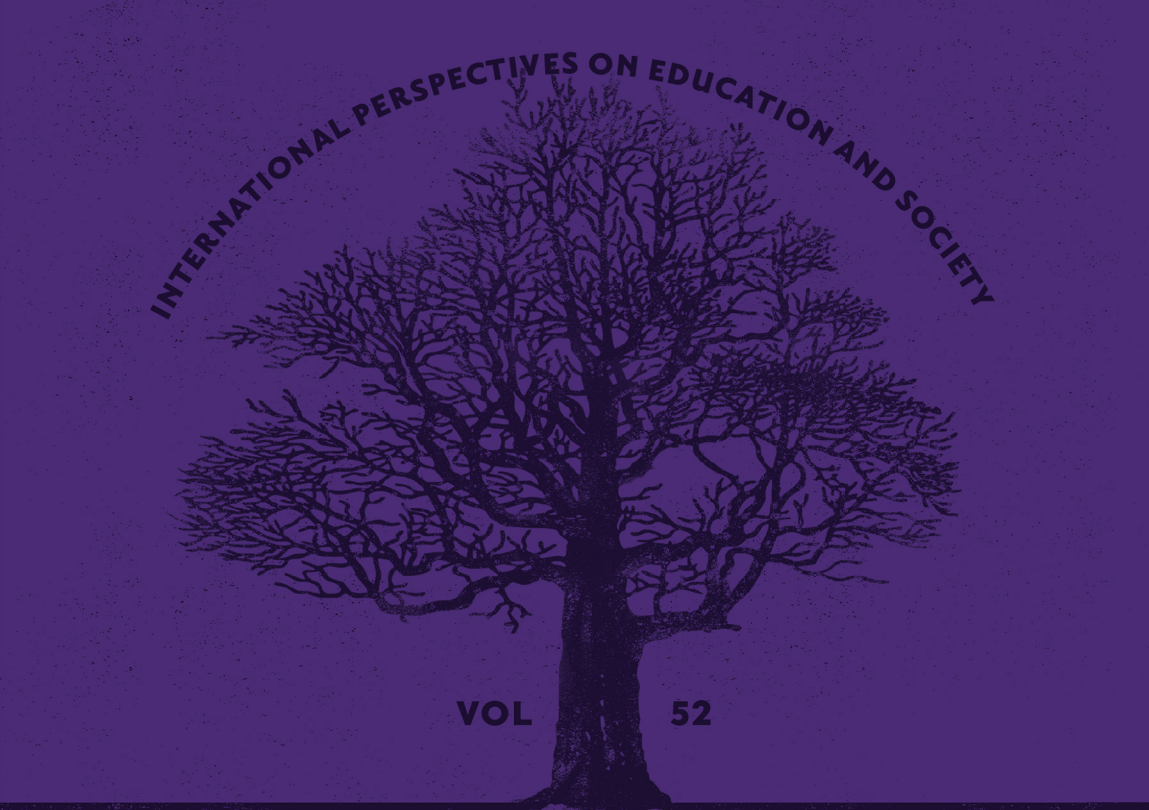
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY



VOL 52

DECOLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGIES IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Anticipating the Cultural Turn?

Edited by

tavis d. jules, FLORIN D. SALAJAN, ANNA BECKER & BENJAMIN SCHERRER

DECOLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGIES IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL.

First edition 2026

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80686-570-3 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-80686-569-7 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-80686-571-0 (Epub)

ISSN: 1479-3679 (Series)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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SERIES EDITOR INTRODUCTION

As part of the International Perspectives on Education and Society series, this volume deepens the tradition of examining education through critical, comparative, and international lenses. It affirms the series' dedication to publishing work that not only critiques entrenched structures but also envisions alternative futures. The contributors' collective call for epistemic justice, relational practice, and institutional transformation resonates with the series' long-standing goals of fostering scholarship that is both theoretically robust and socially meaningful. In doing so, this volume not only redefines the contours of comparative and international education (CIE) but also strengthens the broader project of making education research accountable to the realities of our interconnected and unequal world. This volume brings together a critical collection of scholarship that interrogates the colonial inheritances of CIE while proposing decolonial, reparative, and relational alternatives. In this volume, the contributors challenge the field's long-standing epistemic hierarchies and reveal how systems of knowledge production remain entangled with structures of imperialism, white supremacy, and global inequality. More importantly, they model new ways of thinking, researching, and collaborating that decenter Eurocentric authority and foreground plurality, reflexivity, and ethical engagement.

A central thread woven throughout this volume is a shared recognition that coloniality is not merely a legacy of the past but an active force structuring the epistemologies, governance, and everyday practices of education today. Rather than treating colonial legacies as peripheral to CIE, the contributors collectively demonstrate how they are embedded in its conceptual foundations, institutional priorities, and affective economies. Across diverse contexts, from settler colonial universities to postcolonial African school systems, the volume illustrates how whiteness operates not only as an identity or positionality but as a regime of knowledge that shapes who speaks, what counts as legitimate inquiry, and how education is imagined and delivered. This insight is deepened using frameworks such as critical whiteness studies and decolonial haunting, which expose how academic norms, institutional structures, and even affective experiences such as epistemic anxiety or racial gaslighting function to protect dominant knowledge systems while marginalizing others. Together, these chapters push beyond critique by inviting scholars to reexamine their complicity in the maintenance of colonial order and to embrace relational, reflexive, and justice-oriented alternatives.

The decolonial imperative requires more than critique of formal curricula; it calls for an interrogation of the everyday tools, assumptions, and logics that shape educational practice. Across the volume, contributors show that spaces often assumed to be progressive, including classrooms, development projects, or aid initiatives, can still be grounded in colonial imaginaries. Pedagogical strategies

designed to foster engagement or simulate complexity, including games-based learning and experiential instruction, may unintentionally reinforce imperial narratives and hierarchies while appearing neutral or innovative. Likewise, international development frameworks often promote a language of benevolence, even as they operate through uneven structures of knowledge and power. In these analyses, decoloniality emerges as an ethic of refusal: a refusal not only of dominant content but also of the forms and logics through which authority is established, legitimized, and reproduced in global education.

Relationality functions throughout this volume not only as a theoretical orientation but also as a way of knowing and working that challenges dominant norms in CIE. Rather than treating knowledge as fixed or individual, the chapters emphasize dialogic, context-specific, and collective processes of meaning-making. This is evident in approaches that foreground Indigenous frameworks such as vā, which center relationships as foundational to epistemology, as well as in proposals to move beyond binary logics through intercultural frameworks that emphasize negotiation and fluidity. Whether drawing from Pacific or Asian philosophical traditions, the authors reject rigid separations between global and local, scholar and community, or tradition and modernity. What unites these contributions is a commitment to relational practice as a means of reimagining education not simply as content to be transmitted but as a shared, dynamic, and ethically grounded engagement.

Questions of policy and power in this volume are closely tied to the broader struggle over who defines and controls educational agendas across local and global contexts. The chapters demonstrate that international initiatives and institutional principles, often presented as neutral or benevolent, can reinforce existing hierarchies when they serve geopolitical or ideological interests. Educational programs that promote mobility and collaboration, as well as values like academic freedom and institutional autonomy, are shown to carry embedded assumptions that may limit rather than expand epistemic diversity. The volume invites readers to reconsider how global education governance and academic norms intersect with colonial legacies and contemporary forms of soft power, and to reflect on the conditions under which these structures can genuinely support more just and inclusive forms of knowledge production (Salajan and Epstein).

The volume brings reparative justice and educational transformation into conversation by challenging readers to consider how historical injustices shape present educational structures and possibilities. Rather than treating reparations as a discrete political or legal agenda, the contributors highlight its educational dimensions, emphasizing the need to confront epistemic violence and rebuild curricula around principles of justice, memory, and accountability. The idea of contrapuntal reading becomes a methodological tool for uncovering how colonial histories remain embedded in dominant narratives and institutional practices. This approach invites a deeper interrogation of how education can serve as a site for repair, not only through policy or symbolic recognition but also through concrete shifts in pedagogy, institutional priorities, and knowledge production. By foregrounding Afro-Caribbean perspectives and the legacies of transatlantic

slavery, the volume reframes education as a contested terrain where the work of repair must be both structural and epistemological.

Together, these chapters collectively advance a reorientation of CIE that is rooted in critique but oriented toward transformation. Rather than offering a single pathway forward, the volume cultivates a plural and relational ethos that resists fixed hierarchies of knowledge and authority. Across varied contexts and methodologies, the contributors demonstrate how decolonial thinking can challenge extractive tendencies in research, disrupt normalized systems of domination, and foreground ways of knowing that emerge from Indigenous, local, and marginalized perspectives. The result is not a unified prescription but a shared commitment to reimagining the field as a space of dialogue, ethical engagement, and intellectual accountability. This vision affirms that meaningful change in CIE must grow from complexity, relationality, and a refusal to separate critique from the work of building new possibilities.

The International Perspectives on Education and Society series has long served as a platform for cutting-edge research that explores how education shapes and is shaped by social, political, cultural, and economic forces. In alignment with this mission, the present volume brings together a community of scholars whose work interrogates the enduring colonial structures within CIE and proposes transformative alternatives grounded in justice, relationality, and epistemic plurality. In refusing normative paradigms and reimagining the foundations of CIE, the contributors to this volume do more than critique the status quo. Across their varied approaches, they generate new openings for thinking and practice by centering justice, relationality, and the possibility of epistemic repair. Rather than presenting a unified blueprint, these chapters and authors work collectively to unsettle dominant frameworks while pointing toward multiple pathways for transforming the field from within. By doing so, the volume contributes to the series' ongoing commitment to rigorous, socially engaged, and globally relevant scholarship that challenges dominant paradigms and expands the field's intellectual horizons.

Alexander W. Wiseman
Series Editor

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FOREWORD

Keita Takayama

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My engagement with decolonial scholarship began with the publication of the "blue cover" special issue in *Comparative Education Review*, titled *Contesting Coloniality: Rethinking Knowledge Production and Circulation in Comparative and International Education*. In the special issue's introduction, we directed our critical gaze toward the field of comparative and international education (hereafter, CIE), suggesting how the "grammars" of the field remain trapped largely within the modern/colonial paradigm (Takayama et al., 2017). The special issue triggered a series of responses, including those that are critical of it (e.g., Bu, 2020; Vickers, 2019), and I and others have engaged with such criticisms (see Shields & Paulson, 2024; Takayama, 2025). The book you are about to read, *Decolonial Epistemologies in Comparative and International Education: Anticipating the Cultural Turn?* (hereafter, *Decolonial Epistemologies*), is the latest iteration of decolonial scholarship, which has been much debated in CIE. The book takes up and extends the agenda proposed by the "blue cover" special issue, as it aims to "interrogate the complex and multifaced relationship between decoloniality and CIE, which must be unsettled and reconstituted" (jules and Salajan, Introduction, pp. 1–21). Surely, the book will be debated as part of the ongoing discussion in the field.

"Decolonial," "decolonizing," or "decoloniality" have become a buzzword in the recent education scholarship. Indeed, a cursory survey of recently published books in education attest to this claim, including *The Palgrave Handbook of Decolonising the Educational and Language Sciences*, *Decolonising Australian History Education: Fresh Perspectives from Beyond the 'History Wars'*, and *Decolonizing the Classroom: Confronting White Supremacy in Teacher Education*, just to name a few. Then, we ought to ask, what is the significance of *Decolonial Epistemologies*, the latest addition to this expanding literature? Hereafter, I attempt to situate the book within the field of CIE, including some of the debates mentioned earlier. This is intended to help you readers understand why we needed another book on decoloniality in our field and how you might want to assess its merits.

As the editors jules and Salajan's introduction captures well, decolonial scholarship sits within a long history of anti-colonial and decolonial struggles over the last millennium. Their extended review of this historical context points

to the confluences of multiple trajectories of political movements and intellectual works across multiple regions of the world underpinning what we understand as decolonial theory. Today, the concept of decoloniality is embraced by many critical scholars of education, irrespective of the contexts, including both settler colonial, former colonial and non-colonial settings. Decolonial insights are used as a wide range of critical analyses of education, including interrogating Eurocentric, modern/colonial assumptions imbedded in school and university curriculums as well as in the designs and structures of transnational policy instruments developed by OECD, the World Bank and the global university rankings, and the reassertion of indigenous educational theories and practices developed in different parts of the world. The intellectual resources drawn up are also diversified, too. While the South American decolonial thinkers (e.g., de Sousa Santos, Mignolo, and Quijano) were extensively cited in the earlier literature and remain to be so as testified by the chapters in this volume, other scholars from diverse regional contexts are increasingly recognized as part of this ever-expanding intellectual movements (e.g., Chen, 2010; Mbembe, 2021). Proliferation has invited fragmentation; however, what each scholar means by "decoloniality" can differ depending on which key theorists are drawn upon, for which political/pedagogic projects they are mobilized, and under what historical circumstances they are pursued.

Regardless of the divergent views and approaches within the decolonial "camp," the following fact remains, however: the sustained academic interest in decolonial theory over the last few decades, since the early 2000s, when many of the South American decolonial theorists' works were published. One way to account for this sustained interest is the conceptual cogency offered by this body of theory. One could argue that decolonial theory has provided a set of conceptual tools that enable us to make sense of the pressing politico-economic, cultural, and social challenges faced by societies of late modernity, including different forms of exclusion and marginalization as well as the material, cultural, and ecological consequences of global capitalism on a planetary scale. These pressing issues have surfaced the urgent need for a civilizational paradigm shift proposed by the proponents of decolonial thoughts.

In academia, this existential crisis has been translated into radical questioning of social science disciplines, which are now deemed unreflexively Eurocentric, modern, and hence exclusionary. The claim that social science is Eurocentric is nothing new, but what is distinctive about the same claim by decolonial thinkers is the political and existential urgency surrounding this critique; the modern systems are collapsing in front of our eyes with serious consequences for ecological sustainability and even human survivability. Hence, one can argue that the sustained interest in decolonial scholarship reflects the acute awareness among academics of the need to interrogate and rewrite the foundational "grammars" of modernity as inscribed into their own disciplines as well as into their own consciousness. This is precisely what I, along with Arathi Sriprakash and Raewyn Connell, attempted to initiate in CIE with the aforementioned "blue cover" special issue.

Decoloniality is not without critics; however, criticisms come both from within and without the decolonial movements (see Nelson Christensen and jules in Chapter 3). Some decolonial advocates consider the proliferation of decolonial

theory across different political/pedagogical projects as a problematic diversion from the core issues for which decoloniality, articulated from the perspective of Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and land rights, stands (Tuck & Yang, 2012). There are also critical scholars who remain unconvinced by the intellectual merits of decolonial scholarship or consider it as an "ideological fad" that comes and goes (Vickers, 2019). Even those who are more sympathetic have raised concerns about romanticization of "other" forms of knowledge, reification of differences, and its propensity to promote ethno-essentialism (Baily, 2024; Zembylas, 2025). For decolonial scholarship to mature, it is important to take up these critiques for further theoretical adjustments.

However, what has been rather muted in the ongoing decolonial debate in CIE is the scale of the paradigm shift proposed by decolonial theorists. And the lack of clarity on this point seems to account for confusion out of which some of the critical points mentioned previously have emerged. Fundamentally, decoloniality is a radical critique of the existing mode of modern political and social arrangements and cultural assumptions upon which our current understanding of what we are as humans is based and upon which a set of normative concepts, which are central to our definition of humanity, are premised. These concepts, including freedom, rights, and justice, just to name a few, are essential for Indigenous and minoritized people's struggles for a fair share of economic resource and cultural recognition within the paradigm of modern institutions. Decolonial interventions, by encouraging us to interrogate the ontological assumptions embedded in such concepts (e.g., ontological individualism and ontological dualism), can therefore undermine the capacity of the oppressed to assert their rights and seek justice. This problem becomes more acutely expressed in a context where the political principle of liberalism has been constantly violated, including undemocratic, authoritarian states, as currently witnessed in the United States under President Trump and elsewhere (Baily, 2024). Hence, it is quite legitimate to ask, "are we not taking liberal values for granted in our decolonial work?" (Bamberger & Morris, 2024).

The question raised previously takes us to the core of decolonial conundrum. It asks us to consider whether we seek soft or radical reform within the paradigm of modernity or instead an entirely new paradigm, which remains unknown at this point, that sits beyond the modern paradigm. To borrow the language of decolonial scholar Vanessa Machado de Oliveira (2021), it comes down to our assessment of the fate of modernity itself; whether we think we should put modernity "on life support" on the assumption that it is still reformable or "move it into palliative care" on the assumption that it is no longer reformable (p. 90). My cursory review of the existing educational literature suggests that there exist quite a range of positions on this scale taken up by various decolonial scholars, including the authors of each chapter in this book. Clearly, there is little consensus here. But at least this discussion helps us surface the potential schism between decolonial politics for the pluriverse on the one hand and progressive politics for social justice and equality in education on the other (see Takayama, 2023). The pressing task ahead of those who endorse decolonial work then is to work out how this tension can be addressed conceptually, and this is precisely the task

taken up by Irving Epstein (Chapter 6) in his discussion of academic freedom and decoloniality.

While this conceptual work is urgently needed, it is also important to acknowledge that CIE, as a sub-field of educational research that specializes in education around the globe, is well positioned to begin the decolonizing processes. Out of all the educational subfields, CIE is arguably the most sensitized to cross-cultural differences at ontological and epistemological levels, though this does not apply to all CIE scholars (see Rappleye, 2020). In particular, the cross-cultural strand within CIE studies has long demonstrated that far more relationally oriented pedagogical theory and practice, which defies modern ontological assumptions of self, can be found primarily but not exclusively in non-Western cultural contexts (Komatsu et al., 2021; Tobin et al., 1991). Further, some CIE regional associations, such as the Oceania Comparative and International Society, have already reconstituted their academic meetings in a way that foregrounds the values of relationality and interdependency, featuring the South Pacific islanders' ontological orientations (see Wright et al.'s Chapter 5). Wright et al.'s chapter teaches us that decoloniality demands not only our intellectual and political advocacy for alternative forms of knowledge but also a radically different way of being and relating to each other, including human and non-human entities, that defies the instrumentalist and extractive logics of academic institutions today. These Oceanian scholars offer us a model of being an academic that facilitates our disinvestment from the grammars of modernity that have been internalized into our way of being and knowing through academic socialization.

To conclude, I hope I have delivered the promise I made earlier, which is to show how *Decolonial Epistemologies* advances the decolonial agenda in CIE as well as how the book sits within the ongoing debates in the field. To put it in the language offered by Scherrer and Becker in Conclusion, I have attempted to show how the book has emerged out of the ongoing exchanges of ideas both within and outside CIE as opposed to being a standalone unit of work. It is my modest attempt to honor the kind of shift in CIE knowledge production as proposed by Scherrer and Becker in Conclusion; "moving beyond individual ownership toward a more interconnected and processual understanding of the field of comparative and international education" (p. 219).

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

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THE CULTURAL TURN IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: DECOLONIZING THE FIELD IN AN ERA OF POST-HUMANIST PLURIVERSE THINKING AND RACIAL CAPITALISM

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INTRODUCTION

The field of comparative and international education (CIE) occupies a noteworthy epistemic domain, explicating and studying the workings of foreign education systems, policies, and practices while simultaneously discerning the nuanced interplay with socio-cultural, political, and economic matrices. Today, we live in an era characterized by socio-political movements such as #Black Lives Matter and settler-colonialism, state violence, racial capitalism, numerous wars, rising authoritarianism, and anti-Blackness, which have emerged as salient themes necessitating meticulous examination within CIE (see jules & Salajan, 2024; Salajan & jules, 2024). Yet, it was not until recently that the field began to address the importance of racial capitalism – the complex interplay between race and economics – in shaping its historical trajectory. Scholars have called for the decolonization of the field, arguing that we must deconstruct macro-level structural forces that inadvertently perpetuate colonial effects within the scholarly domain and exacerbate existing disenfranchisements (jules & Salajan, 2025; Scott &

Decolonial Epistemologies in Comparative and International Education: Anticipating the Cultural Turn?
International Perspectives on Education and Society, Volume 52, 3–23
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Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited
ISSN: 1479-3679/doi:10.1108/S1479-367920260000052001

Bajaj, 2023; Takayama et al., 2017). This is crucial because we often forget that "Whiteness is a transnational ideology that stems from colonial dispossession," which has been fueled by processes of racialization that have "created hierarchies, rationale for forms of domination, and unequal social and educational opportunities across the globe" (Scott & Bajaj, 2023, pp. 2–3). Thus, within the scholarly purview, decoloniality is the latest concept *du jour* and has emerged as a politico-cultural imperative, signaling the deliberate unraveling and nullification of the harmful consequences wrought by the historical edifices of Western expansion, colonialism, enslavement, and indentureship. Consequently, racial capitalism, which is inextricably linked to the rise and sustenance of colonialism, is not a variation, stage, or period in the more extensive history of capitalism; instead, it acknowledges that since the commencement of the transatlantic slave trade and the colonization of the Americas, capitalism, in both material and ideological senses, has been racialized, originating social and economic worth from racial labeling and social stratification (Jenkins & Leroy, 2021).

In this introduction, we discuss decolonization and decoloniality broadly, and we have asked contributors to this volume to apply this framework to CIE. While we do not discuss education in granular detail here, our arguments remain relevant to how global educational systems can be decolonized to promote better access, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, there is the question of whether education systems can be entirely decolonized or if they remain colonial at their core. As such, our starting point is the recognition that colonialism entailed not only territorial theft, economic and political violence, and settler colonialism but also cultural and epistemic violence that erased Indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices (see Liboiron, 2021). Decoloniality implies epistemic reconstitution and reparations, and education plays a central role in this process. Decolonization is varied, amorphous, and can have different meanings at different times. Historically, decolonization has been defined as a process aimed at eradicating colonial rule and achieving independence. However, as discussed in the following, more recently, it has been broadened to examine the ways in which we can challenge the lingering vestiges of colonial rule (see wa Thiong'o, 1998). The term "decolonization" has been in use lexically since 1836 but gained notoriety in the mid-1950s, when it was linked to the orderly transfer of power over a protracted period from the metropole to the colonial elites. Of course, this did not happen, and the term took on a life of its own, as the actual process of dismantling European empires was violent. Some have argued that colonialism and decolonization are social processes and that decolonization signifies a rupture beginning with a shift in power, the removal of military and political entities, the composition of anthems, and the redesign of flags (Hopkins, 2008). Indeed, the decolonization movements of the 1950s and 1960s marked a theoretical reversal of the ideological and material forces supporting the hierarchical imperial system, along with the promotion and implementation of democratic principles regarding human and civil rights by so-called Third-World leaders such as Julius Kambarage Nyerere in Tanzania and Mahatma Gandhi in India, among others. Gandhi's concept of Sarvodaya (universal uplift of all) and Nyerere's idea of Ujamaa (familyhood or brotherhood) became central to nation state

decolonization, yet decoloniality (discussed in the following) continues to persist. In other words, as we contend with the "consciousness of self" (Fanon, 1961), we are still faced with the painful legacies and enduring elements of coloniality that are embedded within everyday socio-cultural practices, or the coloniality of being of Western Man (see Wynter, 2003). Therefore, we argue that, since decolonization did not achieve the monumental changes that historical traditions and nationalist discourses have suggested, we must critically interrogate this concept to comprehend its lingering effects today, or what we can call decoloniality. We do this intentionally by moving away from using the concepts of post-colonialism and neocolonialism, where the former's analysis focuses on the cultural, political, and economic consequences of colonialism and how it is being continually shaped and influenced by structures and institutions imposed during the colonial era, while the latter highlights how powerful nations continue to dominate and exploit former colonies through economic, political, or cultural methods, even after decolonization has formally occurred. Although these two concepts aim to address the aftermath of colonization, we argue that they are not as robust as decoloniality in tackling the legacies of colonization. Unlike post-colonialism and neocolonialism, decoloniality is an epistemological project that recognizes the close connection between the colonial condition and the imposition of Western "modernity" as a result of colonialism.

Therefore, the authors in this volume adopt a critical approach to their subjects, aiming to decenter colonial structures that reify notions of racial unity and racial superiority, as well as the apparatuses and bureaucracies maintained within the Western ideal of modernity. They interrogate the wreckage that has been and is being caused by neoliberalism and coloniality in the name of "development" and "progress" at the expense of vulnerable peoples. Within this intellectual terrain, we acknowledge the burden of the "hidden curriculum" – a fountain of performative practices that saturate the field, preventing the recognition, in the words of Mignolo (2007a), that coloniality constitutes the darker underbelly of modernity. In this ontological–epistemological sphere, scholars find themselves trapped in the "colonial matrix of power," an extension of Western dominance as articulated by Quijano (2000). As such, this volume focuses on how we can exhort decolonization within the field of CIE to construct alternative ontologies, axiologies, epistemologies, and onto-epistemologies centered on Indigenous knowledge(s) and cosmologies (jules & Salajan, 2024). In other words, the authors in this volume demonstrate the importance of decolonizing the field of CIE and how this can reshape our conceptual understanding of not only thinking about but also applying and implementing concepts such as settler colonialism, Indigenous knowledge development, and anti-Blackness. Furthermore, these concepts can enhance the ways in which we learn, think, and practice CIE.

In the context of decoloniality, one positionality is essential. As such, we are the co-editors of *Comparative Education Review*, the flagship journal of the *Comparative and International Education Society (CIES),* and have experienced socialism/communism, identify as homosexual/heterosexual, and are Black/white. We reside in both urban and rural communities. We share our identities and affiliations to acknowledge our privilege, the dominance of the English instruction

medium, and our ability to write in the lingua franca of the day. These experiences form the basis of our discussion when talking about decoloniality. In what follows, we discuss the implications of the nuanced relationship between modernity/colonialism and their impact on the different waves of decolonization and decoloniality. In providing a brief overview of these diverse waves of political and economic decolonization, we argue that while political and economic decolonization may have occurred through the self-determination of former colonies, the process of psychological, cultural, and social decolonization is just now taking place. This is because many formerly colonized countries are still structured (socially, politically, economically, etc.) under the colonial narratives that were imposed on them. Next, we discuss how decoloniality may transpire in the field of CIE. We conclude with a brief overview of the book's chapters.

THE DARKER SIDE OF MODERNITY: DECOLONIZATION AND DECOLONIALITY

In this book, when the authors discuss decoloniality, they refer to countries geographically located in the Global South, including Africa, Latin America, and much of Asia and Oceania, which have experienced colonialism and now constitute the demographic Global Majority, comprising people of African, Asian, Brown, mixed-heritage, and Indigenous backgrounds, who together make up most of the world's population. As such, decolonization is viewed as a process in which colonies gain independence from colonial or imperial powers. It involves dismantling colonial institutions and reclaiming political, economic, and cultural autonomy by previously subjugated nations. It is essential to recognize that decolonization is closely tied to Western modernity, colonial expansion, resource exploitation, and enslavement; without modernity, decolonization would not have been possible. As Betts (2012) poignantly discusses:

> The discourse of modernism, in which the rhetoric of empire was formed, emphasized the rational and the orderly, praised the technological improvements that assured the West its only field of superiority, and rejoiced in an attitude of imagined differences that allowed terms like "primitive" and "backward" to stand as antonyms for the nouns' progress' and "betterment," these last two providing the themes of the meganarratives that gave unity to that age's endeavours and imposed their cultural bias on the world at large. (p. 31)

Thus, modernity became linked to European empire-building (i.e., the expansion of territorial influence through the coercive acquisition of resources, land, and people), which began in the 15th century "[with the] Portuguese expansion … and the discovery[1] of America by Spain that the whole planet became the space of one world history" (Dussel, 2000, p. 470), colonialism and capitalism are deeply connected, intertwined with the onto-epistemic religio-spiritual roots of modernity (Edwards, 2025; Grosfoguel, 2013; Saito et al., 2023). Grosfoguel (2013) contends that the long durée of modern knowledge systems has contributed to the ongoing existence of racism and sexism, driven by the Cartesian legacy rooted in religiosity. Thus, *Colonization* should be viewed as the use of power to subjugate Indigenous peoples (and later African, East Indian, and Chinese

people) into serving the empire, while this form colonialism refers to the historical process of European expansion and the ideology based on the belief that the white race is superior to other groups and therefore has the right to civilize and exploit Indigenous peoples.[2] Thus, *coloniality* came to be recognized as the lasting effect of the flipside of Euromodernism that continues to shape contemporary political, economic, social, and knowledge systems. Three dimensions of coloniality have been identified in the scholarship: first, the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000), a mechanism that controls the economy, authority, gender and sexuality, and subjectivity and knowledge; second, the coloniality of knowledge, which focuses on the dominance of Western knowledge; and third, the coloniality of being, which speaks to the hierarchies of human identities. However, due to the scale of colonialism, some describe its highly exploitative and destructive practices that continue to keep former colonies in long-term economic and social harm as "soft colonialism" (Hamamoto, 2006). Conversely, *decolonization* is the dissolution of colonial power in the metropole and periphery as a polity moves from political and economic dependence to self-determination, while *decoloniality* emerged in Latin America and became viewed as a liberatory struggle against global coloniality that "means first to delink (to detach) from that overall structure of knowledge in order to engage in an epistemic reconstitution" (Mignolo, 2017, p. 2). Therefore, decoloniality is a critical examination of hierarchical power relations, history, and social politics aimed at understanding how they contribute to the reproduction of the colonial logic of systemic oppression, exploitation, and subjugation of marginalized groups. Colonialism must be understood through historical continuities and disruptions, and we can view decolonization as consisting of five phases (discussed in the following). The first phase began in the 15th century under the mission of God, Gold, and Glory. The second period was the carving up of the African continent under the Berlin Conference in 1884–85. The third chapter was the post-independence phase of "epistemic and economic colonisation" (Maringe, 2023, p. 146), which Western institutions drove as the blueprint for economic development. The fourth stage, which is on the horizon, is the "techno/digital colonisation," which is a "data-driven, machine- and technology- and digital-dependent discourse" (Maringe, 2023, p. 146). The fifth and current segment is epistemic reconstitution and reparations for the lasting effects of European colonialism (see in the following).

The Chronology and Latitude of Decolonization

While the term "decolonization" is often linked to the post-World War II independence movements in Africa and Asia, Smith (2001) asserts that Indigenous peoples have been at the forefront of decolonial efforts for over 500 years, representing the "unfinished business of decolonization" (p. 7). However, some note that the "Atlantic revolutions"[3] (Godechot, 1965; Palmer, 1959) between 1776 and 1826,[4] which had initially focused on colonial expansionism, were instrumental in the dissolution of European colonial rule, which allowed for the independence of North and South American states and created nations such as the United States, is part of the first wave of decolonization. While this wave of decolonization led

to the loss of territory and the end of colonial rule in parts of the Americas, it allowed European metropoles to double down on colonial penetration in other places. Other scholars suggest that the first wave of decolonization began with the Haitian Revolution (1789–1804), which overthrew French colonial rule and established the first Black republic, and inspired subsequent efforts for freedom and equality globally (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

The second wave of decolonization is categorized as occurring over a period of approximately 100 years, commencing in 1839 when British settler colonies, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa, gained independence and retained the British monarch as their ceremonial head of state. Whereas white settler self-governing colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa were described as "dominion," other imperial settlements were subjected to imperial rule, so in the 1950s and 1960s, when they sought independence, this became known as the decolonial wave. While "dominion status was a characteristically ambiguous imperial invention that recognized various states of self-government while managing to convey overtones of continuing subordination" (Hopkins, 2008, p. 212), decolonization became viewed as changes to the social and political geographies resulting from the process of disentanglement from formal colonial relations and the gaining of independence. Between the 15th and 19th centuries, European nations frequently found themselves at war with one another as they sought to expand their empires through conquest, plunder, looting, and the practice of settler colonialism. So, in 1884–85, 13 European countries and the United States convened in Berlin for what became known as the Berlin Conference, where they established rules for colonization and partitioned the African continent, which was perceived as the Dark Continent, deemed ripe for exploitation, backward, and uncivilized. The outbreak of World War I would lead to several states in the Near and Middle East, as well as Southeast Asia, gaining self-determination from their former colonizers. This period of decolonization coincided with the collapse of the Russian, German, Habsburg, and Ottoman Empires and the establishment of the League of Nations. This wave of decolonization would give rise to "Neo-Europeans" (Klose, 2014), as former white settler colonies adopted the political, social, and cultural systems of their colonial metropole while simultaneously marginalizing Indigenous populations. During this wave, the British Commonwealth (later the Commonwealth of Nations) was also established by the United Kingdom as a means to stave off the disintegration of the British Empire.

The third wave of decolonization, or the period of revolutionary fervor, began after World War II, as numerous colonies fought for independence from the "civilizing" project of colonial empires. In fact, Delavignette (1977), a former colonial administrator, wrote, "they shot up like volcanic lava" (p. 137) in describing the intensity of the fight for independence and further noted that decolonization was the "rejection of the civilization of the white man" (p. 131). During this wave, countries in North and Sub-Saharan Africa were impacted as their resistance to colonial rule grew. Decolonialization during this time was driven by the anticolonial struggles that challenged the dimensions of colonialism, as colonial rule was being transformed by administrative and political changes that