An appeal to Anti-colonial education at the University of Liverpool

A report by the Anti-colonial Education Working Group

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Introduction: an anti-colonial future at the University of Liverpool

This report outlines the possibility for an anti-colonial future within the education practices and community engagement within the University of Liverpool. The university's ambitions summarised in Strategy 2031 are focused on "education that transforms students' lives and creates a fairer, better world" (University of Liverpool, 2023). To realise this vision, the strategy proposes to "create outstanding, transformative, research-connected learning experiences that empower our diverse community of students and teaching staff to achieve their highest potential" (University of Liverpool, 2023). Seeking to "empower our diverse community of students and staff" requires commitments to work on: the content of curricula that the University of Liverpool offers; the diversification of the student and teaching body of the University of Liverpool; promoting an inclusive and safe environment; and enforcing active policies and practices focused on social justice at all levels of the institution (University of Liverpool, 2023). We believe that this commitment to fairness and to do better entails a social justice-based approach to the educational content, context, and environment at the University of Liverpool. Transformative education is a core value of anti-colonial approaches to learning.

An anti-colonial curriculum which reflects all students' history and lived experiences is key in promoting the learning experience highlighted here, including through dismantling the Whiteness of the curriculum, acknowledging the global interconnected nature of our history, and providing research-informed, critical tools to rethink knowledge, its production, valuation, and circulation (Arday et al, 2022). Through re-centring knowledges and scholars from the 'periphery', the University of Liverpool can act on its ambition to develop global networks and strategies, provided it does so in an ethical, glocally-conscious, and fair way. This speaks to objective two of Strategy 2031's global experience and partnerships pillar, aiming to "enhance the global nature of our student experience through an internationalised and inclusive curriculum", which we believe is crucial but necessitates institutional resources to be properly addressed (University of Liverpool, 2023).

This report is an appeal to University of Liverpool educators and administrators to take seriously the role of anti-colonial approaches as a valuable tool in achieving the university's vision.

The Anti-colonial Education Working Group

This policy document was produced by the Anti-colonial Education Working Group (AEWG) at the University of Liverpool. Established in August 2023, the AEWG developed out of the previous Department of Politics Decolonial Working Group into a cross-department working group with a remit extending beyond the School of Histories, Languages, and Cultures. The working group now comprises of a team of like-minded academics across the School of History, Languages, and Culture, the School of Law and Social Justice, the School of Life Sciences, and the School of Environmental Sciences. The Working Group is dedicated to a collective interest in research on anti-colonial pedagogy in higher education. **Here 'anti-colonial' refers to the ideology and practices of resisting empire which constitute a nonconforming anti-imperial inheritance from activists and intellectuals based outside the university and the United Kingdom** (Gopal, 2020).

As part of its inquiry, the AEWG set out to produce (1) four forums of anti-colonial discussion within and outside the university, and (2) one collective output of a policy document. This document is a research-based policy document that exemplifies the efforts of University of Liverpool educators to pursue teaching and teaching-related administration that facilitates an education that is informed by the possibilities generated by anti-colonial solidarities within and outside the University of Liverpool. This last point of establishing educational and institutional solidarities outside the university is crucial: anti-colonialism as a theory and study of power necessitates a focus on "empire and its concomitant forms of racialisation on the one hand, and capital on the other, always seeing these two as co-constitutive" (Salem, 2021: 81).

The AEWG aims to embed its research in wider School, Faculty and University strategies, particularly that of the Strategic Framework 2031. The AEWG's activities directly correspond to this strategy's aims of creating an outstanding, transformative, research-connected learning experience that empowers our diverse community of students and teaching staff. It endeavours towards building an outward-looking, globally connected community across staff, students and alumni, that shares our aspiration for positive worldwide impact; and enhancing the global nature of our student experience through an internationalised and inclusive curriculum.

The AEWG objectives are:

- To feed into wider institutional initiatives to uplift community partnerships including the current development of a Liverpool Learning Framework that is cognisant of inclusivity as a core value.
- To establish a framework for interdepartmental curriculum review and development that examines the current progress and drawbacks of university-wide decolonising the curriculum initiatives and their continued meaning for the University of Liverpool institutional context.
- To create culturally rich learning resources that complement ongoing endeavours to address the design of curriculum content in a globally conscious way that is mindful of wider societal efforts at democratic change.
- To generate interim findings and conclusions that can feed into the School of Histories, Languages, and Cultures; School of Life Sciences; the School of Law and Social Justice, and the School of Environmental Sciences curriculum review boards of 2025.
- To support the student and municipal voices across the university by broadening access to curriculum review processes and exploring new teaching and administrative agendas that will enable students and staff to be agents of change in a connected world.

Executive Summary

Since the Rhodes Must Fall campaign demanding the removal of a statue dedicated to Cecil Rhodes from Oxford University's Oriel college began in 2015, it has regularly been noted by experts and public figures alike that little progress has been made in decolonising higher education. While it is true that the idea of decolonising academia has gained much traction within British Higher Education, particularly since the May 2020 resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement inspired many universities to affirm a commitment to addressing systemic racism and pursuing anti-racist reform, administrative and teaching staff continue to face challenges in their efforts to address the challenge of colonial remnants in classrooms, administrative, and scholastic spaces.

In 2020, David Batty of the *Guardian* reported that decolonising the curriculum was a national problem. The report demonstrated "a reluctance" in British higher education institutes across the country "towards addressing the impact of colonialism on present day racism" (Batty, 2020a; Batty, 2020b). Replies to freedom of information requests from 128 universities showed that only 24 universities maintained that they were overtly committed to decolonising their curriculums. Of those 24, only 11 universities had plans to reform the whole institution. Most decolonising efforts were limited to individual departments, or a minority of students and educators. However, education institutions continue to be complicit in reproducing racially inequitable and colonial-centric knowledge. In 2022 the United Kingdom's largest teaching union called for the then Conservative Government to launch a review to decolonise and create an inclusive national curriculum in England. Meanwhile, throughout 2022 the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education faced a backlash for providing subject benchmark statements which encouraged curricula design principles that stimulated critical thinking informed by "critical race theory" and "decoloniality" or that encouraged discussions of both the positive and negative historic connections between the subjects and imperialism, colonialism, White supremacy (see QAA 2022a; QAA 2022b; QAA 2022c). Despite, these recommendations being created by educator communities (e.g., in Geography, Computing, Classics and Ancient History) to be used as a tool for meaningful reflection when designing new courses or updating existing courses – numerous state politicians and news media outlets took the QAA's attempts to improve the quality of UK higher education as an attack on freedom of speech.

The University of Liverpool is situated in a unique position to take a leadership role in steering the way for universities across the country to move in a progressive direction, by showing how an educational institution can transform social, cultural, scientific, and political knowledge, and address the imperial and colonial contexts that form their foundation in a socially just and globally conscious manner. As a Russell Group university

with historic connections to the transatlantic slave trade and the United States confederacy, and a public institution situated minutes away from Britain's oldest Black community and England's first mosque – our university has a unique responsibility to ensure its staff and students help to create stronger and safer communities and a more resilient future for Liverpool, the UK, and the world. Analogous to our university's motto, "These days of peace foster learning", it is the view of the producers of this report that in these days of global crisis, the University of Liverpool must foster learning that encourages a reparatory peace. This means choosing to provide an inclusive, anti-racist, and as we implore, an anti-colonial education, which is cognisant of and respectful towards neighbouring communities; building bridges so that the activities and benefits of higher education can produce mutual benefits for surrounding inner-city areas.

Our working group upholds that pursuing an anti-colonial educational space fundamentally requires reshaping our curricula, administrative activities, and learning at the University of Liverpool **so that all university actors are encouraged to meaningfully engage with and be cognisant of local Merseyside communities**. Anti-colonialism requires contributing to socially just cities based on "the fair distribution of resources, the recognition of the diverse needs and aspirations across different identities, and the meaningful representation of residents in educational processes" (Butcher and Frediani, 2019:6). Despite being internationalist in nature, arguments of anti-colonialism also argue for the need to contextualise sociopolitical and economic justice within the specific historical conditions of their emergence (Getachew, 2019). The history of the University of Liverpool is inextricably bound with the colonial history of the city of Liverpool. This why our working group maintains that for an anti-colonial education to be possible, the University of Liverpool needs to address the inequities that exist in current university-led community partnerships between itself and the surrounding Toxteth community to better democratise our education and upkeep our civic responsibility of engaging with economic, social, and political issues at a local and global scale.

This report is being published on the 43rd anniversary of the civil disturbances in Toxteth which first brought national attention to how colonial legacies instilled institutional racism throughout the city of Liverpool (Jagne and Small, 2022). Inspired in this political moment, this report maps out its discussion of anti-colonialism as an idea, a community, and as a project in various domains.

The report is divided into four intersecting parts. In Part I, we offer our understanding of anti-colonialism. We offer a contextual explanation to forestall further confusion about the systemic nature of colonial effects and racism in knowledge production, but also to foreshadow ensuing sections explaining how to create community relations, curricula, and administrative changes that can best tackle colonial legacies and aid staff in improving higher education at the University of Liverpool.

In Part II, we examine the university's existing relationship with the local Liverpool community and the barriers to community engagement through community consultations. This report highlights the everyday and historical interactions between the university and neighbouring residents that have resulted in a sense of Othering and mistrust.

In Part III, we present existing work that incorporates anti-colonial teaching and administration practices into the University of Liverpool. As noted in Batty's (2020b) report several universities have failed to understand that decolonising the curriculum requires challenging and remaking whole learning environments structured by imperial and colonial ideas about knowledge, rather than just incorporating Black and non-western scholars into reading lists. This document presents the opportunities and challenges to anti-colonial practices within institutional settings and the benefits for student learning.

In Part IV, this report outlines how anti-colonial curricula can positively contribute to the Student Success Framework and Strategy 2031 before turning to our conclusion.

Part I: What is anti-colonial thought?

From school and university curricula to media and business, calls to ‘decolonise’ are abound today (see Bhambra and Holmwood 2018; Batty 2020b). For all its ubiquity, the meaning of the term is often not specified. While some understand decolonisation as a greater inclusion of **international and marginalised** voices and faces in mainstream institutions, there are also more wide-ranging understandings of the term that embrace notions of knowledge and (re)distribution of resources. As postcolonial scholar Robbie Shilliam (2021) explains **decolonising** often refers to a decentralised movement to recontextualise social, cultural, scientific, and political knowledge, within the imperial and colonial contexts that form their foundation.

In questioning our conceptions of knowledge and current distributions of wealth and power in the **West**, such understandings of decolonisation link to older conceptions of **anti-colonialism** and **post-colonialism**. **Anti-colonialism** refers to a practice-based internationalist system of ideas, an analytical tool, and social movement which centres on the modern effects of empire overseas and its concomitant forms of racism and racial thinking. **Postcolonialism** is an interdisciplinary academic study of the cultural, political and economic legacy colonialism, imperialism, and of racialised violence, addressing the mentality of the European, of the settler, of **Whiteness**, and how it reaffirms itself in modern society. Meanwhile, **West** or **Western** refers to the Anglospheric and European construct or idea of a society that is developed, industrialised, urbanised, capitalist, secular, modern; and fundamentally; characterised as having an institutional/ethnocultural/or racial affinity to countries or former colonies of Western Europe.

Anti-colonial and postcolonial thought emerged from the movements against colonialism in the inter-war and post-World War II period (Getachew, 2019). They also drew upon antecedent struggles in the nineteenth century and earlier such as the Haitian revolution against French colonisers in the late eighteenth century (Gopal, 2020). Anti-colonial and postcolonial frameworks challenged colonialism at multiple levels. At the socio-economic level, they refused to see the Third World as underdeveloped due to its internal cultural characteristics (Bhambra, 2014). Continuing mechanisms of economic drain and monopolisation led to development and underdevelopment in the first and third worlds in a mutually constitutive fashion. The internal linkages between different parts of the world also led to a reconsideration of knowledge production. For example, there was a focus on how the non-West or **Orient** has been portrayed in opposition to and in a hierarchical relation to the West (Said, 1979). Thus, a wide range of fields from media to literature depicted non-Western regions and peoples as passive, barbaric, backward, irrational and pre-modern, while the West was dynamic, active, modern, civilised, and rational (Said,

1979). Such hierarchical and value-laden representations served to justify colonial (and postcolonial) domination of non-Western countries.

Anti-colonial and postcolonial frameworks punctured the self-satisfied pretensions of European or Western society. Instead of being enclosed within themselves, these societies and their knowledge systems were seen to be produced through an engagement with and domination of the colonial subject or imagined non-Western **Other** (Said, 1994). Indeed, in normalising domination of the Other and seeing themselves as self-enclosed, dominant knowledge systems of the West served to silence critical and radical traditions within Euro-America, while also suppressing anti-colonial and oppositional voices from the non-West.

Anti-colonial and postcolonial frameworks help us move towards fuller conceptions of the contemporary world. Where mainstream Western thought sees Euro-America as the origin of modernity, anti-colonial, postcolonial and decolonial frameworks centre the role of colonisation in the constitution of capitalism and modernity. As such, colonial-racial oppression and peripheral regions (such as Latin America) are central to modernity and capitalism (Quijano, 2007; Cusicanqui, 2012).

Relatedly, modernity itself is not just a singular or monolithic phenomenon involving oppression and silencing of colonised subjects (Trouillot, 2015). Indeed, colonised peoples have contested and engaged in creative ways with discourses of progress, liberty and equality associated with modernity and capitalism. Colonial practices were predicated on denying colonised subjects' humanity through confining them to a backward tradition, incapable of history, complexity, or equality. Anti-colonial movements have creatively appropriated conceptions of equality and liberty in the process of struggle (Mngxitama, 2018). As such, theorists from radical Black, Indigenous and anti-colonial lineages, have advocated not for a turning back to a pre-modern past, but for a practice which builds new and emancipatory traditions out of the contradictions of colonial and capitalist present. These would reckon with the way the social-economic structures of our world and our knowledge of these are constituted through unequal, hierarchical relations.

Calls for decolonisation and anti-colonial education embrace frameworks that centre the role of marginalised peoples and regions in the making of our world. Crucially, they centre the reappropriation and democratisation of resources (including land, capital, labour, and knowledge) that are concentrated in the hands of an ever-narrowing elite of mostly, but not exclusively, Western provenance.

Part II: Community consultation: Anti-colonial education and the University of Liverpool

Pursuing anti-colonialism requires addressing the three structures of racism, imperialism, and capitalism (and its accompanying philosophy of neoliberalism). Addressing these structures requires contextualising anti-colonial projects within the local or most immediate historical conditions of their global emergence (Getachew, 2019). In the case of the University of Liverpool, our most immediate circumstances of co-constitutive structures of racism, imperialism, and capitalism tie our academic and educational colonial effects to the surrounding community of Toxteth residents, the oldest Black community in Britain. This is a community that the university has historically marginalised and that it continues to impact both scholastically and socio-economically. The University of Liverpool cannot address the effects of the harmful legacies of colonialism within the institution without acknowledging the interconnectivity of these same effects outside the institution in its immediate vicinity. The first part of this report outlines the findings of community consultations on the relationship between the local community and University of Liverpool and the everyday and historical interactions including community portrayal, housing and displacement, and feelings of exclusion that shape this relationship. Many of those whose shared their views have a long relationship, and have engaged, with different parts of the university over years with varied experiences. We present community reflections along three themes – anti-racism, urban development and displacement, and representation – and offer key recommendations from this consultation.

Strategy 2031's Place and Innovation Pillar outlines a commitment to "support our communities in addressing inequalities and improving life chances, including through widening access to education, participating in arts and culture initiatives that promote wellbeing and sense of community, and working with employers to identify and address skills gaps in the region's workforce" (University of Liverpool, 2024b). However, and as outlined in this report, this intention faces historical legacies of Othering and distrust because of the University of Liverpool's engagements with the local community. In the spirit of anti-colonial reform, the AEWG draws on broader community engagement to develop a specific education approach tailored to the City of Liverpool colonial context. By bridging its operations with insights of community activists, the AEWG calls on the University of Liverpool to empower and encourage a collaborative and equitable relationship between it and the Toxteth Community of Merseyside.

In addition, national problems of labour crises, race relations, and populist controversies have international origins in systems linked to British colonialism and the ramifications of the transatlantic slave trade, anti-colonial education endeavours to bridge national-

international communities by acknowledging how the mnemonic, bodily, and communicative engagements between people and institutions exemplify the consequence of colonial inheritances living on through change. Modern examples of such inheritances include the continued attainment gap between White students and those from Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds and concerns with modernising curricula so that they are globally conscious.

The University of Liverpool's history of engagement with the local community has been fraught. The most resonant example of this is the report written by Muriel Fletcher in the 1930s. Fletcher's report came out of a philanthropic initiative from the Liverpool University settlement, which sought to address the issue of the welfare of Half-caste children, in South End in Liverpool. Fletcher was a graduate in the social sciences, and was hired by Ms. Rachel Fleming, a prominent Eugenicist, to research and write the report (Christian, 2008). The report branded the mixed heritage children as genetically abnormal and the product of unemployed Black seamen (themselves also a 'problem') and 'mentally weak' White women. Fletcher also drew on Eugenicist thinking, arguing that the illness and ill-health of the dual heritage children was the result of 'inherited genes' from their Black fathers, rather than the poverty they faced. Despite its attempts to be part of a 'charitable' initiative, Fletcher's report served to pathologise the mixed heritage children of 'South End' in Liverpool, their parents, and the Black community of the city. While disparaged, Fletcher's report represents a prominent example for the community of how the university has, for a long time, related to the Black communities of Liverpool; the voice of the community itself has been silenced, while those of White researchers' have been amplified. The fact that the university library still holds the report, without necessary historical context, feels problematic and short-sighted.

Therefore, while enhancing the relationship between the University of Liverpool and the Liverpool region, as well supporting local communities, is a key objective of the university's 'Place and Innovation' pillar, community work is central to anti-colonial education, which seeks to challenge and dismantle hierarchies in how knowledge is constructed, presented, and distributed. Anti-colonial education starts from the position that education and knowledge can, and often does, begin outside university walls.

The following section outlines the key issues that emerged from the community consultation and how approaching these issues upholds anti-colonial educational philosophy, as well as meeting the university's strategic vision:

- More support is required for anti-racist initiatives both within and outside the University of Liverpool, this includes financial support, more time offered to staff to carry out community engaged work, and capacity-building initiatives to pre-existing organisations.

- The nature of urban development has harshened the relationship between the University of Liverpool and the community, with residents being displaced by urban development and becoming isolated from one another
- Representation of the needs of the community is lacking in the university. There needs to be greater representation of Black people at the leadership level, while a greater need to highlight to local young people that the University of Liverpool is a place for them.

Support for anti-racist initiatives within and outside the University of Liverpool

The first theme that emerged from the consultation was the lack of financial support and backing from the university for anti-racist initiatives. Anti-racism refers to the active rejection of the institutional and structural aspects of race and racism. The building of an anti-racist university is vital for meeting the two overarching themes set out in the Liverpool 2031 strategy document focused on 'People and culture' and 'Sustainability'. Our strategic visions to "foster an inspirational, welcoming and inclusive culture in which every colleague is valued, respected, and able to thrive and reach their full potential", "take account of the views of our diverse communities through the implementation of effective diversity, equality and inclusion plans at all levels", "conduct our research in a way that supports social and environmental equity", and finally "empower our students to be engaged citizens within Liverpool, in their wider communities and beyond" are meaningless without an anti-racist praxis (University of Liverpool, 2024c; University of Liverpool, 2024d). However, the picture that emerged from the discussion is that support for anti-racist initiatives involving the local community were lacking, particularly financial support. One community member noted that it was vital that the work being done to further anti-racist work within the university was properly funded, supported and prioritised.

It was also noted that the university cannot expect that staff engage in anti-racist work in their spare time. The university should ensure that the time and space is set aside to ensure the building of genuine alliances and collaborations across different communities and that this is a priority of the university. As a part of this, the university should play an active role in maintaining institutional memory to ensure that community building occurs in a sustainable manner and not in fits and starts. This enables long-term relationships to be built and provides the groundwork to develop the necessary trust that the university is able and willing to support proper anti-racist work.

Finally, one salient point made by the community representatives was that outside help in the form of new initiatives or individuals was necessarily not needed for anti-racist initiatives in the community. One community member noted that there were already community-members on the ground doing the work of anti-racism community building

through various initiatives and organisations. What is required – another member argued - is essential investment and funding that builds the capacities of these organisations. Capacity-building was a commonly evoked term among representatives.

Urban development and displacement

Community representatives noted that while individual relationships between academics and the community could be positive, there was a general distrust in the university as an institution. This distrust has developed over the past century, owing to the ways it had isolated residents.

An example of this is the issue of land usage in the area. The university's geographical position and the expansion of the estate over time has had direct impacts on the local community. A particular point raised was regarding how the university estate team has historically gone about "do[ing] business" in communities. The decisions of the broader estate project are not underpinned by community-engaged values that recognise the histories and experiences of the community (indeed the very values of Strategy of 2031), which further damages the trust between the institution and the community.

One incident identified was with the demolishment of local residences which then replaced with student housing. This has led to several issues that are again relevant to the question of Othering within urban environments. Firstly, local communities are being priced out of certain areas of the city because of planning decisions made within the Knowledge Quarter, and, secondly, that when students leave the city in the summer this then leads to "ghost towns" in which the residents that have remained feel isolated and vulnerable. Representatives also discussed the recent purchase of a set of buildings (including a church) by a developer who wanted to convert them into a student hall of residence. The community opposed the conversion and won their campaign; however, the building premises have now been converted into an NCP car park. There was no support from the university during the campaign. Another case involved the conversion of a main road in L8 from a two-way into a one-way road. The university supported the decision as it would make room for a cycle route that would benefit students and staff. While the community recognised the importance of having a cycle route, the lack of advocacy or consultation with residents in both cases from the university has shored up further divides.

Representation within the University of Liverpool

In addition to issues of urban development, several community members raised a lack of Black leadership within the university as a point. Increasing the diversity. They felt that

having Black members in senior university leadership roles would increase community members confidence that they are included in the planning of the university and that the opportunities that do exist (such as bursaries and scholarship) are there for them. This again is grounded in historical feelings that this was not the case. One person shared with us that, as a young person growing up in the area, the University of Liverpool didn't feel like an option for them for pursuing Higher Education. They reflected that it wasn't even something we were asked to consider "It's like we were being encouraged to move out of our own area". The university needs to recognise and address these feelings of exclusion and Othering to meet the aims of sustainability, people and community in a way that has anti-racism at its core.

Another community member raised the fact that it is important to think about who the lecturers are and who is being appointed. They mentioned "a lack of sensitivity" around employment practices and how this can, at times, perpetuate the "status quo" with regards to who feels a part of the university. In addition to this was the question of sensitivity on courses and the importance of serving the different needs of the students as being key to thinking through these questions and ensuring the university is sensitive to different traditions.

Finally, owing to the history cited above, there is little trust between The University of Liverpool and L7's and L8's young residents, who do not see the university as representing their needs. The university should therefore be improving their widening participation agenda, working with pre-existing young people's charities and organisations to nurture and harness the potential of local young people and to inspire them to see the university as a place for them. There needs to be a clear pathway to university that is made available to young people in the area. Role models are an obvious aspect of this pathway. Having young people from the community visit the universities in the city, seeing people from their community in university, and having universities demonstrate to young people that university is for them. This should involve building networks between scholars of colour in the university, and those in primary and secondary work. This network doesn't mean starting afresh, but building on pre-existing organisations, such as the Granby Toxteth Development centre. One contributor even made the important comment of having a "community university" in Toxteth that is accredited by the university, led and staffed by the community.

Community consultation recommendations:

Strategy 2031 is clear that the university intends to continue to renew its commitment "to widening participation and outreach to raise educational attainment and aspiration, so that students from all backgrounds are able and supported to achieve their full potential"

(University of Liverpool,2024b). But the question remains concerning how it will reinvigorate its commitment to its communities in addressing inequalities and improving life chances and whether its institutional ambitions are considerate of combating inequalities in the area in which the university is embedded. To be an anti-colonial learning space, the University of Liverpool must attempt to meaningfully engage with local communities through university structures. In its outward and inward activities, the University of Liverpool must acknowledge that changing the role of the university within Liverpool requires regularly addressing communal "tensions around power, knowledge production, and the possibility for building true partnerships with equivalence", challenging the historical imagination of universities as spaces focused on 'elite' knowledge (Butcher and Frediani, 2019:6).

These are all positive intentions which require sustained in depth dialogue with the local community to assess how these intentions are best met. Policy making in this area needs to be bottom up and community driven to ensure co-production of approaches and buy-in from all stakeholders from the start. Therefore, to fully meet the intentions of the Place and Innovation pillar, this report recommends continuing to develop and expand engagement with the local community, more fully recognising the barriers that exist between the community and the university, and the work that is needed to remove these barriers.

- Prioritising community consultation on land matters – this would give greater power to residents over their locality.
- Streamline funding avenues that are already available to make them accessible to local communities – this would allow the university to engage in the capacity building that is central to community-led work.
- Promote the accessibility of the university to neighbourhood residents and young people to develop a sense that the university is for the local community.

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- The Tiber Community Building project
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- The Goddess Project

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Part III: Moving towards an anti-colonial learning environment

The second part of this report presents case studies of existing anti-colonial practices being implemented in teaching and administration throughout the University of Liverpool. This report outlines the opportunities of anti-colonial pedagogical practices to support the Education and Experience strategic pillar '[t]o create outstanding, transformative, research-connected learning experiences' by centring approaches that reflect the diverse community of students at University of Liverpool that provide a fuller conceptions of the contemporary world (University of Liverpool, 2023). Addressing anti-colonial, and subsequently, anti-racist issues can have positive effects towards reversing deficit ideologies, increasing belonging, expanding education systems, and providing more authentically equitable opportunities for students and staff who experience marginalised identities. Better learning occurs when students can situate, reflect upon, and appraise their education's links to their real-world experiences, lived experiences which are unavoidably shaped by subjective ideals of Western sociocultural power. If the aim of education is to prepare students to participate in the transformation of the world – students need an education which prepares them to **acknowledge, reconcile with**, and **question** the role of these sociocultural power dynamics in **the creation of their world**. Researching the praxis of anti-colonial pedagogy may offer insights into practices educators can take up at the University of Liverpool, to show a collective commitment to making a positive impact within and beyond our boundaries.

This section of the report is based on collegial discussions ongoing throughout the course of the year in AEWG meetings, and our third event on May 3, 2024, a guest lecture of Dr Sara Salem. Dr Salem is an associate professor in sociology at the London School of Economics and a global expert in postcolonial studies, Marxist theory, and world histories of anti-colonialism. The focus of her lecture was to show University of Liverpool educators how she employed anti-colonial methods and practices of teaching in her postgraduate course titled: "The Anticolonial Archive: The Sociology of Empire and its Afterlives".

Salem's course focuses on a selection of 20th century anti-colonial movements to explore the contemporary political affairs that emerged after the formal end of European empire. It uses sociological analysis to examine how principles and rationalities of colonial and imperial rule survived even in contemporary international politics despite the absence of formal colonialism. Salem's teaching explores conversations anti-colonial movements had around ideas of nationalism; capitalism; geopolitics; sociopolitical resistance, and global patterns of inequality. It investigates these topics through what Salem titles *anti-colonial archives*, literature, field sites, archival data, posters, images, tapestries, speeches, films, memoirs private correspondence, and websites – objects and places

which can each be examined to make anti-colonial histories that have been marginalised, visible.

The following two sections depict cases of University of Liverpool Staff sharing their endeavours to incorporate anti-colonial methods and practices into their teaching and administrative practices. We present their reflections using case studies of both teaching and administration to depict the successes, nuances, and challenges staff have encountered employing some effects of anti-colonial thought in their educational activities. All those whose views are shared here are university educators and professional services staff currently employed at the university. Due to several contributors having concerns with facing criticism for their feedback, all case studies have been anonymised. The aim of this section is to make the wider university and senior leadership team cognisant of both the benefits and difficulties educators experience when attempting to address colonial legacies, systematic racism, and community connection in their roles. The first section provides teaching case studies, while the second looks at administrative case studies ongoing at the University of Liverpool. Our report provides an aggregation of 9 overall recommendations emanating from all 9 case studies at the end of both sections.

A special thank you to our consulting specialist: Dr Sara Salem, London School of Economics

Teaching Case Studies

Case Study 1: Decolonising the Sociology Curriculum and Decolonial Reflexivity

This section details my efforts to attempt to decolonise my social theory curriculum. It is a condensed version of a published article which is entitled “Turning the Decolonial Gaze towards Ourselves: Decolonising the Curriculum and ‘Decolonial Reflexivity’ in Sociology and Social Theory” (Moosavi, 2023).

Between 2013 and 2020, I taught an undergraduate sociology and social theory course that aspired toward a decolonised curriculum. In the first semester, I introduced the social theory of Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Theodor Adorno, Pierre Bourdieu, Talcott Parsons, Robert K Merton, Georg Simmel, Erving Goffman, and Michel Foucault, and in the second semester, I examined the broad themes of globalisation, feminism, postmodernism, technology studies, and cultural studies, as well as the social theory of neglected social theorists from the margins, including Ibn Khaldun, WEB Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Syed Hussein Alatas, and Ali Shariati. This was deemed necessary because sociology and social theory have been characterised by an ethnocentrism that has privileged the questions, experiences, and knowledges of Western scholars and societies at the expense of their non-Western equivalents.

I attempted to evaluate my attempts at decolonising the curriculum through engaging in a process which of decolonial reflexivity. This is necessary because existing literature on academic decolonisation often contains insufficient introspection about the impact of colonialism on itself. While those of us who wish to decolonise academia usually call for other scholars to be reflexive, it is rare for decolonial scholars to turn the decolonial gaze towards ourselves and interrogate our own positionality or scholarship in relation to the impact of coloniality upon ourselves.

Decolonial reflexivity involves decolonial scholars drawing upon theoretical discussions about academic decolonisation to introspectively locate the inadequacies, limitations, and contradictions within our own efforts at academic decolonisation, particularly in relation to the potential for us to inadvertently perpetuate coloniality rather than dismantle it. This requires those of us who claim that our curriculum, teaching, research or other academic practice is decolonial to unpack our decolonial activities so that we can seriously consider whether we are really decolonising, or whether we are merely performing decoloniality. Upon reviewing my efforts to decolonise the curriculum, I recognised that there was a danger that my course may have inadvertently: (a) sustained exclusion while claiming to be inclusive; (b) maintained the status quo while claiming to be radical; and (c) reinscribed Western centrism while claiming to decolonise.

For instance, in identifying and teaching the same six peripheral scholars every year, I ultimately, yet unintentionally, excluded many other peripheral scholars and failed to convey the gradations of colonial exclusion, which means that not all peripheral knowledge is equally peripheral. Furthermore, while the peripheral scholars that I included in my course are all relatively well known, at least in some circles, and ample scholarship by and about them is available in English,

there remain other peripheral scholars who have either been lost to history, are less well known or whose work is harder to access.

My course may have been distinct from standard sociology and social theory courses but that is not to say it was as radical a departure as it could have been. A missed opportunity was not making greater effort to more radically explore whether we can abandon the notion of the canon or abandon the notion that social theory is most evidently found in the logocentric writings of individual intellectual elites. As if this is not already troubling enough, decolonising the curriculum may even reinscribe the very Western-centrism that we think we are dislodging. For instance, in my course, a recentring of Western-centrism may have resulted from teaching a larger number of scholars from the traditional canon and teaching them first. As well as inferring that the traditional canon is superior to peripheral scholarship, this may have also given an unintentional impression that peripheral scholars are merely respondents to a Western-centric starting point by whose term's peripheral scholarship should be judged.

Questions must also be asked about the extent to which the peripheral scholars that I taught were non-Western-centric. While I described them as 'peripheral scholars' because there could be little objection to the claim that they have been marginalised in sociology and social theory, I would be reluctant to refer to them as non-Western-centric scholars – except for Ibn Khaldun – because of them having been located within Western academia and because of their intellectual projects having been influenced by Western sociology and social theory. In this regard, we may find that the peripheral scholars that we incorporate into our teaching and research for the purpose of epistemic decolonisation are at least partially an extension of Western-centric sociology and social theory rather than a departure from it. Decolonial reflexivity is a crucial undertaking because if decolonial scholars do not introspectively critique our own efforts at decolonising, not only will the project fail to evolve in the necessary directions, but it may unwittingly derail into either having little impact or even perpetuating that which we are seeking to undo.

Case Study 2: A coordinated approach to embedding Race Equity in Undergraduate Curricula in the School of Biosciences

The ethos driving the race equity initiatives in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at the University of Liverpool centre around collaborative efforts between staff and students. While acknowledging students as valuable assets, there is a conscious effort to prevent the emotional burden of this work from affecting them. This collaboration involves trained and paid student, ensuring our curricula becomes more inclusive of visible and invisible diversities. All the work and some of the ideas below have been provided by students from the DeCoL-SoLS-Advocates.

The first initiative was the forming of the DeCoL-SoLS-Advocates. Founded by Carl Larsen in 2020, and co-chaired with Amal Abdulkadir, in response to a call to action from Black students within the School of Biosciences after the murder of George Floyd, they embody a commitment to promoting diversity and dismantling barriers within our faculty. Currently, there are 25 students in the group, from both UG and PG study, representing all the programmes in the School of Biosciences and even one member from English. Although their focus has been on race equity, their mission is rooted in tangible actions aimed at creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students, regardless of background or identity. In 2024, they won the REACH Award: recognising a group, student, or society involved at the University of Liverpool who has demonstrated exemplary commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity in relation to race, equality and celebrating cultural heritage (REACH). This award celebrates the impact of student-led initiatives and activities that contribute to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus. Another member of the DeCoL-SoLS-Advocates won the Individual award for Greatest Contribution to EDI Award 2024. Honouring a student or graduate who has made the most significant overall contribution to equality, diversity, and inclusivity at the University of Liverpool in recent years. This award recognises a comprehensive and sustained effort to create positive change and promote a culture of diversity and inclusivity within the university community.

One idea that formed in this group was the writing of the Science and Society Civic Service Award. This optional, non-credit bearing award explores the history and philosophy of science, emphasising global citizenship and social responsibilities. Students engage with environmental philosophy, recognising the link between environmental exploitation and the subjugation of marginalised groups. The curriculum includes discussions on decolonising science, addressing representation gaps, and understanding the foundations of science for sustainability through the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Student engagement has been excellent with over 900 students accessing the CANVAS page during its first year. The main challenge is that students perceive they are ‘too busy’ to engage in the award due to study commitments. The lectures will form part of a new module taken by all students in the new Biosciences curricula starting September 2024. One criticism of the award is that we are ‘preaching to the choir’ and this has been a barrier to it being adopted outside our faculty. I’ve come to realise just how pervasive this attitude is and how harmful it can be to the work of social change. Solnit summarises my view: “Do you win by chasing those who don’t share your views, or by serving and respecting those already with you? Is the purpose of the choir to sing to the infidels or inspire the faithful? What happens if the faithful stop showing up, donating, doing the work?” (Solnit, 2018).

Working with academic staff, students compiled Anti-racist and Decolonising Science Reading Lists. These included open-access resources on racism in science, decolonising science, and marginalised scientists. The resources, including reading lists and ED&Iographies (short PowerPoint and video summaries of marginalised scientists), are available to support both students and staff. This has been successful but will require continued editing to keep the references up to date. It has also been a challenge getting academics to 'value' the alternative sources and there is a perception it will replace important content.

To encourage academics to decolonise their reading lists students used R Studio Cloud to analyse their module readings lists and uncover the geographic origin and funding of scientific publications, highlighting publication bias, by producing global maps. The app, AuthorMap-App, is in development, aiming to make the analysis tool available to the wider Higher Education sector. This app was presented at the Academy Pedagogic Research Conference 2024 and was very well received.

Students worked with module organisers to audit modules using Inclusive Curriculum and Decolonising Curriculum Toolkits. Working with academics and CIE, students adapted the SOAS decolonising toolkit, making it user-friendly. The outcomes of these audits were shared with programme teams during curriculum design, and one suggested outcome is that QAA paperwork be updated to include toolkit usage criteria. The major challenge here was encouraging academics, particularly scientists, to recognise the inherent racism in science and the need to address it. This also led to the writing of an EDI and wellbeing focussed programme learning outcomes for all eight new programmes in Biosciences.

Not only is it important to decolonise and contextualise our curricula, but it is also equally important to decolonise the learning environment. A joint initiative involving students and staff, from Libraries, Museums and Galleries, and the World Museum Liverpool, the 'Decolonising Life Science Library Exhibits' highlight the contributions of Black and marginalised individuals to science. Four exhibits over the past two academic years addressed themes such as historical obscurity of contributions and the importance of recognising intersectionality. Feedback on the exhibits has been excellent and we have secured funding for a further four. Once the exhibits have finished in the library, they are on permanent display in the Biosciences building. The focus of the next exhibits includes the exploitation of Black people in science and medicine, and marginalised LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse scientists.

As a university with a predominantly White workforce, lack of representation is one of the key challenges we face. It is tempting to invite ethnically diverse guest lecturers to present to our students but until our workforce is representative of the student body we might wish to look to the students to provide this representation. With this in mind, we filmed a range of undergraduate students who described themselves and what they were doing, while conducting experimental procedures that bioscience students typically use. These students had a range of protected characters including ethnicity, neurodiversity, disability, gender and sexual orientation. We then turned the recordings into cartoons, creating avatars that other bioscience students could watch to learn the techniques.

We are also conducting research to explore the awarding gap between Black and White students. "Closing the Gap: The Experiences of Black and White Life Science Students Through their University Degree," shedding light on the experiences of students from different ethnic backgrounds. Findings from this longitudinal study will be used to provide targeted and timely support for our Black students as part of positive action to remove the awarding gap.

These initiatives collectively reflect the Faculty's dedication to fostering an inclusive environment, promoting diversity, and actively addressing issues related to race equity within its academic community. The various projects, collaborations, and research endeavours contribute to building a more representative and supportive educational ecosystem. However, when working with students in this area one must be mindful of how the work can benefit and impact the students. One must ensure they are paid, adequately trained and supported, the work they do and the skills they develop must be purposefully linked to employability, their work has to be put into practice, if possible, in real time, and most importantly, they have to be protected from the emotional burden of doing this work.

Case Study 3: Problem-Based Learning as Critical Pedagogy in Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

As part of our efforts to review the first-year curriculum in the Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology Department, we have been discussing the idea of introducing Problem Based Learning (PBL) as one of our teaching strategies. While discussing social (in)justice in society is something that we do with students in every module we teach at SSPC, after engaging in consultations with staff, it became apparent that we have not thought enough about how to *do* social justice in the classroom. We do our best to explore with students the ways in which oppressive, marginalising power structures are embedded throughout society in the hopes that they will graduate having nurtured a critical eye and a hunger for social justice; but we should not lose sight of the fact that the classroom is a space where inequalities materialise and can often be reinforced. With this in mind, we have discussed PBL as a strategy to help students gain confidence in their ability to make meaningful contributions to the classroom (even if their school did not leave them well-placed to engage with scholarly literature and write essays) and understand that they too live in a world where capitalist, imperialist oppression is ever present (even if they are not the main target of systemic marginalisation).

PBL is a learning and teaching strategy built on the exploration of real-world-style, complex problems. The session leader presents the group with a complex case, and students then work in groups to identify their collective existing knowledge (academic or from lived experience); set an agenda to gather more information to 'solve' (e.g., further understand) the problem (individually or in groups); and then return to the classroom having enriched their views and ready to share their insights with their peers. Through PBL we will be able to design problems that highlight capitalist imperialism as an everyday occurrence that permeates all our lives as privilege or oppression. Some members of staff have already applied this problem-focused approach in their classroom and have reported encouraging results. The following testimony from one member of staff highlights the potential of this strategy:

> *When delving into the topic of classroom hunger in specific regions, students actively engaged in discussions and shared personal anecdotes from their high school experiences. Many recounted instances of facing hunger to varying degrees, expressing a deep connection to the issue. It was surprising for them to discover that this was indeed an academic concern drawing significant attention from scholars. (...) This approach ensures that students do not perceive the study of society, and sociology as a subject, as daunting as they might have initially imagined.*

The problem-based approach allows students to see social (in)justice in their lives—beyond theory, beyond books, beyond 'far away' case studies. Giving students who have suffered from systemic violence the space to explore their experiences in the classroom, and giving those experiences the same weight and value as the academic theories and texts we engage with, will hopefully give them the confidence to challenge the peers, professors, books and bosses that seek to dismiss their understanding of fairness and justice. PBL will help them place those

experiences in the context of academic conversations on imperialism, capitalism, racism and all those processes that are the substance from which structural inequalities are made. This will allow them to mobilise scholarship to understand, explain and challenge unfair systems of oppression. Through PBL we will delve deep into social critique, and use it in a way compatible with what Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly (2021:147) identify as the essence of critical pedagogy:

> *Through both content and method, [critical pedagogy] seeks to encourage critical thinking, empower students, promote democratisation, and challenge the status quo both within the classroom and the wider social world. It attempts to break with top-down 'rote' learning and a 'just-the-facts' pedagogy, to instead position students as active and equal participants in the learning process.*

In the first instance, the PBL approach will be introduced for the year 2024–2025 in the second-year core criminology course 'Criminological Perspectives and their Application'. The problems will be designed to examine the fact that criminology was born from oppressive worldviews (most notably eugenics), and its theories have ever since been used to sediment structural inequalities. But it will not be predominantly focused on the study of the past (as we run the risk of sending the message that oppressive criminology no longer exists); the course will centre on the exploration of contemporary criminological theory and how it remains a tool for oppression, but also how it contains seeds for emancipation. We will look at the power of critical criminology (including abolitionist, southern, and decolonial criminology) to highlight the legacy of colonial violence and the operation of imperialist power relations both at the macro and micro levels and suggest alternatives for anti-colonial social arrangements.

Due to administrative deadlines, the application of PBL to the core, first-year research methods module will have to wait until the 2025-2026 academic year. But hopefully, by then we will have learned valuable lessons from piloting the strategy for the criminology module and will be in a better position to design it for the first-year core.

Case Study 4: "The Global History of the Present" in the Department of History

HIST 114, "The Global History of the Present", is a team-taught, first-year module introduced in 2018 which is a requirement for first-year History students, and which recruits up to 250 students per year. In exploring some of the myriad global processes through which peoples have historically been connected and the contemporary legacies of these, the module focuses on the ways in which issues to do with empire, capitalism and race have—and continue to shape—the world in which we live. It does so through taking a thematic approach. Module themes, which vary each year according to the composition of the teaching team, range from topics such as the ways in which the violence of empire, and its legacies, have been largely erased from historical memory in former imperial states, to the role of empire in reshaping the global environment, and the legacies of this, particularly for peoples in the global south. In addition to making students aware of the ways in which historical investigation enriches understandings of urgent contemporary issues and debates, the module also introduces them to a range of new ways of approaching the past, in terms of subject matter (particularly through engaging with difficult histories), range of voices (including Global Majority perspectives) and approaches to history, the aim of which is to make them better global citizens.

The module endeavours to fulfil such aims through a novel range of teaching materials. Each of the module themes is taught, for example, through a wide range of both historical and contemporary primary materials—ranging from newspapers and government documents to poems, memoirs, maps, speeches, interviews, testimonies, radio broadcasts, televised news reports and blog posts by individuals from both the global north and south—as well through a diverse selection of secondary materials. Module assessments, particularly the critical reflective journal, which constitutes the main form of assessment, are designed, in turn, to help students think critically about such materials and what they reveal about the connections between the global present and the global past. Such a form of authentic assessment not only embeds key employability skills in the History Department's curriculum, such as the ability to undertake critical reflection and analysis, to be aware of and understand different perspectives, and to develop independence of mind, but plays an important role, in addition, in promoting both diversity and equality.

As the 2018 Royal Historical Society (RHS) report on "Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History" notes while there is now a rich scholarship on non-Western histories, as well as on histories of race, ethnicity and empire, such approaches are not well-represented in UK History curricula. Introductory, first-year modules continue to focus on White histories and Eurocentric approaches to the past; their reading lists, moreover, are dominated by White, male voices. That such approaches are a barrier to both racial and ethnic diversity, as well as to inclusiveness, is apparent in the fact that History undergraduate student cohorts have considerably lower proportions of BAME students (11.3%) than the overall UK undergraduate population (23.9%). What is distinctive about HIST114, therefore, is not only its attempt to broaden the History curriculum at Liverpool and implement anti-colonial pedagogical approaches that encourage diversity and inclusivity, but that it encourages students to critically reflect on such approaches—and that it does so, moreover, with entire first-year student cohorts (students are not able, in other words, to

opt out of it). It thus makes an important contribution to addressing the concerns identified in the RHS report.

In a time of so-called culture wars the module is, however, a challenge to teach, and it has taken a lot of time and experimentation to develop a pedagogical toolkit that is anti-colonial in approach without alienating students who have very fixed ideas about what history is and how to go about studying it. In the most recent module evaluation, for example, students reported that they "Enjoyed learning from a new perspective and challenging ideas that [they] had previously"; particularly "the whole thought process behind decolonising history as we know it". Others also appreciated the opportunity to bring "non-White views into our academic learning, something that happens little in secondary school and in the mainstream academic sphere" in Britain. Students found, furthermore, that the module leads to "a lot of self-reflection" on the ways in which they viewed themselves "and the world around [them]", which one described as a "riveting journey". They valued, in addition, "dealing with issues that can be unpleasant", since this enabled them to develop their "critical thinking" and gave them tools to "assess complicated affairs". Students thus reveal that, in taking an anti-colonial approach, HIST114, fulfils many of the goals of Strategy 2031, as well as the University of Liverpool's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (not to mention its ESD initiatives).

Case study 5: Re-engaging with the Liverpool Black Community through Anti Colonial Education in the School of Biosciences

We are all part of different circles, different communities, some we choose some we don't and some we create. This narrative focuses on strategies for re-engaging with those communities outside the university.

As part of the 2nd year of Science and Society Civic Service Award, 21 students were trained by the World Centre Liverpool in preparation for their Civic Engagement Placement and completed their 20-hour placements in spring of 2023. To be inclusive, three students who had planned to study abroad had their training and placements fast tracked completing them before Christmas 2022. Students worked with various charities around Liverpool, but mainly in L8, including faith groups, asylum seekers, sex workers, sustainability initiatives and mental health charities. Feedback from the students and the agencies they volunteered with has been excellent and the work was presented at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. 17 students have completed their training for the placements in 2024.

As part of our race equity collaboration with LSTM, in 2023 we ran a two-day residential Black Science Bootcamp for 55 Black year 10 pupils from Liverpool schools. One group stayed in halls while the others, with cultural requirements prohibiting them from sleeping outside the family home, attended the day sessions only. The ethos of the summer school was 'It's hard to be what you can't see', and with its focus on representation, virtually all sessions were led by Black STEMM students, academics and professionals.

As an example of positive action, it aims to encourage young Black people in Liverpool to consider university as an option. We hope it helps address other issues in HE for Black students including retention, the awarding gap and progression onto Postgraduate study and STEMM careers. We are running the summer this year and inviting these students back and another group of year 10s. We have provided continued support such as running GCSE Masterclasses in Maths and Science and inviting them to other race equity events.

To reconnect with the Liverpool Black community and to celebrate Black History Month 2023 we ran three events. This started with the opening of the Henrietta Lacks Exhibit in Harold Cohen Library. Henrietta was a Black woman who died over 70 years ago from cervical cancer, but her cells were taken without consent and have been used to serve science leading to breakthroughs in vaccine development, cancer research, chromosome counting, and genome mapping. This exhibit, designed by staff and UG students from the DeCoL-SoLS-Advocates, details how Lacks' cells have been used in science and how Black people are sometimes exploited in science and medicine.

In collaboration with colleagues at LSTM, in October 2023 we supported the Expert Panel Q&A. Understanding colonial legacies, and restorative action. The panel focussed on how Higher Education institutions can tackle their colonial legacies in a meaningful way, and what restorative action looks like now and for the future.

Finally, in October we hosted the ‘Bioethics of Being Black, in Science and Medicine.’ Expert panel event at the Tung. This combined science and arts, merging traditional African music, a commissioned acting performance and a Q&A about bioethics with experts including. This is part of our race equity collaboration between HLS and LSTM ED&I and Race Equity colleagues. Feedback from the event was excellent and there was a tangible sense of trust building and reconciliation.

For Black History Month 2024 we are planning a Bioethics symposium. We are also working with other scientists in HLS to engage with the Black community in Liverpool to support the design of research. We are working with the Health Protection Research Unit in Gastrointestinal Infections (HPRU-GI) – Public Patient Involvement Engagement (PPIE) to understand inequalities in the burden of gastrointestinal infections across society. This work is in collaboration with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

To recognise the importance of intersectionality when dealing with race we are collaborating with the ADHD Society on race and neurodiversity. We have permission to use their ‘Umbrellas Project’ to install an exhibit on the university campus but replace the bright rainbow colours of the umbrellas with skin tones. We will also incorporate various pride flags into the umbrellas to make the installation truly representative and intersectional. We are working with the Guild with the view to erecting the installation in their main social area. We have been offered external funding and Professor Jason Arday has agreed to open the exhibit. This will engage our student community with the anti-racist work we are doing.

Finally, an effective way to engage with people outside our university to increase their awareness of our race equity work is to attend Pint of Science and Science in Your Local events. We took part in the 10th year anniversary of a Pint of Science and gave a talk on ‘The Snide, Side of Science’. We are also running a stall at Africa Oye’. The informal setting facilitates relationship building and is a well-tested method for community engagement.

The relationship between the Black community in Liverpool and the University of Liverpool is characterised by a lack of trust. This distrust may stem from historical instances of marginalisation, underrepresentation, and a perceived failure of the university to adequately address the needs and concerns of the Black community. Our work aims to re-engage with this community, so that past experiences and perceptions of exclusion no longer contribute to an ongoing sense of scepticism and reluctance to engage with the university.

Administrative Case Studies

Case Study 1: Race Equality Charter

As part of the Race Equality Charter, I worked with a group focused on Culture and Student Experience. The focus was on preparing an application for the Race Equality Charter award. While we developed action plans for enhancing race equality in the student experience at the university, I still found the focus on the award application disheartening. It was not clear whether the action plans would be implemented, by whom and over what timeframe. Lacking those specific details, gave me the impression that there was no intention to address the colonial legacies of the university or the real causes of disparities in the culture and student experience, in particular a sense of belonging for non-White students. There was a commitment from the team I worked with, and the process was data-driven. Yet, the gap in the process, in my opinion, is a lack of engagement with the non-White students, whose views I believe are critical to developing strategies aimed at addressing issues they face. It struck me as a process motivated by good intentions, but devoid of the voices of those that it seeks to represent. It was critical to systematically engage non-White students and understand their sense of belonging or unbelonging in the university. Similarly, an understanding of factors that perpetuate a culture and student experience that is exclusionary, as well as the historical and contemporary factors that sustain it could have helped the process. In sum, this is yet one of those exercises that seem to be public relations, a window-dressing devoid of critical action required to address the racial inequalities in the culture and student experience.

– *Former member of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee*

Case Study 2: Research Impact

One of the most lucrative funding streams for higher education institutions is funding for research impact, which is granted when researchers demonstrate that their work is making a social or economic difference in the world beyond academia. Quite apart from the fact that this funding model forces researchers into competition with each other (surely co-operation would lead to more successful research?), there are two main problems with this approach which exacerbate rather than alleviate or challenge the colonial legacy.

The first issue is that universities as places of study are not equally accessible to all, and access to secure employment in well-funded, senior research roles in universities is even more limited, so most research funding in UK universities is concentrated among people who largely originate from a privileged social class and a White, British or European demographic. When researchers successfully bid for a large research grant, they are more likely to receive departmental or faculty support for their research, and therefore more likely to be successful in future funding bids, which means inequalities in access are perpetuated over time, regardless of the EDI policies or initiatives that institutions claim to commit to.

Research impact is about change outside of academia – improving health, alleviating poverty or suffering, challenging inequalities, conserving cultural heritage, and so on – but the system that concentrates funding in the hands of White, male, middle class researchers tend to perpetuate rather than challenge the colonial role of benevolent superiors kindly helping those less privileged or fortunate than themselves. Some researchers are aware of this, and attempt to act as advocates rather than patrons, but they cannot change a higher education funding system that is inherently exclusionary.

The second issue is that research impact funders (UKRI and others) require researchers to demonstrate how their academic ideas influence outside partners (charities, schools, the health service, government, etc) to make the changes that lead to the impact on beneficiaries. By its nature, this model characterises the relationship between academics and those who are impacted or benefitted by their research in a very unequal way, and no credit (or funding) is given where academics show that the relationship with partners or beneficiaries has been of benefit to their research. The flow of knowledge, influence, and impact is characterised as a one-way street, when it comes to research impact funding. At no point is there any acknowledgement that people outside of academia may have their own agency, and no funding will be provided unless change comes about because of the actions of a university researcher.

This extremely top-down, hierarchical approach to the role of academics in knowledge exchange and social change is exemplified most keenly in the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which evaluates the quality of research impact at 7-year intervals. The authors of impact case studies must write a narrative which demonstrates the link from their published research to the social impact that has been made. If a researcher cannot provide evidence that the impact would not have been made without their research, they are not selected for an impact case study. Success in the REF is very well rewarded financially, so it is in universities' interests to compete

in the scheme, rather than to challenge the principles or inherent inequalities in the funding system itself.

Research impact, in and of itself, is not a bad thing. Many researchers have become academics because they want to help alleviate suffering or eradicate inequalities. Their efforts should be celebrated, supported and rewarded, but the current competitive, hierarchical funding model for research impact in higher education does not and cannot do this.

– *Impact specialist within the University of Liverpool*

Case Study 3: Working Group(s)

The Department of Politics launched a Decolonising the Curriculum Project in 2019 inspired by work that was taking place at SOAS, particularly the development of the 'Decolonising SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit', and actions at Goldsmiths following Goldsmiths' Anti Racist Action #GoldOccupy movement. Whilst there was some initial scepticism around what the project would look like and how it would be designed and implemented, a team was brought together to assess what work needed to be done and how to feasibly approach this. The initial step was to apply for Beacon Project funding to be able to bring students on board from the very start. The project was enthusiastically supported by Faculty. In designing the project, it was recognised from the very beginning that student voice and input needed to be a central aspect of any work that was going to take place. Students applied to join the project and, following an interview process, three joined and then played a fundamental role in designing and implementing the research for the project. This led to a report, a number of key outcomes, and some important learning which is reflected on in this discussion.

The report combined a systematic review of relevant literature, with reflections on a survey that engaged the student body at the time on their views on the Politics undergraduate curriculum, and a study carried out by the students on the project team which looked at the teaching resources and content on a range of modules across the curriculum. The key suggestions from the report were for the department to develop a deeper understanding of what decolonising referred to in this context (developing transparent and informed discussions in this area), make use of the report in designing new modules, continue to encourage discussion of challenging questions in respectful ways in the classroom, think through hiring practices and how to encourage diverse recruitment in dialogue with the university.

Central to looking back on this project is the importance of reflecting on some of the challenges that were faced in carrying out this work. One of which was a naivety in the early stages about what a department focused decolonising project could achieve and how to go about achieving the goals set out. For example, how to bring colleagues on board and to ensure that the work was a collective endeavour when there were diverse views on the topics discussed and colleagues faced other pressures at the time, such as high workloads. One of the main lessons from this was the importance of involving students (this was highlighted to us when we welcomed a scholar from another institution to share their knowledge and expertise on the work they had done in this area). As previously mentioned, the students we worked with assessed modules from across the Department, looking at content and teaching practise, they also carried out a survey among the broader student body asking questions about student experiences with the Department and how they interacted with the curriculum. This led to a final report which was shared with the Department, School and Faculty. It was only by working with students that we were able to develop a stronger buy in from the broader student body as well as from colleagues, and that we ensured that their voices were heard with regards to what they wanted their curriculum to look like.

Another limitation to recognise when carrying out work like this is to consider what happens once the funding period ends. Following the completion of the report (which marked the end of the

Beacon Project funding) there were questions about what would happen next. This is one of the lessons it is particularly important to take from this project, regarding how to plan strategically and long term to ensure work is sustainable. There were several attempts made to implement initiatives recommended by the report and following the ending of the Beacon Project, some of which struggled to take off. This was partly due to COVID-19 restrictions but also partly to do with broader issues of competing commitments for staff and student time. The first initiative was a student led staff-student reading group looking at topics around decolonising the university. The reading group met on zoom, lasted for around 18 months and was open to students and staff across the Faculty. However, once the original student who ran the group graduated, attendance for university activities more generally dropped among students because of combining crises surrounding COVID-19 and the cost of living, and staff became even more overwhelmed with responding to the teaching delivery requirements of COVID-19 and (of course) other caring, family and workplace pressures that faced staff and students, the reading group became a lot less feasible.

One thing that was maintained following the ending of the Beacon Project was a staff Decolonising the Curriculum working group, updates from which became a standing item on departmental meeting agendas. While in theory this was a useful tool in raising awareness of the importance of the work, the burden for carrying out this work was placed on a small number of colleagues. This is in no small part due to time constraints on all colleagues as teaching and administrative loads continued to grow and additional projects had to slip. As such, to really do justice to the idea of properly prioritising this work, it would be necessary for it to be properly work-loaded, with allocation given in workload models to ensure that it becomes a central goal that people are given the time and energy to focus on. Otherwise, it runs the risk of being highlighted as of central importance, but not prioritised in a way that makes the ongoing necessary work sustainable, as it is only being carried out by volunteers who inevitably end up overburdened and feeling like their work is not being valued and recognised.

An additional key lesson that it is important to reflect on was the remit and scope of the Department's project. While at the time it was a necessary first step in starting to think about questions such as these, it did not really have the breadth and depth of focus necessary to fully recognise the complicity of institutions in colonial history and to properly challenge our placement within that. As work in this area has developed, it has become even more clear that a far wider, cross-institutional approach engaged not only internally but also within the city, country and with international partners is really needed to start to work towards meeting these real challenges and promoting the kind of change which sits at the heart of Strategy 2031, and in particular the focus on people and place. While there were some smaller important changes that came about because of this project, and some important learning that came from it, to fully implement the necessary larger changes something far greater is required, which is properly work-loaded and therefore prioritised with real buy-in from the university. An approach such as this one would reassure colleagues that work that they are doing is being both recognised and valued by the institution and its importance centred in meeting the ambitious goals of Strategy 2031.

Case Study 4: Library Resources

POLI265 is a Department of Politics module which aims to introduce second-year undergraduates to issues surrounding racialisation in national, comparative, and international politics. It locates race as an enduring feature of access to power and looks at theories of race theory about issues and controversies in the national and global contexts. Students taking POLI265 are expected to analyse how issues of race and marginalisation play out in modern politics and events. The module examines structural disadvantages in racial politics from the US Civil Rights Movement to the UK Movement for Black Lives, and from heritage and identity politics in current British popular culture. The module traces the specifics of race politics in Liverpool and looks at the legacy of slavery and colonialism right up to contemporary manifestations of race and racism in Merseyside. On the POLI265 module, there were several texts from independent, small, and local publishers that were part of the Reading List. The module is reading intensive and the key texts of POLI265 are local texts written by local authors of colour born and raised in Liverpool.

- Al Nasir, M. (2021) *Letters to Gil: A Memoir*. London: William Collins.
- Boyle, M., Wailey, T. and Heneghan, M. (2018) *From Pitt Street to Granby*. Liverpool: Writing on the Wall.
- Heneghan, Madeline. and Onuora, Emy. (2017) *Great war to race riots.* Liverpool: Writing on the Wall.
- Jagne, J. and Small, S. (2022) *1981 - Black Liverpool past and present*. Leicester: Serendipity Artists Movement Ltd (Pocket books).

The reason these books were chosen is in line with anti-colonial politics' concern with the politics of how certain ways of knowing colonial, imperial, racial, abolitionist and capitalist knowledge – overarchingly political knowledge, is structurally marginalised. In this case, the marginalised knowledge is coming from important racialised political activists born in Merseyside who are often not discussed or centred as authoritative figures of political knowledge in British Higher Education. It has been noted in the most recent module feedback for POLI265, student reception to these books has been extremely positive with many students expressing their appreciation for the incorporation of local knowledge into the course. However, students also expressed their frustration with having to initially purchase these books themselves before the university library ultimately came to decide to address its resource procedure limitations.

Although the library endeavours to provide sufficient copies of texts for all teaching modules, there are sometimes issues around obtaining books from smaller publishers. Increasingly, the academic publishing world is setup around eBook access. We at the University of Liverpool for example have a Digital First policy, where we will prioritise digital access. We also impose limits on print book copies as part of our general purchasing policy.

Producing an eBook is now relatively straightforward, and indeed there were eBook copies available of titles published by Writing on the Wall, one of the local Liverpool publishers. However, the format of these eBooks was not one that we at the library could work with – although they were available on Amazon Kindle, a hugely successful publishing model, this is not one that

academic library systems can interface with. This is due to it being built around individual and personal licences, rather than a model which allows multiple users either simultaneous access, or controlled lending - as required by our library systems.

It is also a more difficult financial process to acquire titles from smaller publishers – many, such as Writing on the Wall, are set up to sell via PayPal, which although possible, does not fit the purchase ordering system to provide a comprehensive ‘paper trail’ and thus requires more work for our Acquisitions team to process.

After encountering student and academic feedback that showed we had not provided enough copies of the titles on the Reading List, we opened discussions with Writing on the Wall to see if there was a way we could obtain electronic copies of the titles in a format that integrated with our library systems. We are hoping to come up with a method that suits both parties.

Writing on the Wall would need to be compensated for the number of users accessing a copy of a book, and we would need to be able to host the file in a format that we can make readily available to students. Talks are still ongoing but if successful, it may provide a solution we can take forward with more small publishers, thus removing barriers to access both ways – both for small publishers to get their materials into academic contexts, and for students wishing to access their works digitally.

We also created a feedback form for students to tell us about any issues they may be having so that we can react quickly. Although we did manage to purchase more digital copies of Letters to Gil, another text on the Reading List that students could not access in sufficient numbers. It was felt students lacked agency in that they first went to their lecturer, who contacted the library – they need a more direct route for feedback to the library.

This feedback form is now available on the library website, although we are still working to find out where it can be located so it is most visible to students and will be consulting closely with our Student Partner team to find the best way of surfacing this form.

Overall recommendations from teaching and administrative case studies

To encourage the sustenance of anti-colonial endeavours at the University of Liverpool, the university can:

1. **Provide training** and guidance to educators to assist them with how to address colonial legacies in their curricula in a reflexive and analytical manner.

2. **Encourage staff** to incorporate tenets of race equity in their curricula and an educational environment which provides students with meaningful opportunities to understand their role in the world and address social injustice.

3. **Motivate staff** to design curricula and teaching strategies that account for colonial legacies (e.g., structural racism) in their disciplines by modifying workload tariffs so educators can account for this specific task.

4. **Formally support** the exploration methods of research and teaching delivery that are considerate of alternative knowledge positions, counternarratives, and rationale rooted outside standpoints limited by Western and Eurocentric thought (e.g., Within quality assurance mechanisms, funding bids, and teaching exercises).

5. **Formally support** staff and student endeavours to align education activities with efforts to rebuild the Liverpool Black community's trust in our university and enhance local Black students' participation in higher education.

6. **Mandate** disaggregated monitoring data collection and publication (where possible) of both staff and student experience by race/gender/disability/socioeconomic status and by subject area *

7. **Broaden understanding** of impact by prioritising and mobilising resources for co-produced participatory research and community-based initiatives that are relevant to underrepresented groups and grassroots organisations committed to racial and economic justice.

8. **Formally recognise** the extensive work being completed by educators to perform anti-colonial, anti-racist, and decolonial change within and outside of the university (e.g., Through Workload Allocation Models)

9. **Set up** an across university restorative justice scheme following the likes of Glasgow University and pay reparations into neighbouring communities and organisations (e.g., in the form of local scholarships, eased provision of services to the local public, or community-led development schemes) to reconcile ongoing inequalities.

*The starred recommendation is a point drawn from the policy briefing co-authored by Al Nasir, M. and Vaughn, L. (2024) *Lifting Barriers to Black Academia: Creating Sustainable Actions for Reparative Justice in Higher Education Institutes*. Policy Briefing. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Part IV: An Anti-colonial Student Success Framework and Strategy 2031

The university is committed to fostering a happy, healthy, and successful student experience through its Student Success Framework. This framework acknowledges that student success extends beyond academic achievement and encompasses personal growth, community engagement, and global citizenship. To fully realise these goals, it is imperative to incorporate anti-colonial and anti-racist approaches to education, curriculum development, community engagement, hiring practices, and campus life in general (e.g. building names, monuments, greenspaces). Adopting anti-colonial approaches, addressing historical wrongs, and raising awareness of systemic inequalities will enrich every University of Liverpool student's social consciousness, intellectual capital, and day-to-day experience. Doing so requires the university to commit to recognising and rectifying its colonial legacies, in addition to promoting diverse perspectives and ensuring that both curricula and campus spaces reflect the experiences and contributions of historically marginalised communities. Integrating anti-colonial perspectives and practice will enable students to develop critical understandings of global power dynamics, as well as foster their commitment to local communities, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

Building an anti-racist university is also crucial for achieving the objectives outlined in University of Liverpool's Student Success Framework. Anti-racist practice involves taking proactive measures to dismantle institutionalised racism internally and broaden the university's commitment to under-represented communities externally, each of which will provide meaningful and memorable experiences for students (King and Chandler, 2016). Properly funded, long-term collaborations with marginalised communities are necessary to build sustainable relationships, as well as will diversify the student body and maximise opportunities for students to improve the world. Educationally, maintaining a consistent and committed approach to anti-racist work will cast a necessary light on deeply problematic historical issues that have had lasting adverse impacts on marginalised communities in Liverpool and beyond, which is vital for creating socially conscious global citizens. For example, in interviews completed for this report, the racist views expressed by the Fletcher Report and Professor Percy Roxby (namesake of the Department of Geography and Planning Building) and University of Liverpool's veneration of Sir Ralph Abercromby, who committed genocidal crimes against humanity in the Caribbean, were characterised as "insensitive", "shameful", "ignorant", "insulting", and "disgusting" by local-global community members, historians, and educators.

As articulated by numerous community consultants and colleagues who contributed to this initiative, diversifying both leadership and ideological perspectives across the university will enhance student experience—especially for students who do not see themselves or their core values reflected in University of Liverpool senior leadership and management. Expanding representation and worldviews across the upper echelons of the university is vital in offering students and local residents a sense of belonging and a supportive, as opposed to alienating and hostile, environment. If truly committed to becoming an inclusive institution, both university admissions and hiring practices must be more aware of and responsive to the unique challenges, needs, and strengths of students and aspiring scholars from marginalised backgrounds. Here, the university must actively engage with local communities to develop effective schemes that will enhance the accessibility of higher education for local youth. This includes creating clear pathways to university, providing role models under-represented young people can relate to, and mobilising resources to formalise networks between University of Liverpool faculties and community organisations. By adopting these approaches, the University of Liverpool can better achieve its Student Success Framework goal of fostering a happy, healthy, and successful student experience, not to mention will produce the socially conscious global citizens it prides itself on**.**

Recommendations regarding Strategy 2031

Strategy 2031 explicitly promises to “reimagine our research-connected curriculum to focus on applying the university’s research to real-world problems, emphasise skills development that leads to success in further study and highly-skilled work, and ensure that qualified students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in their studies and research”. Such efforts can contribute to closing the ‘awarding gap’ faced by BME students (see Joseph-Salisbury et al, 2021), granted that the institution provides resources to revise the curricula we offer, the pedagogical tools we use, and the support we can provide students and staff. The university can achieve this promise by embedding research and study within ‘real-world’ problems, particularly those that relate to the city region, will require engaging with the entrenched, historical forms of oppression that have structured the city’s economy and geography. We express ways of achieving this elsewhere in this report.

In its vision, Strategy 2031 outlines its aim to “have a positive impact on people, our place and the planet”, “driven by our values and diverse community of colleagues, students and alumni” (University of Liverpool 2023). There is a need for these aims to be acted on as measurable targets, not mere intentions, by the university, in its hiring of academic and support staff and admissions practices, particularly in leadership roles for staff (Arday, 2018), and at PGT and PGR levels where BME students are notoriously

underrepresented. The University of Liverpool presents itself as a “values-led organisation” which is: ambitious, collaborative, inclusive, innovative and responsible (University of Liverpool 2023). We propose that to commit to anti-racist and anti-colonial practice within the organisation will show commitment to being a responsible and inclusive institution. It will necessitate an active commitment to collaboration, consultations, iterative adjustments, and to continuously improve – social justice is never ‘achieved’ but is an ongoing practice. It is an ambitious task which requires all within the university to engage and develop and needs to be reflected in multi-level policy and practice, following the Race Equality Charter as well as advancing our own internal targets.

The university needs to acknowledge and address its role and responsibility as an institution which reproduces racial injustice to “build respectful, supportive and inclusive communities by providing effective induction and welcome programmes along with other experiences that engage and involve students to ensure they all feel safe, secure and welcome on our campuses” (University of Liverpool 2024a). To achieve this, the university will have to commit to decolonising its campus and learning spaces, particularly for students and staff who have been consistently marginalised in HE spaces and made to feel as ‘outsiders-within’ (Mizra, 2018; Collins, 1998). It is only through active anti-racist practice that the university can increase belonging, safety and inspire its students and staff to thrive. An inclusive environment will particularly care for the staff which experiences the additional burdens of being a person of colour within the academy, who are more susceptible to suffer and be forced out of the academy (Bhopal et aal, 2018).

Conclusion

This report outlines the criteria, obligations, endeavours, of pursuing an anti-colonial future at the University of Liverpool for educators. We put forward the proposition that engaging with/committing to an anti-colonial edification agenda aligns with the University of Liverpool's Strategic Framework 2031 and encourages socio-political perspectives across the university that will help to improve surrounding community relations and enhance student experience. Uptaking an anti-colonial stance will position the university as a globally leading institution in the following ways. By 1) empowering our students and staff to become changemakers; 2) enabling obligations towards civic responsibility via sustainable, globally-conscious, and ethical engagements with local communities; and 3) embracing an education that will transform the quality of student curricula, experience of campus and space, and ambitions of engaging real-world problems. We hope that this report explains some of the ongoing insights, dialogues, and activities of teachers, administrators, and community organisations aspiring to underscore the possibilities of addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism in higher education specific to the University of Liverpool.

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Appendix: glossary of terms

Anti-colonialism: A practice-based internationalist theory, analytical tool, and social movement which centres on the modern effects of empire overseas and its concomitant forms of racism and racial thinking. It is focused on understanding the vital relationship between anti-colonial resistance in the global periphery (e.g., overseas colonies) and the emergence of such dissent in the national and local metropole (e.g., England). As a movement, anti-colonialism requires addressing the three structures of racism, imperialism, and capitalism (and capitalism's accompanying philosophy of neo liberalism). The earliest studies of the anti-colonial were all based on studies of domination and control made from the standpoint of completed colonial independence or incomplete liberation. This movement can be said to be distinguished by anti-racist, non-western, postcolonial, and or Marxist thinkers as WEB Du Bois, Claudia Jones, Frantz Fanon, Anwar Abdel-Malek, Samir Amin, CLR James, Edward Said; Mabini, Mukerjee, Suzanne Césaire, Cabral, Nguyen An Ninh and many more.

Anti-racism: The active rejection of the institutional and structural aspects of race and racism. It is the intellectual, socioeconomic, and political movement to resist the historically developed and societally embedded ways of White and Eurocentric thinking. It addresses the organisation of social groups and distribution of resources, space, and capital according to a racial hierarchy. It consists of radical, self-organising, and emancipatory initiatives, and is cross-communal since anti-racist solidarity must cut across race, class, and geographic divides, and is local, national, and international in nature.

Colonialism: The material domination and concentration of resources by imperial actors to govern marginal populations (e.g., putting down flags, marking territory)

Counternarratives: Narratives that critique and challenge the dominant assumptions, beliefs, myths, and misconceptions embedded in a society.

Decolonising: the decentralised movement to recontextualise social, cultural, scientific, and political knowledge, within the imperial and colonial contexts that form their foundation

Imperialism: The broad strategy of extending a country's power, hegemony, and preservation by means of ideological, institutional, and discursive influence or control often in conjunction with material domination (e.g., what remains when the flags are gone)

Non-racism: A racially liberal approach to race that favours passive behaviours, commitments, discourses, and ideologies and that rejects only extreme forms of racism.

Non-racism assumes the possibility of the racial innocence of people, policies, and ideas; and accepts a mode of racial justice focused on colour-blindness, racial neutrality, and non-discriminatory intentions.

Orientalism: An argument by Palestinian-American academic and political activist Edward Said which explains an ideology prominent in institutions of former colonial and imperial powers. Orientalism is an institutionally-supported belief in there being a natural (ontological) and knowledge-based (epistemological) difference between human occupants of the geopolitical region of the Orient (e.g., Middle East North Africa and periodically South and East Asia) and the Occident (e.g., the Western World comprising of Western Europe and its descendant nation states). According to this argument, the Orient is socially constructed through a series of cultural and scholastic mediums as the anthesis of Western culture, with its people being 'Others'. Said argues that the purpose of this construction was to legitimise colonial expansion and imperial projects, with state policy makers in the Occident historically employing cultural and intellectual projects alongside political and military activities; projects that reified biased ways of knowing the world. These biases were grounded in a series of biological and cultural generalisations and ethnocultural prejudices, like the portrayal of Middle Eastern peoples as irrational, violent, backward, and so on, to present them as ill-suited for civilisational aptitude, land ownership, and sovereignty.

Othering: A term inspired by the arguments of Palestinian-American academic and political activist Edward Said which explains the problematic construction of Western attitudes towards the Orient. In his writing, Said demonstrates the intense impact of hundreds of years of colonialism through philosophy, literature, and politics in the construction of the Other. Othering refers to how the often-demeaning or restricted presentation and understanding of non-European people become deeply ingrained in White Western society's ways of understanding the complexity of interculturality. Othering problematically ensures the reinforcement of a 'them' and 'us' way of viewing the world and society rather than seeing global existences as interrelated, interdependent, and non-binary.

Postcolonialism: an interdisciplinary academic study of the cultural, political and economic legacy colonialism, imperialism, and of racialised violence, addressing the mentality of the European, of the settler, of Whiteness, and how it reaffirms itself in modern society

Race: the political attribution of human competencies by categorising and essentialising group attributes according to a social hierarchy where visible attributes and behaviour are accorded political, economic, social, and cultural value

Racialisation: The exercise of ascribing racial identities to social practices or groups

Racism: A global, national, and local system generating practices, institutions, narratives, and inequities based on race

Western: a historical construct referring to a society that is developed, industrialised, urbanised, capitalist, secular, modern; and fundamentally; characterised as having an institutional/ethnocultural/or racial affinity to countries or former colonies of Western Europe.

White/Whiteness: A constructed socioeconomic and political position, mode of privilege, and category that has historically made some people of a 'white' European phenotypic presentation able to experience socioeconomic and political upliftment in contrast to their perceived non-white or not-white-enough counterparts. The impact of this construct is affected by and interconnected with historic global, national, and local power dynamics as well factors of class, gender, sexuality, disability, and more.

White Supremacy: a national and international system of formal and informal rule which facilitates the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties predicated on a contract by those people who have designated themselves as white.