Developing Decolonial Reflexivity: Decolonizing Management Education by Confronting White-skin, White Identities and Whiteness

Allen, S and Girei, E,

Academy of Management Learning and Education DOI: 10.5465/amle.2022.0387

Abstract

This paper explores the potential contribution that white academics based at a Western institution might offer to decolonizing Management and Organizational Knowledge (MOK). We consider how racial hierarchies underpin MOK and shape existing privileges embedded in higher education institutions in the UK. We reflect on how confronting having white-skin and white identities, and critically engaging with whiteness can contribute to decolonizing management education. We address two questions: How can we, and more broadly white academics, have a constructive role in debates on decolonizing MOK and education? And, what kinds of reflexivity does decolonizing MOK require of us so that we can engage in these debates without colonizing them? The paper consists of four sections: (i) introducing the broader context in which we make our contribution; (ii) exploring issues of identity, whiteness, blackness and otherness; (iii) considering how these issues may or may not be embedded in management and organizational education; and (iv) developing the new concept of decolonial reflexivity, and exploring what this means for white scholars, particularly in relation to ideas of discomfort. By engaging in decolonial reflexivity we hope to encourage stronger engagement from white scholars with issues of race, whiteness and white privilege in MOK and education.

Key words: Decolonizing, Management Education, Organizational Knowledge, Reflexivity, Discomfort, White Privilege, Whiteness, White Identities

1. What is the debate we are seeking to enter?

S - "The UK university has grown up through colonial histories. It is designed for the dissemination mode of passing on this 'wisdom' of Western thought or whatever. So how do we work within a UK university management school, realising that we're not going to bull-doze it and start from scratch?"

E - "Hum"

S - "Also, a large proportion of university income which comes through management and business schools in the UK is from international students, particularly Asian students, and the premise is that we know something that they don't, isn't it?

E - "Yes, and these ideas of global leaders able to work everywhere in the world in a globalised world, which is very much a world of neo-liberal western capitalism rather than really global, how can we work within these overarching demands that come from our institution?"

We have opened this paper with an excerpt of a conversation between us, the two authors, as part of a research project on decolonizing management education. We recorded and transcribed a conversation between us to capture our thoughts on how, as white scholars working for a UK university, we might contribute to debates on decolonizing management and organizational knowledge (MOK), specifically considering potential implications for management education.

Debates about decolonizing MOK share a broad interest in identifying, exploring and contesting how the legacies of colonialism continue to shape our world, perpetuating systems of oppression and exploitation. Thus, debates on decolonization are based on the acknowledgement that while direct rule colonization has ceased to exist virtually everywhere, the matrix of power on which it was based persists (e.g. Bhopal, 2018; Yancy, 2017). In this sense, several scholars use the term

'coloniality' to refer to the persistence and even expansion of colonial logics and asymmetries, employing the term 'decoloniality' (rather than decolonization) when referring to efforts to break away from colonial legacies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018b; Quijano, 2007). The use of decoloniality helps to distinguish intellectual and political endeavours from the historical process of decolonization which started with the end of direct rule colonization and the newly gained independence and sovereignty of former colonies. Thus, our use of the term 'decolonization' is aligned with 'decoloniality' and broadly refers to political and intellectual endeavours aimed at unmasking, contrasting and transcending the colonial matrix of power so as to advance "possibilities of other modes of being, thinking, knowing, sensing, and living" (Walsh, 2018a: 81)[1].

Research on decolonizing MOK and associated curricula have grown exponentially in the last fifteen years, as witnessed by the publication of special issues (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Jack et al., 2011; Jammulamadaka et al., 2021) articles in leading business and management journals (Author; Abreu-Pederzini and Suárez-Barraza, 2020; Dar et al., 2021; Darley and Luethge, 2019; Fougère and Moulettes, 2011; Girei, 2017; Kothiyal et al., 2018; Nkomo, 2011; Woods et al., 2022) and influential books (Bhambra et al., 2018; Prasad, 2003).

Crucially, these heterogeneous debates about decolonizing involve exploring MOK's complicity with what Mignolo (2003) calls the 'colonial difference', namely the systematic and instrumental silencing, annihilating and belittling of knowledges, histories and identities of citizens and communities from outside Western borders. Decolonial and postcolonial scholars point at

[1] For a detailed examination of the overlaps and differences between decoloniality, decolonization and postcolonialism, see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, SJ 2018a and Grosfoguel, R 2011.

MOK's ahistorical and de-contextualised character on which it grounds universalist pretensions (Jack and Westwood, 2006; Prasad, 2009), as well as epistemic violence to non-Western 'others'. This universalising and epistemic violence is argued to be enacted through both silencing and ontologically comparative approaches (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007).

Silencing means that MOK is predominantly based on white curricula, written by white men affiliated to US and European institutions, focusing on organizations and workers in Western contexts (Murphy and Zhu, 2012). An ontologically comparative approach refers to the extent to which organizations located outside the West are known only in how they differ/resemble the Western model (Kwek, 2003). This boundary-making systematically produces pejorative narratives about non-Western contexts and organizations, usually focusing on backwardness, irrationalities and, in more recent decades, corruption. Consequently, there are profound implications for management students, exposed to and educated from a body of knowledge rooted in the colonial tradition and complicit with imperialism and neocolonialism (Abreu-Pederzini and Suárez-Barraza, 2020; Boussebaa, 2020; Darley and Luethge, 2019; Woods et al., 2022).

Another important theme within debates on decolonizing MOK is the aim to unveil and contest institutional racism in management and business schools and higher education more generally. This includes the associated patterns of exclusion and alienation of students and members of staff racialized as non-white (Mbembe, 2016), and how these processes are naturalised and perpetuated by the market forces shaping higher education (Bhambra et al., 2020). For instance, these issues clearly emerge if we consider the broad under-representation of academics of colour

at professorial level as well as on the editorial boards of powerful and dominant journals (Doharty et al., 2021).

By acknowledging this background, we recognise, as expressed in the opening section of conversation, that as academics, teaching and researching at a UK management school, we are enrolled into institutional histories of creating and nurturing inequalities and patterns of domination associated with knowledge and power (Jackson, 2011; Prasad, 2003). This includes acknowledging that ideas developed about managerialism, hierarchies and capitalism, which are central to the identities and curricula of management and business schools, are infused with coloniality – such as teaching students to be 'global leaders' (Abreu-Pederzini and Suárez-Barraza, 2020) and so involved in perpetuating dynamics of cultural, racial and economic inequities (Alcadipani, 2017; Kothiyal et al., 2018). Consequently, when we write above that we will explore implications for management education, significantly this involves questioning taken-for-granted ideas about what constitutes the scope and purpose of MOK, and how doing so is fundamental to decolonizing. While we specifically focus on management education, our contribution draws on debates that question how western knowledge is produced and validated, and that aim to advance "radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought" (Walsh, 2018b: 17).

In recent years, we (the authors) have been studying and researching decolonization, focusing especially on how we could contribute to opening space for generating, informing and sharing alternative knowledges and ways of knowing which contrast with, and confront, the dominance

of a Western scientific canon and its colonial legacies. We do so acknowledging that our role in these debates, as white and western academics affiliated to a UK management school, is problematic. This is because there are common, explicit, political statements within debates on decolonization, aligned with self-determination and resistance struggles, which involve creating space for voices systematically suppressed that speak from, and for, students and academics of colour (Dar et al., 2021; Ibarra-Colado, 2006; Smith, 1999). There are also increasing concerns that embracing the 'decolonial bandwagon' (Moosavi, 2020), is enabling more white/Western/Northern scholars to reinscribe their privileges and prominence rather than contributing to advancing the decolonial agenda. As Mama reminds us, "while we may exercise a degree of agency in determining who we are, the point is that our choices are to some extent framed by the kind of bodies we inhabit, and by our social context" (2007: 6). Thus, entering into these debates that expose and contest the dominance of western voices and the marginalisation of others' voices requires us to critically scrutinise to what extent our presence in these debates can contribute to their advancement. Thus, the first of the two questions we address in this paper is: how can we, and more broadly white academics, have a constructive role in debates on decolonizing MOK and education?

In addressing this question, we draw on critical whiteness studies, focusing especially on their critiques of essentialist notions of whiteness and white privileges (usually based on epidermal whiteness as a fixed biological character), and their calls to reflect on those practices, structures and dynamics that reproduce racial inequalities (Liu, 2022). These debates invite us to problematise the portrayal of whiteness as a stable and transparent trope (Levine-Rasky, 2000), in favour of perspectives that understand it as a dynamic, historically constructed social

condition (Satzewich, 2000), entrenched in a Eurocentric worldview that produces and normalises the privileges of those considered white (Dar et al., 2021; Harris, 1993). As such, a commitment toward decolonizing MOK requires 'heightened reflexivity' (Moosavi, 2020), so to recognise, contest and uncouple ourselves from the ways in which whiteness and coloniality are continuously (re)constructed. This brings us to our second question which specifically addresses management education: what kinds of reflexivity does decolonizing MOK require of us so that we can engage in these debates without colonizing them? We go onto address this question by drawing on ideas of 'uncomfortable reflexivity' and 'pedagogies of discomfort' (Arday, 2018; Boler, 1999; Eriksen, 2022; hooks, 1994; Moosavi, 2022; Pillow, 2003; Zembylas, 2018), showing how developing a new concept of reflexivity can enrich debates on decolonizing MOK.

Mirroring the introduction to this article, the following three sections are introduced by excerpts from one of the initial conversations we had on decolonising management education, which we recorded and transcribed. While this is not an empirical study, we have used the transcript of our conversation as a way to draw some threads together which have emerged from our inquiring into decolonizing MOK, particularly prompting us to explore more literature on key themes. We repeatedly reflected together upon sections of the transcript as part of questioning each other about what we might be able to contribute to debates. Significantly, we wanted to make our situated 'raw' voices from the transcript visible as part of exploring ways to offer an embodied form of representation. We understand that the form of our writing is fundamentally important for the contributions that we seek to offer. This is because we want to connect with, and be informed by, researchers employing reflexivity as a practice for exploring decolonizing knowledge (e.g. Darley and Luethge, 2019; Mbembe, 2016; Nursey-Bray and Haugstetter, 2011;

Ruggunan, 2016), who do so to avoid creating imperialist texts which are decontextualized and assert 'superior' knowledge (Subreenduth & Rhee, 2010). By taking this approach we understand ideas about reflexivity to be informed by various theoretical perspectives connected with post-structuralism (e.g. Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1974; Mbembe, 2001; Mudimbe, 1988), feminism (e.g. Butler, 2004; Calás and Smircich, 2009; hooks, 1994; Mama, 1995), post-colonialism (e.g. Fanon, 1967; Prasad, 2003; Said, 2003) and decolonial studies (e.g. Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007). These perspectives nurture our disengagement with notions of universal truths and remind us of the importance of engaging with the ways we, as authors, produce our texts and stories, which are inevitably situated, precarious and embedded in our own subject positions (Burke, 2008; Calas and Smircich, 1999).

This paper develops through four sections. First, we critically explore how ideas of white-skin, white identities and whiteness can be understood to be distinct from, and interact with each other. In particular, we will problematize the ways in which our 'whiteness' (a term that we shall explore later) shapes and constrains our engagement with, and potential contributions to, debates on decolonizing management education. Next, we examine the relevance of reflexivity in decolonizing endeavours, and following this we propose what we call 'decolonial reflexivity'. In the final section we explore the implications and reflect upon the dilemmas of decolonial reflexivity.

2. How can we enter debates about decolonizing education?

> *E - "I'm just coming from the Development Study Association conference. There were several talks about decolonization, decolonizing development, decolonizing knowledge etc. One of their keynotes was given by Robtel Neajai Pailey and her very powerful*

speech was very much about the role that scholars of colour should play in decolonizing knowledge processes and education. So I want to question and explore what role I can have in these decolonizing processes?"

S - "Hum"

E - "But on the other side, I feel that, there is the need to mark distinctions between black and white, between northerner and southerner. So my question is: how can we use our privileged positions as white academics in a Western university to decolonize knowledge in ways that are not divisive by assuming that white academics can't contribute?"

S - "That's very interesting because I've enthusiastically thought 'yeah great decolonizing', this is something that really needs to be looked at. But then I feel I have kind of entered this space for decolonizing and the only possibility as a white academic seems to be to shut up."

E - "Hum"

S - "And as you have said, if we're recognized as having privileges and I am able to acknowledge that, but how is it that we can use that privilege productively in the process of decolonizing? One of the speakers at a recent event on decolonizing at the university, was saying it's a structural thing, there are white academics' bodies, and their writing, colonizing the curriculum and we need more black academics' bodies to address decolonizing. And so, when I want to advocate for decolonizing I feel like I am inadvertently stepping in and colonizing the decolonizing space.

In this section, we reflect on our potential to be participants in existing debates on decolonizing management education, and, in doing so, we want to critically engage with 'being white' and our affiliation with a Western management school. As illustrated in the excerpt of our conversation presented in the introduction to this section, if we are to connect being white to notions of privilege, being reflexive about what we have to offer requires an awareness of how racial hierarchies underpin MOK and shape the field. Pailey (2020) suggests that holding such appreciations is an important step for mainstreaming race and de-centring the 'white gaze'.

In our experience, ‘being white’ and affiliated with an English institution, accords us with several privileges. For instance, it situates us with advanced skills in writing and speaking in English (the native language for one of us), privileging us over others seeking to publish and circulate their texts in English language journals which are often products from colonized Northern Americas (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Barros and Alcadipani, 2022). Also, we have access to budgets from our institution in a currency that has global purchasing power, enabling our travel to present research at events and conferences which is funded as part of our university’s mission to internationalize and promote the impact of our research. Finally, working for a UK university with a reputation for delivering ‘high quality’ education, provides us with a multicultural audience with whom we can share our chosen teaching.

Our privileges are also apparent if we look at the staggering “invisible and everyday” inequalities within the UK Higher Education sector (Doharty et al., 2021: 242). Significantly, inequalities include academics of colour continuing to represent only a small minority (especially at professorial level), and experiencing racialized barriers involving exclusion and outsiderness (Arday, 2022). For students in UK Higher Education, it is calculated that there is a 13% attainment gap between BAME[2] students and their white counterparts, showing that their backgrounds significantly impact their degree outcomes (Universities UK and NUS, 2019). More broadly, Madriaga and McCraig (2019) argue that in England racial discrimination shapes access opportunities for all students of colour, international and national. Because of the invisibility and pervasiveness of whiteness, there is a substantial risk that it becomes naturalised, de-racialised

[2] This is the term used in the report we cite. However, we acknowledge that it does not reflect the heterogeneity of identities and experiences of the groups of people it refers to.

and disentangled from everyday oppression and exclusion experienced by academics and students of colour.

Consequently, it appears clear that privileges are socially and materially intertwined with white identities, and that white racial dominance shapes relations and processes in business schools (Dar et al., 2021). As lecturers with white-skin in a management school at a university in the UK, we realize that our lives are unavoidably intertwined within ongoing legacies of colonialism and imperialism, which means that our understanding of being-in-a-world varies significantly from others with different coloured skin, identities and backgrounds. For example, it could be argued that in UK Higher Education, being white is performative and acts as a "marker of ethnic differentiation based on white supremacy" (Madriaga and McCaig, 2019: 2), where our bodies are often construed to be part of some 'somatic norm' which inscribes us with various forms of power (Fanon, 1986; Puwar, 2004). Thus even if "white racial domination precedes us, whites daily recreate it on both the individual and the institutional level" (Leonardo, 2004: 139).

Clearly, we need to critically engage with how these privileges are constructed and reproduced, socially and historically. This might happen for instance, when racism is reduced to under-representation of black academics and is tackled with "nonperformative speech acts" (Ahmed, 2004) or tokenistic acts of inclusion (Doharty et al., 2021), which leave unaltered racialised hierarchies according to which privileges are accorded and exclusions and oppressions reproduced. A similar outcome might result from understandings of whiteness as a monolithic ahistorical and stable trope, which, even when used within anti-racism activism, might de-facto contribute to its naturalisation. This can occur when whiteness is placed outside of any processes

of social change by "defin[ing] the 'other' but it is not itself subject to others' definitions" (Bonnett, 1996: 98).

Historical perspectives on the construction of whiteness reveal not only that its contours have been subjected to several mutations, but also its internal stratification, emphasising the need to avoid conflations between whiteness, white as a somatic/epidermal trait and 'white identities' (Bonnett, 1998; Omi and Winant, 1994; Roediger, 1991). We suggest understanding whiteness as a dynamic, historically constructed social condition and worldview (Satzewich, 2000), entrenched in a Eurocentric worldview that produces and normalizes the privileges of those considered white (Harris, 1993; Dar et al., 2021). Whiteness is said to be simultaneously 'insidious' (Yancy, 2017), 'invisible' (Applebaum, 2010) and 'systemic' (Foste, 2020), in so far as despite its constructed nature and unstable borders, it clearly has material consequences, as discussed, for instance, with reference to racial discrimination in UK universities. Thus, although racial differences can be understood as a delusion and a myth (Loomba, 1998: 106), they have materialized into inequalities, which are evident in our societies and institutions.

Consequently, acknowledging the constructedness of whiteness and race more broadly must be accompanied by the acknowledgement of the perpetuation of oppression and discrimination on the basis of historically constructed racial differences (Loomba, 1998). For this reason, language binaries such as black/white, south/north, and eastern/western are often employed, especially by scholars and activists of colour, in debates, so to distinguish between different positionalities in colonial encounters and their legacies in our societies and institutions (e.g. Bhambra et al., 2018). However, we also acknowledge that attaching oppositional meanings to such binaries can be

detrimental if they become involved in naturalizing hierarchies of difference (Alcadipani et al., 2012), as well as inferring potential universalisms and even essentialisms of independent categories (Frenkel, 2008; Prasad, 2003). For instance, issues of alterity, Otherness, Africaness and identity have been at the centre of African intellectual production since the beginning of the twentieth century (Appiah, 1992; Kebede, 1994; Mudimbe, 1988). These debates have produced compelling narratives involving the intermingling of race, otherness, alterity and knowledge, but also provocative critiques about the employment of stable and fixed notions of identities, with regard to both their epistemological foundations and their political potential (Appiah, 1992; Kebede, 1994; Mbembe, 2001; Mudimbe, 1988).

Thus, in considering racial identities, we are aware of the dangers of essentialising, but we are also sensitive to its deployment as a political act. Despite our understanding of identity as fragmented, fragile and fugacious – which renders vacuous any grand universalising discourse based on skin colour – we also acknowledge that 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1988) can open up spaces for political activism (Mir et al., 2003), as it has happened with, for example, the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. However, care and political consciousness are needed so to avoid embracing what Mbembe calls 'nativism' i.e. "an alterity that must be preserved at all costs" (2001: 255), based on a racist paradigm which reproduces racial differences between black and white.

Drawing on these debates, we suggest that such binary categories need to be spoken and written about with care so that there can be appreciation for how, through constructing these binary categories, the associated separations and oppositions can diminish possibilities for recognising

nuances, possibilities for alliances and solidarity, and also the heterogeneity of identities and lived experiences within categories. By arguing that these binary categories need to be spoken with care, we intend to emphasize the need to reflect upon some key problematic positions within anti-racism debates, such as what Bonnett (1996) calls 'confessional anti-racism', where white bodies position themselves as the "anti-racism's' 'other', the eternally guilty and/or altruistic observers of 'race' equality work" (Bonnett, 1996, p. 107). And, as discussed earlier, where whiteness, despite its negative connotation, is reified as a transparent and monolithic racial category (Levine-Rasky, 2000). Such views significantly overlook not only the highly heterogeneous experience of white people (even within UK higher education), but especially do not engage with how whiteness is continuously (re)constructed and the processes through which this occurs. An engagement with these processes is important because it would help to develop a more nuanced understanding of racial domination, and to explore how it is produced within unfolding relations of domination, and in so doing, opening spaces for activism, solidarity and social transformation (Frankenberg, 1993).

This is a key insight for our reflections on decolonizing MOK, insofar as it invites us to unfold notions of whiteness and blackness, question any assumed stable contours or homogeneity and acknowledge that dynamics of domination and oppression are increasingly complex, fluid and often surreptitious. In this sense, the intellectual endeavour to subvert homogenising narratives calls for an understanding of privilege and of dynamics of subjugation able to appreciate on one side the fragmentation and undecidability of the human experience, but also the potential for common struggles beyond categories of skin colour. As Spivak points out, to say "we are just very good white people, therefore we do not speak for the blacks" (1990: 121), is a form of

breast-beating that reproduces hegemonic imperialist narratives. In this exploration on decolonizing education, we interpret Spivak's words as a call for academics (of all identities and bodily appearances) to take responsibility not only for the privileged positions that we may occupy, but more generally for unveiling the structures and processes through which whiteness is constructed and how it produces racialized subjects (Levine-Rasky, 2000). Reflecting on our identities along these lines resonates with calls to engage with what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018a: 8) calls "coloniality of being", which "requires an introspective process of reflecting on the self, as well as the lived experience of those around us" (Jimenez et al., 2022: 13), so to identify the ways in which we are implicated in the perpetuation of coloniality in order to confront and attempt to alter them.

In the previous pages, we have unfolded and problematised the notion of whiteness. We argue that decolonizing MOK requires appreciating that notions of whiteness are constructed and evolving, so as to take responsibility for the privileged positions it determines, and, more generally for unveiling the processes through which whiteness is constructed and so how it reproduces racialised subjects. Doing so we believe requires fresh attentions to differentiating between white-skin, white identities and whiteness – as we summarize from our discussion so far in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Given the contributions that we have reviewed and the conceptual distinctions which we have offered, a key concern is what kinds of reflexivity does decolonizing MOK require of us? We are

particularly aware of the dangers of modes of reflexivity which might seek to absolve and clean us of white identities supporting us to deploy our privileges with stealth. As mentioned in the second excerpt of our conversation, this refers to the possibility of white academics 'colonizing the decolonizing space' for career progression and for perpetuating the status quo. Whereby we could show our dexterity to draw upon 'black' and 'Southern' texts, and along with sufficient self-flagellation about our racialized white identities and histories, establish our legitimacy to speak. Consequently, we need to subvert a reflexivity that merely supports the "maintenance of the dominant western culture of knowledge creation" (Russell-Mundine, 2012: 85). The next section will build on these considerations of white identities and whiteness by exploring the possibilities for pluralising knowledge perspectives and associated voices to decolonize management and business education.

3. Pluralism – doing decolonizing in teaching?

S – "If decolonizing is a reaction to different inequalities that have been created and perpetuated between knowledges and different peoples' bodies, then it doesn't seem like the obvious reaction is to then try and counter that with an alternative form of knowing. To say of Western knowledge process that 'that's not the right way of knowing about this, the right way of knowing about it is over here and you need to get rid of those other ideas'. My dilemma in the classroom when teaching about managing and organizing is how to bring in different perspectives to explore a phenomena or situation.

E – "Hum"

S – What's the value of these different perspectives? Let students engage with different perspectives, see the value, because they will have different views about what is of value to their situation based on their circumstances and experiences, we can't be dogmatic as critical and reflexive educators.

E – "Hum"

> *S – "It's funny, yesterday I was completing a form, putting on my work objectives for the next year. One of the things I put on the form was to work on my teaching materials around decolonizing questions. In a way is that not quite demeaning to the agenda of decolonizing? So maybe I am guilty of boxing it off to be something achievable.*

In this excerpt of conversation, we focus on being reflexive in respect of different perspectives and paradigms and how it might contribute to decolonizing MOK.

A widely explored avenue for decolonizing management education concerns the pluralisation of curricula and engagement with diverse perspectives and traditions of knowledge production, focusing in particular on those historically marginalised, such as indigenous knowledge systems (e.g. Alcadipani et al., 2012; Fitzgibbons and Humphries, 2011; Nursey-Bray and Haugstetter, 2011). These contributions are informative for understanding possibilities for decolonizing management education. Although, an assumption which often seems to underlie discussions about bringing in alternative or indigenous knowledges into higher education is the potential for these ways of knowing to be captured as a 'perspective' that can be articulated, drawn upon and appropriated by teachers and students everywhere, including for instances in management and business education in the UK. However, there are epistemological challenges to such knowledge pluralism as different knowledges and ways of knowing are not so easily contained and codified into identifiable perspectives, and are grounded within different places and cosmologies (Weise et al., 2021).

In particular, modernity and preferences for rationality mean that more embodied forms of knowing which tend to not be written down are often side-lined or ignored as they are not able to be articulated and made 'transferable' (Jolly et al., 2011). Some scholars call this the "additive

approach", where carefully selected and de-contextualised segments from indigenous knowledge systems are unproblematically and instrumentally added and/or incorporated in western curricula so as to fit dominant scientific and economic frameworks, and argue that this approach might lead to their further appropriation and misrepresentation (McGregor, 2014; Weise et al., 2021). Consequently, such pluralisation of curricula might be seen as a mere technical answer which does not alter the status quo; this is because it is a strategy shaped by the needs and experiences of the centre (e.g. Western universities), and the inclusion of indigenous and southern voices in the curricula is an end in itself and not a means "to recenter the curriculum to validate knowledge systems other than the dominant Western worldview" (Woods et al., 2022: 84).

We are also concerned about how 'indigenous knowledge' is often employed within debates on the pluralisation of curricula. As Agrawal (1995) notes, despite its wide usage, there is still a lack of rigorous conceptualisation of 'indigenous knowledge', coupled with an orientation to conceptualise it as a static and immutable frame (see also Jackson, 2014; West, 2014). However, as discussed earlier with regard to 'western knowledge', indigenous knowledge is also better understood as a situated dynamic process, susceptible to changes, negotiations, contestations, and intersections with other knowledge systems (Briggs, 2013). Furthermore, since indigenous knowledge is rooted in political, cultural and social arrangements, it becomes important to consider how local power asymmetries and stratification across multiple dimensions (such as gender, kinship, class, education, age and so on) influence and shape what can be said and especially by whom (Weise et al., 2021). As Kothari (2001) suggests, what might appear as consensual, shared, and locally "true" may mask embedded and interiorised social controls and violence. These perspectives highlight the potential danger of romanticisation and

oversimplification of indigenous knowledge, which would run against the decolonizing purpose for which they were invoked.

Additionally, predominant attention toward indigenous knowledge and local/micro issues might not be able to capture overlaps and analogies across different geographical locations, which means neglecting arrangements that can reproduce and nurture neo-colonial relations and modes of production at global scales (Briggs, 2005). Significantly binary thinking about local/indigenous and global or South and North should be employed carefully and with attempts to consider the possible ways that different knowledge systems might be more intermingled and internally diversified than assumed by perspectives based on binaries (Quayson, 1997; Zeleza, 2005). To acknowledge the intersection and cross-contamination of Western and non-Western knowledge systems can also be seen as an act of intellectual reparation (Joseph, 2016), understood as the acknowledgement of the contributions of non-Western societies and individuals to knowledge creation and scholarships, including in those fields (such as MOK) dominated by western and white voices.

Based on our discussions in the previous paragraphs, we are cautious about understanding decolonizing education as developing knowledge pluralism in curricula, as taking such a position has been accused of taming decolonizing (Tuck and Yang, 2012). In this sense, Özkazanç-Pan contends that decolonizing implies coproduction "with 'the Rest of the world' rather than about 'the Rest of the world' [to] disrupt the hegemony of Western epistemology" (2008: 971). Similarly, Hamman et al. advocate for dialogic reflexivity between scholars from different contexts to open spaces for bridging Western and Southern management debates, by engaging

not only with cognitive and intellectual dimensions, but also "their sometimes painful, personal, and experiential aspects associated with legacies of colonialism and exclusion" (2020: 15).

Kothiyal et al. (2018) explore Indian management scholars' identity work to consider how reflexive practice can support the problematisation of the Western canon, as well as create possibilities for plural and hybrid forms of knowing. Embedded within the reflexive challenge of paying attention to multiple 'levels' is trying to unveil and subvert: 'othering' and 'universalising', insider-outsider binaries (Hamdan, 2009), and unsettle 'world-views' that are predicated on a particular gender, culture and/or socioeconomic status (Russell-Mundine, 2012). Nursey-Bray and Haugstetter (2011) who explore intercultural understanding by considering the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, suggest that it is crucial to question dominant paradigms and to develop 'reflexive praxis', a self-reflective practice to transform teaching and learning processes.

Building on these debates, we share calls for a stronger engagement with knowledge systems that confront and contest the Western canon. However, we recognize that this is a complex endeavour that cannot be simplified through the extrapolation and appropriation of 'other', potentially romanticised and commodified, forms of knowledge and knowing. For this reason, it has been suggested that reflexivity occupies a central place in decolonizing management education. We agree with this proposition, but we also find it important to explore what kind of reflexivity can be productive for decolonizing management education, particularly in light of our earlier discussions about whiteness and white identities, which we will consider in the next section.

Part 4: Decolonial reflexivity

E–- "One thing that we should do is to try to identify the different meanings that we attach to decolonizing education or decolonizing the curriculum. Yes pluralise the curriculum but then also provincialize the western gaze to show the limitations and how all these different ideas came from specific centres of power. Another way we can interpret decolonizing is to highlight how many voices and many ways of knowing have been marginalised or repressed. As well as highlighting different contributions from the South to the knowledge that might be considered completely Western, these are just some ideas.

S - "Yeh it's quite a challenge. But I don't think, going back to what we were saying earlier, taking all these kinds of white western theorists off the curriculum and putting all black or indigenous writers on the curriculum instead seems to be the best way forward. It's what is the conversation between these different people? How do they differ? What can we learn about these different perspectives? How can different people offer us different possibilities? That does seem a more productive conversation."

E–- "Yes and we often think about reflexivity as a way to become more aware, more knowledgeable, and to gain some sort of security and confidence in what we are doing. Maybe we can think about a form of radical reflexivity which actually aims to make us feel uncomfortable, as a starting point for decolonizing our practice as educators."

S–- "Also, there's this discomfort idea with reflexivity that it just evacuates the possibility to fully know about being in a world, particularly around radical varieties, so reflexivity is an idea that can helpfully undermine that you could know, and helps to explore how you might work with that sense of not-knowing, and how might that be productive."

This final section of conversation introduces decolonial reflexivity as a potentially important contribution to debates about MOK and decolonizing management and business education. Drawing on existing studies on the role of reflexivity in decolonizing MOK (e.g. Abdelnour and Abu Moghli, 2021; Jammulamadaka et al., 2021; Prasad, 2014), we see reflexivity as an individual and collective strategy for bringing differently grounded identities, knowledges and

ways of knowing into conversations, promoting awareness of their associated underlying assumptions, as well as the socio-political contexts through which they emerge. A core intention for being reflexive is that dominant and taken-for-granted assumptions should be surfaced, explored and questioned as part of considering alternative possibilities for thinking and action (Cunliffe, 2003).

Here we aim to suggest that engaging in reflexivity as a strategy for decolonizing management and business education needs to promote discomfort and disorientation. What do we mean by discomfort and disorientation? In our dialogue above, we reflect on three dimensions associated with a discomforting reflexivity, related to noticing and exploring entanglements with (a) identities, (b) knowledges and ways of knowing, and (c) an inability to comprehensively know due to an ongoing attention to issues such as perspectivity and situatedness. We will now explore these dimensions in turn, and consider the possibilities they raise for developing understanding about decolonizing management MOK and education.

(a) Decolonial reflexivity–- identities and discomfort

Reflexive discomfort, as involving learning to pay attention to identities which we inhabit and become inscribed onto our bodies, has been considered in relation to race and education (Arday; 2018; Boler, 1999; Eriksen, 2022; hooks, 1994; Pillow, 2003; Zembylas, 2018). hooks writes about how her transgressive approach to race and racism education can create potential pain and discomfort for learners as "new ways of knowing may create estrangement where there was none" (1994: 43). Similarly, Arday explores how education about race entails learning about 'difficult knowledge' relating to "how power and privilege maintain normativity and hegemony at the expense of ethnic minorities" (2018: 144). Along similar lines, Abdelnour, and Abu

Moghli (2021) suggest that reflexivity which supports decolonization produces discomfort insofar as it requires exploring emotional and intellectual challenges resulting from confronting privileges and marginalisation, of ourselves and those around us. Also, Boler writes about 'a pedagogy of discomfort' to suggest that educational processes need to help us "to explore beliefs and values; to examine when visual 'habits' and emotional selectivity have become rigid and immune to flexibility; and to identify when and how our habits harm ourselves and others" (1999: 185).

We recognise that for some reflecting on white privilege and white supremacy might be discomforting, because they fail to see their agency in the reproduction of such differences and superiorities. However, such a position seems to be based on an understanding of whiteness as fixed, stable and unchangeable. But, if we consider whiteness as a "constellation of processes and practices" (DiAngelo, 2018: 57), that perpetuates privileges, power asymmetries and unequal distribution of resources, all those racialised as white play a role in its reproduction, wittingly or unwittingly (see also Leonardo, 2004; Moosavi, 2022). Reflexivity of discomfort, we believe, can help navigate what DiAngelo (2011) calls 'white fragility', namely "white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress" (DiAngelo, 2011:55). Racial stress prevents engaging with race and racism, and hinders possibilities for recognizing and confronting whiteness and our complicity in its reproduction. Thus engaging with 'white fragility' by inviting white academics to engage with how race and racism shape their lived (and others) experience in higher education and in management schools can become a form of reflexivity of discomfort that supports decolonizing MOK because it, starts from the assumption that we cannot eschew our entanglements with whiteness.

We share Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly emphasis on the need for "a critical understanding of racism" (2021: 20), and we add that such understanding cannot be only theoretical, but must be personal, engaged and lived. As Moosavi argues, decolonization requires heightened reflexivity, and he suggests, "this is particularly true for Northern scholars who need to recognise how we are privileged by coloniality and even implicated in its enduring structures of inequality" (2020: 333). However, as Eriksen suggests "the embrace of pedagogy of discomfort as a strategy runs at least two fundamental risks: the risks of individualising the phenomenon as well as intellectualising or pedagogising it at the expense of decolonization." (2022: 73). What Eriksen (2022) reminds us of here is that whilst it will be a person(s) who engages in reflexive processes and feels discomfort, understanding reflexivity as merely individual cognitive processes denies how people are embedded and embodied within historically and politically situated (and habituated) social practices and discourses. For example, Yancy writes about how white people can be "ambushed by whiteness" by referring to the reflections of an American antiracist activist who, on boarding an aeroplane which was being piloted by two black pilots, found himself thinking: "Oh my God, can these guys fly this plane?" (2017: 220). It hence becomes crucial that, in approaching discomfort we move beyond "individual psychologised emotion[s]" to understanding discomfort "as a social and political affect that is part of the production and maintenance of white colonial structures and practices" (Zembylas, 2018: 86). Doing so can help to move classroom conversations away from separating out individuals based on the colour of their skin to interrogating particular social, organizational and political arrangements and exploring how such patterns can be interrupted.

Consequently, these contributions invite management educators to embed identities and race in our teaching and engage with the discomfort it might cause, especially to white/western educators and students. We recognise that race is only one among many dimensions of our identity, but reflecting on our own experience in the UK higher education sector, we note that some of them, such as for instance gender and class, are more frequently and openly discussed than race. Furthermore, previous studies have observed the increased popularity of a depoliticised understanding of intersectionality, unrooted from its black feminist origins, and employed to construct race-neutral discourses on diversity in which anyone can be positioned as marginalised (Nkomo, 2021; Rodriguez and Freeman, 2016).

Our understanding of reflexivity and its emphasis on engaging with how racialised identities are constructed and perpetuated is aligned with a more radical understanding of intersectionality, positioned within the overarching working of coloniality (limki, 2018; Liu, 2018; Riad and Jones, 2022). This understanding of intersectionality resonates with the notion of the colonial matrix of power, and the multiple and complex hierarchies that affect our identities and lived experiences. However, the novel idea introduced by decolonial perspectives is that "race and racism becomes the organizing principle that structures all of the multiple hierarchies of the world-system" (Grosfoguel, 2011: unpaged). Thus, considering the centrality of race and racism in decolonial thinking, its conspicuous absence in management education (Nkomo, 2021), and the invisibility and pervasiveness of whiteness, as discussed previously, we suggest that, for white scholars and educators, whiteness represents a crucial point of entry for engaging with decolonial reflexivity.

Working together on this project for more than three years has involved the unique twofold opportunity of embedding reflections on issues around race, whiteness, and coloniality in our daily work and of exchanging and together reflecting on them. We have learnt to talk more about race, whiteness and coloniality and have begun to engage with and learn from the discomfort it creates. In this sense, our understanding of discomforting builds on an understanding of discomfort as inescapable but also productive and promising, in that it helps to break silences that inhabit management education but also to avoid reflexive praxis becoming a 'move to innocence' (Tuck and Yang, 2012), a relieving and reassuring practice limited to enhanced individual self-awareness but disentangled from material changes related to power and privilege.

(b) Decolonial reflexivity - knowledge and ways of knowing and discomfort

In the previous pages, we discussed pluralism as a strategy for decolonizing MOK. We have in particular emphasised the importance of developing curricula that recognise and confront the Western-centric character of MOK, and that open space for knowledges and ways of knowing that have been historically marginalised, silenced and trivialised. However, we also shared concerns regarding the instrumental appropriation of indigenous knowledges and the 'additive' approach, where the pluralisation of curricula is constrained and does not challenge Eurocentric validation assumptions and criteria, thus reinstating their authority vis-à-vis other knowledge systems. As suggested, different perspectives are not socially understood to be of equal value and different ways of knowing are differently grounded and constituted, particularly in relation to whiteness, and as such pathways to 'epistemic pluriversality' are far from straightforward (Mignolo, 2016). Management educators have the dual challenge of the Western university being predicated on purposeful and strategic marginalisation of non-Western knowledge processes, as

well as the substantial issue that the emergence of management and business education is enveloped within, and often resolutely in the service of, neo-colonial capitalism. For example, Weise et al. (2021) suggest that bringing different knowledge systems into conversation within universities requires the participation of those who are the bearers of such knowledge. Consequently, the inclusion and integration of indigenous knowledges in Western higher education, without substantial changes in their demographics, seem to be destined to be tokenistic and likely ignored.

Further, some consider that decolonizing universities might be an impossible project, pointing out that those scholars committed to decolonization "must be prepared for a daunting struggle" (Moosavi, 2020: 341). This struggle is due to constraints posed by our institutions, but also for the individual and collective efforts it requires, especially to scholars in the Northern hemisphere. Many of us are inevitably 'epistemically blind' to ways of knowing originated, practised and valued outside Western borders, as they never were part of our education, or of the requirements we needed to meet to acquire our academic status (Banerjee, 2022). Thus, engaging critically with them and being able to embed them in our curricula is a mammoth task that requires navigating the discomfort resulting from our ignorance, lack of direction and guidance and well-founded doubts regarding our ability to respectfully and critically engage with them. This is further complicated also by the fact that the historically rooted marginalisation of non-Western knowledge systems coupled with the commodification and monopolisation of academic publishing has made them less accessible (Collyer, 2018). Still there are insightful empirical contributions that explore avenues for decolonizing universities (Henriques and Abushouk, 2018), knowledge (Moosavi, 2020) and MOK (Abreu-Pederzini and Suárez-Barraza, 2020;

Kothiyal et al., 2018; Woods et al., 2022). A common theme across them is the need to be reflexive, tentative and intellectually/emotionally curious (or brave) to engage with what positivist science has taught us to consider implausible or unreasonable.

Another avenue we have is that of centring in our teaching critical reflections on how racism (Nkomo, 1992; Dar et al., 2021; Banerjee, 2022), slavery (Cooke, 2003; Pierce and Snyder, 2020), imperialism (Boussebaa, 2020), and coloniality (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) are embedded in MOK scholarship and curricula, coupled with the conspicuous absence of debates on race or whiteness. Again, these reflections will likely cause discomfort, because they require white management educators to learn from and familiarise themselves with these notions and debates, to position our teaching and ourselves within them. This might contribute to opening new spaces for management education, especially by developing activities and frames through which students can relate their variegated lived experiences to these debates.

(c) Decolonial reflexivity - the limits of knowing and discomfort

The third dimension we associate with reflexivity of discomfort is about an inability to comprehensively know. An assumption which connects with other educational approaches to challenging whiteness is the need for "expos[ing] the limits of knowing and to disrupt epistemological and ontological certainty" (Applebaum, 2010: 150). In particular, we understand a reflexivity of discomfort to be associated with radical reflexivity. This is because radical reflexivity is not just about 'unsettling' ways of thinking about reality, but goes further by claiming that whoever is doing the 'unsettling' is also constrained by a set of presuppositions and assumptions that influence the way we view the world (Pollner, 1991: 370). Radical reflexivity calls for attention to how individual and collective worldviews are entangled with power and

social and material contexts (e.g. Author). We see these possibilities as significant for decolonizing education because radical reflexivity helps to overcome the potential for understanding reflexivity, through multiple perspective taking, as helping us to transcend our bodies and socio-cultural situatedness. On the contrary, in reflecting on reflexivity within this project, we often realised that our 'turning back on our-selves' is inevitably constrained. For example, whilst we might read Fanon's (1967) writing prompting us to question taken-for-granted assumptions about how people experience being in a world, we, the authors, with 'white' bodies can never know what it might be to speak as a 'black' body. Additionally, radical reflexivity can also support us in recognising how whiteness can be 'insidious' (Yancy, 2017), 'invisible' (Applebaum, 2010) and 'systemic' (Foste, 2020), with the connected potential for indelible 'white psychoses' (Andrews, 2016) which no forms of being reflexive or experiencing can fully negate.

Consequently, this dimension of discomfort involves an appreciation that we necessarily cannot develop the perspective, 'figure it all out' or 'resolve the problem'. Particularly, as we are situated and embedded beings, and so the meanings and implications of decolonizing need to be able to reveal and reflect these contextual differences, along with the variations in forms of inequality and oppression. Relationality, where meanings are produced 'between' people and things, is understood as integral to radical reflexivity and opens up possibilities for discomfort because of inevitable unknowingness about our-selves and relations with others (e.g. Author). Significantly, this means that the potential for identity universalisms or essentialisms are subverted (e.g. white or black), necessitating a seeking of alternative perspectives, hearing different voices, and questioning taken-for-granted aspects of our and others' intermingled

identities to make some sense of realities. Such an approach to reflexivity offers possibilities for decolonizing because it denies us the potential for comfort, security and confidence in knowing our-selves and Others. Further, embracing unknowingness as an ongoing way of being can help us to not recoil when we feel anxiety about the realities we encounter. This is because engaging with our limited visibility with respect to our entanglements in whiteness and coloniality becomes fundamental to understanding our being.

Consequently, whilst we agree about the importance of "acknowledging our own complicities, privileges and positionings so to de-hegemonize (not counter-hegemonize) our position", we question the potential to "learn how to occupy the subject position of the other" (Spivak, 1990, p. 121). Such intentions assume the potential to comprehensively know and so have associations of comfort by somehow transcending our-selves. Our decolonial reflexivity works differently. It connects with Boler whereby discomfort needs to be "beyond a reductive model of 'guilt vs. innocence'" (1999: 176). Doing so means that we appreciate the interdependence of our identities with others, and by allowing potential fluidity and hybridity we avoid grasping for imagined static (and secure) binaries and fixed categories, whether they be white/black, west/east or indigenous/scientific. And if we do use such categories 'strategically' in pursuit of change, we do so with great care and in acknowledgement of their slipperiness.

Finally, in relation to this third dimension, as Zembylas writes "[by] conceptualizing white discomfort as a matter that can somehow be 'addressed' pedagogically in schools and universities, there is the risk of pedagogizing the – much broader and far more complex – political project of decolonizing white colonial structures and practices both within and beyond

the education sector" (2018, p. 87). A possibility to change institutional processes and practices could involve emulating 'alternative universities' which displace dominant logics of revenue generation for profit, efficiency, and students-as-consumers; with gift culture, mentors and self-directed learning (Kothiyal, 2018). Doing so might discomfort identities of whiteness and privilege as part of material changes to university organizational arrangements. Reconstituting policies of internationalization, often construed as a celebration of the wisdom and mobility of Western academics, could be changed to focus on bringing in 'non-Western others' to challenge, and to inform changes to, business and management schools' purposes and practices.

By drawing out some of the key themes from this section Table 2 summarizes the potential implications of a decolonial reflexivity in relation to white-skin, white identities and whiteness. As discussed earlier it is fundamental to our argument for the potential value of decolonial reflexivity that these three connected but different notions are not conflated.

Insert Table 2 about here

Concluding remarks

We hope to have represented our inquiry in an open way, supported through the inclusions of sections of dialogue, attempting to take care with how we make claims about what decolonizing MOK means, and could be. We have done so by expressing our dilemmas, and placing our voices as two white-skinned academics who are exploring and experimenting with ways of productively engaging in action and debate on decolonizing. We have considered a range of dilemmas which we see as central to finding our role and making some progress to respond to our first question: how can we have a constructive role in debates on decolonizing management

knowledge and education? A key dilemma relates to how to understand the relationality of identities, and associated politics, in ways that are productive for challenging essentialisms, but able to decentre Western centrism and engage with different ways of producing knowledge.

Crucially for us, personally, is how to draw upon the powers and privileges inscribed onto our white bodies and academic affiliations in ways that vanquish them in the service of race and knowledge equalities, for all. We have reflected on the need to speak about conventional fixed categories with care, with the readiness to recognise their constructed, plural and slippery nature, and doing so whilst appreciating the political meaningfulness of strategic essentialism. However, we have also tried to appreciate through the range of voices we have drawn upon how the potential insidiousness and invisibility of whiteness can still 'ensnare' us as we strive towards ways of decolonizing MOK (Yancy, 2017). For example, as Moosavi (2022) explores in his critical reflection about attempts to decolonize his teaching.

We also have emphasised the need to talk more often and more seriously about racialised white identities, so to avoid the reification of whiteness and the consequent perpetuation of the asymmetries and social divisions it creates. This could start, for instance, by seeing whiteness not as a somatic attribute but as a social and political process so as to enlighten the dynamics through which it fabricates divisions and distributes false rewards. Learning from anti-racist work on destabilising blackness, and unfolding the plurality of white experiences might serve to nurture solidarity and develop an inclusive common ground among academics and educators committed to challenging the imperialism and neo-coloniality of management and business education. Drawing on Bhabha's notion of 'third space', this might open the way for an "international

culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of culture, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (1994: 38).

To respond to our second question, 'what kinds of reflexivity does decolonizing MOK require of us so that we can engage in these debates without colonizing them?' we have drawn the writings of others (Arday, 2018; Boler, 1999; Eriksen, 2022; hooks, 1994; Pillow, 2003; Zembylas, 2018) to develop ideas about a discomforting decolonial reflexivity. We suggest that this concept, with associated ways of learning and being, can be productive for management and business educators and students to engage in decolonizing debates analytically and emotionally. However, we notice potential limitations, as urging, particularly white people, to confront their discomforting feelings does not necessarily interrogate the practices and relations of power involved in reproducing race, racism and whiteness that generate such feelings (Zembylas, 2018). Also, we recognise some of the potential substantial challenges in educating with ideas of decolonial reflexivity, in particular we noted some particularities of teaching management and business students in a UK context.

Indeed, we are not suggesting that educators from 'inside' universities alone can decolonize (management) education. As others have argued the academy as a 'colonial force' is incapable of decolonizing itself, with tendencies towards taming or co-opting decolonizing to become sanitised policy about 'diversity' or 'inclusion' which do not challenge whiteness (Doharty et al., 2021). However, these fundamental challenges do not negate the worth of efforts by educators to decolonize. Nonetheless by attempting to notice the potential feedbacks and reverberations in combination with other actions, such as student-led initiatives and protests, such efforts can help

to inform progress inside and outside of Western universities. This is important given that some evidence suggests (e.g. the number of academics of colour) that very little, or no progress is being made. Resistance from university managers and some colleagues is inevitable, given the deep institutional ruptures that engaging with decolonizing entails, and writing such as that on 'tempered radicals' can be a helpful perspective to bring to approaching such challenges via defter relational work (Meyerson and Scully, 1995). Attempting to decolonize will not and, as we have suggested should not, be a comfortable process for ourselves, students and universities as ingrained patterns of being, knowledge making and teaching will need to be confronted and challenged. In this sense, and acknowledging the dangers of "inward looking white solipsism" (Hunter et al., 2010), we suggest that decolonial reflexivity should open up dialogues with colleagues from other, non-Western, contexts and affiliations (Hamann et al, 2021). Such dialogues could help to make management and business education and theorisation more responsive to the variety of contexts, histories and identities in which it is embedded.

By writing this article together and listening to each other expressing views about what shape our contribution to decolonizing MOK could, should and would be allowed to take we have sought to discomfort ourselves. At times in trying to openly express our questions and concerns we may have felt that we engaged in decolonial reflexivity. This is particularly so, when questioning our purposes for seeking to publish this article and wondering what we as white-skinned scholars, drenched in histories of various forms of intercultural exploitation and our daily living implicated in ongoing patterns of racial exploitation, have to offer. Which is admittedly a rather pathetic form of discomfort in comparison to those who daily experience the harsh realities of racism and subjugation across the world. At other times writing felt like just getting on with 'our

job'. Being critical scholars, and concentrating on assembling words about decolonizing kept the topic somewhat at a distance from discomforting our identities, perhaps associated with what has been described as "a form of racist inertia" (Yancy, 2017, p. 221). Also, by accepting our limited grasp on the world, as we continue to be challenged and troubled by notions of reflexivity, attempting to engage in provincialising the western gaze feels somewhat cathartic. This is of course far removed from the pain, anguish, frustration and desperation we have seen within the 'Black Lives Matter' global demonstrations. Perhaps such realisation is part of our further noticing how our entanglement in the ongoing reproduction of white supremacy cossets us from revelations of palpable discomfort. We recognise that our writing may well prompt accusations of being 'merely' armchair "white traitors to white privilege" (Alcoff, 1998: 25), or that we have positioned ourselves as "heroic white scholar[s] who somehow transcend whiteness" (Foste, 2020, p.134). This suggests that greater opportunities for management and business education activists lie in challenging the form of the 'Westernized uni-versity' in the pursuit of progressive forms of organizing education to allow the content of a 'Decolonial pluri-versity' (Grosfoguel, 2013). Daily acts and words of solidarity in support of those who are discriminated against within universities, and more widely in the public sphere are also crucial activities.

We hope to have lived up to our opening claim that we were going to produce a text that could neither be regarded as imperialist nor an oppressive form of representation. We would like to feel that having produced this article we are closer to understanding and developing our contribution to, and acting on decolonizing MOK and education. Finally, we hope that this article will encourage more white educators and researchers to openly and reflexively explore race and whiteness and consider how they impact on management and business education and research.

Table 1 – Comparing and contrasting white-skinned, white identity and whiteness

	White skinned	**White identity**	**Whiteness**
Material – physically present	A person having a tone of skin covering their body which is understood to be 'white' in colour. 'White' can encompass a wide range of 'light' coloured skin tones. Historically lighter coloured skin tones are generally correlated to peoples who live closer to the poles – away from the tropics.	People may have similarly light skin tones but they are more likely to be identified as 'white' if the person is 'from Europe', rather than being 'from Asia' likely based on other prominent physical bodily features such as eye shape and hair tone.	Whiteness is not physically identifiable in relation to a person's body.
Socially understood and constructed	The tone of a person's skin is interpreted as and given the enduring label (and so homogenised) of 'white' which is in distinction of, and in possible opposition to, other labels of skin tone, in particular 'black'.	A person identified as white can be associated with a certain (dominant) racial group which are interpreted to have common characteristics which make them as more dominant and capable which (re)produces various forms of power (intersecting with class and gender) over those of 'other' racial groups.	Whiteness is understood as invisible, insidious and everyday which (re)produces and normalises privileges of those considered white through the dominant ways that societies and organizations are ordered.

Table 2 – Understanding the implications and possibilities for decolonial reflexivity in relation to white-skinned, white identity and whiteness

	White skinned	**White identity**	**Whiteness**
Reflexive implications for decolonial reflexivity	We cannot transcend our bodies, or change the colour of our skin. The tone of a person's skin is incidental – categorising and attributing (universal) meanings to people based on skin tone is problematic because socio-cultural meanings of different skin colours are rooted in producing inequalities and injustices.	We ultimately cannot control the identities that other people inscribe on to our bodies. However, we may seek to: explore identities which we have taken-for-granted or not previously wanted to acknowledge; challenge and subvert racialised identities because of how they normalise privileges and subjugations; consider ambiguous, precarious and uncertain senses of self.	We need to unveil whiteness, as it evolves and is (re)constructed, so that it can be identified, explored and challenged. Doing so involves: provincialising the 'Western gaze' and 'Western canon'; creating possibilities for plural and hybrid forms of knowing; taking responsibility for interrogating the ordering processes that determine privileged and 'other-ed' positions; and, interrogating particular social and political arrangements as well as exploring how such patterns can be mitigated and subverted.

References

Abdelnour, S and Abu Moghli, M 2021 Researching violent contexts: A call for political reflexivity. *Organization* doi.org/10.1177/13505084211030646.

Abreu-Pederzini, GD and Suárez-Barraza, MF 2020 Just Let Us Be: Domination, the Postcolonial Condition, and the Global Field of Business Schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 19(1): 40-58.

Agrawal, A 1995 Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge. *Development and Change* 26(3): 413-439.

Ahmed, S 2004 Declarations of whiteness: The non-performativity of anti-racism. *Borderlands* 3(2): 1-15.

Alcadipani, R 2017 Reclaiming sociological reduction: Analysing the circulation of management education in the periphery. *Management Learning* 48(5): 535-551.

Alcadipani, R, Khan, FR, Gantman, E, et al. 2012 Southern voices in management and organization knowledge. *Organization* 19(2): 131-143.

Alcoff, LM 1998 What Should White People Do? *Hypatia* 13(3): 6-26.

Andrews, K 2016 The Psychosis of Whiteness:The Celluloid Hallucinations of Amazing Grace and Belle. *Journal of Black Studies* 47(5): 435-453.

Appiah, KA 1992 *In My Father's House. Africa in the Philosophy of Culture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Applebaum, B 2010 *Being white, being good: White complicity, white moral responsibility, and social justice pedagogy.* Lexington Books.

Arday, J 2018 Dismantling power and privilege through reflexivity: negotiating normative Whiteness, the Eurocentric curriculum and racial micro-aggressions within the Academy. *Whiteness and Education* 3(2): 141-161.

Arday, J 2022 No one can see me cry: understanding mental health issues for Black and minority ethnic staff in higher education. *Higher Education* 83(1): 79-102.

Banerjee, SB 2022 Decolonizing management theory: A critical perspective. *Journal of Management Studies* 59(4): 1074-1087.

Barros, A and Alcadipani, R 2022 Decolonizing journals in management and organizations? Epistemological colonial encounters and the double translation. *Management Learning* doi.org/10.1177/13505076221083204.

Barthes, R 1977 *Image, music, text (S. Heath, Trans.).* London: Fontana.

Bhabba, HK 1994 *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge.

Bhambra, GK, Nisancioglu, K and Gebrial, D 2018 *Decolonizing the university*. London: Pluto Press.

Bhambra, GK, Nişancıoğlu, K and Gebrial, D 2020 Decolonising the university in 2020. *Identities* 27(4): 509-516.

Bhopal, K 2018 *White Privilege: The Myth of a Post-Racial Society.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Boler, M 1999 *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education.* NY: Routledge.

Bonnett, A 1996 Anti-racism and the critique of 'white'identities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 22(1): 97-110.

Bonnett, A 1998 Who was white? The disappearance of non-European white identities and the formation of European racial whiteness. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(6): 1029-1055.

Boussebaa, M 2020 In the shadow of empire: Global Britain and the UK business school. *Organization* 27(3): 483-493.

Briggs, J 2005 The use of indigenous knowledge in development: problems and challenges. *Progress in Development Studies* 5(2): 99-114.
Briggs, J 2013 Indigenous knowledge: A false dawn for development theory and practice? *Progress in Development Studies* 13(3): 231-243.
Burke, S 2008 *The death and return of the author: Criticism and subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Butler, J 2004 *Undoing gender.* NY: Routledge.
Calas, MB and Smircich, L 1999 Past Postmodernism? Reflections And Tentative Directions *Academy of Management Review* 24(4): 649-671.
Calás, MB and Smircich, L 2009 Feminist perspectives on gender in organizational research: What is and is yet to be. In: Buchanan D and Bryman A (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*. London: Sage, pp.246–269.
Collyer, FM 2018 Global patterns in the publishing of academic knowledge: Global North, global South. *Current Sociology* 66(1): 56-73.
Cooke, B 2003 The denial of slavery in management studies. *Journal of Management Studies* 40(8): 1895-1918.
Cunliffe, AL 2003 Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: Questions and possibilities. *Human Relations* 56(8): 983-1003.
Dar, S, Liu, H, Martinez Dy, A, et al. 2021 The business school is racist: Act up! *Organization* 28(4): 695-706.
Darley, WK and Luethge, DJ 2019 Management and Business Education in Africa: A Post-Colonial Perspective of International Accreditation. *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 18(1): 99-111.
DiAngelo, R 2018 *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism.* Beacon Press.
Doharty, N, Madriaga, M and Joseph-Salisbury, R 2021 The university went to 'decolonise' and all they brought back was lousy diversity double-speak! Critical race counter-stories from faculty of colour in 'decolonial' times. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 53(3): 233-244.
Eriksen, KG 2022 Discomforting presence in the classroom – the affective technologies of race, racism and whiteness. *Whiteness and Education* 7(1): 58-77.
Fanon, F 1986 *Black Skin, White Mask.* London: Pluto.
Fitzgibbons, DE and Humphries, M 2011 Enhancing the circle of life: Management education and Indigenous knowledge. *Journal of Management Education* 35(1): 3-7.
Foste, Z 2020 Remaining vigilant: reflexive considerations for white researchers studying whiteness. *Whiteness and Education* 5(2): 131-146.
Foucault, M 1974 *The order of things.* London: Tavistock.
Fougère, M and Moulettes, A 2011 Disclaimers, dichotomies and disappearances in international business textbooks: a postcolonial deconstruction. *Management Learning* 43(1): 5-24.
Frankenberg, R 1993 *White women, race matters. The social construction of whiteness.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Girei, E. (2017). Decolonising management knowledge: A reflexive journey as practitioner and researcher in Uganda. Management Learning, 48(4), 453–470
Grosfoguel, R 2011 Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality. *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World.* 1(1): unpaged.

Grosfoguel, R 2013 The structure of knowledge in westernised universities: Epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides. *Human Architecture: Journal of the sociology of self-knowledge* 1(1): 73-90.
Hamann, R, Luiz, J, Ramaboa, K, et al. 2020 Neither colony nor enclave: Calling for dialogical contextualism in management and organization studies. *Organization Theory* 1(1): 1-21.
Hamdan, A 2009 Reflexivity of discomfort in insider-outsider educational research. *McGill Journal of Education/Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill* 44(3): 377-404.
Harris, C 1993 Whiteness as Property. *Harvard Law Review,* 106: 1707–1791.
Henriques, A and Abushouk, L 2018 Decolonising Oxford: The student movement from Stuart Hall to skin deep. In: Arday J and Mirza HS (eds) *Dismantling race in higher education*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.297-309.
hooks, b 1994 *Teaching to transgress. Education as a practice of freedom.* NY: Routledge.
Ibarra-Colado, E 2006 Organization Studies and Epistemic Coloniality in Latin America: Thinking Otherness from the Margins. *Organization* 13(4): 463-488.
Jack, G and Westwood, RI 2006 Postcolonialism and the politica of qualitative research in international business. *Management International Review* 46(4): 481-501.
Jack, G, Westwood, RI, Srinivas, N, et al. 2011 Deepening, broadening and re-asserting a postcolonial interrogative space in organization studies. *Organization* 18(3): 275-302.
Jackson, T 2011 *International Management Ethics: A Critical, Cross-cultural Perspective.* Leiden Cambridge University Press.
Jackson, T 2014 Cross-cultural management from the South: What a difference global dynamics make. Sage Publications Sage UK: London, England, 3-5.
Jammulamadaka, N, Faria, A, Jack, G, et al. 2021 Decolonising management and organisational knowledge (MOK): Praxistical theorising for potential worlds. *Organization* 28(5): 717-740.
Jimenez, A, Vannini, S and Cox, A 2022 A holistic decolonial lens for library and information studies. *Journal of Documentation* ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print).
Jolly, F, Whiteman, G, Atkinson, M, et al. 2011 Managing and educating outside: A Cree Hunter's perspective on management education. *Journal of Management Education* 35(1): 27-50.
Joseph, CL 2016 On Intellectual Reparations: Hegel, Franklin Tavarès, Susan Buck-Morss, Revolutionary Haiti, and Caribbean Philosophical Association. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* 9(7): 167-175.
Joseph-Salisbury, R and Connelly, L 2021 *Anti-racist scholar-activism.* Manchester University Press.
Kebede, M 1994 *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization.* Amsterdam: Rodopi.
Kothari, U 2001 Power, Knowledge and Social Control in Participatory Development. In: Cooke B (ed) *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Zed Books.
Kothiyal, N, Bell, E and Clarke, C 2018 Moving Beyond Mimicry: Developing Hybrid Spaces in Indian Business Schools. *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 17(2): 137-154.
Kwek, D 2003 Decolonizing and Re-Presenting Cultures's Consequences: a Postcolonial Critique of Cross-Cultural Studies in Management. In: Prasad A (ed) *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmilliam, pp.121-146.
Leonardo, Z 2004 The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'white privilege'. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36(2): 137-152.

Levine-Rasky, C 2000 Framing whiteness: working through the tensions in introducing whiteness to educators. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 3(3): 271-292.
limki, r 2018 On the coloniality of work: Commercial surrogacy in India. *Gender, Work & Organization* 25(4): 327-342.
Liu, H 2018 Re-radicalising intersectionality in organisation studies. *Ephemera* 18(1): 81-101.
Liu, H 2022 How we learn whiteness: Disciplining and resisting management knowledge. *Management Learning* 53(5): 776–796.
Loomba, A 1998 *Colonialism/Postcolonialism.* New York: Routledge.
Madriaga, M and McCaig, C 2019 How international students of colour become Black: a story of whiteness in English higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 1-15.
Mama, A 1995 *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender, and Subjectivity.* Routledge.
Mama, A 2007 Is It Ethical to Study Africa? Preliminary Thoughts on Scholarship and Freedom. *African Studies Review* 50(1): 1-26.
Mbembe, A 2001 *On the Postcolony.* Berkely: University of California Press.
Mbembe, A 2016 Decolonizing the university: New directions. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 15(1): 29–45.
McGregor, D 2014 Lessons for collaboration involving traditional knowledge and environmental governance in Ontario, Canada. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 10(4): 340-353.
Mignolo, W 2016 Yes, we can. *AUC INTERPRETATIONES* 5(1): 13-36.
Mignolo, WD 2003 Globalization and the Geopolitics of Knowledge: The Role of the Humanities in the Corporate University. *Nepantla: Views from the South* 4(1): 97-119.
Mignolo, WD 2007 Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural Studies,* 21(2-3): 449–514.
Mir, RA, Mir, A and Upadhyaya, P (2003) Toward a postcolonial reading of organizational control. In: Prasad A (ed) *Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis: A critical engagement*. Springer, pp.47-73.
Moosavi, L 2020 The decolonial bandwagon and the dangers of intellectual decolonisation. *International Review of Sociology* 30(2): 332-354.
Moosavi, L 2022 Turning the Decolonial Gaze towards Ourselves: Decolonising the Curriculum and 'Decolonial Reflexivity' in Sociology and Social Theory. *Sociology* doi.org/10.1177/00380385221096037.
Mudimbe, VY 1988 *The Invention of Africa. Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University
Murphy, J 2009 Beyond criticism: towards alternatives. *Critical perspectives on international business* 5(4): 304-317.
Murphy, J and Zhu, J 2012 Neo-colonialism in the Academy? Anglo-American Domination in Management Journals. *Organization* 19(6): 915-927.
Meyerson, DE, and Scully, MA 1995 Tempered radicalism and politics of ambivalence and change. Organization Science 6(5), 585-600.
Ndlovu-Gatsheni, SJ 2018a *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa. Myths of Decolonization.* Dakar: CODESRIA.
Ndlovu-Gatsheni, SJ 2018b *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization.* London: Routledge.

Nkomo, SM 2011 A postcolonial and anti- colonial reading of 'African' leadership and management in organization studies: tensions, contradictions and possibilities *Organization* 18(3): 365-386.
Nkomo, SM 2021 Reflections on the continuing denial of the centrality of "race" in management and organization studies. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* 40(2): 212-224.
Nursey-Bray, M and Haugstetter, H 2011 More Than a Marriage of Convenience: The Convergence of Management and Indigenous Educational Practice. *Journal of Management Education* 35(1): 168-186.
Omi, M and Winant, H 1994 *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s. New York.* NY: Routledge.
Özkazanç-Pan, B 2008 International management research meets "the rest of the world". *Academy of Management Review* 33(4): 964-974.
Pailey, RN 2020 De-centring the 'White Gaze' of Development. *Development and Change* 51(3): 729-745.
Pierce, L and Snyder, JA 2020 Historical origins of firm ownership structure: The persistent effects of the African slave trade. *Academy of Management Journal* 63(6): 1687-1713.
Pillow, W 2003 Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16(2): 175-196.
Pollner, M 1991 Left of ethnomethodology: The rise and decline of radical reflexivity. *American Sociological Review*. 370-380.
Prasad, A 2003 Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Prasad, A 2009 Contesting Hegemony Through Genealogy. Foucault and Cross Cultural Management Research. *International Journal of Cross Cultural management* 9(3): 359-369.
Prasad, A 2014 You can't go home again: And other psychoanalytic lessons from crossing a neo-colonial border. *Human Relations* 67(2): 233-257.
Puwar, N 2004 *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place.* NY: Berg.
Quayson, A 1997 Protocols of Representation and the Problems of Constituting an African 'Gnosis': Achebe and Okri. *The Yearbook of English Studies. The Politics of Postcolonial Criticism* 27: 137-149.
Quijano, A 2007 Coloniality and modernity/rationality. *Cultural Studies* 21(2-3): 168-178.
Riad, S and Jones, D 2022 Approaching intersectionality through metonymy: Coloniality and recursion at work. *Gender, Work & Organization* DOI: 10.1111/gwao.12828.
Rodriguez, J and Freeman, KJ 2016 'Your focus on race is narrow and exclusive:' the derailment of anti-racist work through discourses of intersectionality and diversity. *Whiteness and Education* 1(1): 69-82.
Roediger, D 1991 *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class.* London: Verso.
Ruggunan, SD 2016 Decolonising management studies: A love story. *Acta Commercii* 16(2): 103-138.
Russell-Mundine, G 2012 Reflexivity in Indigenous Research: Reframing and Decolonising Research? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 19(1): 85-90.
Said, EW 2003 *Orientalism.* London: Penguin Books.

Satzewich, V 2000 Whiteness Limited: Racialization and the Social Construction of" Peripheral Europeans". *Histoire Sociale/Social History.* 33(66): 271-289.

Smith, LT 1999 *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous People.* London: Zed Books.

Spivak, GC 1990 *The post-colonial critic: Interviews, strategies, dialogues.* NY: Routledge.

Tuck, E and Yang, K 2012 Decolonization is not a metaphor Decolonization: Indigeneity. *Education & Society* 1(1): 1-40.

Universities UK and NUS 2019 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #Closingthegap. Report.

Walsh, C 2018a On Decolonial Dangers, Decolonial Cracks, 4 and Decolonial Pedagogies Rising. In: Mignolo W and Walsh C (eds) *On Decoloniality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Walsh, C 2018b On Decoloniality,The Decolonial For: Resurgences, Shifts, and Movements. In: Mignolo W and Walsh C (eds) *On Decoloniality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Weise, C, Alvarez, IM and Sarapura, N 2021 Designing a deep intercultural curriculum in higher education: co-constructing knowledge with Indigenous women. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 17(2): 335-345.

West, A 2014 Ubuntu and business ethics: Problems, perspectives and prospects. *Journal of Business Ethics* 121(1): 47-61.

Woods, C, Dell, K and Carroll, B 2022 Decolonizing the Business School: Reconstructing the Entrepreneurship Classroom through Indigenizing Pedagogy and Learning. *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 21(1): 82-100.

Yancy, G 2017 *Black bodies, white gazes: The continuing significance of race in America.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Zeleza, PT 2005 Banishing The Silences: Towards the Globalization Of African History. *11th General Assembly of CODESRIA.* Maputo, Mozambique.

Zembylas, M 2018 Affect, race, and white discomfort in schooling: decolonial strategies for 'pedagogies of discomfort'. *Ethics and Education* 13(1): 86-104.