Redefining Inclusive Religion Education in Lesotho Schools:
A Colonial Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

In this article, I revisited the study conducted in 2017 on inclusive religious education in Lesotho. The point of the 2017 study was to figure out how participants perceive inclusive religious education. The Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training's inclusive education initiative piqued my curiosity. The findings were split into two categories. Firstly, it was discovered that religious education is commonly equated with Christian education. Secondly, inclusivity in religious education was defined as offering Christian instruction to all students, regardless of their religious affiliation. The previous study, however, could not provide a persuasive explanation for why religious education is equated to Christian education or why inclusive religious education is comparable to Christian education for all students, regardless of their religious views. I wanted to fill that vacuum in this essay by arguing for a new approach to inclusive religious education in Lesotho schools. I asserted that coloniality is a legitimate premise for believing that inclusive religion education means that all children should participate in Christian education learning. I also utilised (post)-colonial discourse analysis to support my claim. As a proposal, I suggested that inclusive religion education be defined in the context of decoloniality, which is a process of decentering and delinking from colonial thinking and action in order to embrace border thinking. Border thinking demands a new approach to inclusive religion education that is based on interculturality and pluriversality.

Keywords: Colonial discourse; Coloniality; Decoloniality; Inclusive education; Orientalism; Religious education

Introduction

This article is the result of an empirical study that looked into how religious education teachers and school principals viewed inclusive religious education. The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has shifted its focus from Special Education to Inclusive Education. Lesotho established the Special Education Unit (SEU) in 1999 with the goal of integrating learners with special educational needs into the regular school system, according to the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) (2016). Learners with special educational needs have been classified as having a variety of disabilities, including physical and sensory impairments, intellectual disabilities, and learning

disabilities (LD). As part of educational capacity building for Special Education services, the SEU was tasked with educating educators and other caregivers.

However, in light of current worldwide trends, the Ministry of Education and Training, through the SEU, has identified the need for a paradigm shift from outdated pedagogies, such as the transition from integration to inclusion, mental retardation to intellectual disability, and special education to inclusive education. Learners of varied disabilities, languages, cultures, genders, ages, ethnicities, and other human differences were now included (The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) 2016).

Inclusive education, as defined by the Ministry of Education and Training (2018), is a process of addressing and responding to the unique needs of all learners by promoting participation in learning, cultures, and communities while eliminating exclusion within and from education. It seeks to provide an atmosphere that is most favourable to learners' needs and preferences, allowing them to achieve their full academic and social potential. Inclusive education professes that "[n]o student is excluded from or discriminated within education on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, birth, poverty or other status" (Kusuma & Ramadevi 2013:30).

I conducted an empirical qualitative phenomenological research project in 2017 with a specific focus on inclusive religious education, realising that a shift from narrow special education to expanded inclusive education necessitated a change in curriculum content, pedagogy, and school environment to cater for learners with all their differences and preferences. The participants were religious education teachers and principals. The study's goal was to learn how participants felt about inclusive religious education. Their viewpoint was thought to play a role in the revision of religious education content and the building of a welcoming environment for students of many faiths. The information was gathered through in-depth interviews and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The research yielded two significant findings. First, it was established that religious education and Christian education are seen as synonymous terms. Second, providing Christian education to all is seen as part of religious education inclusion. Catchphrases like "classroom for all," "equality," "uniformity," and "accommodation" were used to describe how Christians and non-Christians alike have an equal opportunity to learn in the same Christian school, same classroom, and same Christian extracurricular activities (Mokotso 2017).

The study did not explain why religious education is equated to Christian education or why inclusive religious education is seen as equivalent to Christian education for all learners, regardless of their religious beliefs. This article intended to address that void by advocating for a new approach to inclusive religious education in Lesotho schools.

To answer the question of why religious education is compared to Christian education, I argued that coloniality is a plausible basis for believing that inclusive religious education means that all children should participate in Christian education learning, and I used (post)colonial discourse analysis to support this claim. According to Mignolo (1993:122), colonial discourse analysis is a literary historicism that aims to explain the dynamics of the colonial condition. Its purpose is to examine colonialism (and its aftermath) critically in order to understand the effects of conquerors, imperial officials, travellers, and missionaries on the construction and operation of colonialism's ideology. It investigates the consequences of Western imperialism and how they are still felt today (coloniality).

The term "colonial discourse" is credited to Edward Said's reworking of Foucault's theory of discourse. It was found to be useful in describing discourses that describe meanings and ideas as they are formed, mediated, and embodied in colonialism's knowledge, cultural experiences, and social behaviours. Edward Said (1978) coined the term "Orientalism" to define an organised collection of concepts, assumptions, and discursive procedures for producing, interpreting, and evaluating culture and knowledge about non-European peoples. Unlike previous works that concentrated on the economic or political logics of colonialism, Said stressed the link between power, knowledge and culture (Carrol 2018:23; Hamadi 2014: 40; Robbins 1992:209).

This essay uses colonial rhetoric to examine the effects of colonialism on religious education. It contributes to broadening the area of analysis beyond colonial economic and political discourse to cultural and knowledge power relations. Education describes how knowledge is spread, whereas religion symbolises culture. However, at times, religion is considered a subset of culture, given that no single religion today encompasses a complete community, and no society lives entirely according to one set of sacred norms and rituals (Rees 2017). Nonetheless, I used a lengthy history of establishing the connection between culture and religion in the article. For example, Clifford Geertz, a notable anthropological thinker, defines religion as "a cultural system comprising of myths, rituals, symbols, and beliefs established by humans as a way of giving our individual and collective existence a sense of meaning," according to Woodhead (2011:124).

The same may be said for education and knowledge. Rwanamiza (2009:2) emphasises that while there is no universally accepted definition of education, it is widely acknowledged that education and knowledge are linked. Education, in whatever shape or term, refers to the processes of making resources available and establishing an environment favourable to the development and creation of knowledge. Colonial discourse is advantageous because it expands the scope beyond colonial governments to include other colonial actors, such as missionaries. Edward Said's analytic notion of Orientalism is particularly significant since it relates to the coloniality hypotheses presented in this article as the primary reason for associating inclusive religious education with inclusive Christian education.

Coloniality frame, hypothesis and analytic tool

In this article, coloniality serves as the hypothesis, framework, and analytic instrument of colonial discourse. Following Maldonado-Torres' (2007:243) definition of the term, coloniality is used in contrast to colonialism. Colonialism is a political and economic relationship in which a powerful nation controls and dominates another as a colony, while the dominant nation becomes an empire. Coloniality, on the other hand, refers to established structures of power that evolved because of colonialism and that define culture and knowledge far beyond the confines of colonial administrations. Coloniality, as a result, outlasts colonialism. It lives on in cultural modus operandi, common sense, information generation and distribution, and people's aspirations, and it pervades practically all aspects of modern life.

The implication of Maldonado-Torres' (2007:243) definition of coloniality is that coloniality first and foremost relates to Western imperialism, which refers to the expansion of Western countries' power and influence through colonisation, whether by

military or other means. Other means include "cultural imperialism" (Dubois 2008; Porter 2008; Harris 1991), which has been attributed to other colonial agencies, including missionary activity in colonies prior to direct colonialism. Second, colonialism does not stop with independence, neo-colonialism, or post-colonialism; it is still very much alive in contemporary postcolonial society.

The two aspects of coloniality are discussed in this essay: cultural imperialism and colonialism's long-term effects on modern society. Cultural imperialism, according to Dunch (2002:302), is the forcible imposition of cultural items such as local customs, traditions, religion, language, social and moral norm concepts, entertainment, and commodities in a foreign society. According to Tobin (2007), cultural imperialism has become one of the key instruments of colonialism. While military engagement nearly always precipitated colonisation, cultural imperialism was the only means to fully realise its consequences. Colonisers used law, education, and military force to impose various aspects of their own culture on the target people, driven by the notion that their way of life was superior. Colonisers, motivated in part by a desire to rid local populations of supposedly "barbaric", "uncivilised" practices and mores, knew that the easiest approach to lessen resistance from the colonised was to eradicate as many indications of the previous way of life as possible.

Because "cultural imperialism" is linked to power, it is frequently studied through orientalism, according to Dunch (2002:303). Edward Said (1978) contended that nineteenth-century professors and authors were implicated in the development of colonial power, despite their ostensibly abstract and apolitical intellectual pursuits. He contended that their writings about the "Orient" established a narrative that jumbled various societies and imbued them with a set of negative characteristics that contrast matching positive traits given to the "West." As a result of this discourse, the "Self" and "Other" were formed in such a way that the West's political supremacy over the "Orient" appeared both natural and inevitable. Imperialism, Said maintained, required cultural preparation in addition to brute expropriation based on superior technology and political-economic motives, as observed by Robbins (1999:210). This cultural preparation extended so broadly and profoundly into the culture that it became nearly indistinguishable from it. Therefore, any person who wants to learn about imperialism must first learn about culture, and any person who wants to learn about culture must first learn about imperialism.

In this article, coloniality contributes by examining four connected questions: a) How does inclusive Christian education fit within the colonial framework. b) How has Christian education been influenced by cultural imperialism? c) What are the long-term consequences for modern Lesotho? d) How do words like "equality," "uniformity," and "accommodation" characterise colonial discourse? What role does Said's Orientalism play in understanding all of these colonial structures?

Analysis of Lesotho's inclusive Christian Education

The first Westerners to be involved in pre-colonial (classical colonialism) Lesotho were the PEMS (Paris Evangelical Missionary Society) missionaries in the 1830s, followed by the Roman Catholics and Anglican Missionaries in the 1860s and 1870s respectively. Said's Orientalism is most suited to characterise the encounter between missionaries and Basotho. The missionaries classified Basotho as "others," and this otherness was based

on what Staszak (2008) describes as "imagined civilisation and Christian hierarchies." The missionaries perceived themselves as civilised and religious, while they regarded the Basotho as barbarians who did not practice any religion. One of the missionaries, Mabille (1901:356) wrote, "What we call religious ideas might be more justly termed superstitious ideas, as the Basuto has no religion, if religion is what unites man to a superior being." Another asserted, "The Basutos, like generally speaking the Kaffirs, possessed no religious knowledge before entering into contacts with the whites" (Laydevant 1935). According to Staszak (2008), once the otherness is created, the in-group, or "the Occident-the Us" as Said calls it (Hamadi 2014), begins to develop a dominating consciousness by denouncing a difference. The difference is portrayed as a denial of identity and thus as a possible source of prejudice. Everything linked with the other is viewed as wild, backward, powerless, and profoundly different from the (ostensibly) Occidental characteristics of civilised behaviour, logical intellect, modernism, and (justifiably) powerful. As a result, power asymmetry emerges, with the dominant group in the position of forcing certain features of their own culture on the target population.

Missionaries, motivated in part by a desire to rid local populations of purportedly barbaric, uncivilised practices and mores, also realising that the best way to reduce opposition from the colonised was to eliminate all signs of the prior way of life as far as possible (Tobin 538), began a process of inclusion through Christianisation and civilisation. The Paris missionaries' letters to home during their first decade in Lesotho, according to Martin (2008:886), left little doubt about their purpose in Lesotho. They were to convert the Basotho to Christianity. This required complete spiritual and personal rebirth, public acceptance of the Christian message, and a commitment to live out their evangelical heritage every day. The preaching in the church and the teaching of Christianity in the formal education system were both used to promote Christianisation and civilisation. As Said points out (Hamadi 2014), imperialists neglected and even distorted the cultures, histories, values, and languages of the colonised in their drive to rule them and plunder their wealth under the guise of educating, civilising, and even humanising them. According to Martin (2000:888), Basotho who converted to Christianity were forced to abandon a variety of religious and cultural beliefs and customs in order to follow the missionaries' instructions. The following items were included on the list to be deserted: the exchange of cattle at marriage, polygamy, Sotho sexual practices, spiritual beliefs, animal and human body parts in rituals, and faith in the medicine men (lingaka). The initiation or circumcision ceremony, which was obligatory of all Basotho boys and girls shortly after puberty, was one of the strongest institutions that the missionaries campaigned against.

After being humiliated and alienated from their identity, Basotho came to accept Christianity as their exclusive religion, and in order to cope with their own religious rejection, they had to follow Christianity and its cultural manifestations. Because Christianity was promoted as a synonym for education, it gained the status of being the sole religion taught in schools. Consequently, it became the representation of civilisation, and was therefore lived out by people.

Dubois (2005:130) supports that Christian conversion was frequently a sign of ethnic identity, particularly among the minority groups targeted by missionaries. It was also a mark of class; in most cases, missionary school systems facilitated the creation of

bilingual, self-consciously modern elites. The identities afforded by Christian conversion thus coincided and mixed with family, lineage, village, commercial networks, guild associations, generational divides, and gender, and the very specific nature of these identities often led to violent conflict between local Christians and communities.

In 1868, the Basotho territory became a British Protectorate, and in 1871, it became a recognised colony (Maliehe 2014). During this period, Lesotho became a Christian state under colonial government, and the Christianised Basotho were further alienated from their religion and culture through colonial schooling and governmental machinery (Gill 2010). Missionaries and colonists took the method of universalising Christianity on the grounds that the "other" can only be saved through Christian religion and can only advance or civilise if they accept Western civilisation. According to Redemption Press (n.d.), the concept of Christian universalism dates back to the church fathers such as "Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Macrina, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Evagrius of Pontus, Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose of Milan, and the early Jerome," but it resurfaced at Vatican II when it became synonymous with inclusivism. It has since appeared in subsequent Catholic catechisms and other church writings. It is worth noting that the contemporary inclusive religious education advocated in Lesotho; which includes terms like "classroom for all," "equality," "uniformity," and "accommodation" for non-Christian students; is based on Christian universality. Without delving into the theoretical universalisation of Christianity, I suggest that this pattern reflects the coloniality of the 'other,' who were without religion and "uncivilised", a trend that persists in today's inclusive religious education. Arguably, there is no classroom for all, just a one-size-fits-all classroom, no equality, only inequality, no uniformity, only conformity, and no mutual accommodation.

According to Sarkar (2008:240), the universalisation of Christianity reflected in Western civilisation was based on culture and represents cultural particularities. As Falk (1997:9) explains, it is based on "the geopolitics of exclusion," in which exclusion is implemented largely as a result of "false universalism," which portrays the specific and fractional as if it were synonymous with the general. In effect, the "fake" universalism refers to a mask worn to disguise Western civilisational power in order to realign the "barbarian" other. Civilisation hegemony was considerably more than the sum of its political and economic achievements, as it targeted unique ideas, recollections, beliefs, rituals, misconceptions, myths, and symbols that are at the heart of human identity. Tallman (2013:10) claims that European colonists attempted to propagate Christianity over the colonies through violence. The British Empire defined its imperialist ambitions as the White Man's Burden, which claimed responsibility for bringing Western civilisation to so-called backward cultures and peoples. The Belgian King Leopold II, for example, claimed that his conquest of Africa was intended to civilise the savages.

Agreeing with Sarkar (2008:240), I contend that genuine universality would recognise substantial contrasts as well as similarities in building up a world order based on forms and standards particularly planned to enable reasonable participation of different civilisations. Alienation through exclusionary universality not only cut the Basotho off from their culture and religion but also blindfolded them against the existence of other religions apart from Christianity and even the concept of religion. Failure to conduct an intellectual assessment of one's own religion, other religious traditions outside of Christianity, and the meaning of inclusion in religion not only

alienates one from culture but also leads to intellectual alienation and estrangement from the self. Basotho Christian elites, like other Africans, had a single goal: to be recognised as human beings in a colonial environment. According to Ndlovu (2017), following Fanon's theses of alienation, African educated elites tended to embrace the process of self-denial while adopting and internalising Western values, behaviour, and modes of knowing in their quests of recognition. Western language, education, culture, and religion have all become important priorities. That is, they learned to perceive the world through Western lenses, leaving them unable, in my opinion, to make independent judgements on issues that affect them.

Unfortunately, Christian educated elites were the ones who led Lesotho to independence, and they continue to dominate most of the country's institutions, including the church and education sector, confirming Fanon's crucial distinction between true independence and pseudo-independence, and total liberation and puppet independence. Pseudo-independence refers to the condition in which previously colonised people are still caught in the webs of culture, fashion, and coloniser images (Thomas 1999:74). The post-colonial Christian elites' influence continues to bear fruit in modern Lesotho. Lesotho is still considered a Christian country, according to the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL), which claims that Christianity has 90% of the population. The remaining 10% is said to be shared between Muslims, Hindus, Baha'is, Jews, and indigenous peoples (International Religious Freedom Report 2018). The figures, especially when it comes to indigenous religion, are dubious. Even if the figures are correct, minorities must be given equal attention. Christianity's universal mission to convert the "heathen" other – non-Christians – is still propagated through the school system, where they are taught Christianity in one school, one classroom, with pseudo-equality and are obliged to comply with the religion taught and accommodated therein. According to Carroll (2018:26), inclusive religious education within the dominant Christian education/religion is shaped by histories of oppression, violence, and displacement, and is a key component of colonisation and assimilation. The idea of "inclusion" is used to maintain the colonial mind set of assimilation/conversion and erasing of the other/"heathen".

Fanon criticised the role of Christian elites in the postcolonial era, claiming that they are not entirely autonomous but instead serve as emissaries of the old imperialistic rulers (Iqbal, Arif, and Jamil 2015). Mental colonisation, according to Fanon, does not lessen tyranny or strive to conceal dominance; rather, it transforms the agent into a bringer of violence into his home and mind. They are once again a source of violence and a menace to their communities (Iqbal, Arif, and Jamil 2015). While Christian elites were intended to aid in the decolonisation process, they continue to defend inequitable social systems and condone the government's use of force through their religious organisations (Iqbal, Arif, and Jamil 2015:8-9). Forcing individuals of different faith traditions into one school, one classroom, and forcing them to acquire Christian education is oppressive and violent.

Towards a Religious Education that is All-Inclusive

The type of inclusive religious education for which I advocate follows the description provided by Jackson (2015:9). Jackson (2015:9) contends that 'religious education' should not be confused with a form of initiation into what might be called 'religious understanding', through learning and practising religion. Instead, 'religious education'

often refers to the promotion of an inclusive, general public understanding of religion or religions, which is what can be referred to as 'understanding religion'. Religious education is typically described using terms like "inclusive religious education" or "integrative religious education." In the context of inclusivism, the term "religion education" (as opposed to "religious education") is preferred. Religion education, in my opinion, restricts the possibilities of religiousness, which may entail a process of an invitation into a certain religious tradition. According to Stoeckl (2015:2), religion education is an approach to the study of religion in which "religion" is taught in the curricula alongside other subjects. The goal is for students to understand how faiths, cults, and non-religious worldviews coexist in today's world. In this approach, all people, from different faiths and even non-religious, are included.

Inclusive religion education does not merely promote 'inclusiveness' as advocated in human rights but also gets into the politics of coloniality power structures. Habermas (2005:2-3) points out that religious traditions and religious groupings have taken on a political significance that has never been seen before. The cultural trust of religious 'other' continues to influence major civilisations of the world, fuelling the hopes of multiple modernities' political agenda. As though in a psychological experiment, the picture of modernity in the West has undergone a transformation: the so-called "typical" pattern of the future of all other civilisations has suddenly become a unique scenario. As a result, religious education must include a commitment to decoloniality inclusion, or the removal of colonial shackles while avoiding romanticisation of pre-colonial cultural notions. Fanon advised against reviving indigenous religious beliefs, believing that they were just as repressive as conquering local traditions. Although Fanon recognises the importance of cultural resources in the decoloniality process, he is concerned that the naïve restoration of all indigenous things will be detrimental (Settler 2012:9). The inclusion of multiple modernities, numerous civilisations, or multiple cultures is what Fanon advocates. Decoloniality engagement opposes Western cultural imperialism and the universalisation of Western Christianity and civilisation. It acknowledges the 'Us in difference' while dismissing the 'Other.' Decoloniality operates alongside a set of perspectives, including interculturality and pluriversality.

Guilherme (2019:6) defines interculturality as "confidence in the benefits of being and acting as an intercultural person." It implies the existence and reasonable accessibility of numerous societies, as well as the possibility of forming shared social enunciations through interchange and mutual respect. Interculturality is not only a fascinating relationship in which people combine aspects of their various personalities but is also a process of developing new pleasant and friendly personalities. As indicated by Guilherme (2019:7), interculturality not only focuses on the accommodation or compromise of various civilisations but also places a strong emphasis on incorporation thinking, which involves a two-way exchange of social effect between distinct groups of people. Interculturality is recognizing the presence of colonial culture and its potential contribution while additionally upholding for different civilisations that have been suffocated but which share a comparative commitment to human civilisation. It generally advocates for a principal association among epistemic and decolonial talk, recognising that various civilisations might gain from each other in working towards physical, mental and spiritual human life.

Similarly, as demonstrated by Mercier (2019:2), pluriversality is a significant reaction to universalism's and Western expansionism's control and furiousness. As per Mbembe (2015), pluriversality is a counter-record to Western universalisation of knowledge production, which, as Jackson (2019) points out, relies on the ontological occasion of the 'one world,' which gives it an advantage as the bona fide authority and genuine kind of clarification, notwithstanding some other ways of life. Pluriversality opens up extra epistemic and ontological alternatives. Nonetheless, as Mbembe (2015) calls attention to, this does not infer that universalised knowledge ought to be dismissed; rather, it ought to be recognised close by and inside other epistemic traditions. It is true that, as Querejazu (2016:8) points out, where universalism is applied, there is a lack of multiple being and rejecting of other ways of living that do not fit under the universalised standard rule. The demeanour denotes aggression and purposeful exclusion of the "other".

As a result, I recommend that inclusive religion education in Lesotho be redefined along the lines of decoloniality, interculturality, and pluriversality. Decoloniality presupposes three distinct approaches to the teaching of inclusive Religious Education: "decentering, delinking, and border thinking," (Büschel 2020:131; Behari-Leak 2020:17). 'Decentering' refers to new points of view with a focus on social intersections (Büschel 2020:131), and it provides a new approach for educating and learning from diverse religious traditions and worldviews. Decentering addresses both "the position and the issue" of religion education (Büschel 2020:132). The 'decentering' of religion education promotes the removal or relocation of the teaching of religion education from the perspective of a single part of the world or of powerful elites. It broadens the scope; socially, geographically and culturally; and introduces a plurality of voices into the school where all become part of the educational system and the substance of the subject. Delinking is inseparable from de-Westernisation (Mignolo 2012), which is a philosophical development away from a Eurocentric approach to education. It is anti-imperialist and hostile to Eurocentrism tactics. Its aim is to bring silenced voices into recognition. It is a call for a reflective insightful practice that underscores the dynamic contemporary world. As Mignolo (2012) contends, Christians must delink from Christianity's imperial/colonial trap in various ways and by various paths, one of which, as I would see it, is the teaching of Christianity in an open reciprocal borrowing from other religious traditions/cultures.

Delinking, as Büschel (2020:133) points out, leads to 'border thinking,' which attempts to "de-subalternize knowledge" by bringing forth subaltern epistemologies that are suppressed by coloniality. According to Grosfoguel (2011), border thinking is a direct response to educated elites that are involved in Eurocentric reasoning and political designs, as well as passionate conservatives who argue for precolonial epistemologies. It takes part in the process of 'de-subalternizing' knowledge and power by allowing the 'other,' non-Western, to take centre stage in knowledge creation. Border thinking requires a diversity of epistemologies in the context of inclusive religious education. It opposes the universalised Christian religion's "authoritative knowledge" as well as the substitution of Christianity with any other kind of religious knowledge. Christianity is set on an equal footing with other religious traditions and worldviews in the border thinking approach. The teaching and learning of religion join various types of knowledge from all wellsprings of spirituality and worldviews.

From an intercultural perspective, inclusive religion education implies an interreligious or interfaith approach that strives to foster understanding, tolerance, and social cohesion in order to actively shape the relationships between individuals of other religions and worldviews (Abu-Nimer & Smith 2016:395). Barrett (2013:25) defines interculturalism as a focus on contact and exchange across diverse cultures, faiths, and worldviews. It entails an open and courteous exchange of viewpoints between individuals and groups from various cultural backgrounds, based on equality. It allows for a fair exchange of faiths and worldviews in the classroom, allowing students to gain a better understanding of cultural and religious beliefs and practices that are different from their own, fostering mutual understanding, increasing interpersonal trust, cooperation, and participation, and promoting tolerance and mutual respect. Interculturalism, according to Barrett (2013:25), is an inclusive strategy because it helps to reduce prejudice and stereotypes in public life, facilitates relationships between diverse national and faith communities, and fosters integration, a sense of common purpose, and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies.

The current coloniality approach of assimilation into Christian beliefs or "occidentalist" forms of false inclusion that privilege Christianity over other religious traditions and worldviews, and treat the "other" as someone in need of Christian faith and knowledge, cannot achieve inclusive religion education. In order for inclusive religious education to work within an intercultural context, religion must be redefined in terms of horizontal religious and cultural interactions. According to (Sitrin 2011), horizontality or horizontalism is a social connection that promotes the formation, growth, and preservation of social institutions to ensure an equivalent distribution of the executive's authority. These structures and relationships function because of dynamic self-management, involving the continuity of participation and exchange between individuals to achieve the larger desired outcomes of the collective whole. The interculturality inclusive religious education I am proposing embraces "horizontalism" as a form of consensus-based participatory school system that is all inclusive and anti-hierarchal, as well as aiming to foreshadow a society where there is no existent 'Us' in difference.

Religious education inclusivity based on pluriversality presupposes a school system that values and recognises intercivilisational dynamics. In this approach, as per Baker (2021:15), the hegemony of Western civilisation and the subalternity of cultures come together as cultural variety, with the subaltern cultures no longer suppressed or silenced. In this method, the educational system undertakes the task of unlearning the cultural biases of the prevailing Eurocentric cosmology, notably the western system of knowledge, and begins to view and conceptualise the world outside of the Eurocentric imagination. The implication is that the educational system should foster an atmosphere in which all religious traditions, particularly those repressed by western cultural imperialism and Christian hegemony, are recognised as having equal educational value to Christian teaching. Pluriversality religious education, according to Baker (2021:15-16), should be understood as an "ecology of knowledges" in which multiple civilisational and cultural knowledge systems are brought together for students to learn, compare, and move back and forth in considering the various religious traditions and worldviews that best contribute to addressing specific problems or issues. The ultimate goal of pluriversal, ecology of knowledges movement is to create an inclusive educational system in which

people of many worldviews may coexist and learn from one another in order to solve shared local and global challenges. A pluriversal religious education is an alternative to the existing Eurocentric Christian educational system of assimilation/marginalisation in the name of universal truth. Options that contrast with Eurocentric Christian education are vital today to foil the emergency-driven elitists' schooling framework including the complete subjection and control of knowledge and religion within coloniality premise.

Concluding remarks

Lesotho's Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) (2016) recognised that a paradigm change from special education to inclusive education was required. Inclusive education entails limiting all forms of discrimination that result in the exclusion of some students from the education system. Culture and 'religion' are a few components adding to the exclusion of others. A call for a change of perspective implies discovering methods of defeating the exclusion of others in the education system. That is, there should be a shift in how people think about inclusive education. During a paradigm shift, according to Besancenot & Dogguy (2011:2), two changes occur simultaneously. The first is the previous paradigm's inability to solve problems or explain anomalies. The second is the development of another one with more promising outcomes. Inclusive religious education is impossible to be defined within Christian education, which means that inclusive Christian education is a failing paradigm. I therefore propose a change of worldview on how inclusive religious is perceived. A change of worldview requires reflection on why the old is failing. Through a reflective process, I argued that coloniality is the cause of the continued exclusion of others on religious grounds. Decoloniality, with its principles of intercultuality and pluriversality, is a new paradigm that I propose. In this new paradigm, "inclusive religious education" is renamed "inclusive religion education", which includes learners from many religious traditions as well as non-religious people.

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