

Decolonising Economics?

2022

1. Context of the workshop

At the end of this course, I anticipate that we will all be asking more questions, rather than having definitive answers on this topic. This course will fundamentally ask whether we can, or even should use the word 'decolonising' in our pursuit of a better economics? Both participants and lecturers, will also be encouraged to reflect on their own situatedness in how they have come to "know".

Any discussion on decolonising economics should not be seen as a prescriptive approach to many of the topics we will cover. Rather, this is an opportunity for broader points of discussion on decolonising; to reflect context specific realities (Chelwa, 2016) (Bassier, 2016), to de-centre Western ideas in economics (Alves & Kvangraven) to "[democratise] knowledge from its current rendition in the singular into its plural known as knowledges" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018a:4) – to name but a few.

As we will analyse in this course, other disciplines have engaged far more deeply with the debates and contestation around what it means to decolonise. As the economics discipline has barely begun to grapple with this, this is a vital and important process Zein-Elabdin and Charusheela (2004), argue that postcolonial thought could provide a "cross cutting 'frame' in which we may rethink a variety of important heterodox traditions within Economics". This idea will be explored further in this course, as an opportunity for deeper engagement.

2. Some potential pieces to engage with

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all the work that might be useful to critically engage with on this topic. It is certainly open to critique (something I hope we can do in our live sessions). Each one of these suggestions (books, chapters, articles, blogs, videos, tweets, videos, art work), makes reference to a wealth of other suggestions which you may end up finding more useful to work through depending on your interest or context. (I have also just included a few initiatives/organizations at the end of the reference list, that you are welcome to add to!).

I have tried as far as possible, to offer options that can be relatively easily engaged with but you may find each of these suggestions more/less approachable/useful/accurate/Eurocentric/Americanised (which we can also discuss in class!). You might also want to take a look at these suggestions and delve a little deeper into the various intersecting identities of the authors. Hopefully, we will also discuss some of this in our live sessions, to think more explicitly through knowledge production and dissemination. I have also included some pieces of fiction as I have found them to be more useful for me, than many pieces of non-fiction.

They have also not been organized thematically, as I am hoping that once again you are not limited/influenced by my identification of themes. Rather, that you give this list a quick look, dive a little into what grabs your attention to narrow it down, and we have a fruitful discussion of what interests you in the live session – to choose specific content for each of the sessions.

Of course, you are encouraged to engage critically with any of these pieces and to decide where you do and don't agree with this work, as well as being able to justify *why* you would argue this way.

These suggestions are also invariably influenced by my own positionality. Ideally, it would be wonderful if each of you had suggestions that we could add to this list, to more clearly reflect the contributions from everyone in this course. Please note that this does not have to be just academic journal articles. If we take seriously Ndlovu-Gatsheni's call to democratise knowledge into knowledges, then how can we begin to do so by recognizing knowledges in other forms?

3. Suggestion list

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Some initiatives to take a look at

- DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) - <https://dawnnet.org/about/>
- FEMNET (The African Women's Development and Communication Network) - <https://femnet.org/>
- NAWI collective (Afrifem Macroeconomics Collective: A Pan-African Feminist Initiative) - <https://www.nawi.africa/>
- D-Econ (Diversifying and Decolonising Economics) - <https://d-econ.org/mission/>