in staff responses relating to global systems of research funding and academic publishing. On a global level, one member of staff noted that

> "the […] academic system is still incredibly unequal in terms of resources available to those from the 'global south'",

while on a local level, another respondent highlighted the importance of

> "Ensuring that decisions about funding and opportunities are made by diverse panels that include a range of perspectives, including those from the global majority and or ethnically minoritised people".

Two respondents also mentioned the way in which decolonising research has to involve questioning current practices of reviewing and editing academic research. For example, one member of staff noted that it will have to involve critically examining

> "what kinds of papers to encourage or accept in journal editing roles".

The research academics are able to pursue is significantly enabled and constrained by systems of funding, a point that was picked up in a number of responses. In particular, "because the money and resources for these educational and scientific endeavours come from the global North, academics in the global North are able to determine what does and doesn't get funding […]. Scholars in the global South who reject this agenda-setting process are likely to be cut off from networks of scholarship and funding thus ensuring that their work is marginalised" (Richardson, 2018, pp. 240-241). Additionally, it should not be underestimated that "participation in academic research and policymaking networks requires funds to travel and research and reliable access to technologies to maintain those connections" (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015, p. 15). These background conditions are taken for granted in global minority institutions while scholars in global majority institutions often do not have the same means at their disposal. Next to the global level, responses also pointed at funding decisions on a more local level and the need for global ethnic majority scholars to have a seat at the table at which funding decisions are made.

Publishing practices are another important area within research that was highlighted by the survey responses. We need to start by acknowledging that publication outlets based in global minority countries are valued more highly than those in global majority countries. This is obviously problematic because this hierarchy signals to researchers that knowledge can only be found in certain parts of the world. Beyond this, we also need to be aware how this directly affects the kind of research that counts as legitimate as publishing in journals in global majority countries also "requires conforming to their methodologies and paradigms, which generally reflect Western traditions and values" (Vavrus & Pekol, 2015, p. 15). And when

[36] Relevant procedures may relate to, for example, the way in which academic leadership positions within the Faculty are advertised, hidden costs that are not acknowledged by our Faculty workload model, or support for academic-related and professional services staff to engage in continuous professional development activities.

individual academics work to question these power imbalances by, for example, “publishing in the global South [they] have to expect lower REF scores or an additional amount of justification for the significance of their work. This, in turn, affects their job security” (Last, 2018, p. 209). Current practices of academic publishing are inherently hierarchical and reproduce the coloniality of knowledge. Editors and reviewers, as identified in the responses of some staff members, therefore have an especially important role to play in disrupting these hierarchies by re-envisioning the perceived methodological boundaries of their discipline.

It should also be noted that the current cost-model of academic publishing further entrenches global inequalities. Many institutions in global minority countries have so-called “read-and-publish” deals with large publishing houses in which the institution covers the cost of its researchers being able to publish open access in a wide variety of journals. The problem with this model is that it “lowers barriers to readers only to raise them for authors” (Pooley, 2020) – in particular authors at institutions in global majority countries who are unable to offer similar deals to their staff. “The practical effect of the agreements is to create an authorial underclass, a stratum of scholars who—thanks to geography or institutional affiliation—don’t get to publish [open access]” (Pooley, 2020). As some of the respondents of the survey rightly identified, the availability of resources within institutions is intimately connected with the reproduction of existing global knowledge hierarchies. While it is beyond our Faculty to change these global systems, **we ought to make space available for staff to reflect on ways to identify sights of resistance and opportunities to advocate change**.

11 Commitments

As this report has tried to make clear throughout, if we want to take decolonisation seriously, we need more than words to bring about concrete change. As a result, the Faculty commits itself to taking the following steps, each of which is clearly aligned with the broader institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (internal resource only):

3. Developing, supporting and retaining a diverse and inclusive staff community
4. Securing successful outcomes for students
6. Providing a healthy, safe and inclusive environment and enriching experience for staff and students
9. Ensuring a sustainable and balanced student cohort mix

11.1 Student Education

Commitment	Key Facilitators	Timeframe	KPIs
We will create Faculty-wide resources for students providing an introduction to racism, colonialism and its legacies, and the fundamental principles and aims of decolonisation within higher education.	Student Research Experience Placement holder, supervised by Faculty Decolonising Lead, dissemination through Faculty Student Advisory Board	Made available at start of 2023/24 academic year (initial review at end of year)	6
In collaboration with students, we will create training for students on how to engage in challenging discussions within their disciplines.	Faculty Decolonising Lead in collaboration with Faculty Student Advisory Board	To be made available for 2024/25 academic year	4 & 6
We will provide workshops and resources for staff to engage with what decolonisation in student education entails and how they can concretely apply this to their own practice.	Faculty Decolonising Lead in collaboration with University Dean for EDI	Trial workshop planned for semester 2 of 2023/24 academic year	3, 4, & 6
As part of the Curriculum Redefined Process, we will work with Schools to review their approach to embedding decolonisation at both programme and module level.	Faculty Decolonising Lead in collaboration with School Transformative Educators	Review of programme and module documentation at start of semester 2 of 2023/24 academic year	3, 4, & 6

Commitment	Key Facilitators	Timeframe	KPIs
In collaboration with Schools, we will aim to increase uptake of existing guidance on the use of content notes and staff training on how to engage in challenging discussions within their disciplines.	Faculty Decolonising Lead in collaboration with School Transformative Educators	Offer of mini-workshops in semester 2 of 2023/24 academic year	3, 4 & 6
We will review processes related to admissions and our current scholarship offering.	Faculty Educational Engagement, Faculty Decolonising Lead	Initial review and plan for change to be drawn up in 2023/24 academic year	9

11.2 Research

Commitment	Key Facilitators	Timeframe	KPIs
We will provide workshops and resources for staff to engage with what decolonisation in research entails and how they can concretely apply this to their own discipline.	Faculty Decolonising Lead in collaboration with University Dean for EDI	Trial workshop planned for semester 2 2023/24 academic year	3 & 6
In collaboration with Schools, we will translate university-wide guidance for staff on how to engage in more equitable global research within their own discipline.	Student Intern, supervised by Faculty Decolonising Lead, facilitated by School Directors of Research and Innovation	As soon as the University's principles on decolonising research have been published	3 & 6
We will review internal processes related to the availability of research funding and its allocation as well as processes related to international research partnerships.	Pro-Dean for Research and Innovation, Faculty Operations Director, Faculty Research and Innovation Manager	Initial report on changes implemented by the end of 2023/24 academic year	3 & 6

11.3 International

Commitment	Key Facilitators	Timeframe	KPIs
We will review our internationalisation strategy with a particular focus on how it facilitates or hinders the recruitment of a truly diverse student body.	Lead by Pro-Dean International and implemented through School Directors of International	Done in tandem with creation of new Faculty Strategy (date to be confirmed)	9
We will review our current exchange programme partnerships with a particular focus on collaborations with institutions in global majority countries.	Lead by Pro-Dean International in collaboration with Study Abroad Office	Initial review and plan for change to be drawn up in 2023/24 academic year	6
We will enable colleagues to ensure that all students are able to engage with international perspectives, for instance by inviting guest speakers from global majority countries.	Faculty Decolonising Lead with support from Pro-Dean International	Identification of barriers and plan for change to be drawn up in 2023/24 academic year	3, 4 & 6

11.4 Workplace Policies and Procedures

Commitment	Key Facilitators	Timeframe	KPIs
We will review processes related to recruitment, pay, promotion and the advertisement and appointment of leadership positions with the Faculty.	Recruitment: EDI Project Officer and Recruitment Working Group with support from HR Pay: EDI Lead with support from HR Promotion: EDI Lead Senior Leadership Positions: Deputy Dean	Initial review and plan for change to be drawn up in 2023/24 academic year	3 & 6
We will create induction resources introducing new colleagues to the University's decolonising key principles and the Faculty's approach to decolonisation.	Faculty Decolonising Lead	To be made available for 2024/25 academic year	3

Commitment	Key Facilitators	Timeframe	KPIs
We will review the Faculty workload model to consider possible changes that would make time available to staff for EDI work, including familiarising themselves with decolonisation, and to apply what they have learned to their teaching, research and leadership roles.	EDI Lead and Faculty Operations Manager	Initial review and plan for change to be drawn up in 2023/24 academic year	3 & 6
We will ensure that all staff in Faculty and School leadership and line management positions are attending training on race and racism at work.	Deputy Dean	As soon as the University has selected an appropriate workshop provider	3 & 6

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13 Appendix I – Survey Questions

13.1 Student Survey

What is decolonisation?

1. Are you familiar with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education? *(Required)*
   - Yes
   - Yes, but I don't know what it means
   - No

Decolonisation in your Degree

London South Bank University's Decolonising the Curriculum defines decolonisation as 'identifying and acknowledging the roots of modern racism and colonial legacies and its manifestation in multiple forms: knowledge materials, politics, national and local institutions, social and cultural processes'.

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements in the context of your degree studies? *(Required)*
   (5 point likert scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)
   a) Decolonisation should be an important part of studying my discipline.
   b) I am aware of decolonising initiatives within the school/faculty/university.
   c) Staff have demonstrated a willingness to engage with questions of decolonisation raised by students.
   d) Contributions to the discipline from outside the dominant White/Western paradigm are taken seriously by staff and students.
   e) I am concerned about 'getting it wrong' when it comes to decolonising.
   f) I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising.

Decolonisation in your Modules

For those with a taught element only:

3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements in the context of your degree studies? (Mentions of diversity and lived experiences in the questions below pertain to characteristics such as, for example, race, ethnicity, gender, disability and class.) *(Required)*
   (5 point likert scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)
   a) My module materials include a diverse range of voices.
   b) Learning activities allow for discussions related to a diverse set of topics.
   c) My assessments are relevant to my lived experiences.
4. With your answers to the previous questions in mind, are there any particular topics or theoretical approaches that you would like to see discussed more in your curriculum?
   - Free text answer

Additional Comments

5. Please add any further comments you have using the box below.
    - Free text answer

13.2 Staff Survey

What is decolonisation?

1. Are you familiar with the term "decolonisation" in the context of higher education? *(Required)*
    - Yes
    - Yes, but I don't know what it means
    - No
2. (If yes to previous answer) Please briefly describe in your own words what this term means to you.
    - Free text answer
3. Have you read the University of Leeds Decolonising Key Principles?
    - Yes
    - No

Decolonisation in your Teaching and Research

London South Bank University's Decolonising the Curriculum defines decolonisation as 'identifying and acknowledging the roots of modern racism and colonial legacies and its manifestation in multiple forms: knowledge materials, politics, national and local institutions, social and cultural processes'.

4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements in the context of your role in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures? *(Required)* (5 point likert scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)
    a) Decolonisation should be an important part of teaching and research in my discipline.

For those whose role includes any teaching and/or student-related activities:

5. In what ways do you think decolonising applies to your teaching and/or student-related activities? *(Required)*
    - Free text answer
6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement in the context of your role in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures? *(Required)* (5 point likert scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)
    - I know how to start applying decolonising principles to my teaching and/or student-related activities.

For those whose role includes any research and/or research-related activities:

7. In what ways do you think decolonising applies to your research and/or research-related activities? *(Required)*
    - Free text answer
8. To what extent do you agree with the following statement in the context of your role in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures? *(Required)* (5 point likert scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)

a) I know how to start applying decolonising principles to my research and/or research-related activities.

Resources for Decolonisation

9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements in the context of your role in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures? *(Required)* (5 point likert scale: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)
   b) I have the time necessary to engage in decolonising work.
   c) I have the resources necessary to engage in decolonising work.
   d) I am aware of decolonising initiatives within the school/faculty/university.
   e) I am concerned about 'getting it wrong' when it comes to decolonising.
   f) It is my responsibility to challenge existing power structures when it comes to decolonising.
   g) I am concerned about the personal consequences of challenging existing power structures when it comes to decolonising.

Opportunities, Challenges and Support

10. Are there any other challenges or opportunities you see when thinking about decolonising your research, teaching and/or other parts of your job?
    - Free text answer
11. What types of support would you like from your School and/or Faculty to help you in decolonising your teaching, research or other parts of your job?
    - Free text answer

14 Appendix II –Personal Information Questions

14.1 Students

1. What is your ethnicity? Please leave this box empty if you would prefer not to say.
   - Free text answer
2. What is your parent school? *(Required)*
   - Design
   - English
   - Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies
   - History
   - Languages, Cultures and Societies
   - Media and Communication
   - Music
   - Performance and Cultural Industries
   - Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
3. Are you a joint honour students taking modules outside of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures? *(Required)*
   - Yes
   - No
4. What is your level of study? *(Required)*
   - Pre-Sessional/Foundation Year
   - 1st Year
   - 2nd Year
   - 3rd Year
   - 4th Year
   - Year in Industry/Study Abroad
   - Postgraduate taught
   - Postgraduate research

14.2 Staff

1. What is your ethnicity? Please leave this box empty if you would prefer not to say.
   - Free text answer
2. What is your school? *(Required)*
   - Design
   - English
   - Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies
   - History
   - Languages, Cultures and Societies
   - Media and Communication
   - Music
   - Not associated with a School
   - Performance and Cultural Industries
   - Philosophy, Religion and History of Science
3. What is your job title? *(Required)*
   - Free text answer

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