Researching Race in the Colonial Academy: An Introductory Context

The call for papers for this Special Section was driven by two significant questions: First, why is it that Management and Organization Studies (MOS) largely neglects theorizations of race – i.e., what race is and what race does – even as it writes *about* race, or more precisely, about people marked as racially Other? And second, how might theorizations of race help clarify what is needed to suspend acts and effects of historical and ongoing racial injury in organizations and beyond? Underlying both questions lies a concern with the persistence of racial injury and a search for the possibilities of racial justice.

We began contemplating these questions during a stream on *Race and Coloniality at Work* at the Gender, Work and Organization Conference in Sydney, Australia, in 2018. This Special Section was conceived as the next step of the conversations begun there. Yet, it has taken a long time to come to fruition a major reason being the pandemic, which affected authors and reviewers as well as us, the editors. During the pandemic, the conditions of performing academic labour were radically altered, which created an intensification of work - including an increase in need for pastoral support for students - yet universities and the academic publishing machine in general appeared to demand an unaltered rate of productivity. We recognise this as an effect of the coloniality of work and organizations, in which racialized bodies work under differential conditions of labour because the idea that they do not need to be cared for, as fully human, has already been normalized.

In opposition to this, we sought to move with deliberate slowness - insisting on a generosity and spaciousness for authors, reviewers, and ourselves. We were keenly aware of the racial and gendered fault lines produced by the pandemic, within and beyond academia (Davis et al., 2022; Thobani, 2022), and therefore that slowness and care was doubly significant. We were also starkly reminded of the prevailing carelessness of neoliberal academia when the employing university of two members of the Special Section editorial team went through an insolvency-driven organizational restructuring brought about by the mismanagement of university finances, resulting in one member of the team eventually being made redundant with little notice and no compensation.

We include this preamble as a reminder that texts are always produced in context, although the conditions might not show in the finalized text itself. Nevertheless, such invisible traces matter, as the articles in this Special Section show.

Recursive Critique: Race and Management and Organization studies

Management and Organization Studies does not have a good track record on race. Already in 1990, Cox and Nkomo (1990; also Cox, 1990) first revealed the silence on race in the field at a time when social sciences from sociology to anthropology and law to education studies had all had to contend with the issue. Fifteen years later, Proudford and Nkomo (2006, p. 335) made the sad observation that "we are left where we started: we still know that differences exist, but little about the mechanisms that perpetuate

and sustain those differences and, consequently, how to eradicate the negative consequences of racial differences in organizations." This sorry state has all but continued to this day. Recently, Nkomo has yet again drawn attention to the "lack of significant progress in making race a core analytical concept in MOS" (Nkomo, 2021, p. 213). Following Nkomo's provocations, we suggest that a possible explanation for this situation is MOS's inattentiveness to how power operates through the analytic of race even though many other operations of power have been analyzed closely.

Engagements with race, race-ing and racialization in MOS appear primarily to be aligned with a simplified sociology of race (see Ray, 2019), reduced mostly to the race relations model deriving from the United States. The race relations model effectively assumes that "racial prejudice arises out of a *natural* antipathy between groups on the basis of difference" (Steinberg, 2001, p. 57; *emphasis added*). As such, it offers "a palliative orientation: 'improving' the way in which two or more 'races' and their members act and act toward one another" (Winant, 2007, p. 1852). Accordingly, early research into race in organizational contexts was focused on prejudice and discrimination ensuing from racial differences, and mostly in the North American contexts (see Nkomo, 1992 for an overview). Vestiges of this race relations logic, with its focus on difference that in itself explains antipathy and tensions, are evident in the contemporary diversity management literature, under which the study of race has become subsumed in MOS (Nkomo, 2021). In this confined space, if not a niche, race has then been diluted and tamed, and often approached as a variable attributed to individuals rather than as a complex of processes of social formation (Ahonen et al., 2014).

Extending beyond the race relations imperative, the sociology of race is concerned with explaining "the relationship between economic and symbolic dimensions of [racial] existence" (Silva, 2001, p. 428). In other words, the sociology of race describes the economic, social and cultural arrangements that constitute the life of the racial Other. Studies of race in MOS that do build on this broader foundation commonly seek to describe and analyse how the racially Other inhabits organizations, with the starting point of managing racialized bodies where race is seen as an already existing category of difference that needs to be managed, usually either to reduce conflict or toincrease productivity. The category however is understood as only applying to some members of the organization, as "only racial/ethnic minorities are viewed as having race" (Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2014, p. 395). Racialized bodies appear against a "sharp white background" (Rabelo et al., 2020, p. 1842), through which they are scrutinized and judged as "safe versus threatening; worthy versus undeserving; valid versus illegitimate; acceptable versus deviant; valuable versus expendable" (ibid.), and stereotyped, often, at the nexus of race and gender. Race then appears through the shaping of organizational identities, creating barriers for those occupying racialized identities as they seek to enter the organization (Kang et al., 2016), advance upwards in them (Tomlinson et al., 2013; Wyatt and Silvester, 2015), and continues to affect those who have achieved elite leadership roles (Glass & Cook, 2020). Explicitly intersectional analyses of such identities are conducted by, for example, Atewologun and Singh (2010) who show the various ways in which Black professional women and men negotiate organizational norms related to race and gender. Carrim and Nkomo (2016) combine intersectionality theory with the concept of identity work to draw attention to how managerial identities

– in this case those of South African women managers – are not only a matter of individual strategies, but shaped by socio-historical, political and cultural conditions. Their study points towards the role of "institutionalized processes and systems" (p. 273) in identity formation and thus paves the way for important questions regarding "how racial identity both organizes and is organized and what role organization and management practices and knowledges have in those processes" (Greedharry, Ahonen & Tienari 2020, p. 655). In other words, organizational processes do not simply exercise power on already racialized bodies; instead, they "do the work of making race" (Greedharry, Ahonen & Tienari 2020, p. 658).

Accounts which move towards what Greedharry and her co-authors (2020) articulate as organizational processes recognize how race impacts arrangements of (economic and social) life. And insofar as these arrangements produce differential economic and social effects, contemporary examinations of race in MOS are impelled by the need to describe how this difference is produced and experienced in organizations through relations of power; and how history continues to play out in organizations in racial terms (Grimes, 2002; Nkomo & Al Ariss, 2013; Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014; Riad & Jones, 2013).

Sociological studies that focus on describing how race impacts organizational life often focus on the experience of injury, perpetrated through microaggressions, prejudice, bias (see alexander, 2022; Mandalaki & Prasad, 2022; Smith et al., 2019; Prasad & Qureshi, 2017; Wooten, 2019). Here, the description of injury is deemed necessary in order to rectify offending ideas and practices, and thereby prevent future injury (see Bell et al., 2021; Bell, 2020; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2013; Erskine & Bilimoria, 2019; Murrell, 2021; Opie & Roberts, 2017). This approach, however, can be critiqued for reifying differences as natural and, as such, offering limited engagement with the prevalence, and indeed normalization, of injury as an effect of structural power.

Critical approaches to the study of race constitute the point of departure for this Special Section. In so doing, we have sought to go beyond an understanding of the study of race as the description of the arrangements of organizational life and the experiences of injury. This move stems from a concern with comprehending the socio-structural power signified by categories and classifications of difference, and the imperative to undo the same. This necessitates an examination of the processes of categorization and classification – i.e. how racial difference comes to be constituted.

For example, extant literature using critical approaches theorizes racial difference as constructed through historical, social, and organizational discourses, including EDI praxis (Holvino and Kamp, 2009). Here, racial discourse is implicated in the operation of power relations that not only produce injury but also become posited as the condition of possibility for redress and emancipation (cf. Ahonen and Tienari, 2015). Similarly, the appropriation of Critical Race Theory (CRT) within MOS, has sought to demonstrate the constitutive role of racial difference in modern arrangements of economic, social and organizational life. CRT demands an examination of how systems and structures *de facto* produce racial injury – specifically discrimination and exclusion – and advances the need for transforming the same (cf. Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, 1989). Consequently, CRT literature within MOS follows from a recognition of how modern organizational

architectures are constructed through the exclusion of the racial Other (see Dar et al., 2021; Muzanenhamo & Chowdhury, 2021; Minefee, 2018). This approach, as Nkomo (2021) notes, seeks to establish organizations as always already racist – i.e., spaces that are symbolically, and thus materially, organized through the evacuation of racially othered living. Hence, the possibility of redressing racial injury and realizing racial justice is contingent upon undoing racial power.

In thinking about the research we wanted to foster through this special section, and beyond, we begin from the standpoint that racial power is an effect of coloniality. In particular, we wished to emphasize that, insofar as race is "the deepest and most enduring expression of colonial domination" (Quijano 2001-02 cited in Lugones, 2008, p. 3), the study of racial power in organizations necessitates a reckoning with coloniality. The logic of coloniality helps comprehend the epistemic paradigm that naturalizes, and thus legitimizes, formations of "culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production [as they exist] well beyond the strict limits of colonial administration" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 243). Thus, tracing the arrangement and operation of racial power, while necessary, is not adequate to undoing it. What is required, instead, is an interrogation of the very terms - i.e. the epistemic ground - upon which (our) knowledge and understanding of race, racial domination/injury and racial liberation/justice operates, and by which it is also limited.

Thus, taking as a starting point how racial difference is understood and conceptualized in contemporary MOS literature, our call invited contributions that address what often remains hidden in organizational relations, identities, and practices: how coloniality depends upon the production of racial difference and the diverse power mechanisms that operate through that difference once it is produced and reproduced. Nevertheless, in response to this call we noted an apparent separation between analyses of race and coloniality, reflecting the difficulty in understanding coloniality as a present context rather than historical background. Theorisations of race may not explicitly invoke coloniality and vice versa, but as we discuss in the following section, we find an explanation or countering of colonial logic in the contributions we received that future research could build on.

Countering Colonial Logics: Contributions to the Special Section

The challenge of theorizing race and processes of racialization in management and organizations is to find ways of doing so without reproducing the colonial logics that race and racialization depend upon. One important methodological shift in approaches to question or race and racialization in MOS has been greater recognition and legitimacy of autoethnographic accounts of racism at work. Analyses written in the first person show clearly how norms of organizational life, including the diversity and inclusion practices developed to address problematic norms, produce an experience of devaluation, degradation, and dehumanization for the racialized or minoritized worker. The value and purpose of such narratives is to help the autoethnographer make sense of the experienced effects of racialization, but it is still a relatively rare instance where such narratives also directly broach the question of how coloniality has come to produce the category of race. We received several autoethnographic contributions and the

question the editors had to reflect on was, how do autoethnographies help us think about coloniality and race? In this Special Section, Salmon's article points to the coloniality of the workplace itself, a location where "[t]he university benefited from appearing to address race, while continuing to leave a white power structure in place" (p. 12). Ethnographic accounts often foreground colonialism as a historical context but have more difficulty in presenting coloniality as a set of power relations that organize the present. Salmon's analysis, focusing on the most contemporary practices of equity, diversity, and inclusion, allows us to see coloniality at work now.

We understand autoethnography as a necessary anchoring point in thinking about the relations between race and coloniality. In one sense they appear to reconfirm the naturalness of categories of difference because people use them as if they were 'real' in their own lives. The very production of narratives about how life is lived seems to confirm the naturalness of the categories under description. But, of course the best autoethnographies, autobiographies, and autotheories, foreground the very constructedness of the category — and in the literal sense, therefore, the *unnaturalness* of being 'black' or 'brown'. The autoethnographies of racialized, racially minoritized, workers, then, are powerful reminders of the labour that racialized subjects undertake in making themselves out of their categories, even when such categories appear to open them to traumatizing experiences of the workplace. A diversity subject, for example, must learn to be a very particular kind of racialized subject, as the work that critiques diversity practices clearly shows (Ahmed, 2012; Ahonen & Tienari, 2015), and when they do not conform, as Donahoo, Salmon, and Sobande and Wells all demonstrate in this Special Section, they have to negotiate the ontological consequences of their non-conformity also. The personal narrative (Salmon), the poem (Sobande and Wells), bodily aesthetic (Donahoo) and the artwork (Riad and Jones), make visible the constructedness of the categories and thus remind us of the continual effort required to produce the racialized subject that coloniality requires; a production that may also, sometimes, be partly joyful, affirming and (re)generative.

There is an indicative tension in the autoethnographies between the difference that the racialized subject labours to produce, reproduce, or resist, and the norms that they are working with. The use and discussion of different forms (art, poem, aesthetics, narrative) underlines the social, ethical, and political constructedness of racial difference, but without direct exposition and critique of the epistemologies underlying these categories the racialized subject's necessarily sophisticated understanding of their own experience of race cannot be fully mobilized to destabilize and demolish norms established by the logic of coloniality. Direct discussion of colonial epistemology draws attention to the ways in which racialization requires and advances knowledges that produce and discipline racial norms through and at work. Donahoo's interviews with Black women demonstrate that the women themselves have an acute understanding of the racist beauty norms that govern the possibilities of their employment, promotion, success, and retention in organizations. It is in interpreting those experiences through Black Feminist Thought, with its focus on surviving and resisting injustice, that Donahoo exposes how Western norms of beauty enforce the colonial order of things at work.

Han offers an even more direct account of how coloniality requires knowledges and practices of racialization, namely the colonial epistemologies that underwrite Western academia as a whole. Drawing on the potential of autoethnographic narrative, as discussed above, Han combines her experience as an anthropology student and scholar with critique of the organizational conditions of anthropology itself. Anthropology offers a particularly salient example of colonial epistemology, not only because it was instrumental in constructing and maintaining the authority of Western and Western-trained scholars to represent the non-Western world but because it seemingly has already passed through a postcolonial moment of self-reflexivity. As Han notes, in the case of anthropology disciplinary reflexivity has not led to significant change: "white academic privilege leads to exclusion of racialised people, which leads to the status quo of anthropology as a white discipline through the maintenance of white predominance as well as suppression of non-white knowledge" (p. 8).

The relative ease with which colonial epistemology can accommodate discussion, reflection, or critique of colonial history while preserving structures and practices of racialization points to a crucial role for those of us who study organizations, labour, and employment now. Colonialism is easily metonymized into time (the past) or space (the Third world or the Global South) that is irrelevant to or separate from the capitalist modernity of our workplaces and organizations today. The articles by Stevano, Cook-Lundgren, and Kalemba pay precise attention to the ways in which coloniality organizes labour and still depends upon the maintenance of racializing norms. Stevano's study of cashew factory workers in Mozambique observes that "[c]apital's ability to pay workers below the cost of social reproduction is enabled and reinforced by the sociological and cultural construction of African workers as different and somehow able to cope with low pay and harsh working and living conditions'' (Stevano, p. 9). Kalemba's study of precarious employment among young African migrants shows us the mirror image of the same colonial logic in contemporary Australia. In their search for work, young African workers in a deindustrializing town are, once again, positioned as those who are 'naturally' suited for dirty work. In refusing particular kinds of work to those with African names and bodies contemporary "hiring practices [that] ensure that the racial distribution of labor continues, because they guarantee that migrant Black African youth compete for work under unequal conditions" (Kalemba, p. 13).

It is important to reiterate here that the processes of racialization do not operate upon Black and brown bodies in isolation, but in relation to the white bodies that are also disciplining and being disciplined by racial norms. Cook-Lundgren's examination of the 'expatriate' worker in an American international development organization in Kenya shows us a less obvious side of the persistent dynamic of coloniality in labour relations. The dominance of American management knowledge in the Kenyan context produces a 'natural' differentiation between workers once again, where "foreigners are suited to the analytical or complex problem-solving work, whereas this is lacking in Kenyans" (Cook-Lundgren, p. 10) who are presumed to have local or context-specific knowledge only. This dynamic is strikingly familiar to what Kalemba and Stevano find in their research sites, confirming once again the coloniality of labour as articulated by Quijano (2000). At the same time, similarly to Han's article, Cook-Lundgren draws our attention back to the problem of epistemology itself: "Narratives of meritocracy within SEN also serve to

conceal the operation of epistemic dominance" (p. 12). In other words, it is in the 'natural' way that American knowledge about management comes to construct American and other expatriate workers as superior to their Kenyan colleagues that we can see the logic of colonialism continuing. The foreign workers are not positioned as superior directly through their bodies but through their proximity to and use of American management knowledge.

As we have noted, attention to colonial epistemology is necessary to mobilize racialized subjects' own understanding and analyses of their experiences; but we want to emphasize that this need not take the methodological form of direct discussion of the episteme. Rather, a pressing analytic task is to show a meaningful and substantive connection between the micro-encounters of racism and racialization and the macro-structures of coloniality. In their article, Fox, Ramanath, and Swan both explain and explore the value of combining ethnomethodological approach with conversation analysis to reveal how a manager, in an everyday workplace conversation, makes race "relevant to his argument" (Fox, Ramanath, and Swan, p. 19) for supposedly disciplining an employee. The point, as the authors make clear, is not simply that the manager uses a racist insult, which is undeniably harmful to the individual, but that the way he does so reveals colonial authority to control the space, displacing and excluding racialized workers from the everyday interactions that are central to the smooth functioning of the organization (Fox, Ramanath, & Swan, p. 18).

The methodology that Fox, Ramanath, and Swan develop also reminds us that what may be important for us as scholars of race and coloniality is what Spivak has called a catachrestic, an affirmative *mis*use, of Western methods and theories. In speaking back to their peer reviewers, the authors were called on to make complex articulations between ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, membership category analysis, critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and organization studies. This sometimes threatened to overwhelm the authors' *primary* task of examining "the specific categories and devices that make up forms of racism, and how these are deployed in specific organizational contexts for particular institutional aims" (Fox, Ramanath, & Swan, p. 4). In other words, we need to be less preoccupied with whether we are confirming existing theories of racialization and colonialism, however influential and valuable, and more attuned to what those theories and methods allow us to say, perhaps even using them unconventionally and in combination with unexpected intellectual resources as needed. Above we alluded to the fact that studies of colonialism and coloniality, as well as race and racialization, easily settle into certain metonymic relations which are related to the disciplining pressure on us, as scholars, to cite the right theorists, show we understand them accurately, and use them as conventionally understood. Riad and Jones remind us that our interpretative metonymies, including our theories and methods, are dangerous when we allow them to become rigidified, especially in the ways that specific theories and approaches become the only acceptable way in which to think and imagine the relations between race and colonialism. In their discussion of intersectionality, through close reading of American artist Kara Walker's interventions in racial representation, Riad and Jones challenge us to "to be vigilant of intersectionality's metonymy, but also conscious of our own metonymizing practices" (p. 22). Counter-intuitively, then, there are times, as Riad and Jones provoke us to consider, when we must refuse

intersectionality, or Quijano's (2000) account of the coloniality of labour, or other postcolonial methods and theories that we cling to at theoretical risk to our real work. We must

> refuse [intersectionality] when it leads to naturalization of race or gender, fixing them in the "colonial difference," and use it to open up specific positional and provisional analyses that are sensitive to power relations and which confound narrow and rigid categorizations of the manifestations of difference and their intersections (Riad & Jones, p. 22).

Race, Coloniality and Knowledge Production: Some Research Trajectories

We began this introduction by noting our concern with the limitations of contemporary MOS literature in addressing the persistence of racial injury and the possibilities of racial justice. The papers in this Special Section respond to this concern by anticipating the need for our work to address the problem of racial signification – i.e., of the institution of racial categories as arbiters of meaning and value. This entails, in fact, an abolitionist praxis directed not only at race but, crucially, at coloniality.

Race is an invention of the modern episteme (cf. Foucault, 1970; Wynter, 2003). In particular, it emerges as an effect of the modern notion that the human mind can know the properties of objects with certainty, and the associated epistemological proposition that establishes these properties as ontological effects (see Silva, 2016; Wynter, 2003). Accordingly, racial categories are constructed, mostly, through descriptions of empirical differences in the appearance of bodies, and the institution of these differences as manifestations of the truth of the human condition (ontology) (Silva, 2001). Furthermore, the modern episteme addresses difference as primordial, and therefore fundamental and irreconcilable, and seeks to map difference against an established ideal so as to render the World into an ordered whole (Silva, 2016).

This is the basis of colonial logic that establishes the priority not only of the Human over all other forms of existence but also of the European form over all other appearances of the human. Race as manufactured ontological difference becomes race as ethical difference (or what Wynter (2003) calls "value distinction"). In other words, colonial logic not only institutes the racial Other as the "physical referent of the idea of the irrational/subrational [as well as dysselected-by-Evolution] Human Other" (Wynter, 2003, pp. 266-267) but also produces "'race' [as] the non-supernatural but no less extrahuman ground… of the answer that the secularizing West would now give to the Heideggerian question as to the who, and the what we are" (2003, p. 264). In other words, it is colonial logic that advances the "*racial* as a modern category of being" (Silva, 2001, p. 423).

Every encounter with race is thus necessarily an encounter with coloniality. And it is only through the abolition of colonial logic that race may be abolished as a means of organizing and managing being. Yet, as noted above, colonial logic is constitutive of the modern episteme - to our ways of comprehending the World as an ordered whole made up of distinct and irreconcilable parts. Within this context, the (colonial) location of the (European bourgeois conception of the) Human as the ideal representative (in both senses)

of order, always already renders the racial Other as essentially different and thus a primal threat to order/the World (see Silva, 2016).

Engaging with colonial logic, as we have aimed to do in this Special Section, thus helps underscore how our ways of knowing are contingent on racial Othering, and as such, always already produce racial harm and injustice. Engaging with colonial ways of knowing facilitates a move away from the content and operation of racial categories and necessitates instead a reckoning with the formation of racial categories as an effect of the principles of knowledge production. As such, it helps reveal how the disruption of racial harm and injustice is contingent upon epistemic disruption.

To be sure, merely describing the operation of coloniality cannot in and of itself produce such disruptions. But without such a reckoning, we cannot begin to let go of our attachments to contemporary tools of critique (Silva, 2001). What we need, instead, is to "unleash the imagination's radical creative capacity and draw from it what is needed for the task of thinking The World otherwise" (Silva, 2016, p. 59)- i.e. to abolish the coloniality of (our own) thought (see Silva, 2014 and 2016 for an account of what this thinking otherwise might entail).

The contributions in this special section give us clear markers for how we might begin to untangle, disrupt, and abolish the coloniality of our own thought. The autoethnographies, interviews with, and explorations of the racialized subject's experiences at work help us understand how coloniality requires not just the production, but the self-reproduction of race. Documenting the processes and aesthetic practices through which racialized subjects negotiate workplace norms and structures gives us a basis from which to see how racial categories might eventually be unraveled. We are reminded of the constructedness, mobility, and unnaturalness of racial categories, which exposes the contingent nature of coloniality itself. The studies of employment, across different contexts and conditions, help us understand the repetitive logic of coloniality, which reinscribes and normalizes the idea that some workers are 'naturally' better suited to dirty, onerous, local, low-skilled, or precarious work. The contemporaneity of these cases from Mozambique to Australia in this Special Section shows us clearly that coloniality does not just repeat, but reacts to, readapts, and redeploys the differential value of racialized bodies established by earlier forms of colonialism and colonial ways of knowing. Race has been established as a modern category of being and is now used to various effects to maintain and consolidate particular relations of power. And, finally, the critical reflections on the theories we use to study the relations between race and coloniality point us towards the need to be more deliberately flexible and provocative in the ways we engage with the colonial episteme that underlies our own scholarship. As we noted above, the readiness of contemporary academia to reabsorb and recuperate critical discussions of race, colonialism, and decolonization, without fundamentally disturbing the conditions of academic labour, should both infuriate and incite us to focus on the task of abolishing the coloniality of our thought rather than reinsert ourselves into the colonial episteme as 'decolonial experts'.

This Special Section is an invitation to extend all those lines of research forward. We conclude with four directions that we think are particularly important:

- · Articulating race and coloniality together;
- · denaturalizing and defamiliarizing racial categories;
- · constructing organizational whiteness; and
- · disrupting the colonial episteme.

Articulating race and coloniality together. As we noted above, despite our explicit call for contributions that would articulate race and coloniality together, the submissions we reviewed found it difficult to speak to both orders of analysis. We have proposed, following foundational scholars in the literature, that race is an effect of the colonial order of things, but we need more theorization and articulation of what this means in organizational contexts and how this works here and now, rather than as a historical legacy. This means thinking more precisely about the situated relations of power we find: exactly which structural, organizational, and institutional processes incite, produce, and reproduce the meanings and effects of race? In a commonsense way, we often understand the recursions of racism discussed in the literature to be a sign that relations of power also remain, broadly speaking, the same. As we have noted, the studies of employment practices in this Special Section do clearly show signs of a pattern, but we read this as an effect of the logic, not actually identical relations of power among the agents in each of those cases. The educated Kenyans being displaced within their organization are in a different situation than the young African migrants being refused entry to skilled employment, and it is important that our analyses can show how coloniality orders and reorders the meanings of race to maintain its logics.

Denaturalizing and defamiliarizing racial categories. The abolition of colonial logics requires a complicated disinvestment, in our methods but also in our very self-understanding, from racial categories (Gilroy, 2000). We understand autoethnography as an important development in feminist, critical race, queer, and postcolonial studies of management and organizations, and, at the same time we urge fellow race scholars to use their studies of the aesthetic, phenomenological, and experiential dimensions of racial injustice to unravel the naturalness and obviousness of giving a colonial account of ourselves. The queer scholar of colour, José Esteban Muñoz, explores this through his conceptualization of disidentification (Muñoz, 1999; see also Lykke, 2014), a practice in which we resist both identification and non-identification or counter-identification. In other words, we want to begin to transform the logic of coloniality from within its categories and distinctions, by both refusing to speak naturally of ourselves as racialized and equally refusing to speak of ourselves as 'universal' or 'Human' subjects, a discourse from which we have been systematically excluded.

Constructing organizational whiteness. For us it goes without saying that whiteness, just as much as Blackness or brownness, is a racial category that requires disinvestment, but we separate it out here because continuing colonial relations of power mean that it is a different project with a different itinerary. White subjects are, *de facto*, universal, Human subjects, which would make it a somewhat facile gesture

to disidentify from whiteness. However, future research needs to build on, expand, and even partly complicate the extant work on whiteness within MOS to examine not only whiteness as a norm, whiteness as property, white supremacy, and white privilege in organizations but also the multiple histories, boundaries, limits, and liminalities of whiteness in and through organizations. This work should aim to address and reveal how coloniality operates through (its) organizational whiteness.

Disrupting the colonial episteme. Finally, we need a much more intellectually courageous and transformative engagement with the colonial episteme and its methods. Marginalized knowledges have historically negotiated their way into scholarship through unconventional and unexpected combinations of methods and disciplines. We would like to see more contemporary scholarship that, in pursuit of the object of colonial abolition, is less preoccupied with citing the same scholars and proving their knowledge of the correct applications of methods and more focused on what will allow us to say what we want to say about how the meanings of race are turned into organizational and social effects. The contributions to this Special Section gesture towards a range of ways in which we might begin to do this, from the serious consideration of poetry and art as modes of knowing; to the combination of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis with organizational studies of race; to the rejection of theories that threaten to reify analyses of race into a colonial grid of knowledge. This is, undeniably, a risky direction. As Alison Pullen asked in a slightly different, but related context, when we adopt practices and methods that are not yet validated, or might never be, "[d]o we perform the institutionalization of our own exclusion?" (Pullen, 2006, p. 289). At the same time, as we noted above, the ways in which the colonial episteme and its institutions can reabsorb and reuse both colonial and racial critique ought to make us bolder about defying its protocols. We do not have anything to lose except the validation of the colonial episteme.

The contributions to this Special Section provide some, although necessarily partial, means to begin thinking about the questions we have raised here. What is clear, however, is that Management and Organization Studies as a field needs to take race and coloniality seriously now. In 2030, which will mark forty years since Cox and Nkomo (1990) initially attempted to shake the field out of its complacency, we should be in a situation where a similar review should find a thriving subfield of research that produces insightful research that challenges and advances thinking in the field but also contributes to the understanding of race, racialization and race-ing well outside the boundaries of the field itself.

Acknowledgements

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