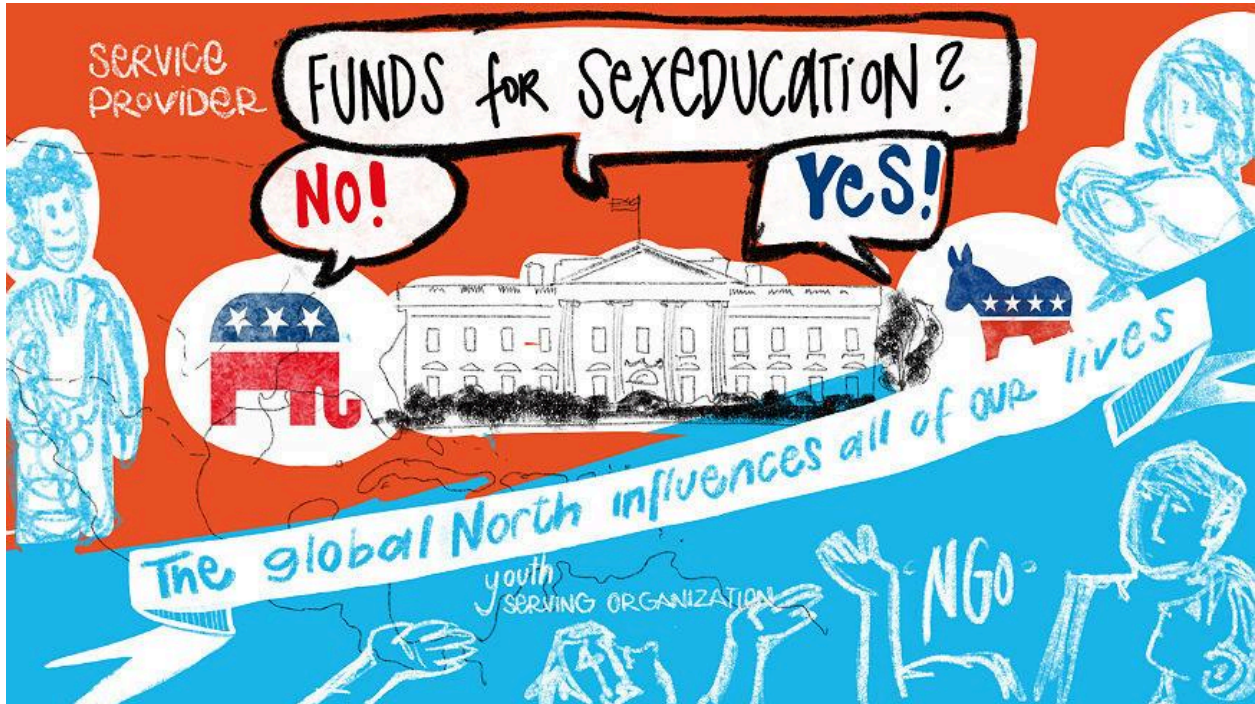


Decolonizing Education: Examining the Impact and Limitations of Decolonisation in a Globalized World



Introduction

In recent years, decolonization has become a critical aspect of education, as it pushes for the correction of historical inaccuracies and biases established by colonial powers. However, with globalization also playing a major role in shaping the education landscape, it's important to consider the effects this has on decolonization efforts.

On one hand, globalization opens up access to a diverse range of resources and ideas, enabling students to develop a more critical perspective in their education. But, on the other hand, the

continuing Western domination of the global education system and globalization's potential to reinforce this domination can threaten the decolonization process.

It's essential to examine the impact and limitations of decolonization on different educational organizations, including individual students and institutions. This understanding can help us to grasp the true definition and value of decolonization and to work towards ending Western hegemony in education.

This article delves into the influence of decolonization in education, specifically by exploring the practices of individual students and institutions. Additionally, it examines the current limitations of decolonization efforts and offers recommendations for overcoming these barriers.



Practices of Educational Organizations

Students

As the next generation of leaders, students play a crucial role in shaping the academic landscape. They can drive change and challenge the status quo, but at the same time, they are also susceptible to the impact of educational policies. Freire (2000) argues against the traditional banking model of education, where students are simply passive receivers of knowledge, and instead advocates for a problem-solving approach that fosters critical thinking among students. This critical epistemology aligns with the principles of decolonization, encouraging students to question the dominant narratives and norms imposed by Western hegemony.

This kind of critical thinking, known as epistemic disobedience (W. Mignolo, 2011, 2009), can lead to a more well-rounded and self-aware student. With the rise of globalization and greater student mobility, students are increasingly exposed to diverse cultures and knowledge. This can present challenges as students reconcile conflicting perspectives, but it also provides a unique opportunity for them to critically evaluate different ideas and broaden their understanding of the world. The growing participation of Muslim women in international higher education, for example, is challenging the homogenized Western depiction of Muslim womanhood (Shah & Khurshid, 2019). This not only amplifies their voices but also helps to increase awareness among both local and foreign students.

While globalization offers a wide range of resources and opportunities, it also perpetuates the dominant Western influence in the global education system. The capitalist system, driven by funding and scholarships from colonial powers, can limit independent thought and critical thinking among students. To truly leverage the benefits of globalization in promoting decolonization, there needs to be systemic change and greater awareness of the colonial context (Majee & Ress, 2020). It is important to note that student's ability to engage in epistemic disobedience is most effective when supported by collective movements and structural change, such as the #RhodesMustFall movement.

Institutions

Higher education institutions have a noble goal of imparting knowledge and fostering independent citizens with strong moral values. However, the curriculum and agenda of these institutions are often shaped by social trends, such as globalization. The interconnectedness of universities through global networks has enabled the flow of knowledge beyond geographical borders and has made it easier for students to access higher education.

However, this internationalization of education has also been criticized for perpetuating Western hegemony, as it tends to prefer Western resources and the English language in academic circles. This has resulted in a few privileged universities gaining an unfair advantage and has intensified competition between institutions. Moreover, the increasing mobility of students has led to a pattern of students moving to center countries, while the periphery countries become senders. This can be problematic as it leads to the distribution of center knowledge to periphery countries and perpetuates the Euro-American dominance.

To address these issues, the decolonization of higher education institutions is crucial. Decolonization in the context of educational institutions is a systematic approach to challenge the injustices and Western domination in academia and to question the colonial context in curricula. This process encourages institutions to redirect their focus away from Western epistemology and to center diverse knowledge and resources in the curriculum.

For example, in South Africa, decolonization involves decentering Western knowledge and putting African ideas at the center of knowledge production in universities. This can also extend to using diverse languages and resources in the curriculum. In 2005, students at the Chinese University of Hong Kong protested against the increasing use of English in courses and criticized higher education institutions for selling out their mission and values to academic capitalism under the guise of internationalization. The concept of "pluriversity" is one of the futures imagined from decolonization, where knowledge production is open to epistemic diversity. This transforms globalization from being a tool for the commercial expansion of Western knowledge to a pedagogical strategy that promotes the diversification of knowledge around the world.

However, the implementation of pluriversity is challenging under the current global education system, where the demand for epistemic diversity is often replaced by the internationalization agenda that perpetuates Western domination. The influence of academic capitalism and the intense competition between institutions have made it difficult to remove the colonial framework in education. Universities must choose between participating in a global competition or undergoing institutional reform for equity and decolonization. Only when the social structure supports epistemic diversity through systemic reform, will it be possible for higher education institutions to make transformative progress.



Source: Everlyn Corr

Limitations

Decolonizing Practices Moving Beyond Mere Removal of Colonial Residue

Decolonizing practices are often associated with the elimination of colonialism and its remnants. The #Fallism movement, exemplified by the #RhodesMustFall campaign in South Africa, is often cited as an example of decolonizing efforts in the realm of education. However, instead of solely

focusing on destroying colonial residue, this movement highlights the need to recognize and acknowledge the existence of colonialism in academia. As a result, it proposes new pathways for replacing the colonial framework, such as changing university names or revamping recruitment structures.

Decolonization is not about destroying Western knowledge, but rather about decentering it and removing its territorial grip. Le Grange (2016) notes that "decolonization involves a process of change that does not necessarily involve destroying Western knowledge but in decentering it or perhaps deterritorializing it." Thus, reformulating the concept of decolonization to focus on creating something new rather than fighting against the old is a critical step towards addressing current challenges in decolonizing education (Tavernaro-Haidarian, 2019).

Understanding Conflicts in Colonial History for Pluralism in Knowledge

Decolonizing practices are closely tied to the recognition and acknowledgment of historical events, including the ugly aspects of colonial history. However, with each country having its own unique interpretation of history, the situation becomes complicated. Throughout history, the memories of powerful nations have been reconstructed and rewritten. During colonialism, the colonized countries experienced language erasure and the fabrication of their culture and history. Even after independence, these countries still struggle with the impact of colonial-era knowledge. In this context, it is important to understand the power dynamics that shape historical memories and to work towards collecting diverse narratives to promote critical discussions and mutual recognition.

The importance of pluralism in knowledge can be seen in the comparison of Suh et al. (2013) of the Korean War in history textbooks from China, Japan, Korea, and the United States. They highlight the significance of acknowledging the complexity and controversy surrounding colonialism by comparing contrasting interpretations in history textbooks. By recognizing the diverse perspectives, decolonization efforts can better understand historical conflicts between nations and promote discussion through epistemic diversity.

Understanding the Complexities of Decolonizing Efforts by Exploring Regional Decolonization

Decolonization is frequently discussed in the context of Western hegemony and white supremacy in academia. However, the meaning of decolonization can vary greatly in different regions of the world. Regions like East and South Asia, for example, have a long history of complicated internal colonialism that has created historical entanglements. In this case, the meaning and value of colonialism are not limited to Western intervention and epistemology, but also stem from the lingering impact of internal colonialism.

For example, South Korea has been working towards reforming its educational structure and context to remove the influence of Japanese colonialism in its history and education. During the Japanese colonial period, fabrication of history and culture was a common colonial practice, making it important for Korea to promote critical thinking among its students through reformed and accurate knowledge. Therefore, decolonizing efforts in the global education system must broaden their understanding to include diverse perspectives from a variety of countries, including those from the peripheries that are often overlooked.



Conclusion

The concept of decolonisation in education is a call to action for critical thinking and the decentering of Western hegemony in higher education curricula. However, the current understanding of decolonisation faces numerous challenges due to the influence of globalization and capitalism, which views higher education as a marketable commodity.

It is crucial to expand our definition of decolonisation beyond simply removing colonial elements and acknowledge the lingering effects of colonialism in all regions, not just the West. The power of plurifying knowledge through epistemic diversity can provide new perspectives in education and promote critical discussions on controversial topics.

The journey towards a truly decolonised education system will not be easy, but it is a necessary fight. Decolonisation will continue to shape the future of education through ongoing debates and the cooperation of global networks that prioritize diversity in knowledge.

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