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## **Challenging the lack of BAME Authors in a Psychology Curriculum**

Decolonizing psychology curricula faces substantial anti-racist inertia and a history of “*using data limitations as an excuse not to push ahead*” (NUS & Universities UK, 2019; pg. 35). We report on a targeted curriculum decolonization project at a British university. We quantitatively coded the identifiable ‘race’, gender and nationality of the authors set as reading at the beginning (in 2015-16) and 3-years after the project began (in 2019-20). Our analysis revealed no significant change in the dominance of Globally Northern (95%), white (95%) and male (57%) authors over time. Indeed, there were more White, male authors named John than BAME -female and -male authors, of any name, collectively. We call on organizational bodies to promote decolonization as part of course re-accreditation converging with staff’s interest.

**Keywords: Decolonization; Racism; Curricula; UK; Psychology; Teaching**

**Wordcount: 6,146 words**

## Challenging the lack of BAME Authors in a Psychology Curriculum

### Racism in universities

Universities can perpetuate racism (Pilkington 2013; Tippett et al. 2014). In the UK, the ‘race’ degree awarding gap provides a stark example. This refers to the greater likelihood white students have (81%) of gaining the highest honours degrees compared to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME<sup>1</sup>) students (68%; NUS and Universities UK 2019). This occurs regardless of prior attainment, cannot be explained by a lack of motivation or effort on the part of students and is an even larger gap for Black students (58%; NUS and Universities UK 2019). BAME UK university students are also more likely to drop out, leave with fewer job prospects and exhibit less satisfaction in highly influential National Student Satisfaction (NSS) surveys compared to their white counterparts (National Union of Students 2011; Pilkington 2013). Furthermore, recent investigations have found that almost a quarter of British university BAME students have faced racial harassment defined as: “*verbal abuse, exposure to racist material, exclusion and less obvious forms such as microaggressions*” (Equalities and Human Rights Commission 2019, 26).

University racism does not exist in a vacuum. It is part of a wider and persistent cycle of discrimination that BAME people face. For example, Black students face lowered expectations and increased disciplinary actions relative to their white counterparts throughout primary and secondary education (Khan and Shaheen 2017; Akala 2018). Such racism can result in substantially lowered attainment for Black students throughout later education. In addition, university racism can directly relate to wider material inequalities, where for example, Black male graduates in the UK are paid almost £4 less per hour compared to their

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<sup>1</sup> ‘We use the term BAME to reflect educational policy discourses in the UK (NUS and Universities UK 2019) though it is concomitant to ‘people of colour’. We recognise both terms are contested and imperfect.

white counterparts (Mance 2018). Indeed, BAME people are generally more likely to earn less, less likely to own their own houses and have less ‘liquid’ or immediately-accessible wealth relative to white people (Khan and Shaheen 2017; Tippett et al. 2014). Such material inequalities between white and BAME people, contribute to differential and poorer educational experiences for the latter group and feed into wider disadvantages that can accrue over the life course and across generations. For example, research has found that neither having educated parents, nor a high economic background, is enough to counter inequalities for Black students in education (Henry, Betancur Cortés, and Votruba-Drzal 2020). The breadth of racism and its cyclical nature through the life course should motivate the university educator to uptake anti-racism actions.

### ***Standpoint racism***

Before acting however, it is important to understand how racism is perpetuated in universities. Critical Race Theory (CRT; Delgado and Stefancic 2017), is an intellectual roadmap for combatting racism as it operates at multiple levels (e.g., institutionally and societally). Whilst CRT came from US legal studies, its accessibility, comprehensiveness, and acknowledgement of the social construction and intersections of ‘race’ has meant it is particularly applicable elsewhere including to the UK (Delgado and Stefancic 2017; D. Gillborn and Ladson-Billings 2010). . Key tenets or components from CRT guiding this work are outlined below. One central component is the acknowledgement that people (and educators specifically), have standpoints or biographies, that are likely to directly inform the research, teaching and practises that they produce. For instance, a white male educator is unlikely to have epistemic knowledge or direct, personal, experience of sexism or racism leaving him more likely to minimize both (Tate 2014). Similarly, whilst BAME people do not have a singular essentialized experience of the world, their experience of racism will mean that they are more likely to be aware of and resistant to its polluting, pernicious effects, in the

psychological work and teaching they produce (D. Gillborn and Ladson-Billings 2010; Delgado and Stefancic 2017). Given universities are predominately white spaces (particularly at senior levels; NUS and Universities UK 2019), white educators may deploy perspectives on the world that are neither neutral nor apolitical but rather reproduce or minimize racism (Haraway, 1991).

### ***Curricula racism***

The practices of educators can be seen in the ‘official’ curricula<sup>2</sup> they set, as highlighted by the calls for curriculum decolonization i.e., the challenge for curricula to represent people and issues from around the world and to uptake an anti-racist stance (Du Bois 1935; Owusu-Bempah and Howitt 1994; Peters 2015). For example, curricula have tended to ‘whitewash’ the past, where racism such as colonialism and slavery are either ignored or benevolently framed (e.g., Du Bois 1935; Dart, 2015). Demonstrably, the authors of one 2017 Texan history textbook described slavery “*as a pattern of immigration where African workers came to North America*” (Dart 2015; ). Such phrasing denies the facts that people were enslaved, that they did not emigrate but were forcibly kidnapped and that this was not a pattern of immigration but a violent human rights atrocity.

A racist curriculum can result in a poor understanding of racism. Various experts have documented how the educational sector produces an individualized understanding of racism (Henriques 1984; Reed Jr. 2008). This individualization implies any group can experience racism and that individual action is the most important means of ending it (Crenshaw 2006; Reed Jr. 2008;). Other research has found that university students can individualize

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<sup>2</sup> Curricula can be defined in various ways with scholars distinguishing between the official curricula largely content taught in core modules and core readings, to more peripheral curricula such as that within elective modules and supplementary readings to the ‘hidden’ curricula focusing on the assumptions and underlying ideologies embedded within curricula but largely unnamed (Gravestock 2006; Jay 2003). We focused on the official curricula as this was judged to be the most impactful whilst immediately accessible avenue for curricula decolonization for this project.

racism and be confused about its extent (Jankowski 2021) and that BAME students are particularly alienated by curricula including by the ideological assumptions transmitted such as implicit denial of the full humanity of Black people (e.g., NUS 2012). Pragmatically, these findings speak to the whiteness of curricula.

### ***Psychology's racism and sexism***

Psychology is a noteworthy example of a white dominated discipline (including its educators) practising racism. Quantitative content analyses of popular psychology journal articles show the samples, editors and authors (93-97%) tend to be from the Global North<sup>1</sup> especially North America and Western Europe (Arnett 2008; Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010; Veillard 2017). Arnett notes that psychology has neglected people globally (the 'neglected 95%') and advocates psychology should rename its journals to be more transparent about this (e.g., *Developmental Psychology of Americans*). Heinrich and colleagues (2010) demonstrated that classical psychological effects do not translate across populations and are not universally generalizable. Further, that the Global Northerner samples studied were the least generalizable group of humans that psychology could study. Veillard (2017) importantly demonstrated that even the samples in cross-cultural psychology, the subdiscipline professing to remove psychology from Global Northern dominance, still had this bias (showing 97% of the participants were from the Global North in popular cross-cultural psychology journals).

In support of CRT (Delgado and Stefancic 2017; Haraway 1991) the typically white standpoints of psychologists (noted above) has influenced the work produced and the viewpoints promoted in psychology. For example, the explicit racism of prominent white psychologists such as Charles Spearman, Philippe Rushton, Francis Aveling, Francis Galton, Hans Eysenck, and Raymond Cattell is well documented. Cattell, for example, wrote in 1987 that immigrants' "*unfortunate [racial] combinations [caused their] higher crime and insanity*

rates” (Tucker n.d., para. 11). Likert (1932) was the creator of the quantitative response ‘Likert’ scale, still widely used. To validate the scale, he asked his white, American participants the following questions: “*Would most negroes, if not held in their place, become officious, overbearing, and disagreeable? Yes/No*” (1932, p. 18) and “*How far in our educational system (aside from trade education) should the most intelligent negroes be allowed to go?*” Rushton’s work provides another example of psychology’s racism. This was uncritically published in the *British Psychological Society’s* (BPS’) flagship journal in 1990 and was designed to show that Black people were inferior including by having lower levels of “*marital stability, law abidingness [and] intelligence*” (Rushton, 1990, p. 196). Other work of these prominent psychologists is still used in mainstream psychology texts today.

Beyond the documented explicit examples above and the wider scientific racism these psychologists have helped propagate (for overviews see: Tucker n.d.; Guthrie 2003;), psychology has contributed to racism in other ways. One example is Drapetomania, a proposed ‘mental disorder’ given to Black slaves who resisted slavery (including by attempting to free themselves; Guthrie 2003). Further, evidence has emerged that shows Black people who participated in civil rights activism, during the 1960s, were forcibly incarcerated by white psychiatrists who would diagnose them as schizophrenics who are “[*irrationally*] *paranoid against [their] doctors and the police*” (Metzl 2011). Indeed, Martin Luther King Jr. (King 1963) himself criticized psychology directly for pathologizing Black people’s rational responses to systematic racism. More recently, psychology has been criticized for failing to serve BAME people in clinical psychology (e.g., Myers and Speight 2010), community psychology (Dutta 2018) and social psychology (Kessi and Kiguwa 2015). In particular, for failing to provide culturally sensitive therapy, pathologizing BAME communities as socially ‘broken’ and stripping BAME individuals from consciousness about the structures that heavily influence their success and wellbeing (Dutta 2018). As Tucker

(n.d., para. 23) notes, psychology's relationship to racism should be viewed not as "*guilt by association here but guilt by [enthusiastic] collaboration*".

A further tenet of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic 2017) is that racism's entrenchment across society means it can *hide in plain sight*. Therefore, making racism visible is needed before making it vulnerable. Yet in-depth analyses of psychology curricula are scarce. The few studies that have explored this document a dominance of men and white people in psychology textbooks (e.g., Owusu-Bempah and Howitt 1994; Gray 1988; Conti and Kimmel 1993). For example, Owusu-Bempah and Howitt (1994) analysed a popular 'Introducing Psychology' textbook highlighting how it often used racist stereotypes when discussing Global Southern cultures; implying the behaviour of people from these cultures was deviant, tribal and animalistic. Conti and Kimmel systematically analysed the most popular 11 developmental psychology textbooks from 1992 finding a dearth of information on women and particularly BAME people. Just 25 mentions of BAME people were found across the 11 textbooks (consisting of 1-2 paragraphs or less in each mention) and two of the textbooks omitted any mention of BAME people at all. This left BAME women being mentioned in the 11 textbooks just 3 times. Finally, Gray documented an absence of BAME people in the photographs of introducing psychology textbooks.

Others have argued psychology's curricula directly produces a poor theoretical understanding of racism. As an example, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979) was originally hoped to be a progressive intervention in psychology by focusing on the 'social' of social psychology and reconceptualising racism from an unconscious by-product of those with authoritarian personalities to the product of tensions between different groups of people (Henwood 1994). Nonetheless, the theory's application to date has failed to identify the power imbalances that exist between different groups whilst implying that tension between groups is inherent and natural (Henriques 1984; Henwood 1994; Leach 2002). In



other words, this theory and its application treats racism as an interpersonal system rather than a structural one that requires structural challenges (Delgado and Stefancic 2017), a reflection of social psychology's failure to live up to its anti-racist potential more broadly (Kessi and Kiguwa 2015). In general, the BPS accreditation that sets psychology curricula in the UK does not mention 'race' or racism at all (BPS 2019). This means in practise psychology educators are free to either individualize racism, omit racism entirely or indeed, perpetuate racism via scientific racist psychological content (Tucker n.d). Psychology's curricula can be summed up best then by the words of Flaherty (2016; 22 as cited in Dutta 2018): as systematically "*undervaluing the work, intelligence, and experience of people of color*".

Another relevant tenet of CRT is its acknowledgement that racism intersects with other inequalities (Crenshaw 1991). Notably, feminists have long challenged psychology's sexism including Freudian depictions of women as penis envying, inverted men (Nolan & O'Mahony, 1987), psychologists' use of sexist language (Campbell and Schram 1995), or psychology's predominately men only samples (e.g., Rao & Donaldson 2015). Relatedly, despite women outnumbering men at the 'lower' tiers of psychology (e.g., at undergraduate level), men vastly outnumber women in the higher echelons (e.g., at professorial level; APA's Center for Workforce Studies 2014; Press Association 2016). It is therefore important to be aware of not only racism in universities and psychology, but also sexism and its intersection with racism (where BAME women may be doubly disadvantaged).

### ***Calls for curricula decolonization***

CRT (Delgado & Stefancic 2017) proponents are not content to highlight racism alone, but aligning with activists, wish to challenge it too. In Bell's (Bell 1995, 493) words: "*We believe that standards and institutions created by and fortifying white power ought to be resisted*". Fittingly various anti-racist investigations have recommended curriculum

decolonization (NUS 2012; NUS and Universities UK 2019; Jessop and Williams 2009).

These recommendations reflect wider student-led campaigns such as ‘Why Is My Curriculum white’ and ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ (e.g., Peters 2015). Such campaigns have arisen from a long history of critique across different disciplines (history, philosophy, art, English literature etc). For example, more than 80 years ago, sociologist DuBois challenged history curriculums in 1930s America for their racist depiction of Black people (Du Bois 1935).

The need to quantifiably assess progress on curricula change is paramount to avoid the tendency to condemn racism without enacting any changes that might actually counter it (Chakelian 2020). This problem has a long history within the UK. For example, the much lauded 2017 governmentally commissioned review into UK workplace racism (MacGregor-Smith 2017) was found, at a later evaluation, to have been almost entirely ignored. Just 1 of the 14 anti-racist workplace goals set by the investigation improved, 12 stagnated and 1 regressed (Kerr 2018). Such is the danger of curricula change being ignored, reports by the NUS and Universities UK (2019 32) have attempted to counter universities’ excuses for inaction in advanced, for example by urging universities to not “*us[e] data limitations as an excuse not to push ahead*”. Indeed, quantifiable data can be used to continually and concretely measure progress over time.

### ***Current study aims***

The current study aimed to assess whether a targeted Curriculum Diversification project within one university department led to concrete, quantifiable, curricula change. The objective was to quantitatively assess the white, Globally Northern, androcentrism within a British Higher Education BSc psychology curriculum before (2015) and three years after the project began (2019). More specifically, in line with Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2017), we quantitatively analysed the standpoints of curricula authors by assessing

the probable gender, 'race' and nationality of the authors of key readings before- and after- the project implementation.

## **Method**

### ***Project details: Psychology Decolonization project***

The project began in 2016 and primarily urged curriculum designers to decolonize their reading lists as well as their teaching content through the inclusion of more anti-racist and BAME authored work. This was contextualized by data on racism (including within higher education) and the various investigations that recommended curriculum decolonization as one way of combatting this (NUS 2012; NUS and Universities UK 2019). The project received funding from the institution's Centre for Learning and Teaching twice for £2,500 which paid for a research assistant, books and participant incentives. We aimed to consult widely with the institution (e.g., by working with the Staff Race Equality Forum members and holding open project meetings). The curricula resources and guidance we provided can be summarized as:

- Curricula resources: We set up a public archive of work by BAME psychologists and/or on anti-racism at [www.bmepsychology.com](http://www.bmepsychology.com). We also purchased relevant books on racism and created a department specific 'bookshelf'.
- Staff training and awareness raising: We promoted decolonization via staff training workshops, other internal events and via periodic emails. When the course was re-accredited in 2018, we suggested implementing a new course outcome, i.e., 'for students to understand psychology as it pertains to the global population'.
- Teaching support: We gave guest lectures on racism, and we also developed anti-racist teaching materials, both of which could be embedded in existing modules.

## ***Materials***

To measure the possible impact of the Curricula Diversification Project on set curricular content, all but one of the core module handbooks from the BPS accredited BSc Psychology (Hons) course of the 2015/16 (pre) and the 2019/2020 (post) academic years were analysed (one staff member requested their 2015 module not be analysed; see Table 1).

***Procedure: Coding***

We counted the number of materials listed as essential or supplementary reading in each core module across both the 2015 and 2019 cohorts. Materials included textbooks, book chapters, journal articles, podcasts and online videos. Access to electronic databases and search engines enabled us to look beyond the specific reading lists to publicly available information about the authors (e.g., other publications, author profiles and professional networks) before making reasonable conclusions about each author’s identity (‘race’, gender and nationality), as expressions given or given off (in the words of Goffman; 1956). For the module handbooks, some authors were listed multiple times either through authoring multiple materials set or where the same material was set across different modules. Each duplicate of the author was treated as a new instance given this is another instance in which a student will be reading work from that person’s standpoint. If an online source was available to inform the coding it was noted.

<i>Table 1. Codes, levels and definitions used to code author’s likely demographic details.</i>	
No.	Identifiers
1)	‘Race’: Author is: 1a) Identifiably white; 1b) Likely white– no image or biographical details of author’s available however psychologist has a typically Globally Northern name, psychologist’s work does not obviously focus on the Global South

	<p>or anti-racism, psychologist writes in English and is based in a Globally Northern institution; 1c) Identifiably Black; 1d) Identifiably Asian; 1e) Likely BAME- no image or biographic details of psychologist available however psychologist has a typically Globally Southern name and author is based in a Globally Southern institution 1f) Unknown – no biographical or visual information can be determined about the psychologist.</p>
2)	<p>Gender: Author is: 2a) A man –descriptions of author uses male pronouns (“he/him”) and author’s physical appearance has typically male features such as short hair, larger forehead, hair recession, no makeup and name is typically male; 2b) A woman –descriptions of author uses female pronouns (“she/her”) and physical appearance has typically female features such as long hair, smaller forehead, no hair recession, make up and name is typically female; 2c) Unknown – lack of biographical or visual data available to code identifiable gender.</p>
3)	<p>Nationality: Author is 3a) Globally Northern – biographical data indicates authors’ nationality is based in either Australasia, North America or Europe (Macleod, Bhatia, and Liu (n.d.); 3b) Globally Southern – biographical data indicates author’s nationality originates from Africa, South America or Asia; 3d) Unknown – no nationality information is available.</p>
4)	<p>Author’s name.</p>
5)	<p>Key information of the material authored (e.g., title, year published; for curriculum analysis only)</p>

6)	Online source's URL that the coding was primarily based on
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*Pilot testing and coding development*

Table 1 outlines the coding framework used in the study. All codes were piloted by the first author on one of the module handbooks before coding commenced. After this, temporary code levels were created (e.g., Likely white) and/or the codes were further defined (e.g., on specifying which continents fell into the 'Global North' category). Two research assistants were then trained to complete the rest of the coding for each curriculum, respectively. Once this was completed, all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), Unknown and Likely white codes were double checked by the first author against the internet source link attached (or if coded Unknown the first author checked to see if no verifiable information about the authors biography could be found). Any codes that were not supported were corrected or changed to Unknown. Codes where verifiable information could be obtained were then corrected.

Ten percent of the materials of the 2015 analysis (n = 21) and of the 2019 analysis (n = 32) were randomly selected for formal inter-rater reliability checking by the 3<sup>rd</sup> author. Agreement between raters was high ranging from 90.0% to 100.0%. Due to the uniformity of the coding (the high number of Globally Northern, white authors), the kappa statistic that calculates whether disagreement between two raters is greater than chance has limited utility in such a dataset (Molnar 2015). The very few disagreements that were evident (n = 7/ 240) were largely where an author was originally coded as unknown and then was recoded as 'known' given more or new information was now available.

*Ethics*

As a research team we were mindful that this study carried potentially significant ethical implications. We did not wish to limit the scope of the issue to one single university department. We therefore removed module names and any identifying institutional details wherever possible. We also agreed with the department to not make the data public. Furthermore, we made extensive efforts to consult the institution whose curricula we were analysing and through the project, provide resources and guidance to enact anti-racist change. Finally, we were also mindful of the potential ethical issues in coding. For example, Hylton (2018) warns of the danger of essentialization when drawing quick conclusions about subjects of researchers. BAME psychologists do not inherently differ in outlook or on anything else to their white counterparts. Regarding ‘race’ Hylton (p. 88) states:

*“A methodological word of caution. In drawing such conclusions there is the danger that researchers of ‘race’ may fall into the same traps that they wish to disrupt themselves [...].”*

We therefore stress the proxy nature of the codes: as fallible and only as how a student might see the curricula should they be taught it. Furthermore, that the authors’ standpoint as only potentially influencing the work produced. Ultimately, we follow CRT in resisting colour-blind curricula and in naming racism (Delgado & Stefancic 2017), to extend the words of Bell (1995, 493), *“revolutionizing a [psychology curricula], begins with the radical assessment of it”*. Quantitative research can provide a meaningful challenge to racism, if it follows key CRT-tenets such as acknowledgement of the intersectional nature of racism, the need to name racism and the benefit of substantiating this with qualitative work (S. Gillborn et al. 2021) Ethical approval was granted for this study by the departmental ethics committee (01-MAY-20).

## Results

### *The 2015 curriculum*

In total, in the 2015 curriculum, 202 materials were set across the modules analysed, ranging from 0 to 89. The numbers of authors or co-authors was 348. The average number of materials set (excluding those of one unusually high third year module;  $N = 89$ ), was 9.4 ( $SD = 7.6$ ).

White men made up most of the authors ( $N = 209$ ; 60%). White women made up a third ( $N = 120$ ; 35%). There were eight (2%) BAME men authors and three (1%) BAME women authors. This was fewer than the number of authors whose gender or 'race' could not be identified ( $N = 8$ ; 2%).

Most authors were Global Northerners (European, Australasian or North American;  $N = 330$ ; 95%). Eleven (3%) authors were Global Southerners (South American, Asian or African) and seven (2%) were by authors whose nationality was not identifiable. Of the eleven Global Southern authors (South American, Asian or African), two were white South Africans (Kevin Durrheim and Victor Finkelstein) and three were Israelis likely of European descent (Amia Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach and Tammar Zilber). There were therefore only six authors who were BAME and Globally Southern.

### *The 2019 curriculum and change between the two curriculums*

In the 2019 curricula, 304 materials were set across the modules analysed, ranging from 0 to 85. The number of authors that authored or co-authored the materials numbered was 599. The average number of materials set, excluding those of one unusually high third year module ( $N = 85$ ), was 22.5 ( $SD = 23.3$ ). This represented an increase on the 2015/16 curriculum of 102 materials by 215 authors or co-authors.



White men made up half of the authors on the course (N = 323; 54%). White women made up a third (N = 240; 40%). There were twelve (2%) authors who were BAME men and five (1%) who were BAME women. This was again fewer than the number of authors whose gender or 'race' could not be identified (N = 19; 3%). The first Chi-square analysis showed no significant changes between the two curricula with regards to 'race' and gender ( $\chi^2(3) = 3.95, p = .267, Cramer's V = .07$ ; with BAME men and BAME women collapsed due to low expected cell counts). This meant the proportion of authors who were white men, white women, BAME and unknown did not change over time.

There were 564 (94%) Global Northern authors and 6 (1%) authors whose nationality could not be determined. The twenty-nine (5%) remaining authors were Global Southerners (South American, Asian or African). Four of these authors were white South Africans or white Namibians (Kevin Durrheim, Derek Hook, Victor Finkelstein and Jacoba Van der Vyver), ten were Argentinians likely of European descent (Isaac Prilleltensky<sup>3</sup> and Tamar Chamorro-Premuzic) and five were Israelis likely of European descent (Amia Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach, Tammar Zilber and Andrea Berger). There were only ten authors who were BAME and Globally Southern. The second Chi-square analysis showed no significant changes between the two curricula with regards to nationality ( $\chi^2(1) = 1.46, p = .226, Cramer's V = .04$ ; with unknown nationality authors excluded due to low cell expected cell counts). This also meant the proportion of authors who were Global Northerners, Global Southerners and Unknown did not change over time.

### ***The number of authors named Johns and the number of BAME authors***

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<sup>3</sup> As mentioned, authors who were set multiple times in the course were counted as separate instances for example, Isaac Prilleltensky was set nine times and Andrea Berger was set twice which somewhat inflated the number of Globally Southern authors counted.

Full details of every identifiably BAME author in both curriculums is presented in Table 2 (notably four of the BAME authors co-authored a single paper). Constraints of space prevent the presentation of the white authors' details as there were so many. Nonetheless it is important to confront just how many more White male authors made up the curriculum compared to BAME authors. A useful way to do this is to compare the number of people who are White, male and named John/Jon to the number of people who are BAME, any gender and of any name (as similar analyses have done; Castro and Collins 2021). Therefore, as a comparison for the BAME authors, Table 3 presents details of the white men authors named John/Jon (n = 32) who outnumbered BAME authors of any name or any gender (n = 19).

*Table 2. Details of authors from materials across the two BSc Psychology Hons Course (co)authored by an identifiably BAME person (N = 19)*

Curriculum	Number	Surname	First name	'Race'	Gender	Nationality
2015	1	Teo	Thomas	Asian	Man	Globally Northern
Both	2	Lee	Kyungwha	Asian	Woman	Korean
	3	Goswami	Usha	Asian	Woman	Likely British
	4	Mama	Amina	Black	Woman	Nigerian-British
	5	Saravanan	Balasubramania m J	Asian	Man	Indian
	6	Bughra	Dinesh	Asian	Man	Indian

	7	Deepak	M G	Asian	Unknow n	Indian
	8	Jacob	K S	Asian	Man	Indian
	9 - 10	Owusu- Bempah	Kwame	Black	Man	Ghanian
	11	Gonzalez	Robbie	BAM E	Man	American
	12	Moghadda m	Fathali M	Likely BAM E	Man	Iranian
2019	13	Lam	Virginia	BAM E	Female	Likely British
	14	Owens	Darice	BAM E	Female	Likely American
	15	Capote	Kailani	BAM E	Female	Likely American
	16	Steele	Claude	Black	Male	American
	17	Duarte	Jose	BAM E	Male	American
	18	Omaar	Rageh	Black	Male	British
	19	Rosario	Vernon	BAM E	Male	American

Notes. Numbers correspond to BAME author. (a) indicates detail of the material they authored or co-authored that was set in the BSc course. (b) indicates URL address or other details from which author demographic details primarily obtained at the time of data analysis.

- (a) (2009) Chapter 3: 'Philosophical Concerns in Critical Psychology'. In. D. Fox, I. Prilleltensky & S. Austin (eds.) *Critical Psychology: An Introduction (Second Edition)*. London: Sage. (b) <http://www.yorku.ca/teo/index/Professional.html>
- (a) (2000) *Childhood Cognitive Development: the Essential Readings*. Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell (b) <http://www.palgrave.com/br/book/9781137031136#aboutAuthors>
- (a) (2002) *Blackwell Handbook of Childhood Cognitive Development*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell (b) <http://www.csap.cam.ac.uk/network/usha-goswami/>
- (a) (1995) *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity*. London: Routledge. (b) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amina\\_Mama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amina_Mama)
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- (a) as above. (b) <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/news/records/2014/September/Prof-Dinesh-Bhugra-begins-Presidency-of-World-Psychiatric-Association.aspx>
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Table 3. *Details of authors from materials across the two BSc Psychology Hons Course (co)authored by an identifiably white, man named John or Jon (N =32).*

Curriculum	No	Surname	First name	'Race'	Gender	Nationality
2015	1 - 2	Cromby	John	White	Man	Globally Northern
	3	Potter	Jonathan	White	Man	British
Both	4	Kremer	John	White	Man	British
	5 - 8	Pinel	John	White	Man	Globally Northern
	9	Maltby	John	White	Man	Globally Northern
	10	Oates	John	White	Man	Globally Northern
	11	Daniels	John	White	Man	British
	12 - 14	Smith	Jonathan	White	Man	Globally Northern
2019	15	Smith	Jonathan	White	Man	Globally Northern
	16	Rich	John	White	Man	American

17	Jost	John	White	Man	American
18	Brown	Jonathon	White	Man	American
19	Ruscio	John	White	Man	American
20 - 29	Stirling	John	White	Man	British
30	Winkler	John	White	Man	American
31	Swain	John	White	Man	American
32	Cooper	John	White	Man	Globally Northern

Notes. Numbers correspond to white, men authors named Jon/John. (a) indicates detail of the material they authored or co-authored that was set in the BSc course. (b) indicates URL address or other details from which author demographic details primarily obtained at the time of data analysis.

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## Discussion

Our simple analysis has highlighted one iteration of white and Global Northern androcentrism in a modern, British, psychology curriculum in 2016 and, three years later, in 2019. Across the materials set, there was a dearth of BAME authors and authors in the Global South. This intersected with a gender bias (where most authors were identifiably men)

meaning there were just eight identifiably BAME women authors in both curriculums out of a possible 947. Such was the scale of this dominance that there were more white, male authors named Jon/John than there were BAME authors of any gender, of any name, in both curriculums. This concrete, quantitative analysis shows the dominance does not just exist in the samples of psychological research or on editorial boards (Veillard 2017; Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010; Arnett 2008) or in psychology textbooks (e.g., Owusu-Bempah and Howitt 1994; Gray 1988; Conti and Kimmel 1993) but in the reading lists of psychology modules too.

As mentioned, CRT (Delgado & Stefaniec 2017) is not content to just highlight racism but to challenge it too (Bell 1995, 493). Our targeted project was designed to transform the curriculum over the three years. Over the 3-year period, there was an increase in materials set meaning the curriculum did change: it grew. Despite this increase, the additional materials were not from BAME or Globally Southern authors. Meaning our attempts to challenge the curriculum failed.

It is possible that the department decolonized the curricula in ways hidden to our quantitative analysis. A quantitative analysis is limited in assessing such changes especially changes to the content, format or detail of the curricula beyond quantifiable author identities (these limitations are further discussed below). However, there were other indications of staff resistance to curriculum decolonization that supported the quantitative analysis (such as module leaders readily dropping guest lectures on racism and that the Curriculum Decolonization bookshelf had just one staff member ‘borrow’ a book since it was created). Nonetheless, it is important to note some of the anti-racist steps the department did take. This included the department allowing the first author to develop an elective module on institutional racism which ran during the 2018-2019 year; the department already having a long-standing elective on the psychology of women, and the curricula addressing

psychology's scientific racism and Western bias in some pockets of some modules. Furthermore, two core modules incorporated teaching materials designed to promote an understanding of the social construction of 'race' and the impact of racism and two elective modules included a guest lecture on racism. There are important pockets of anti-racism on the curricula, some of which existed long prior to the project's inception and which, arguably, show a greater anti-racist curricula commitment relative to other more 'mainstream' UK psychology courses.

Nonetheless, even if curriculum decolonization occurred in other ways noted above and hidden from this analysis, the failure to set authors who are BAME, women and Globally Southern as reading is itself a failure given representation is important and given there may be a certain authority in the authors we choose to select as readings for our students relative to the authors whose work is included in our teaching in other, less concrete, ways. The lack of quantifiable and concrete change may reflect a tendency to support anti-racism in theory but a failure to take concrete steps required to sustainability embed it. Our findings reflect a wider 'lip service' paid to anti-racism including by the UK government. Specifically, where various investigations highlighting racism are commended, but the steps needed to combat racism are ignored (e.g., Chakelian 2020).

### ***Limitations of the current research***

Our analysis was quantitative. As mentioned, researchers have shown the value of qualitatively assessing curricula decolonization (Owusu-Bempah and Howitt 1994; Conti and Kimmel 1993). Further qualitative research is needed e.g., research that explores the processes around curricula development and that assess the way students are and are not impacted by such curricula. This research is also substantiated with focus groups with psychology students (S. Gillborn et al. 2021) and surveys with UK higher education staff about curriculum decolonization (Sandle et al. in prep.). Relatedly, the codes in this study are

imperfect. For instance, there are meaningful differences of power, experience and discrimination between BAME people with some seeing the ‘BAME’ moniker as unhelpfully obscuring these (Sandhu 2018). Furthermore, there are substantial power differences within ‘Globally Northern’ authors such as between Eastern European and Western European authors. Authors may be disadvantaged otherwise in curriculums through ableism, homophobia, class or simply because their work does not conform to the dominant epistemologies of psychology. None of these biases were the focus of our quantitative analysis. We therefore want to stress that our codes are proxies of a white, Global Northern, androcentrism only and to encourage more sophisticated intersectional research in future.

### *Envisioning a decolonial curricula*

There is a need to decolonize the curriculum but also there is a danger of a reactive curricula change. To avoid this, curricula reform should not essentialise BAME and/or women authors. Though there are real benefits to their inclusion (e.g., students who see a diverse faculty may be less likely to fall out of a ‘leaky racial and gendered pipeline’; NUS and Universities UK 2019) we must think about how broader concerns of ontology, epistemology and methodology play out within this diversity as noted by others (Arnett 2008; Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010;). It does not do due credit to the students we teach to insert work into our curricula for the sake of an author’s demographic details. This could lead to the tokenistic insertion of decolonized content alongside ‘colonized’ content, implying both approaches are equally valid and that it is up to the student to select the one in which they wish to learn from (Brookfield 2007). Indeed, there is a need to focus efforts more on the ‘colonized’ or Global North curriculum to undo the entrenched assumptions it implants including rampant individualization. Only then can decolonized knowledges flourish (McGregor and Park 2019) after a substantive engagement with decolonized work, one which is not so narrow a reform as to ignore psychology’s and higher education’s wider impact. More specifically, Jay (2003)



is concerned to note that a ‘diverse curriculum’ can often be implemented *in order to* ensure the core values and perspectives provided by former dominant curricula are maintained, such as through Global Northern Higher Education’s increasing neo-colonial internationalization (McGregor and Park 2019; Lockett, Hayes, and Stein 2020).

### ***Academics as the barrier to decolonization***

Clearly attempts to decolonize can fail and/or be limited (Lockett, Hayes, and Stein 2020; Vandeyar 2019; Brookfield 2007). Vandeyar (2019, 5) provides a particularly useful framework to understand failures of decolonization in the context of South African Higher Education. She notes that three potential barriers to decolonization exist: the content, the learner and the teacher. For our project, we believe the content was available. It is wrong to assume that anti-racist and Global Southern work in psychology does not exist. It does (e.g., Guthrie 2003; Myers and Speight 2010; Owusu-Bempah and Howitt 2000; Rowe 2013). In brief, Myers and Speight (2010), Rowe (2013) and Guthrie (2003) give especially useful historical overviews of psychology’s racism as well as outlining innovations in psychology that have resisted this (including prominent Black American psychologists, transnational psychology and the work done by the African Psychology Institute and Black Psychology). Schmidt (2019) also usefully reviews Canadian psychology’s attempt to indigenize its curricula so that it is as accessible to Indigenous students as it is to white Canadian students, acknowledges the violence of Canadian colonization and recognizes the value of Indigenous knowledge in meeting the goals of psychology. We made strenuous efforts to make this available to staff both virtually and physically. Furthermore, curricula accreditation guidance does allow for the use of decolonized content. For example, the UK’s BPS is explicit in stating that their guidance’s purpose is to “*allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design*” (QAA 2016 2) but anti-racism can also be included through the BPS’ inclusion of the following subtopics “*diversity*”, “*social constructionism*”, “*identity*” and “*culture*” (BPS

2017, 11). This is recognition that notions of ‘objectivity’, ‘detachment’ and ‘race/gender neutrality’ no longer hold a central stage in the psychological field. To sum, the barrier to curriculum decolonization in psychology is not a lack of content.

The second potential barrier to curriculum decolonization identified by Vandeyar (2019) is the student. For our project, we believe students are in general supportive of decolonization both at the institution concerned and more broadly. Our own research with BAME students from the department and other social sciences courses suggested so (S. Gillborn et al. 2021) Indeed, the students incorrectly believed it was not their place to feedback on curricula to staff and furthermore significantly underestimated the ability staff had to set curricula believing curricula setting was much more prescriptive than it was. Other evidence of student support for curriculum decolonization also exists. For example, Jankowski (2021) has found that 97% of 395 UK university students surveyed (54% White) believe universities should ‘ensure curriculum diversification’. Finally, student led campaigns and advocacy also suggest support for it (NUS 2012; NUS and Universities UK 2019; Peters 2015). In sum then neither content nor students appear to be the barriers to curriculum decolonization.

The third potential barrier to decolonization, according to Vandeyar (2019, 5), is academic staff. Our own experience running the project and findings from our anonymous survey of UK staff (Sandle et al. in prep.) have found a vocal minority of staff have several fears around curriculum decolonization. This includes that it is racist to White authors, that it is inappropriate to name ‘race’ (instead believing curricula setting should be colour-blind) and that there is a lack of resources to implement decolonization. We concur with Vandeyar (2019, 5) then in identifying the academic as the Achille’s heel of curriculum decolonization both here and elsewhere.

The fears espoused by staff should be easily resolved. Resources for curriculum decolonization *are* abundant, reflecting authors that are representative of a global population of men and women *is not* racist to White authors, challenging racism *includes* naming ‘race’. However as Gillborn and Ladson-Billings (2010, 41) note: “*a rational negotiation between minoritized groups and White power holders, where change is achieved through the mere force of reason and logic [is unrealistic]*”. Given the department’s failure to decolonize the curriculum, despite our targeted, well-funded and constructive project, we believe academic organizational bodies, overseeing accreditation themselves (such as the BPS), should act. CRT’s (Delgado and Stefancic 2017) concept of interest convergence provides an answer here. In analysing US civil rights victories, theorists have noted that these typically occurred after White people believed that universal voting or education desegregation was more beneficial to themselves than was continuing to suppress Black civil protest. We feel the BPS and other accrediting bodies (such as the APA) should act and specifically go further than releasing statements in support of curriculum decolonization (e.g., “[*programmes should offer more culturally and socially diverse perspectives in their teaching and learning*”]; (BPS 2020). We believe the BPS and others should consider providing accreditation only to those courses that decolonize their curriculum. This will then ensure curriculum decolonization aligns with staff interests, who will be interested in continuing to teach on accredited courses. The BPS must be aware that professed commitments to decolonization from staff may not ‘bear fruit’. We must not forget a year or three, may not seem long in an academic’s career. But for many students, three years can be their entire formal education in psychology. How much longer must they wait?

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