Introduction to the Minitrack on Decolonizing Technology and Society

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Abstract

Contemporary information systems research is often dominated by Western perspectives. This dominance underscores a need for diverse research methodologies that challenge these entrenched viewpoints. Our minitrack addresses this by showcasing research focused on decolonization, emphasizing decolonial viewpoints through local epistemologies, Indigenous theories, and methodologies. By incorporating these diverse perspectives, we provide valuable insights for information systems researchers on how decolonial approaches to technology and society can effectively combat oppression. This work not only fosters a more diverse and inclusive society but also inspires further exploration and dialogue. Through this emphasis on decoloniality, we aim to pave the way for a more equitable and comprehensive field of study.

Keywords: decoloniality, decolonization, demarginalization, ethics.

1. Introduction

Decolonial inquiry is essential for advancing Information Systems (IS) research, as the field is predominantly influenced by Western epistemological frameworks (Chughtai, 2023a). Ignoring the impact of colonial legacies on technology can perpetuate power imbalances and result in knowledge that favors dominant perspectives. By incorporating decolonial thinking and methodologies, IS research can become more inclusive and relevant to diverse global communities (Chughtai & Myers, 2023b). This approach emphasizes the importance of recognizing the agency of marginalized groups in using and adapting technology for their empowerment and challenges dominant viewpoints in knowledge production.

Building on this foundation, our minitrack invited scholars to explore decoloniality in information systems, challenging colonial legacies in the digital society and envisioning decolonial futures.

We encouraged theorizing and developing decolonized technologies at all levels. Topics of interest ranged from decoloniality and critical race issues in technology, to decolonizing gender, sex, curriculum, and higher education through technology. Our call covered decolonial approaches to technology design, data colonialism, data justice, digital activism in decolonial contexts, and the application of decolonial methods, theories, and local philosophies.

We received 3 submissions on diverse topics. After a thorough review, we accepted one of these papers.

The paper is by Camen Teh and is titled "Grappling with Colonial Forces: Exploring the Use of Social Media Among Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Practitioners in China." It explores the use of social media among Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu practitioners in China, focusing on the power imbalances present in the online communication spaces of the play (Chughtai, 2021; Chughtai 2014a, 2014b). Camen Teh argues that the sport's history and development reflect colonial and postcolonial forces, with dominant communities in Brazil and the United States shaping knowledge flow and practices. The study utilizes a decolonial perspective to examine how Chinese BJJ practitioners navigate these power dynamics using social media features, including mimicry and the danmaku commenting system on the popular Chinese video-sharing platform Bilibili. The author suggests that Chinese practitioners find agency in reposting and adapting Western content, creating a unique space for learning and community building within their own cultural context.

We believe that our minitrack contribution will be a valuable resource for both emerging and experienced researchers. By critically emphasizing decoloniality, we hope this track will continue to pave the way for more in-depth and critical decolonial research across a variety of topics. This focus on decoloniality aims to enhance our collective understanding and knowledge, inspiring continued exploration and dialogue in the field. Through this effort, we strive to foster a more inclusive and equitable approach to Information Systems research.

2. References

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