

## The Praxis of Decolonising Social Work Education

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### Abstract

The concept of decolonisation has been touted for many years as an intonation for the resist colonisation. Scholars such as W.E.B Dubois, Frans Fanon and Steve Biko among others speak about the colonisation and the coloniality of power as an anomaly that needs to be resisted and reversed. Despite many forces against colonisation both through wars of resistance and scholarship and with benefit of hindsight, it is evident that the determination to colonise was stronger than and means to resist and decolonise. This resulted in the institutionalisation of the colonial power whose impact is seen in every aspect of the life of the previously colonised groups as evident in the health care, cultural, educational, political, and religious systems. While the new generation born in this distorted situation surrounding their being, in their connection with the older generation they realise the extent to which colonisation alienated them from their identity. This gave rise to a movement of students and academics in South Africa referred to as the #Fallists. It was named after its demands for the fall of colonial architecture and the total emancipation of the racially dominated country. The movement was established in 2015 wherein, among its demands, was the scrapping of tuition fees. This led to a social media tagline #Feesmustfall. The understanding is that tuition fee is an affront to the people and an impediment to the strides towards decolonisation. Secondly, they sought to have statues of apartheid-era leaders removed from public spaces such as universities and city centres and others. Statues of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town and Oxford University in the UK were targeted against the backdrop that he is one of the architectures of colonialism who should not be displayed on the façade of prestigious places. This was in essence a symbolic gesture towards the decolonisation of public spaces. In this way, the call for decolonisation took a global stature. This movement heightened the demand for decolonised education amid concerns over the quality and contextual relevance of education at the South African Institutions. Furthermore, the movement understood the centrality of decolonised knowledge production in the broader decolonial struggle, hence the call for attention to the process of knowledge production and dissemination in institutional learning. It is in this vein that this paper focuses on the praxis of decolonising social work education. This paper uses critical race theory (CRT) and the social development theory to reflect on the critical issues that need attention in decolonising education in general and social work in particular. This is a critical review of literature aimed at elucidating the calls for decoloniality and the praxis for decolonising social work education. The paper will also make recommendations on how other disciplines within academia may begin the discussions and actions towards decolonising their process of teaching and learning as well as the content thereof.

**Keywords:** decolonization, S. Africa, social development theory.