

Decolonizing Development Education and the Pursuit of Social Justice

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Abstract:

Decolonization has become a popular discourse in academia recently and there are many debates on what it could mean within various disciplines as well as more broadly across academia itself. The field of international development has seen sustained gestures towards decolonization for several years in theory and practice, but hegemonic notions of development continue to dominate. Development is a contested set of ideas and practices that are under critique in and outside of academia, yet the reproduction of colonial power structures and Eurocentric logics continues whereby the realities of the global majority are determined by few powerful institutions and a global elite. To decolonize development's material and discursive powers, scholars have argued for decolonizing development education towards one that is ideologically and epistemologically different from dominant narratives of development. I add to these conversations and posit that decolonized ideologies and epistemologies have to be accompanied by decolonized pedagogies and considerations of decolonization of institutions of higher education. I discuss the institutional and critical pedagogical dilemmas and challenges that exist, since epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical decolonizations are influenced by institutional politics of higher education that are simultaneously local and global. The paper engages with the concept of critical hope in the pursuit of social justice to explore possibilities of decolonizing development praxis and offers suggestions on possible pathways forward.

Keywords: Development, decolonization, decolonial, critical hope, social justice, praxis, pedagogy, epistemology

Título: Descolonizar la educación para el desarrollo y la búsqueda de la justicia social

Resumen

La descolonización se ha convertido recientemente en un discurso popular en la academia y hay muchos debates sobre lo que podría significar dentro de varias disciplinas, así como de manera más amplia en la academia misma. El campo del desarrollo internacional ha visto gestos sostenidos hacia la descolonización durante varios años en teoría y práctica, pero las nociones hegemónicas de desarrollo continúan dominando. El desarrollo es un conjunto disputado de ideas y prácticas que están siendo criticadas dentro y fuera de la academia, sin embargo, la reproducción de las estructuras de poder coloniales y las lógicas eurocéntricas continúa mediante la cual las realidades de la mayoría global están determinadas por pocas instituciones poderosas y una élite global. Para descolonizar los poderes discursivos y materiales del desarrollo, los académicos han abogado por descolonizar la educación para el desarrollo hacia una que sea ideológica y epistemológicamente diferente de las narrativas dominantes del desarrollo. Agregó a estas conversaciones y postulo que las ideologías y epistemologías descolonizadas deben ir acompañadas de pedagogías descolonizadas y consideraciones de descolonización de instituciones de educación superior. Discuto los dilemas y desafíos

pedagógicos institucionales y críticos que existen, ya que las descolonizaciones epistemológicas, metodológicas y pedagógicas están influenciadas por políticas institucionales de educación superior que son simultáneamente locales y globales. El documento aborda el concepto de esperanza crítica en la búsqueda de la justicia social para explorar las posibilidades de descolonizar la práctica del desarrollo y ofrece sugerencias sobre posibles caminos a seguir.

Palabras clave: Desarrollo, descolonización, descolonial, esperanza crítica, justicia social, praxis, pedagogía, epistemología.

“We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water” (Freire 1994: 8)

Introduction:

Calls for decolonizing academia have become forceful in recent years. Student-led protests around racist colonial legacies (‘Rhodes Must Fall’), lack of curricular inclusivity (‘Why Is My Curriculum White’), and higher education funding politics (‘Fees Must Fall’) have made headline news and inspired conversations and debates around decolonization across universities internationally. Decolonizing universities, disciplines, curriculum, and course syllabi have been discussed vigorously in various platforms and in publications (e.g. Noxolo 2017; Radcliffe 2017; Sabarnatam 2017; Bhabra et al. 2018; Chantiluke et al. 2018; Rutazibwa 2018; Cupples and Grosfoguel 2019). The field of international development has seen sustained gestures towards decolonization for several years in theory and practice, but there has been a recent surge of interest in decolonizing development education. This is because, despite various contestations, critiques, and transformations of the meanings of international development over time and space, a hegemonic notion of development continues: a system of domination by Eurocentric thinking and practices in the erstwhile-colonies in Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Latin America that are now independent nation-states in need of development because they are considered ‘lacking’ or ‘less-than’. Development occurs through powerful global institutions, such as the World Bank, International Monetary

Fund (IMF), United Nations, and related organizations, both supranational and bilateral, that are largely controlled by former colonizers and current imperial states. These influential institutions continue to determine the fate of billions in the developing world (or the global South). Agendas, funding politics, and policies of development continue to shape the majority world’s societies and environments despite trenchant critiques over several decades in the ways development is carried out.

In light of this, the continuing colonial legacies of development are important to address. This is because many colonial logics are still at the heart of the development project. Development is thus often critiqued as a form of neocolonialism in countries where the colonizer has formally left in name only. The historical theft and exploitation that built the West at the expense of the rest are frequently overlooked or ignored in dominant development thinking and practices, so decolonizing development requires recognizing, understanding, and addressing these historical silences and violences. Scholars have called development a creative adjustment of coloniality, whereby the colonialist logics and imperatives still remain socially, politically, economically, and ecologically. Extractions of resources, restructuring of nation-states and economies, consolidations of power in the hands of a few global elites, and the practices of surveillance, conformities, and alienations continue. Such processes happen despite feel-good discourses such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Tropes of inclusion, diversity, participation, democracy, sustainability, and equality permeate development discourses, yet hegemonic power structures continue to reproduce inequalities and injustices across scales and locations.

If development institutions and practices are maintaining coloniality, then development education is complicit, as the largest number of development practitioners are trained in interdisciplinary international development studies programs and affiliated disciplines, such as development geography, development sociology, and development economics (the latter being the foremost influencer of international development policies). Thus, decolonizing development

in policy and practice necessitates decolonization of development education to be a critical initial step, as the students of today will become the development practitioners, policy-makers, and implementors of tomorrow (Rutazibwa 2018). This brings into question how development education prepares students for careers in international development: since critique is necessary but insufficient, enacting an anti-colonial decolonizing of development via critical pedagogy becomes necessary (Sabarnatam 2017). Asymmetries in knowledge production and the structural inequalities that exist mean that the very understanding of and teaching about development needs to be re-envisioned and new grammars, vocabulary, tools, and worldviews need to be fostered. Decolonial, anti-racist, Indigenous, and Southern scholars are incorporating questions around social justice in their work to overcome entrenched epistemic biases in higher education in general and development studies in particular (Baud et al. 2019; Kothari et al. 2019). I add to such scholarly literature and posit that decolonized epistemologies and methodologies have to be accompanied by decolonized pedagogies and considerations of decolonization of institutions of higher education. I discuss the institutional and pedagogical dilemmas and challenges that exist, since the dialectics between ontology, epistemology, and pedagogy are constrained by institutional politics of higher education that are influenced by both local contexts and global power assemblages.

By tracing the critical genealogies of thought in development, it becomes possible to see continuities, ruptures, and resistances to the hegemonic epistemologies of development. In these spaces lie potentialities of other ways of thinking of development and enacting it to disrupt development's ongoing material and discursive powers. The development literature is replete with different theorizations, critiques, deconstructions, and resistances to dominant tropes of development, so I will refrain from rehashing what is already well-debated in existing scholarship. My focus instead is drawing on key critiques from the various strands of scholarship to think through what decolonizing development education could mean by engaging with the concept of critical hope in the pursuit of social justice praxis. Since students of development are often frustrated

with aligning the various theories and critiques they learn with decolonial praxis, the paper discusses ways it may be possible to do so. The paper is structured as follows: I first discuss decolonizing development ideologies and then development education vis-à-vis epistemologies and methodologies. Next I focus on decolonizing development pedagogies by engaging critical pedagogies of hope and global social justice. I situate these within broader contexts of decolonizing institutions of higher education and academia. I conclude with some thoughts on how decolonization of development education may be pursued individually, collectively, and institutionally for emancipatory changes and decolonial futures.

Decolonizing Development Ideologies:

Critical scholars of development have deconstructed development ideologies to expose the problems in framings, narratives, and explanations. Decolonial, postcolonial, and anticolonial scholars writ-large have all pointed to the problems of the imagery and politics of Eurocentric development (e.g. Frank 1966; Rodney 1972; Sachs 1992; Ferguson 1994; Crush 1995; Escobar 1995; Apffel Marglin and Marglin 1996; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Kothari 2006; Chakrabarty 2007; Kapoor 2015).¹ Some have argued that development shares the framing problems of Orientalism (Said 1979) and that racialized hierarchies are ever-present in development thinking and practice. Development has also been called a depoliticizing machine (Ferguson 1994) as well as one of unmaking (Escobar 1995). The narratives, imagery, power structures, and discourses of development are often colonial in their underlying ideologies and practices. The colonial matrix of power (Quijano 2000) of the past is continued as modernity/coloniality now (Mignolo 2007), which regenerates colonial relations of domination, oppression, and exploitation even though formal colonization may have ended. The framings that drive development policies and projects can influence the outcomes and trajectories of entire peoples and places. Dominant discourses do not always confront how framing and representation

1 Decolonial and post-colonial studies, while having different genealogies and geopolitics, both critique the material and epistemological legacies of colonialism that continue (Ramarathnam and Tambe 2017).

impact the lived experiences of Othered peoples and subaltern lives. This disjuncture has led to numerous development failures, emergence of various resistance struggles, and outright rejection of development interventions. As such, post-development and anti-development scholarship have had enduring appeal due to their critiques of hegemonic development's Eurocentric biases, the continuation of modernity and coloniality, representational crises, scientific racism, active underdevelopment, and erasures of local systems and knowledges.

Decolonizing involves engaging with a variety of bodies of critical scholarship to learn from but also includes action. In other words, decolonization cannot be only a discourse or a metaphor, but involve an affirmative practice (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012; Tuck and Yang 2012). It is important to recognize that decolonizing is not a state of being or a fixed point of arrival, but one of persistent struggle by various peoples and institutions. Decolonizing is a process and it is relational, it requires solidarity networks to be built, as well as un/re-learning of accepted 'truths' (Walsh and Mignolo 2018). In addition to political attention to representation and difference, there must be critical attention to persistent critique (Asher and Wainwright 2018). Decolonizing development means disrupting the deeply-rooted hierarchies, asymmetric power structures, the universalization of Western knowledge, the privileging of whiteness, and the taken-for-granted Othering of the majority world. The challenges are to what extent those with power are willing to change and in what ways, if at all. Those in power need to let go of power and learn to embrace radical solidarity with Others, whereby Others' autonomy is respected, and power asymmetries are addressed. Decolonizing is impossible if it does not address issues of global capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy, racism, and other forms of structural violence. Ultimately, decolonizing is about liberation and new ways of valuing, not privileging Eurocentric values as universal or superior (Fanon 1963; Tuhiwai Smith 1999; Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019).

Yet dominant discourses of development do precisely this. There is incessant prioritization of economic growth of nation-states so they may 'catch up' with advanced industrialized countries that

benefited from colonialism and imperialism. Given planetary ecological destruction and climate change, with billions of people struggling to survive, valorizing 'growth' (a Eurocentric term) on a finite planet does not really make sense anymore. This means that far more work is needed on how development is conceptualized, practiced, and measured. Given that much of development to date has promoted market logics, capitalism, and exploitative relations of power, an anti-colonial and anti-imperial decolonizing approach would examine costs and benefits in very different ways. The consequences of global processes need greater systematic review and critical analysis for meaningful change. Decolonizing the stereotypes and hegemonic discourses and practices in development requires confronting ongoing racializations, silencing, and discriminations across scales and locations. By recognizing the reproductions of the framings of Othered lives and ecologies in development thinking, it becomes possible to envision how the binaries of Self/Other (Said 1979) that permeate development may be deconstructed and changed. Similarly, normalization that knowledge comes from the 'expert' and the 'West' needs to be challenged.

Decolonizing Development Education - Epistemologies and Methodologies:

Decolonizing development education has to be pursued through academia, curriculum, research methods, teaching styles, and recruitment of educators. This has to be contextualized and de-essentialized away from neoliberal hegemonic practices of higher education and issues need to be heeded in context. Efforts to decolonize international development education and training are often initiated with steps to decolonize syllabi and reading lists in courses, workshops, and symposia. Much of this involves teaching and citing scholars from the global South and Indigenous scholars, elevating marginalized voices, and valuing different ontologies and epistemologies. Some have called for prioritizing epistemologies of the global South in this (Santos 2014; Escobar 2016). Given increasing instrumentalization of knowledge, the impacts of neoliberalization of universities, and the legacies of imperialistic relations that reproduce inequities, it becomes necessary to articulate a

politics that confronts these directly. A politics of radical change has to be foregrounded (Esson et al. 2017). Tokenistic moves to diversify curricula do not address deeply ingrained imperialistic and racialized relations and logics of power not just among people but also within pedagogy. Decolonizing development education opens up existing knowledge to transformations towards radically more inclusive forms of knowledge production and repertoires in theory, methodology, and praxis. Scholars of various strands of development scholarship and other bodies of critical scholarship, especially anti-colonial scholarship, have provided us the foundations from which to do this (e.g. Labouchère 1899; Said 1979; Fanon 1952, 1963; Freire 1970; Césaire 1972; Nandy 1983; Spivak 1988; Blaut 1993; Escobar 1995; Hochschild 1998).

Decolonizing development education first and foremost means acknowledging the ongoing legacies and continuities of colonialism and imperialism, and then what has been termed “a radical delinking” from the continuities of inequalities and inequities that are being repeated through neoliberalism (Noxolo 2017: 342). Such demands arise from both resistance movements born out of oppression and injustices as well as student movements calling to decolonize academic institutions. Engaging with Indigenous and Southern epistemologies and theories that have not been violently erased through Eurocentrism hold possibilities of decolonizing (Santos 2007; Connell 2014). Pluralizing voices and ethical practices of engagement are fundamental. Listening to marginalized Others and centering voices of the global South involve creating space and including, in rigorous and not tokenistic ways, the voices of Indigenous peoples, peoples of color, and those who are often not heard or heeded. This can lead to profound changes in reconfiguring power constellations (Asher 2013; Bhabra 2014). However, there cannot be façades of inclusion without any change to dominant and unequal power structures or knowledge bases, and this is often the crux of the matter (Raghuram and Madge 2006; Noxolo 2017). Tokenistic recruitment of Others who justify or help support Eurocentric values and perpetuate colonial mindsets does not help decolonize development education. Rather, it is part of the legacies of fetishization and tokenization of

black and brown bodies to uphold hegemony (Fanon 1963; Césaire 1972; Nandy 1983).

Decolonizing development education engages with pathways of disentanglement from hegemonic ideologies and representations, from colonialist logics and practices, and decentering of Eurocentric knowledges and ways of being. The explicitness to questioning power and privileges is perhaps why there is often resistance to or subversion of decolonizing endeavors. By asking probing questions, such as who created this knowledge, what assumptions does it rely on, what does deconstructing its façade reveal, who is speaking for whom, and so on, it becomes possible to fight epistemicide, ecocide, and genocide (Santos 2007, Maldonado-Torres 2016). Honest confrontations of violent pasts and continued legacies require a recognition that decolonizing is a political act. It is not neutral. What is required is a paradigm shift that recognizes the radical possibilities of pluralities and diversities, as well as actions, while knowing one’s own confines and internalizations (Langdon 2013).

At the same time, the location of decolonizing a curriculum also matters, as context influences the particularities of debates and realities. For instance, decolonizing development studies in Cape Town, South Africa will differ from say, Cambridge or Oxford, England. In the former, students waged campaigns called ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ and ‘Fees Must Fall’, undertaken by a politically-conscious student body confronting South Africa’s own racist and colonial past, the material realities of ongoing racial discrimination and poverty in post-apartheid South Africa, and the politics of higher education financing. In Cambridge, minority students initiated and sustained a campaign called ‘Why is My Curriculum White’ to question the whiteness of what was being taught and lack of curricular inclusivity in the heart of the former Empire. Relatedly, the ‘Rhodes Must Fall Oxford’ campaign at Oxford emerged out of concerns of racial discrimination in British academia and its complicities in colonial violence. While allied in spirit, the particularities of student-led protests were locally contextual and globally connected. These campaigns inspired other student movements and solidarities have formed across institutions of higher education globally but in different ways (Chantiluke

et al. 2018). Yet all point to the need to disrupt the taken-for-grantedness of higher education in what knowledge gets to 'count', the ongoing coloniality of knowledge, various exclusions, and imperialist pedagogies (cf. Quijano 2000).

Because development curricula are largely drawn from academic research findings and publications, critical analyses of knowledge production and methodologies of research become necessary too. This is because decolonization has always been about power and the control of what knowledge counts and is disseminated are normalizing tactics of power. Decolonizing methodologies of development research and knowledge production is essential at all levels of development education and training. The positionality of the knowledge producer influences the knowledge proffered, and thus how development knowledge is produced, circulated, and consumed needs to be critically analyzed and addressed. Some scholars have argued that transnational alliances of knowledge co-production in research collaborations are spaces of possible action for students and educators involved in international research. Transdisciplinary co-production of knowledge that is grounded contextually and carried out across the North-South divide is complex, often time-consuming, and sometimes frustrating (e.g. Simon et al. 2018). But this is necessary labor to prevent the perpetuation of imperialist logics and racist ideologies that development inherited from its colonial roots and passes on in development education. Engaging with scholars and activists from the global South is often a first step to learning about the local contexts and histories, but ethical and collaborative engagement with oppressed groups and subaltern voices is essential to not tokenize, marginalize, coopt, or sideline their ideas. Engaging with and learning from Southern and Indigenous scholars is important to overcome biases of Northern scholars and the politics of academic knowledge production (see Rivera Cusicanqui 2012 for an excellent exposé on this). The positionalities and politics of the people involved in any process of decolonizing will influence the opportunities to co-create solidarities and to envision possible pathways forward, so it is important to be mindful of this and not reproduce colonialist relations of power in research and publications.

The disruptions and transformations necessary for decolonizing methods are facilitated by critical self-reflexivity and awareness of issues of power, privilege, positionality, politics, and material consequences. This requires interrogations of positionality in any research process; positionality refers to how one comes to know the world relationally and the position someone occupies in relation to other people, and it involves looking into one's own privileges, locations, histories. Such interrogations require critical self-reflection or reflexivity (Nagar and Ali 2003; Sultana 2007). Engaging deep reflection on one's location in grids of power relations and being accountable to challenging the location one speaks from becomes necessary. Reflexivity is not navel-gazing or essentializing of the self. The critical positioning of oneself within legacies of colonialism, Eurocentrism, geopolitical power relations, and various subjectivities mean that one's positionality is always being produced in relational ways. Being ethical to Othered peoples and places and to the process of decolonization necessitate continual revisiting of these power relations. Ethical field research or engagement are possible when one is not only aware but enacts responsibilities and an ethics of care that does not perpetuate coloniality and Eurocentric knowledge production practices or publications. Research is therefore never neutral, but a political project. Learning from feminist scholarship and methodologies can allow for more critically-engaged research as reflexivity and positionality are centered (Moss 2002). Greater attention is paid to the ways development has impacts across intersectionalities of gender, race, class, and other relevant contextual axes of social difference (Mohanty, 1984, 2003; McClintock 1995; Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Lugones 2010; Ahmed 2017). Careful and reflexive engagement can unearth buried epistemologies and address issues of epistemicide from colonialist and Western impositions historically and spatially. Praxis is a practice informed by critical reflection, and it is a feedback mechanism whereby action and theories are linked, so that corrections or adjustments can be made (Freire 1994). It also recognizes the limitations and challenges involved as well as improves accountability. Being flexible and reflexive allows for more impactful engagement and research praxis that are equitable and respectful of differences.

Some scholars have called for decolonizing development studies by replacing it altogether with Global Justice Studies, such that decolonizing development is conceptualized as redistribution and reparations, where equity, dignity, and justice can be advocated for and pursued (Rutazibwa 2018). Focusing on global social justice and global solidarities to fight injustices and redress inequities may be more fruitful than working within the confines of development (Rutazibwa 2018, Schöneberg 2019). Anti-colonial and decolonial scholars have reminded us that global justice is only possible with global cognitive justice (Thiong'o 1986; Santos 2007), since epistemic decolonization is necessary to practice decoloniality (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo 2007; Maldonado-Torres 2016) and to fight internal colonization (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012). Cultivating pluriverse approaches to knowledge production can disrupt hegemonic knowledge production systems (Kothari et al. 2019). All knowledge has to be contextualized and different ways of knowing and being in the world valorized to expand knowledge bases, not invisibilized in the institutionalization of Western hegemonic knowledge. Disagreement is often the underlying premise of decolonial theory as it rejects the universality of knowledge produced in the West (Tuck and Yang 2012), so programs need to teach students how to deal with contradictions, disagreements, and incommensurabilities in epistemology and ontology in contextualized ways.

As such, development education needs re-evaluation and more critical pedagogy geared towards global justice education, one that involves ecological, gender, racial, class, and economic justice. Critical social justice accepts that hierarchies and marginalization are deeply embedded in societies and works to change this collaboratively to address injustices and oppressions (Freire 1970; Sensoy and DiAngelo 2012). Such a critical pedagogical approach would involve teaching and learning from critical social theories, making local connections to global problems, locating oneself within the tapestry of global power relations, understanding the relationships and connections of ecologies and societies, engaging with historical legacies, valuing civic engagement and scholar-activist collaborations, practicing moral courage, and engaging with solidarities and collectivities (Sensoy

and DiAngelo 2012; Andreotti et al 2018). Nurturing global citizens who are critically self-reflexive, ethical, aware, and committed to building substantive solidarities and alliances is essential for planetary justice. This will require checking one's privilege; confronting hegemonic assumptions and power relations; learning to sit with contradictions and ambiguities; dealing with emotions of despair, discouragement, discomfort, and cynicism; and practicing humility and open-mindedness. Emancipatory transformations are otherwise far more difficult. I believe that critical pedagogies of hope are needed for this, which I discuss below.

Decolonizing Development Pedagogies - Critical Pedagogies of Hope and Global Social Justice Praxis:

Radical philosopher Paulo Freire (1994) posited that having stubborn hope is necessary but insufficient for continual struggle and action. Instead, critical hope enables transformation by accepting the struggle as part of the process, and dialectically the struggle relies on critical hope for transformations. Critical hope, rooted in political struggle and social justice goals, is productive and generative. Critical hope can be emancipatory. A hopeful stance engenders openness to different outcomes, yet it is not naïve in its expectations. Critical hope enables a sense of purpose and works with challenges. Thus, decolonizing development *requires* critical hope. Conscientization enables praxis and transformation and it is based on the recognition that oppressed people can be active agents of action (Freire 1970, 1994). Critical hope requires meaningful dialogue and empathic responses that are rooted in activism. The purpose of maintaining critical hope is to foster possibilities of social justice, for environmental justice, for equitable relations, and more hope-full futures. Critical hope can drive social action, rather than result in hopelessness. It enables envisioning possibilities, mobilizations, and collectivities. Teaching students to understand and practice critical hope in the face of obstacles of decolonizing requires critical pedagogy that is also transformative (hooks 2003; Giroux 2010). Since decolonizing is a political and an epistemic approach and it is not just theory but also enacting, decolonizing development

education becomes a form of activism rooted in social justice that is informed by different knowledges and realities.

Critical pedagogy scholars argue that emancipation is achieved through awakening of critical consciousness which can then lead to critique, action, and collaborations as praxis (Freire 1970, 1994; hooks 1994, 2003). This can have the potential to enhance freedoms and possibilities of liberation. Thus the politics surrounding education becomes a critical component of pedagogy. Critical pedagogy views teaching as a political act that overturns cultures of silence that oppress. Social justice pedagogy is to 'see' students intersectionally and pursue emancipatory education to empower students to act in the world. Emancipatory education involves students examining their power and positions, and questioning their values to understand their location in the world (Freire 1970). Greater self-reflexivity is taught and practiced. Critical self-reflexivity can be used to interrogate legacies of coloniality locally and globally. Critical pedagogy underscores rejecting notions of fixed problem-framing and solution-finding. Rather, emancipatory education has to be contextual, recognized to be partial, and consist of ongoing struggles.

Freire (1970) posited the need for negotiated curricula (not a regimented curricula or teaching style but a dialogical education), problem-posing education (critical thinking for the purpose of liberation through dialogue, listening, and action), critical conscientization (becoming aware of oppressive systems), humanization (to reject banking model of education) and praxis (action-reflection-action). This includes inclusive pedagogical methods, accountability of non-traditional academic backgrounds of students, and empowering students to practice agency. Knowledge is understood to be partial and situated and assumptions are interrogated (cf. Haraway 1988). Critical hope and decolonial pedagogical approaches value the exchange, collaboration, and dialogue between teacher and student, whereby social locations and intersectional identities of teachers and students are discussed. This approach addresses marginalizations of students, affirms and legitimizes different backgrounds and histories, and fosters inclusive classrooms. Feminist scholar bell hooks (1994; 2003) argues that a space of possibility is created with pedagogic praxis of hope

while teaching to transgress. Calling this engaged pedagogy, hooks argues that issues of 'white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' have to be deconstructed and embodied experiences of differences become central to notions of liberation, emancipation, and solidarity. Intersectionalities of oppression, especially gender, race, and class, are central to hooks' analyses. Hope-filled classrooms foster respect, mutuality, care, and compassion. Education becomes freedom and a collective goal. Building collectives become important, such as those that challenge Eurocentrism in development.

Critical global social justice praxis based on critical hope pedagogy is part and parcel of the process of decolonization, of delinking Eurocentric and capitalist worldviews, and promoting new ways to articulate and promote notions of democracy, equity, and futurity. These gesture to more direct engagement with issues of oppression, inequity, and subjugation in pedagogy and practice. It requires learning how to engage with constant struggle and constant critique simultaneously (Asher and Wainwright 2018; Tuck and Yang 2018). It entails addressing both the material and discursive aspects of representation and politics in curricula, among students and educators, and beyond the classroom. However, there is no singular blueprint for how to do this, as it involves co-creating creative possibilities and conscious navigations. Creative solidarities that are grounded in ethics, equity, and dignity can enable these possibilities. Thinking about pitfalls and failures should be part of this process, but desires to avoid pitfalls or failures should not lead to hopelessness or abdications. Thereby, cultivating critical hope through praxis becomes foundational to decolonization for both students and educators (Freire 1970).

There are no fixed decolonial pedagogical techniques and styles for decolonizing development pedagogy but the guiding principles of critical hope and critical pedagogies are important. There are different methods of teaching for decolonized classrooms and they can't be prescriptive (e.g. peer assessments, story-telling, going out into the local community, experiential learning, etc) and have to be configured in context. Scholars have discussed challenges and possibilities in their own decolonial critical pedagogy. For instance, Langdon (2013) discusses decolonizing pedagogies

that involves students critically engaging with both the material and discursive aspects of development themselves while decentering the educator. Spiegel et al. (2017) present attempts to implement decolonized development education in their online courses, showing the challenges and unsettling that needs to occur among students. They point to heeding inequities in admissions and language barriers in higher education. Andreotti (2016) discusses how different types of student audiences challenge different ways critical theories are taken up and mobilized in her HEADS UP framework (the acronym is derived from the main issues addressed: hegemony, ethnocentrism, ahistoricism, depoliticization, self-congratulatory and self-serving attitude, uncomplicated solutions, and paternalism). Underhill-Sem (2017) highlights the importance of teaching reflexivity, usage of local languages in teaching, and developing peer-learning techniques. Others posit that students should be taught to practice pluriverse and *buen vivir* (Kothari et al. 2019; Esteva et al. 2013). Scholars have also advocated for engagement with Indigenous epistemologies of relationality, holism, and pedagogical emphasis on place-based learning and experiential learning (Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019).

As such, decolonized pedagogies foster ethical engagement that involves cultivating relations over time, but it is also the ethical framing of questions, methodologies, and methods, and understanding one's own politics. Students and educators learn of the importance of dialogue with multiple constituents and publics simultaneously, both in text and in person, so as not to carry out the violence of misrepresentation, misappropriation, or speaking 'for' rather than speaking 'with'. Being conduits of information is perhaps more useful, but one must be careful to not claim voice on behalf of people, and thus remain critically vigilant of representation politics and damage narratives (cf. Tuck 2009). Care also has to be taken to ensure not reproducing elitist local knowledge only but include different voices, different locations, and different knowledges. There must be caution against fetishizing elite local knowledge (i.e. constructing the native informant) (cf. Spivak 1999), or the homogenized 'third world woman', or the problematic notions of 'participation', 'community', and

'empowerment' (all of which have been thoroughly discussed in critical development studies in the last two decades but repeatedly show up in development policies in apolitical ways).

Given that resistances and counter-narratives have always existed but were suppressed or ignored by dominant systems, decolonizing excavates what was silenced or suppressed. It is an act of not only un-silencing and un-erasing (Rutazibwa 2018) but also unlearning to relearn (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012). Critical dialogues and careful engagement can enable the possibilities of this happening. It is in a way a responsabilizing of those with privileges to create spaces and opportunities for amplification of erstwhile marginalized voices, whether in texts or in/out of the classroom, but without essentializing or tokenizing. The lived experiences of racialized and marginal peoples have to be centered, rather than the centering of whiteness or colonial logics. This requires awareness of the colonial mindset, whether it is among outsiders or insiders. At the same time, universalizing any local knowledge is also problematic, as there is never one truth but rather partial truths and situated knowledges. Specificities and historicities are important to heed, making decolonizing in one place look different from that of another, as context matters.

Radical and substantive solidarity and ethical engagement have become important ways to enact anti-colonial decolonizing of development education for global social justice praxis. Mutuality, shared responsibility, care, and ethics become centralizing logics, rather than civilizing, saving, or enforcing. Radical alternatives have to be envisioned and enacted through substantive cross-border solidarities (cf. Mohanty 2003). Global justice is not easy work, but it is necessary to foster equitable futures. Decolonizing development means accepting complexity and contradictions. This may seem like upturning the proverbial apple cart, but nuance requires flexibility in analysis and process, and flexibility enables better outcomes. Rigor is not only about fixity, but about being truthful to the process of knowledge co-production and co-creations. Ethical actions and imaginations require learning to see differently, do differently, and to enact deep listening. It requires a recognition of colonial logics that are continuing in various forms, and to

recognize possible transformations that are more socially and ecologically just and inclusive. Room must exist for surprise and creativity in this process. Such a mindset enables different imaginations to coexist, and the possibility of seeing otherwise. Critical hope sustains such processes of transformation where a continual feedback loop ensures not creating new power hierarchies and oppressions.

Through all this, it has to be understood that alliances and solidarities are influenced by our own identities, abilities, ethics, and the issues we focus on or are tasked with (Simon and Carr 2014; Sultana 2014; Schöneberg 2019). We shouldn't assume that anything we desire to do will be possible, productive or even have transformative outcomes. Such hubris should be replaced with a clear understanding of the limitations and challenges of any endeavor, as well as a good dose of humility and empathy (Chatterton et al. 2010). As noted earlier, carefully unpacking the what, why, for whom, by whom, and how of any decolonizing endeavor is necessary, and who the 'we' is that is doing this needs to be questioned, as there are risks of universalizing of specific and situated knowledges. Being able to say 'we' is often an act of privilege itself and it needs to be problematized. This is why praxis is important. Praxis is central to the pursuit of global social justice and decolonizing development. As Freire (1970) argued, praxis is theory-action-reflection, thereby it involves continual learning and engagement.

Ultimately decolonization is about democratization, in that more equitable relationships are made possible and uneven power relations are understood and addressed. This way, various histories, stories, lived experiences, and voices are included in what 'counts' in reconstructing development knowledge. Epistemic diversities or ontological differences are brought to the forefront, not ignored or sidelined. Legacies of colonialism, racial capitalism, and imperialism are discussed and confronted, and the normalization of the developing world as inherently lacking that needs fixing is interrogated. Both colonial amnesia and colonial/empire nostalgia are evacuated, and an anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-imperial ethos internalized.

Because decolonization is a continual and collective process that may be frustrating, it requires practicing critical hope, where hope is fundamentally about being hope-full, a way of being that maintains hope in the face of challenges, frustrations, and crises. It is not a vacuous optimism, but a profound ability to bring forth and hold on to hope through processes and challenges. While it can seem like calling for expulsion of despair or disengagement, it is not, as it is about working through why such issues arise in the first place and configuring ways to address them. Working through systems can be challenging, and requires tackling cynicism, doubt, and fear head-on. Working with various groups of peoples while recognizing the limitations can profoundly shift one's sense of hope and privilege. Since there are institutional barriers to transforming hope into action in higher education, understanding the barriers and challenges are necessary. I turn to this next.

Decolonizing Institutions of Higher Education:

The role played by institutions of higher education in advancing a radically different model of development education is important. What is taught, how it is taught, by whom it is taught, for whom it is taught, and the multi-scalar institutional politics involved in these are important to critically examine (Langdon 2013; Bhambra et al. 2018). So, questioning what is included or not in the curricula and changing content (the 'what'), reconfiguring pedagogical approaches and styles of teaching (the 'how'), improving recruitment of and inclusive retention of marginalized educators (the 'by whom'), addressing barriers to entry and subsequent success of students from varied backgrounds in higher education (the 'for whom'), and bringing in local historical, geographical, structural, and instructional politics (the 'where') can be starting points in decolonizing higher education. Decolonizing knowledge production and dissemination face challenges of normalization, colonial logics of valuation, neoliberal capitalism, and racism/Othering of various forms. Tokenistic measures to diversify only curricula are insufficient to decolonize development education as this only a part of a much larger issue. Recognizing the political nature of knowledge production and dissemination is necessary for decolonizing academia.

Given increasing global turn to the right, decolonizing academia more broadly has become vital (cf. Sultana 2018).

Universities were sites of cultivation of Empire and continue to perpetuate Eurocentrism (Mbembe 2016; Bhambra et al. 2018). They remain resistant to change whereby transformations of relations of power in hierarchies are resisted by those in positions of power or those who benefit from dominant hegemonies. Heleta (2016) argues that structural barriers to decolonizing higher education are due to the rootedness in Eurocentrism, epistemic violence, and the hegemonic power structures that maintain them. Similarly, Esson et al (2017: 384) caution “decolonising geographical knowledges rather than structures, institutions and praxis reproduces coloniality, because it recentres non-Indigenous, white and otherwise privileged groups in the global architecture of knowledge production.” This speaks to the crux of the problem of decolonizing higher education where underlying structural power relations in universities and programs make changes difficult. Furthermore, rapid neoliberalization of higher education in general poses challenges to decolonizing higher education insofar as transformative changes are thwarted when tick-box metrics, standardization of knowledge, and capitalistic ties are increasingly institutionalized.

The global political economy of higher education is another factor. Colonial relations of power maintain the dominance of global North universities and perceived values of their degrees, so pedagogical, ontological, epistemological, and praxis changes are urgent there. Students in development studies and allied programs come from around the world, from different backgrounds, histories, locations, and have different aspirational goals and career trajectories (e.g. governments, international organizations, civil society, private sector, academia). Students from the global South often come to universities in the global North to be taught what to do when they go back home. They often carry those ideological framings, maintaining Eurocentric knowledge as the dominant knowledge that has currency in global settings, thereby reproducing Eurocentric hegemony. Students from the global North who aspire to work in development or in the global South also perpetuate the reproduction

of power relations that are colonial and Eurocentric. When not addressed, this perpetuates the ‘pale, male and often stale’ status of what is deemed valuable knowledge, referencing the whiteness, masculinity, and colonial logics pervasive in higher education (Bhambra et al. 2018).

Furthermore, caution is necessary so that decolonizing initiatives are not coopted into neoliberal diversity agendas, which occurs on the terms of the white empire (Last 2018), as well as the problematic ways decolonization can be articulated and applied as empty signifiers (Tuck & Wang 2012; Long 2018). In other words, avoid “Liberalspeak – a discourse that promotes only superficial change, protecting the establishment from the structural transformation behind true decolonisation” (Gebrieal and Shi 2015). Decolonizing needs to be a political process since reversals, co-optation, or capture are possible. It is thus inherently a continuous political struggle. It is already evident that decolonial and decolonizing are terms that are being institutionalized and packaged in depoliticized ways (Bhambra et al. 2018). These have recently become buzzwords and are being commodified problematically, and an apolitical usage of the terms need to be challenged. Thus, it is imperative to be explicit about the anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-imperial politics at the heart of decolonizing development education as well as decolonizing institutions of higher education, and recognizing that it is a process of struggle, becomings, and possibilities against both historical and existing exploitations and oppressions.

An Invitation/Non-Conclusion:

Decolonizing development education thus requires engaging with decolonizing development ideologies, epistemologies, methodologies, pedagogies, as well as decolonizing institutions of higher education. There are multiplicities of possibilities and challenges that exist and there is no one universal way to go about decolonizing development education or pursuing critical pedagogies for global social justice. Given that there are myriad ways one can engage and act, I close with some thoughts on possible pathways to begin a journey since students and educators often want to

know where to start. However, these are in no way exhaustive or prescriptive nor are they a fixed set of guidelines. These are meant to inspire robust and rigorous inquiry into analyses and actions. These partial ideas are offered in case they are helpful to commence necessary conversations and reflections. It is an invitation to consider the following:

- Questioning modernity and coloniality in oneself and in everyday life.
- Thinking about how one's own individual behavior contributes to coloniality in the world.
- Cultivating a decolonial attitude and consciousness.
- Fostering explicitly anti-imperialistic, anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-patriarchal and anti-discriminatory mindsets.
- Constantly learning from multiple critical sources and educating oneself away from hegemonic knowledge and ideologies by reading broadly and deeply.
- Practicing deep listening, humility, reflexivity, praxis, and solidarity-building.
- Being silent so that marginalized Others and subalterns can be heard.
- Working with and supporting those who are working on reparations and justice.
- Challenging colonial apologists and white heteropatriarchal supremacy.
- Fighting institutional racism and imperialist logics that are practiced.
- Working with others to decolonize higher education.
- Combating the complexes of the 'white savior', the 'Western savior' or the 'expert savior'.
- Rehumanizing dehumanized subjects and Others and pursuing equity in representations.
- Cultivating cross-border intersectional solidarities and convivialities that are accountable, non-hierarchical, and non-patronizing.
- Building active and ethical solidarities against perpetual war, violence, and destruction.
- Resisting and challenging neoliberal capitalism's relentless pursuit of extraction and exploitation of Othered bodies and ecologies.

- Practicing a global sense of justice so that it becomes the norm and not the exception.
- Fostering critical hope and critical pedagogies in higher education.
- Refusing hopelessness and frustrations in the decolonizing journey.
- Committing to the struggles of decolonizing development praxis.

This necessarily-incomplete list is a call to commence conversations and changes. This is because decolonizing development is a collective project, not an individual one, nor one that has a timeframe or prefigured set of goals. It requires difficult questions be asked and possibilities envisioned collectively in order to pursue equitable and emancipatory transformations for planetary justice. Decolonizing has to be a collaborative journey and a collective struggle of committed individuals. It is one of undoing and redoing, of unlearning to relearn, of questioning, reconsidering, and being open to different possibilities. It is not a singular pursuit, but one grounded in contexts and epistemologies with multiple outcomes. It first starts with unshackling our minds, decolonizing our senses, cultivating a consciousness of ethics, and practicing critical hope, rather than accepting the normalization of colonialist ideals, scientific racism, Eurocentric hierarchies, hegemonic constructions or dominant tropes. In the end, decolonizing development praxis is an ongoing political project for global social justice, one of shared becoming for a more just future for all peoples and the planet.

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