

Colonialism as context in diversity research

by Mrinalini Greedharry, Pasi Ahonen and Janne Tienari

Abstract

Diversity management practice and research are both direct responses to the conditions European colonialism of other parts of the world has produced. We argue that diversity research thus functions within a colonial episteme, a way of thinking and producing knowledge about the world that is structured by colonial logic. Taking colonialism seriously as a context is not only about acknowledging culturally different ways of knowing, but also about recognizing and undoing the authority of the West to determine what diversity is around the world and what constitutes diversity research. We propose there may be other ways to conceptualize the relationship between difference and diversity and offer some provisional ideas about how we can begin to do this in our research.

Introduction

From the fifteenth century onwards, the expansion of certain European powers well beyond their boundaries resulted in massive redistribution of global wealth; forced or voluntary large-scale relocations of populations; and decimation of peoples, environments, and cultures. Colonialism thus fundamentally changed the ways in which we think, know, make sense of, and relate to our world. The legacies of colonialism, its enduring forms and recursions, still influence, organize, structure and even direct much of our thinking in various ways depending on the historical conditions in which we find ourselves. In many places around the globe, the populations from which organizations draw their workforce are the product, by-product or an indirect consequence of Western colonialism. As a result, much of

diversity research addresses and aims to remedy the effects and injustices colonialism produced; and at the same time, that research is a product of those very colonial conditions.

In this chapter, we are less concerned with the material historical conditions colonialism produced, and is still producing, and more interested in colonialism as an epistemic context of and for diversity research. Epistemology, what we know and how we think we know it, directs and drives our methodological choices and determines what we consider to be true. It is our contention that diversity research, while often aiming to remedy and redress the effects of colonialism, still functions within a colonial episteme, a way of thinking and producing knowledge about the world that is fundamentally structured by colonial logic. We contend that to advance diversity research, we need to challenge this episteme. Specifically, building on the argument of Ahonen et al. (2014: 277) that “context matters in terms of power”, we propose colonialism is an important, but obscured, epistemic context of diversity management research. Taking colonialism seriously as a context of diversity management is not only about acknowledging culturally different ways of knowing but also about recognizing and undoing the authority of the West to determine what diversity around the world is and how we know it, that is, by what means we produce diversity knowledge.

Colonial logic continues to organize diversity research, whether the researcher is evaluating particular differences for organizational performance gains or in an effort to address social and organizational inequalities. There is a historical continuity, or at least recursion (Stoler, 2016), between past and contemporary practices because there is an epistemic context common to both that has not been rethought, despite several attempts to ethically reframe diversity management research (Ahonen & Tienari, 2015; Ahonen et al, 2014; Benschop, 2011; Nkomo 1992; Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014). This is not to claim that there is an inevitable, or necessary, logical relation between the colonial management of

difference and what we now call diversity management¹. It is tempting to assume that repetition reflects a fixed relationship between management practices and the differences it wants to manage. Crucially, however, we suggest the historical relationship does not secure the logical relationship but exposes its contingent nature. Through opening up the colonial context of diversity management to analysis, therefore, we might be able to imagine new ways of thinking about diversity management. How else might we conceptualize the relationship between difference and diversity? What are the conditions that facilitate or obstruct the ways in which, and by which, difference has to become diversity? Are there ways to rethink and reimagine these relationships within colonial histories without using colonial logics?

We begin by describing the problem of colonialism as an epistemic context of diversity research and then examine some indicative examples of extant diversity literature to show how the epistemology shapes current research. Following this, we discuss possible directions for research that aims to deconstruct and destabilize the colonial episteme. We conclude with discussion of what we think is the key problematic to address in de-, anti- and non-colonial diversity literature.

Colonialism as epistemic context

Both functionalist and critical management diversity research traditions acknowledge that colonial history is a background to diversity management, usually by recognizing that social inequalities are the result of previous and ongoing colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial, relations. However, accepting colonialism as a historical context of the present social situation does not necessarily imply a critique of the circumstances of knowledge production about diversity management research. Ahonen et al. (2014) propose that the distinctions between what they term functionalist and critical approaches to diversity

management is largely about how diversity should be governed rather than whether it should be governable in the first place. For this reason, they argue that there is a need to examine the “particular and specific circumstances and processes of knowledge production” (p. 269) that relate to diversity and direct its management, and for elucidating how “context matters in terms of power” (p.277). Even critical approaches, then, do not always consider the fundamental role of context, despite their focus on power relations (cf. Ahmed & Swan, 2006). The logic of knowledge production remains intact.

By contrast, to claim that colonialism is an epistemic context of diversity management research is to point to the fact that knowledge and management of difference occurs because some epistemologies rather than others have secured the authority to define difference (and then act upon such knowledge). In other words, it is not only the case – as Stuart Hall put it – that “they are here because you were there” (cited in Akomfrah, 2017: 198), but also about how the capacity to define the meaning and significance of both “here” and “there” continues to have effects that serve as the basis of thinking and action today.

Taking history seriously

Unpacking the colonial episteme poses particular challenges for research methods because colonialism defines and shapes the nature and scope of our investigations while being largely hidden. For example, the ever-increasing need for diversity management is commonly understood to be a response to globalization – a new phenomenon in which businesses now operate on an international and unprecedented scale. When viewed in the light of the long history of Western colonialism, there is something oddly amnesiac about globalization narratives, which implicitly or explicitly suggest that “we” have a new, contemporary problem of managing the “difference” of others. This is simply not the case. From the beginning colonizers were deeply invested in identifying and developing ways to

manage a wide range of differences, often developing classification systems and procedures for their colonies that later came to form the backbone of metropolitan institutions, governance practices and ways of producing knowledge (Cohn, 1996; Stoler, 1995, 2016; Thomas, 1994). Insofar as diversity management research imagines and represents globalization as a “new” or “contemporary” challenge, its colonial context, both historical and epistemological, is already under erasure.

Nevertheless, diversity management is not simply colonial management under another name. Instead, we want to draw attention to a longer, recursive history of managing and governing difference than diversity management scholars tend to acknowledge. Taking a historical view helps us to begin tracking the persistent and adaptive power that Western epistemology retains to define and set the terms of proper diversity management problems, in both research and practice. To call attention to colonialism as an epistemic context of diversity research, then, is to remind researchers that we want to manage difference because colonial logics have already established what, when, where, and how particular differences matter as well as how those differences are produced by the methodologies and underlying assumptions that inform them.

Reimagining difference

One possible response to the dominance of Western epistemology is to consider how other kinds of differences matter in other cultural contexts. While that demonstrates the limits of Western diversity practices, we are less interested in reimagining the nature of the differences themselves than mapping out what Western epistemology does with the differences it has selected as salient. Instead of making “better” or more “appropriate” differences while still relying on colonial logic, we want to question the colonial logic itself in order to destabilize its authority.

Our approach draws on the postcolonial tradition of critique established in the work of Edward Said, the subaltern studies group, and postcolonial feminist theory, specifically on the problem of epistemology and power relations. Such work is typically interpreted as arguing that Western epistemology dominates because it has economic, military, or political power. However, more accurately, work by Said (1978; 1984; 1993), Prakash (1999), Chakrabarty (2000), Spivak (1999; 2010), Mohanty (1991; 2003), among others makes a more nuanced analysis of how power and epistemology are related. In some cases, such as Said's (1978) discussion of Napoleon's campaigns in Egypt, obtaining and producing knowledge is part of the process of acquiring power; in other cases, such as Mohanty's (1991) discussion of the figure of the "third world woman" in feminist scholarship, the production of new kinds of knowledge like feminist theory reproduces old power relations. In other words, following Foucault, it is not possible to know in advance how power will shape or be shaped by the production of knowledge. For this reason, it is important to attend to how power is produced, reproduced, distributed and diverted through structures of knowledge; and how power adapts or is arrested through new forms of knowledge.

The colonial order of things

Postcolonial scholarship has demonstrated the extent to which the structures of Western knowledge have been substantively formed by the specifically colonial order of things. This is no less true in the case of management knowledge (Cooke 2003a, 2003b; Jack, 2016; Jack and Westwood, 2009; Jack et al., 2011; Prasad, 2006; see also, Greedharry & Ahonen, 2015). In the case of diversity management research in particular, the object of managing people who are considered to be different, whether for improved performance of the organization or attempts to manage social inequality through better organization, has both obvious and hidden continuities with management practices developed for colonial rule.

European colonies managed people with the express aim of ensuring that its organizational forms and institutions could function effectively. In the British context, for example, as early as 1835, Thomas Macaulay argues for the deliberate creation and training of a “a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Macaulay 1995: 430) in order that the English should be able to run their empire more effectively. From one perspective, Macaulay’s words can be understood as the rhetoric of a government official attempting to rationalize imperial ambitions before an explicit colonial mandate is established in 1858. One can, without much difficulty, distance such government from management in the sense that we write and research about it today. From our perspective, however, the early impulse to manage difference for imperial ends is significant. Macaulay does not propose to simply exclude Indians from the public sphere or dominate them; he proposes to manage their difference in a *specific* way, allowing their “blood and colour” to remain, but their “morals and intellect” to be trained through a new program of education in ‘Englishness’. Once they have been trained in English sensibilities and become manageable themselves, it is Macaulay’s intention to delegate some of the colonial task to them (“a class who may be interpreters”). The aim of managing colonial difference, here, gives rise to a new form of knowledge, which in turn produces new middle managers for this particular colonial enterprise.

In the case of managing social inequality for better organization, the connection to colonial thinking may be less well-understood but is no less salient. The management of both metropolitan and colonial populations along racial and cultural lines is not, historically, inconsistent with socially progressive visions and ends. Historical studies of motherhood, sexual health and public hygiene have demonstrated how the inclusionary impulse to improve the health and wellbeing of the population was intersected by the desire to maintain colonial

and racial relations of power (see e.g., Anderson, 2006; MacLeod & Lewis, 1988; McLaren, 1990; Valverde, 1991, Shah, 2001). The drive to retain empire was a crucial motive for reforming gender and class inequalities in the metropolitan center. Relatedly, while racial science was a necessary part of the colonial regime, the racial hygiene and eugenics programs it produced were targeted at populations of metropolitan centers and settler colonies (e.g., Adams, 1990; McLaren, 1990; see also, Baker 1912). In fact, many progressive social health and welfare policies in the West have their origins in racial hygiene and eugenics (e.g., Broberg & Roll-Hansen, 1996). We should be careful not to dismiss the import of colonial thinking behind progressive politics and aims. The point is not that the early twentieth century reformers were unenlightened, but rather that in a colonial epistemology racializing logic is not always easily distinguishable from a desire to improve and cultivate social progress.

Writing through colonialism

To understand how colonial epistemology shapes contemporary research, we now turn to work with an explicit commitment to thinking about the colonial implications of diversity management and research. It is in these exemplary cases where the researchers are already sensitive and responsive to the question that we think it is possible to see most clearly how difficult it is to write against the colonial epistemology. Various studies over the last decade (Kalonaityte 2010; Pio & Essers; 2014; Özkazanc-Pan, 2012) demonstrate how deeply colonial logics structure the epistemology of diversity research, making it profoundly difficult to resist and rout. This difficulty suggest that the field of diversity research is primed for the kind of colonial critique we propose.

Examining authority to determine

In her study of a Swedish adult education school, Kalonaityte (2010) provides a postcolonial analysis of how cultural authority and hierarchy are produced and maintained through diversity work itself. In the school, being properly Swedish means that “one must speak Swedish, but also sound Swedish, and perhaps be Swedish through some inherent quality, which cannot be captured through language” (Kalonaityte, 2010: 44). The slippage from skills that can be acquired to primordial essences that always leave traces to those who can perceive them is telling, since these expectations are not only directed at the migrant students but also at teachers from migrant backgrounds. The diversity work practiced and celebrated is thus firmly entrenched in a hierarchical system of who is and who is not considered properly Swedish, and hence, by implication, culturally inferior.

The process where, on the one hand, the Other are educated, ‘civilized’, so that they come to appreciate the cultural superiority of things Swedish while, on the other hand, the Other are denied full access to Swedishness is a key and commonplace strategy of colonial management. Indeed, it echoes our discussion of Macaulay’s argument for producing new kinds of cultural and racial middle managers. Kalonaityte’s (2010) work shows persuasively that, in some instances, diversity work can and does function along the lines of colonial logics. In the course of diversity work, “organizations actively contribute to the essentialization and maintenance of disadvantaged and privileged identities” (Kalonaityte, 2010: 47) through their reproduction of colonial logics, categories and hierarchies. Kalonaityte’s conclusions thus indicate an important limit to diversity work, and equally to diversity management research more broadly, arguing that “the renunciation of authority over cultural signification process means letting go of the notion of cultural supremacy” (Kalonaityte, 2010: 48). As such, we suggest diversity management research needs to *examine its own authority* to determine what diversity is, how it should be managed, and when it has been achieved.

Epistemological limits and boundaries

Faced with a challenge to our authority as researchers, it is appealing to reach for the methodological solution of enabling the “diverse” to represent themselves directly. Pio and Essers’ (2014) study of Indian women migrants to Aotearoa New Zealand follows a feminist research practice of “letting migrant women tell their own stories, rather than scholars telling migrant women’s stories and filtering them through western/ Eurocentric notions, [so that they themselves] can provide alternative images of the Other” (Pio & Essers, 2014: 5). The authors emphasize that their interviewees are managing the complicated ground of being *both* Indian and women in Aotearoa New Zealand. Here, the category of “woman” is one that travels across borders and is separable from “migrant” (Indian). Thus, the authors suggest, “these women are not necessarily disadvantaged by traditional Indian beliefs such as patriarchy” (Pio & Essers, 2014: 10) because there are “other cultures who may see patriarchy as less oppressive and more a space of security” (Pio & Essers, 2014: 3). In other words, patriarchy may be a cultural value that we need to respect. The authors remind us that structures and forms of oppression are not directly transposable from one context to the next.

Inadvertently, however, the attempt to let the diversity subjects “speak for themselves” illustrates how colonial logic continues to work even in analyses that expressly aim to break down Western conceptualizations of gender and racial/ethnic or cultural categories. To be Indian, in Pio and Essers’ (2014) analysis, is to subscribe to patriarchy as a cultural belief, whereas “utilizing the gender equality in NZ [can] make her gendered role permeable” (ibid.: 7). Although the analysis recognizes that cultures vary, it does not understand the category of Indian or migrant as one that might change the ‘universal’ meaning of “gender”. The migrant women are to be understood on their own cultural terms, but the analytical framework does not allow their cultural difference to make a mark on the

surface of Western ideas of gender. As several postcolonial feminists have argued (e.g., Jayawardena, 1986; Mohanty, 1991, 2003; Oyewùmí, 1997; Spivak, 1993, 2010; Trinh, 1989), many uses of gender as an analytic maintain the colonial authority to determine the meanings of both “woman” and “non-Western”. While differentiations between the genders/sexes have longer histories than the relatively short period of Western colonialism, it is often the case that colonialism has spread specific gender-based ways of (re) distributing power around the world as well as the ideas and concomitant logics that gender differences matter in a particular way. Thus, the diversity researcher is situated in an epistemology that does not necessarily permit many other kinds of moves than to reproduce Western analytics, at least while the colonial epistemology that structures the field is left intact.

Decolonizing research practices

Finally, though she writes in the field of international and cross-cultural management rather than diversity management, we discuss Özkazanc-Pan’s (2012) work because she explicitly asks how it might be possible for researchers to do their work without inadvertently reproducing colonial logics. Could we rely more on the work of scholars from under-represented constituencies? Perhaps all we need is ‘native informants’ and/or ‘cultural insiders’ who are embedded in the local culture deeply enough. Özkazanc-Pan demonstrates persuasively that voluntarist solutions are insufficient because, whatever the researcher’s cultural position, Western epistemology *structures* their work: thus “hegemonic IM concepts and approaches still guide much of the cross-cultural management research even when authored by Turkish scholars” (Özkazanc-Pan 2012: 577). The researcher cannot be turned into a broker between the Western epistemology and the local context because the problem is not one of accuracy or perception. Instead, “being a researcher interested in inclusion and equality requires an ethical commitment to decolonizing our ways of seeing, doing, and

writing” (ibid.: 586).

What all three of these studies demonstrate is the difficulty of writing through the colonial logic that frames diversity management research. As Kalonaityte’s work indicates, in many cases the taxonomies that are relevant in diversity work and produced or reproduced in diversity research are relevant because of the desire to establish, control, and reproduce racial and cultural authority. Rather than evaluating the effectiveness or design of particular diversity management practices, perhaps we ought to reconsider the terms that establish which differences must be managed. In Pio and Essers’ work, we see that even when there is careful attention to thinking about difference differently, there are overarching analytic concepts, such as gender, that still work to reproduce colonial epistemologies when left unpacked. Speaking directly to the diversity subject, or giving a voice to the diversity subject, does not disturb the colonial epistemology, if their voice is explained in terms of concepts that rely on colonial authority. Equally, in Özkazanc-Pan’s work, we see that the researcher, perhaps a diversity subject themselves, cannot outwit the colonial epistemology by drawing on their own lived experience and knowledge of difference. Attempts to counter-balance the underlying epistemology by reference to lived experience are continually thrown back against the boundary of the epistemology itself, which has already established that the only knowledge that matters is the knowledge that is useful and productive for colonial logics.

Unthinking colonial epistemology in research practice

In the introduction, we asked how might we produce knowledge about diversity and its management that is not useful to the colonial order of things? As we argued above, the connection between colonial management and diversity is not logically inevitable. If it were, then, just as Özkazanc-Pan (2012) concludes, the ethical thing to do would be to stop producing diversity management knowledge. At the very least, we should stop producing the

kind of diversity management knowledge that is intent upon *managing* differences, even for progressive ends. But if the connection is only historical, albeit recursive, then it ought to be possible to rethink the relationship between difference and diversity. Future research could ask not “what’s the difference” or “what difference does diversity make” (cf. Ahmed & Swan, 2006; Harrison & Klein, 2007), but whether there are other ways to conceptualize the relationship between difference and the management of difference we call diversity? What kinds of conditions either facilitate or obstruct the way in which difference has to become diversity? Can difference be uncoupled from the drive to manage difference-turned-into-diversity?

Functionalist studies

Taking these questions as starting points suggests that future research on diversity needs to be designed to describe the mechanisms, techniques, and processes by *which difference creates a need for, and becomes, diversity*. Functionalist research design has focused on determining levels and units of analysis, developing key constructs, formulating hypotheses for testing, sampling, and rigorous analyses (Dobbin et al, 2015; Harrison & Klein, 2007; Kalev et al, 2006). In their comprehensive historical study of diversity initiatives in US organizations Kalev et al (2006) and Dobbin et al (2015) work on the basis of reports submitted by companies to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and complement their database with surveys in a sample of the companies. Relying on the official classifications (for example, gender and race) this research design enables the authors to scrutinize which diversity measures work over time in US organizations. The categories or their representativeness is taken as a given, which cements the idea that these differences themselves are diversity. The historical processes by which particular differences become diversity remain implicit, even concealed.

Roberson et al. (2017) argue for more systematic ways of examining meanings associated with differences as well as the mutability in people's identities and how these impact on shared value systems in organizations. This entails more innovative and sensitive methods, including qualitative or social network analysis, and more dynamic or temporal approaches (see also, Mayo et al., 2016). Importantly, acknowledging US dominance in extant research, Roberson et al. (2017: 495) suggest "research should at least consider the boundary conditions created by the cultural context in which studies are conducted." These kinds of developments towards more nuanced research designs in the functionalist tradition can be taken further. The boundary conditions to be considered need to include epistemic contexts and examine and acknowledge the mechanisms with which knowledge about difference is created. Importing concepts, ideas and methods without careful translation work, including the logic of relations of power and knowledge (what affects what, for what reason and how), is dangerous and may produce misleading results. What gender, for example, is, how it operates, how it matters and how it exists, if at all, may vary radically from one location or time period to the next (see, Oyewùmí, 1997; Repo, 2015). Context needs to be understood as something that pertains to both the research object and the research framework as well as something that extends well beyond positioning the research subjects, objects and researchers themselves on a map.

Critical studies

The social and historical construction of difference is more central to the aims of the critical tradition in diversity research, which is reflected in its more varied and predominantly qualitative research designs. Typically, studies work with documents and interviews in specific organizational settings (e.g. Janssens & Zanoni, 2014), but these can be complemented with participant observation (e.g. Zanoni & Janssens, 2015). Scholars have

also engaged in other ways of generating and analyzing empirical materials. Litvin (1997), for example, studied organizational behavior textbooks to unveil their assumptions and essentialized conceptualizations of diversity. Analyzing popular pictorial representation enabled Swan (2010) to show how visual imagery of diversity promotes particular ideological aims around racial difference and “how difference is constituted, circulated, contested and re-signified and how social privilege and attendant hierarchies of inequality are reproduced through images” (p. 79). Schwabenland and Tomlinson (2015) organized “action research groups” with diversity practitioners to offer them spaces for reflection and to generate research materials on these reflections. Finally, Marfelt and Muhr (2016) demonstrate the potential of ethnographic studies of diversity in organizational settings. Following a diversity project in a company for three years, they documented a marked change in the micro-politics around diversity as contextual dynamics influenced how the concept was perceived and acted upon.

Critical research has deployed a variety of qualitative designs to understand the dynamics of privilege and (in)equality, as well as the complexities of representing difference. What we are proposing is closer attention to the processes and techniques by which differences are necessarily turned into diversity. Whereas the research design of critical diversity studies remains focused on its aim of improving the representation of diversity subjects in organizations, our critique of colonial epistemology remains committed to *denaturalizing* the need to turn categorization (salient difference) *into representation* (diversity subjects). Where much of critical research is interested in understanding how people use, adapt, and deploy diversity language and practices, we argue for the need to identify the mechanisms, techniques, and processes by which difference appears to create a demand for, or assumption, of diversity in the first place; as well as the need to identify the mechanisms, techniques, and processes by which difference becomes or is made governable,

manageable and accountable. Diversity research itself and its methods are part of this equation.

Rethinking the making (up) of diversity subjects

If we can understand how the relationship between difference and diversity has been formed, we can begin to denaturalize the need to turn the identification of salient differences (taxonomies and categorizations) into the process of making diversity subjects (representation). In terms of quantitative studies, this would mean studies that recognize more explicitly the historical formation of the categories it deploys, as well as the constructed nature of categories in general as part of the research design. It would be especially important to discover whether we can develop novel ways of dealing with populations that do not draw on colonial logics or categories. Could we develop logics and practices of categorization that are explicitly anti-colonial? In terms of qualitative studies, it might be useful to turn to the methods and designs of historical and literary studies. We need to understand how diversity is produced as a narrative effect in legal, managerial, cultural, and other texts and what difference falls out of these narratives because it cannot be said, heard, or most importantly, used. Further, what are the dynamics of this not speaking/hearing, and who are those who cannot speak/hear? Under what conditions do these subjects find themselves?

One of the most important developments for rethinking the relationship between difference and diversity would be more dialogue *between* the qualitative and quantitative studies of diversity research (see also Mayo et al., 2016; Roberson et al., 2017). Currently the two approaches seem to have few points of connection and largely exist in separate worlds. Future research designs that can examine how diversity has been qualitatively formed and then quantitatively deployed would be invaluable in helping us to understand more precisely how difference becomes diversity. Through reflexive studies it ought to be possible to

understand these processes in detail, and thereby explore diversity as an historical, numerical, legal, experiential, and narrative effect.

With more empirical information about the precise techniques and processes by which difference is produced as diversity we can also begin to provide analyses of how current forms of diversity management practice and research maintains or reproduces rather than challenges the power of Western epistemologies. As indicated above, the boundaries we have drawn between the functionalist and critical traditions are not always so clear. Thus, even though the analyses and conclusions of functionalist research tend to focus on better understanding and use of the right balance of categories and taxonomies, this begs the question of how diversity is and ought to be defined. Functionalist research tells us that the optimal balance for turning difference into diversity has not been found (Joshi & Roh, 2009; Roberson et al, 2017), perhaps, because there is no such thing. Similarly, though the analyses and conclusions of critical diversity research focus on the nuances of representation, and theorize the need for more perceptive readings of the power imbalances and contexts of diversity discourse, it also finds that ever more attuned readings of power do not produce reliable, emancipatory diversity practices (Zanoni et al, 2010).

This is where a colonial critique of diversity research may be useful, because remaining skeptical about the necessity of yoking difference and diversity together, prompts us to analyze what has become normalized and naturalized in our conceptualizations of diversity. What is our investment in diversity management that does not achieve its ends, but continues to be deployed as an influential and desirable organizational means? And why do we continue to produce research about it? As Ahmed (2012) and Prasad (2006) have argued, it may be that diversity research has itself become a means for perpetuating colonial logics, under cover of convincing discourses of doing diversity in organizations. However, in order to confirm this, we need meticulous analyses of how and under what conditions colonial

logics operate in research on diversity and its management. Moreover, we need analyses of whether, and to what extent, the failures of diversity practices can be attributed to those logics. The culmination point of these analyses is to be able to ask and answer the question: are there ways to manage diversity that do not repeat and reproduce colonial logics, rely on categories derived from colonial encounters, and/or impede the other from speaking and being heard except as a productive diversity subject?

Conclusions

Our chapter began from two questions: (1) what is the basis of the authority of diversity research to determine what diversity is and how it should be managed around the world; and (2) what kind of research should we be doing to find out?

It is our contention that the relationship between difference and diversity has been produced by colonial logic, and that diversity research functions to keep the power relations of that epistemic context in play, despite the aims, ethics, and desires of the players in the field. That difference consistently fails to become effective ('good') diversity may not be a result of poor diversity management or flawed diversity management research, but a reflection of the colonial episteme that assumes problematic differences are there to be turned into simplified, productive diversity. Instead of working towards keeping diversity in place, then, perhaps the time has come to challenge, critique and dismantle this epistemology.

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