

**TOWARDS 'DECOLONIZING'
CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY
ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND GLOBAL
HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXTS: A
CRITICAL SYNTHESIS**

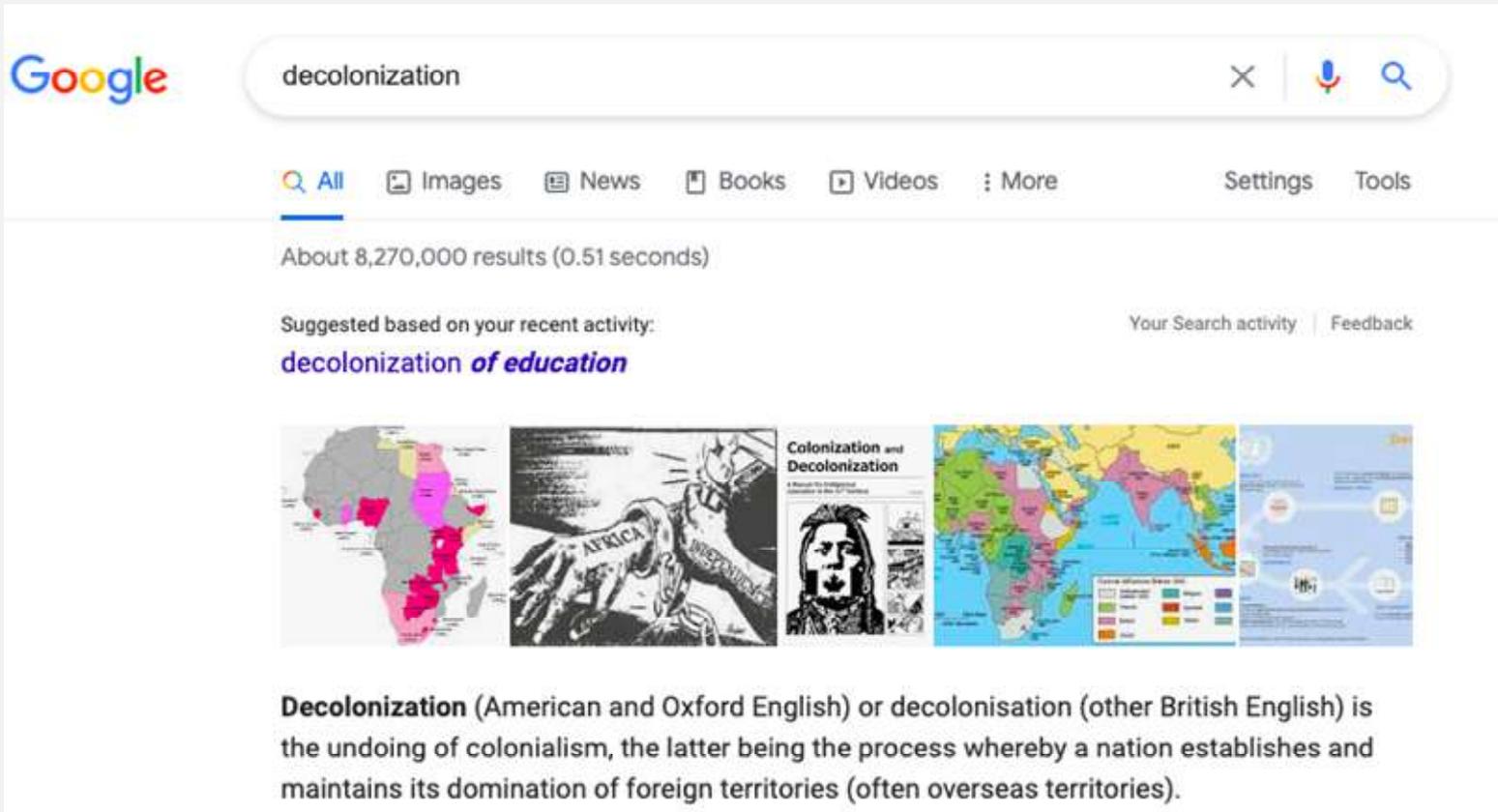
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INTRODUCTION

“What does it mean to decolonize?” Decolonizing cannot be an abstract universal. It has to be answered by looking at other W questions: Who is doing it, where, why, and how?” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 108)



The image is a screenshot of a Google search page for the term "decolonization". At the top left is the Google logo. The search bar contains the text "decolonization" and has a clear button (X) and a microphone icon. Below the search bar are navigation tabs for "All", "Images", "News", "Books", "Videos", and "More", along with "Settings" and "Tools". The search results show "About 8,270,000 results (0.51 seconds)". A section titled "Suggested based on your recent activity:" includes a link for "decolonization of education" and links for "Your Search activity" and "Feedback". Below this are five image thumbnails: a map of Africa with colored regions, a black and white illustration of hands holding a globe labeled "AFRICA", a book cover titled "Colonization and Decolonization", a world map with colored regions, and a diagram with circular nodes.

Decolonization (American and Oxford English) or decolonisation (other British English) is the undoing of colonialism, the latter being the process whereby a nation establishes and maintains its domination of foreign territories (often overseas territories).

OUR FOCUS

- What does “decolonizing” mean in the context of curriculum and pedagogy?
- How does one decolonize curriculum or pedagogy in higher education? How is it actualized?
- What are the limitations and complexities in incorporating DCP¹ in higher education?



I. Decolonizing Curriculum and Pedagogy

FRAMEWORK



Geopolitics of Knowledge (Mignolo, 2011)

- Knowledge/power relations that privileges a certain gaze
- Hierarchical global education system
- Focus on Ws of knowledge production

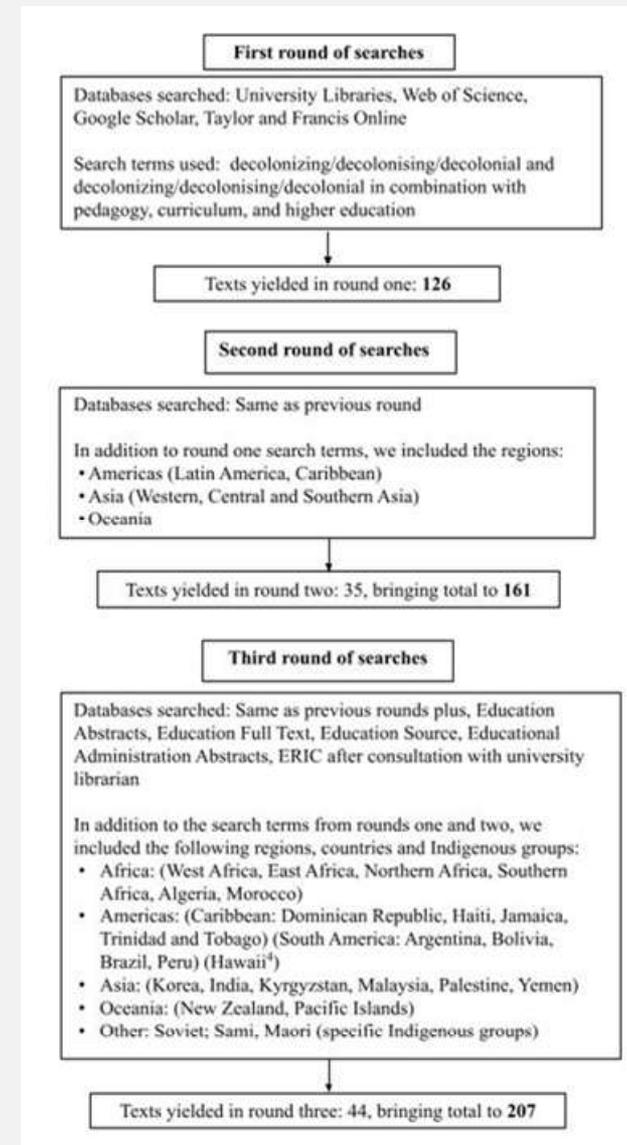


Pedagogy and Curriculum

- Pedagogy: Instructional & relational learning practices
- Curriculum: Material content & purpose, influence what counts as knowledge
- These manifest inside & outside of classes

METHODOLOGY: SEARCH PROCESS

- Positionality
 - Faculty and doctoral students of color affiliated with highly intensive research universities located in the U.S. white-settler context
 - South Asian Canadian, Filipinx/Asian American, African American, Muslim, heterosexual, queer, rural/urban, Ilokano and Kapampangan diasporic communities
- English language
- Economics of publishing
- Databases are non-neutral platforms
- Terminology
- Search terms: decolonizing/decolonising/decolonial, pedagogy, curriculum, higher education



METHODOLOGY: SEARCH PROCESS

- Three rounds of searching: **207 total texts**

Regions Represented in the Reviewed Literature					
Africa (49)	Americas (77)	Asia (23)	Europe (26)	Oceania (16)	Multiple Regions (16)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa (40) • East Africa (3) • Africa broadly (2) • Ghana (1) • Mauritius (1) • Nigeria & Ghana (1) • Uganda & Sudan (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada (33) • U.S. (31) • Brazil (4) • Mexico (2) • Latin America broadly (2) • Colombia (2) • Bolivia (1) • Costa Rica (1) • Nicaragua (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India (8) • Malaysia (2) • Palestine (2) • Asia broadly (1) • Bangladesh (1) • Iran (1) • Japan (1) • Korea (1) • Kyrgyzstan (1) • Lebanon (1) • Pakistan (1) • Philippines (1) • Singapore (1) • Qatar & UAE (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.K. (22) • Netherlands (2) • Belgium, UK, Ireland (1) • Cyprus (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia (13) • New Zealand (2) • Australia & New Zealand (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Global” [authors or examples span 3+ regions] (7) • Cyprus & South Africa (3) • Global North (1) • Colombia & Australia (1) • New Zealand & Canada (1) • North America & Europe (1) • U.K. & Argentina (1) • U.S. & Australia (1)
Disciplines Represented in the Reviewed Literature					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African studies • Agriculture & Economics • Anthropology • Architecture • Art • Art History • Audiology • Black studies • Business • Community psychology • Counseling and psychology education • Comparative and international education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical security studies • Curriculum studies • Dance • Design studies • Development studies • Education • Engineering • English • Environmental education • Ethnic studies • Feminist studies • Food systems • Geography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German studies • Health • History • Humanities • Human rights • Journalism • Indigenous studies • Inter-Asian cultural studies • International development • International education • International political economy • International relations • Language education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law • Literature • Math & physics • Media studies • Medicine • Music • Nursing • Pacific Islands Studies • Peace studies • Philosophy • Political science • Psychology • Public administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science • Social sciences • Social studies • Social work • Sociology • Teacher education • Technology • Trauma studies • Urban studies • Vocational pedagogy • Women, gender and sexuality studies 	

DECOLONIZING MEANINGS

Similarities

- 1) **Recognizing the constraints** placed by monocultural perspectives or hierarchies in one's discipline, institution, profession, policies, and/or broader society (critically examining, deconstructing, questioning, uncovering, recognizing)
- 1) **Disruption** (decentering, destabilizing, interrupting, resisting, challenging, eliminating, divesting, dismantling)
- 1) **Making room for alternatives** (asserting, imagining, giving voice, enabling, centering, embedding, liberation, reconstructing, validating, transforming, integrating, empowerment, self-determination)



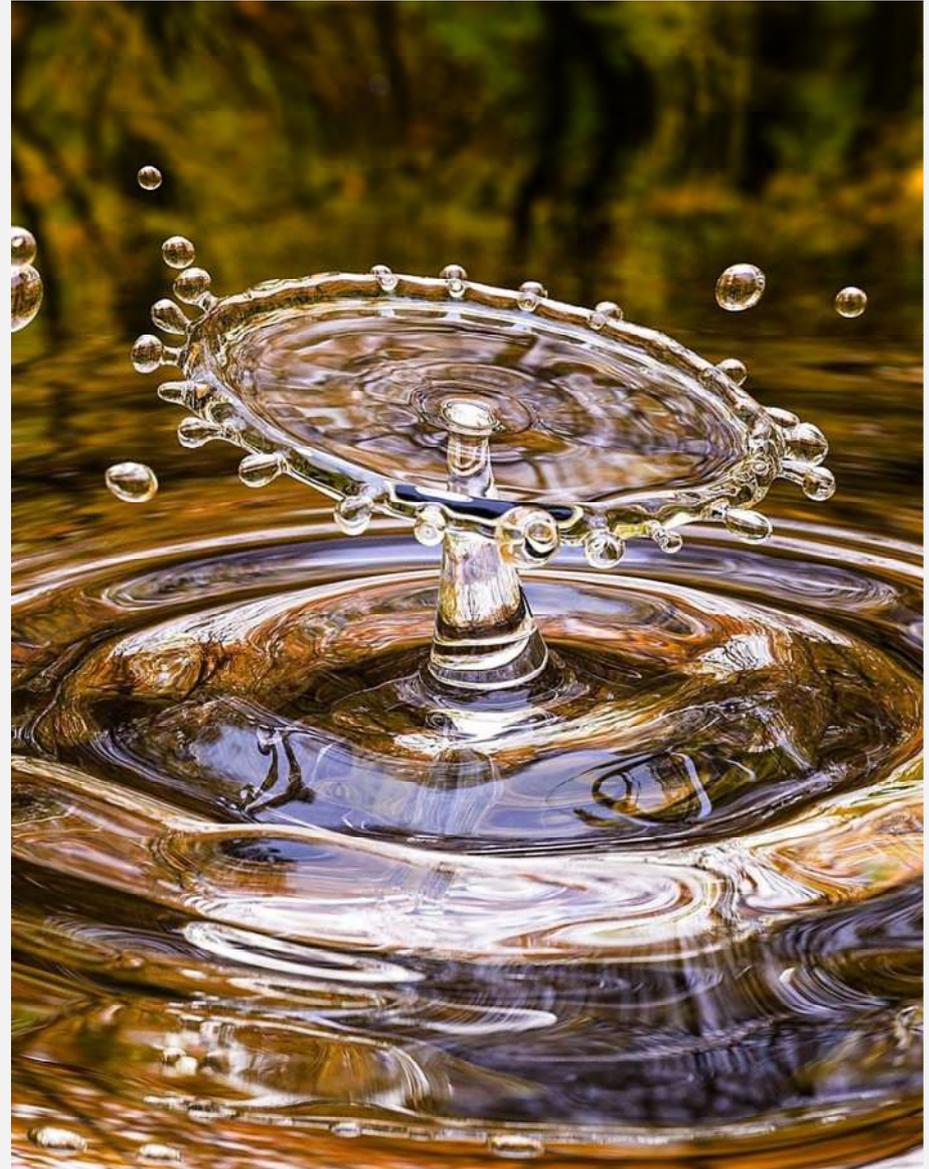
DECOLONIZING MEANINGS

- Making room for alternatives manifested differently across regions
- Thus, geographic differences included:
 - **Outward facing alternatives** – placed an emphasis on looking outside of institution by centering local/Indigenous communities, building within communities, and reallocating institutional resources to local Indigenous communities (Central and South America)
 - **Inward facing alternatives** – targeting changes within higher institutions through classroom-based curricular and pedagogical shifts and bringing indigenous/local knowledge systems and practices into higher education (Oceania, South Africa, Asia)

ACTUALIZING DCP

Similarities

- 1) Critiquing & probing the positionality of knowledge
- 1) Constructing an inclusive curriculum beyond dominant knowledge systems
- 1) Fostering relational teaching and learning
- 1) Connecting higher education institutions, community, and sociopolitical movements



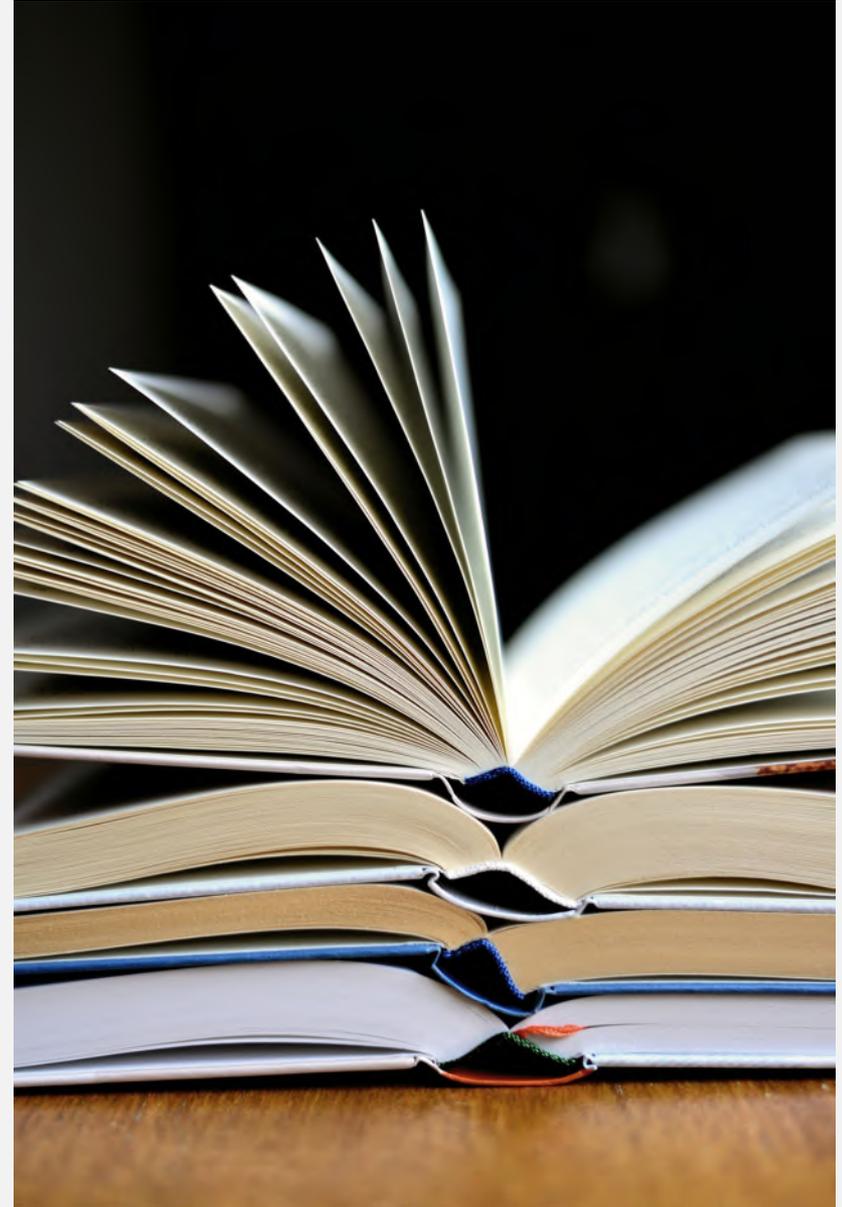
ACTUALIZING DCP

• **Geographic Differences**

- Naming
 - “Africanizing”: South Africa
 - “Indigenization”: Central America, South America, North America, Oceania
 - “Localization”: Asia
 - “Diversification”: Europe, United States
- “Object” of self-reflexivity practices
 - Australia and Canada – should be done in relation to communities Indigenous to the land
 - Europe and U.S. – self-reflexivity as a process of self-examination and exploration of one’s privileges in relation to others
- Outward – South America (Brazil), also Australia, New Zealand, Canada

ACTUALIZING DCP

- **Disciplinary Differences**
 - **Social sciences and humanities:** more inward facing, interrupting canons and integrating 'alternatives' to Eurocentric paradigms
 - Undergraduate (encourage co-production of knowledge) vs. graduate (seminar-type spaces, building deeper relationships between students and areas of study)
 - **Applied fields** (health, engineering, education): critically examining their training and/or their relationship to populations one would engage



ACTUALIZING DCP

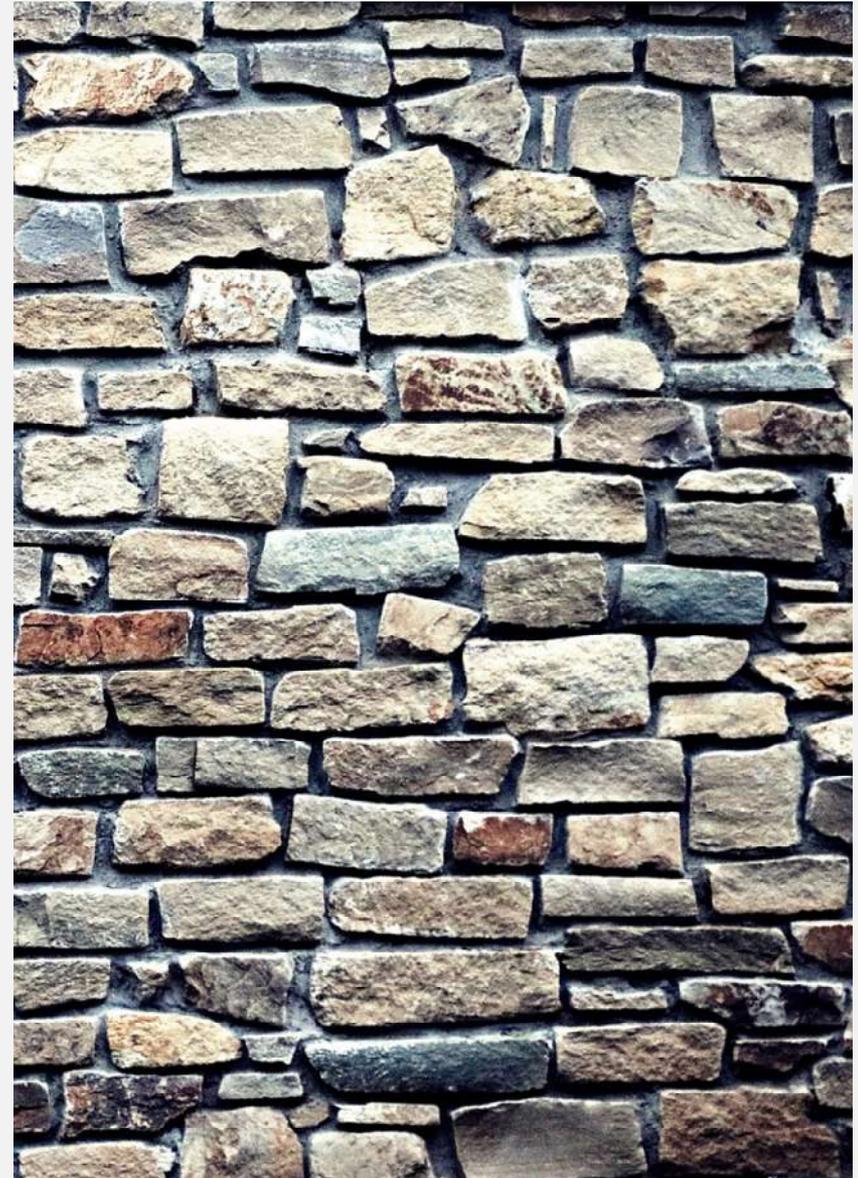
Stakeholder Drivers and Differences

- Faculty
- Students
- Institutions
- Indigenous educational leaders outside of traditional higher education institutions
- Online environments

CHALLENGES TO DCP

Inward Facing

- 1) Student resistance
- 1) Context (institutional type and culture and/or disciplinary context)
- 1) Systematic/structural barriers (policies, lack of leadership support)
- 1) Lack of access to resources (knowledge, funding, and staff)
- 1) Recognition that there is no pure local or Indigenous knowledge, and all knowledges are entangled with each other



CHALLENGES TO DCP

- **Geographic Differences**

- Unique challenges with addressing indigeneity within white settler contexts (Northern America and Oceania), and Central and Southern American contexts
 - Engaging Indigenous knowledge as majoritized instructors
 - Facilitating understanding between Indigenous and white settler populations
- Geopolitics of knowledge added another layer of complexity within Asian (e.g., South Asia and Southeast Asia) and South African contexts. Such complexities included knowledge dependency, lack of resources, international accreditation, and global social mobility.

- **Disciplinary Differences**

- Challenging an interdisciplinary-oriented disciplinary canon is easier
- Professional culture informing curriculum (e.g., medicine, psychology)
- Geopolitics of knowledge constraints drawing upon “universal” western knowledge systems (e.g., engineering)

CHALLENGES TO DCP

- **Stakeholder Differences**
 - Institutional cultures
 - Student resistance from majoritized and minoritized student groups
 - Leadership and staff

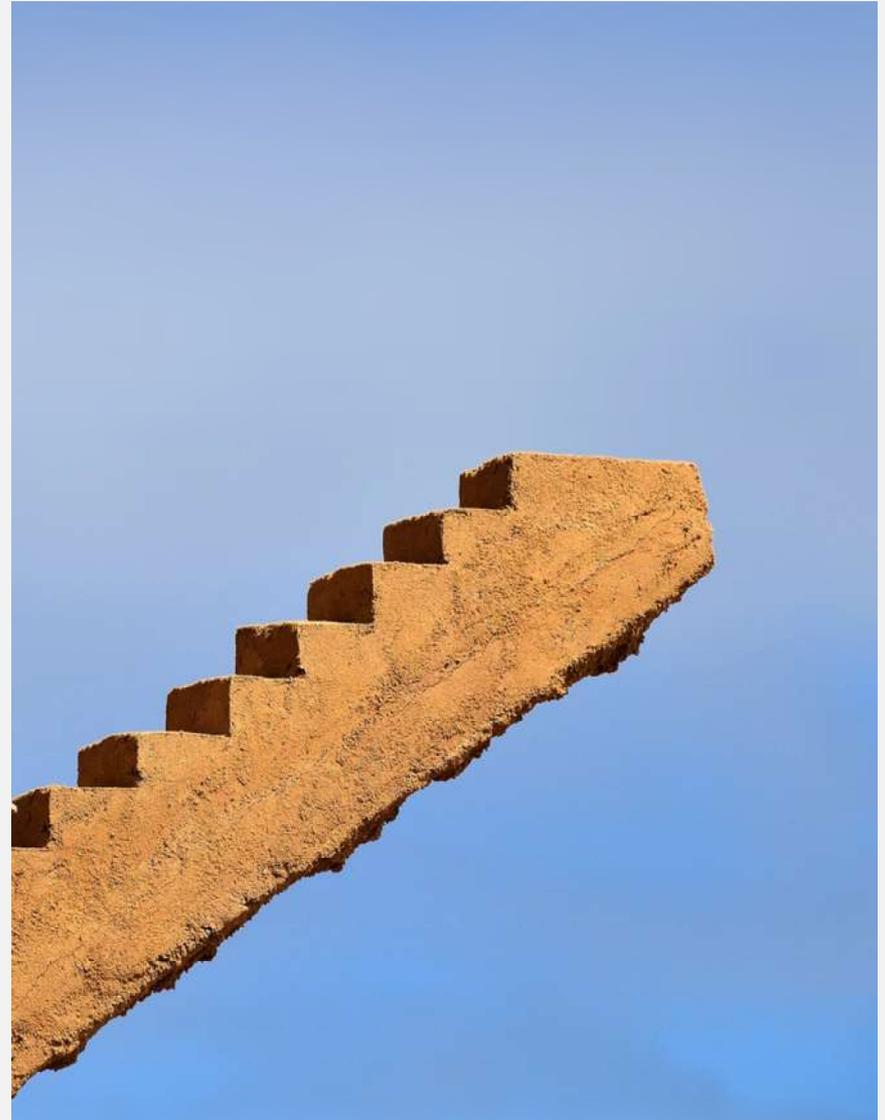


DISCUSSION

- While there are similarities, ultimately the meanings, actualization, and challenges of decolonizing pedagogy and curriculum varied depending on the context
- The literature highlighted the continued role of the European imperial legacy in the global higher education arena
- Geography primarily drove the various interpretations of decolonization, derived from local and regional communities' physical proximity to white bodies (i.e. ,White settlers or colonizers) and/or colonization's particular impact on daily life.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- More transnational discussions of DCP projects
- More research on DCP in increasingly digitized higher education and scientized environments
- Affective and temporal possibilities and challenges of engaging DCP
- Interrupt ontological assumptions reifying dualistic separation, recognizing interconnections between communities



CONCLUSION

- Possibility for a field or discipline of decolonial studies that can further previous anti-/post-colonial studies
- Does coalescing into an established field or “discipline” the work?
- Will the radical efforts of decolonial scholars become more subdued due to an expanding academic multicultural framework?
- We hope the reflections and directions would be useful for forging solidarity and evaluating decolonizing strategies and methodologies to address coloniality across geographical contexts and disciplines