African Indigenous Research to Decolonisation of African Universities' Curricula

A (South) African Perspective

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Abstract

The phrase *African indigenous research* (AIR) depicts a novel research thrust that seeks a global entrance into the mainstream research assortment as a competitive area of study. A discourse on decolonisation attempts to reverse the gains of colonialism. Existing studies show that most (South) African universities' curricula can be traced to the colonial era. A rereading of available scholarly conversations depicts some reluctance on the part of education authorities towards decolonising the (South) African universities' curricula. It is in the context of the above that the present study engages conversations on decolonisation in order to establish a common ground that affords AIR a notable articulation on decolonisation of (South) African Universities' curricula. The present research is anchored on a critical race theory (CRT) in which narrative inquiry as a methodological approach is utilised. Although the phrase African universities' curricula is employed, the study will focus on the (South) African universities' curricula as representative examples. The (South) African scenario is preferred as a case study due to the author's familiarisation with (South) African universities as well as African decolonisation discourses. The study attempts to answer the following three questions (1) what motivated research conversations on decolonisation? (2) why is the study on decolonisation of the curricula in (South) African universities necessary? and (3) what is the global impact of decolonisation processes in (South) Africa?

Keywords: African indigenous research; global impact; (South) African universities' curricula; decolonisation; community of inquiry

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Introduction

The present study seeks to engage scholarly contributions on decolonisation in order to establish the contribution of African indigenous research (AIR) to the decolonisation of (South) African universities curricula. Scholars who corralled on decolonisation include the following representative examples: Ajani and Gamede (2021), Du Plessis (2021), Simelane (2019), Mahabeer (2018), Saunders (2017), Chaka, Laphalala and Ngesi (2017), Higgs (2012), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2012), Ritskes (2012), Mignolo (2005), and wa Thiong'o (1986/1981), among others. The struggle for decolonising university curricula has been rife in (South) Africa. Thus, Emmanuel (2023:1) writes that, "for a significant majority of scholars writing in and about Africa today, the case for counter-hegemonic discourse is aptly expressed through the concept of decolonisation, which literally means to negate colonisation." In my view, Masoga and Shokane's (2019) "Afro sensed" conversation also fits into this debate on decolonisation. Afro sensing refers to "knowledge

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which is located within an Africanism knowledge space (paradigm)" (Masoga & Shokane, 2019). According to Masoga and Kaya (2011:153), "Afro-sensing is an approach which contends that communities cannot significantly advance the development of Africa without taking African cultures seriously." In an effort to decolonise the imposition of western knowledge in Africa, Mignolo (2005) argues that coloniality is deep seated in modernity, progress and dependency on the western knowledge as the only benchmarks of improvements, currency and latest developments. Nevertheless, there are also critics (e.g., Táíwò, 2019) who argue that most conversations on decolonising the curricula neither identify nor sufficiently explain which parts of the curricula they regard as requiring some revisions. Elsewhere, it is alleged that such conversations neither take into account nor implement legality issues (see Himonga & Diallo, 2017). According to Himonga and Diallo (2017), efforts toward decolonisation of the African universities' curricula should start with decolonisation of the law and the legal education. Another observation is that it has become a common practice among African reformists to by-pass legal itineraries and proceed to accelerate what is traditionally perceived as correcting colonial imbalances and injustices. One would then evaluate as illegitimate the claim that (South) African universities' curricula require some amendments. In addition, other writings have revealed that it is usual for politicians to induce the attention of the commoners by citing alleged colonialist continuum as a paradigm for revolutionary activism in order to ignite the perceived majority consensus clamouring for curricula reforms in (South) African universities. For example, Wax (2013:226) was opposed to the stance of politicians by writing that, "we continue to be hoodwinked by politicians who promise the eradication of poverty as a grand ideal." Chilisa (2012), Le Grange (2016), and Simelane (2019, no pagination) also argue that "colonised people invoke their histories, worldviews, and IKSs to theorise and imagine alternative possibilities such as an alternative and decolonised curriculum." When van der Merwe and van Reenen (2016:2) write that, "...parodied racial integration and transformation efforts at the university," the argument of a university curriculum that sustains a political pedagogy comes to the fore. Mashau (2018) and Grosfogueol (2011) prefer to use the following terms, "de-Europeanisation," "de-westernisation," and "de-hegemonisation," which in their individual meaning, still carry the concept of decolonisation. However, *The Soudien Report* (2008:9) had previously enunciated that "...discrimination in public higher education institutions, with a particular focus on racism and to make appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and to promote social cohesion." Mashau's (2018) and Grosfogueol's (2011) position had been foregrounded in *The Education White Paper* 3 (1997:1) which identified the racial and discriminatory practices which required that "...all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era." In my view, for Luckett (2016:416) to write that, "getting a degree here [referring to UCT] is a form of mental slavery and colonisation...We must exorcise the colonial ghost from the curriculum..." is not a bold but an emotional statement. Understandably, Luckett's statement, among others, emerge from a (South) African context in which universities' curricula are a reflection and reminder of colonial practices which many people are still nurturing and experiencing in a supposedly democratic (South) Africa. However, I still maintain that Luckett, among other activists and Decolonialists, may need to retain their composure so that as one reads a scientific piece of writing on such a critical debate, it neither depicts hate-speech nor a hindsight of vengeance towards the beneficiaries of apartheid/colonialism. However, the above argument exposes the limitations of a post-colonial African state emerging from white settler colonialism (e.g. Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, etc.). This type of post-colonial state is built on multi-racial politics, and the question of decolonising curriculum and universities cannot be treated in isolation from reformulating the law and the constitution (see Himonga & Diallo, 2017). In my view, a research scientist needs to desist from the popularised phrase of parents eating "sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on the edge" (see Waldman, 1989:1-5). In my reading of conversations on decolonisation, the readership should be informed that (South) Africa has an agenda that of decolonising the universities' curricula. The above assertion may further be extended by making reference to "Rhodes Must Fall" and "Fees Must Fall" initiatives (see Himonga & Diallo, 2017). Himonga and Diallo (2017:2) noted that, "In 2015 South African universities witnessed a spate of protests under the banners of 'Rhodes Must Fall' and 'Fees Must Fall' and the broad issues of social justice and the transformation of universities from their colonial and Eurocentric heritages." It is generally held elsewhere that when one considers the genesis of decolonising the curriculum, the so-called "Rhodes Must Fall" (see Rhodes Must Fall Oxford 2018) movement tended to divert from pressing national questions. The present research examines the function of AIR by exploring conversations on decolonisation in order to establish whether such initiatives are (1) succeeding in implementing curricula reforms in universities, (2) what are the legal implications of such initiatives, and (3) the global impact of decolonisation processes in (South) Africa. In view of the last point (no. 3), a dialogue is facilitated with contributions that are critical of decolonisation processes in Africa. These include: Táíwò's (2019) critique of decolonisation processes in (South) Africa and Lee and Paine's (2019) discussion on "What were the consequences of decolonisation," among others. In this study, critical race theory (CRT) is employed in conjunction with narrative inquiry as a methodological approach.

Critical race theory

The present study utilises CRT in arguing that higher education institutions contribute to the maintenance and perpetuity, not only of apartheid and racism, but also of the curricula that sustain colonial tendencies in both theory and practice. CRT or simply critical theory (Lombard 2010) is known to have originated in US law schools. The proponents of CRT are numerous to enumerate. Some examples include: De la Garza and Ono (2016), McCoy & Rodricks (2015), Martinez (2014), Delgado and Stefancic (2012), McLaughlin & Whatman (2011), Hilrado (2010), DeCuir & Dixon (2004), Bernal (2002), and Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995), among others. Ladson-Billings (1998:7) furnished the present argument by elucidating the criticality of CRT when it "first emerged as a counter-legal scholarship to the positivist and liberal legal discourse of civil rights." Although CRT emerged primarily from and is taught at many law schools, as prefigured by various schools of thought, it has, however, spread to "other disciplines and even to other countries…" (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012:113–142). Awareness of Ladson-Billings' and Delgado and Stefancic' views have led De la Garza and Ono (2016:1) to concur that, "CRT originated as an extension and critique of critical legal studies (CLS)." Meanwhile, Martinez (2014:9) says CRT brought "together issues of power, race, and racism to address the liberal notion of colour blindness and argues that ignoring racial difference maintains and perpetuates the status quo with its deeply institutionalised injustices to racial minorities." Both Delgado and Stefancic' (2012) and Martinez' (2014) explanations were developed by De la Garza and Ono (2016:1) who also maintained that "CRT is an intellectual movement that seeks to understand how white supremacy as a legal, cultural, and political condition is reproduced and maintained, primarily in the US context." A detailed account of the function of CRT is conveyed by Delgado and Stefancic (2012:1–18) in the following writing:

> CRT movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which stresses incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.

Thus, Delgado and Stefancic (2012:41) examine race as a "social construction, not a biological reality." Hence, "we may unmake it and deprive it of much of its sting by changing the system of images, words, attitudes, unconscious feelings, scripts, and social teachings by which we convey to one another that certain people are less intelligent, reliable, hardworking, virtuous, and American…" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012:42). Following up on the ideas propounded by De la Garza and Ono, the dual contribution of Orbe and Allen (2008:209) also affirmed that, "unlike most of the earlier genres of race scholarship, critical race scholarship does not treat race as an independent variable; rather, it regards race as a site of struggle." Hence, Hiraldo (2010:57) echoes that, "CRT scholars work to address the inter-sectionality of race and other social identities within their analysis…essentially CRT places race at the center of the paradigm; however, this does not necessarily mean that other identities are ignored." In the context of the representative examples given above, it can firmly be stated that CRT is a "useful theoretical construct for decoloniality and transformation because it seeks to explain how education systems and institutions not only perpetuate, but also maintain racism, Eurocentric epistemologies and racist pedagogical practices" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Bernal, 2002). Having discussed CRT as an emergence of a legal framework, it is not a misrepresentation of facts to suggest that any meaningful effort towards decolonising the curricula in (South) Africa needs a recourse which is legalistic in both form and character. From a (South) African perspective, I observed that decolonisation initiatives (or better still *reforms* towards revolutionising key sectors such as education, land, etc.) have not followed legal reform processes. In my opinion, it is in the best interest of both scholarship and the higher education system in (South) Africa to utilise the existing legal institutions and expertise in order to expedite credible curricula reforms in the country. It can also be said that any meaningful curricula reforms should begin with some legal and judicial reforms (see for example, The World Bank, 2004). Commencement on the decolonisation exercise should take account of and be guided by a legal framework. In my view, failure to acknowledge legality issues tends to define the decolonisation exercise as politically motivated; hence, extrajudicial. The same view could have motivated Ball (2012, cited in Mahabeer, 2018:8-9) to write that, "there are grave implications for curriculum changes brought about by government initiatives to suit political, economic and social goals." Sayed, Motala and Hoffman (2017:1) add that, "decolonising the curricula has recently been re-energised by the students through political action across (South) Africa." It is in the context of the above opinions that AIR should engage contributions on decolonising the curricula by employing feasible approaches that seek to strike a balance between visible legacies of institutionalised colonial appendages and the efforts of Decolonialists.

A Narrative Inquiry

This paper utilizes a qualitative research method known as narrative inquiry. Narratives are how "we story the world" (Mishler 1995:117). A study of psychology shows that human beings think, perceive and imagine using narrative modes to enhance understandings and meanings to their political discourses and therefore rely on narratives as a way of formulating political knowledge and "reality" about the world (Mudau & Mangani 2018:179-202). Therefore, the main argument is that narratives tend to provide meaning either in moments of crisis or when the centre is not holding. On the one hand, qualitative research method involves "the systematic collection, organisation and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or observation. It is used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context" (Malterud, 2001:483). On the other hand, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) maintain that "narrative inquiry is an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and cultural context." As Clandinin and Connelly observed, narrative inquiry is suggestive of an investigation into the discourses that explored on the theme/subject under scrutiny. Clandinin and

Connelly's views are supported by Etherington (2000). Social scientists and anthropologists have published extensively on Decolonialism and their Decolonialist conversations are widely read. The development of the present study will benefit from the interaction with such conversations. In addition, previous contributions on both IKSs and AIR are in abundance. These will also add value to the scholarly engagement in order to arrive at the analytic conclusions from an informed position. Other contributions have focused on relatively contemporary discourses such as Afrocentricity (see Asante 1998; 2014) and Africology (e.g. Okafor, 2017). An interface with the conversations by the above scholars will broaden the scope of the present research. Allied to the above dialogue, are dissertations and periodicals that have mesmerised on themes discussed in the present discourse.

Research on decolonising the curricula in (South) Africa

The research was motivated by a wider reading of conversations that explored on decolonisation debates. Some examples will suffice. Jonathan L. Earle contribution on *African Intellectual History and Historiography* (2018), has informed the present study in a unique way. The present research carries the title *African Indigenous Research* (AIR) which complements Earle's ideas in *African Intellectual History and Historiography* (AIHH) in a various way. Earle (2018) wrote that Europeans regarded Africans as racially inferior people who neither possessed written chronologies nor political pasts of which to speak. In other words, as Earle maintains, Africans are not qualified to speak against colonialism which they could not dismantle when the system commenced and perpetuated. Earle (2018) maintains, "intellectual historians of Africa are principally concerned with how Africans have understood and contested the contexts that they inhabited in the past, and how ideas and vernacular discourses change over time." Other contributors who are renowned for their research on the Social Sciences and Humanities with a special focus on Africa include: Steven Feierman (1990) and John Edward Philips (2006). In addition to Earle's opinion, it has also emerged that present African indigenous researchers are concerned primarily with decolonisation. Falola (2001:5) argues that "Modern intellectuals owe their origins to the spread of Western formal education, which began in some parts of Africa in the sixteenth century and were soon joined by the British, Danes, French, Dutch, and Germans." It seems there is a belief among some (South) African people that Africans themselves sustained colonialism. With that sense in mind, it is not feasible for African professionals, who benefitted from Europeanism, to speak against the system that shaped their intellectualism. The alleged view is that (South) African scholarship makes it impossible to think of African history as an inert entity awaiting the attention of professional historians. Professionals take their place in a broader field of interpretation, where Africans are already reifying, editing, and representing the past. Earle (2018) has cited cultural anthropologists such as Chika Okeke-Agulu, David T. Doris and Lorand Matory who "comparatively studied a wide array of cultural practices, such as Black Atlantic religious productions, art and decolonisation" (see Okeke-Agulu, 2015; Doris, 2011; Matory, 2005). Also, affirmative as well motivational for this research is Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò's book entitled *Against decolonisation: Taking African agency seriously* (2022). In his other contribution entitled "Rethinking the Decolonisation Trope in Philosophy," Táíwò (2019:135-159) argued that contemporary African decolonisation discourse has lost its way. Simelane's (2019) study also influenced the gathering of the momentum towards the development of the present discourse.

The necessity of a study on decolonising the curricula in (South) Africa

The study on decolonising the curricula in (South) Africa is necessary for various reasons. For instance, information gleaned from the majority of conversations from among (South) African researchers who focus on AIR in general and decolonisation in particular, shows that

(South) Africa is literally serving "two-masters" – apartheid beneficiaries and post-apartheid manipulators emerging from black people who claim to represent the majority poor. The idea of serving two masters (see Bell, 1976: 470–516) needs to be critically evaluated in view of the denial by (or rather reluctance on the part of) the perceived democratic society in the new dispensation to reverse the oppressive/apartheid system that is still trapped and sandwiched within various strata including the higher education sector. I am persuaded to agree with Bell's (1991:378) opinion that, "…a manifestation of our humanity which survives and grows stronger through resistance to oppression, even if that oppression is never overcome." Bell's (1991:378) "…even if that oppression is never overcome," is challenged by Nelson Mandela's acumen that, "…education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world" (see Du Plessis, 2021:54). Mandela's statement should not be taken for granted in the context of African indigenous researchers who should appropriately employ their education as a powerful tool to engage contributions on decolonising the curricula in (South) Africa. One may speculate that Nelson Mandela's reference to decolonial education as the most powerful weapon to "change the world" was not primarily rooted in the educated African nationalist thinking which he regarded as the viceroy of decolonisation and perceived to be best positioned to drive the decolonial agenda. In my view, Mandela's position attempted to rekindle a decolonisation agenda by blending the nationalist thinking with the modern Decolonialist philosophy (e.g., Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2022) towards a reformulation of the education system in (South) Africa. Admittedly, Mandela belonged to the first generation of decolonial leaders such as Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Kwame Nkrumah, and Robert Mugabe whose entrance to politics were influenced as beneficiaries of either Western or missionary education. However, the first democratic President of South Africa was keen towards reconstructing the rainbow nation's higher education system to also benefit the previously underprivileged which until now remains "unfinished business of epistemological and racial decolonization" (Falola 2022:3). According to other views, decolonising the curriculum is not the task of a novice. For example, Jansen (2017) contends that decolonising the curriculum is driven by specialists and not students and others who are regarded as intruders. Zeleza (2009, cited in Mahabeer 2018:1) maintains that "within the (South) African higher education context, decolonisation of the curriculum calls for the dismantling of Eurocentric epistemologies that continue to dominate" (see also Heleta 2016:1–8). Thus, Santos (2014, cited in Mahabeer, 2018:1) also gravitates that, "in (South) Africa, the call for the Africanisation of universities and the need for them to detach themselves from their colonial and apartheid histories has come to the forefront." The study could go on and on to elucidate conversations that made it necessary to proffer research on decolonisation of the (South) African universities' curricula.

The global impact of decolonisation processes in (South) Africa

When Mahabeer (2018:10–11) writes that, "decolonising the curriculum is about acknowledging diversity, ethics and language, universalising the curriculum, and creating a synergy between the 'old' and the 'new' curriculum with the focus on 're-humanising' the curriculum," the sense of the global impact of the decolonisation processes in (South) Africa comes to the fore. For instance, both Frantz Fanon (1963) and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) are widely celebrated and globally recognised for their contributions on "decolonisation of the curriculum." Sanford, Williams, Hopper and McGregor (2012, cited in Mahabeer, 2018:1) reveal that, "despite teacher education curricula recurrently undergoing change globally, foundational fundamental philosophies have not changed." Thus, it is argued that "curriculum decision-makers must become catalytic agents of change and not be obsessed with Western knowledge and ideologies, nor should they totally discard Western Eurocentric ideologies" (Mahabeer, 2018:10). According to Mahabeer (2018:10), "curriculum decision-makers should make deep intellectual decisions on curriculum matters by exploring local and international imperatives that would generate knowledge that is globally competitive and yet locally mindful." Still on the global impact of decolonisation of the (South) African universities' curricula, language is the focus of attention. For example, Hunter's (2015, no pagination) research reveals communities in late colonial Tanzania which "translated international discourses about freedom and citizenship into the Swahili press." Meanwhile, Táíwò's (2019:135-159) position contradicts Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2013, cited in Simelane, 2019:13) study that says coloniality refers to "long standing patterns of epistemic power and domination emanating from colonialism, and transcends colonial borders." One would therefore not support Masoga and Shokane's (2019) argument which locates indigeneity within the Afro sensed epistemology and ontological grounding in the light of "globalising" AIR on decolonisation processes. Masoga and Shokane's (2019) proposition of Afro sensing refers to "knowledge which is located within an Africanism knowledge space (paradigm)." Elsewhere, Masoga's (2017) emphasis on IKSs of the African peoples, though recognised as a profound "local" knowledge, has not proved itself as vibrant and practical beyond the ingenious formulation. The above argument is raised at the backdrop of Masoga's (2017, cited in Masoga & Shokane, 2019, no pagination) assertion that indigenous knowledge is "knowledge owned by local people in their specific communities and passed on from generation to generation." Masoga's view of IKSs sought to support Prah's (2004:105) contention that, "African culture should occupy a central position in the overall social activity of Africans." Masoga's (2017) contribution, though requiring a critical reflection, are not in the list of ground-breaking efforts toward IKSs. Some contributions on decolonisation do not really present themselves as befitting attention on the global platform. For example, Grosfoguel (2013:74) argues that "the canon of thought in all the disciplines of Social Sciences and Humanities in the westernised university is based on the knowledge produced by a few men from five countries in Western Europe namely Italy, France, Germany, England and the United States of America." In my view, Grosfoguel's assessment does not have a positive impact at the global level. The same view is held by Dladla (2011, no pagination) who observed that contributions "appear as though there were not world-renowned African scholars with bodies of work which as a result of being grounded in the specificity of the African experience expressed views which differed considerably from the Eurocentric." Nevertheless, a balanced critical reader may disagree with Dladla (2011, no pagination) for making the following comments:

> Much of the curriculum in (South) African universities is still unashamedly culturally chauvinistic and not even as might arguably be the case with other parts of the world, a locally-driven cultural chauvinism, but the most classical and unapologetic Eurocentrism with a bias against and condescension towards non-European thought and even more especially against the African perspective and experience.

While Dladla makes an insightful statement on the decolonisation of African universities curricula, he does not significantly present the impact of decolonisation initiatives at both (South) African and global levels. Meanwhile, decolonisation of the curricula at African universities is not a simple excise; it involves a lot of hard work and wider consultations. Proponents of decolonisation of the African universities' curricula have cited the choice and use of language as one of the factors that need to be attended to. Mbembe (2015:17) argued that "a decolonised university in Africa should put African languages (cultural heritage) at the core of its teaching and learning programme." Meanwhile, information gathered for this study has shown that Mbembe appears to be unaware that at (South) African universities various local languages are taught. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996:4) declared the 11 languages (namely: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga) as official languages. According to Olivier (2009), as far as education is concerned, decolonisation of the languages in (South) African universities may not apply. So, decolonising the language at African universities may be deemed as practically inappropriate. However, what I am gathering from the author's contribution is that African societies are endowed with alternative and indigenous ways to curing illnesses. In *Colonial Power and African Illness*, Vaughans (1991) deliberates on IKSs and the potency of African medicine to cure illnesses. Nonetheless, one would not lose sight of the fact that (South) African universities have a global focus because they attract professionals and students from all the world. For African indigenous medicine to be recognised globally, AIR should deepen its initiatives at research institutions in (South) Africa. Another outstanding scholar to comment on decolonisation is Táíwò (2019:135-159). Táíwò classifies decolonisation into two categories: deconolisation$_1$ and decolonisation$_2$. While decolonisation$_1$ aims at achieving political and economic self-determination, remarked Táíwò, deconolisation$_2$ is regarded as a contemporary academic hostility to ideas and practices due to experiences of the colonial past. According to Táíwò, the latter has no end, and is "analytically unhelpful" (see Emmanuel 2022:2). Táíwò (2019:135-159) regards decolonisation conversations (e.g., Fanon, 1963) as "counter-hegemonic discourses" and refutes that such contributions cannot "move the erstwhile colonies toward actualisation of their freedom in any meaningful way" (see also Emmanuel, 2022:2). The claim by the United Nations (n.d.) that, "the wave of decolonisation which changed the face of the planet . . . represents the world body's first great success," also depicts a contrast to Táíwò's position as explained above. In addition, Crawford's (2002, no pagination) analysis that, "many link decolonisation with developing global human rights norms" does not represent a majority view. Admittedly, "western European empires covered the globe for considerable portions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (Lee & Paine, 2019:406). Lee and Paine (2019:406) opined that, "Extensive research suggests that European rule negatively affected political and economic development in their colonies." Nonetheless, interaction with critical scholarship has revealed that the gains of conversations on decolonisation have not been achieved globally in spite of the voluminous literature recorded so far. Having examined Táíwò's (2019) and Lee and Paine's (2019) contributions, among others, the readership would not be unconscious of the delineation that AIR is divided over the issue of decolonisation from both (South) African and global perspectives. Almost all conversations on decolonising the curricula focused on language change. Another contestation that tends to be a hindrance to the positive impact of decolonisation efforts at the international level is the question of adherence (or lack of it) to the law. Earlier on in this discourse, legal reforms were discussed briefly as the starting point prior to decolonising the African universities' curriculum so that the exercise does not appear as one of the "invasions" or "operations" which is a common feature in (South) Africa. It was alluded to that when a legitimate programme is politicised it loses its credibility as a genuine exercise towards reform. Thus, Himonga and Diallo (2017:2) pointed out that, "decolonisation of law, which in turn raises questions about the legal history of African countries; the concept of law; the role of law in African societies; the status of indigenous systems of law in post-independence or post-apartheid legal systems; and how law is taught in African law schools." "The first premise is," further argued Himonga and Diallo (2017:3), "that decolonisation cannot be achieved without the development of indigenous systems of law through legal education. In essence, the development and survival of living customary law cannot be divorced from the decolonisation of law in Africa." Hence, Hotz (2015:23) concurred that, "as a law student, I believe decolonising the law faculty goes beyond the faculty and the institution. It speaks to what the law is and how it is used within society."

Conclusion

The present study lived up to its commitment of exploring conversations on decolonisation of the (South) African universities' curricula. Various discourses on decolonisation were discussed. Outstanding concepts which emerged from the conversations comprised the impact of western thought and knowledge as well as imposition of western culture through language on the (South)

African education system. In its entirety, AIR established that conversations on decolonisation attributed some distortions on African societies (including African universities' curricula) as consequences of western imperialist regime. However, some scholarly views were opposed to decolonisation processes on (South) African universities' curricula. These critics argued that conversations on decolonising the universities' curricula were overzealous and the contributions were just "counter-hegemonic discourses" which were "analytically unhelpful." The global impact of decolonising the (South) African universities' curricula was also discussed. Scholarship cited for this study has demonstrated that decolonisation conversations have not achieved much globally. The question of adherence to the law regarding both the constitutionality of decolonisation as well as implementing strategies earmarked for curricula reforms in local universities was explored.

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