

## Decolonial Approaches to the Psychological Study of Social Issues

In recent years, there has been an increasing volume of calls (e.g., #RhodesMustFall) to reveal and resist the Euroamerican-centric character of the modern global order. Inspired by these movements, the *Journal of Social Issues (JSI)* and special issue editors (Shahnaaz Suffla, Kopano Ratele, Geetha Reddy, and Glenn Adams) seek papers for an upcoming special issue that builds on a series of recent SPSSI-sponsored events devoted to decolonial perspectives in psychology.<sup>1</sup>

Perspectives of decolonial theory (e.g., Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) provide an increasingly influential framework for understanding the racialized violence inherent in the modern global order. A central concept of decolonial perspectives is *coloniality*: habits of mind and ways of being (e.g., colonial mentality and racial privilege; see David & Okazaki, 2006; Phillips & Lowery, 2018) that have roots in the colonial period but persist long after the end of colonial rule. Whereas mainstream accounts typically portray modernity and its individualist psychological manifestations as the leading edge of progress, decolonial theorists use the phrase *modernity/coloniality* to emphasize the extent to which colonial violence constitutes the modern global order. This phrase positions coloniality as the “darker side of modernity” (Mignolo, 2011): the typically obscured shadow of racist violence inseparable from the shiny project of modern individualist growth and development.

The goal of the special issue is to consider implications of decolonial perspectives for the psychological study of social issues. On one hand, we anticipate contributions that reveal and counteract the *coloniality of knowledge* in psychological sciences. How do theory and method reflect and reproduce interests of Euroamerican-centric global domination? What can researchers or practitioners do to resist forces of coloniality in their work? How might psychologists draw upon subordinated intellectual traditions to develop knowledge and forms of practice that better reflect experiences of the marginalized global majority? On the other hand, we anticipate contributions that illuminate potential resources that psychology and related fields might offer the decolonial project. How does research speak to decolonial analyses of modern/colonial institutions (e.g., human rights regimes, international development, scientific research, higher education) and related social issues (e.g., afterlives of slavery, racism, migration, gender-based violence, poverty, and environmental degradation)? What are the possibilities for a decolonial psychology that promotes empowerment and nurtures emancipatory ways of being? These are timely

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<sup>1</sup> These include several webinars (e.g., *Decolonial Approaches to the Psychological Study of Social Issues*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2jtgB2QsQs&t=1324s>; *Toward a Decolonial Psychology: Three Scholars in North American Settings*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVUgdCmianU&t=168s>) and a SPSSI-sponsored conference at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa in February, 2019 (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0xytvYYkrk&t=271s> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiSCJ01avKg>).

questions that are relevant to all readers of *JSI*, but they are especially pressing for the marginalized majority of people outside WEIRD (i.e., Western, educated, industrial, rich, and [supposedly] democratic) centers of global power that disproportionately inform mainstream psychological science. Accordingly, we encourage contributions from researchers outside WEIRD and white-dominated settings.

In keeping with *JSI* guidelines, we anticipate that the largest set of contributions will be reviews or original reports of empirical research. However, as scientific methods are themselves ripe for decolonization, (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015), we welcome contributions that apply a broad range of quantitative or qualitative research approaches to reveal/counteract the coloniality of everyday life in the modern global order.

Interested contributors should submit titles, detailed abstracts of 3-4 double-spaced pages, and short biographies (limited to half a page) to Glenn Adams ([adamsg@ku.edu](mailto:adamsg@ku.edu)) by **October 31, 2019**. Detailed abstracts should conform to APA style. They should describe the theoretical underpinnings of the work and implications for institutional policy or action. For empirical reports, the abstract should include descriptions of the sample, methodology, and primary results. Authors reporting qualitative research should consider COREQ or SRQR guidelines. For review articles, the abstract should include a discussion of criteria for inclusion and primary conclusions. A guiding criterion for acceptance will be clear elaboration of decolonial implications. Strong submissions will extend consideration of decolonial theory and action beyond mere diversification of context, personnel, and curricula to articulate implications for resistance and transformation of modern/colonial realities.

The editorial team will select a subset of detailed abstracts for inclusion with the formal proposal that they will submit to the *JSI* Editor by December 15, 2019. The editorial team will provide authors with feedback about inclusion in the special issue proposal by November 30, 2019. If *JSI* gives approval to proceed with the special issue, then we will direct invitees to submit manuscripts of 5000-8000 words within 3 months of the invitation date.

## References

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- Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2013). *Empire, global coloniality and African subjectivity*. Berghahn Books.

Phillips, L. T., & Lowery, B. S. (2018). Herd invisibility: The psychology of racial privilege. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 27(3), 156-162.

Tuck, E., & McKenzie, M. (2015). *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, Methods*. New York: Routledge.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.