From Supremacy to Inclusiveness: A Transformation Model to Guide a Mainly White University to Become a Latine Research Serving Institution

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ABSTRACT

There is an indication that Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) concepts dominate the discourse regarding what research and knowledge should be about, not including all that is known about all people. These conceptions about research and knowledge are problematic since they perpetuate Western societies' ideas that undermine diversity, inclusion, and the development of critical thinking within academic spaces. We developed a decolonization model to engage a midsized university in the decolonization of all aspects of academia that include students, curriculum, faculty, administration, and the community. The model uses the work of Enriquez (1994), Martin-Baro and Laenui (2000) as a framework to decolonize academic curriculums—integrating the liberation psychology wheel to move policies and the strategic plan in the journey toward a decolonized Latine Research Serving Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Striving for equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-oppressive education have been significant movements within the United States educational system, when the educational system has become more and more politized and polarized (Greene, 2022). However, decolonizing the process of becoming a "Hispanic Serving Institution" means changing not only the curriculum but the integration of practices that disrupts and challenges the systems that perpetuate oppression, discrimination, and marginalization of minoritized and racialized groups that continue to be a challenge. Mainly since historically, schools have served as "laboratories in which social injustices such as class, gender, language, and racial inequality were inculcated, tested, implemented, and perpetuated" (Lebeloane, 2017; p. 2). Thus, decolonizing the process of becoming a "Hispanic Research Serving Institution" aims to reclaim the historical memory, promote equity and justice, and make knowledge relevant and relatable to marginalized groups (Lebeloane, 2017; Lumadi, 2021).

One of the tools of the colonization process is cultural control, that includes language and education. Thus schools and universities have become the center stage of colonial reproduction and indoctrination (Moane, 2014). Therefore, academic institutions rely on curriculum, standards, and regulations to control knowledge production and determine who can access it and how. Examples of these practices include the use of the English language as the dominant language of instruction; the use of texts and materials that depict primarily White, Eurocentric values; and demonizing the culture, language, and values of ethnic minority groups (Lebeloane, 2017; Lumadi, 2021). Furthermore, resistance to using critical pedagogies, models, and praxis that promotes critical thinking, social awareness, and anti-oppressive education has highlighted the role of politics and power relations in the educational process (Moratilla, 2019). Therefore, critically examining how these practices continue perpetuating the colonial mentality and promoting the hidden curriculum is imperative.

## A Model of Decolonizing the Process of Becoming a "Hispanic Research Serving Institution"

Two models are identified in the literature as valuable models to develop a decolonial path toward a strong, inclusive "Hispanic Research Serving Institution." We are combining those two models: Laenuii (2000) and Martín-Baró (1998). Decolonizing is a complex process requiring critical reflexivity, problematization, and social transformation. Garcia (2018) provided an institutional framework with a solid blueprint to begin the work. Nonetheless, while practical the framework and a good beginning, in our view, it lacks more of the presence of indigenous principles. It could seem

like a continuation of the WEIRD domination. Therefore, in the model that it describes, the author intends to integrate these indigenous principles into the process of policies, curriculum, faculty development, and teaching method development.

A decolonization process must include a period of healing, meaning after the De-ideologization and denaturalization process, a healing process needs to take place, that healing takes the form of grieving and mourning. It helps create a space to nurture dialogue, having the necessary tools to enhance interdependency and begin to dream again or be creative. The next step of the decolonization model is the commitment to change and action that provide the tools to transform and continue with the path toward critical consciousness that began during the dialogue stage (see Figure 1). Below we are describing the model, adding the dimensions listed by Garcia (2018).

Figure 1
Stages of the Liberation Process
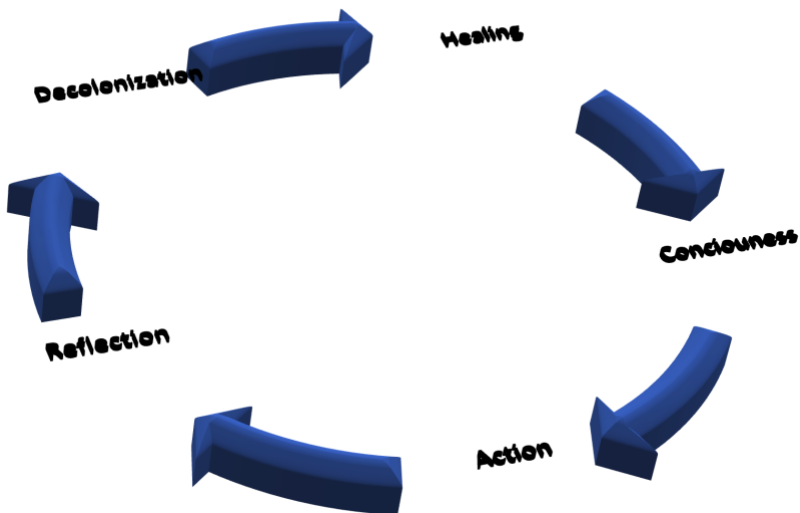
The Decolonization Process

The first phase of the proposed decolonization process also takes stages before reaching the decolonization condition. The authors describe the different steps below.

Stage 1 (Rediscovery & Discovery).

The studies and historical literature indicate that people who have undergone colonization inevitably suffer from concepts of inferiority concerning their historical, cultural/social background. They live in a colonial society which is a constant and overwhelming reminder of the superiority of

the colonial society over that of the underlying indigenous one (Hartmann, Wendt, Burrage, Pomerville, & Gone, 2019; Tate, Torres Rivera, Brown, & Skaistis, 2013).

Furthermore, for those who have been subject to colonization by alien societies and cultures, history is written from the perspective of the oppressor (Martin Baró, 1998; Wilson, 1997). In liberation psychology, this is a critical component, given that without an understanding of the actual etiology of the oppression and subsequent conditions, accurate understandings from the perspective of the oppressed cannot be attained. The most critical aspect of this principle is that the investigation of societal structures and recovery of actual historical memory can be conducted by those oppressed in partnership with social scientists and practitioners. Therefore, it is this first phase of rediscovery of one's history and recovery of one's culture, language, identity, etc., is fundamental to the movement for decolonization as it creates the fundamental basis of what is to follow is deconstructing and reconstructing the organization dimensions listed by Garcia (2018) such as "purpose," and "mission." In this model, we are incorporating two more elements from the liberation psychology principles. De-ideologization is the first principle borrowed from liberation psychology that is listed by Montero and Martín-Baró (Martín-Baró, 1986; Montero, 2009). Martín Baró pointed out that dominant social forces such as Church, media campaigns, schools, universities, and governmental bureaucracies establish the "realities" of the lived experience of the poor and oppressed. These messages maintained a "cultural stranglehold" on how social scientists study and understand such circumstances. As such, Martín-Baró (1986) posited that a critical step in achieving a socially just and mentally healthy context for these populations was to investigate these dominant messages considering the lived experiences of those living on the margins. Montero (2009) describes this process as "the conscious construction and reconstruction of an understanding of the world one lives in, and of one's lived circumstances, as part of a totality" (p. 75). By engaging in the de-ideologizing process, social scientists and oppressed populations can begin to make sense of their current situation, considering recovered historical memory and analysis of everyday experience.

The second is denaturalization, a critical examination of notions, beliefs, and assumptions that we usually take for granted and do not question. By denaturalization, we challenge the interests of power dynamics that lead to the creation of our beliefs. Denaturalization and de-ideologizing lead to problematization.

This stage, in our opinion and experience, will cover the dimension of purpose presented by Garcia (2018), where the description of purpose is "to advance outcomes that are holistic and grounded in racial and cultural ways of knowing; outcomes may include degree attainment, certificates,

course completion, critical consciousness, democratic citizenship or racial/cultural identity development." Additionally, the dimension of mission, which Garcia describes as being grounded in anti-racist, anti-oppressive, decolonizing ideologies. In her description, she includes teaching members from a decolonized perspective grounded in indigenous ways of knowing: environmental sustainability, land recognition, community revitalization, enhancement, and engagement (Garcia, 2018).

Stage 2 (Grieving).

While we understand that talking about grieving is a decolonizing process of becoming a "Hispanic Research Serving Institution" is a little different, we nonetheless also understand that coming from a white supremacy base is essential to grieve the loss to be able to celebrate the new beginning. We also see the stage of mourning as a natural outgrowth of the first phase, a time when people can lament their victimization. This is an essential phase of healing. Even in individual tragedies where one is a victim of some crime, has experienced the death of a close loved one, or suffered a sexual assault, the victim must be permitted a time of mourning.

Furthermore, the mourning stage can also accelerate the earlier stage of rediscovery and recovery. People in mourning often immerse themselves in the rediscovery of their history, making for an exciting interplay between these two phases, feeding upon one another. This phase may also be expressed in great anger and a lashing out at all symbols of the colonizer. Nonetheless, eventually, the natural process of acceptance takes place, and it is in this stage where the dimension of membership fits, given that it is grounded in the idea of racial and cultural mixing, not with the intent of erasing difference or assimilating members, but instead to value and respect all ways of knowing.

The institution is not exclusionary, but recruits from various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, all united with the desire to disrupt and challenge dominant structures such as white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, Christianity, nationality, and ability.

Stage 3 (Visualizing).

This phase is the most crucial for decolonization. Here, the whole panorama of possibilities is expressed, considered through debate, consultation, and building dreams on further dreams, eventually becoming the flooring for creating a new social order.

During this phase, colonized people can explore their own cultures and aspirations for their future, considering their government and social order structures, encompassing and expressing their hopes. So crucial is this phase that it must be allowed to run its entire course. If the visualization is cut short by any action plan or program designed to create a remedy meeting the perception of the issue at a premature stage, the result can prove disastrous.

In this stage, the process looks at utilizing oppressed peoples' virtues when working to improve their lived experience. Martín-Baró described the virtues of the oppressed people of his own country, El Salvador, by marveling over "their ability to deliver and to sacrifice for the collective good, their tremendous faith in the human capacity to change the world, [and] their hope for tomorrow that keeps being violently denied to them" (p. 31). This strengths-based approach allows the social scientist to depend on oppressed people to produce the tools and energy that may lead to liberation. Further, utilizing the virtues of oppressed peoples takes the tools used to cope with oppressive circumstances for generations and transforms them as an indispensable tool for liberation.

Stage 4 (Commitment).

According to Laenui (2000), during the process of dreaming, people will have the opportunity to weigh their voices rather than become caught up in counting votes or bullets. They will be able to wade through the cult of personalities and family histories and release themselves from the shackles of colonial patriotism. They will now be ready to commit to a single direction in which society must move. This phase will culminate in people combining their voices to state their desired law clearly. There is no single "way" or process for a people's expression of commitment. In fact, over time, the commitment will become so clear that a formal process merely becomes a pro forma expression of the people's will (Laenui, 2000). Here during this phase, the authors see the dimension of technology being weight in as all forms of delivery that lead to the intended outcomes of the organization; this includes curricular and co-curricular options that are centered on the racial and cultural ways of knowing decolonized pedagogical approaches, and anti-oppressive educational practices.

Stage 5 (Action).

The final stage of the decolonization process can only be appropriately implemented upon a consensus of commitment reached in the 4th phase. Otherwise, the action taken cannot be said to be the choice of the people colonized.

But the reality of many situations does not allow for such a methodical, patient, time-consuming process of the four earlier phases. When people are under physical attack, when they find their children torn from their homes for reeducation in colonial societies, and when people are being removed from their traditional lands in droves, action may be called for before the community completes the visionary phase. But that kind of responsive action to colonization's onslaught is not the action spoken of here. The responsive action is one for survival. The act called for in the 5th phase of

decolonization is not a reactive, but a proactive step taken upon the consensus of the people.

In this stage, the other dimensions of Garcia's (2018) model came. First, it is governance within the organization is communal, decentralized, and evenly distributed, drawing on themes within indigenous governance. This includes eliminating a centralized reporting structure and embracing autonomy and pluralism at the micro- and macro levels. Second, community standards are fluid; organizational members develop rules, regulations, and policies as needed to protect the community and progress. Garcia also mentioned justice as a restorative process grounded in relationship building, networking, personal responsibility, and community restoration—finally, the incentives to move the mission and purpose forward.

The Healing Process

While the healing process begins early during the decolonization process, as evidenced in the recovery of the historical memory and later with the grieving process. It is essential to make emphasis the areas that liberation psychology mention as crucial element of healing, like "el buen vivir," the IWOK (Indigenous Way of Knowing), independency, the ability to tell one their own story, syncretism, and one command to create. Healing started during the decolonization process, but it must continue with the reaffirmation of different identities and values living in syncretism with each other.

The Conscientization

The primary goal of Liberation Psychology is the awakening of critical conscientization (i.e., critical consciousness) in the person/group. Martín Baró (1998) credits Freire (1996) with creating the notion of conscientization (Freire, 1996). He incorporated this concept from Freire's new pedagogy of the oppressed into his foundations for the psychology of liberation. Martín Baró (1998) suggests that critical consciousness "is not simply becoming aware of a certain fact, but rather it is a process of change" (p. 227). In other words, to become conscious of reality is to become aware of and involved in continual discovery and action related to "truth." Through rediscovering historical memory, de-ideologizing understandings of cultural truths, discovering the people's virtues, and applying this knowledge to specific contexts and lived experiences through problematization, critical consciousness emerges and is maintained. Conscientization is never complete but instead "brings with it the possibility of a new praxis, which at the same time makes possible new forms of consciousness" (Martín Baró, 1998, p. 40). This ongoing process of liberatory praxis between theory and action forms the foundation on which Liberation Psychology rests.

The Action

The action in the model is the continuation of the steps taken in the decolonization process mentioned earlier. Furthermore, in the model, the action is about looking at a piece, like the barriers to decolonization, such as those mentioned by Blume, that directly contradict the decolonization model (see Blume, 2020).

The Reflection

Finally, based on Freire's model, the proposed model talks about reflection to raise consciousness. Meaning the problematization of the process, which is to ask questions such as how traditional teaching practices have contributed to the reproduction of oppressive practices and the need to move towards a liberating and transformative pedagogy. We must name, confront, and dismantle the different structures perpetuating and reproducing colonial knowledge. Questioning, (1) Who is teaching? (2) Who is being taught? (3) What is the learning content; and (4) How is it taught? (5) Who is developing policies; (6) What is the community's involvement in curriculum, policies, etc.?

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As we mentioned at the beginning of this piece pushing for equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-oppressive education have been significant movements within the United States educational system. However, decolonizing the university system and integrating practices that disrupt and challenge the systems perpetuating oppression, discrimination, and marginalization of minoritized and racialized groups continues to be a challenge. These challenges are primarily associated with the dominant discourse of imposing Eurocentric values at the expense of demonizing and devaluing indigenous ways of knowing. Thus, decolonizing educational spaces requires a deep understanding of the colonization process and the integration of liberatory praxis. That incorporates educational practices that promote critical reflexivity, problematization, and social transformation. Furthermore, we understand that the decolonization process mainly pertains to the historical process while decoloniality extends beyond political liberation, delving into the complexities of knowledge, culture, and identity. These authors assert that even though decolonizing academic spaces is a complex and challenging process it is imperative if we strive to achieve equity and promote anti-oppressive education.

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