

British Journal of Religious Education
Special Issue
Call for Papers

**Decolonising the Religious Education Curriculum:
International Perspectives in Theory, Research, and Practice**

Editorial team

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This Special Issue of the British Journal of Religious Education on **Decolonising the Religious Education Curriculum** aims to advance international and comparative perspectives in theory, research and practice around issues of decolonisation in the curriculum with specific reference to postcolonial discourse.

These debates invariably centre on disputed discourses of power imbalances in cultural and educational influence, institutionally, in curriculum design, in pedagogy. Variant and diverse theories of education present such critiques, and prominent here are Freire (1957), subsequent fields of critical pedagogy (Darder et al. 2016), and posited correlations between knowledge and power pre-eminently delineated by Foucault (1970), Bourdieu (1986), Herman and Chomsky, 1995), and so forth. Postcolonial critiques have here specifically long recognised the critical significance of cultural knowledge as much as economic and military control to the enterprises of colonialism and imperialism (for instance, Bhabha, 1990; 2004; Césaire, 2000; Fanon, 2001; Mishra, 2013; Said, 1994).

Educationally, intense debates rage today in institutions across continents between the colonised and former colonised over the form, content and interpretation of the curriculum. Often framed in terms of ‘decolonising the curriculum’ such debates are live and often inflammatory in Europe as much as say in Africa. An extensive and authoritative review of the decolonising the curriculum literature is presented by the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2017), emanating from protests as of 2015. These are inherently deep level impacts that cannot be limited to any single continent, any type of institution, or indeed any curriculum area or subject. Yet the voice of religious education is here curiously muted. We, as editors of this special issue, believe the complexities of such debates are currently under-examined by scholars and researchers across religion in education, and is deserving of urgent attention from the worldwide religious education community.

Themes that need further addressing include greater emphases in religious education on social and community cohesion; religion and human rights, race, gender equality; migration, immigration and refugee status; freedom of religion and freedom of expression; ideological and religious extremism; counter-extremism and de-radicalization in education; security and counter-terrorism.

Drawing on global perspectives from the northern and southern hemispheres to address issues of cultural definition in the curriculum, particular emphasis will be paid to the complex ways in which notions of decolonising the curriculum have become deeply embroiled in an imperial European and world history. These histories inevitably encompass both traditional narratives of political and military power but also cultural definition and control, particularly in education, across all phases. Debates around colonialism entail, therefore, also notions of security as the debates increasingly feature historical memory and continuing senses of injustice wrought by colonial past and ongoing postcolonial relations as a prominent part of educational and public discourse globally.

The editorial team of the Special Issue are not here taking a particular ideological stance. We recognise that there are many divisive and extreme views, calls even to violence and revolutionary overthrow, within colonial criticism and postcolonial theory, and that the notion of decolonising the curriculum is in itself far from contested. It is perhaps not surprising that debates around this decolonising the curriculum are strongest in the global south, and nowhere perhaps more strongly than in the prominent work of South African religious educators.

The Special Issue marks a genuine and timely opportunity - an urgent necessity rather than merely opportunistic - to provide a scholar- and research-informed religious education impact to these debates around decolonising the curriculum. Decolonising the curriculum is not either restricted to any age phase of type of institution, private or public, and impacts early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education sectors.

In addition to invited contributions, this call for papers invites contributions from scholars and researchers, policy-makers and practitioners from a range of disciplinary perspectives working within and beyond religion in education, where religious education intersects with:

- Colonial and postcolonial theory applied to religious education
- Colonialism and post-coloniality as antecedent and ongoing elements in counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and de-radicalization in religious education
- Comparative and international studies on religion in education
- Curriculum studies in the humanities, including but not limited to history, literature, philosophy and theology - for new cross-disciplinary insights on colonialism and religious education
- Critical theory, including but not limited to environmental activism, feminism, gender studies in religious education
- Postcoloniality, religious education and securitisation theory
- Colonialism, ideological and religious extremism in religious education
- Cross-phase teachers, researchers and policy-makers in religious education - early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education

Theoretical and empirical contributions are welcomed.

Revisiting and building on some of the foundational work specific here to postcolonial theory, human rights and religious education – for example, Gearon (2001) ‘The Imagined Other: Postcolonial Theory and Religious Education’ and Gearon (2002) ‘Human Rights and Religious Education: Some Postcolonial Perspectives’ in the *BJRE* – the Special Issue aims to place the *British Journal of Religious Education* at the forefront of important debates about the role of religion and education in postcolonial context.

- Submission of abstracts (paper proposals): 30th September 2019
- Announcement of accepted abstracts: 31st October 2019
- Full papers from authors due: 29th February 2020
- Feedback from editors on full papers submitted by authors: 30th April 2020
- Deadline to receive revised papers from authors: 31st July 2020
- Anticipated publication in *BJRE* (online): 30th September 2020

Guidelines to authors for proposal submission

Name and Contacts

Full name, title and affiliation of the first author and up to three additional authors or contributors, along with a complete mailing address, contact information and primary discipline/area of work for each

Title of proposed chapter

Please indicate the title of your paper.

Proposal Content

Proposals should explain the paper’s objectives or purpose and ensure that it falls within the call of the paper. Proposals should describe the paper’s conceptual perspectives or theoretical framework, research methods/modes of inquiry (including data sources, evidence and materials), and at least an outline of the paper’s results and/or substantiated conclusions or warrants for arguments/point of view (i.e. main argument). Finally, proposals should present the scholarly significance of the paper.

- Proposal should be no longer than 500 words.
- Full papers should not be more than 6,000 words.
- Send proposals to Dr Liam Gearon (liam.gearon@education.ox.ac.uk), copying in Dr Yonah H. Matemba (religion.education@uws.ac.uk).

For format, style and referencing, please visit *BJRE* website for detailed information: <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=cbre20&page=instructions>