

Decolonial, anti-racist and abolitionist pedagogies in International Relations Part I: Experiences, Experiments and Responses

Friday, 20 June 2025 15:00 (1h 30m)

As institutions embedded in the structures of racial capitalism (Gerrard, Sriprakash and Rudolph 2022), universities contribute to colonial and racial systems of oppression. Although resistance to this has always been a reality, the last few years have witnessed social movements across the world calling for the decolonisation of the university. Decolonisation of research and disciplines and decolonisation of curriculum and pedagogy are the most obvious paths upon which to embark towards decolonisation and perhaps the routes in which educators have more impact. In the discipline of International Relations (IR), post and decolonial perspectives have always been present (Henderson 2017; Vitalis 2015), although marginalised for a long time in a discipline characterized by eurocentrism (Hobson 2012) and whiteness (Sabaratnam 2020). Nevertheless, decolonial and postcolonial scholarship in IR has progressively evolved over the past 25 years as illustrated by an abundance of literature.

The emergence of new epistemological communities within Western academic institutions in the late 20th century led to changing understandings of what constitutes knowledge and its purposes (Bhambra 2016). Scholars and practitioners from post-colonial and marginalised communities have foregrounded voices and perspectives that have previously been erased or silenced. Decolonial and abolitionist theories and debates have challenged mainstream knowledge, its hierarchies and its pedagogical operations, as well as the very function of education as an emancipatory and liberatory process vis-à-vis inequity-reproducing institutions that have played a leading role in marginalising indigenous knowledge systems and maintaining racialized hierarchies. These developments have also shown how the language of decolonising the university, as well as the language of anti-racism, are increasingly being coopted by many institutions in a neo-liberal take on diversity.

Convenors of this roundtable therefore stand with Tuck and Yang (2012) when they remind us that decolonisation is not a metaphor and with Sara Ahmed (2006) when she warns us about the harmful effects of such co-optation. In this context, the literature on abolition in education constitutes a valuable reflection on the possibilities of countering this co-optation process (Abolitionist university studies 2023; Neal and Dunn 2020; Love and Muhammad 2020; Dunn, Chisholm, Spaulding and Love 2021).

In the light of the above, this roundtable gathers interventions bringing empirical reflection, based on specific pedagogical experiments/experiences in the classroom, using critical, radical, decolonial, abolitionist or anti-racist pedagogies in conversation with IR and institutional responses to these.

Interventions will focus more specifically on:

- The development of a decolonial praxis in the naming of race and racism in the French context, with Tal Dor, Manel Ben Boubaker and Christine Mussard.
- The possibilities brought by student-staff network with an experience at The University of Manchester, with Luke Bhatia.
- The prospects and challenges of anti-racist and decolonial pedagogies in De Montfort University (Leicester), with Amina Easat-Daas and Pinar Donmez.
- The inputs of indigenous knowledge in IR education through cartography, with an experience in Brasil by Marcia F Camargo.

Speakers are Tal Dor, Luke Bhatia, Amina Easat-Daas, Pinar Donmez and Marcia F. Camargo.

Convenors of the roundtable are Leila Mouhib (chair) and Heba Youssef.

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group