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DECOLONIZING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH HE/A/R/ TOGRAPHY: CORAZONAR, SENTIPENSAR Y SENTISABER

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The University of San Francisco

**DECOLONIZING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH
HE/A/R/TOGRAPHY: CORAZONAR, SENTIPENSAR Y SENTISABER**

Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of International and Multicultural Education

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

By
Patricia Rojas-Zambrano

Berkeley

April, 2023

The University of San Francisco

Dissertation Abstract

Decolonizing Mental Health Through He/A/R/Tography: Corazonar, Sentipensar y Sentisaber

Decolonizing mental health at large entails transformations in research, curriculum, and praxis. Activist scholars and mental health practitioners at the frontlines of social justice struggles must take part in collaborative inquiry that re-centers decolonial knowledge and praxis. Taking a decolonizing approach to research requires more than selecting a specific technique or method. We must also consider the context in which the research is being designed as well as the implications of the research, its values, its claims, and its relation to power. This means creating avenues beyond those privileged by cartesian dichotomies to access embodied knowledge, not only disembodied intellectual knowledge. This qualitative study uses He/a/r/tography, a research methodology created by the author drawing on a/r/tography a form of arts based educational research. He/a/r/tography is a unique philosophical orientation to research that offers epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological foundations towards decolonizing knowledge and mental health research and praxis. This study was conducted with a group of mental health practitioners who come together as a community of practice to learn from each other and re-imagine their clinical practice. Findings have implications for continuing education and training beyond the mental health profession and argue for the beneficial interconnectedness of heart centered pedagogies, art-based teaching, and learning, and decolonial frameworks. The weaving of these approaches generates a model towards a decolonial future in mental health.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Patricia Rojas-Zambrano April 26, 2023

Candidate Date

Dissertation Committee

Dr. David Donahue April 26, 2023

Chairperson Date

Dr. Monisha Bajaj April 26, 2023

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