



FINDING NEW PATHWAYS
TO UNDERSTAND GENDER,
VIOLENCE AND POVERTY:

WHAT DOES
DECOLONIALITY OFFER US?

GENDER, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY SEMINAR(HSRC)

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CONTINUING COLONIAL PARADIGMS OF KNOWLEDGE GENERATION: HAVE WE FAILED?

- Evidence suggests that risk factors associated with gender based violence are characteristic of impoverished communities, for example:
- Family Adversity (Londt et.al, 2015)
- Childhood Adversity (Jewkes et.al, 2012)
- Substance Abuse (Jewkes, et.al, 2012)
- My question is for how much longer will we continue to research contributing factors/risk factors/drivers that underlie and sustain gender, violence and poverty?

FINDING NEW PATHWAYS TO UNDERSTAND GENDER, VIOLENCE AND POVERTY: WHAT CAN DECOLONIALITY OFFER US?

- Quijano defines coloniality as different to colonisation in the following way,
- “Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations”.
- Maldonado-Torres argues that “Coloniality is a mode of power that structures ‘modernity’”.



COLONIALITY OF GENDER

- Lugones (2010)
- “Unlike colonization, the coloniality of gender is still with us, it lies in the intersection of gender/class/race as central constructs of the capitalists world system of power” (p.746).

COLONIAL-MODERNITY

- The historical advent of colonial-modernity (via conquest and colonization) from the 15th century onwards entailed reorganization of the entire globe to achieve the political, social, economic and epistemic domination of the West over the global South
- This is primarily achieved through the **positioning of modernity as democracy and liberal human rights as progressive, universal and protective of all humans.**

DECOLONIAL THEORIES: COLONIALITY OF KNOWLEDGE, BEING AND POWER

- Coloniality of Knowledge
 - The coloniality of knowledge is structured through rationality and reason as the expression of knowledge authority.
 - The positioning of Western forms of science/knowledge generation/research as superior to other forms of knowledge generation
- Coloniality of Being
 - The coloniality of being refers to the discursive and material production of 'the subject' or commonly understood as 'identity'

COLONIALITY OF POWER

- Coloniality of Power
- The means through which power is produced and institutionalised, through hierarchical structures and classification that becomes embedded in the social and cultural imaginaries.
- For example, the coloniality of power meant that gender and sexuality were inscribed through the institution of racialised modernity, including racialised capitalism

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- Patriarchy (sexism) is one form of coloniality as are racism and heterosexuality as all are **reconstituted through modernity**,
 - and in the contemporary, post-apartheid era, specifically in the notion of **human rights**
 - as the Western-European or modern invention of gender is constituted through the '**universal**' **notion of the human** .

DECOLONIAL FEMINISMS

- Decolonial feminists theorising or re-theorising gender, for example, Oyewumi (1997) and Lugones (2010) challenge the very concept of woman and man as universal but rather argue these as colonially imposed notions that construct human identities according to the male-female binary which has long limited the idea of knowledge about the human.
- As Sylvia Wynter argues, the 'human' is an invented fiction, which follows that men as human, are invented fictions that become naturalised and legitimated

THE PROBLEM OF MODERNITY AND DISCOURSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- Such binary and hierarchized cultural classifications and ranking is the strategy of modernity to produce its subjects in line with progressive and non-progressive identities or degrees of humanity,
- the latter still in need of development to become real humans or
- attain rights that will make them fully real or human,
- in accordance with the core notion of universal human rights and its standards

COLONIAL DIFFERENCE AND RACIALISED MODERNITY

- The colonial difference positioned a European heterosexuality as a morally, spiritually and legally superior identification and practice.
- This engineering of what counted as a civilized humanity was further entrenched through a racialised capitalism that positioned black women's bodies as sites of reproduction of labour (a continuation of slavery and colonization).
- Racialized modernity (coloniality/modern human rights) has ensured that black women's bodies remain a form of value, only as a source of labour, and a commodity that can be dispensed with at any whim.



RHETORIC OF MODERNITY

- The narratives of modernity are constantly regenerated through the celebrated idea of newness newness and post – are the two pillars with which the mythology of modernity captures the feelings and the imaginary of the population. I call this the rhetoric of modernity – rhetoric in the sense of discourse aimed at persuading an audience.
- The rhetoric of modernity that aims to persuade you through promises of progress, growth, development, and newness of objects (M and Walsh (2018,p.140)).

SHIFTING TO DECOLONIAL RESEARCH TO ADDRESS GENDER, POVERTY, VIOLENCE AND INEQUALITIES

- How do we disentangle research on gender, violence, poverty and inequality from modern, colonial discourses (and the rhetoric of modernity)?
 - Does it mean abandoning frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals? And its attendant donor community?
- We must rethink the use of Human Rights Discourses as progressive? Are we participating in recolonising African subjects, livelihoods, etc?
- How do we re - Centre African theories of Freedom?

