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DECOLONISING THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM: INSIGHTS FROM A SEMI-SYSTEMATIC INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Introduction: Since the 2015/2016 *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* student protests in South Africa, higher education decolonisation has become a rapidly growing field of study and practice across disciplines worldwide. In this, university curriculum decolonising (UCD) assumes a central role, as *one* (and only one) strategic moment in these intersectional (especially class, gender, race) struggles for social and epistemic justice, inclusiveness and liberation, for decolonising the university, academia, and knowledge at large: on the one hand, the formal curriculum is political as it seemingly objectively establishes and legitimates what is deemed valid, recognised, relevant, authoritative knowledge; on the other hand, the curriculum is central in the university's mission of social and epistemic reproduction (Adefila *et al.*, 2022; Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2021; Morreira *et al.*, 2020; Shahjahan *et al.*, 2022; Stein & Andreotti, 2018; Veras *et al.*, 2021). Objectives: Conducted in English and Portuguese between February 2023 and May 2024, this bilingual study seeks to contribute to improving linguistic diversity in higher education literature review (beyond the dominance of English) while extending previous reviews of higher education decolonisation in three distinct ways: theoretico-conceptually, by specifically mapping the emerging field of UCD through critical dialogue between globally shared referents and often overlooked particular contributions and contestations; methodologically, by proposing a pluri-scalar framework for critically analysing the politics of UCD; and practically, by culminating in methodical guidance for empirical decolonial university curriculum analysis. As a critical review, this also aims to conscientise and provoke decolonial action while informing future primary research, as a contribution to disrupting the reproduction of the structure of coloniality. Methodology: Within a critical sociology of education framework seeking social transformation, this study combines the semi-systematic approach to literature review (Snyder, 2019) with the integrative approach (Torraco, 2016). These approaches serve exploratory ends to generate an overview of a defined topic, to conceptually map a knowledge field, and to substantiate research agendas while stimulating further primary research (rather than, for instance, provide solutions to unresolved issues identified in the analysis) (Snyder, 2019; Torraco, 2016). The Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Scopus, and Web of Science Core Collection (WoS) databases were searched in February 2023 using an English/Portuguese search string. This systematic search yielded 463 unique journal articles and book chapters published up to 2022 inclusive and has been complemented by purposive search (e.g., checking references of references). Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns across the texts in accordance with the objectives of this review, presented as an analytic narrative that transcends mere descriptive mapping, synthesising and reporting, by critically generating new perspectives and frameworks on the topic (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Torraco, 2016, p. 404). Findings: In accordance with the objectives of the study, three key themes are discussed: (i) theoretico-conceptual framings of UCD, especially 'decolonisation', 'decoloniality', and 'coloniality of power', and conceptual contestations (e.g., post-colonial *versus* decolonial; the widely used notion of 'epistemicide'; the complexities of learning:unlearning:relearning); (ii) the politics of UCD, including the 'add-on', 'institutional-transformist' and 'systemic' approaches, and constraints to doing UCD at different scales (e.g., limits to individual academic agency and institutional/systemic cooption of UCD); and (iii) methodological challenges in empirical decolonial university curriculum analysis, regarding the selection of the case, data gathering/sampling, and analytical method and techniques

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(quantitative proxy indicators *vs* qualitative thematic analysis). Conclusions: Five agendas for future primary research generated from this analysis are elicited: (i) further development of decolonial university curriculum analysis methodology; (ii) how to decolonise oneself; (iii) how calls for UCD may impinge on liberal individual academic freedom; (iv) the relationship between UCD and academic quality; (v) universities' responses to calls for UCD; (vi) counter-cooption strategies beyond isolated institution-based action.

Palavras-chave: Coloniality; Curriculum; Decolonisation; Higher Education; Literature Review.

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