

THE SHADOW OF COLONIALITY OVER NAMIBIA'S GREEN HYDROGEN RUSH

A DECOLONIAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NAMIBIA'S
GREEN HYDROGEN TRANSITION NARRATIVE

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Abstract

Deze thesis onderzoekt de transitie naar groene waterstof in Namibië door een *dekoloniaal perspectief*, met een focus op hoe het concept *coloniality* zich manifesteert in het Namibische waterstofdiscours. Door gebruik te maken van *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* en de dekoloniale theorie, verkent het onderzoek welke ideeën in het narratief van de Namibische overheid wijzen op *coloniality of power, knowledge* en *being*. De analyse brengt vier belangrijke thema's aan het licht: de nadruk op economische groei, de afhankelijkheid van buitenlandse investeringen en kapitaal met als hoofddoel de export van waterstof, het geloof dat industrialisatie de enige weg is naar sociaal-economische welvaart, en de framing van Namibië als een wereldwijde voorloper op het gebied van waterstof. Deze thema's tonen patronen van *ecologisch imperialisme*, waarbij Namibië's toekomst wordt vormgegeven door externe actoren en neoliberale economische structuren. De bevindingen laten zien dat Namibië's strategie historische afhankelijkheidspatronen versterkt, waarbij exportgerichte beleidsmaatregelen en buitenlandse investeerders voorrang krijgen boven lokale energie-soevereiniteit. Het discours negeert alternatieve kennissystemen, wat duidt op *coloniality of knowledge*. Daarnaast weerspiegelt het discours *coloniality of being* door Namibië voornamelijk te positioneren als leverancier van grondstoffen, waarbij de toekomstvisie sterk wordt afgestemd op westerse modellen. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan de dekoloniale energietransitie-studies door empirische inzichten te bieden in de koloniale invloeden binnen Namibië's groene waterstofnarratief. De studie pleit voor een rechtvaardigere en meer inclusieve energietransitie die bestaande machtsstructuren doorbreekt en ruimte maakt voor diverse epistemologieën. Het roept op tot kritische reflectie over hoe koloniale erfenissen nog steeds het energiebeleid in het mondiale Zuiden beïnvloeden.

Abstract

This thesis examines Namibia's green hydrogen transition through a decolonial lens, focusing on how coloniality manifests in the country's hydrogen discourse. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and decolonial theory, the research explores how Namibia's government's narrative on green hydrogen reflects coloniality of power, knowledge, and being. The analysis identifies four key themes: the emphasis on economic growth, dependence on foreign investment and financial mechanisms for developing a hydrogen industry with the goal of exporting green hydrogen, prioritization of industrialization, and positioning Namibia as a front runner in the hydrogen

sector. These themes highlight patterns of ecological imperialism, where Namibia's development is shaped by external actors and neoliberal economic frameworks. The findings reveal that Namibia's strategy reinforces historical patterns of dependency, favoring export-driven policies and foreign capital over local energy sovereignty. The discourse also marginalizes alternative knowledge systems, reflecting coloniality of knowledge, while framing Namibia primarily as a resource provider for the Global North and mirroring their future to western models underscores coloniality of being. This research contributes to decolonial studies on energy transitions by providing empirical insights into the colonial underpinnings of Namibia's green hydrogen narrative. The study advocates for a more just and equitable energy transition that challenges existing power structures and embraces diverse epistemologies. It calls for critical reflection on how colonial legacies continue to shape energy policies in the Global South.

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1. Introduction

“La technologie de l’hydrogène comme vecteur d’énergie n’est pas si simple, et si le continent africain veut jouer le rôle de pionner dans ce domaine, c’est dès maintenant qu’il doit s’y prendre en créant les structures de recherche et de formation appropriées.” (Diop, 1985)

Many alternative energy sources are being explored to combat climate change and reduce carbon emissions. One promising solution is green hydrogen that is being positioned as a key energy carrier of the future. While numerous countries are investigating green hydrogen as a potential replacement for traditional energy sources, not all possess the capability to produce it. Therefore, the green hydrogen transition is inherently a global transition because those countries will be dependent on imports from the Global South. Consequently, nations with ideal conditions for producing green hydrogen using renewable resources like wind and solar power are developing their own strategies to establish a green hydrogen ecosystem and industry. This is particularly true for several African countries, including Egypt, Morocco, South Africa and Namibia.

In 2021, Namibia took its first significant step in this direction by mentioning developing a green hydrogen economy within their Harambee Prosperity Plan II (HPPII), a plan for Namibia’s socio-economic future. This was followed by the establishment of the Green Hydrogen Council, the Namibian Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy and strategic partnerships with international actors, positioning Namibia as a future supplier of green hydrogen to the Global North. This trend aligns with the visionary thought of Cheikh Anta Diop, who, as early as 1985, emphasized the importance of African nations establishing research and training structures, including specialized university departments, to pioneer the technology of green hydrogen (Diop, 1985). While these initiatives offer promising opportunities, they raise concerns about whether Namibia’s green hydrogen strategy continues historical patterns of colonial resource exploitation, ultimately leaving Namibians without adequate access to energy. Because energy poverty remains a significant problem for many African countries (Adow, 2020).

The overall narrative of the transition suggests mutual benefits for both sides, but persistent systems of unequal power relations between the Global North and the Global South continue to influence the global energy transition, perpetuating an unequal ecological exchange (Dorn, 2022). This dynamic echoes historical patterns of resource extraction, raising concerns about

neocolonial power structures in contemporary energy transitions. Scholars like Gabor and Sylla (2023) and Müller (2024) have argued that energy transitions (Müller) and the hydrogen transition (Gabor and Sylla) are indeed shaped by colonial and neocolonial power structures. Gabor and Sylla further assert that within the existing economic system the hydrogen transition will be characterized by an unequal ecological exchange. Therefore, this paper does not aim to determine whether *coloniality* exists within Namibia's green hydrogen discourse; instead, it focuses on how coloniality manifests and through which ideas it appears in its three forms: *power, knowledge, and being*. By doing so, this research aims to provide empirical contributions to the growing field of decolonial studies on energy transitions.

This research draws on the ideas, concepts and methodologies of decolonial studies (Ahmed, 2021; Maldonado-Torres, *On the coloniality of being*, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Decoloniality as the future of Africa*, 2015; Macgilchrist, 2014; Quijano A. , *Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality*, 2007), world-systems theory (Frame, 2022), critical microfinance (Gabor & Sylla, *Derisking Developmentalism: A Tale of Green Hydrogen*, 2023) and political ecology (Schulz, 2017; Müller, 2024). The hypothesis of this paper is that different ideas of the Namibian government's discourse on their green hydrogen transition will contain all three forms of coloniality: *coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge* and *coloniality of being* due to the relation between humans and nature in the global system.

This analysis will employ a critical discourse approach embedded in a decolonial approach to answer the following question: *Which ideas and concepts perpetuate coloniality within the Namibian government's green hydrogen discourse?* The subquestions are: *Which ideas expose the coloniality of power, particularly ecological imperialism? Which ideas expose the coloniality of knowledge? Which ideas expose the coloniality of being?*

The thesis is structured as follows: The background chapter provides an overview of the global green hydrogen transition and Namibia's specific approach to this energy source. The literature review engages with key decolonial concepts, such as coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, as well as the theories of ecological imperialism and unequal ecological exchange. The methodology chapter outlines the critical discourse analysis approach and the decolonial framework applied in this study. The analysis chapter presents the findings, identifying the key ideas and concepts that sustain coloniality within Namibia's green hydrogen discourse. Finally, the conclusion and discussion reflect on the implications

of these findings, the limitations of the research, and potential directions for further exploration.

This thesis seeks to challenge mainstream narratives that frame green hydrogen as a purely technological and economic solution. By situating Namibia's green hydrogen strategy within historical and structural contexts, it reveals how colonial power dynamics continue to shape the trajectories of Global South countries. The goal is not to dismiss the potential benefits of green hydrogen, but to advocate for a transition that is genuinely equitable and free from the shadows of coloniality.

2. Background

Increasingly, green hydrogen is globally being recognized as a crucial low-carbon¹ solution for combating climate change. To understand the broader context of the green hydrogen transition, a brief overview of the global hydrogen transition and the specific Namibian hydrogen transition will be provided.

2.1. Global Transition to Green Hydrogen

Worldwide economic and political policies and strategies are adopted to incorporate green hydrogen in energy transitions to get away from high-carbon energy resources. The global hydrogen production market is anticipated to grow at an annual rate of 9.2% from 2030 onwards (ETC, 2021). This trend has become more obvious since 2020 due to various economic, geopolitical, and other factors (Van de Graaf, 2022).

Japan was an early adopter of this transition, developing a specific strategy with cost and efficiency targets (Capurso, Stefanizzi, Torresi, & Camporeale, 2022). As early as 2010, Japanese company Kawasaki Heavy Industries developed a vision for producing green hydrogen. On top of that, the country is pioneering in hydrogen technology development (World Economic Forum, 2024). Given Japan's limited domestic energy resources, it partners with other countries, such as Namibia, with which it has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

¹ There are different types of hydrogen depending on how it is produced. The only hydrogen that is considered low-carbon is green hydrogen, blue hydrogen, yellow hydrogen, pink hydrogen and turquoise hydrogen. Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate about the carbon impact of blue, yellow, pink, and turquoise hydrogen (Howarth & Jacobsen, 2021)

Australia aims to become a major global player in green hydrogen by 2030 (Green Hydrogen Organisation, n.d.a.). With abundant resources for green hydrogen production, Australia plans to use it domestically and export it globally. In 2019, Australia released a national hydrogen strategy focusing on creating hydrogen hubs nationwide, targeting a production cost of under \$2 per kg ("H2 under 2") (Capurso, Stefanizzi, Torresi, & Camporeale, 2022);

The European Union also envisions a future with green hydrogen, estimating it could comprise 20% of its energy mix by 2050 (Nweke-Eze, 2023). This process accelerated due to the war in Ukraine, aiming to reduce dependency on Russian energy (Kalt & Tunn, 2022).

The EU's hydrogen strategy and REPowerEU plan aims "to support the uptake of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen to help decarbonise the EU in a cost-effective way and reduce its dependence on imported fossil fuels" (European Commission, n.d.). The EU has signed MoUs with Namibia, Uruguay, Tunisia, Ukraine, and Canada to secure access to this low-carbon energy source. Specific EU member states, including Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium, are leading the green hydrogen initiatives.

Lastly, while addressing that many other countries also are developing their hydrogen strategies, countries like Chile, Morocco, and Egypt have enormous potential due to their abundant solar and wind resources, which are ideal for green hydrogen production. These countries strive to produce hydrogen at the lowest cost. Egypt's President El-Sisi, at the Egypt-EU Investment Conference, promoted Egypt as "*a hub for the transfer and trade of renewable and green energy*" (al-Sisi, 2024).

2.2. Namibian Transition to Green Hydrogen

In 2021, Namibia launched the Harambee Prosperity Plan II (HPPII), which outlined the nation's hydrogen ambitions within its "Economic Advancement Pillar", laying the foundations for its hydrogen transition. Shortly after, the government established the Green Hydrogen Council, chaired by former Minister of Mines and Energy Obeth M. Kandjoze, to oversee this transition. Six months later, Hyphen Hydrogen Energy, a joint venture between German energy company ENERTRAG and investment firm Nicholas Holding, was selected as the preferred bidder for Namibia's first large-scale hydrogen project, the Southern Corridor Development Initiative (SCDI), located within the *Tsau //Khaeb National Park*. In total, the Namibian government plans to develop three hydrogen valleys across the southern, central, and northern regions of the country (Republic of Namibia, n.d.b.).

In 2022, during COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, the Green Hydrogen Council officially launched its ‘Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy’ for 2025. This strategy set objectives including the establishment of a structure to develop the green hydrogen industry, regulatory framework alignment, launching projects for capacity-building, developing a shared infrastructure governance model, and implementing training programs and policies (Green Hydrogen Organisation, n.d.b.). At the same conference, the Namibian government introduced its green hydrogen finance vehicle fund, SDG Namibia One. *“This fund aims to attract catalytic climate financing for the three main phases of project delivery: development, construction and operation.”* (Republic of Namibia, n.d.b.). Through this fund, the Namibian Government will acquire a 24% equity stake.

Since committing to green hydrogen Namibia has signed different MoUs with various countries, including Germany (2021), the Netherlands (2023), and the European Union (2023). These agreements highlight Namibia's growing role in the global green hydrogen landscape. In September 2024, Namibia hosted the Global African Hydrogen Summit, an event that did not only advance Namibia's ambitions but also fostered collaboration across Africa, strengthening the continent's collective commitment to leading the green hydrogen transition. Namibia strives to start exporting hydrogen and its derivatives from 2026 onwards.

3. Literature review

“The biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves, for instance, with other people’s languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life. It even plants serious doubt about the moral rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish. Amidst this wasteland which it has created; imperialism presents itself as the cure and demands that the dependent sing hymns of praise with the constant refrain: ‘Theft is holy.’ Indeed, this refrain sums up the

new creed of neo-colonial bourgeoisie in many 'independent' African states." (wa Thiong'o, 1986)

This citation from Ngugi wa Thiong'o's book 'Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature' (1986) encapsulates the central argument of this literature review, emphasising the destructive impact of imperialism on colonised societies—stripping them of their identity, culture, and language—only to then present itself as the remedy. Although Ngugi wa Thiong'o is departing from an African Literature context, his critique applies broadly to the ways in which colonial powers imposed their languages, even on postcolonial governments. His ideas have profoundly influenced decolonial thinking (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

This review draws on decolonial-, world-systems-, and partly postcolonial perspectives, acknowledging that while decolonial and postcolonial frameworks are distinct, they converge in critiquing Euro-North American modernity (Bhabra, 2014). This modernity is deeply intertwined with the logic of coloniality—a concept that refers to the persistent power structures that originated in colonialism and continue to influence global hierarchies, economies, and social relations (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

This chapter unfolds by first engaging with Ndlovu-Gatsheni's argument on the "myths of decolonization" (2013), where he builds on the work of scholars from both the Decoloniality and Postcolonial Schools. These perspectives argue that the postcolonial era is not a new, liberated world but rather a continuation of colonial power dynamics through the persistence of coloniality. The discussion then turns to the Decoloniality School's emphasis on the concept of coloniality, drawing on Anibal Quijano's (2007; 2000) multifaceted framework of this concept, which encompasses coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, we begin by focusing on the material dimension of coloniality—coloniality of power. This focus allows for an exploration of the contemporary phase of imperialism within the global economic system in the 21st century. Frame's (2022) concept of ecological imperialism is particularly pertinent, as it underscores the biophysical aspects of imperialist dynamics.

Subsequently, this chapter addresses the coloniality of knowledge and being, which, while less emphasized, remain significant within the context of the transition. The three dimensions of coloniality—power, knowledge, and being—operate both independently and in interconnected ways, collectively shaping the structures and narratives of the hydrogen

transition. This interconnected framework provides a comprehensive lens for exploring the ongoing dynamics of coloniality in the energy transition.

3.1. “Myths of decolonization”

“African nationalism and decolonization were thus ranged against all the dark aspects of modernity, including underdevelopment and epistemic violence. But what emerged from the decolonization process was not a new world dominated by new humanist values of freedom, equality, social justice and ethical coexistence. African people found themselves engulfed by a ‘postcolonial neocolonized world’ characterized by myths of decolonization and illusions of freedom.” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni , 2013)

Namibia, often seen as the last African country to gain formal independence in 1990, is a key example of this reality. Rather than focusing on Namibia’s complex formal colonial past, we will explore conceptual frameworks that help explain its present situation. Yet, these concepts are inseparable from the past, echoing Mudimbe’s (1988) Words that *“history is both a discourse of knowledge and a discourse of power.”* In other words, understanding the present requires an understanding of the past, and these frameworks, by uncovering power relations, provide us with the tools to do just that.

Our analysis focuses on the dynamics of power within postcolonial discourses, particularly in the Namibian context, drawing on Gayatri Spivak’s characterization of the *“postcolonial neocolonized world”* (Spivak, 1990). This concept underscores that Africa’s so-called ‘postcolonial’ reality is not a space liberated from colonial influence but remains subject to the forces of ‘neocolonialism’. Through financial mechanisms and the influence of various Global North actors, the futures of Global South nations are still shaped by external powers, perpetuating poverty and inequality (Ziai, 2020). As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argues, the terms ‘postcolonial’ and ‘neocolonial’ do not represent separate realities but coexist, reflecting an enduring entanglement of colonial legacies. *“The term ‘postcolonial neocolonized world’ captures a normalized abnormality whereby issues of African identity formation, nation-building and state-construction, knowledge production, economic development and democratization remained unfinished projects mainly because of their entrapment within colonial matrices of modern global power.”* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni , 2013).

At the heart of this entrapment lies economic control, making the concept of coloniality of power a central focus of this paper. As Quijano (2007) explains, coloniality of power encapsulates the global structure introduced by Western modernity, founded on racial

classifications that determine social, political, and economic hierarchies. However, coloniality of power is deeply interconnected with coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being. Western modernity has imposed its epistemologies on non-Western nations, shaping how knowledge is produced and validated (Ndlovu-Gatsheni , 2013). The way we understand modernity itself is dictated by these Western knowledge systems, reinforcing coloniality of power by legitimizing certain ways of knowing while marginalizing others. This process extends to coloniality of being, which refers to the lived experience of colonized people shaped by the expansion of modernity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni , 2013). The realities imposed by colonial hierarchies continue to influence how individuals in postcolonial states like Namibia experience their identity, existence, and socio-economic conditions.

In conclusion, the interplay between coloniality of power, knowledge, and being reveals how Namibia's contemporary discourse on development and economic progress remains embedded in neocolonial structures. These concepts help us understand the ongoing reproduction of inequality and external dependency, highlighting how Western modernity's imaginaries continue to dictate the trajectory of Global South nations.

3.1.1. Coloniality

Coloniality, as a concept, differs from colonialism in that while colonialism refers to the formal system of one country dominating another, coloniality extends beyond formal governance and permeates every sphere of society, including cultural, political, and social dimensions. This distinction helps explain why formal decolonisation “*did not give rise to a 'postcolonial world'*” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Decades after political independence, the globalised world remains entrenched in coloniality, which shapes and sustains globalisation itself (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). As Aníbal Quijano asserts: “*Coloniality, then, is still the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed*” (Quijano A. , Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality, 2007). The purpose of this concept is to examine the ‘new’ or ‘modern’ global social, political and economic world order that has been constituted 500 years ago. It is particularly relevant to Namibia, where the power dynamics of imperialism and direct colonialism continue to influence the country's present reality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

The notion of coloniality was introduced by sociologist Aníbal Quijano and further developed by thinkers such as philosopher and semiotician Walter D. Mignolo and philosopher Nelson Maldonado-Torres. It also draws on the works of Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and Kwame

Nkrumah, all of whom belong to the Decoloniality School. Initially, it was connected to world-systems theory and closely aligns with scholarly work in development and underdevelopment theory, as well as the critical social theory tradition of the Frankfurt School (Bhabra, 2014). Also referred to as the Modernity/Coloniality School, it highlights that modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin. Bringing these two concepts together allows us to see coloniality of power as a western (European/North-American) structure that is inscribed within the modernity rhetoric (Bhabra, 2014). Colonialism, imperialism, slave trade and apartheid regimes were only a consequence from this (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Thus, coloniality is an essential and determining element of modernity (Schulz, 2017).

To explain the Decoloniality School more clearly, we can use Bhabra's comparison with postcolonial theory. These two schools of thought are often mistaken for one another because they share some similarities, but they also have important differences. Postcolonial theory and the Decoloniality School share a common goal of critically examining the legacies of colonialism and the existence of postcolonialism, and neocolonialism, as well as the consequences of modernity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Both schools explore how imperialism and colonialism have shaped global systems in various ways—economically, culturally, and socially (Bhabra, 2014). They resist the structures of power that have maintained inequality and exploitation, examining how these structures persist in shaping the contemporary world. Both perspectives highlight the need to address historical injustices and offer tools for understanding how colonial domination continues to influence societies today.

Despite these similarities, postcolonial theory and the Decoloniality School differ in their intellectual origins, focus, and approaches. Postcolonial theory primarily emerged from the Middle East and South Asia, influenced by scholars like Foucault and Derrida, who critiqued colonialism through cultural and discursive lenses (Bhabra, 2014). Unlike decolonial scholars, postcolonial scholars start their timeline in nineteenth century and often remained within "the realm of the cultural" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

In contrast, the Decoloniality School, also known as the modernity/coloniality school, originated in South America and draws on direct experiences of imperialism (Bhabra, 2014). This tradition incorporates dependency theory and world-systems theory, emphasising the structural and historical dimensions of colonialism that date back 500 years. Decolonial scholars argue that imperialism is not a past event but an ongoing process manifesting in various forms. As said, they focus on how modernity itself is inseparable from coloniality,

highlighting the need to dismantle these deep-rooted systems of knowledge and power that continue to perpetuate inequality and exploitation today.

Moreover, while postcolonial theory focuses on critiquing Western cultural narratives, the Decoloniality School challenges the global hierarchies that sustain colonial power dynamics. Decolonial scholars advocate for ‘epistemic disobedience’, rejecting Eurocentric ways of thinking and embracing alternative and marginalised forms of knowledge (Schulz, 2017). The Decoloniality School identifies three different forms of coloniality that are interrelated: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The following section will delve deeper into these dimensions of coloniality.

3.1.2. Coloniality of power

The modern world is built upon a fundamental asymmetry that reflects entrenched hierarchies of power. The concept of coloniality of power helps to analyse the global distribution of power and the mechanisms through which the modern world operates (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). This concept highlights the material dimensions of global inequality, particularly economic power relations (Quijano A. , Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality, 2007). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), modernity divides the world into two distinct spheres: the ‘Zone of Being’ and the ‘Zone of Non-Being’. The ‘Zone of Being’ consists of nations in the Global North that hold power and dictate global systems, while the ‘Zone of Non-Being’ encompasses countries in the Global South that are subjected to these dictates.

Modernity reinforces these divisions, positioning the Global North as ‘developed’ and the Global South as ‘developing’ or ‘primitive’. These hierarchies are not coincidental; they emerged alongside the rise of imperialism, with Eurocentric classifications and racial constructs forming the foundation of this ‘modern’ system (Quijano A. , Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality, 2007). This is why Quijano (2007) refers to the phenomenon as modernity/coloniality, emphasising that modernity and coloniality are inseparable, with the former relying on the structural inequalities of the latter.

Therefore, scholars argue that the assumption of equality among post-independence states is a misconception. This notion has been thoroughly challenged by world-systems and dependency theorists since the 1960s and 1970s (Hickel J. , Dorninger, Wieland, & Suwandi, 2022). These critiques reveal how global power dynamics continue to operate under the guise of modernity, perpetuating inequalities that were established during the colonial era and remain entrenched in the present. In today’s world, where ecological crises are intensifying,

these challenges provide fertile ground for coloniality to thrive. The following section will explore concepts that shed light on how these dynamics manifest and continue to shape global power structures.

3.1.2.2. Ecological Imperialism

Coloniality of power is mostly sustained through economic domination, which is theorised in dependency theory and world-systems theory. A crucial concept in world-systems literature is imperialism, which Ghanaian anti-colonial leader and former president Kwame Nkrumah describes as an octopus that dominates and controls trade, investment, labor, and natural resources, ultimately exploiting the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Ecological imperialism extends this idea by focusing on the ecological dimensions of imperialism. This paper specifically draws on Mariko L. Frame's (2022) analysis of ecological imperialism in relation to global ecological crises. She argues *“that the economic development and consumption levels of the Global North are built upon the ecological exploitation of the Global South through global economic integration”*.

World-systems analysis is valuable for understanding the integration of the Global South into a neoliberal economic system with significant ecological impacts (Frame, 2022). Historian Alfred Crosby (2004) linked the success in the accumulation of global capital by European imperialists to biological factors. However, rather than adopting a historical perspective, Frame focuses on the political-economic processes that world-systems theorists consider important when examining the ecological aspects of imperialism. The ideas of a world-system analysis are linked with ecological issues through focussing on the existence of an "Ecologically Unequal Exchange (EUE)", which will be discussed later.

At the end of formal colonialism as a tool of imperialism, post-independent states found themselves in a neocolonial world order as a tool of imperialism (Nkrumah, 1965; Frame, 2022). Nkrumah (1965) introduced the concept of neocolonialism, referring to the continued economic dominance of foreign actors over these countries and their policies, representing the continuity of colonialism. The term neocolonialism remains significant in today's global neoliberal system. As Ziai (2020) argues, empirical examples *“clearly demonstrate the existence of neocolonial relations in the global economy”*.

Within this system, ecological imperialism manifests in various forms. Development policies emphasized economic growth while maintaining the same exploitative structures. After the 1980s with the neoliberal turn, structural adjustment programs, influenced by the Washington

Consensus, significantly altered the economies of the Global South. These policies supported economic growth but continued the (ecological) exploitation characteristic of colonialism. Currently, development goals have shifted towards "green growth," but the fundamental tendencies of neoliberalism stay the same (Gabor & Sylla, 2023).

The central tendencies of this phase of ecological imperialism are neoliberal international trade, international investment, and international finance (Frame, 2022). International free trade ensures that peripheral countries specialize in the export of natural resources.

Additionally, there is a focus on foreign direct investment (FDI) that aims to *“increase the foreign exchange of low-income countries and avoid further debt buildup”*, leading these countries to rewrite their laws and regulations in favour of foreign investors. One example that Ziai (2020) gives is about the prevalence of export processing zones in the Global South, which favour foreign capital by creating conditions that attract investment and resist the nationalization of companies. Lastly, the liberalization of international finance, which disregards socio-ecological repercussions, plays a significant role. This financial capital also funds green hydrogen projects and reinforces the economic hierarchy, as it is primarily concentrated in countries of the Global North.

Frame (2022) identifies five key characteristics of ecological imperialism. First, it is rooted in the relentless drive of the capitalist system to expand. Second, it is based on unequal power dynamics between countries, reflecting a hierarchical division of labour in a capitalist system. Third, the impact manifests in severe socio-ecological consequences or in ecological debt or in ecologically unequal exchange for peripheral countries. Fourth, the form in which ecological imperialism exists is shaped by the continuous dialogue between movements and counter-movements. Lastly, the outcome is that there is an ongoing accumulation of capital for the imperialist countries.

In summary, applying a political-economic perspective from the world-systems approach to ecological imperialism helps us understand why global ecological crises intensify rather than resolve in the 21st century. Imperialism was not just a phase in history preceding colonialism, it persists today in the form of neoliberal development policies, still visible as an octopus that dominates, controls, and exploits. Moreover, imperialism is closely linked to the domination, control, and exploitation of natural resources, leading to significant ecological repercussions, which ecological imperialism highlights.

3.1.2.1.1. Ecologically Unequal Exchange (EUE)

One central feature of ecological imperialism closely linked to the tendency of international trade is Ecologically Unequal Exchange trade. This concept is important because through EUE, dependency and world-systems literature are theoretically and empirically linked with ecology. Ecologically Unequal Exchange (EUE) originates from the concept of “Unequal Exchange” theories developed by Emmanuel (1972) and Amin (1978). These theorists argue that Unequal Exchange exists in the value of embodied labour time, leading to net transfers from low-wage to high-wage countries in international trade (Dorninger, et al., 2021). They challenge the notion that ‘market forces’ and ‘the law of demand and supply’ create a level playing field where everyone benefits equally from international trade. In reality, countries with low wages and labour-intensive industries cannot compete equitably with countries that have higher wages and more efficient industries.

Through trade, the surplus value generated by labour in the periphery, embodied in the traded commodities, is extracted and transferred to the core, where profits accumulate. This economic imbalance forces Southern countries to export a significantly higher volume of goods to import the same value from the North, resulting in a net appropriation for the North through trade (Hickel J. , Dorninger, Wieland, & Suwandi, 2022). The total drain from the Global South through unequal exchange since the 1960s is calculated to be around \$62 trillion. This figure rises to \$152 trillion when accounting for the lost economic growth (Hickel, Sullivan, & Huzaifa, 2021). In short, industries in the Global North have monopolized production processes and set the rules of international trade, ensuring that profits are accumulated in the North rather than remaining in the periphery (Wallerstein, 2004).

While classic theorists like Emmanuel and Amin argue that time (labour) is unequally exchanged, contemporary theorists extend this concept to include space (biophysical resources like energy). This tends to be overlooked as biophysical resources are often not considered crucial for a country's economic growth (Dorninger, et al., 2021). According to Hornborg (2006; 2011), trade involves a time-space appropriation. Additionally, as highlighted in ecological imperialism literature, environmental degradation is a significant cost associated with this unequal exchange and cannot be overlooked (Frame, 2022).

A pioneering example of Ecologically Unequal Exchange (EUE) is the sugar industry. Sugar was produced as an industrial commodity in the periphery for the European core. The industry was labour-intensive, required vast amounts of land and capital, and operated in a highly

competitive global market. This pressure drove sugar plantation owners to exploit labour and degrade the environment to reduce costs (Gabor & Sylla, 2023). While financiers accumulated all the profit, both the people and the environment suffered disastrous effects.

In summary, international trade is not as neutral as it may seem. The extraction of time and space characterizes the North-South divide, with the North accumulating most of the profits through net appropriation, leaving the South ‘underdeveloped’. These unequal ‘market forces’ are dictated by large companies with monopolies on production processes, primarily based in the North. This dynamic not only perpetuates ‘underdevelopment’ but also shifts environmental degradation to the South. A clear example of this is the imperialist commodity of sugar.

3.1.2.1.2. Derisking Developmentalism

This concluding paragraph on ecological imperialism examines Daniela Gabor and Ndong Samba Sylla’s article called ‘Derisking Developmentalism: A Tale of Green Hydrogen’ (2023). Since Namibia is the focus of this analysis, it is important to explore the structure of its economy and the role of different actors in shaping it, particularly in relation to the country’s hydrogen ambitions. The research by Gabor and Sylla is particularly relevant in this context, as it uses Namibia’s green hydrogen transition as a case study to investigate the changing dynamics between state intervention and private capital within international development frameworks. This framework aligns with EUE, as Gabor and Sylla argue that *“Adherence to the WSC, and to ‘industrialization-by-derisking’, will likely strengthen the enduring pattern of unequal ecological exchange between global North and global South”* (Gabor & Sylla, Derisking Developmentalism: A Tale of Green Hydrogen, 2023).

Gabor and Sylla’s concept of ‘derisking developmentalism’ fits within a broader trend that has emerged with global climate strategies they identify as the ‘Wall Street Consensus’ (WSC) (Gabor, 2021). This WSC paradigm reflects a shift in global development thinking, it is believed public investments in combination with debt pressures and fiscal constraints make it impossible to achieve sustainable development goals. As a solution, this approach promotes partnerships between governments, international development agencies, and private investors. are believed to limit achieving sustainable Within the Wall Street Consensus paradigm, the assumption is that fiscal constraints and external debt pressures limit the potential for public investment to achieve sustainable development goals. The aim is to turn public priorities, like

green hydrogen production, into attractive investment opportunities for private capital by reducing financial risks.

Under this derisking model, governments are encouraged to offer various forms of support, such as guarantees and subsidies, to make investments safer and more appealing to private investors. For example, Namibia's green hydrogen initiative uses the SDG Namibia One Fund to create subsidies for financiers. This fund leverages public resources to improve the financial viability of green hydrogen projects, relying on mechanisms like public-private partnerships (PPPs), concessional loans, and government-backed guarantees. These measures reduce the risks for private investors while transferring part of that risk to the state.

Gabor and Sylla argue that this approach represents a new form of developmentalism where the state no longer leads industrial transformation independently. Instead, its role is to facilitate private investment and align it with national development goals. However, they suggest this model is a compromised version of traditional developmentalism. Unlike classic developmental states that controlled and directed private capital for national interests, derisking developmentalism requires the state to accommodate the profit expectations of foreign investors. This reliance on external capital limits the state's ability to independently shape its development trajectory, as it must consistently accommodate investor demands for favourable returns.

As a result, while Namibia's derisking approach may support some level of green industrialization, it also reinforces dependencies that echo colonial patterns. The state focuses on creating favourable conditions for foreign investment, often at the cost of meeting local needs and achieving sustainable industrial growth. According to Gabor and Sylla, Namibia's strategy of exporting green hydrogen to satisfy European energy demands sustains unequal ecological and economic relationships between the country and the Global North.

To move beyond these dependencies, Gabor and Sylla propose a shift away from the Wall Street Consensus toward a model they call the 'Green Bandung Woods'. This vision calls for a democratic global economic system that focuses on reducing inequalities between nations and addressing climate injustices. Rather than serving the interests of wealthy investors, this model emphasizes fairness and equity, ensuring that those most affected by climate change are not further marginalized.

3.1.3. Coloniality of knowledge

Coloniality of power is closely intertwined with coloniality of knowledge. This concept asserts that there is only one legitimate way of knowing—the Western (European) way—and that this knowledge claims to be universal (2007). Quijano (2007) refers to this as modernity/rationality, highlighting how European modernity and rationality are fundamentally linked to colonial dominance. In this framework, modernity is sustained by the belief that European knowledge is the sole valid perspective, reinforcing the colonial foundation of modern systems of thought. The first part of Descartes' famous quote, 'I think, therefore I am' encapsulates the essence of coloniality of knowledge by implicitly asserting that there are those who do not think (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This assumption leads to the conclusion that there are individuals who do not think, who lack rationality. The second part of the quote suggest that these individuals do not truly exist, linking directly to the coloniality of being, a concept we will explore in in the subsequent section. This exclusion marks non-European ways of knowing as inferior or non-existent (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

In addition, European knowledge is often viewed as an objective entity separate from the individual who produces it, distancing the knower from the process of knowledge creation itself (Bhambra, 2014). As discussed earlier, the Decolonial School differentiates itself from the Postcolonial School by actively seeking to dissociate from epistemic imperialism (an endeavour that is challenging because this imperialism is embedded in all facets of what is considered "modern"). Decolonial authors aim to 'delink' by distancing themselves from the assumptions of 'modern' paradigms. However, they recognize that these paradigms are dominant and, at times, unavoidable in research due to their pervasive influence (Mignolo W. D., 2011). In academia, this coloniality of knowledge manifests through the dominance of Western universities and scholarly frameworks. Knowledge production, however, is not neutral, it is created for specific purposes and reflects underlying power dynamics. *"Africa is today saddled with irrelevant knowledge that saves to disempowered [sic] rather than empowering individuals and communities."* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

The process of 'Othering' involves political power and the domination of one group over another, specifically, the colonizer over the colonized, which is an unequal relationship (Browne, Bottorff, & Johnson, 2004). In this framework, the European 'thinker' becomes the normative standard, while those deemed 'non-thinkers' are positioned as deviations from this norm. This dynamic not only sustains European identity by contrasting it with the 'Other' but also reinforces hierarchical structures of knowledge and power. Ultimately, coloniality of

knowledge and the process of Othering operate together to uphold systems of domination, ensuring that non-European epistemologies remain marginalized and subordinated.

3.1.4. Coloniality of being

Continuing with Descartes' famous quote, 'I think, therefore I am' the second part, 'I am', touches upon the coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Unlike Descartes, philosopher Heidegger focused on the aspect of being rather than knowledge. However, in a similar vein to Descartes' 'I think', Heidegger's ontology failed to recognize that he excluded beings that are 'non-existent' (in contrast to the ones who 'are') within his ontology (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Heidegger introduced the term *Dasein*, meaning 'being there', to describe the human experience of being. In contrast, Maldonado-Torres (2007) draws on Fanon's concept of the *damné*, meaning 'the condemned' or 'not being there'. *Dasein* refers to a human who exists and is recognized, while the *damné* represents those dehumanized by colonial structures, whose existence is denied.

Another crucial aspect of denying a group's existence lies in language and how language is used to describe and define them.

“‘Science’ (knowledge and wisdom) cannot be detached from language; languages are not just ‘cultural’ phenomena in which people find their ‘identity’; they are also the location where knowledge is inscribed. And, since languages are not something human beings have but rather something of what humans beings are, coloniality of power and of knowledge engendered the coloniality of being [colonialidad del ser]’.” (Mignolo W. , 2003)

In 'Black Skin, White Masks' (1967), Franz Fanon provides foundational insights for the Decolonial School by theorizing the non-being and dehumanization of colonized people, particularly through language. While coloniality of knowledge operates within the mind and epistemic frameworks, coloniality of being impacts the lived experience (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This lived reality, described by Mignolo (2011) as *“the darker side of modernity”* is characterized by violence and death, where colonized people are stripped of their existence and humanity.

Amid this dehumanization brought by imperialism, Africans developed concepts like 'Negritude' and the 'African Personality' as a means to counter the erasure of their humanity (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). This struggle to reclaim humanity continues to this day. Although racist hierarchies and imposed knowledge systems defined African beings in dehumanizing ways, there was a persistent resistance to these constructs. At the same time, as Fanon points

out, the dehumanization through language fostered a sense of alienation among Africans, affecting how they viewed themselves. This alienation has left a lasting impact on the lived experiences of Africans, reinforcing the coloniality of being (Maldonado-Torres, *On the coloniality of being*, 2007).

3. Problem Statement

Green hydrogen as an alternative energy resource is a relatively recent phenomenon, and there are still significant gaps in understanding its implications. Within mainstream discourses, green hydrogen is often framed as technically and economically promising. As a result, most studies tend to focus on technical feasibility or economic cost analysis (Kalt & Tunn, 2022). There is an overall optimistic narrative that obscures deeper issues related to global power inequalities that characterize the current energy transition.

What remains undertheorized is how (neo)colonial discourses shape contemporary hydrogen transitions and impact the lived realities of those affected by these developments. In countries like Namibia, which has endured centuries of imperialism and colonization, it is possible to expose colonial continuities within the current hydrogen transition narrative. Anibal Quijano's threefold concept of coloniality, coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, provides a valuable framework for identifying these continuities. Looking at energy transitions from a decolonial perspective allows us to understand this new and 'modern' phenomenon within a historical and structural context, thereby revealing underlying power dynamics. As Kalt and Tunn (2022) in their critical research agenda argue: *“Critical research on the global hydrogen transition is crucial to prevent the (re)production of global inequalities and power imbalances, to anticipate and circumvent problems and conflicts in its implementation, and to set the course towards a globally just and socially accepted hydrogen transition.”*

Existing literature, such as that by Gabor and Sylla (*Derisking Developmentalism: A Tale of Green Hydrogen*, 2023; *Dreams of Green Hydrogen*, 2023), approach the topic from a political economy perspective, specifically applying a critical microfinance lens to highlight the risk of Ecologically Unequal Exchange inherent in these transitions. Meanwhile, Franziska Müller (*Energy Colonialism*, 2024; *Hydrogen Justice*, 2022), along with Johanna Tunn and Tobias Kalt (*Hydrogen Justice*, 2022) provide analytical frameworks and practical tools, such as the concept of hydrogen justice, to link energy transitions to broader issues such as energy colonialism, green extractivism, and green developmentalism. These theoretical

perspectives form a foundation for this study, particularly Müller's (2024) analytical framework, which will be elaborated on later.

Additionally, this study builds on the research avenue suggested by Kalt and Tunn (2022), who proposed that *“discourse analysis (e.g., Ahmed 2021) could investigate the ideas and concepts reproduced through hydrogen policies and projects, examine how producer countries are represented and objectified, and interrogate contingencies of whiteness that are inscribed in these representations (Baldwin 2012).”* Rather than analysing hydrogen policies and projects, this study examines the discourse of the Namibian government, a nation recognized as a key player in the green hydrogen transition. Guided by Ahmed's (2021) decolonial approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and framed within a postcolonial Namibian context, this research aims to reveal *“historical processes and struggles that underpin Africa's political marginalization and underdevelopment by the West.”* It is therefore that we focus more broadly on the government's discourse, allowing us to systematically identify (neo)colonial influences within Namibia's green hydrogen narrative.

Nevertheless, the economic dimension receives particular focus within the discourse, drawing on the research of Gabor and Sylla (2023), who highlight Namibia's green hydrogen strategy as a compelling case for examining the relationship between state and private capital. This underscores the importance of economic factors in the energy transition and brings to light the power dynamics that will be examined through the lens of ecological imperialism.

The research question is:

Which ideas and concepts perpetuate coloniality within the Namibian government's green hydrogen discourse?

This is further explored through the following subquestions:

Which ideas expose the coloniality of power, particularly ecological imperialism?

Which ideas expose the coloniality of knowledge?

Which ideas expose the coloniality of being?

The analytical framework guiding this research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) through a decolonial epistemic shift. By acknowledging coloniality of power within postcolonial discourses, this framework ensures that the findings reflect a deeper understanding of the historical and structural inequalities shaping contemporary narratives. According to Ahmed (2021), coloniality has received less attention within the discursive field compared to cultural, political, or economic fields. Therefore, this research will achieve two

key objectives based on decolonial literature: first, to systematically identify ideas that perpetuate coloniality within Namibia's green hydrogen discourse, and second, to broaden the scope of knowledge production by acknowledging epistemic coloniality embedded in these discourses. This dual approach not only reveals hidden power dynamics but also challenges dominant Eurocentric perspectives, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse surrounding Namibia's green hydrogen transition.

This master's thesis employs critical decolonial discourse analysis to examine Namibia's positioning as an emerging player in green hydrogen production. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to critical hydrogen studies and avoid the narrow focus on technological-economic aspects that often dominate hydrogen transition narratives. Additionally, this research engages with the Decoloniality School by critically interrogating the enduring legacies of colonialism and the persistence of neocolonial dynamics within global energy transitions. Ultimately, this research aims to uncover how colonial power dynamics are perpetuated in Namibia's green hydrogen discourse and to provide a critical framework for achieving more just and equitable energy transitions.

5. Methodology

The research method employed in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) from a decolonial perspective, which allows for the examination of Namibia's green hydrogen discourse to uncover and challenge hegemonic colonial logics (Ahmed, 2021). Grounded in the theoretical foundations of the Decolonial School, this approach seeks to go beyond hegemonic colonial logics and develop a narrative of social phenomena informed by decolonial thought. At the same time, this study acknowledges a critical tension: traditional CDA methods originate from Eurocentric critical discourse studies, which can reinforce the very colonial power structures they aim to critique. This paradox highlights the need for a decolonial epistemic shift that not only exposes coloniality within discourse but also challenges the limitations of conventional CDA. Therefore, applying a decolonial perspective in this study is a theoretical, methodological, and epistemological undertaking aimed at producing knowledge that recognizes colonial histories and fosters more inclusive and critical understandings of discourse (Passada, 2019).

This section introduces Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the primary method and sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the decolonial approach that informs its application. In Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), discourse is viewed as a social practice where language

both constructs and is constructed by society, simultaneously shaping and reflecting reality (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The understanding of discourse encompasses ‘semiotic modalities’, of which language is one expression (Fairclough, 2016). In this paper, discourse will be synonymous with language. According to Van Dijk (2013), there is no single method of CDA, but rather multiple methods. Specifically, this paper draws on Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional analytical framework. Within Fairclough's framework, language relates to other social elements in a dialectical manner, meaning it is both distinct from and interrelated with them (Fairclough, 2016).

The first dimension is description (discourse as a text) analysing different aspects of linguistics to look at how language is used this makes us understand how formal choices in a text (grammar, choice of words, metaphors, etc.) construct meanings and interpretations. The second dimension is interpretation (discursive practice) examining the relationship between text and interaction, considering that the text is both a product of a process and will eventually be interpreted by the consumers. The last dimension is explanation (social practice) understanding the social context of the text and the effects that the text will have on that context. The interpretation is linked with the explanation phase because *“what one ‘sees’ in a text, what one regards as worth describing, and what one chooses to emphasize in a description, are all dependent on how one interprets a text.”* (Fairclough, 1989).

The ‘critical’ aspect of CDA focuses on the significant role discourse plays in power dynamics. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) explain: *“Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people.”*

While Fairclough emphasizes the issues of power that discourses produce, the decolonial approach critiques mainstream critical discourse analysts for overlooking the coloniality of power inherent in discourses (Ahmed, 2021). *“The decolonial criticism ‘aims to make a ‘decisive intervention’ into the very discursivity of the modern sciences in order to craft another space for the production of knowledge – an other way of thinking, un paradigma otro, the very possibility of talking about ‘worlds and knowledges otherwise’ (Escobar, 2007, p. 179)”* (Ahmed, 2021).

The persistence of coloniality in the postcolonial world underscores the need for this approach. Although mainstream critical discourse analysts advocate for multidisciplinary

approaches (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), the recognition of the colonality of power within the linguistic field, particularly in African and Latin American contexts, remains insufficient (Ahmed, 2021; Passada, 2019). When discourses from formerly colonized countries are analysed without recognizing the colonality of power, yet still claiming the universality of CDS methods, it distorts our understanding of the contexts of these countries and perpetuates colonial power dynamics, which Mignolo (2007) refers to as “*the colonization of being through the colonization of knowledge.*”

To illustrate the implications for analysing texts from the Global South, Ahmed (2021) critiques Innocent Chiluba’s analysis in ‘Social Media Networks and the Discourse of Resistance: A Sociolinguistic CDA of Biafra Online Discourses’ (2012). Chiluba examines the Biafran Online Campaign Groups (BOCG), which consist of Igbo individuals in Nigeria and the diaspora, advocating for a separate nation due to perceived marginalization. Chiluba attributes this marginalization to corrupt Nigerian leaders and suggests leadership reforms as a solution. However, he overlooks the deep colonial roots of Nigeria’s ethnic conflicts. Ahmed highlights that Chiluba’s Eurocentric framework ignores the colonial creation of Nigeria, which amalgamated diverse ethnic groups without regard for their distinct identities, leading to ongoing tensions and separatist movements. This oversight exemplifies a broader issue in mainstream CDA, which often fails to incorporate the colonality of power. By neglecting this critical dimension, Chiluba’s analysis does not fully address the underlying causes of Igbo marginalization, which are deeply entrenched in Nigeria’s colonial history.

Macgilchrist (2014) identifies three critical issues that can perpetuate the colonality of power and reinforce global hierarchies in discourse: colonial residue, Eurocentrism, and mono-epistemicism. First, colonial residue refers to the use of terms such as ‘(under)development’, ‘progress’ and ‘economic growth’, which are rooted in colonial language. Second, Eurocentrism manifests in texts as the dominance of a Eurocentric perspective that claims objectivity, thereby marginalizing alternative ways of thinking and knowing. This is visible across various academic fields and limits the scope for diverse epistemologies. Finally, mono-epistemicism involves the assumption that only one mode of thought, typically European or American, is valid, positioning this as the “master paradigm” for all knowledge. If these issues are addressed within the field of CDA “*the logic of colonality is revealed in its political fabric of modernity, globalization and capitalism*” (Passada, 2019).

5.1. Research Design

5.1.1. Research Question

The overall goal of this research is to analyse which ideas and concepts perpetuate coloniality from a decolonial approach to political discourse analysis. The critical goal is to not take for granted the social reality in which these ideas and concepts exist. Therefore, power relations within the social context of these discourses will first be recognized and studied, necessitating a thorough review of the literature on coloniality and the position of Namibia in the global hydrogen transition². Empirically, the research will employ a decolonial approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover the specific ideas and narratives within the discourse that reinforce coloniality.

The research question addressed in this study is: *Which ideas and concepts perpetuate coloniality within the Namibian government's green hydrogen discourse?* The subquestions are: *Which ideas expose the coloniality of power, particularly ecological imperialism? Which ideas expose the coloniality of knowledge? Which ideas expose the coloniality of being?* This study does not aim to determine whether coloniality exists, as this issue has been extensively explored across various schools of thought. Given the unequal global power relations that we have discussed in the literature review and the position of Namibia within these relations, the hypothesis is that the Namibian government's green hydrogen discourse reinforces all three dimensions of coloniality: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being.

5.1.2. Sampling and Material

The data for this study consists of key documents and speeches from Namibian government officials involved in the development of the country's green hydrogen industry. The selection process focused on identifying key documents and speeches that provide critical insights into Namibia's hydrogen transition discourse. A common approach used by CDA practitioners for selecting data involves identifying 'typical texts' (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Two official documents form the foundation of this research: the HPPII (table 1, #1) and The Strategy (table 1, #3). The first (#1) identifies green hydrogen as a crucial component of Namibia's economic development strategy and the second (#2) is further developing this vision. These documents are central to Namibia's green hydrogen narrative and are essential

² This is extensively discussed within the literature review

to this analysis. Additionally, The Blueprint (#10) provides a recent overview of Namibia's progress as of 2024. Given its extensive (partly technical) content, relevant sections were selected based on the occurrence of key concepts and terminology pertinent to the study.

The speeches analysed in this research were delivered by President Nangolo Mbumba, Minister of Mines and Energy Tom Alweendo, and Green Hydrogen Commissioner and Presidential Advisor James Mnyupe. These individuals are key players in shaping Namibia's green hydrogen policy and strategy. The selected time frame spans from 2021, when the HPPII (#1) was published and green hydrogen was first introduced into Namibia's economic development plan, up to 2024, reflecting the most recent developments in the sector.

The selection process was guided by the significance of the documents and speeches within Namibia's green hydrogen strategy and the prominence of the individuals involved. Additionally, a keyword analysis was conducted to identify terms relevant to the concept of coloniality. This included terminology such as 'development', 'progress', and 'economic growth' drawn from Macgilchrist's (2014) taxonomy, which highlights how such terms can "*potentially reproduce racist views of global hierarchies*". Vocabulary from ecological imperialism literature, including terms like 'export', 'investment' and 'financialization' was also incorporated, recognizing the inherent link between colonial vocabulary and imperialist practices.

The sampling process has been made upon key documents from the Namibian government, speeches and one interview of officials of the Namibian government who are particularly interesting within the development of the Namibian hydrogen industry. To start, two key documents were identified for this research. Those two official documents (#1, #3) are the cornerstone documents within Namibia's development of Green Hydrogen. The first is the Namibian Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy, which serves as the government's action plan for establishing a green hydrogen economy in Namibia, outlining its goals and vision until 2025. This document frequently refers to the Harambee Prosperity Plan II (HPPII), particularly 'Goal 3: Developing Complementary Engines of Growth,' where green hydrogen is included as a critical activity, reflecting its importance for Namibia's economic strategy.

Documents, interviews and speeches were sourced from official Namibian government website, relevant youtube channels and the official social media page of the Namibian government 'Namibian Presidency', both in written and video-recorded formats (#2, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9). As mentioned earlier, this study focuses solely on spoken or written language

as discourse, excluding other forms such as non-verbal communication, due to the specific objectives of the research. The documents serving as data for this paper are most crucial for the first two dimensions of analysis: the descriptive and interpretative phases. Theories and concepts from the literature review, along with the broader social context of green hydrogen, will inform the explanation phase by situating the data analysis within its social context.

Table 1. Overview of sampled material

#	Year	Name of Documents	Author/speaker	Type
1	2021	Harambee Prosperity Plan (“HPPII”) Goal 3: Developing Complementary Engines of Growth	Republic of Namibia	Report Document
2	2021	A green hydrogen hub for Africa	Minister of Mines and Energy Tom Alweendo	Speech
3	2022	Namibia Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy (“the Strategy”)	Republic of Namibia	National Strategy
4	2023	Gospel of Green Hydrogen	Green Hydrogen Commissioner and Presidential Advisor James Mnyupe	Speech
5	2024	Statement on the occasion of The Press Briefing Following Participation in the 79th Session of The United Nations General Assembly and The Hamburg Sustainability Conference	President Nangolo Mbumba	Speech
6	2024	The Conversation: Namibia’s Green Hydrogen	James Mnyupe	Interview
7	2024	Keynote Adress At the World Hydrogen Summit	President Nangolo Mbumba	Speech

8	2024	Speech at Inauguration Cleanergy Green Hydrogen site	Minister of Mines and Energy Tom Alweendo	Speech
9	2024	Namibia's president 'committed to green hydrogen program'	President Nangolo Mbumba	Interview
10	2024	A blueprint for Namibia's green industrialisation	Republic of Namibia	Document

5.1.3. Data Analysis

Now that we have explained how the data was retrieved, we will turn to the process of analysing that data. As previously mentioned, the analysis followed Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional analytical framework: description, interpretation, and explanation. Drawing on Müller's (2024) analytical framework—where she combines the multilevel perspective (MLP) with Quijano's insights on the modernity/coloniality relationship and ideas from the Decoloniality School—I developed an analytical framework (table 2) specifically for this research. As Müller (2024) states, using Quijano's insights is *“highly significant for understanding how energy transitions may be pervaded by colonizing notions.”*

Instead of employing MLP, I used Fairclough's three-dimensional model and combined it, following Müller's method, with the three dimensions of coloniality: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge, and coloniality of being. The primary emphasis is on coloniality of power and ecological imperialism, as mentioned above, especially because of the economic implications of energy transitions. This framework enables us to trace all forms of coloniality within each document or speech. To ensure a consistent analysis, guiding questions have been developed for each dimension of Fairclough's model, facilitating a systematic exploration of the data through this decolonial lens.

Table 2. Analytical Framework

	Coloniality of Power	Coloniality of Knowledge	Coloniality of Being
Description (discourse as a text)	Which words reveal unequal power relations?	Which words reflect hierarchies of knowledge?	Which words influence Namibia's self-identity and

			potentially impact lived realities?
Interpretation (discursive practice)	How can these words be interpreted within the discourse?	How can these words be interpreted within the discourse?	How can these words be interpreted within the discourse?
Explanation (social practice)	Do the words and their interpretations contribute to the existence of coloniality of power and ecological imperialism?	Do the words and their interpretations contribute to the existence of coloniality of knowledge within these discourses?	Do the words and their interpretations contribute to the existence of coloniality of being within these discourses?

5.2. Ethical Considerations

Within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), being ‘critical’ involves making ethical considerations. As Wodak and Meyer (2016) state, “*Naming oneself ‘critical’ only implies superior ethical standards: an intention to make one’s position, research interests, and values explicit and their criteria as transparent as possible, without feeling the need to apologize for the critical stance of their work.*” Therefore, this section explicitly addresses these ethical considerations.

From a decolonial perspective, researchers must acknowledge that they themselves are subjects of the research (Passada, 2019). The language used in the discourse being analysed, as well as the language employed in this paper, actively shapes reality. This necessitates recognizing the coloniality of power not only in word choices but also in the dynamics between the researcher and the researched. The researcher holds the power to represent the researched, who may lack the agency to respond or challenge these representations. However, analysing from a decolonial perspective “*enables us to recognize subjects in their space, historical time*” breaking with colonial logics by directly acknowledging them (Passada, 2019).

In addition, When it comes to data selection or the decision to analyse certain aspects, it is inevitable that something else will be left out (Tenorio, 2011). Thus, the validity of this

research, ranging from theorizing and data selection to analysis and conclusions, does not depend on achieving ‘objectivity’, a goal that is ultimately unattainable in social sciences and qualitative research (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Instead, this study seeks to offer an additional perspective or way of understanding reality. With this we recognize that this research is inherently political. That’s why being ‘critical’ here means being self-reflexive, continuously questioning both other researchers and oneself, and acknowledging that societal changes render the validity of one’s research fluid (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

6. Analysis

This section presents the findings from the analysis of documents and speeches by the Namibian government and its representatives. Utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical framework, the section is organized thematically to highlight the core ideas and concepts central to Namibia’s green hydrogen transition. The analysis begins with the first two dimensions—description and interpretation. Each theme concludes with applying the third dimension, explanation.

6.1. Green Hydrogen for (green) growth

Within the selected texts, Namibia’s economic agenda lies at the heart of its promotion of green hydrogen as a low-carbon alternative. Although this priority is not explicitly stated, the language, semantics, and recurring emphasis throughout the documents reveal an underlying focus on economic goals. For example, in the *Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy*, climate change is mentioned as a real threat only once, followed immediately by a reference to the economic system:

“The world is on a collision course with a climate crisis. Yet the global economy still relies heavily on fossil fuels – the main source of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.” (n.d.b., p. 10)

Towards the end of the document, another reference underscores economic transformation as the foundation of the hydrogen transition:

“Building a thriving hydrogen industry in Namibia could make a real contribution to solving the global climate crisis” (n.d.b., p. 48)

Similarly, in the HPPII document (Republic of Namibia, n.d.a.), one activity which will investigate the feasibility of green hydrogen is placed under the second pillar ‘Economic Advancement’ within the third goal ‘Developing Complementary Engines of Growth’. Given

that this document forms the foundation of the Hydrogen Strategy, it signals that green hydrogen is primarily intended to serve an economic role within the country.

Further, the HPPII document states that Namibia is *“playing a vital role in fighting climate change”* directly followed by a focus on *“at the same time harnessing concessionary funding, making the most of the multi generationally low cost of capital that is currently available in the global capital markets.”* (n.d.a., p. 35) This reference frames hydrogen as essentially being solved through the existing economic system to contribute to Namibia’s *“national growth and COVID-19 economic recovery plan”* (n.d.a., p. 24). The emphasis on ‘growth’, especially ‘green growth’ through hydrogen, is clearly tied to the economic agenda, suggesting ‘green growth’ could be interpreted as ‘economic growth in a green wrapper’ without fundamental changes.

The ultimate objective of this growth is for Namibia to become an *“industrialized nation”* (n.d.b., p. 6), thereby *“improve the quality of life of our people to the level of their counterparts in the developed world by the year 2030”* (n.d.b., p. 6), as emphasized by the late President, Dr. Hage G. Geingob. The strategy posits that hydrogen could *“accelerate Namibia’s socio-economic development and foster prosperity”* (n.d.b., pp. 16, 34) potentially *“aligning Namibia with other developing economies”* (n.d.b., p. 42). Current President Nangolo Mbumba has echoed this, stating:

“Green Hydrogen offers opportunities beyond just clean molecule production, it holds the potential to anchor new industries in emerging markets globally” (Mbumba, Keynote address by his excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba President of the Republic of Namibia at the World Hydrogen Summit, 2024a)

Lastly, a final example supporting the argument that Namibia’s discourse prioritizes economic interests over genuine climate action comes from Namibian Minister of Mines and Energy, Tom Alweendo, who explained:

“[...] we need to clearly understand that when we came up with the HPP that talked about green hydrogen, it was a deliberate strategy to see, how do we get better ways to grow our economy?” he added that *“this [green hydrogen] is something very real that can actually recalibrate our economy and grow much faster than what we might have achieved in the past.”* (Alweendo, 2024).

6.1.1. Conclusion

Namibia's green hydrogen strategy, framed within the existing economic framework, reflects an uncritical acceptance of the neoliberal model—a system deeply implicated in driving the climate crisis. Here, the 'neoliberal growth model' transforms into a 'neoliberal green growth model' using the very economic system that contributed to climate issues as the basis for addressing them. This aligns with ecological imperialism literature, particularly as Frame (2022) explains how global capital drives the exploitation of natural resources, leading to significant ecological repercussions. Global South countries are integrated into this system through development policies, which have impacted these nations in various complex ways (Frame, 2022). This exemplifies coloniality of power, where Namibia's integration into the global economy aligns with historical patterns of exploitation rather than fostering equitable, sustainable progress.

Coloniality of knowledge is evident in the reliance on the current economic system as the solution to climate change. As Hickel (2021) argues, the dominant notion of making growth 'green' does not have any ground. He advocates for 'degrowth' which focuses on reducing energy and resource use while restructuring economies to address inequality. However, the Namibian green hydrogen strategy reflects a contrasting logic, rooted in the neoliberal framework, which perpetuates structural imbalances. Hickel et al. (2022) emphasize these imbalances noting that *“that labour and resources in the South remain cheap and accessible to international capital, while Northern exports enjoy comparatively higher prices.”*

This dynamic extends into the coloniality of being, explored further in the next section, where Namibia implicitly positions itself as a resource supplier for the Global North. This framing aligns with the systemic *“colonial imaginations of the Global South as energy resource provider”* (Hickel, 2024). Such positioning reflects the deeply rooted reality of an economic system driven by growth, perpetuating Namibia's role as a resource-exporting nation. This role is reinforced by the dominant narrative of development and industrialization as pathways to progress.

Namibia is not only impacted by this system, the government's framing actively reinforces it. By presenting hydrogen as a low-carbon solution within the existing economic framework, this approach upholds the three pillars of ecological imperialism: neoliberal international trade, international investment, and international finance. Evidence of this framing is found in the following chapter, 'Expensive Green Hydrogen for Export'. In this next chapter, the

discourse presents hydrogen as a costly resource that requires substantial financing and investment, with the ultimate goal of exporting it to other countries.

6.2. Expensive Green Hydrogen for Export

As we have seen in the previous section, the discourse surrounding Namibia's energy transition through green hydrogen reveals its foundation in economic motivations, fitting squarely within a neoliberal framework. The Namibian government acknowledges the significant costs of establishing a green hydrogen economy, emphasizing investment and finance as essential for fostering green industrialization, as seen in its efforts to attract private capital and foreign direct investment (FDI). These findings resonate with the pillars of ecological imperialism: neoliberal international trade, international investment, and international finance. This section will examine all three pillars within the discourse of the Namibian government on their green hydrogen transition.

Central to the narrative is the recognition of the significant financial burden of Namibia's hydrogen transition:

“Recognizing that the cost of capital is a key determinant of hydrogen and derivatives production costs, Namibia is setting up a facility to mobilize concessionary climate finance to de-risk investments and lower the cost of capital for hydrogen projects.” (n.d.b., p. 7)

“Developing Namibia's green hydrogen industry will require an estimated US\$190 billion of investment to 2040.” (n.d.b., p. 43)

Nevertheless, the cost of this transition is not framed as a burden but rather as an opportunity: *“there is someone willing to pay for an opportunity within our country Namibia, they know they will get a return on their investment.”* (Mnyupe, Namibia's Green Hydrogen - With James Mnyupe and Theopolina Kapani, 2024). Consequently, the overall tone of the discourse remains optimistic. This optimism is echoed throughout the data, with terminology in the context of investment and finance focused on growth and progress. Phrases such as *“build the nation”* (n.d.b., p. 43), ‘scale up’, ‘transformative’ and ‘accelerate’ emphasize this forward-looking narrative. The language is carefully chosen to ‘attract’ and ‘retain’ potential investors, underscoring the idea that profitability is the primary goal. The tone also serves a strategic purpose: avoiding negative or cautious language that might deter large corporations or financiers.

The strategy places significant emphasis on the role of private capital, with FDI highlighted as a critical driver of economic growth. The OECD defines FDI as *“a category of cross-border*

investment in which an investor resident in one economy establishes a lasting interest in and a significant degree of influence over an enterprise resident in another economy.” (OECD, 2024). Namibia’s government regards green industrialization as a way to attract FDI, noting its historical role in driving economic growth: *“Namibia’s capacity to attract and retain significant levels of FDI was at the core of the growth acceleration registered between 2000 and 2015.”* (n.d.a., p. 35). The government envisions renewable energy projects as catalysts for further FDI: *“Namibia’s potential to produce products that leverage its comparative advantage in renewable energies will attract FDI into new and nascent sectors.”* (n.d.b., p. 36).

The Namibian government does emphasize the role of both public and private capital in driving investment for its hydrogen transition: *“[...] we run a mixed economic system whereby we promote private capital but we equally also encourage or do intervene as a government especially where private sector is not always the solution [...]”* (Alweendo, 2021). This is visible within the key financing strategy, namely, the “blended finance approach,” implemented through the infrastructure fund SDG Namibia One. *“This fund aims to attract catalytic climate financing for the three main phases of project delivery: development, construction and operation.”* (n.d.b., p. 17). Its stated goal is *“to raise fit-for-purpose capital to build the nation robustly and sustainably”* (n.d.b., p. 43)

Blended finance, as defined by the OECD, is *“an innovative approach to financing sustainable development that aims to attract commercial capital towards projects that benefit society while also providing financial returns to investors.”* (OECD, 2021). Additionally, it is defined as *“the strategic use of development finance for the mobilisation of additional finance towards sustainable development in developing countries”* (OECD, 2018). Similarly, another source named Climate Fund Managers, who oversee SDG Namibia One, describe blended finance as *“the strategic use of public capital to remove or reduce investment risk, enabling private capital to participate at a risk return profile that meets their requirements.”* (Climate Fund Managers, 2024).

The concept of derisking is explicitly mentioned four times in the strategy. A key example from the data states: *“Namibia is setting up a facility to mobilize concessionary climate finance to de-risk investments and lower the cost of capital for hydrogen projects.”* (n.d.b., p. 7). Derisking is facilitated through blended finance, and the Namibian government has already adjusted its institutional frameworks to align with this vision (Haag, Tunn, Kalt, Müller, & Simon, 2024). This echoes what Gabor and Sylla (2023) have illustrated in their

article, as discussed in the literature review. From the way derisking is framed in the strategy, it is evident that its primary purpose is to reduce the cost of capital, thereby making Namibia as a country more attractive to private investors.

Within the discourse it is clear that greater emphasis is placed on the private sector's role in developing the green hydrogen industry. This is evident in statements such as: *“The development of appropriate incentives that attract an array of investment capital which supports a robust and diverse growth trajectory is a critical component of a private sector-led economic growth programme.”* (n.d.a., p. 37). Further illustrations are, for instance, the first activity under Goal 3 in the HPPII document is to *“Develop an implementation plan to attract private sector investment into the Green and Blue Economy”*. Similarly, the document ‘A Blueprint for Namibia’s Green Industrialisation’ identifies the dominance of state-owned enterprises as a barrier to economic growth, stating that they have *“stifled private opportunities”* (Republic of Namibia, 2024, p. 7). The emphasis on encouraging private sector involvement is further highlighted by the directive to *“foster private sector-led development”* in the strategy (n.d.b., p. 40). Financing from private sector actors is highlighted as critical, with strategies aiming to *“form strategic partnerships with key importers such as Japan and anchor partners from the private sector to support infrastructure financing and development”* (n.d.b., p. 42).

The emphasis on global financial capital and foreign direct investment (FDI) aligns with the Namibian government's commitment to building international alliances with both public and private actors. As stated in the strategy, *“Through strategic diplomacy, Namibia forges relationships with international partners dedicated to building the hydrogen economy”* (n.d.b., p. 41). While ‘local’ actors are acknowledged in the narrative, the primary focus appears to be on global partners.

The discourse frequently highlights partnerships with Global North countries, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, and private sector actors from Japan. During the visit of Belgium's king to Namibia, Minister Tom Alweendo underscored the importance of such partnerships: *“you need to have, number one, partners that can bring FDI”* (Alweendo, 2024). Although public and private actors from the African continent are mentioned, their presence in the discourse is relatively minimal compared to Global North participants. This disparity is particularly noteworthy, given that Namibia itself is an African nation.

The question remains: who benefits from this ‘expensive’ green hydrogen industry? From the data we can see that there is a recognition that it could benefit Namibians and change their energy poverty, less than 50% of the Namibians today have access to electricity (n.d.a., p. 58). A development goal within HPPI is ‘Secured and cost-effective Energy Supply’ is for Namibians to have a more secured energy supply (n.d.a., p. 58). Green hydrogen for domestic use is mentioned but not that frequently and mostly following with a ‘but’ or ‘and’, so not being the overall goal within their green hydrogen discourse. What is more mentioned about the domestic impact of green hydrogen is the fact that it will create a lot of jobs. This seems to say that producing green hydrogen is good for the country, but eventually you are producing so that someone else reaps the benefits. For example within the speech of James Mnyupe:

“we're looking at employing a lot of people so potentially 15 000 people during the construction stage on top of that we should be able to produce a lot of excess electricity and we want to use that excess electricity at home but also exporting it” (Mnyupe, 2023)

Export and trade, on the contrary, seems to be a central theme within the strategy and within the whole discourse of Namibian officials. For example, in the speech of James Mnyupe, he talks, more technically, about how green hydrogen can be best exported: *“so once we have this product we can then sell it to a market and there you can see we want to export it to Europe”* (Mnyupe, 2023), also *“Namibia is set to emerge as a major global hydrogen producer and an early entrant in the hydrogen export market.”* (n.d.b., p. 15). For example, the executive summary of the strategy does not once mention the production of green hydrogen for domestic use. Instead, it focusses on *“[...] Namibia is poised to help fill the anticipated global hydrogen demand-supply gap [...]”* (n.d.b., p. 7), *“[...] Namibia is in the perfect position to contribute to the global transition [...]”* (n.d.b., p. 7). The chosen words ‘poised’ and ‘the perfect position’ can be a rhetorical strategy to naturalize the choice to produce green hydrogen, making it appear logical, necessary, or beyond question. By doing so, such language subtly discourages alternative perspectives or resistance, reinforcing the inevitability of the proposed direction.

And in order for Namibia to find selling markets, partnerships need to be made *“Namibia is looking to develop supplier relationships with Europe, Japan, South Korea, and China and is very open to discussing opportunities with other regions.”*, *“Namibia is well placed to serve markets in Europe, China, Japan, and South Korea, and other parts of the world”* (n.d.b., p. 7). The strategy also notes, *“Many countries, particularly in Europe, will not be able to meet their demand fully and/or cost-effectively through domestic production. To secure sufficient*

supply at low cost they will have to form energy partnerships with countries that have abundant renewable energy resources. [...] Even countries with strong ambitions to boost their domestic production, such as China and India, may need to rely on imports” (n.d.b., p. 13). The President of Namibia is making sure that the relations are good between nations all around the world: *“My missions to the United States, Germany and Spain underscore the basic truth that development cannot be effective without stronger multilateral and bilateral partnerships. Our country cannot develop if we don’t nurture partnerships by responding to opportunities in the external environment.”* (Mbumba, 2024c).

And Although the Namibian government stresses that they will partner with countries around the world (Mnyupe, 2024), it is still clear that these countries are mostly based within the Global North. Europe, in particular, is seen as a major recipient of Namibia's green hydrogen and its derivatives. This is underscored by Namibia's recent signing of Memoranda of Understanding with several European Union countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, as well as with the EU itself.

6.1.2. Conclusion

Namibia’s green hydrogen strategy reflects the broader dynamics of the global capitalist economy, inherently tied to the coloniality of power. International investment and trade, central to this strategy, are shaped by existing value chains that perpetuate inequality. As a result, the countries and actors who have historically benefited from these systems—primarily from the Global North—continue to dominate within green value chains. Civil society has raised concerns about this trend, warning that *“hydrogen pursuit being driven by the Global North countries’ decarbonisation agendas will worsen injustice and poverty in the Global South’s developing countries, especially in Africa”* (Chiderov, 2022).

This critique aligns with Gabor and Sylla’s (2023) argument that *“green developmentalism with a de-risking arm must be accompanied by a new economic and financial order we call ‘Green Bandung Woods.’”* Such a framework would prioritize the economic and political concerns of the Global South, addressing the unequal ecological exchanges that have historically characterized global development. Without this reimagined order, Namibia risks being trapped in the same exploitative patterns of ‘carbon capitalism’ where decisions about green hydrogen are made primarily by foreign investors from the Global North, sidelining the Namibian government and population.

Partnerships with Global North countries, including Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, and private sector actors from Japan dominate the strategy, with limited attention to African partnerships. This disparity is notable given Namibia's position within Africa and reinforces the critique that the Global North continues to reap the majority of benefits from green hydrogen development. Civil society actors warn that this emphasis on export markets risks failing to "*satisfy local renewable energy and hydrogen demand*" (Chiderov, 2022). Just like Stephen G. Bunker (1985) argued about the Brazilian Amazon rainforest this warning can also be applied on the Namibian Hydrogen transition: "*when natural resources are extracted from one regional ecosystem to be transformed and consumed in another, the resource-exporting region loses values that occur in its physical environment; these losses eventually decelerate the extractive region's economy*".

Namibia's reliance on international investors and markets positions it as a supplier within global value chains, leaving local communities with minimal gains. Scholars like Gabor and Sylla (2023) stress that "*Without the developmental state in strategic control over the green hydrogen chain, the green hydrogen revolution threatens to trap global South countries into the patterns of unequal ecological exchange.*" This dynamic is compounded by the dominance of foreign capital in the state–capital relationship, as Namibia adjusts its policies to attract investment rather than assert control over its resources.

Namibia's green hydrogen strategy reflects coloniality of knowledge through its reliance on neoliberal economic paradigms and Western-centric development models. The discourse frames green hydrogen development as dependent on international investment, finance, and export-driven growth, reinforcing the notion that progress can only be achieved by adhering to Global North-defined standards of development. Alternative knowledge systems, such as local and indigenous understandings of sustainability and resource management, are largely absent from the conversation. Instead of exploring development pathways that prioritize local energy needs and community well-being, the strategy upholds Western ideals of industrialization and economic growth. This marginalization of non-Western epistemologies and the privileging of Eurocentric frameworks serve to legitimize Namibia's role as a resource supplier for the Global North, thus maintaining historical patterns of cognitive and economic dependence.

Coloniality of being is evident in how Namibia's green hydrogen discourse constructs the nation's identity primarily as a resource provider for foreign markets, particularly those in Europe. The emphasis on exporting green hydrogen to meet the energy needs of the Global

North reinforces a hierarchical relationship where Namibia's role is defined by its ability to serve external interests rather than fulfill domestic needs. The strategy highlights partnerships with Global North countries while giving minimal attention to African collaborations, reflecting a sense of inferiority and subordination within global energy systems. Furthermore, while the potential for job creation and local benefits is mentioned, these aspects remain secondary to the overarching goal of meeting foreign demand. This framing diminishes the intrinsic value of Namibian communities and their right to self-determination, perpetuating a colonial dynamic where the well-being of the population is compromised for the benefit of international stakeholders.

In light of these dynamics, Namibia's green hydrogen strategy has potential but risks replicating the inequalities embedded in the global capitalist economy. To ensure equitable development, it is essential to adopt a new framework, such as the 'Green Bandung Woods', that centres the concerns of the Global South and challenges existing power structures (Gabor & Sylla, 2023). Only through such a shift can Namibia avoid reinforcing historical patterns of dependency and inequality, making its green transition genuinely transformative.

6.3. (Green) development will end with (green) industrialisation

Namibia's green hydrogen strategy is deeply tied to the idea that green development will culminate in green industrialization, which is framed as the ultimate pathway to achieving socio-economic transformation. This connection is articulated in the introduction to the strategy by late President Hage G. Geingob, who referred to "*The genesis of Namibia's ambition to become an industrialised nation [...]*" (n.d.b., p. 6). He further emphasized that the ultimate objective of this growth is for Namibia to become an "*industrialized nation*" to "*improve the quality of life of our people to the level of their counterparts in the developed world by the year 2030*" (n.d.b., p. 6). Current President Nangolo Mbumba builds on this vision, describing green hydrogen as a tool to "*[...] anchor new industries in emerging markets across the globe.*" (Mbumba, 2024a). This vision presents green industrialization as a linear pathway to achieve prosperity.

Prosperity is primarily framed as the socio-economic benefits "*for each and every Namibian*" (Mbumba, 2024c). Green hydrogen is portrayed as a transformative force capable of creating significant employment opportunities, with estimates predicting "*600,000 jobs by 2040*" (n.d.b., p. 7). The strategy outlines additional benefits, "*Local content manufacturing, e.g., in renewable energy components and sustainable biomass harvesting, will further enhance*

economic development. The Government will use the additional income to advance its socio-economic goals.” (n.d.b., p. 7). This narrative positions green industrialization as the solution to Namibia’s socio-economic challenges, tying progress directly to economic growth and technological advancement.

The rhetoric of green industrialization draws heavily on modernization theory, which assumes a linear path of development that mirrors the experiences of Global North countries. The Namibian government explicitly aligns itself with this narrative, suggesting that the country’s current socio-economic status can be elevated by adopting similar industrial and economic models. This is evident in the strategy’s repeated references to aligning Namibia with *“developed economies”* (n.d.b., p. 42), *“emerging markets”* (Mbumba, 2024a) and its ambition to achieve prosperity comparable to *“counterparts in the developed world”* (n.d.b., p. 6).

Three central observations emerge from the discourse surrounding green industrialization. First, Namibia is positioned as being at the beginning of a modernization journey that developed nations have already completed. The late president’s vision situates Namibia as striving toward a *“dream of industrialization”* (Alweendo, 2024), reflecting a forward-looking yet aspirational narrative. Second, industrialization is framed as the essential mechanism for achieving modernization, with green hydrogen serving as the anchor for this transformation. This is reinforced in documents like the ‘Blueprint for Namibia’s Green Industrialisation’, which states that *“Green industrialisation can establish a new growth trajectory”* (Republic of Namibia, 2024). Third, the discourse ties industrialization to societal prosperity, suggesting that Namibia’s current socio-economic challenges stem from its lack of industrialization. This is evident in James Mnyupe’s observation: *“it’s not about green hydrogen, it’s about accelerating the economic transformation and the industrialization of Namibia”* (Mnyupe, 2023).

Future-oriented language further legitimizes this industrialization narrative. President Mbumba’s keynote describes the 21st century as a *“potentially transformative era”* (Mbumba, 2024a) for Namibia and the continent, emphasizing the importance of preparing for the *“future”* and its impact on *“future generations”* (Mbumba, 2024c). The vision of a prosperous, industrialized Namibia is framed as both a practical objective and an aspirational ideal. However, this framing implicitly measures Namibian society against an imagined future modeled on developed nations, assuming that this envisioned future is inherently ‘better’ than the Namibia of today.

In conclusion, the strategy constructs green industrialization as inevitable, desirable, and transformative. Words like ‘prosperity’, ‘growth trajectory’ and ‘new industries’ naturalize the link between development and industrialization, leaving little room for alternative paths. The framing of green industrialization as a ‘dream’ (Alweendo’s tekst) highlights its aspirational nature, but it also underscores the government’s reliance on narratives that replicate the development trajectories of Global North economies. By presenting green industrialization as the key to societal transformation, the discourse reinforces the idea that Namibia’s progress depends on aligning with a singular, growth-oriented model of development.

6.3.1. Conclusion

Building on the analysis of Namibia’s green hydrogen strategy as tied to green industrialization, this section examines its broader social context, focusing on the origins and implications of its narrative of progress and modernization. Previously, we observed how industrialization is framed as a linear pathway to prosperity, with green hydrogen positioned as the cornerstone of this transformation. However, decolonial scholars argue that this narrative, deeply rooted in paradigms of coloniality and neoliberalism, has already shaped Namibia’s past and self-perception while continuing to influence its future direction.

The narrative of progress and modernization central to Namibia’s hydrogen discourse perpetuates the logic of coloniality. Decolonial theory highlights how knowledge is deeply intertwined with “*imperial processes of appropriation*” (Mignolo W. D., 2011), shaping both how postcolonial nations like Namibia perceive their past and envision their future. In this context, the notion of modernity—here represented by the transition to green hydrogen as a sustainable and advanced way of living—legitimizes interventions in society “*in the name of a higher, evolutionary goal or simply the common good defined by people claiming expert knowledge*” (Ziai, 2017). For Namibia, this logic positions industrialization, particularly through green hydrogen, as both inevitable and desirable. This worldview assumes a universal trajectory of progress that mirrors the experiences of nations of the Global South while marginalizing alternative epistemologies.

This narrative of development is deeply rooted in colonialism and persisting colonial power structures (Müller, 2024), where the economies of the Global South were restructured to serve the interests of the Global North. Today, development policies and neoliberal frameworks continue this legacy by integrating countries like Namibia into global markets, not to promote

their independent growth, but to sustain exploitative systems that benefit wealthier nations. As Frame (2022), Gabor and Sylla (2023), Ziai (2020) state, 21st century development paradigms and neoliberal development policies are used to let these countries integrate within this neoliberal market. In their position paper, Altenburg and Kantel (2024) highlight concerns raised by Namibian civil society organizations regarding the HPPII, and by extension, the green hydrogen transition. They caution that, historically, extensive export projects, often justified as tools for development, have tended to deepen inequalities by primarily benefiting external markets while offering minimal gains to the producing countries. Similarly, Frame (2022) illustrates how the development paradigm is perceived by those in the Global South, stating: *“For the impoverished and marginalized in the Global South, this development is experienced as a form of contemporary ecological imperialism [...]”*.

Neoliberalism has further entrenched this framework, presenting GDP growth and industrialization as universal indicators of success. However, this model fails to address the specific needs of local populations. Instead, it perpetuates the ‘coloniality of knowledge’ where Western solutions are portrayed as superior and universal. Namibia’s hydrogen strategy embodies this dynamic, adopting a Western-centric approach to climate change and development that prioritizes industrialization and economic growth while excluding alternative knowledge systems. As a result, local epistemologies and solutions, potentially more suited to Namibia’s context, are marginalized, reinforcing systems of control and exclusion.

This logic extends to the ‘coloniality of being’ which shapes how Namibia perceives itself and its future. By focusing on the Namibian government’s discourse, it becomes evident that this narrative of progress has been internalized, influencing how Namibians view their values, aspirations, and identities. The Namibian government’s vision reflects values and goals that mirror those of Western powers, reinforcing the notion that these are universal and superior. As Mazrui (1986) argues, *“What Africa knows about itself, what different parts of Africa know about each other, have been profoundly influenced by the West.”* This internalization creates what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) calls *“politicized states of existence”* where local values and ways of being are reconfigured to align with Western standards of progress and modernity.

The implications of this coloniality of being are profound. Namibia’s strategy implicitly measures its success against a Western-defined future, where industrialization and GDP growth are seen as the ultimate goals. This framing not only reinforces systems of economic

dependency but also reshapes how Namibians see themselves and their society, prioritizing external validation over local needs and aspirations. In adopting this framework, the Namibian government reproduces the very power dynamics that have historically marginalized the Global South, limiting its ability to envision development paths that genuinely serve its people.

To move beyond these limitations, Namibia's green hydrogen strategy must challenge the coloniality embedded in its discourse. As Mignolo (2011) emphasizes, the solutions proposed by modernity are not neutral—they are rooted in systems of exploitation and exclusion. By embracing alternative knowledge systems and decolonizing its approach to development, Namibia can reimagine progress in ways that prioritize its people's needs and contexts. Breaking free from the coloniality of knowledge, power, and being is essential for Namibia to achieve a transformative vision of development that truly reflects its aspirations and realities.

6.4. Namibia as a Global Leader

Namibia's green hydrogen discourse positions the country as a rising leader in both Africa and the global arena, emphasizing its unique natural resources and strategic ambitions. Central to this narrative is the focus on Namibia's exceptional solar and wind resources, which are presented as the foundation for its leadership potential. For instance, it is stated that *"the solar resource [in Namibia] is one of the world's best and wind resource is also excellent"* (n.d.a., p. 35). This sentiment is further reinforced by claims such as, *"We have got the best wind resource, we've got the best solar resource, and therefore we as a country really we are well placed"* (Alweendo, 2021), and *"We have the highest rate of sun because we are a desert country"* (Mbumba, 2024b). These natural advantages are used to justify Namibia's ambition to lead in the green hydrogen sector and in broader climate change initiatives.

Former President Hage Geingob is portrayed as a central figure in shaping this vision, often elevated to symbolic status. He is described as *"the visionary who planted a tree under whose shade he will never sit but shall transform the lives of millions of people and turn their dreams of prosperity into reality"* (Mbumba, 2024a). This metaphor positions Geingob as the architect of a transformative future, emphasizing his role in Namibia's green hydrogen narrative.

The discourse constructs a collective identity around this ambition, frequently using inclusive language such as 'we' to emphasize the shared nature of Namibia's goals. This collective

identity extends to claims about the exceptional nature of Namibians and their government. For instance, it is stated that the transition is driven by the ambitions of “*the President, the government, and the immediate citizens [who] had an ambition to transform [Namibia into] a leading economy*” (Mnyupe, 2024). Phrases like “*Namibia is the land of the brave*” (Mnyupe, 2024) further bolster this sense of national pride. However, this inclusive ‘we’ raises questions about who is part of this collective ambition and who is left out. As we have seen above, this reference to the citizens and the economy raises questions about who is part of this ambitions and who is left out.

The government’s commitment to this vision is highlighted through language that underscores effort and dedication. Words like ‘tireless’ are repeatedly used, as in the claim that Namibia has “*worked tirelessly to position [itself] as the primary leader in the global market for Green Hydrogen*” (Mbumba, 2024a). In contrast to the language showcasing Namibia's excellence, the discourse also conveys a sense of modesty. James Mnyupe remarks, “*We’re not used to being at the forefront of innovating something new*” (Mnyupe, 2024). At the same time, the discourse acknowledges Namibia’s journey, presenting the country as still in the process of establishing itself as a leader. For example, the government states, “*Namibia is emerging as one of the leading voices in Africa in the fight against climate change*” (n.d.a., p. 35). Terms like ‘emerging’ and aspirational phrases such as ‘aims to’ and ‘will set the bar’ highlight this ongoing evolution. Namibia “*aims to become the first Zero Emission country in Africa, playing a vital role in fighting climate change*” (n.d.a., p. 35) and claims that it “*will set the bar on environmental and community-responsible development*” (n.d.b., p. 45). Despite this, the government also asserts leadership in specific areas, such as conservation, stating, “*We are a global leader in conservation and nature-based rural development*” (n.d.b., p. 45).

External validation from international actors further reinforces this leadership narrative. For instance, Germany’s recognition of Namibia’s role in global climate efforts is highlighted by President Mbumba: “*Our country is called to participate in Summits and Conferences that seek to promote solutions to dealing with a warming climate and the advancement of the Sustainable Development. It is in that vein that I was invited to the October 2024 Hamburg Sustainability Conference*” (Mbumba, 2024c). Hosting and attending global events on green hydrogen further reinforces this image, but the discourse also reveals a reliance on external expertise. Mbumba acknowledges this dependency, noting, “*For the first time, our engineers and architects and technical people [are attending] German universities to learn how to*

handle those industries. We are proud of that. We are ahead of many other countries” (Mbumba, 2024b). In his keynote President Mbumba also says: *“In this regard, the Namibian government, together with national and international stakeholders, is spearheading efforts to unlock the massive potential of Green Hydrogen”* (Mbumba, 2024a). This recognition of external support underscores Namibia’s need for global partnerships to build local capacity and maintain competitiveness.

As we could already see in the sections above, the narrative also reflects Namibia’s economic ambitions, which are closely tied to its leadership in green hydrogen. The discourse frequently emphasizes global competitiveness, positioning Namibia alongside countries like Chile, Australia, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, described as *“all those guys who are trying to do the same thing we’re doing”* (Mnyupe, 2023). This competitive framing underscores Namibia’s determination to secure a prominent position in the emerging green hydrogen market while acknowledging the necessity of collaboration. Minister Alweendo captures this balance, stating, *“You need to have partners that can make us more competitive.”* (Alweendo, 2024).

6.4.1. Conclusion

Namibia’s green hydrogen discourse presents the country as an emerging leader in sustainability and climate action, leveraging its natural resources and international partnerships to establish a prominent role in the global energy transition. However, this self-perception is deeply interwoven with the dynamics of coloniality, particularly the coloniality of being, which shapes Namibia’s identity and lived experience within this transition.

Namibia positions itself as exceptional, both in terms of its abundant renewable resources and aspirational leadership. This identity is largely shaped and reinforced by external validation, particularly from the Global North. For example, the European Commission highlights Namibia's potential, stating, *“Thanks to its abundant renewable energy potential, Namibia is becoming a front-runner in the green hydrogen space”* (European Union, 2023). As Gabor and Sylla (Gabor & Sylla, 2023) observe: *“Europe bets that in a net-zero world, wind and solar will power most activities”*. This reliance underscores how countries like Namibia are essential to fueling Europe’s energy transition, further embedding Namibia’s identity within external agendas rather than its own autonomous framework.

The coloniality of being is evident in Namibia’s self-identity, which is shaped by externally imposed paradigms of modernity and progress. The recognition Namibia receives from global actors emphasizes its natural resources rather than the agency or innovation of its people,

perpetuating what Maldonado-Torres (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) describes as “*the sub-ontological difference*”. This framework reduces Namibians to the concept of the *damné*: those whose existence is defined by systemic exclusion and dehumanization (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). While Namibia’s transition to green hydrogen is framed as a pathway to progress, it risks replicating extractive systems that marginalize its people, turning their lived realities into a “*a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death*” (Fanon, 1965) as Fanon describes.

The coloniality of knowledge further reinforces these dynamics. Namibia’s reliance on Western expertise, such as sending engineers to German universities to “*learn how to handle those industries*” (Mbumba, 2024b), reflects a continuation of this dynamic of epistemological hierarchy that privileges European knowledge over local knowledge. This reliance undermines Namibia’s ability to generate its own knowledge and solutions, instead reinforcing a global order where the Global North retains its position as the arbiter of progress and innovation.

In parallel, the coloniality of power manifests in Namibia’s emphasis on competitiveness and alignment with global capitalist frameworks. By situating itself alongside countries like Chile, Australia, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, Namibia engages in a global race defined by the rules of wealthier nations. This framing aligns Namibia with historical patterns of resource extraction, where the Global South’s assets are commodified to sustain Global North economies.

Namibia’s reliance on external partnerships to remain competitive, as highlighted by Minister Alweendo’s statement, “*You need to have partners that can make us more competitive*” (Alweendo, 2024) underscores this dependency on external actors.

These dynamics culminate in contradictions inherent in modernity. While the green hydrogen transition promises progress and sustainability, it risks sidelining the lived realities of Namibians, who may face environmental and economic costs without equitable benefits. . Civil society (Wemanya, et al., 2022) warn of the potential exclusion of Namibians from the gains of green hydrogen underscore how these modernity-driven transitions often replicate historical patterns of exploitation and inequality.

7. Conclusion and discussion

In this concluding section, I will summarize the key findings and provide final reflections. I will also address the limitations of this research and suggest potential directions for future exploration. As discussed, this study contributes to existing knowledge by offering an

alternative perspective, rather than claiming to reveal an ‘objective truth’ (Mignolo W. D., 2011), something that this paper sees as an impossible task. Therefore, drawing conclusions in this context is approached with careful consideration, as the goal is to enrich epistemological understandings rather than provide definitive answers.

This master's thesis investigates the primary research question: *Which ideas and concepts perpetuate coloniality within the Namibian government's green hydrogen discourse?* To address this, the study explores three sub-questions: *Which ideas expose the coloniality of power, particularly ecological imperialism? Which ideas expose the coloniality of knowledge? Which ideas expose the coloniality of being?*

In response to these questions, the analysis through a decolonial approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA) identifies four key ideas that sustain coloniality within the Namibian government's green hydrogen narrative: the emphasis on economic growth as the driving force behind green hydrogen development, reliance on investment and financing schemes to facilitate production for export, the pursuit of socio-economic development through industrialization, and Namibia's portrayal of itself as a global leader in this sector.

Engaging with the literature and current global developments has underscored the critical importance of researching the persistence of colonial legacies in energy transitions and in African political discourse. The findings were surprising, as Namibia, a Global South country, still exhibits all three forms of coloniality—power, knowledge, and being—within its green hydrogen discourse. This underscores a sobering realization: coloniality is a globally pervasive phenomenon, embedded in contemporary systems and narratives. Moreover, the elites who once led anti-colonial movements have taken the place of colonial administrators, yet they continue to operate within a ‘postcolonial neocolonized world’, perpetuating the same power structures under a different guise (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). This continuity is clarified by Ahmed (2021), who states: *“Post-colonial political elites in Africa eventually inherited this discourse, and with the globalization of democracy, this discourse has become even more entrenched, perhaps defining African political discourse.”*

This research demonstrates that *coloniality of power*, operating on the economic level, is deeply embedded in Namibia's green hydrogen discourse. Previous studies on green hydrogen transitions, both in general and within Namibia specifically, have highlighted the neocolonial dynamics that underpin these hydrogen economic systems (Gabor & Sylla, 2023; Haag, Tunn,

Kalt , Müller, & Simon, 2024; Browne, Bottorff, & Johnson, 2004; Müller, Energy Colonialism, 2024).

To better understand these dynamics, this study applies Frame's (2022) concept of 'ecological imperialism', which provides a lens for identifying how coloniality of power operates within the discourse. According to this framework, the presence of three central economic tendencies, neoliberal international trade, international investment, and international finance, would indicate colonial power relations at work. The analysis confirms that these tendencies are indeed existing in Namibia's green hydrogen narrative, demonstrating the enduring influence of coloniality on the country's economic strategies and partnerships. The next paragraphs will shortly reflect on these three tendencies and how they manifest within Namibia's green hydrogen discourse.

First, neoliberal international trade is evident in the strong emphasis that the discourse places on building partnerships with Global North countries such as Germany, Belgium, and Japan. While domestic use of green hydrogen is mentioned, it is overshadowed by the focus on export markets. Namibia's portrayal of itself as a key supplier to global markets underscores its positioning within international trade hierarchies shaped by colonial legacies.

Second, the reliance on international investment is clear in the way the high costs of green hydrogen development are presented as necessitating foreign direct investment (FDI). The reliance on private capital from external sources reflects Namibia's continued economic dependence on Global North actors, reinforcing patterns of exploitation and inequality.

Third, international finance is reflected in the promotion of financing schemes such as blended finance and de-risking mechanisms designed to attract foreign investors. These financial models prioritize the interests of international capital over local needs, highlighting how Namibia's green hydrogen transition is shaped by global financial systems that perpetuate colonial power dynamics.

These findings reveal that *coloniality of knowledge* also exists in the discourse. The narrative is framed within a neoliberal economic paradigm, presenting green growth and industrialization as the only viable pathways to development. This framing marginalizes alternative models such as degrowth (Hickel J. , 2021) and local knowledge systems that may offer more appropriate and sustainable solutions.

Moreover, the analysis highlights the *coloniality of being* in Namibia's green hydrogen strategy. The discourse constructs Namibia's identity through its role as a resource supplier

for the Global North. While the strategy promises socio-economic benefits for Namibians, such as job creation and infrastructure development, these promises are secondary to the overarching goal of serving international markets. This reflects the historical dehumanization and marginalization inherent in colonial systems (Maldonado-Torres, *On the coloniality of being*, 2007).

While green hydrogen is widely promoted as a promising solution to combat climate change, Namibia's green hydrogen discourse reveals deeply embedded colonial dynamics that deserve critical scrutiny. This research demonstrates that viewing Namibia's hydrogen transition not as an ahistorical, purely technological or economic endeavour, but as a political, power-laden, historical and discursive process exposes the reality behind the narrative. Rather than representing a revolutionary step forward, the transition fits within existing capitalist structures that continue to exploit natural resources and degrade the environment (Frame, 2022). This raises important questions about why countries around the world are endorsing what has been termed the "*champagne of energy transition*" (vitrnws, 2024).

From an economic perspective, achieving a just transition requires a fundamental restructuring of the global economic order. As Gabor and Sylla (2023) argue "*the green developmental state must reorder its macro economic institutions*". Furthermore, the literature on ecological imperialism highlights the need to transform the relationship between humans and nature and to challenge the global economic system that disproportionately burdens the Global South with the consequences of climate change (Frame, 2022). When viewed through the lens of coloniality, it becomes clear that these economic, political, and historical traps cannot be addressed without a decolonial shift in power, knowledge, and being. For Namibia and other African nations, freeing themselves from these dependencies requires a profound rethinking of these domains (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

In this context, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's concepts offer a pathway forward. His call to "*decolonize the mind*" (wa Thiong'o, 1986) emphasizes the importance of preserving and revitalizing non-Western epistemologies and languages, while "*moving the centre*" (wa Thiong'o, 1993) advocates for shifting away from a world based on an Euro-American centre. These approaches offer essential tools for dismantling colonial legacies and enabling African nations to shape their development paths independently, free from the constraints of global political, economic, cultural, epistemological, and social hierarchies.

7.1. Limitations of the research

I must emphasize that I am a white European student writing this research in a European capitalist country. I do not experience the realities of being directly affected by climate change, nor am I unheard because I have 'indigenous knowledge'. Furthermore, it is likely that my research will be given more recognition than work produced by scholars from the Global South or by individuals with a different ethnic background, even within the same university. This raises an important question: am I truly in a position to write about decoloniality?

According to Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2020) decoloniality is a critique and a way of thinking. It requires ongoing self-reflection, as its outcomes are diverse, open-ended, and part of a continuous process. The most significant aspect of engaging in decolonial work is to uncover coloniality within mainstream European thought, which is often presented as modern and normative. With this paper, I cannot avoid critiquing my own position. I must acknowledge that I have been educated within this modernity framework and, despite my best efforts to remain aware of it, traces of this mentality may still appear in my work. To minimize this, I personally reflect on the three critical issues within discourse identified by Macgilchrist (2014): colonial residue, Eurocentrism, and mono-epistemicism. However, significant challenges remain. For instance, it is often difficult to find academic work from authors based in the Global South. Although non-Western scholarship is becoming more accessible, it is still limited, and frequently the same authors are cited repeatedly.

Second, this research does not include interviews or included input from civil society actors. My data is limited to official documents and official events from the Namibian government. Including perspectives from Namibian government officials or civil society actors could have enriched the findings. As Foucault (1973) states: "*discourse in general and scientific discourse in particular, is so complex a reality that we not only can but should approach it at different levels and with different methods.*" Exploring the same research questions through alternative methods and approaches and with other texts would therefore be valuable.

Third, while the findings confirm the persistence of North-South power relations, it is important to recognize that these dynamics do not represent the entire reality. There are complexities beyond these binaries. As Dorn notes (2022), countries positioned between these realities complicate the narrative. For instance, nations like China, which are gaining

significant global economic influence, are often categorized as part of the Global South, but this terminology does not capture the full scope of their political and economic position.

7.2. Agenda for further research

Since green hydrogen as an alternative resource is a relatively new phenomenon, there remain many areas yet to be explored. An important area for further study is the phenomenon of Global South countries reproducing colonial discourses. Investigating why nations like Namibia continue to produce narratives entrenched with coloniality could shed light on the geopolitical factors at play. This line of inquiry could also address the broader implications of these discourses on international relations and national sovereignty. Applying the hydrogen justice framework proposed by Müller, Tunn, and Kalt (2022) would be particularly valuable in this context, as it can help identify who benefits from green hydrogen projects and who bears the costs.

Another avenue is comparative research with other Global South countries, such as Morocco, Egypt, and Kenya, to determine whether coloniality manifests similarly in their green hydrogen discourses. Identifying common patterns of economic dependence, knowledge production, and identity construction could offer a broader understanding of how colonial legacies shape energy policies across different regions. This comparative approach would highlight both shared challenges and unique national experiences.

In addition to exploring coloniality, future research could conduct empirical studies on energy transitions using the concept of energy colonialism and the analytical framework developed by Müller (2024). By applying this framework, researchers can uncover the ways in which contemporary energy policies and practices replicate colonial power dynamics across multiple levels of the energy transition process, like energy governance and energy infrastructure. This perspective offers a critical examination of how energy transitions sustain systems of exploitation and inequality.

Given that energy transitions are shaped by multiple actors, policies, and strategies (Dorn, 2022), further research could investigate the role of multinational corporations in shaping green hydrogen narratives. For instance, analysing the discourse promoted by initiatives like the 'Hydrogen Council', which includes members such as Shell, Total, Engie, and Kawasaki, could uncover their impact on governmental policies and international energy strategies.

Exploring the power struggles between governments, corporate entities, and civil society could also clarify who decides on energy resources and on what terms (Kalt & Tunn, 2022).

Additionally, research into the perspectives of civil society organizations could reveal how their discourse aligns with or diverges from government narratives. Examining the ‘bottom-up’ reactions to green hydrogen policies can provide insights into how local communities and grassroots movements respond to these transitions. This line of inquiry would offer a more holistic understanding of the societal impacts and resistance to energy policies shaped by colonial legacies.

Finally, research could focus on identifying and exploring alternative paradigms that challenge dominant, coloniality-infused narratives. Investigating concepts and frameworks that seek to dismantle colonial structures and promote transformative change (Kalt & Tunn, 2022) could offer new pathways for just and equitable energy transitions. This would involve analysing decolonial and indigenous approaches that propose models free from the constraints of global political, economic, and social hierarchies.

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