Handbook of Peace Psychology

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Decolonizing perspectives in peace research

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Zusammenfassung

Dekolonialität, *dekoloniale Perspektiven*, *dekoloniale Methoden* und die *Dekolonisierung des Denkens* sind allesamt bedeutsame Schlagwörter in den akademischen Debatten der letzten Jahre geworden. Kaum, so scheint es, führt ein Weg daran vorbei. Doch was bedeuten diese Begriffe und Konzepte eigentlich und welche Forderungen gehen mit ihnen einher? Das vorliegende Kapitel verfolgt drei Ziele: Erstens soll ein Verständnis dafür geschaffen werden, was dekoloniale Perspektiven als dekolonisierende transformative Praxis fordern und vorschlagen. Zweitens soll ein Verständnis dafür geschaffen werden, was dies innerhalb der Friedensforschung bedeutet. Drittens werden einige zentrale Punkte aufgezeigt, die angesprochen werden müssen, wenn verhindert werden soll, dass die Dekolonisierung von Friedensforschung und -Psychologie eine Metapher wird. Das Kapitel zeigt entlang von vier Dimensionen auf, wie Kolonialität sich manifestiert und welchen Mehrwert dekoloniale Perspektiven für Friedensforschung und insbesondere Friedenspsychologie dort leisten können: (a) Wissens(re)produktion, (b) Forschungsmethoden, (c) Institutionen und Strukturen sowie (d) intra- und interpersonelle Mechanismen. Alle Abschnitte werden durch Beispiele und Orientierungsfragen begleitet. Insofern bietet das Kapitel keine Blaupause, sondern appelliert daran, dekoloniale Perspektiven als eine transformatorische Praxis zu verstehen, die für den Aufbau von Frieden unerlässlich ist.

Schlüsselwörter: Dekoloniale Perspektiven, Kolonialität, Critical Race Studies, Friedensforschung, Privilegien

Abstract

Decoloniality, *decolonial perspectives*, *decolonial methods* and the *decolonization of thought* have all become significant buzzwords in the academic debates of recent years. What do these terms and concepts mean, and what demands do they entail for peace studies and activism? This chapter pursues three goals: First, to create an understanding of what decolonial perspectives argue and propose as a *transformative decolonizing practice*. Second, to create an understanding of what this means within peace studies. Third, to highlight some topics that should be addressed to avoid that *decolonizing peace studies and peace psychology* becomes a metaphor. The chapter discusses along four dimensions how coloniality is reflected there and what added value decolonial perspectives can provide for peace research and peace psychology: (a) knowledge (re)production, (b) research methods, (c) institutions and structures, and (d) intra- and interpersonal mechanisms. All sections are accompanied by examples and orientation questions. In this respect, the chapter does not offer a blueprint but appeals to understand decolonial perspectives as a transformational practice that is imperative for engaging in peace research and practice.

Keywords: decolonial perspectives, coloniality, critical race studies, peace studies, privilege

Introduction[1]

Decoloniality, *decolonial perspectives*, *decolonizing methodologies*, and the *decolonization of knowledge* have all become very powerful buzzwords in the last years. Despite initial reluctance, decolonial/decolonizing perspectives (DP) have – so it seems – become almost mainstreamed and have permeated all academic disciplines. But what do these words mean and, more importantly, entail? And what can be their role for peace psychology – a discipline that is already concerned with contributing to the transformation of conflict and violence?

When the editors invited me to contribute to the new handbook on peace psychology with some reflections on decolonizing perspectives, I was delighted by the opportunity to do so. Not only because it would give me the chance to reconnect with some of the questions that had initiated my journey to combine social psychology and DP almost a decade ago, but more so, because in recent years *decolonial/decolonizing perspectives* have increasingly become a discourse that risks perpetuating the very structures of violence that it claims to dismantle. In this sense, Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010) already demanded over a decade ago to decolonize the rhetoric of postcolonial critique: "Critique becomes rhetoric when it detaches ideas from practices, finding its ultimate goal in rewording concepts, rather than in the transformation of institutional practice" (p. 49).

Thus, instead of understanding DP as a rhetorical discourse that merely contributes minor cosmetic interventions to knowledge production, I will refer in this chapter to decolonial critique as a way towards radically transforming those institutional and epistemic practices that up until today have stabilized colonial relations of power/violence[2] and been accomplice to wider forms of oppression along the axes of coloniality. It is this transformation which I call decolonization.

While the term *postcolonial* refers to situations that, since the formal end of colonization, are still marked by coloniality, *decolonizing perspectives* are less dedicated to an actual state (such as an actual decolonial situation, as the term *decoloniality* suggests) than to a *process* by which this state can be achieved. In this sense, while *decoloniality* can (and should) be retained as a horizon to strive for, I believe that we should first be concerned with *decolonizing* the way to get there. For me, this is a key difference, as a processual perspective invites us to include *ourselves* and *our own doing* into our observations, rather than looking at a context from the outside as a seemingly uninvolved party. DP thus seek to reveal (post-)colonial relations and dismantle them through reflection, perception, and behavioral change from within coloniality.

This is especially interesting for peace psychology, as it is concerned with how psychological research can prevent or overcome violence and conflict, promote peace, and contribute to social justice and healing at the social, intergroup, and interpersonal level. Since neither the relations at these levels of analysis, nor our perceptions and positionalities (and thus our academic capacity of analyzing them) emerge in an ahistorical space but are shaped by (post)colonial power relations, a revision and decolonization of these underlying fundaments is crucial to avoid reproducing or overlooking these forms of violence. Understanding the role of peace psychology in maintaining or dismantling these postcolonial power relations is therefore central for it to meet its claim and to increase its positive effects

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[2] In line with Brunner (2021), who emphasizes, that the German word Gewalt "simultaneously denotes power and violence" (pp. 4-5, emphasis in original), pointing to both power and violence as constituent elements of politics.

on peace. Against this background, I want to take this chapter as an opportunity to emphasize the potential inherent in DP – not through discursive appropriation, but as transformative practice, and by directing our gaze at our *own* practices, at *ourselves* as researchers and teachers, as practitioners, and as learners. A gaze that, I will argue, is indispensable, insofar as overcoming phenomena of violence is a serious concern for us.

With the present contribution, I do not aim to display decolonial debates in general, nor of peace psychology in particular. Rather, I will try to emphasize, using Pillay (2017)'s approach of *cracking the fortress*[3], some of the points of intervention, that I believe are the most relevant, should scholars from peace studies and peace psychology be seriously concerned with decolonizing their discipline and overcoming epistemic violence and coloniality within their knowledge production. In this sense, although the chapter is written for the Handbook of Peace Psychology, I believe it offers food for thought well beyond peace psychology and contributes to peace studies more generally.

Thus, the purpose of this chapter is threefold: First, to create an understanding of what DP argue and propose as a decolonial transformative practice. Second, to create an understanding of what this means within peace studies, peace psychology and familiar disciplines. Third, to highlight some of the basic problems in theoretical and methodological knowledge production that should be addressed to avoid that decolonizing peace psychology becomes a metaphor. As a result, the following contribution takes rather a problem-centered perspective that can provide food for thought, but without wanting to give the impression that with any (methodological) blueprint, the basic problem of postcolonial epistemic violence and its multidimensional reproduction can be circumvented. In other words, its contribution is to provoke the reflection of 'domination/violence' within academia and to stimulate a critical thinking about domination/violence and its entanglement with/in peace psychology, hoping that this will contribute further to the discipline itself and to its impact on peace and conflict.

To do so, I will first revisit and define DP and differentiate, in line with Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010), between *decolonial discourse as rhetoric* and *decolonizing transformative practice*. This will also help to understand how DP have been commodified and why this is a barrier to overcome postcolonial forms of violence in peace research and practice. Secondly, I will focus on the cracks that decolonial practice can provoke in academic knowledge production within four highly entangled dimensions: (a) knowledge (re)production, (b) methodologies, (c) institutions and structures, and (d) intra- and interpersonal mechanisms. Parting from the first subsection, I suggest what I call three decolonizing strategies that may contribute to crack any of the above-mentioned dimensions and contribute to its decolonization. As a decolonizing practice, all the sections are accompanied by some guiding questions for further reflection and will not only include literature that is labelled as *decolonial*, but also literature from critical race theory and critical whiteness studies.[4]

I would like to finish this section by emphasizing that dealing with our personal and contextual entanglements with/in coloniality is messy and often uncomfortable. One aspect of this is to make visible how our positionalities have informed our academic work, instead

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[3] Pillay (2017) draws on John Holloway's 'cracks' on capitalism: "A crack is the perfectly ordinary creation of a space or moment in which we assert a different type of doing" (Pillay, 2017, pp. 1-2).

[4] Throughout the chapter, I will emphasize racism as a key dimension of coloniality in the different dimensions entailing knowledge production. This is not as a way of ignoring the other axes of coloniality, but more so as a reaction to what Azarmandi (2018) has called "the racial silence within peace studies" (pp. 69). Whereas it seems to me that it is easier to confront within (white) European academia the issues of class and gender (from a white perspective), it is mostly still uncounted for how racism intersects within these dimensions.

of erasing ourselves from the texts we produce. Consequently, I would like to position myself here as a German-Colombian activist researcher in peace and conflict studies, educated in and writing from Germany, yet highly entangled with Colombia and it's sought for peace, through social, political, academic, and family life. I have tried over the decade to contribute to decolonization – be it as a peace activist, as a researcher and scholar (see Cárdenas, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2022), as a *practitioner*, or through translating critical thought emerging from Latin America (for a German-speaking audience Cusicanqui, 2012, 2018; Svampa, 2017, 2020, for instance). I also have conducted research that combines social psychological thought and DP, some of which I will refer to in this chapter as examples to how the interrogations posed by DP can be turned into practice.

Thus, by no means is the purpose of this article to finger-point at others because of their entanglement with postcolonial structures and discourses. On the contrary, through the positionality I have described above, I believe that I am sitting at the very *edge* of coloniality myself, which, according to the context, positions me at either of both sides. I would like to encourage us all to inquire our personal and contextual entanglements, to deal with this often uncomfortable and incommensurable reality, and to recognize our co-responsibility either by enabling change or by protecting (material/epistemic/affective) privileges. It is our decisions on an everyday basis, through which we either contribute to peace (in a positive, decolonizing sense) or to the perpetuation of postcolonial forms of violence and oppression.

What are decolonizing perspectives?

In the last thirty years, DP have permeated almost all disciplines – from humanities and social and political sciences, over geographies to law and international relations – even some natural sciences, such as biology have begun to reconsider their colonial imprint.

But what are DP? DP are concerned with understanding how colonial structures have shaped and continue shaping power relations on a micro, meso, and macro level. They analyze from different angles and in an inter- and transdisciplinary way the legacy of colonialism in the contemporary social, cultural, political, and scientific composition of postcolonial societies – both of those that were previously colonized and those that colonized (Engels, 2014). More importantly though, and as I have pointed out in the beginning, DP are concerned with an epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2011a): a thrive to overcome these colonial continuities from within academia and, to a different extent, through a cooperation with and strengthening of marginalized communities and their thought (Escobar, 2010). Thus, the decolonial turn does not refer to a single theoretical school but rather to a diversity of perspectives that see *decolonization* as a task that is yet to be accomplished.

What we often describe today as DP is inspired by Latin American traditions, such as dependency theory, world-system theory, but also by the different liberation traditions (e.g., philosophy of liberation, theology of liberation, and certainly, psychology of liberation), and also inspired by anticolonial and marginalized thought emanating from the Global South and the Global North, such as critical race theory. Thus, Maldonado-Torres (2011) rightly points out:

> [The] decolonial turn was announced by W.E.B. Du Bois in the early twentieth
> century and made explicit in a line of figures that goes from Aimée Césaire

and Frantz Fanon in the mid-twentieth century, to Sylvia Wynter, Enrique Dussel, Gloria Anzaldúa, Lewis Gordon, Chela Sandoval, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, among others, throughout the second half of the twentieth to the beginning of the twenty-first century. (Maldonado-Torres, 2011, p. 2)

However, let's not forget that, since colonization and long before reaching the academy, anti- and decolonial thought was practiced, opposing "what could be called the colonizing turn in Western thought" (Maldonado-Torres, 2011, p. 1). This knowledge is kept alive and developed further by oppressed communities to ensure cultural, epistemic, and material survival – parting from what I discuss as Rooted Epistemic Resistance in depth in my dissertation (I will come back to this later).

Of particular significance for DP to arrive in the centers of academic knowledge production and to gain cross-disciplinary attention was the concept of coloniality of power. It was coined by the Peruvian sociologist Quijano (1992) and soon united a school of thought across the globe. With this concept, Quijano argued that colonial structures are alive after their formal end, with the aim of enabling the continued exploitation of the Global South, its territories, and subjects, along axes of gender, race, class (or capitalism/modernity), and authority (or power/knowledge, Quijano, 1992). Coloniality as a mechanism of power was established through colonization/invasion of the Americas and the transatlantic slave trade and can be defined as "one of the constitutive and specific elements of the world pattern of capitalist power" (Quijano, 2007, p. 93). It is important to understand that this coloniality is in fact the key enabler for Europe to constitute itself as the center of modernity because it invisibilizes that this modernity was in fact developed *in* the Americas and *via* colonial mechanisms of violence, oppression, and dispossession. The coloniality of power thus refers to the interrelation between modern forms of exploitation and domination and its mechanisms[5] (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).Thus, parallel to the colonial dis/possession, normalization and naturalization of differences along the above-mentioned axes of power (race/gender/class/authority), the positionality and subjectivity of Eurocentric knowledge production was erased, leading to the universalization and objectivization of Eurocentric knowledge – something that Castro-Gómez (2010) called the *zero-point hubris*. These violent mechanisms of coloniality must be recognized as the *dark side of modernity* (Mignolo, 2011b) and are "kept alive in learning manuals, in the criteria for good academic work, in culture, common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in the aspirations of subjects, and in so many other aspects of our modern experience" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243).

Following these initial reflections, other, closely interconnected concepts have emerged: One is the coloniality of being, that is the inferiorization of people to ensure the concentration of capitalist power along the axes of race, gender, and class (see, for instance: Castro-Gómez, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Simply put, this perspective sets European, educated white men, their positioned epistemology and their values, as the norm, e.g., through *objectivity*. Closely related with this is the coloniality of knowledge, that is the control over knowledge production and its in/visibilization and hierarchization through epistemic violence.[6] And finally, the coloniality of gender, that is not only the inferiorization of cis-women and their gradual de-feminization and intersectional hyper sexualization along

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[5] Such as invasion and extractivism, the sought for human exploitation along the intersecting axes of race and gender to ensure the capitalist exploitation of natural resources for the European project of modernity, motivating the genocide of autochthonous populations and the transatlantic slave-trade.

[6] Epistemic violence deals with the violence of invisibilizing and/or inferiorizing certain forms of knowledge and their authors, as well as the violence that is normalized and justified through knowledge (for a detailed discussion of the concept, see Brunner, 2020)

race, but also the invention of this heteronormative gender system[7] to ensure capitalist productivity (Lugones, 2007).

This quick overview shows, that DP have not only gained attention in a wide variety of disciplines, but also different analytical fields have emerged with which DP are concerned – not only to understand how colonially-based hierarchies, inequalities and injustices are maintained, but more importantly, how these colonial continuities can be breached. Undoubtedly, a major focus relates in recent years to knowledge production itself as the site where these forms of violence are enacted. As a result, knowledge production can be seen both as a driver for coloniality as well as a tool for epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2009). In this sense, DP have become known as a paradigm that calls for a knowledge production bottom up, that peripheralizes eurocentrism and aims at including as equals – not as resources – marginalized voices and their epistemologies in this process.

Cracks to decolonize Peace Psychology

Especially with emphasis to the relevance that the Latin American tradition of the psychology of liberation (and other liberation traditions) have played in shaping decolonial thought, there is great potential for mutual enrichment in future theoretical and empirical research, especially insofar that peace psychology is concerned with overcoming violence. Although, especially within the normative tradition of peace psychology, as well as with other realms of the critical psychological traditions (such as community psychology) there are many overlaps with decolonial and social psychological approaches at the interface of peace, conflict/violence, and oppression/liberation, up until recently, mainstream (social) psychology has been more reluctant to engage with DP and vice versa.

One reason may be the dominance of Eurocentric methodological paradigms in contemporary mainstream social psychology, such as theory construction based on quantitative, experimental work, and the hegemony of perspectives within the discipline that are based on the positivist tradition[8]. On the other hand, the critical scrutiny of psychological work by representatives of the decolonial tradition is also a result of the complicity that the psychological discipline (and psychoanalysis) had played during colonization and today as a (re)producer of hegemonic Euro- and US-centric knowledge (Macleod & Bhatia, 2008; Ward, 2013), peripheralizing for instance, within their discipline, the very pioneers of decolonial thought – such as Frantz Fanon (Hook, 2004). In this sense, Augoustinos and Reynolds (2011) state, for example:

> While psychology has contributed important insights to the study of prejudice and racism, at the same time it has not been immune from serious criticisms that the discipline itself has promulgated concepts and theories that are highly racist and ethnocentric. Psychology's 'racist' history is difficult to deny.[9] (Augoustinos & Reynolds , 2001, p. 5)

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[7] A system that relies on binary and dichotomous gender constructions and normalizes heterosexual relationships while criminalizing or othering, e.g., queer love.

[8] For a discussion of the ethical and epistemological problems concerning eurocentrism in quantitative and experimental research from a decolonizing perspective, as well as for the decolonizing benefits that quantitative research can have under certain conditions, see Zwiener-Collins et al. (2021).

[9] Proof of this can be found, for instance, in Guthrie (2004).

As a result, Macleod and Bhatia (2008) cynically stated that "postcolonial psychology is not in its infancy, but rather [in] an embryonic stage" (p. 576). However, "even if psychology is resistant to change, the zeitgeist has necessitated decolonization onto the national agenda" (Pillay, 2017, p. 2). Consequently, steadily although reluctantly, there has been an increased interest over the last years within those areas of social psychology that are concerned with not merely attesting, but rather overcoming structures of violence and domination (e.g., Adams, Dobles, Gómez, Kurtiş & Molina, 2015; Adams, Gómez Ordóñez, Kurtiş, Molina & Dobles, 2017; Bhatia & Priya, 2021; Hook, 2004, 2012). There is no doubt that also in (social) psychology in recent years DP have grown from an *embryonic stage* to a solid body of literature. It seems that the initial hesitancy has given way to a need not only to engage with DP, but to acknowledge the complicity that psychology had and still has in colonial processes of appropriation and oppression (Adams et al., 2015; Pillay, 2017; Stevens & Sonn, 2021, p. 7). In this sense, the liberation psychologist Jesús Martín Baró had already criticized in the nineties that psychology was another instrument to mold the minds and ease their consciousness in favor of capitalism (Baró, 1986, in Orellano & Gonzalez, 2015). In this sense Bulhan (2015) suggests:

> To decolonize psychological science, it is necessary to transform its focus from promotion of individual happiness to cultivation of collective well-being, from a concern with instinct to promotion of human needs, from prescriptions for adjustment to affordances for empowerment, from treatment of passive victims to creation of self-determining actors, and from globalizing, top-down approaches to context-sensitive, bottom-up approaches. (Buhan, 2015, p. 239)

I agree that Bulhan (2015)'s demands for changes within Psychology are central to examining its complicity with violent social conditions. As important as Bulhan's concerns are for societal change, I would like to state in this chapter not only in the spirit of Tuck and Yang (2012) that "[d]ecolonization is not a metonym for social justice" (p. 21), but also that *decolonizing* understood as social transformation and not as a rhetoric (the aforementioned differentiation I have made earlier, based on Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2010), involves a deeper engagement with the premises of the demands above (e.g. a bottom-up approach does not per se guarantee *decolonization*, unless it is accompanied by a process that considers how coloniality has affected the intrapersonal, as well as interpersonal and intergroup relations, see, for instance: Fanon, 1952/2008).

Thus, instead of explaining what DP are, in an abstract way, I will describe throughout the following section, what DP in peace psychology can involve, and when they are reduced to a discourse. Making use of Pillay (2017)'s take on Holloway's *cracks* as a moment in which we assert a different type of doing, I will focus on four dimensions, that from a decolonial perspective need to be *cracked* in Peace Psychology (and elsewhere): 1) knowledge (re)production, 2) methodologies, 3) institutions, and 4) intra- and interpersonal mechanisms.

Cracking epistemic violence and the coloniality of knowledge

The concept of the coloniality of knowledge is concerned with tracing how coloniality has been stabilized through knowledge. Epistemic violence refers to the violence perpetuated onto knowledge and through knowledge production and its in/visibilization. Feminist, BPOC

and queer scholars have emphasized the subjectivity of knowledge and of access to knowledge, pointing to the violence that the universalization of an androcentric, (post-)colonial knowledge entails. Thus, Patricia Hill Collins, Donna Haraway and others have emphasized standpoint knowledge and positioned positionality, leading to a situated knowledge (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2010), that includes that of the academic sphere. Contrary to hegemonic perceptions of Eurocentric knowledge production, knowledge thus is always positioned, locally and historically bound. Thus, invisibilizing both this positionality, as well as rendering inferior/invisible other possible (positioned) interpretations,[10] are but one side of epistemic violence in Eurocentric knowledge production and of Eurocentric authority to define what is (not) knowledge (Brunner, 2020). On the other hand, epistemic violence also points to the violence that may be legitimized, naturalized and invisibilized through knowledge production itself (Brunner, 2020). While a thorough conceptualization of epistemic violence is beyond this chapter[11], Brunner (2021) "[i]nsist[s] on locating epistemic violence in a specific origin (Europe) and contextualize it within a specific history (colonialism and capitalism) and specific operating modes (racism/sexism, separation, hierarchization and naturalization)" (p. 204).

For peace psychology then, a decolonial perspective on knowledge means first and foremost to reflect the foundations of the discipline. What is it what we think we know? From whom have we learned and what have we learned? Has this knowledge contributed to justify violence against specific groups (e.g., by rendering specific groups as *deviant* or through individualizing structural phenomena)? How is this knowledge informed by modernity/coloniality and intersected with capitalist interests? But it also refers to where we situate specific knowledges (e.g., in or outside academia), depending on where those who have enunciated this knowledge are based, and which epistemic authority/capital they have been granted.

In terms of Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010) *decolonizing epistemology* means "ontologizing knowledge" (pp. 52-53), meaning to reconnect the knowledge with the producer, and calling for a decentering of European and/or knowledge of the Global North. The latter will be specifically important in terms of redistributive justice and to establish new social relations that disengage with the coloniality of being. But also, from a pragmatic perspective that is interested in recognizing the specific expertise of alter-knowledges, as the next part shows.

Decolonizing Strategy 1: Cracking the coloniality of being and remembering invisibilized literature and their authors

The coloniality of being is concerned with centering and universalizing Eurocentric androcentrism as a prototype, while inferiorizing other people along the intersecting axes of race, gender, and class. This is justified, normalized, and naturalized through colonial stereotypes and social imaginaries, pointing to the epistemic violence described earlier, in which science - and psychology in particular – have played a crucial role. The coloniality of being and its intersection with the coloniality of knowledge has, however, also contributed to invisibilizing and/or discrediting those voices that produced (and continue producing)

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[10] Such as the peripheralization of Latin American psychology of liberation or the regionalization of African psychology alongside un-naming the westernness psychology (see, for instance, Pillay 2017).

[11] See Brunner (2020, 2021) for a comprehensive revision of epistemic violence in general and, for international relations, in particular.

alter-knowledges in- and outside the academia – especially if it is/was aimed at destabilizing the colonial order.

One of the key "set[s] of conceptual resources" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 216), that have received too little attention in mainstream psychology in the past, but has been key in informing decolonial perceptions and practices much beyond psychology, are the "[v]arious articulations of liberation psychology [that] have emerged over the last 50 years as one of the most influential meta-theoretical perspectives in Latin American psychology" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 216). Liberation psychology addresses various forms of structural, cultural, material, and epistemic oppression on marginalized collectives as a key enabler for the suffering of communities and aims at developing solutions parting from their intrinsic capacities and knowledges (see, for instance: Burton, 2004, 2013; Burton & Kagan, 2005; Lykes & Sibley, 2014).

Besides liberation psychology, another key influence from within psychology, that has informed DP are those contributions emanating from subjects who were marginalized and oppressed by colonial violence themselves, and whose knowledges were, more often than not, discredited as political and/or peripheralized. Current publications seem to appreciate to a greater extent those works within psychology that had hitherto been treated with reference to Eurocentric quality criteria of academic work (objectivity, positivity, detachment) more neglectfully[12]: One example of this is Frantz Fanon (1952/2008), whose works, fifty years after his death, are finally enjoying growing influence within mainstream psychological debates and are discussed today in relevant journals with regards to their added value for decolonizing contemporary psychology (see, for instance: Adams et al., 2015, 2017; Castillo, 2017; Hook, 2004, 2012; Lau, 2017; Maldonado-Torres, 2017). In this sense, Stevens and Sonn (2021) acknowledge, that

> Whilst certainly overlapping with other lenses in psychology today, including Critical Psychology, Black Psychology, Feminist Psychology, and Liberation Psychology, for example, decolonial theory is much more broadly and paradigmatically directed towards understanding the historico-ontological effects of coloniality as a system, on contemporary social arrangements and subjects today. (Stevens & Sonn, 2021, p. 2)

It is indeed the analysis of the systemic nature of coloniality (the way how gender, raza/racism, class, and authority are interlocked) that allows us to understand not only how intersectional discrimination works, but also how white supremacy and white innocence[13] (Wekker, 2016) have been maintained via epistemic authority. However, I would disagree with Stevens and Sonn (2021) in that decolonial theory is "much more broadly and paradigmatically directed" (p. 2) than the claims that have been made over the last fifty years by peripheralized and marginalized (queer, feminist and migrant) BIPOC[14] scholars (see, for instance the works of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987/2012), Frantz Fanon (1952/2008), Grada Kilomba (2010), Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (1999), Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (2012), etc.). In fact, we can see that what today is known as *decolonial theory* would not have been

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[12] They were perhaps appreciated as politically relevant work, but not recognized in their scientific analytical contribution to psychological debates to the same extent that they are now are being re-read.

[13] Wekker (2016) describes with white innocence the hegemonic discourse in the Netherlands that labels the Dutch collectively as an antiracist, welcoming and diverse-loving community, while at the same time normalizing whiteness and rejecting any analysis that discloses race as on-going marker for in- and exclusion in the country and thus racism as a possible explanation for the continuation of white hegemony.

[14] BIPOC is the acronym of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

developed without their works. In line with Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010), I rather agree that "[i]t is this paradoxical situation of inclusion of knowledge production on the one side and exclusion of the local translators and originators of these debates on the other, which a perspective on coloniality unravels" (p. 59).[15]

Thus, to crack the coloniality of peace psychology does not only mean to remember and acknowledge the canon of thought from invisibilized and peripheralized scholars relevant to peace psychology, but it also "involves attending to the ontological dimension of knowledge production itself. Relating the material conditions of knowledge with its ontology requires an interrogation of the paradigms that persist in re-establishing disciplinary boundaries, reiterating androcentric and Eurocentric knowledge traditions" (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2010, p. 59) This means in terms of *epistemic justice*, to reconnect in our curricula these crucial works with their ontological, geopolitical and historical context of violence, and to recenter the authors within the debates they have provoked as *agents* thereof. Of course, this also includes peripheral knowledges from the Global South in the present, such as the knowledge of the innumerous alter-modernities (Escobar, 2010) that are being produced, e.g., in indigenous universities such as is the case of the Autonomous Indigenous Intercultural University in Colombia (Universidad Autónoma Indígena Intercultural – UAIIN, by its Spanish acronyms)[16].

Thus, decentering Eurocentric knowledge is by no means about geography alone. A Eurocentric perspective is not bound to Europe as a geographical space but has become through coloniality as a norm the prototype of authorized knowledge in most regions of the world, mediated and justified by practices of knowledge generation defined and standardized as *scientific*, which subjugate other forms of knowledge generation and preservation, such as oral memory, *sentipensar*, etc. (see Escobar, 2010). In this respect, how much literature from countries in the Global South is considered in a curriculum is not a criterion for a *decolonization of knowledge*. On the contrary: The task is to de-normalize Eurocentric knowledge (not to just add literature from the Global South as an addendum to the canon), and to destabilize the mechanisms that contribute to the hierarchical de/authorization of knowledge. Taking the example of European sociology, Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010) states:

> The decolonial project aims to foreground subjugated knowledge, creative and intellectual foundations in the global South and within the margins of the 'global North' as I suggest here. […] This could also trigger a debate on the global but locally experienced inequalities intrinsic to this field, which organize access to 'authorized' knowledge, prevalent in an androcentric Eurocentric angle. (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2010, p. 59)

For Germany then, a decolonization of knowledge could start with recentering those scholars in Germany, who long before the 'decolonial turn' have made and continue making the very demands that are now *en vogue* among *white* scholars: Migra*BIPOC[17] scholars, who have denounced the colonial legacies in Germany and its violence (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2016; Ha,

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[15] In Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: A Reflection on the Practices and Discourses of Decolonization, Cusicanqui (2012) discusses the different mechanisms within academia – also within so-called decolonial circles – that contribute to epistemic extractivism and invisibilize the original authors from the debates they had generated through an example of her own (see for a discussion of epistemic extractivism, that includes Cusicanqui's story, Grosfoguel, 2016).

[16] For more information, see: https://uaiinpebi-cric.edu.co/

[17] Persons with migration biography and/or background and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour.

2010; Ofuatey-Alazard, 2009; Piesche, 2009; Sow, 2011; Sow, Arndt & Robinson, 2011, to name but a few).

Decolonizing Strategy 2: Recentering alter-knowledges on peace, conflict, and trauma

Recentering marginalized and invisibilized alter-knowledges is not only a concern of epistemic justice, but also of epistemic humbleness. What I mean by this is to recognize not only that alter-knowledges can reveal specific knowledge that we are otherwise unaware of, but also to learn, as persons who have *learned to be knowledgeable*, *to learn to be(come) unknowledgeable* and to acknowledge, that members of marginalized, peripheralized or othered groups have acquired, due to this positioning, a particular expertise that we need to value if we truly want to increase our horizon. Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010) has stressed with regards to the work of the Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa the relevance of the "epistemic condition of the borderlands" (p. 59). As a queer US-American Chicana scholar, she self-identified as a *Nepantlera*, a threshold people who move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds (Keating, 2006). Her specific knowledge is conditioned through having been subjected to various intersectional forms of oppression, producing an increased capacity to identify forms of intersected discrimination and colonial violence. Thus, if we are concerned with decolonizing peace psychology, we need to diversify in our curriculum and beyond our canon of thought, not via epistemic extractivism from the Global South (Grosfoguel, 2016), but rather through connecting the consciousness of having *white*/Eurocentric and otherwise intersecting privileges with a humbleness that recognizes that this *privilege* logically includes having been spared from particular forms of (colonial) violence that we, as scholars, are interested in understanding, analyzing and overcoming. Consequently, those who have not been affected by these forms of (post/colonial) violence have had little or no practice in identifying, analyzing and reacting to it, whereas for those who have been subjected to these, often intersecting forms of oppression, this has become a pivotal tool for survival. Anzaldúa (1987/2012, p. 60) calls this specific sensitivity to perceive violence *la facultad* (the capacity). Recentering marginalized alter-knowledges thus means to recognize both the epistemic limits of those privileged by coloniality as well as the *facultad*, the epistemic capacity of those intersectionally discriminated against, to reveal mechanisms of violence.

This becomes palpable if we reflect exemplary on the coloniality of key terms with which peace psychology is concerned, such as peace and trauma.

The coloniality of peace: Several authors have pointed to the coloniality of peace and the need to decolonize conflict transformation (Jabri, 2013; Jaime-Salas, 2018, 2019; Rodriguez Iglesias, 2020; Walker, 2004, 2015, just to name a few). While a thorough discussion of this is beyond the scope of the chapter, I will only highlight three axes along which peace can be de/colonized: 1) geopolitical localization, 2) Eurocentric peace as epistemic violence, and, highly entangled with both: 3) the distribution of peace-competence along colonially based (racial) hierarchies.

1) Geopolitical localization of peace and conflict: Azarmandi (2018) argues, that violence and conflict "is located in territorial space, often located in the global South, while much of academic research on peace continues to be located in the global North" (p. 70). This means not only, that violence is located *elsewhere*, even if the causes for conflict (e.g.,

military interventions, weapons industry, modern enslavement, and rampant capitalism) are based in and emanate from the Global North. In the words of Azarmandi (2018):

> This detaches the researcher both geographically as well as discursively from where violence is understood to be taking place, simultaneously delinking the researchers' position from structures that uphold and maintain violence. Consequently, decolonial critique and engagement with continuities of colonialism and racism in the global North have been marginal. (Azarmandi (2018, p. 70)

This detachment may also contribute to labelling certain cultures and nations as inherently violent or deficient in peace, while locating peace expertise in the Global North, albeit historical genocides, such as colonization, the holocaust, and world wars I and II, emanating from there. For instance: as German-Colombian growing up in Germany, I was often confronted with Colombia and its citizens (of which I also happen to be one) being easily labelled as being violent and/or having a *culture of violence*[18] (despite innumerous local, regional and national peace initiatives), whereas Germans, despite their/our country's immense weapons industry (which exported illegally weapons to, e.g., Colombia[19]) see no reason to why this should reflect at all on the image of German national identity or culture[20]. As part of my master thesis, I found first results indicating that how a country's national identity is framed (e.g. as peace incompetent or peace competent) may have indeed an effect on the individual conflict resolution preferences of this country's citizens (Cárdenas, 2018a; Cárdenas, 2018b).[21] This points not only to the continuous harm done to populations if their cultures are labelled as violent or peace incompetent, but also reaffirms the ethical responsibility to reflect on our co-responsibility as researchers and humans in reproducing colonial stereotypes and asks us to be(come) epistemically disobedient.

2) The Eurocentric concept of *peace* as epistemic violence: Similarly, and through the concept of *pacification*, Cruz (2021) has shown the close relationship between the concept of *peace* (understood as an absence of manifest conflict) and colonially based oppression:

> Eurocentric peace concept is a strategy of epistemic violence, insofar as it replicates the system and colonial power pattern, by virtue of being linked to the way in which knowledge is produced from modern science; that is, as a knowledge geolocation, or by affirming that epistemically speaking peace is only valid if it represents the values, practices and knowledge that arises from the Global North. However, the communities that remain in the orality-resistance- pedagogy have created their own peace, based on experience, on

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[18] For the case of Colombia, see for instance, Waldmann (2007), who attested Colombia a culture of violence, and Posada Carbó (2006), who discussed critically that Colombia is repeatedly being portrayed as violent and its national identity being reduced to it.

[19] In July of 2021, the German weapon producer Sig Sauer has been condemned to surrender the proceeds of 11.1 million euros for illegally exporting 38.000 pistols to Colombia (see, for instance: Henkel, 2021; War Resisters International, 2019)

[20] This could also be explained by the concept of white innocence, developed by Wekker (2016) for the Netherlands.

[21] Since testing the effects of a violently labelled national identity on conflict behavior would have been unethical for the reasons mentioned above, I conducted an online experiment with youth from Bogotá (Colombia) where one group was confronted with a peace-competent national narrative (e.g., through emphasizing civil society initiatives for peace), while the control group received a text on coffee. The group confronted with a peace competent narration of the Colombian identity showed significantly higher preference for peaceful conflict management than the control group (Cárdenas 2018a, 2018b).

everyday life and the historical accumulation of their own resistance. (Cruz, 2021, p. 6)

Decolonizing peace would then mean to make visible the limitations and adverse effects underlying a Eurocentric notion of peace: Not only as a strategy of epistemic violence and oppression, but also in its limited capacity for achieving peace. De-normalizing our hegemonic understanding of peace and peripheralizing it as an anthropocentric peace allows us to recognize, that this conceptualization of peace is condemned to fail its goal, because it invisibilizes the protection of nature as a necessary requirement for lasting, positive peace. Recognizing this would allow to recenter other notions of peace, e.g., of many ancestral populations, which have an intrinsic relationship with nature – ergo cannot detach an imagination of peace from nature (Cárdenas et al., 2022). *Decolonizing peace* thus requires not only to add ancestral or alter-knowledges as an addendum to the canon, but to engage with it on eye-height. Thus, as much as I agree with Cruz (2021) in the above-mentioned quote, I would like to complicate his reflection a bit further and warn against the romanticization of *the locals*, which can easily become a decolonial rhetoric that stabilizes postcolonial social relations:

3) The distribution of peace-competence along colonially based (racial) hierarchies: As I have mentioned above, the coloniality of being includes the normalization of descendants of the colonizing countries as the prototype, and the othering of colonized persons, groups, and societies (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). This process of othering involves both the phenotypical racialization of others, as well as the othering of societies and cultures through locating them, according to the development discourse and the civilization myth, epistemically and ontologically in the periphery, in the past and as deviant from the norm. The term *ethnicity* is built on this basic (post)colonial imagination of alterity. Thus, besides the general ethical and research problems associated with using *ethnicity* as a social identity category[22], *ethnicity* is thus also problematic in the sense, that ethnicization is often associated with an understanding, that defines ethnic(ized) populations as peripheral or rural and locates them in the past (Bocarejo Suescún, 2015).

For peace research and activism, this is highly problematic because it limits their activism to the *grassroots level* and renders them as *unauthentic* as soon as their activism surpasses the colonial imaginary of the *nobel savage*.[23] Beyond the racist imaginary underlying these assumptions, the peripheralization of ethnic(ized) expertise on peace(-building) and conflict transformation also disregards the fact that, because of colonization and coloniality, forced displacement, and genocide, both conflict mitigation and peacebuilding run like a thread through the collective memory or historiography of many indigenous and ancestral (i.e., colonized) communities. Thus, an expertise on conflict mitigation and peacebuilding has necessarily become for many a criterion of survival. However, as for the case of the recent peace agreement in Colombia, for ethnic(ized) top-

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[22] The use of the term ethnicity to categorize people, e.g., in quantitative research, is highly problematic for many reasons, but cannot be adequately discussed in the context of this chapter. One of the reasons is that it is often used as a dominant category, while alternative criteria (access to education, trauma, financial status, etc.) are overlooked. In the past, this has tended to perpetuate stereotypes against certain social groups instead of exposing the factors underlying them (e.g., discrimination). Moreover, the dominant categorization of groups along ethnicity leads to the invisibilization of heterogeneity within groups (e.g., along socio-economic status or migration biographies, intranational hierarchies based on racism and geopolitical location). See, for instance, Grosfoguel (2004) for a discussion of ethnicity from a decolonial perspective for the US-American context, where he discloses how Hispanic, e.g., invisibilizes the postcolonial relationships of power and oppression between and within Latin American countries, e.g., along racism and geopolitics.

[23] See, for instance, the emotional debate among scholars and activists regarding the testimony of Nobel Peace laureate Rigoberta Menchú, some of whom felt duped by her accounts (Nelson, 2001). Nelson (2001) provides an excellent analysis of the postcolonial imaginaries underlying this debate.

level peace activists to be recognized as peacebuilding experts, is not only a challenge, but also a path that is accompanied by different forms of discursive, epistemic, structural, and physical violence.[24] The disacknowledgement of ethnic(ized) expertise for national conflict transformation can also be observed, for instance, in the famous Lederach pyramid, which locates ethnic leadership at the grass roots- and meso-level but excludes them from the policy level (Lederach, 1997, p. 39).

In order not to reproduce and stabilize postcolonial stereotypes based on the coloniality of being, research should thus seek to break with the colonial imaginary that locates ethnicized populations and their anticolonial and decolonizing struggles in the past and in the periphery, and instead make visible the already existing realities that complicate these narratives. For instance: In my on-going research project, I am working with Colombian top-level ethnic(ized) peace activists (those who are invisibilized in the Lederach pyramid, Lederach, 1997). Questions that I am addressing with regards to the context of the implementation process of the peace agreement of 2016 are, for instance: How do they try to unleash decolonizing effects, as they challenge hegemonic understandings on *conflict*, *peace* and *transitional justice* through their peace activism at policy impact level? Which challenges do they encounter along this journey to be heard? As I elaborate in my research, their *Rooted Epistemic Resistance*[25] offers an expertise on the armed conflict (incl. its geopolitical and historical causes and dynamics) and on integral peacebuilding, whose relevance surpasses the local level. However, their knowledge is often being dismissed as *specific knowledge* that is perceived to be only relevant to the population group they are members of. Therefore, and as I have argued recently, "peacebuilding is condemned to fail if it ignores ethnicization", and its interaction (as a process that others, marginalizes and hierarchizes non/racialized subjects) with peace and conflict (Cárdenas, 2022). Thus, the dichotomous construction of non-racialized/white/mestizo vs. racialized/ethnicized also needs to be understood as a main barrier to include ethnic(ized) knowledge into conflict transformation and to recognize ethnic(ized) experts as key stakeholders for peacebuilding.

The coloniality of trauma: Although the criticism against the narrow understanding of trauma through the definition as *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD) in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* DSM (today DSM-5) is not new, according to Goodman (2015), who rereads the criticism from a decolonial angle, the mainstream trauma approach is problematic. Not only for disregarding the cultural and context-specific diversity of symptomatic individual and collective reactions to traumatic events long after the event itself, ignoring, amongst others, inter- or transgenerational trauma (e.g., Cárdenas & Schultheiß, 2016). But also, because it pathologizes the individual, instead of addressing the systemic injustices that create and repeat vulnerabilities (along the colonial axes of power race/gender/class, e.g., racist bullying), and individualize the problems (Goodman, 2015). Through a decolonial perspective we can see that trauma often is socially and/or structurally caused, arguing for that its prevention through structural change, as well as the healing from trauma is, in fact, a social debt. Thus, for Goodman (2015), "trauma-informed practices that are truly decolonizing require that clinicians take an active role in the process of decolonizing [through] advocacy, activism, and social justice action" (p. 69).

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[24] I am discussing this in depth in my on-going research project Ethnic(ized) agency and its decolonizing potential in the transition period of armed conflicts at Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, Germany.

[25] With the concept Rooted Epistemic Resistance, I describe the specific and complex expertise that top-level ethnic(ized) peace activists often have acquired through confronting and reflecting their individual and collective experiences of violence from an epistemological standpoint that is positioned at the very intersection – the knot – of (post)colonial and rooted or ancestral epistemologies, intertwined with de/colonizing visions for the future.

Decolonizing Strategy 3: Turning our gaze towards ourselves

In 2015, Adams et al. (2015) argued, that "[e]ven those of us who identify as social or political psychologists typically proceed with academic business as usual with few opportunities to reflect on our participation (as both intellectuals and citizens) in ongoing processes of domination" (p. 214). They conclude that "[t]he bulk of work in mainstream psychology still reflects and promotes the interests of a privileged minority of people in Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich, Democratic (a.k.a. WEIRD; Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan, 2010) settings" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 214). As a result, they suggest an approach to decolonizing psychology that is concerned with decolonization as *denaturalization*,[26] emphasizing the following:

> [E]fforts at decolonization must also interrogate and disrupt elements of coloniality in both the standard regimes of hegemonic science (i.e., the coloniality of knowledge) and the psychological habits of the people in the typically WEIRD settings that inform scientific imagination (i.e., the coloniality of being). (Adams et al., 2017, p. 7)

In line with Adams et al. (2017), I thus want to argue that a way of decolonizing those areas concerned with peace from within the Global North could be to overcome white hegemony in peace activism and research. A crucial question could be: Why is peace activism/research so white? And how can this racialized divide be overcome? What is needed to decolonize our peace movements and research? Whereas the subsequent sections will discuss these questions more in depth, turning our gaze towards ourselves (in the Global North) also reveals another topic that peace psychology could address to a greater extent – the paradox revealed by the *refugee crisis*:

> [T]he divide created between the insider and outsider of the nation. This divide evokes the logic of coloniality, as it creates a racial difference between the insiders, considered members of the nation, and the outsiders, considered 'migrants'. Thus the dichotomy between citizens and migrants is embedded in a racializing logic produced within social relations shaped by the enduring effects of colonial epistemic power. *(*Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018, p. 25)

This would imply to conduct research not only in the *outside world*, but also to assess colonially based conflicts within our own geographic boundaries, e.g., epistemic authority/violence, between non-racialized and BIPOC in- and outside peace movements.

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[26] Adams et al. (2017) mention in total three approaches to decolonizing psychology. Whereas two of them (decolonization as indigenous resistance, and decolonization as accompaniment) are located in the peripheralized and marginalized regions of the world, and bear the risk of merely discursive/superficial decolonization as rhetoric (called by Adams et al., 2017, "superficial indigenization"), the first (indigenization approach) risks additionally to reproduce forms of epistemic violence through, re-essentializing, romanticizing, and folclorizing autochthonous community solutions for epistemic appropriation through extractive practices (Adam et al., 2017, see also Grosfoguel, 2016). The second approach (accompaniment approach), however, bears the risk of reproducing epistemic hierarchies, turning the researcher either into the expert with the epistemic authority to analyze the observed setting of the marginalized community, or into the "white savior" (Adams et al., 2017, p. 6)

Cracking postcolonial methodologies

"[I]f we are to use decolonising methodologies to decolonise psychological knowledge, then we should be aware of the complexity of the term 'decolonisation', including its rich, contested and complicated history" (Barnes, 2018, p. 383).

The afore-mentioned sections already have made quite clear that DP stand for and defend a specific methodological approach, whose advocates, rather than postulating a supposed objectivity and assuming the possibility of non-involvement as researchers, see themselves as engaged scholars, who aim at taking responsibility for how their research contributes to decolonization – or stabilizes coloniality instead. In this sense, the afore-mentioned sections already have, I believe, complicated and widened the struggle for finding an adequate research question (and its implications), and for selecting the contexts to be researched. Likewise, I have argued that an active and responsible reflection of the entanglement of the researcher and their positioning within the research project, informed by their epistemological standpoint, is a necessary requirement for decolonizing research. This means that DP aim at consciously reflecting on (and making transparent) the researcher's involvement and entanglement within structures of power and privilege, as well as acting historically and context-sensibly, pursuing research that is political in the sense that it aims at contributing to decolonization (and not only talking about it). However, DP have also stimulated the debates on what constitutes good methodological practice more explicitly, and beyond the qualitative vs. quantitative paradigm.[27]

Criticism is, amongst other things, concerned with how epistemic extractivism (Cusicanqui, 2012; Grosfoguel, 2007, 2018) of research projects has taken advantage of vulnerable populations, revealed secrets, and put communities under risk (see, for instance, Pittaway, Bartolomei & Hugman, 2010; Smith, 1999/2016). With the book *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Smith (1999/2016), an increasing literature has been concerned with how to decolonize research methodologies. Smith (1999/2016)'s book was – and is – concerned with making palpable the violence imposed onto indigenous and other marginalized communities through research (of indigenous communities) as a colonial practice, but also the colonially-based difficulties for indigenous researchers within and beyond their communities. The idea of decolonizing methodologies thus

> raises questions about who we focus our research on, the types of questions that are asked, the relationship between researchers and participants, the values underpinning research, what can be inferred from the study, and the contributions to equality and justice. Decolonising methodologies also focus on the research enterprise itself; its pedagogies, systems, exclusions and power that privilege certain knowledges over others. (Barnes, 2018, p. 380).

In response to this, participatory action research (PAR) – an approach developed in Latin America to counter Eurocentric knowledge production and to use research as a means to liberation (e.g., Lykes & Crosby, 2015; Lykes, Lloyd & Nicholson, 2018). PAR is concerned with fostering research collaboration at eye level. This involves the joint identification of the research question, the methodologies involved, and the analytical focus and results. Ideally,

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[27] See Zwiener-Collins, Jafri, Saini and Poulter (2021) regarding the potential of decolonizing quantitative research methods.

it should also include a joint identification of the envisaged products and effects and how they benefit the collaborating group/community. The researcher benefits from the specific expertise of the community and allows insiders and outsiders to gain new insights through standpoint epistemology. However, it is important to recognize that PAR is a time and resource-consuming practice, that not only complicates researchers' outputs, but more so, it also means a not insignificant additional effort on the part of the *researched* – without being able to completely resolve the problem of the epistemic authority of the researchers. In this sense, Barnes (2018) asks us to

> not assume that certain methodologies are de facto more likely to contribute to decolonisation than others [which is why] decolonising methodologies, like other methodologies, are not as straightforward as is sometimes represented in the literature. It is important, therefore, to interrogate the assumptions of decolonising methodologies [to avoid] perpetuating a system of knowledge production that is at best powerless, and at worst continues to produce limited knowledge under a new guise. (Barnes, 2018, p. 380)

Thus, despite all methodological rigor, power relations will be reproduced if we deploy decolonization merely as a rhetoric, rather than to break with its underlying assumptions and if we dismiss our own positionality, meaning: if methods are not accompanied by a decolonizing practice of the researchers with themselves, their privileges, and their perceptions from themselves as well as from the structures, they are embedded in (see, for instance: Jordan & Kapoor, 2016; Kara, 2017; Lac & Fine, 2018; Lucko, 2018; Sandwick et al., 2018). In this sense, Smith (2005) states:

> What is troubling to the dominant cultural group about the definition of "native" is not what necessarily troubles the "native" community. The desires for "pure", uncontaminated, and simple definitions of the native by the settler is often a desire to continue to know and define the Other, whereas the desires by the native to be self- defining and self-naming can be read as a desire to be free, to escape definition, to be complicated, to develop and change, and to be regarded as fully human. (Smith, 2005, p. 86)

Applied to the use of *ethnicity* as a category in quantitative research, this would mean, for example, to refrain from categorizing persons along their allegedly group membership, as I have stressed earlier. This does not mean, however, that postcolonial social markers such as *race* should be ignored altogether in research. On the contrary, it is necessary to consider and make more visible racialization as an influencing factor on, for example, exposure to violence, in order to show the systemic and structural effects of coloniality on conflict: For example, to reveal that certain individuals are more often forcibly recruited by illegal actors due to their vulnerability as members of racialized groups, or to show that racialized or ethnicized communities are completely neglected by state-run peace initiatives due to structural racism (Cárdenas 2022). Ethnicity, then, much like gender, should not be used to describe, categorize, or to typify people, but to reveal, e.g., underlying dynamics of in/exclusion and oppression: So not *What does Y tell us about group X?* But rather: *How are people, that are categorized as members of group X or Z affected by structural dynamics Y? How does this contribute to effect Z?* However, if quantitative questionnaires are used, they should be developed in dialogue with persons who identify as members of these groups and

consider intersectional factors (geopolitical location and local history, age, gender, income, education, and so on).

Thus, independently of whether we decide to do PAR, use other qualitative research methods, or quantitative methods (such as I have shown earlier with regards to my M.A. thesis), we need to consider on what foundations our methods are developed, who develops them, for what and with which outcomes. First, this refers to the methodological design: Who decides on the methodological design and with which criteria? If it is experimental, what does it imply? How do we design the experimental setting? Is it possible that it reproduces colonial categorizations (e.g., binary gender constructions, postcolonial stereotypes, etc.)? What are the foundations of the hypothesis that we are testing, e.g., do they already rely on colonial imaginations (e.g., Tißberger, 2017, pp. 63-74)? And finally: Does collaboration take place? And if so, at eye level? Who initiated the collaboration and why? What is the investment of researchers and other participants, and how does each party benefit from the research on the short, medium, and long-term?

Cracking institutional fortresses of coloniality

I have already mentioned that a key concern for decolonizing peace studies and peace psychology lies in diversifying the possible expertise on peace and conflict. A central obstacle that according to Barnes (2018) stands in the way of the decolonization of psychological output is "the systems of exclusion that prevent writers from marginalized communities from entering as well as their experiences of marginalization within the academy" (p. 384).

The relevance of Barnes (2018)'s claim for addressing systemic exclusion along coloniality within the academy is underlined by a study mentioned by Tate and Page (2018), that showed for the UK, that in 2013/2014, 83.5% of professors were white, while only 0.5% were Black. Also, a study mentioned by Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2016) showed that in 2012 only 6% of professors in Germany had a migration background, and of these six percent, 80% were white Europeans and 43% of these white Europeans were Austrian or Swiss.

A key quest for decolonizing peace psychology should then seriously be concerned with cracking the institutional fortress of academia as one of the most crucial strongholds of the coloniality of knowledge. Considering anti-discrimination and diversity policies in place at universities, this problem seems not to be solved through policy recommendations alone. In fact, Gutiérrez Rodriguez shows how the institutional structure and everyday racism interact in the university, leading to multidimensional everyday violence directed at Migra*BIPOC scholars and students, that are silenced by the institutions and remain unattended (2016). This leaves, as students told us, too, within the context of a European research project to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion in higher education institutions (BRIDGES), to intersectional fatigue and exhaustion, pushing Migra*BIPOC either outside of academia or, to try to survive/strive within this hostile system through compliance (e.g., avoidance and assimilation).[28] These dynamics restabilize coloniality of being within the university. Also Thompson and Zablotksy (2016) conclude that diversity, albeit being "imagined in reports and drafts" (p. 86), is practiced only as a "selective inclusion of the other-ed" (p. 86; e.g., by inviting international BIPOC scholars while continuing to marginalize BIPOC living in and working on Germany). This selective (and conditioned) inclusion of the

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[28] For more information regarding our research project BRIDGES (2020-2022), see https://buildingbridges.space. The project outputs (toolkit, course, and monograph) are available in English, German, Spanish and Greek.

other-ed allows to construe everyday postcolonial violence at the university as exceptional, and to stabilize white comfortability in the German university system (Thompson & Zablotksy, 2016).

Tate and Page (2018) identify for the exclusion of BIPOC another explanation, which is at the heart of social psychology: the social psychologic construction of *unconscious bias* and, more importantly, the dealing with it because of how it is conceptualized and made sense of. Regarding the dominant literature, Tate and Page (2018) state:

> For social psychologists (and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training designers and administrators), not only is unconscious bias inevitable at the individual level. It is inevitable and, indeed, normal at the societal level. Racism – a word rarely used in the unconscious bias semantic field, which is revealing in itself – is therefore not an active choice. (Tate & Page, 2018, p. 145)

In contrast to this, Tate and Page (2018) reveal that the underlying assumption – that unconscious bias is human and, therefore, the biased person innocent – is a mechanism of *whiteliness*.[29] It detaches the biased person from its responsibility to overcome their bias and demotivates them to do so, converting *unconscious bias* into the "acceptable face of racism, the phrase that a majority white sector feels comfortable with using and discussing to describe itself" (p. 143). They continue:

> ([U]n)conscious bias is part of the apparatus of maintaining white racialised power by calling on the idea of ignorance, of not knowing that what is being done or said is racist because it was not wilfully said or done to hurt, to discriminate, to be racist. It came from somewhere over which we have no control – i.e. the unconscious. (Tate & Page, 2018, p. 151)

The power of (un)conscious bias unfolds together with whiteliness (the self-construction as not racist), leading to actions that locate the reasons for whiteness not within the institution, their actions, and choices (and thus within the own realm of responsibility) but outsourcing it onto Migra*BPOC individuals who have not entered/been admitted/left university (Tate & Page, 2018).

Tate and Page (2018) claim that "the white self is a location of opacity in terms of its own racism. […] [W]e cannot merely look to the individual psyche but also to our institutions' cultures and practices" (p. 155). Thus, if we truly want to decolonize the way knowledge production works (in peace psychology), we need to consider how institutions' cultures and practices re-stabilize whiteness within the academia and, also within peace research. Which ways of everyday violence through eurocentrism, androcentrism, and *unconscious bias* (racism), have we invisibilized/ignored in our teams, institutes, job posts, and staff selection processes? Or the other way around: How is whiteness constructed and stabilized in the spaces relevant for peace & conflict? (Not) dealing with this on the institutional level, as I have argued earlier, is not only an ethical question, but also has drastic implications for our epistemological capacity through an (un/conscious) limitation of standpoints within the discipline and threatens to merely commodify decolonial/decolonizing perspectives.

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[29] According to Lebens (2015) and with reference to Marilyn Frye, whiteliness can be understood as the disassociation of white people with whiteness (understood here not as phenotypical but as the privileged position that is gained as a result of being read as white), through "denial of culpability, overwhelming belief in one's own goodness or good intentions" (p. 71).

Thus, in order to understand how the proposed *cracks* may be reacted to by privileged white(liness) scholars, I will look in the subsequent section on how white supremacy operates on the affective dimension through *white fragility* on the individual and interpersonal level.

Cracking *moves to innocence* on the inter- and intrapersonal level: On denials and withdrawal strategies to stabilize coloniality

With reference to Tate and Page (2018) and Lebens (2015), I have tried to emphasize whiteliness as an obstacle to confront one's own entanglement in (post)colonial forms of violence and as a strategy to maintaining privilege while at the same time discursively rejecting it. In their famous article *Decolonization is not a metaphor*, Tuck and Yang (2012) describe six ways of *settler moves to innocence*. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss how, the title of their article against "a too-easy adoption of the decolonizing discourse" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 11) has become, paradoxically, a trope of decolonizing rhetoric for many scholars itself[30], I believe, that their article is particularly valuable as they point out that decolonization is not about reconciliation: On the contrary, the claim for reconciliation rather exposes the need of privileged scholars/activists to rescue what Tuck and Yang (2012) call "settler normalcy" (p. 35). Instead of reconciliation, they propose the following:

> An ethic of incommensurability, which guides moves that unsettle innocence, stands in contrast to aims of reconciliation, which motivate settler moves to innocence. Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. […] Decolonization offers a different perspective to human and civil rights-based approaches to justice, an unsettling one, rather than a complementary one. Decolonization is not an 'and'. It is an elsewhere. *(*Tuck & Yang, 2012, pp. 35-36)

Ethics of incommensurability means not to search for a reconciliation that in fact is a pacification (see Cruz, 2021), but to endure incommensurability. This is a painful process, especially for those of us who want to be allies, but also have enjoyed our (intersectional) privileges – above all the comfort arising from the privilege of whiteliness.

If we consider *moves to innocence* (see also Macoun, 2016) in- and outside academia as a pursuit to rescuing white normalcy through reconciliation with those oppressed along the intersecting axes of coloniality (race/gender/class), it becomes understandable that cracking the coloniality within academia – meaning the transformation of the relations of domination in the (re)production of knowledge – is really more difficult than expected, due to the affective dimensions involved on the interpersonal level and due to the unconscious mechanisms that restore white normalcy.

Tißberger (2013) has described "whiteness as a dethematized center of power" (p. 359) that, when made visible, causes white people to feel "disturbed in their comfort in white culture" (p. 359, translated by the author). She goes on:

> The affective reaction […] is a sign of the nervousness of whiteness. [It] transmits 'racist knowledge' in reaction to the destabilization of its self-

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[30] Tuck and Yang (2012) argued in their article for the U.S.-American context of a settler colony, that decolonization must involve land repatriation from settlers to indigenous communities to be more than just a metaphor.

understanding, that is, as countertransference. Racism is expressed here not as a projection, but in reaction to an insecurity. (Tißberger, 2013, p. 359)

Thus, according to Tißberger, when the (*white*, andro- and Eurocentric) postcolonial normalcy is challenged or destabilized (by Migra*BPOC), it produces a discomfort in those who benefit from it. As a reaction to this discomfort, these persons then often mobilize a 'collective racist knowledge' (a knowledge rendered invisible as racist, Tißberger, 2013, p. 360) to discredit the *destabilizer.* This allows to disengage from the content level (is the argument valid?) and to focus on the interpersonal level, converting the destabilizer into a person that must justify why s/he is a *mood killer*[31].

Schwarzbach-Apithy (2017) describes lecturer responses of this discomfort to decolonizing interventions by non-white students at a German university along three levels: 1) the content level (of the monopoly of Eurocentric knowledge as a horizon), 2) the domination level (through the de/authorization of knowledgeability along coloniality/racism), and 3) the disciplinary level (the discrediting of non-whites as arrogant, aggressive, etc. when they don't conform to the postcolonial discourse). "Regardless of different ways of disciplining, they all always convey a warning: the 'disruptive' discourses should not be repeated" (Schwarzbach-Apithy, 2017, p. 254, translated by the author).

These reactions to restabilize white normalcy are harmful experiences for those who try to disrupt the hegemonic canon of thought. Thus, Migra*BIPOC are forced to either disengage or to be *a mood killer* – or worse, risk being accused of being insensitive to *white needs*. Tate and Page (2018) concluded in this context, that "[t]he need to focus on white suffering, white fragility, to say it is not your fault, produces a paradox at its center where those racialized as white are victims of the racism from which they benefit" (p. 152).

Persons who, due to intersectional experiences of discrimination, have acquired in a painful way what Anzaldúa (1987/2012) called a special *facultad* (capacity) to reveal mechanisms of violence that often remain invisible from a Eurocentric angle, must thus continue, even in the *decolonial era*, to expect from their supposed allies discursive forms of violence so that white privileges of (un)knowledge may remain undisturbed. In doing so, the costs (time, energy, emotional burden) associated with decolonizing knowledge production in and beyond educational institutions, as well as preparing the learning work for the group, are often outsourced to those already affected by discrimination, in a way that it leaves them exhausted (see Schwarzbach-Apithy, 2017). It is the sum of the costs associated with disturbing spaces dominated by whiteness, that often demotivates Migra*BIPOC to join and/or collaborate with these spaces and contributes to that anti-war and pacifist movements are still predominantly white (Azarmandi, 2018; Martínez, 2012). In this sense, the Chicana activist Martínez (2012) argues that it is "racist ideas and practice among white activists [that] hold back building the strongest possible anti-war movement" (p. 62) and goes on that the "resistance to defining anti-war struggle as anti-racist can be found [in the U.S.] in the War Resisters League, which has been almost entirely white for eighty years" (p. 64).

Thus, if we are seriously interested in decolonizing knowledge in- and outside peace psychology in terms of a transformative practice, this must necessarily start with us as co-producers of coloniality who are deeply involved and entangled in it. We should aim at understanding how and when we co-create it, and what renouncing of

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[31] In fact, avoiding being a mood killer was one of the key reasons why Migra*BIPOC students in the afore-mentioned BRIDGES project disengaged in settings where social phenomena (segregation, discrimination, integration) would be discussed. For more information, download the tool "Neoliberal Compliance" on: https://buildingbridges.space/neolibcomp/.

epistemic/affective/material (white/Eurocentric/androcentric) privileges concretely means, to try avoiding a rhetoric that in its effects reproduces colonial relations of violence and privilege. At least, renouncing of something cannot mean that everything remains the same, right? DP as a transformative practice is thus an uncomfortable process in which none of us performs flawlessly, as the colonial matrix operates along different axes of oppression and through complex mechanisms, as I have tried to show in this chapter. The point being made here is to recognize and take responsibility for our own involvement in the production and perpetuation of power and violence. A *decolonizing peace psychology* can tackle these affective fortresses of coloniality (and their harmful effects) within the peace movement, within peace-strengthening institutions, such as the Civil Peace service, or within peace research itself.

Conclusion

> If the current paradigm is a colonial system that is racist, capitalist, heterosexist, and ableist, a paradigm shift can only be theorized and moved toward if we critically and intersectionally engage race, gender, class, sexuality, and so forth. For peace continues to be an impossibility as long as we do not address coloniality. *(Azarmandi, 2018, p. 77)*

The goal of this text was to offer some food for thought on what decolonial/decolonizing perspectives on peace psychology could mean as a transformative practice - and to distinguish it from a mere rhetoric that stabilizes the fortresses of coloniality. In this sense, the chapter did not aim at reconciliation, but rather at incommensurability. This may have disappointed those who thought that there was an easy solution to decolonize peace studies and peace psychology, a blueprint even. Unfortunately, one of the key fortresses of coloniality lie in the constitution and make-up of academic work itself, rendering indispensable a thorough re-composition of academic work as a *technique of learning*, and of its members as speakers, listeners, writers, and observers.

Decolonization does not mean integrating peripheral knowledge into a hegemonic canon of thought that remains largely untouched. Nor does it mean engaging in a diversity conditioned by coloniality that upholds hegemonic thinking by legitimizing it further through a *diversity discourse* (Thompson & Zablotsky, 2016). The point is to initiate an honest debate at eye level that considers one's own involvement with colonial-based forms of violence. To do so, it is not enough to read Cusicanqui (2012) or to quote Tuck and Yang (2012) with the half sentence, that *decolonization is not a metaphor,* to enact ourselves as allies. It is also not necessary to look at the other side of the world and to import decolonial perspectives from there. They can help us to question and better understand our postcolonial relations of violence in our own context, yes, but the homework to do so and to draw our own consequences remains with us: Which people and which knowledge is (not) part of our research and the curriculum we teach? Under what conditions do we integrate them, and what level of incommensurability can we deal with? Who are *we,* and where are we positioned along the axes of coloniality? How do we deal with the distribution of epistemic/material/authoritative resources? And are we ready to redistribute them?

Decolonizing is thus not so much about what we say, but what we do. Turning the gaze towards our own practices – without, however recentering ourselves through our emotional affectedness (e.g., by white guilt or white fragility) – may be a starting point to

transform academic practices and thus decolonize peace psychology, peace activism, etc. The pursuit of DP to transform our academic practice is thus also first and foremost an ethical responsibility – before being one of moral or intellectual superiority. The direction is a different one: Whereas the first makes me humble and responsible, the other one makes me defend myself and to justify. I hope that this distinction can help to identify the difference.

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