



**UNIVERSITY OF  
GOTHENBURG**

**Exploring colonial and decolonial influences in the teaching of indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities.**

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Author: Kimberly Spirito  
Supervisor: Bart Klem  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis engages the topic of colonial and decolonial influences within teaching of indigenous epistemology, ontology, and methodology, here abbreviated to indigenous perspectives, at institutions of higher education. More specifically this study brings the discussion into a Swedish setting. Little is known about the colonial and decolonial influences in the pedagogy at Swedish universities, particularly in relation to the teaching of indigenous perspectives. The aim of this study was to explore colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities through the experiences and perspectives of scholars engaged with researching and teaching about indigenous perspectives. Since many previous studies focus on student's perspectives and experiences of colonial and decolonial influences within curriculum, another aim of this study was to highlight the experiences and perspectives of the scholars working with these kinds of questions. Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with scholars working within the Swedish universities: Gothenburg University, Lund University, Linköping University, Uppsala University, and Umeå University. The data collected was then subjected to a thematic analysis through a theoretical lens consisting of Decolonial Theory and key concepts within Decolonial Theory in relation to knowledge, pedagogy, and indigenous perspectives. It was found that there exist both colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives. The data showed that colonial influence has its foundation in a domestic culture that comes to affect the institutional processes which ultimately influence the curriculum and teaching, while the decolonial influence comes through from scholars' and students' individual initiatives enabled by an encouragement to generate diversity.

**Keywords:** Colonial influence, Decolonial influence, Education, Teaching of indigenous perspectives, Sweden.

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# 1. Introduction

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Fikret Berkes, the author of “Sacred Ecology”, writes that there has been an increased international and academic interest in indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems since the 1980 (Berkes, 2012). Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2019) write in their book “*Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education – mapping the long view*” that in the past 20 years doctoral and master’s programs in Native American, American Indian, Māori, Aboriginal, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Studies have been established in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The authors write that some of the most exciting work regarding Indigenous Studies and Decolonizing Studies is being done through application of decolonisation concepts within the fields of Education, Critical -and Postcritical Pedagogy and Curriculum Studies (Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck, Yang, 2019: xi-xv). Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies are two emerging fields of research where indigenous and non-indigenous scholars challenge colonial or non-indigenous knowledge systems (ibid:51).

However, even if incentives to decolonise and include indigenous epistemology, ontology, and methodology in curriculums of higher education are growing in numbers, it is far from the norm. Academics teaching about indigenous perspectives do so independently of any widespread organized framework (Rademacher 2020). In other words, progress is happening at the individual level (ibid). The rate of which new knowledge is produced regarding this topic and the rate of incentives to decolonise and include indigenous perspectives into academic settings is uneven. Some countries have established indigenous academic programs and produced substantial knowledge regarding decolonial teaching of indigenous perspectives, while others show emerging incentives to integrate indigenous perspectives into curriculum.

With this thesis I want to bring the discussion into a Swedish setting. Sweden is a country home to the Sámi people, a people who define themselves and have been recognized as indigenous people. Sweden is also a country with a history of colonialism. Little is known about the colonial and decolonial influences regarding pedagogy at Swedish universities, particularly in relation to the teaching of indigenous peoples epistemological, ontological, and methodological approaches to understanding and learning about the world. It is always problematic to reduce something as complex and multifaceted as indigenous epistemology, ontology, and methodologies, to one definition or phrase. However, in this thesis, it will be referred to as “indigenous perspectives” as the thesis is focuses on the colonial and decolonial aspects within the act of teaching about many different indigenous knowledge systems, rather than trying to define what indigenous epistemology, ontology, and methodologies are.

As discussed and problematised both in chapter 1.3 (Delimitations) and chapter 2 (Background), I deliberately adopt an open-ended conceptualisation of indigenous epistemology, ontology, and methodologies, rather than seeking to establish a definition with hard distinctions between the indigenous and the non-indigenous. By highlighting the experiences of academics working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia, through semi-structured interviews, and by analysing their statements through the lens a theoretical framework consisting of decolonial theory, this study hopes to shed light on both the colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives at Swedish universities.

## **1.1 Disposition**

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The study has three main parts: In the first part, chapter 1-3, I describe the research aim, questions, delimitations, relevance to Global Studies, the case background, problematisation of the terms “Indigenous” and “Western/Settler Colonialist” and their respective perspectives, and finally the previous research that has been conducted on the topic and how this study is positioned in relation to it. The second part, chapter 4-5, is dedicated to descriptions of the research design, the theoretical framework, and methodological framework. The final part, chapters 6-7, describes the results, the analysis, discussion, and the conclusion where the research questions are answered as well as recommendations for further research.

## **1.2 Aim and research question**

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The purpose of this study is to explore the colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies, here described as indigenous perspectives, at Swedish Universities. The aim is to generate new knowledge and contribute to research about colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous knowledge systems and worldviews (perspectives) within Swedish academia by highlighting the experiences of the scholars working with such questions. To achieve the aim of the study, semi-structured interviews with academics were conducted. The semi-structured interviews were mainly guided by questions regarding the academics’ experiences when working with indigenous perspectives in an academic setting in general and in an academic setting in Sweden. The respondents’ answers were then analysed through a thematic analysis and the theoretical lens consisting of concepts from decolonial theory and decolonial approaches within education.

The research questions guiding the study is:

- *How do colonial and decolonial aspects come to influence the teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia according to academics working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities?*

### 1.3 Delimitations

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Certain choices regarding delimitations were made to steer the research in a clear direction. As mentioned in the introduction, the increased interest in indigenous perspectives and knowledge seems to be a global phenomenon. A large-scale study with perhaps a quantitative or mixed method approach could be useful if one were to study the occurrence and characteristics of the phenomenon on a global scale. However, such a study would not provide an in-depth insight into the workings of colonial and decolonial influences in Swedish academia. A qualitative case study research design, with semi-structured interviews, was therefore chosen for this study. Spatially, the study was delimited to Sweden for the reasons previously mentioned, for being the home of the Sámi people, who define themselves as -and have been recognized as- an indigenous people and for the country's colonial past. Sweden was also chosen for the fairly limited research on the topic of the decolonisation of academia in the country.

I have also delimited the research to focus on the lived experiences and perspectives of academics working with indigenous perspectives. Academics working with -and teaching about- indigenous perspectives were chosen as research participants since they tend to be aware of decolonial arguments. The decision to focus on academics instead of students was made after I had conducted a literature review of the previous research on the topic of decolonisation and indigenous knowledge in education. I concluded that I was unsatisfied with the amount of research that mentioned the teacher's perspectives. Quite a lot of research regarding student experiences and perspectives of colonial and decolonial aspects in academia already exists<sup>1</sup>, thus this study will not be engaging with student perspectives.

The focus of this study are the experiences of the academics teaching about indigenous perspectives and their perspectives of colonial and decolonial aspects in Swedish academia in relation to indigenous perspectives. I have therefore not included an analysis of course curriculums, schedules, or literature list.

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<sup>1</sup> Kidman, J., Yen, C., & Abrams, E. (2013); Kidman, J., Manathunga, C., & Cornforth, S. (2017); Rahman, K. (2013); Brown, L. (2019); Luckett, K. (2016).

The focus is not on how, when or where the indigenous perspectives are being included. Therefore, analysing the content of curriculum, schedules or literature list was irrelevant and has not been included in this study. Studies that are at a larger scale could potentially explore this further. The expression “indigenous perspectives” is also frequently utilized in this study. The term could mean several things, but in this thesis, it refers to several indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies.

Deciding that I needed to delimit the complexities of the many indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies existing in the world to the phrase “indigenous perspectives” for this study was not an easy decision to make. However, as stated in the introduction, the decision was made primarily because I chose to not focus on the teaching of one particular indigenous group’s epistemology, ontology, and methodology at Swedish universities. Describing one group’s epistemology, ontology, and methodologies would have been easier. However, choosing to go with this alternative would have meant fewer research participants available for the study. The research participants in this study work with several different indigenous groups around the world, and describing all of the group’s epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies in depth would have meant exceeding the limitations of this study.

Finally, I also concluded that trying to define the epistemologies, ontologies, and methodologies as a non-indigenous person, without any participatory input from a member from each of the indigenous groups that my research participants are working with, was for me, an act I was not ethically comfortable with performing. Also, if I had tried to achieve this, it would also have led to the study exceeding the time and wordcount limitations. Instead, I have in chapter 2 problematised and discussed the terms “indigenous”, “western/settler colonialist”, “indigenous perspectives”, and “western/settler colonialist perspectives” to specify of whom I speak.

## **1.4 Research relevance to Global Studies**

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This study is relevant to Global Studies because it offers reflexivity to academic education, particularly education including indigenous perspectives in the curriculum. As discussed in the introduction, academic institutions all over the world are taking more interest in indigenous perspectives and knowledge. There is a global increase in interactions between scientific knowledge holders/producers and traditional knowledge holders/producers. In other words, such social interactions started as local phenomenon, but through globalisation and increased communication between groups, communities, and knowledge holders it has become a global phenomenon. This study addresses this local-global social phenomenon in the context of Sweden and is therefore relevant to Global Studies.

## 2. Background

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The chapter on background begins with a description of terminology and descriptions of how this study has utilised the terms indigenous, western/settler colonialist, indigenous perspectives, and western/settler colonialist perspectives. I have also included a sub-chapter on case background for the reader to gain an understanding of the context that the study addresses.

### 2.1 On the terms Indigenous and Western/Settler Colonialist

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#### 2.1.1 Indigenous and indigenous people

The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d, a.) describes the English term “indigenous” as an adjective, as *“something or someone existing naturally or having always lived in a place”*. Georgina Stewart (2018:740-41), a Māori researcher, writes in the article “What does Indigenous mean for me”, that indigenous is an adjective used of *a person/peoples, language, culture, or some aspect of culture*. In this study, the term will be utilized as an adjective in relation to person/people and culture. There is no universal definition of indigenous people, but there are international declarations which include objective and subjective criteria for identifying the peoples concerned (International Labour Organisation, n.d; United Nations, n.d).

The United Nations’ (UN) “Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” specifies self-identification as indigenous as a fundamental criteria. It refers to their right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their traditions and customs (United Nations, n.d). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines indigenous peoples through two categories, the subjective and objective categories. The subjective category describes that an indigenous person or group are indigenous if they self-identify as belonging to an indigenous people. The objective category states that indigenous peoples are: “Descent from populations, who inhabited the country or geographical region at the time of conquest, colonization, or establishment of present state boundaries. They retain some or all their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, irrespective of their legal status” (International Labour Organisation, n.d). By these definitions there are about 370 million indigenous persons around the world, belonging to more than 5000 different indigenous people (Amnesty International, n.d). Cornthassle (2003) writes that the “self-identification” policies for indigenous nations have since the late 1970’s become an increasingly internationally accepted practice. The World Council of Indigenous People passed the resolution that only indigenous peoples could define indigenous peoples.

There are governing bodies against the policy of self-identification, who state that in order to implement declarations and treaties there must be clear definitions of indigenous people (Corntassle, 2003:75-76). Corntassle writes that this debate causes a dilemma that impacts the construction of indigenous identity. Constructing a definition of indigenous people generates the risk that some who need to be included under the declarations and treaties could be excluded. Not having a definition generates the risk that anyone could claim indigeneity to take advantage of the treaties (ibid). Corntassle (ibid) describes that the dilemma of “who is indigenous” has become more politicised after indigenous peoples gained a distinct legal standing under international law. As a consequence of this, there has been an increase in attempts by multiple actors such as NGOs, international organisations, state governing bodies, and researchers, to develop their own definitions of native peoples (ibid). This has led to multiple definitions without any consensus across disciplines.

The author concludes that self-determination policy in tandem with a working definition of indigenous peoples can work when within global instruments that can enable the betterment of indigenous lives (Corntassle, 2003:94). However, established working and academic definitions have not provided enough flexibility across time and space. This has resulted in a discourse where the question “who is indigenous?” is focused on the role of state governing bodies rather than emphasising indigenous goals of political, cultural, economic, and social autonomy (Corntassle, 2003:94).

This study may be an academic one, but it does not take on the task of creating definitions of the terms indigenous or indigenous peoples, nor the task of defining particular indigenous peoples, as it is not the purpose of the study to do so. Rather the focus is on academics’ thoughts on how self-identified and objectively identified indigenous peoples’ ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies are engaged and taught within Swedish academia. Hence, one could say that the study adopts the position of international declarations regarding the definition of indigenous and indigenous people. When I utilize the term indigenous or indigenous people, I am referring to people who self-identify as indigenous. Tackling the dilemma Corntassle (2003) presents, would have exceeded the limits of this study.

### **2.1.2 Western/Settler Colonialism and Western/Settler Colonialist**

The Cambridge Dictionary (n.d, b.) describes the English word “colonialism” as a noun and something that can have three meanings. The first noun of colonialism is described as “*the belief in and support for the system of one country controlling another*”. The second noun of colonialism is described as “*a policy or system in which a country controls another country or area*”

The third noun of colonialism is described as “*control by one country over another and its economy, or support for such control*”. What these definitions have in common is the description of one controlling another and the support of that control.

Kohn and Reddy (2017) observe that semantically, colonialism is, when looking at Latin translation, connected to the act of moving a population into an area where there are people already, while the control and governing of an already existing population without significant settlement of the own population, or the military governance over foreign people, is connected to imperialism (ibid). However, they recognize that both terms refer to a conquest and that their meanings have changed over time. The authors write:

“Some scholars distinguish between colonies for settlement and colonies for economic exploitation. Others use the term colonialism to describe dependencies that are directly governed by a foreign nation and contrast this with imperialism, which involves indirect forms of domination” (Kohn & Reddy, 2017).

Throughout history, colonial projects have been conducted by several peoples and nations, for example by the Qing Empire (1600-1912) in inner Asia and South China (Schneider,2020). Although there have been other colonial projects, no other colonial project has been as far reaching and encompassing as the European. This study focuses on western colonialism and settler colonialism. Kohn and Reddy (2017) describe that the European colonial project emerged when moving large numbers of people across oceans and maintaining political sovereignty despite geographical dispersion became possible. Nowell, Webster & Magdoff (2020) write that western colonialism began with Europeans discovering the populated Americas and sea routes past Africa’s southern coast. This led to the newly formed European nation-states conquering areas and peoples all around the world and the forming of new European empires. By doing so, European institutions, culture and governance were also forced upon the colonized through different methods (ibid). Today, colonialism has become synonymous with western colonialism (Kohn and Reddy, 2017).

Settler colonialism has been distinguished from colonialism by some scholars within the field of indigenous and decolonial studies. Veracini (2011:1-2) writes that settler colonialism and colonialism are intertwined but are in fact two separate things. The main distinguishing factor is the mentality of settler colonialism which is “go away” rather than colonialism’s “work for me” (Veracini, 2011:2; Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2019: 52). Another difference is that settler colonialists intend to permanently stay on already populated land and assert sovereignty, while colonisers can invade, occupy, and exploit a populated area for a period and then leave (Veracini, 2011:1-12).

A third difference is that colonialism seeks to maintain imbalances in power between coloniser and colonised, while settler colonialism seeks to end the imbalance in the form of a supreme and unchallenged settler state and people. In other words, to eradicate the colonised people through various different ways (Veracini, 2011:1-12).

However, in the end, both western and settler colonialism are today commonly connected to European nations invading, conquering, exploiting, governing, and assimilating areas of the world and the people already existing there (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). The two terms, describe in this study, European actions, influenced by a European knowledge system and worldview (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006:207). This common factor between western colonialism and western settler colonialism, the European knowledge system and worldview, is central in this study, and it is for this reason I have chosen to combine the two terms.

## **2.2 On the terms indigenous perspectives and Western/settler colonial perspectives.**

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As mentioned previously, when I utilize the term indigenous perspectives, I am referring to the ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies that belong to indigenous peoples. Self-identified and objectively identified indigenous peoples' ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies are varied and complex and cannot be considered as homogeneous, (Morgan, 2019: 119; Shizha, 2019:201-2; Oliviera, 2019:349; Elliott-Groves & Fryberg, 2019: 639-640).

However, they are not representative of all non-global north or non-western/settler perspectives. There are ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies that are non-western/settler belonging to local and traditional groups that do not self-identify as indigenous (FAO, n.d). When the study mentions Indigenous peoples' perspectives or ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies, it refers to perspectives or ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies belonging to self-identified indigenous peoples which are the focus of this study. When I utilize the term western/settler colonial perspective I am referring to western/settler colonial ontology, epistemology, and methodology. I draw from the works of Mignolo and Walsh (2018;197-8), Mignolo and Tlostanova (2006) and Blaser (2013), referring to a hegemonic knowledge system and worldview that was and still is to this day influenced by the European colonisers' worldviews.

The colonisation of knowledge and reality by the west/Europe occurred largely in sync with European colonialism, as no other colonial project has been as far reaching as the European (Leibowitz).

Western knowledge might not in itself be inherently colonial, but put in relation to other forms of knowing, such as spiritual, emotional, and physical (non-cognitive knowing) the tendency is often to dismiss, delegitimise and assert dominance (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Mignolo & Tlotanova, 2006; Blaser, 2013; Leibowitz). This will be discussed further in the chapter about the study's theoretical framework.

## **2.3 Case Background: Self-censorship, Environment of Silence**

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Sweden is a European country with a colonial history, both domestically, with the colonisation of indigenous Sámi lands in northern Sweden and abroad, colonising parts of the Americas and Africa (Reymond, 1988; Fur, Naum, & Nordin 2016). This is, however, not common knowledge, or at least something that is talked about often. On the contrary, Sweden sees itself as “the world’s conscience” and one of the world’s most reputable country in the world when it comes to social justice, human rights, and sustainability (Swedish Institute, 2018). These titles have their origin in Sweden’s post-WWII aid efforts (Palme, 2012), which has grown into a culture that strongly values human rights and democracy. This is something that has become part of the national identity and a core part of “Swedishness”, while Sweden’s colonial past, slave-trade and race discrimination has become a tabu subject or a subject met with ambivalence (ibid).

Gunlög Fur (2013) writes about the phenomenon, arguing that the failures of the country’s colonies abroad might have been a source of embarrassment which resulted in a lack of discourse, research, and access to documentation regarding the topic, and which then resulted in the lack of education about the topic. A narrow definition of colonialism, which reduces it to the possession of colonies far away, has also played a role in the downplaying of Sweden’s role as colonial nation (Naum & Nordin, 2013:4). Naum and Nordin (2013:4) write:

“Perhaps the most widespread view among academics, the general public and politicians is, however, an opinion that Scandinavian participation in colonial politics was benign and their interactions with the encountered peoples in Africa, Asia and America were gentler and based on collaboration rather than extortion and subjugation” (Naum and Nordin).

In other words, a form of soft self-censorship over time took place which eventually led to the development of an “environment of silence” or “amnesia” (Palme, 2013). Generations have been educated with curriculum lacking in information about Sweden’s colonial past.

## 2.4 Case background: Swedish Universities

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Places of higher education in Sweden were not exempt from the colonial discourses that were hegemonic during the European area of imperialism and colonisation. In fact, Professor Herman Lundborg was the founder of the world first state institute for race biology in Uppsala in 1922, and he worked closely with the Nazis in Germany (Wistrand, 2018). He researched the Swedish indigenous Sámi people, and his research, among others, led to forced sterilisation of over 63 000 Sámi and forced assimilation of the Sámi in Sweden (ibid). In other words, Swedish places of higher education have a history of influencing colonialism, white/Aryan supremacy, discrimination, and marginalisation.

Much like universities all over the world, colonial influences are much less prominent today and post-colonial and decolonial discourses have made their way to Swedish academia. Research, courses, and programs focused on critical perspectives, post-colonial and decolonial research can all be found at several universities (Linnéuniversitetet, n.d; Lund University, 2020; Uppsala University, n.d). Instead of marginalising indigenous peoples, universities are increasingly embracing cooperation and integration of indigenous knowledge into both research and curriculum (Várdduo Sami Research Centre, n.d). This study takes into account the background of the chosen case (Swedish academia) when exploring the current environment within Swedish academia, and the colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives at the universities.

### 3. Previous research

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This chapter entails descriptions of literature on indigenous perspectives in academia and previous research has been conducted on the topic of indigenous perspectives and in academia and Colonial and decolonial influences within teaching of indigenous perspectives in places of higher education. However, as mentioned previously, I have yet to discover a study of this sort in Sweden. Hence, by drawing inspiration from previous research, but conducting this study in Sweden, the hope is that this study will fill a knowledge gap regarding the phenomenon. Below follows a description of previously conducted research on topic of colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in places of education. The information was sourced through the Gothenburg University Library's database which provided access to research of different levels, such as master's thesis research and research published in academic journals. The previous research that I have included here vary in level, from research published in academic journals to master thesis research.

#### 3.1 Teaching of indigenous perspectives in places of education

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“It is still rare to have Indigenous knowledge included in curriculum, to have Indigenous experiences of colonization fully recognized in history, or to have Indigenous perspectives included across curriculum” (McKinley & Tuhiwai Smith, 2019:4.)

This thesis draws inspiration from existing literature on the topic of teaching about indigenous perspectives in academia. The quote above is from the book “Handbook of Indigenous Education” by Elizabeth Ann McKinley and Linda Tuhiwai Smith which was published in 2019. The book is a collection of texts on different topics, with each chapter authored by an indigenous scholar. The quote summarises something that echoes throughout research on curriculum standards in relation to teaching about indigenous peoples; a lack of adequate representation of indigenous peoples, their stories, lifeworlds, and experiences within curriculum. Although teaching about indigenous people does occur to different degrees, some research identifies that the teaching is often heavily influenced by preconceptions constructed by the western/settler colonial hegemony about indigenous peoples or how teaching should be conducted (Krueger, 2019; den Heyer: 2009). Krueger (2019: 294) conducted a study about how curriculum within K-12 social sciences in Canada include teaching of indigenous Native Americans. He writes that studies show that curriculum, rooted in settler colonialism, privileges white perspectives, and minimizes the spaces for perspectives of Native Americans. The spaces that do open up to First Nations people in America freeze them in time, as curriculum mostly only cover native American history in relation to the first settler's arrival (ibid).

Krueger writes:

“Three common issues in curricular portrayals are: (1) the invisibility of Native Americans in post-1830s United States, (2) a whitewashing of Native American biographies to champion those who reflect traditional ideals of masculinity and American values, and (3) an almost exclusive situating of Native Americans within their own often contentious interactions with white Americans. What these issues highlight is a shortsighted view of Native Americans that reflects a reliance on entrenched stereotypes” (Krueger, 2019:299).

Another study with similarities to Kreuger’s (2019) study is “Sticky points: teacher educators re-examine their practice in light of a new Alberta social studies program and its inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives”, by Kent den Heyer (2009). den Heyer (2009) conducted five individual and group open-ended research conversations with five volunteer university instructors of secondary social studies courses in Advanced Professional Teaching, in and Introductory Professional Teaching.

He interviewed the teacher educators about their thoughts on a new provincial K-12 program of social studies which requires teachers to include aboriginal and francophone perspectives when teaching about “identity” and “citizenship”. The author writes that the stakeholders of this new programme feel ill-equipped to implement it. den Heyer (2009) identified that the cause of the feeling of inadequacy to implement the programme lay with the inadequacy and lack of teacher education about aboriginal and francophone perspectives. den Heyer (2009) also identified that difficult emotions, in relation to colonial legacy, ongoing land disputes, and material and symbolic differences between aboriginal and non-aboriginal play a role in the doubts of teachers towards implementation of the new programme.

A master’s thesis written by Tracy Lynn Blood (2010) at the University of Alberta, called “Integrating an Aboriginal Perspective: Issues and Challenges Faced by Non-Aboriginal Biology Teachers” follows a similar research design to den Heyer’s (2009) study. The author explores the experiences of non-indigenous academic teachers within the field of Biology to determine how the research participants conceive of their own incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives into their teaching of Biology. The focus of the study was to determine how the teachers incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into their teaching, what value they see in incorporating them, and what support and resources the teachers utilise or have access to when preparing the lessons and curriculum containing Aboriginal perspectives. Blood (2010) utilised semi-structured interviews as a method of collecting data and a thematic analysis to analyse the data. She identified that non-indigenous biology teachers at places of higher education understand that there is a difference between an additive approach and real integrative approach.

The author concluded that the teachers indicated a willingness to try to incorporate an Aboriginal perspective, but viewed their attempts as being not overly successful. She found that there was a great need for support for Aboriginal perspectives to be included in curriculum and implemented in class.

What these three authors, Kreuger, den Heyer, and Blood, have in common, are their conclusions regarding non-aboriginal teachers view on integrating indigenous perspectives in education. They identify a willingness to include indigenous perspectives, but also a discomfort and a sense of being ill-equipped within the educators. They identify that these feelings stem from unclear definitions of “indigenous” and from a larger societal unawareness of past and present indigenous perspectives, experiences, and lives, that in itself stems from a colonial past.

In contrast to the study’s conducted in Canada, Catherine Walsh (2018:69-74) writes of a construction of “A New Social Condition of Knowledge” in Ecuador in the book “On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, and Praxis”, which she wrote with Walter Mignolo. Politically, Ecuador has been at the forefront of including indigenous perspectives, changing their constitution to include elements of Buen Vivir. This reflects the decolonial social development in South America, stemming from the decolonial school of thought which has its origin in South America. Walsh (2018:69-74) writes that Amawtay Wasi (House of Wisdom), the Intercultural University of Indigenous Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador, was founded in 2000 as a response to the need to construct a new social condition of knowledge. The university was founded to confront neo-colonisation of epistemology and establish a place for intercultural knowledge. Amawtay Wasai dismantles the universality of the Western knowledge system and has taken on the task to respond from epistemology, ethics, and politics, to the decolonization of knowledge” (Walsh, 2018:69). Walsh writes of Amawtay Wasai;

In its conceptualization, organization, and logic, Amawtay Wasi finds its ground in a renewed comprehension and use of ancestral science, that is, of an Abya Yalean cosmology and philosophical theory of existence centered on relationality or connectedness, symbolized in the concept of the Andean chakana. The chakana orients an educational perspective that has its base in the complementarity, reciprocity, correspondence, and proportionality of knowledges, practices, reflections, lived experiences, and cosmologies or philosophies, all of which, in turn, organize the pluriversity’s five knowledge centers, an organization that marks a radical departure from the continental model of disciplinary and “disciplined” faculties, departments, and programs (Walsh, 2018:70).

The Western knowledge system is not excluded at Amawtay Wasi. It is included in Amawtay Wasi's construction of intercultural knowledge. The construction of intercultural knowledge refers to an intercultural co-construction of theory, reflection, and praxis that seeks to enable a different understanding of global, national, and local realities, and articulate diverse perspectives (Walsh, 2018:70).

Another example of indigenous perspectives being integrated into education comes from a Native American scholar who has recently gained more recognition, Robin Wall Kimmerer. Kimmerer is an ecologist and biologist from the U.S, and she is integrating indigenous knowledge both into her courses' curriculum, and her methods of teaching. In 2012 she wrote "Searching for synergy: integrating traditional and scientific ecological knowledge in environmental science education" which describes her own experiences and perspectives on integrating traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into environmental science education and scientific ecological knowledge (SEK). Kimmerer (2012) describes that fostering pluralism is an approach that benefits integration of TEK into places of higher education. Kimmerer identifies 5 key elements to fostering pluralism:

1. "Clear and disciplined analysis of how TEK and SEK are grounded in different worldviews. Mutually respectful evaluation of the divergences and convergences of these epistemologies creates the foundation for critical examination of how synergy might be created between them" (Kimmerer, 2012:317,319).
2. "Engagement of the indigenous pedagogy of direct, experiential learning in which the land and its inhabitants are recognized as primary knowledge sources" (Kimmerer, 2012:317,319).
3. "Holistic engagement of multiple elements of human capacity: mind, body, emotion, and spirit, not just the intellect which is exclusively privileged in conventional environmental science education" (Kimmerer, 2012:317,319).
4. "Recognition that in indigenous approaches, knowledge and responsibility are inextricably linked, so the course content and approach simultaneously cultivate the responsibility that accompanies knowledge acquisition, including protection and appropriate use of cultural knowledge" (Kimmerer, 2012:317,319).
5. "Recognition that the mutually exclusive duality between matter and spirit which is essential to the scientific worldview is bridged in TEK where material and spiritual explanations, the secular and the sacred, may simultaneously coexist" (Kimmerer, 2012:317,319).

Kimmerer (2012) goes on to describe how she has over the years developed this framework through experimenting with the curriculum of her courses, discussions with students regarding the content of the courses and her experiences and perceptions of events that unfolded during the courses. Kimmerer also utilised theoretical concepts and frameworks developed by peers in the field of generating and researching knowledge synergies when developing her framework (ibid). However, there is no direct mention of colonial or decolonial influences in the article. She does reference authors writing about colonialism and science and decolonising education but does not directly refer to the scholarly fields or draw any connections to them. Although, those connections seem prevalent between the lines.

Sandra Styres is an indigenous scholar from Canada. Her chapter “Legacies of Land: Decolonising Narratives, Storytelling and Literature” in the book “Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education” is about her own experiences, but also draws on educators’ and student experiences from several courses, including a course she developed called Legacies of Land: Decolonising Narratives, Storytelling and Literature (Styres, 2019:24). The course integrates indigenous ways of educating and indigenous ways of knowing through including Land as a teacher (land as material place, land as emotional place, land as spiritual place) to disrupt colonial praxis and conduct decolonial praxis (ibid:24-37). The author offers in the chapter practical ways of conducting decolonial praxis in pedagogical practices.

Styres (2019: 24-37) utilises First Voices in culturally aligned and place-conscious texts, stories, oral traditions, and symbolic rich themes that support literacy of Land as living engagement and describes how these literacies shape decolonial frameworks for education contexts. She also utilises decolonial theory in combination with her “First Voices-framework” to reflect upon existing colonial power and privilege in education and why decolonial praxis within education is necessary. Styres (ibid:30) writes that there is currently still a general unwillingness to engage in the uncomfortable process of decolonisation because decolonising is an unsettling process of unravelling the relations of power and privilege (ibid).

When addressing the matter of decolonial pedagogy, Styres (2019: 32) writes of the importance of decolonising praxis, which begins with developing a critical consciousness about the realities of oppression and social inequities for minoritized people. This disrupts the colonial ideologies and historical realities and opens up spaces of critically discussing privilege and power, but also of self-reflection regarding one’s own position (ibid). The author describes decolonising praxis in relation to pedagogy as resistance to mainstream approaches to teaching by challenging colonial relations of power and privilege that are systematically embedded in academia (ibid).

Emotional responses among the students can occur, but it is important to unpack those responses. Decolonising praxis also comes with challenges for instructors as it brings their own socio-cultural identities into the classroom, and they must manage both their own biases and assumptions while simultaneously managing students' responses (Styres, 2019:33). Teachers must be aware of their own triggers as able to operate at multiple levels while being present in the process (ibid). Styres (2019:33) emphasises that decolonising praxis in the education of teachers could be a key to further decolonisation of education. Finally, Styres describes how she herself utilises decolonising praxis.

The courses she teaches opens up spaces for experimental approaches to course content by being lecture-light and designed after a highly reflective format (Styres,2019: 34). She applies an approach that de-centres focus on the teacher as the only knowledge holder and enables students to consider their own prior knowledge, positionalities and how these come to affect their intake of knowledge. The students are exposed to First Voices, issues such as a curriculum of place and way that the land is the primary teacher, narratives of the body in relation to land and so on (ibid).

The previous research described in this chapter shows first that there exists research on the topic of teaching about indigenous perspectives. Secondly, they show that teaching of -and integration of- indigenous perspectives occur more or less within institutions dedicated to education depending on context. This study is positioned in relation to previous research like the ones described above. Although this study draws inspiration from both theoretical concepts and research designs utilised in previous research on teaching -and integration of indigenous perspectives in places of education, there are several things that sets this study apart.

The previous research included in this chapter all deal with teaching -and integration of indigenous perspectives in places of education, however, many do not utilize a decolonial theoretical framework. This thesis utilises a theoretical framework based on concepts within decolonial theory to generate knowledge of teaching -and integration of indigenous perspectives in places of education different from the previous research. The studies by Styres (2019:24-37) and Kimmerer (2012) are good examples of scholars reflecting upon colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives at places of higher education. However, Styres (2019) and Kimmerer (2012) both only mentions that their empirical material came from instructors and students, but most of the references to colonial and decolonial pedagogical practices are in relation their own lived experiences. This is the main difference between Styres (2019)' and Kimmerer's (2012) studies and this study.

This study's empirical material consists of data collected from interviews conducted with multiple scholars reflecting on colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in places of higher education rather than just one person's reflections. Another thing that sets this study apart from the previous research is instead of focusing on colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives within a single field or subject, this study explores multiple fields through semi-structured interviews with scholars working within different fields. This is to provide an overview of the colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in the case Swedish academia rather than a research field.

Many of the previous studies also focus on exploring the teachers' practical experiences and their views on the practical implementation and the practical benefits and difficulties that might occur when planning the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. They focus more on practicalities in terms of material, workplace training, education of the educators, and process, on what could and should be considered practically when implementing Aboriginal perspectives, rather than reflections regarding influences of values and worldviews behind the structure of the institution they work for. In other words, they identify the teachers' practical experiences regarding integration of Aboriginal perspectives, their approaches, difficulties, and thoughts on how things could be improved practically. There is not much reflection regarding colonial legacies of the institution of education which could be behind the difficulties, nor decolonial praxis in relation to implementation of Aboriginal perspectives. This thesis will be exploring the link between the teaching of Aboriginal/Indigenous perspectives, colonial influences and decolonial praxis in a Swedish setting.

This study has much in common with Walsh's and Mignolo's book "On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis" (2018). Both explore the colonial and decolonial influences within teaching of indigenous perspectives at places of higher education. While their contribution is much more extensive, Sweden is rarely mentioned. When one is searching for studies on the phenomenon it is rare to find studies set in the context of Sweden. This study aims to provide some insight about the phenomenon in the context of Sweden.

## 4. Theoretical framework and key concepts

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In this chapter study details the theoretical framework and key concepts that informs the analysis. The framework consists of the overarching theoretical concept; Decoloniality, and specifically the relevance of it within the area of education.

### 4.1 Decoloniality: Coloniality of knowing, coloniality of being

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Decoloniality is a school of thought that emerged and gained the status of a legitimate concept primarily through Latin American academic movements and knowledge production inspired by social movements post second world war (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:15-29; De Sousa Santos, 2006:1-15). It was born out of the struggles of those who had been delegitimized as knowledge holders, and from those who felt oppressed due to external and internal colonisation and the global designs of the modern/neo-colonial world (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:16).

The primary outlook of Decoloniality is that colonialism, derived from past European colonialism, is still present and ongoing through the hegemony of Western modernity and global capitalism (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:15-29). Decolonial thinkers like Aníbal Quijano (2000; 2007), Walter Mignolo and Madina Tlostanova (2006), argue that the hegemonic classifications of the world and the way we in the modern world legitimise knowledge and understandings of reality stem from the ideas conceived during the formation of European nation states in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and then later from the Enlightenment.

Mignolo and Walsh (2018:197-8) write that the epistemic totality of the European colonisers came from a tradition of secular totality of knowledge within the Christian church. As Europe began the process of breaking free from the hegemonic power of the church and formed monarchically lead nation states, this tradition of totality was integrated, but in the form of new ideas such as mercantilism, later capitalist, science, and the mental construct of hierarchical coding of “race” and “ethnicity” based in biology (Quijano, 2000; 2007). Quijano (ibid) explains that it is in this period of human history that the European/Western lifeworld (ontology) was born and where the pluriversal world came to an end and the universalized paradigm began with European colonisation of the places, people, history, time, and reality itself.

Blaser (2013:554) has identified the European/Western lifeworld (ontology) as: (a) the western scientific knowledge production is the only legitimate way of learning about reality, (b) there is a stark distinction between Nature and Culture, (c) a linear concept of time, where the past has negative value, and the future has positive value (d) as there is a tendency to conceive difference (such as cartesian dualism) in hierarchical terms. European/Western lifeworld is also said to have a tendency to claim universality (Hutchings, 2019:116). As the European colonisers spread across the world, so did their system of beliefs, effectively dismissing and delegitimizing non-European ways of knowing and being. As Europe began colonising other lands, external and internal colonisation of bodies and cultures also took place through the delegitimization of other existing epistemic and ontological understandings (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006). The European epistemic and ontological outlooks became hegemonic and are to this day hegemonic as it is embedded in modernity and globalization (ibid). The combination of the capitalist ideas and hierarchical coding of race justified enslavement and systematic repression and expropriation of indigenous populations lifeworlds in favour of the European images, beliefs, modes of knowing and producing knowledge, to the colonizers (ibid).

This combination of capitalist ideas, hierarchical coding of race, and the eradication of the pluriversal world by European colonisers is what Quijano (2000;2007; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:23) identifies as Coloniality, or the Colonial Matrix of Power. Coloniality, he writes, became an efficient means of social and cultural control beyond the immediate and physical presence of the colonizers. The colonizers used their monopoly on violence and power, which gave them access to resources, to mystify their knowledge system by first placing the access to it beyond the reach of the colonized (Quijano, 2007). Later it was introduced to the colonized in selective ways through educational institutions, which gave the colonized who became learned in the ways of the European knowledge system access to resources. European culture was made seductive: it gave access to resources and power, and Europeanisation became an aspiration, thus unifying the world in a strive to acquire the European ideal society (ibid).

Mignolo and Walsh (2018;197-8), inspired by the work of Quijano, write that Coloniality is a complex configuration of building, managing, and controlling every part of life by an invader. The Decolonial school of thought argue that Coloniality is still present and enacted today as seen in the classification of the world and reality, in descriptions of history, in the way we measure time, and in what is considered legitimate knowledge (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2006). Decolonial approaches focus primarily on untangling how Coloniality has been present in human history and is still present today in the production of knowledge and understandings of reality in order to highlight struggles between contrasting perspectives of what exists and what is known.

Mignolo and Walsh (2018:17) write of Decoloniality:

“It is a form of struggle and survival, an epistemic and existence-based response and practice—most especially by colonized and racialized subjects—against the colonial matrix of power in all of its dimensions, and for the possibilities of an otherwise” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:17).

“[...] it is indicative of the ongoing nature of struggles, constructions, and creations that continue to work within coloniality’s margins and fissures to affirm that which coloniality has attempted to negate. Decoloniality, in this sense, is not a static condition, an individual attribute, or a lineal point of arrival or enlightenment. Instead, decoloniality seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:17).

Decoloniality is the foundation of the theoretical framework that informs the analysis of this study. It is the core theory from which this study is positioned. However, as previously stated, decoloniality has become a broad school of thought, influential within different disciplines and areas of study. Therefore, the choice to delimit to decoloniality within education and teaching of indigenous perspectives was made to create greater specificity within the theoretical framework and thus, the analysis.

## **4.2 Decoloniality and higher education**

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### **4.2.1 Colonial influence of academia**

One institution that helped to secure the coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being was the university, an institution created to generate and spread knowledge (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:198). Western university became a key site through which colonial knowledge and colonialism itself were produced, institutionalized, and naturalised, both in the metropole (Europe) and the colonies (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu, 2018:3). It was at the European university that theories of race and capitalism emerged, which supported colonial endeavours and ethical and intellectual grounds for dispossession and domination of the colonised subjects. The founding of European higher education institutions in colonised territories became an infrastructure of the empire and an actor through which European worldviews and knowledge systems were spread and local, traditional, and indigenous knowledge suppressed (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu, 2018:4-6).

The structure, norms and values of today's higher education is therefore, according to Decoloniality, based on the European and Western colonial past. The totality of European and Western episteme and ontology spurred the founding of the higher education institution to colonise not only bodies, but knowledge and being in the world (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu, 2018: 5-6). According to Decoloniality, while formal empires no longer exist, and while the academy has come a long way in terms of inclusion since then, the institutional structures, norms, and values, derived from Western epistemic and ontological foundations, remain intact (ibid). Apple (2004) write that schools normally seem neutral and usually not seen to operate any political agenda or ideology but looking closer and through a critical lens such as decoloniality one can see a "hidden curriculum". The "hidden curriculum" is partially in what is included and excluded from curriculum, and partially the political socialisation that teaches students how knowledge is "supposed to be" obtained and created. Rademacher (2020) recalls Indigenous educators discussing that at universities, the pressure to publish and get tenure stands in the way of integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into education as such projects tend to receive less attention and less funding.

#### **4.2.2 Decolonial praxis in higher education**

Within academia, indigenous epistemologies and ontologies have historically not been recognized as knowledge or philosophy and have been confined to the realm of spirituality or culture studies, primarily by anthropologists (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu: 2018:67). When the decolonial academic movements started, decolonizing perspectives persisted alongside colonial models of education (Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck, Yang, 2019: x). The movement has since joined forces with indigenous studies, indigenous pedagogy, curriculum studies and social justice education (ibid) in an attempt to break away from the confinements of colonial models of research and pedagogy to further knowledge production and create spaces for non-western epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies within higher education and research.

Attempts to break away from the confinements of colonial models of research and pedagogy are diverse and come in many different forms. The form most relevant to this study is decolonial praxis, which is in itself also a broad term. Conducting decolonial praxis at places of higher education generates spaces where Western colonial academic structures can be challenged and thus the Western epistemology, ontology, and methodology, and where decolonisation of not only structure and curriculum, but people, can occur (Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck, Yang, 2019:24).

Styres (2019:32) writes that decolonial praxis in pedagogy involves developing a critical consciousness about the realities of oppression and social inequities for minoritized people within the practical application of teaching.

Decolonial praxis resists mainstream approaches to teaching and learning, aims to reveal any “hidden curriculum” (the colonial structures that shape modern education) and introduces non-western, non-settler colonial elements to curriculum, teaching, and learning (Styres, 2019:32). Decolonial praxis in education can also include integrating indigenous pedagogy. Indigenous pedagogy can include extending teaching beyond the classroom and scholars, learning from the land, learning from local and traditional knowledge holders, and learning through body, senses, and emotions, and emphasising the value of reciprocity (Styres, 2019:32).

### **4.3 Applying the theoretical framework**

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The theoretical framework described above was designed in relation to the research question which guides this study. It informed the analysis by enabling the discovery of key words and themes within the data that ultimately lead to the final conclusions regarding colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia.

## **5. Research Method**

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This chapter describes the methodological considerations and methods utilized in the process of conducting this study. Here I present the empirical method and the method of analysis, as well as the choices and considerations behind them. The chapter also includes a discussion regarding the research method, where the strengths and weaknesses of this study in terms of validity, reliability, and replicability, are discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with my reflections regarding my positionality and ethical considerations throughout the research process.

### **5.1 Empirical method**

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#### **5.1.1 Process of choosing research design and data collecting method**

At the beginning of the research process, I considered conducting a qualitative mixed-method study which was going to include content analysis of curriculums and observations of teaching methods, in addition to conducting semi-structured interviews. This could have provided even more information regarding colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives at places of higher education in Sweden.

However, I realised that applying such an approach would convolute the study and generate a risk of overstepping the limits of the thesis. A study of larger proportion could take on such tasks. To avoid compromising the readability of the thesis, a qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews was chosen as this study's research design. Bryman (2012:68) writes that a qualitative case study design with semi-structured interviews has the ability to generate the type of intensive and detailed inquiry that this study seeks.

A case study is often linked to a particular place, such as a community or organisation, and the intensive examination of the setting (Bryman, 2012:67; Esaiasson, 2017:108-9). My first choice of place was a single university where teaching of indigenous perspectives was relatively frequent, the School of Global Studies at Gothenburg University. However, careful consideration regarding the quantity of data that could be generated, and the likeliness of my research participants being identified, guided my decision to extend beyond a single university. By focusing on the community of academics working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives at several Swedish universities, I could remain within the frame of a case study design, while also minimizing the risk of not obtaining enough data.

Semi-structured interviews allow for some structure in the form of a script yet provides flexibility as there is an emphasis on flowing conversation and the respondents' perceptions of the phenomenon being studied (Bryman, 2012:471-4; Edwards & Holland, 2013: 54-6). The script provides some guidelines to keep the conversation on topic, prompts, and enables a more natural conversation without many interruptions (Bryman, 2012:471-4). A semi-structured interview format also enables the researcher to compare answers between research participants during the analysis more easily (ibid) By electing semi-structured interviews as my data collecting method, I could make sure that all of interviews followed certain themes yet provide an environment for flexibility and flowing conversation for each of the interviewees to frame and recall their understanding of the phenomenon.

### **5.1.2 Process of selecting research participants**

Once the choice of conducting a qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews was made, a process of selecting research participants could be initiated. Bryman (2012,417) writes that a "purposive sampling" approach is the most appropriate for case study research. Purposive sampling is a non-probability form of sampling (Bryman,2012:418; Lavrakas, 2008:543,545). In other words, it is a form of sampling that does not rely on random selection. Instead, the goal is to sample cases or participants in a strategic way so that they are relevant to the research questions (ibid).

Since it is not based on random selection, choosing units that vary from each other in terms of key characteristics could ensure a more nuanced result (ibid). Also, by not conducting random sampling, purposive sampling does not allow generalization (Bryman,2012:418). Bryman (2012:417) writes that, before engaging in purposive sampling, the researcher must first select a case or cases and then sample units within the case, which can be at different levels.

The purposive sampling chosen for this study was “Criterion sampling”, which means sampling units (cases or individuals) that meet particular criteria (ibid:419; Patton, 2001:238). The sampling was based on the study’s research design; case study with semi-structured interviews with individuals, and research question: How do colonial and decolonial aspects come to influence the teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia according to academics working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities?

The chosen criteria: Scholars (indigenous or non-indigenous) who specifically conduct research within the field of decolonial and indigenous perspectives and who are currently teaching about decolonial and indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities.

Sweden has 40 schools of higher education. I chose to delimit the study to 15 state universities, all of which were subjected to the chosen criteria. Out of the 15 state universities, five were found to employ academics which met the criteria. These five Universities were: Gothenburg University, Linköping University, Lund University, Uppsala University and Umeå University. Based on the criteria I found 15 academics which met the chosen criteria, all of which I contacted by email with an attached research description and message of intent. Out of the 15 academics that met the criterions, I ended up with 10 willing participants, with 9 valid interviews. It was revealed that one participant, out of the 10 willing, did not fit the criteria during the interview. The person did conduct research about indigenous perspectives but did not teach about it.

The nine valid research participants are described below.

1. Research Participant 1 (RP1): Male Gothenburg University. Human Ecology.
2. Research participant 2 (RP2): Female, Uppsala University, Cultural Anthropology.
3. Research participant 3 (RP3): Female, Lund University, Feminist Cultural Geography.
4. Research participant 4 (RP4) Male, Lund University, Human Ecology.
5. Research participant 5 (RP5) Male, Gothenburg University, Peace and Development Studies.
6. Research participant 6 (RP6), Female, Linköping University, Postcolonial Feminism.
7. Mr Nicholas Torretta, Male, Umeå University, Institute of Design. PhD Student of Design, with a focus on Decolonial Design.
8. Research participant 8 (RP8), Male, Gothenburg University, Human Ecology.
9. Research participant 9 (RP9), Female, Umeå University, Humanities.

### **5.1.3 Data collecting -and interview process**

#### **5.1.3.1 Creating semi-structured interview guide**

A semi-structured interview was chosen as a data-collecting method, which meant that an interview guide had to be created. Bryman (2012:471-4) describes that the interview guide for semi-structured interviews is a list of questions or specific topics to be covered which can be ordered under themes, but which acts a guideline more than actual script. The interviewee has leeway in how to answer and the order in which the questions are asked do not have to follow the outline during the interview (ibid). Questions not in the guide may also be asked if the interviewer wants to follow up on something the interviewee said (ibid). The interview guide also helps keep the conversation somewhat structured to themes connected to the research question/s, and the interviewees talking about similar things, but from their own perspectives. This helps the analysis (ibid).

For my interview guide (see appendix 1), I followed Bryman's (2012:473) advice and created some order by structuring the guide into four sections with themes connected to the research question, starting broad and ending the interview with more specific questions. The first section entailed general questions regarding the research participant's background and background in working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives. The second section entailed questions that asked the research participant to reflect upon colonial and decolonial influences in education and teaching of indigenous perspectives in Sweden. The third section entailed questions that asked the research participant to reflect upon such things, but more specifically in relation to their workplace (department and university). The fourth and final section entailed similar questions, but in relation to how it effects their own work. This structure enabled the research participants to reflect in levels and I felt it enabled easier conversation.

#### **5.1.3.2 Interview process**

The interviews were scheduled between February and April 2021. When contacting the research participants, I also specified that due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, the interviews would be conducted through video calls. Bryman (2012:477) writes that interviews in qualitative research is usually conducted face-to-face, but if there are things prohibiting a meeting of the face-to-face sort, the researcher can conduct interviews remotely. Video calls enabled me to interview academics from several different universities without expending time and money on transporting myself or them. It also enabled me to observe the research participants reactions and gain greater insight into their experiences, not only from what they were saying, but seeing their expressions when they were saying it. Video calls over Zoom also made it possible to record the conversations for data gathering and transcribing – recording.

When conducting the interviews, which were conducted in English, I started the conversation with going over the research description again and by reminding the research participants that they would be anonymised and could withdraw their participation at any time. I also asked if they had any questions or concerns before proceeding. After going over any questions I proceeded with asking permission to record the conversation. Bryman (2012:482-3) writes that recording interviews allows for more thorough and repeated examinations of the interviewee's answers and helps to correct natural limitations of our memories. Recording and transcribing also enables easier thematic analysis and direct quoting. It is for these reasons I chose to record the interviews. None of the participants requested to sign a written consent form regarding the recording or direct quoting. Verbal consent was sufficient for all of them. The semi-structured interview guide was utilized during the interviews, but there was also room for me to ask spontaneous questions. The interviews lasted between 1-1.5 hours. During the interviews I wrote down key words, words that sparked particular insight, and after each of the interviews I proceeded to take notes regarding my thoughts.

When all of the interviews had been conducted, I noted down some potential themes from information that stood out and which I could remember, gathered the key words from each of the interviews and created a map of common traits between the interviews. By doing so directly after the interview period ended, while it was all fresh in my mind, created preconditions for the analysis process. More about this process will be described under the chapter "method of analysis"

### **5.1.3.3 Transcribing**

To convert the recorded data, the interviews, into a format that could be easily utilized for thematic coding and as quotes the recordings had to be transcribed. The transcribing process commenced once all of the interviews had been conducted and recorded. There are multiple ways of transcribing recordings. One way is a highly thorough and detailed transcription which includes features of talk during the conversation (emphasis, speed, tone, timing and pauses) (Baily, 2008). This way of transcribing emphasises that the details and features of talk are important for the analysis. For my analysis of thematic coding, the features of talk were not as important. I applied a version of the transcribing technique called "denaturalised transcription", which focuses on what is being said, rather than how it is being said. In other words, the informational content of the interviewee's speech is the focus. Denaturalism suggests that meanings and perceptions that construct our reality are within speech (Oliver et al. 2005, p.1274.). The perceptions and meanings were what I was after in my analysis.

Bryman (2012:484) writes that transcribing is tedious and time-consuming work. For every hour of speech, the researcher should set aside five-six hours for transcribing. Transcribing manually can also yield vast amount of paper, which can take a lot of time to get through when analysing. To avoid time consuming and resource consuming aspects of transcribing, I devised a strategy which entailed a modification of the denaturalised transcription-technique.

I first utilised an online transcribing tool called Otter.ai to automatically transcribe all of the interviews. This yielded fairly good transcripts as the AI had been coded to understand English and the interviews were conducted in English. However, they still needed to be corrected into correctly worded transcripts as the AI could not perfectly understand the speech if the participant had an accent, which some participants had. I applied a method of listening and re-listening to correct the transcripts to ensure the precision and quality of the data. This resulted in a less time-consuming transcribing process and yielded transcripts that enabled thematic analysis of the data. With the transcripts of the data, in combination with my mapping of key words, as well as similarities and contrasts between the interviews, I was able to produce a result that could answer my research questions.

## 5.2 Method of Analysis

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### 5.2.1 Method of analysis – Thematic analysis.

A common approach to qualitative data analysis is “thematic analysis”. However, although widely utilised, there is no clear agreement or consensus about what a thematic analysis entails according to Braun and Clarke (2006). What is known about the method is that it offers a more accessible form of analysis for those early in a qualitative research career, in contrast to Discourse Analysis, Thematic Decomposition Analysis, IPA and Grounded Theory which all include aspects of identifying themes. Thematic analysis is a method utilised for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data (ibid). It consists of six steps divided into phases described in the image below.

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Image 1: Table of phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

**1. Familiarizing:** The process of manually conducting thematic analysis for this study began halfway through at the interview stage with noting down initial ideas of potential codes and themes as they were being uncovered. When listening and re-listening to the recording as I was transcribing the interviews, I was also familiarizing myself with the gathered data.

**2. Generating initial codes:** Once all of the interviews had been conducted, I created a map of the connections, codes, and themes that I could identify from my own memory and experience of hearing all of my research participants speak (see appendix 2). This acted as an initial framework for uncovering codes within the data set. As I was transcribing the interviews, I was comparing the data to the initial codes from my memory to see if there were any new codes or interesting features I had missed. Once an interview was transcribed, I also generated individual mind-maps of codes with color-coded phrases and sentences for each.

**3. Searching for themes in the codes:** After all the codes had been identified, a process of generating themes from the codes could commence. Just as I had utilized the visual aid of mind-mapping in Adobe Photoshop for identifying codes, I utilized visual aid for creating themes too. The codes could be sorted into overarching themes and sub-themes (see appendix 3).

**4. Reviewing themes:** When themes had been generated, a reviewing and refining of the themes was done in relation to the coded extracts and then to the entire data set. Adobe Photoshop was utilized to visualise the reviewing (see appendix 3).

**5. Defining and naming themes:** Following the reviewing and refining of themes, I defined the themes by naming them (see appendix 3).

**6. Writing the result:** When the analysis had been conducted and themes had been identified from the data, the result from the analysis could be written down and later discussed in relation to the theoretical framework. Finally, a conclusion could be made, and the research question answered.

### **Generated Themes:**

1. Domestic cultural aspects.
2. Rigid internal processes of the institution.
3. Lacking knowledge about decolonial praxis.
4. Individuals' efforts
5. Students' actions and efforts.
6. Academic support, but lack of specific effort

### 5.3 Discussion regarding research method

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A qualitative method, such as the one chosen for this study, is not void of challenges or limitations. The critique that qualitative methodology faces involve aspects of generalizability, validity, replicability, dependability/reliability, and lack of transparency.

Bryman (2012:406) writes that a qualitative case study is different when it comes to generalizability, as it does not aim to generalize to population. Rather the findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory. Thus, this study does not aim to generalize to population, but to theory.

Bergström and Boréus (2012:406) writes that to keep a research question intersubjective, the researcher should describe their reasoning extensively and transparently. To increase the study's replicability and to ensure that the reader could with ease determine the reasonableness and dependability of the results, the study attempts to comprehensively describe the theoretical framework, the methodology, the conducted analysis, and the conclusions made (within the scope of the study). When conducting a qualitative case study, perfect replicability is hard to achieve since the case can come to change and evolve over time and no other case is exactly the same. However, by being transparent about this, by utilising general theoretical and methodological frameworks and by being as detailed as possible regarding the research process, it is possible that the study could achieve some replicability (Ahrne & Svensson, 2015:26).

Applying transparency and reflexivity was also necessary to face the challenges of reliability. The interview guide is therefore included in the appendix (see appendix 1). Ahrne and Svensson (2015:26) write that to increase a study's credibility and reliability one can reach out to the research participants and get feedback on the result of the study.

Finally, the study attempts to work around the challenges and critiques of qualitative research by comprehensively describing the reasoning behind the choices and conclusions made throughout the research process.

## 5.4 Self-reflexivity and ethical considerations

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Engaging in self-reflexivity is an important part of the process of research within social science (Bryman, 2012:393). It allows the researcher to think reflectively over one's positionality, the methods, values, potential biases, and decisions in relation to the researcher's cultural, political, and social context (ibid). What follows here is first a detailing of my reflections regarding my positionality in relation to this study, and then a detailing of my ethical considerations.

### 5.4.1 Reflexivity and thoughts regarding positionality

Conducting reflexivity became relevant in terms of my choices regarding the research design and approach. One example when reflexivity became necessary was during the process of gathering and analysing the data. In other words, during the process of selecting research participants, creating the interview guide, conducting the interview and finally when analysing the data. As a student at Gothenburg University, who has taken courses taught by some of the research participants, I had to take care to dissociate myself from my role as course participant and position myself as a researcher with as neutral a stance as possible. The fact that I have studied some of the courses had its advantages, such as prior knowledge of general content of some of the courses and knowing which educators to contact. But I did have to focus on leaving my own experience behind and remain attentive to the information given by the interviewees.

Another reflection that came up several times was the question of whether or not to conduct decolonial praxis in regard to the research design of this study. I would have wanted to try my hand at it and break away from the western scientific standards. The research participants asked me, out of curiosity, if this study would itself be conducted in conformity with decolonial praxis. I answered that I would have tried to design this study after decolonial praxis if it was not for my position as a master's student. The topic was discussed with my supervisor who advised me to not take the risk, and that opportunities to conduct such studies would come along in the future. An examiner of this study might find research based on decolonial praxis or indigenous methodology invalid. Thus, a choice was made to design the study after western scientific standards. I do not think that this choice hinders the research in any way and that valid conclusions could be made thanks to the chosen research design. Incorporating a decolonial theoretical framework within a non-decolonial research design is a middle way and it is done frequently within research.

#### **5.4.2 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are a necessity when conducting research. This study is based on data collected from research participants. Thus, the research process entailed informing the research participants about the purpose of the study and about how the data would be utilized and handled, that the data gathered would not be shared publicly or privately and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. Ethical considerations also included protection of identities, informed consent, and the right to privacy (Bryman, 2012:135-147; Esaiasson, et.al, 2017:267). This study protects the identities of almost all its research participants by utilizing pseudonyms in the form of “Research Participant” or “RP”. A verbal confirmation of anonymity was deemed sufficient by all participants. However, one scholar specifically requested to not be anonymised, as an act of decolonial praxis.

There are discussions regarding the practice of anonymising research participants within decolonial research. Some scholars working with decolonial research mean that anonymising is not really a choice in modern research, it is standard and traditional practice. Relational accountability, within indigenous and decolonial theory, states that participants should be able to request that their names be mentioned so that the knowledge and information can be traced back to them (Wilson, 2008:10). Wilson (2008:130) writes that anonymity could contribute to information losing its power without the knowledge of the knowledge-holder. Chilisa (2012:110) builds on Wilson’s work and writes that when relational accountability is practiced with a relational ethical framework, research participants become co-researchers and there is an emphasis on revealing their names so that the knowledge in the study can be traced back to them. Thus, as a practitioner of decolonial praxis Mr Torretta requested to be named in this study.

Although my personal position on the matter is that I agree with the logic behind relational accountability, I did not fully practice it for this study. The subject matter of this study is delicate in terms of the safety, wellbeing, and future prosperity of the research participants. Revealing their identity could endanger their positions as employees at universities, hence their requests to be anonymised. However just as I ethically adhere to the requests of most of my research participants to be anonymised, I ethically adhere to the request of Mr Torretta to not be anonymised. For further protection of the identities of the research participants, I proceeded to only use the participants given aliases when processing the data. In other words, no names, except Mr Toretta’s are saved in the material.

## 6. Findings and analysis

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This chapter details the empirical findings that came to constitute the themes discovered within the data under the sub-chapter “6.1 Empirical findings”. The detailing of the empirical findings is followed by the sub-chapter “6.2 Analysis” which presents my analysis of the empirical findings through the lens of the theoretical framework. The conducted analysis provided the information needed to answer the research question.

### 6.1 Empirical findings

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#### 6.1.1 Domestic cultural aspects.

When asked to speak about their perspectives on colonial and decolonial influences within Swedish academia, and if they had experienced any colonial and decolonial influences when teaching about indigenous perspectives, a majority (8 out of 9) of the research participants spoke of matters that could be specified under the theme “domestic cultural aspects”. Within the theme were the codes; 1. Lacking knowledge about indigenous due to silence on the topic embedded in the culture. 2. Sweden is not as advanced as other countries with indigenous peoples, in terms of reconciliation, decolonisation and integration of indigenous perspectives into curriculum. Some spoke about having to factor in that students were unaware of both the struggles of the indigenous peoples in Sweden, but also abroad. Others spoke of an environment that made it difficult to integrate decolonial praxis into teaching of indigenous perspectives. They drew connections between generations not gaining deeper knowledge about indigenous peoples during their education, to a perpetuation and reproducing of an unintentional self-censorship, or an “environment of silence” that has for a long time existed in Sweden and which also comes to influence academia and higher education in terms of internal processes and the way the scholars can integrate decolonial teaching of indigenous perspectives. When met with scepticism both within and outside Swedish academia, born out of lack of knowledge, generating proper integration is hard.

RP5 describes how he used to ask his students about how many of them knew anything about the indigenous Sámi people or other indigenous people, a few of them knew the basics, but nothing more than that. He describes that the situation was the same when he was a student 20 years ago, thus he concluded that there had not been much progress in integrating information about indigenous peoples or their perspectives, issues, history, and so on, during the past 20 years.

RP5 reasons that this is because there is a general lack of knowledge about indigenous people in Sweden and that it is perpetuated through a cycle of children not learning about indigenous people in school because the educators are uncomfortable teaching about something they were never taught how to teach as their teacher education curriculum did not include it due to lack of knowledge. RP5 said that it is much easier for teachers to teach about what they know than about things they do not know anything about. This cycle then reproduces a lack of knowledge throughout the Swedish society.

Other research participants also had similar experiences. RP2 said that when encountering people not familiar with her research she experienced that the people felt attacked when she spoke of social issues and social problems related to colonialism, especially in a Swedish context. Even researchers from other fields, who might not engage with critical social theory or work with notions like colonialism and decolonialism felt it was a sensitive subject.

“[...] if you say that Sweden is a colonial state, there'll be insulted personally, like, as if they're attributed certain bad characteristics or kind of with certain responsibility, I think this awareness is entirely lacking in Sweden.” – RP2

RP2 said that she believes that Swedish academia has ways to go in terms of decolonising and becoming more open towards indigenous perspectives. She could see a lot of structural discrimination and other ways which indigenous perspectives are marginalised in Swedish academia. She sees this as something connected to a political phenomenon occurring in Sweden, that it is not only present at her workplace or Swedish academia. RP2 said that she considers it a serious problem that Swedish academia is very far from recognizing alternative knowledge systems and epistemologies.

RP3's statement seemed to concur with RP2's:

“Oh yeah! Like, see you in year 2200. Hopefully then we will have caught up.” – RP3

RP3 also shared her perspective on the way that teaching about indigenous knowledge is conducted in Swedish academia and how it could be connected to history and culture of western colonial influences. She said that the way educators at places of higher education are teaching about indigenous, traditional, and local knowledges is completely unacceptable. That the interaction with these knowledge systems still mirror a colonial approach, where there is a white person that visits the knowledge holders, obtains their knowledge, filters the information through the western/settler colonial knowledge system for us in the global north to be able to digest it. This often happens without any benefits given to the one's sharing their knowledge.

There was even the perspective of Sweden's "progress" in integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives going backwards due to cultural aspects among the interviewees. RP9 talked about how her department, which focuses on indigenous issues, has faced criticism from scholars within other fields at Umeå University. There have been scholars saying that the University spends too much funding and resources on something that is not "real science" or something "unnecessary". When asked if she saw any progression within Swedish academia in terms of integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives RP9 responded that she could not see much development, rather she saw a regression. She drew a connection between global political developments, such as the rise of extreme right-wing parties and politics, and the backlash of the integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia. She said:

"As we know, we see a lot more of these nationalist kind of political movements and political parties. So, I think that has something to do with it as well. Apparently, indigenous research and indigenous methodologies, it's a threat to academic freedom. [...] So, there isn't really any (progression), it just doesn't exist. We're very, very far behind with anything that has to do with indigenous research or indigenous methodologies being introduced into curriculum in Sweden, in Swedish academia. No, I don't see that. I don't see a development towards that. I see a backlash when it comes to ideas around that."-RP9

### **6.1.2 Rigid structural aspects of the institution.**

The research participants often referred to rigid internal structures and processes within Swedish academia when talking about colonial and decolonial influences. This referral occurred when addressing colonial and decolonial influence within Swedish academia at large, within their respective workplaces and regarding their own work as course coordinators and lecturers. Most research participants see a progression in terms of frequency of inclusion and integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives compared to when they began engaging with the topic. However, it is still difficult to initiate and maintain integration due to rigid structures and processes. The research participants revealed that they had the freedom to design a curriculum and syllabus however they wanted, and they were even encouraged to include diverse content. There were however unspoken limits and obstacles to integrate decolonial and indigenous perspectives, such as pre-existing expectations from the departments regarding what the course should contain (theories from western science perspectives), time limits of the courses (4 weeks), time limits for developing curriculum, and rules and regulations regarding any alterations to previously approved curriculum (it takes time to change a curriculum).

The research participants also identified a strong connection between the previous theme, “domestic cultural aspects” and the “rigid structural aspects of the institution”. RP3, RP6, RP8 and RP1 all spoke about this. RP3 said that the teaching periods are structured as four-week periods and that due to this structure educators have to pick very limited information to present to the students. There are also expectations that part of those four weeks should be dedicated to introducing the students to the subject’s theoretical background, which are often theories developed by people within the western/settler knowledge system.

“Geography definitely has colonial perspectives, hidden but sprinkled in every single class, because our discipline was founded on basically the idea of mapping to then go and extract. So that's extremely problematic in the history of our discipline. “[...] what we are teaching started from some white guy that went to another continent, and told them that he was exotic, you know? This is everywhere [...].” – RP3

The problem with having short periods to teach courses and having to dedicate a lot of time to teaching western/settler science is that it reduces the amount of time that can be spent on deep conversations about how to decolonise. Figuring out how to open up spaces for such conversations and how to dedicate time to bring students up to speed about colonial influences, decoloniality and indigenous perspectives are two of the biggest challenges according to RP3. The decolonial paradigm is only brought to the students towards the end of the student’s education.

“Getting students up to speed to be able to have a critical understanding, even in the first year of a masters is hard. Once you have come from education in our societies where you have been taught math, chemistry... what I mean is that we are constructed in a way that makes it hard to exit what we’ve been taught.” - RP3

RP6 spoke of an increasing interest in decolonial praxis and indigenous perspectives outside of academia in Sweden and of seeing increased engagement with the topics within activist movements through the requests of her input and presence. However, she noted that the engagement within the academic environment was not increasing at the same rate as within activism and noted that even indigenous scholars in Sweden are made to conform to the rigid western scientific standard. She said that the university’s structures and frames are very rigid even though there is interest in diversification. When speaking of the rigidity of academia, RP6 points out that changing curriculum and introducing new courses is a complex process. She points out the complex process, stemming from laws and rules, as being one of the culprits of stopping rapid progress in the area of decolonisation and integration of indigenous perspectives.

RP6 also said that when teaching of indigenous peoples does occur, it is often within descriptive and narrow courses, which she felt was unfair and not right in comparison to the grand influence of western/settler colonial perspectives that are present in all courses. In general, indigenous methodology, like Sámi methodology and perspectives, are being ignored according to RP6. She has observed Sámi researchers, knowledgeable in Sámi methodology, being trained at the university to ignore it and instead use the western/settler colonial specific set of devices because there is no recognition of indigenous methodology as being valid research methods. RP6 reasons that unless we broaden the “rules of the conversation” to include other voices we will always be just assimilating and adjusting to the western/settler colonial structures.

RP8’s perspective seems to concur with RP6 regarding the increased level of awareness of colonial mechanisms and of decolonial and indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia, yet that the rigid system is difficult to change. He shared that there is more critical thinking occurring and self-awareness among the educators regarding how educators are teaching and speaking about things and how it does or does not reproduce colonial mechanisms. RP8 describes that the self-reflexivity and joint reflexivity opens up conversations about whose reality is allowed to be real within the course curriculum, syllabus, and lectures. However, he could also see that despite the increase in conversations and awareness, western/settler colonial content still dominates courses within higher education in Sweden. He contributed this to “the very, very strong mechanisms that makes it difficult to change academia radically from the inside”.

RP8 continued to explain why it was difficult to change the structures and spoke of the colonial mechanism being the ability to make people assimilate to it by being the only way to gain a voice as a scholar and teacher.

“[...] it's an entire system of incentives that pushes researchers into doing a certain kind of research. And it's not that we're not allowed to do it in other ways, but those other ways are not how you get promoted. That's not how you get how you get tenure. That's not how you become a professor. So, we continue this practice of extractivist research in relation to indigenous people, because that's how we get where we are”. – RP8

RP8 spoke also of how the unspoken system of incentives for doing research are reflected in the teaching since much teaching is intimately connected to the educator’s research. He said that if there is an incentive for the academic to do a certain type of research that reproduces colonial relations of power through the creation of knowledge, then it spills over into the education of new generations.

When speaking to RP1, he described the challenges of integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives that occur within the rigid structure of Swedish academia in more detail. He spoke about how making changes within a research context was easier than changing things within the curriculum or syllabus, which was a much slower process. He began by addressing the more general issues such as the issue of availability in terms of literature. Most accepted literature within his area of teaching is written from a Eurocentric point of view. It is hard to find indigenous literature with theoretical approaches and that match the requirements of the courses according to RP1. Then there is also the practical issue of changing the course literature which takes time, of which course coordinators and educators have very little to dedicate to make changes to courses. RP1 said:

“[...] often, I get to know that I am to be responsible for a course a bit too late, which means that I am not in a position to change course literature as it is a lot of work so it’s kind of, to some extent, gets downplayed. Changing the content of lectures or what I am saying is easy to do, but structural things like course literature, or aim in the description of the course is harder to change for different practical reasons. It does not get done to the extent that you would want to do it. You have to have the time, the energy and those things that take more work and preparation, there is always a risk that those disappear.” – RP1

RP1 did not attribute the lack of time or effort to the lack of awareness, but rather to the structure of the procedures and processes that dictate how higher education is designed and delivered. The process of changing the syllabus requires not only time, but resources, as there needs to be reviewing of the new syllabus and discussions regarding the change. RP1 expresses that it is difficult to undergo such a process when the course coordinator has a few weeks to make changes before the course starts and is swamped with other tasks. So, many rationalise that topics and perspectives that do not make it into the syllabus can instead be brought up during lectures, since changing the content of lectures is much easier than changing the syllabus or course description.

### **6.1.3 Lacking knowledge about decolonial praxis.**

A third theme that could be identified was “lacking knowledge about decolonial praxis. The research participants described how there was often a well-meaning inclusion of decolonial and indigenous perspectives that instead became colonial praxis due to inadequate or shallow interactions with indigenous lifeworlds and perspectives. Most research participants commented that there was an increase in integration of indigenous perspectives compared to when they entered academia, but they were concerned with how the integration was being conducted. Some even called this increase a “fad”, a way to gain quick recognition as a scholar.

It was clear from the statements that the research participants equated the shallow interactions with indigenous perspectives within the teaching of indigenous perspectives, not with intentional ill-intent or a conscious colonial mindset, but rather with a lacking understanding of how to interact with indigenous perspectives on a deeper level. This, they said, results in educators relying on their western epistemological background instead, which ultimately reproduces colonial praxis and coloniality. RP1 and RP4 also spoke about the dangers of romanticising indigenous perspectives and how cherry picking the parts of indigenous perspectives that fit one's own agenda is an issue.

RP4 spoke of his personal opinion that the line of reasoning that tries to incorporate indigenous knowledge by rearranging it, reproducing it along scientific epistemology is not contributing to the decolonisation of knowledge because scientific knowledge follows different methodology. RP2 said that by doing this, researchers and educators are reproducing western/settler colonial scientific epistemology and methodology where it still has the authority to claim which knowledge is useful. This she means is not real decolonisation, just another level of colonisation of indigenous knowledge.

When asked about if she thought there existed a “hidden curriculum” in relation to teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia, RP2 responded:

“I’d be careful with calling this a hidden curriculum because it would imply that the scholars who do this have the intention to do it. I would rather not see the intentions behind the agency of scientists. I would rather see structures. They might have sincere intentions when working with indigenous knowledge, to give it what it deserves, but due to their epistemology, epistemological background, due to their ideas of what is science and how to make indigenous knowledge scientific and give it status this way, they are actually in reality reproducing colonial structures. Through reproducing the idea of what is dominant knowledge, they reproduce the ideas of what knowledge deserves trust and what kind of knowledge should be distributed in society.” – RP2

Others also spoke about a well-meaning intention in relation to integrating indigenous perspectives. They thought that a lot of people are, in their minds, well-meaning when they want to bring what they think is indigenous knowledge into the classroom. RP3 also connected the unintentional colonial praxis when integrating indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia to the theme of “domestic cultural aspects”. She said that what she found interesting is that many who do the work of integrating indigenous perspectives into higher education do not necessarily use the language of decoloniality. This she attributes to the cultural aspect of Sweden not seeing itself as a colonial country despite colonising both domestically and abroad.

When speaking to Mr Nicholas Torretta about this phenomenon he told me that he had also been thinking about it and gave me a metaphor that could describe it.

“I’ve been trying to think about it, if you can call it a hidden curriculum, or if it’s like, whether it’s intentional or non-intentional, or, yeah, I think it’s historical. And like many times people don’t realise how they’re reproducing those (colonial) structures. [...] it’s like, imagine that people are standing in a room, in an apartment. They are not aware of the structures of that house that supports them here and they have no idea how to change them when they didn’t see it being built, but they are benefitting from it”. – Nicholas Torretta.

RP6 spoke about her experiences and concerns regarding scholars engaging in decoloniality because it is “fashionable”. She had noticed that Europe, including Sweden, had begun to interact with decoloniality as if it was a fad, a new fashion.

“It’s a new fashion, everybody’s decolonizing everything these days, without understanding very often where it comes from and how it’s connected with this indigenous struggles, because this is a source of coloniality. But it’s very often forgotten.” – RP6

RP6 continued explaining how she could see groups with western/settler colonial heritage “hijacking” the concepts of decoloniality and indigenous perspectives, for example within feminist school of thought, without conducting decolonial praxis or self-reflection. This she felt was very problematic.

RP4 and RP1 said that even teaching that claim to be decolonial or highly considerate about indigeneity and indigenous perspectives can display colonial tendencies when only focusing on certain types of “indigenous perspectives”, types that fit our western ideas of indigenous perspectives and indigeneity. “Cherry picking” what perspectives, issues, and aspects of indigeneity to teach about is also problematic as it could contribute to further suppression of indigenous peoples.

RP4 said that the revitalization of indigenous identity has certainly helped a lot of people to live much more meaningful lives and to do much more meaningful things, but that there are huge differences between some of the people who consider themselves indigenous and that it is naive to think that indigenous identity and perspectives are one thing. He emphasised that indigenous identities are constructed and influenced by societal developments just like all other identities. This means that sometimes indigenous people produce identities that strike us as not quite what we mean by indigenous. To not recognise this can cause problems and divides, even within indigenous groups. RP4 recognizes this as a complex issue.

RP1 spoke about how we western/settler colonially indoctrinated people tend to include other perspectives and ways of knowing based on whether they are consistent with our scientific way of knowing about indigenous people's perspectives. He mentioned that within anthropology there are discourses regarding ontological exclusion and how academic work sometimes romanticises the notion of the indigenous identity and indigenous perspectives. RP1 said that people are not as interested in indigenous coal miners who vote for Trump compared to the indigenous environmental activist. The indigenous coal miners' perspectives become excluded as they do not fit with the image of the indigenous protector of nature.

“I see a tendency and a risk that we are reproducing colonial perspectives. It [The included knowledge] is a very particular kind of knowledge that gets included and valued, and it gets included from a kind of colonial perspective. When I read some of these things, I think it is a bit problematic, because I see a romanticizing tendency like “Look at this cute knowledge, based on traditional and certain perspectives” which end up advocating for practices that we would also advocate for.” – RP1

#### **6.1.4 Individuals' efforts**

While the research participants spoke about the difficulties to integrate decolonial and indigenous perspectives into Swedish academia, they never said it was impossible. Many told me about their own and colleagues' individual efforts to integrate decolonial praxis and indigenous perspectives. All of the research participants were engaged with integration of indigenous perspectives where they could. It was also not uncommon that indigenous scholars were mentioned as being at the forefront when it came to working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives within academia. Some research participants said that indigenous scholars are at the forefront when it comes to pushing for a decolonial perspective in Swedish academia. RP3 said that decolonial works are emerging in Sweden thanks to Sámi scholars.

When speaking about his own experiences and perspectives on the process of integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, RP8 informed me that it was all about “finding the cracks and openings in the system” that could be made into spaces for decolonial praxis and indigenous perspectives. He said that despite the epistemic and ontological arrogance exhibited and reproduced by academia, there are openings within that arrogance that can be -and are being utilised to generate spaces for plurality and decolonial praxis.

I think, step by step, these issues are being discussed more, and these kind of cracks and fissures in the system are kind of opening up to new spaces and new ways of discussing this. But it's also very much my kind of hope, and what I strive for.” – RP8

The research participants also shared the ways that they try to engage with indigenous perspectives and decolonial praxis within a rigid system. Engagement could include utilization of indigenous texts, non-hierarchical lectures/classes/seminars and becoming an ally by asking permission to teach about certain indigenous perspectives or elements of indigenous lifeworlds. RP6 said that she always includes texts written by indigenous scholars and authors in her course syllabus and tries to include in interdisciplinary methods and diverse ontologies when conducting seminars.

Mr. Nicholas Torretta said that we cannot decolonise by colonising back, meaning he cannot conduct decolonial inspired teaching by teaching in the same way as other top-down knowledge-transfer methods. He explained that he teaches in circles where class is held in a circle, never in lines where he is in the front of the classroom teaching to rows of students. He also uses a “talking stick” in the form of a stuffed toy to create a space where everyone can have a chance to speak and listen. This dismantles the structure of having the educator speaking at the students, and instead invites the students for co-teaching and co-learning.

RP9 told me about her decolonial toolbox containing particulate ethical considerations such as becoming an ally, thoroughly learning from indigenous communities, and asking permission to teach about certain indigenous perspectives or elements of indigenous lifeworlds.

“And when it comes to adding indigenous perspectives (to curriculum), then they have certain guidelines. So, I can adopt that when they teach me that. When it comes to indigenous methodologies, there aren't any universal, strict rules, but there's some common principles. [...] And after years of working with this, I've come to my own sort of methodological toolbox that I use. – RP9

### **6.1.5 Students' actions and efforts**

Another theme that could be identified had to do with student involvement in integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives. Participants also spoke about how they could see a shift in mentality between students they had 10 years ago and students they are teaching today. Students seem more open and critical towards power structures within academia today. The participants explained that one of the signs that things are changing is that they gets questioned and challenged by students in a different way compared to 10 years ago. Students are more critical towards the structure of their education.

RP6 spoke about how students were unsatisfied with how certain curriculum at Linköping's University only included a single lecture with her about the topic and how students have increasingly been taking action to ensure greater integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives. She explained that tension has emerged between her colleagues who do not like that the students are criticising and colleagues who appreciate the feedback and agree with it. She described an instance where they were discussing race in the classroom, and students brought up that the topic was not being sufficiently addressed, and that she as educator encouraged the students to do something about it.

I feel that even in the Swedish University now there is this something going on there, you know, when the students say more openly what they like or dislike, and so I think that something will change here too soon, because the university would have to adjust to this new demands. Also, from both from the bottom up” – RP6

Others also addressed the increase in students' engagement several times during our conversations, saying that many of students today have interests in other ways of knowing than the dominant Eurocentric scientific way of thinking. They are pushing for change and raise the issues of academia not providing education in other ways of knowing and learning. Some participants also said that this also comes up during teachers' meetings and during evaluation of courses.

#### **6.1.6 Academic support, but lack of specific effort**

The final theme that could be discerned from the data came from the question regarding the existence of frameworks on how to work with integration of indigenous perspectives at their respective workplaces. Many research participants answered that there were no specific frameworks on how to work with -and teach about indigenous perspectives, that they had freedom as tenured scholars to decide themselves how to work with it, within certain boundaries set by the department. Some said that if they had to identify a framework it would be the policy of inclusion and the departments strive for diverse course content. They explained that any changes to curriculum or syllabus must pass through a committee often consisting of colleagues who go over the curriculum and syllabus and decide if they are inclusive enough. RP1 explained that at his department such a course conference was held every three years to go over existing curriculum and syllabus to see if they still pass as relevant and diverse.

However, some of the research participants questioned if Swedish academia's policy of inclusion and diversity was enough to generate significant changes and integration of indigenous perspectives. In other words, the research participants reasoned that there exists academic support to integrate decolonial and indigenous perspectives through the policy of inclusion and encouragement to create courses with diverse content, but specific support for integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives was more difficult to come by.

“There is a day when a group of people within the department audit the syllabus, and they try to see how diverse the syllabus is. So, I wonder how certain syllabi pass that check, because I only see guys, and I always see white people. I'm not sure how those syllabus pass that check.”

– RP3

“If the department wants to have some sensor or some strong perspective on what to teach and how to teach it, it is within the department. I haven't experienced any of those in any of my departments. I've always been free to do what I want. Now, when it comes to indigenous methodologies and perspectives, because they are so marginalised and discriminated against, I'm not aware of any course that is actually looking into Indigenous Studies or anything that's especially kind of focusing on indigenous people.” – RP2

RP5 spoke more in depth about the downside of academic freedom in relation to teaching about indigenous perspectives. He explained that the lack of a general framework also opens up the possibility to leave out indigenous perspectives entirely from curriculum. He told me about an instance where parts of the teacher education curriculum and courses in Gothenburg had been designed by a person who came from a Political Science and Human Rights background. She had tried to integrate indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. However, when the curriculum was handed to the teachers, they commenced to change the curriculum, because they lacked the knowledge about human rights and indigenous perspectives. Thus, a lot of the human rights and indigenous perspectives disappeared from the curriculum due to academic freedom. The inclusion of indigenous perspectives in curriculum seems to be dependent on the knowledge and interest of the scholar responsible for the course or lecture according to RP5 rather than on any existing collective initiative to include indigenous perspectives within the department.

This concludes the description of the empirical findings. The quotes utilised to illustrate how the themes could be identified in the data were chosen because they served the purpose best compared to other quotes that address the same themes within transcripts. Even though several research participants spoke about the themes, utilising quotes from all participants would have resulted in the text being convoluted. Instead, I chose to describe in a concise manner how each theme was addressed by several research participants to prevent convoluting the text and exceeding the limitations of this study.

Six themes were discerned from the data when utilizing the methodological framework, thematic analysis. The following chapter contains my analysis of the empirical findings, which was conducted through the lens of the theoretical framework in order to generate answers to the research question asked in this study: How do colonial and decolonial aspects come to influence the teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia according to academics working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities?

## **6.2 Analysis**

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### **6.2.1 Colonial influence within teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia**

By applying the decolonial concepts in the theoretical framework to analyse the empirical material I could discern that three out of the six themes detected in the data; 1. Domestic cultural aspects, 2. Rigid internal processes of the institution, and 3. Lacking knowledge about decolonial praxis, have strong ties to colonial praxis and colonial influence.

By utilising the theoretical framework as a lens, a connection between the theme “domestic cultural aspects” and colonial influence can be identified. The environment of silence that the research participants speak of could be considered a form of unintentional or intentional denial of indigenous lifeworlds obtaining space in the public sphere in favour of the western/settler colonial lifeworld. The participants spoke of a lack of information about indigenous peoples and their perspectives in curriculum at every level of education and of students being entrenched in the western/settler colonial knowledge system. Both of these aspects within the data point to a continued colonisation of knowing and being in Sweden, where the western/settler colonial perspectives are perpetuated and excluding in several ways, but one being through educational institutions (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu, 2018:5-6; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018:198).

The research participants also drew connections between the environment of silence and the second theme rigid structure of academia in Sweden as colonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish higher education. From the academics' viewpoint, trying to integrate indigenous perspectives in a decolonial manner is difficult, but not impossible. It is difficult because of the strong presence of "colonial mechanisms" present in internal processes within the institution, which according to the research participants, stems from a culture that has difficulties recognizing its colonial past, but also from academia's colonial past. The pre-existing expectations that courses should partially be dedicated to subject's theoretical backgrounds, the time limits for developing curriculum, and rules and regulations regarding any alterations to previously approved curriculum, all point to structures, norms and values of today's higher education in Sweden reproducing coloniality of knowing and being (Quijano, 2000; 2007; Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancıoğlu, 2018:5-6; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018:198).

Some research participants revealed that the most challenging aspect of teaching about indigenous perspectives is to awaken students to critical concepts and get them to understand principles of decoloniality. They equate this challenge with the fact that the students, before coming to the course, have been deeply entrenched into colonial scientific thinking. In other words, the totality of western/settler colonial perspectives (Blaser, 2013), Coloniality (Quijano, 2000; 2007; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), is witnessed by the participants, not only in Swedish society, but in Swedish higher education as well. However, the participants also said that even though they are sometimes met with resistance, as times goes on the decolonial praxis sparks an awareness and discussions that students find valuable.

The third theme, "Lacking knowledge about decolonial praxis", also has strong ties to colonial praxis and colonial influence. Most of the teaching of decolonial and indigenous perspectives are often being conducted with colonial praxis as there is a lack of knowledge regarding decolonial praxis, indicating that institutional structures, norms, and values, derived from western colonial epistemic and ontological foundations remain intact while integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:15-29). It also indicates that there is a danger of further colonisation of indigenous knowing and being as the teaching of indigenous perspectives are conducted with colonial praxis. This is true even if the intentions are well-meaning.

Thus, a conclusion can be made that generating change within Swedish academia is difficult because it is hard to change the hearts and minds of people who were shaped in a society and educational system based on western colonial perspectives without much input regarding their country’s colonial past or information about other existing epistemological, ontological, and methodological principles. Even though there exists a will to generate diversity within Swedish higher education, there seems to be a lack of collective drive to thoroughly create diversity. Swedish academia seems to want to integrate indigenous perspectives yet does not actively and collectively address the colonial mechanisms that shape and steer the internal processes, its staff, and the education of the students.

Based on accounts of the nine academics I interviewed, colonial influence may be depicted as the figure I have created to the right (figure 1). It is difficult to identify an origin, but the reproduction and continuation of colonial influence within Swedish academia, particularly in relation to teaching of indigenous perspectives, can be illustrated as a cycle. People are shaped within a domestic culture that does not easily recognize its colonial past, making them unaware and ill-informed about indigenous perspectives.

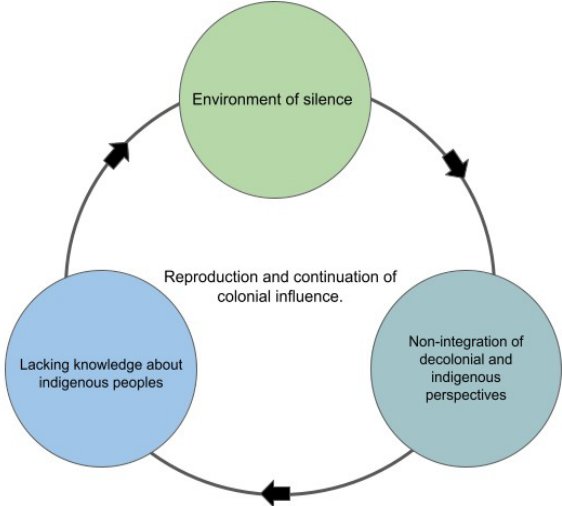


Figure 1: Illustration of how colonial influence is reproduced and continued in Swedish academia

As some of the research participants pointed out, when people are ill-informed or lacking in knowledge about a topic they tend to avoid engaging with the topic or are just not aware that it is a topic that can be engaged. Thus, the possibility of integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives goes undetected, and it is left out of curriculum. This furthers the lack of knowledge about indigenous peoples, their perspectives, and issues, which then reproduces an environment of silence. This then influences the teaching of decolonial and indigenous perspectives as the scholars who do want to engage with the topic experience a difficult time convincing their colleagues and departments to engage the topic with them, to support the integration actively and thoroughly. When people are ill-informed or lacking in knowledge about a topic and they are avoiding engaging with the topic or are just not aware that it is a topic that can be engaged, the internal processes that hinder integration of decolonial praxis and indigenous perspectives remain intact as well.

The research participants identified that certain internal processes were obstacles to integration of indigenous perspectives, such as limited amount of time to make changes to curriculum, limited amount of time to teach about the subject, long processes when changing anything in the curriculum or syllabus, and expectations to include western scientific theories. These internal processes were rigid and difficult to change. On the other hand, all of the research participants also identified that inclusion of decolonial and indigenous perspectives was on the rise compared to when they entered academia, and Swedish academia was no exception. However, what they also identified was that while inclusion and integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives was on the rise, inclusion of decolonial praxis in relation to it was not rising at the same pace.

### **6.2.2 Decolonial influence within teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia.**

Despite the data showing that the teaching of decolonial and indigenous perspectives within Swedish higher education being highly influenced by western/settler colonial perspectives, the empirical material also shows that two out of the six themes have ties to decolonial praxis and decolonial influence; 4. Individuals' efforts and 5. Student's actions and efforts. As previously stated, integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives at Swedish universities is hard, but not impossible. Even if there is a domestic culture generating an environment of silence, lack of knowledge regarding decolonial praxis and rigid structural aspects within Swedish academia that create obstacles, individual scholars are actively engaging with integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives. The data revealed that the decolonial influence within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia, such as decolonial praxis in the sense of untangling production of knowledge and attempting to break free from western/settler colonial perspectives (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:17; Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck, Yang, 2019:24), is tied to individuals' and students' actions and efforts.

Indigenous scholars are leading the decolonisation efforts and struggles for integration of indigenous perspectives, but there are non-indigenous scholars engaging with decolonisation of academia, curriculum, and teaching of indigenous perspectives.

The research participants spoke about emerging spaces for decolonial praxis and indigenous perspectives within the fissures of the rigid structures. Tactics for integrating decolonial and indigenous perspectives included seeking out and taking advantage of "cracks" in the system. This seems to correlate with Mignolo and Walsh's definition of decoloniality.

“[...] it is indicative of the ongoing nature of struggles, constructions, and creations that continue to work within coloniality’s margins and fissures to affirm that which coloniality has attempted to negate. Decoloniality, in this sense, is not a static condition, an individual attribute, or a lineal point of arrival or enlightenment. Instead, decoloniality seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:17).

Decolonial praxis resists mainstream approaches to teaching and learning, aims to reveal any “hidden curriculum” (the colonial structures that shape modern education) and introduces non-western, non-settler colonial elements to curriculum, teaching, and learning (Tuihawai Smith, Tuck, Yang, 2019:32). The statements given by the research participants indicate that decolonial praxis is being conducted by individual teachers teaching about indigenous perspectives to a certain extent, and also to an extent by students, rather than being a fundamental part of department policy or a working framework within Swedish academia for teaching of indigenous perspectives. Based on accounts of the nine academics I interviewed I have created a figure (figure 2) that illustrates how decolonial influence enters Swedish academia through fissures in the cycle of reproduction of colonial influence.

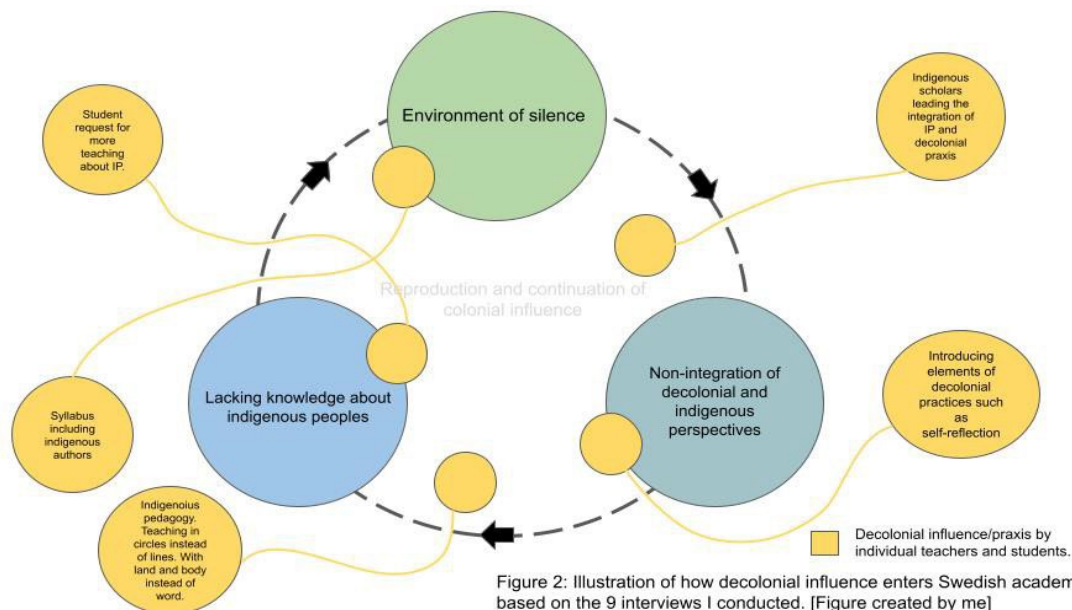


Figure 2: Illustration of how decolonial influence enters Swedish academia based on the 9 interviews I conducted. [Figure created by me]

### **6.2.3 Both colonial and decolonial influence within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia.**

Figure 2 shows fissures in the cycle of reproduction and continuation of colonial influence in Swedish academia in relation to the indigenous perspectives. The final theme discerned in the data “Academic support, but lack of specific effort” seem to indicate that those fissures are tied to Swedish academia’s policies regarding inclusion and willingness to generate diversity. The research participants’ statements revealed that Swedish academia encourages individuals to generate diversity within curriculum and syllabus, but the engagement with active integration of indigenous perspectives seems to stop there. None of the research participants spoke about any existing collective efforts to decolonise teaching of indigenous perspectives. The responsibility is shifted to the individual teachers, whom are “free” to engage with decolonial praxis and decolonial pedagogy of indigenous perspectives. This indicates that Swedish academia, to some extent, contributes to decolonial influence and to colonial influence as previously mentioned.

## **7. Conclusion**

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This final chapter ties the study together. Here is summarized the main findings of the study and the answer to the study’s research question. This chapter also contains recommendations for further research.

### **7.1 Concluding discussion**

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The research question asked in this study was: How do colonial and decolonial aspects come to influence the teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia according to academics working with decolonial and indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities? With this research question, this study aimed to explore the colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives at Swedish Universities. It also aimed to highlight the experiences of the scholars working with such questions and discuss what we can learn from them regarding colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives conducted in Swedish academia.

By conducting nine semi-structured interviews with academics specifically working within the field of decoloniality and indigenous perspectives, data regarding their experiences of colonial and decolonial influences within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia could be collected.

The data was then subjected to a thematic analysis, which revealed six themes. Out of the six themes identified, more than half had strong ties to colonial influence, while two themes had strong ties to decolonial influence. This indicates that the academic experts observe and experience that teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia is highly influenced by colonial aspects. It was identified that the colonial aspects influencing teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia emanates from a domestic culture that has created an environment of silence regarding the country's colonial past, rigid internal structures and processes, and a lack of knowledge regarding decolonial praxis. The three themes are intertwined and seem to create a cycle that reproduces colonial influence within the teaching of indigenous perspectives. However, the research participants also observed an increase in integration of decolonial and indigenous perspectives compared to when they entered academia. Many attribute this increase to a global trend, but also to individuals and students engaging and actively trying to create spaces for decolonial praxis and indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia.

The two themes connected to decolonial influence indicates that the academic experts observe and experience that teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia is also influenced by decolonial aspects, but to a lesser extent than by the colonial aspects. It was identified that the decolonial aspects influencing teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia emanates from individual teacher's -and students' engagement with decolonial pedagogy and decolonial praxis when teaching/learning about indigenous perspectives. By finding fissures in the rigid structures and taking advantage of Swedish academia's policies regarding inclusion and willingness to generate diversity, individual scholars are integrating decolonial pedagogy and decolonial praxis when they can, in particular when teaching about indigenous perspectives.

In conclusion, the experiences of academic experts working at Swedish universities reveal that the teaching of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia is highly influenced by the colonial legacy of the country, of the colonial legacy of academia, and the lack of knowledge about decolonial praxis. However, the teaching of indigenous perspectives is becoming increasingly influenced by decolonial aspects thanks to increased engagement with decolonial praxis from individual scholars and students. Decolonial pedagogy of indigenous perspectives is emerging through fissures in a cycle of reproduction of colonial influence and through encouragement to generate diversity. However, slow progress could be attributed to a lack of collective efforts to integrate decolonial pedagogy and indigenous perspectives. Being a qualitative case study with semi-structured interviews this study is not completely representative or generalizable for all of Swedish academia, however it shows an indication of what teaching of indigenous perspectives is like within Swedish academia.

## 7.2 Recommendations for future research

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The discoveries made regarding colonial and decolonial influence within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia in this study are based on the subjective experiences and perspectives of academic experts. The semi-structured interviews provided a pretty in-depth insight into the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia. For even further insight into colonial and decolonial influence within the teaching of indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia, future research could apply a mixed method approach, observing teaching and planning of courses, and analysis of the written documents such as curriculum and syllabus.

Participatory research, where the research participants are actively involved in the knowledge production, could also provide in-depth insight while also conducting decolonial praxis. Comparative studies between Swedish academia and other countries' places of higher education could also be interesting. Finally, I also encourage future research to engage more with indigenous scholars, but to do so using decolonial praxis. I hope this study inspires further research into the colonial and decolonial influences, and integration of indigenous perspectives within Swedish academia.

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## **Appendix 1 – Interview Guide**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Short introduction of the study:**

1. The study is positioned in decolonial arguments regarding academic education, that the structure academia has historically been Eurocentric and that this lives on still in a colonial shadow. But there is evidence that this is slowly changing. As I wrote in my email, the study isn't aimed at scrutinizing anyone or academics' work. The focus is on your perspectives and experiences of what it is like working with Indigenous perspectives (IP).
2. To gain understanding about how you navigate academia.
3. Finally, your perspective regarding if colonial and decolonial arguments apply to Swedish academia. We'll get to what some of these arguments are.

#### **The interview is divided into 4 sections**

1. Your background
2. Your perspective on colonial and decolonial influences in academia.
3. Your perception of how your workplace(s) works with indigenous perspectives.
4. More in-depth about your experience with the framework.

Confirm that the participant understands that they will be anonymous unless they say otherwise and ask permission for recording and permission for direct citation.

Any questions for me before we start?

If you at any time feel like my questions seem accusatory or want to not participate any longer, please inform me.

## 1. Respondent's background

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1.1 Could you tell me about...

- Your academic background, what did you study and where?
- What made you decide to pursue an academic career?
- Current occupation?
  - What institution/s?

1.2 You are currently working at Uppsala University.

- When did you start working there?
- What are your specific tasks? Research? Teaching? Administrative work?
- What do you mainly teach/research about?

1.3 Have you worked with indigenous perspectives/issues/knowledges before?/ How long have you been working with indigenous perspectives/knowledge?

14. When was the first time you encountered indigenous perspectives/cosmologies/knowledge in an academic setting?

1.5 Do you remember what people around you thought about indigenous perspectives/knowledge when you first started out in academia?

## 2. Your perspective on colonial and decolonial influences in academia

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### **\* Presenting example from previous research on decolonising education\*:**

Previous research regarding decolonisation of academia argues that academia is a product of western ontological, epistemological and methodological belief and value systems, an Eurocentric worldview which has essentially enabled the colonisation of reality, knowledge, time and history. Decolonial thinkers argue that, although academia is less colonial and more inclusive now, colonisation of such things still occurs, residing in the structure of academia, academic principles, in what is taught and how it is taught, especially in terms of indigeneity and indigenous perspectives.

Part of what I'm interested in is your thoughts regarding the influence of "colonial shadow" (hidden colonialism) and if it manifests in academic teaching.

### 2.1 What are your thoughts regarding the existence of a hidden curriculum?

- Do you agree with the argument? Do you think academic teaching is complicit in perpetuating coloniality of ontology, epistemology and methodology? If yes, to what extent? If no, why do you think this argument exists?
- Do you think these things apply to academia in Sweden?
- Are these arguments talked about at your workplace(s)?
- Are these arguments something you think about when conducting your work as a researcher and teacher?

### **\*Presenting example from previous research on decolonising education\*:**

Much of current research regarding decolonisation of academia also reports increased awareness, reflexivity, and an increase in decolonising efforts within academia. This can be in terms of an increased interaction between western science and indigenous science, the breaking down of the separation of the two, the inclusion of indigenous perspectives and methodologies in terms of education and a diversification of what is considered legitimate science.

### 2.2 What are your thoughts on this?

- Do you think these things apply to academia in Sweden?
- Is this something that is talked about at your workplace?
- Do you think there is a need for such diversification in academia?

### **3. How the respondent's workplace(s) works with indigenous perspectives and colonial/decolonial influences in education.**

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3.1 How would you describe the way that \_\_\_\_\_ university facilitates the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in education?

3.2 What would you say is the institutions' main motivation for inclusion of indigenous perspectives in curriculums?

3.3 Are there guidelines for how to work with inclusion of indigenous perspectives/knowledge in the context of education? Are there do's and don'ts?

- Ex: In terms of planning curriculum and lectures
- Ex: In terms of conducting lectures -
- Ex: In terms of assignments -
- Ex: Use of guest lecturers and citizen science
- If no, what do you think are the pros and cons of not having a framework?

3.5 Do you find there are aspects of colonial influence within this way of teaching about indigenous perspectives?

- Ex: In the way that it worked with
- Ex: In terms of the content
- Ex: In terms of who could and can influence the content.
- Ex: The hindrance it creates in terms of inclusion of indigenous perspectives?

3.6 Do you find there are aspects of decolonising perspectives coming through within this way of teaching about indigenous perspectives?

- Ex: In the way that it is worked with
- Ex: In terms of the content
- Ex: In terms of who could and can influence the content.
- Ex: The possibilities it creates in terms of inclusion of indigenous perspectives?

#### **4. Respondent's experience with colonial and decolonial influences influencing their work.**

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4.1 Are indigenous perspectives or the topic of indigeneity in any form included in the curriculum that you are teaching right now?

4.2 How do you work with this framework/inclusion of indigenous perspectives in relation to your teaching? This can be in terms of designing curriculum which includes examples of IP as well.

4.3 If you are to bring up the topic of indigenous perspectives when teaching: do you have any particular strategies for working with the framework when teaching/talking about indigenous perspectives/knowledge during your lectures?

4.4 What are the most challenging aspects when working with the framework/policy/rules/principles/no framework when it comes to teaching?

4.5 Do you feel that the way your institution has chosen to work with indigenous perspectives is limiting in any way in terms of teaching or planning a course, specifically in relation to indigenous perspectives and knowledge?

4.6 Can you recall something that you feel was successful thanks to the way the institution has facilitated the inclusion of indigenous perspectives? (particularly when teaching).

## Appendix 2 – Initial codes from memory framework

There has been a definite progression from the pure anthropological tradition of thinking about indigenous peoples and cultures from when they started in academia.

The structure of academia in Sweden is rigid when it comes to the curriculum. It is hard to make sweeping changes. The top worries that the topic of indigenous or decolonial perspectives are not relevant or attractive enough to students and would be waste of money.

There is a clear difference between research and teaching in terms of funding and openness to indigenous and decolonial perspectives. Research is accepted more.

One of the 12 is indigenous. The rest are non-indigenous scholars.

The idea of what kind of knowledge was valuable and why it was valuable can be linked to colonialism too!!

Even though the topic has been advancing and a more critical and decolonial perspective have made it into academia there has been certain fluctuation, stagnation or even a backwards going trend compared to a few years ago.

There are no official guidelines provided by the departments or universities regarding how or what to teach. Ethical considerations are of course recommended, but it is up to teachers regarding what and how to teach since it is not required to teach it.

They note that students react differently to the topics, but it is more positive reactions to the opportunity to learn more than negative reactions. They said that the students are often the ones driving the inclusion of indigenous perspectives.

The most challenging aspect of teaching is maintaining a decolonial mindset in a colonial setting and to find ways that bring justice to the true knowledge holders within the context. Academia does not facilitate an environment that help with this.

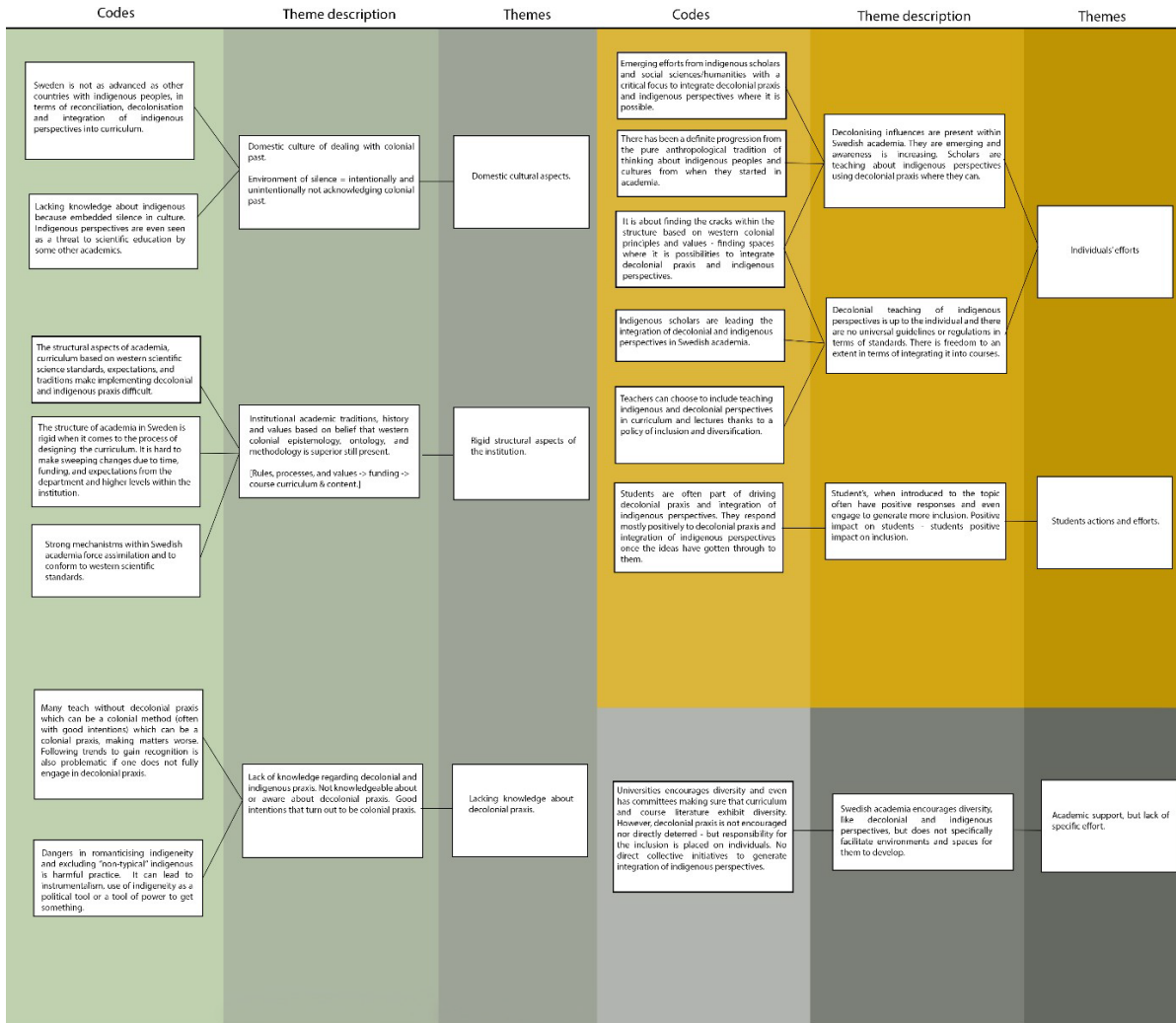
Sweden is not as advanced as other countries with indigenous peoples, in terms of reconciliation, decolonisation and integration of indigenous perspectives into curriculum.

Identified issues are mainly ignorance embedded in culture, lack of monetary funds and the structure of academia itself. One person said that indigenous perspectives are even seen as a threat to scientific education by other academics.

Most of their success stories contain student involvement.

Most are frustrated that there is not much being developed in terms of collective academic effort.

# Appendix 3 – Visual aid for mapping, refining and specifying codes and themes



- Colonial influence
- Decolonial influence
- Both colonial and decolonial

Table of converting codes to themes from collected data (interviews with academic teachers) regarding teaching about indigenous perspectives in Swedish academia. Data shows codes with connotations that suggest colonial influence, connotations that suggest decolonial influence, and also connotations that all interviews had in common, but suggest both colonial or decolonial influence at the same time.