Decolonizing the Mind: Historical Perspectives in a New Era

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Abstract: This research explores the decolonization of the mind from a historical perspective in the new era through a literature review method. Decolonizing the mind attempts to dismantle colonial legacies that still influence the postcolonial era's structure of knowledge, education, and social consciousness. By reviewing relevant academic literature, this research identifies how colonial discourses still dominate and how postcolonial theories attempt to challenge dominant Eurocentric narratives. The results show that despite the formal end of colonialism, many educational institutions and intellectual discourses still operate within a framework that marginalizes non-Western perspectives. This research also highlights the importance of epistemic inclusion and recognition of local knowledge as essential steps in decolonizing the mind. In addition, critiques of existing decolonization approaches are also discussed, particularly about the effectiveness of their implementation in creating real structural change. This research provides significant theoretical contributions and practical insights into how decolonization principles can be applied in various contexts to achieve sustainable transformation in the distribution of knowledge and power.

Kata kunci: decolonization of mind, historical perspective, new era

INTRODUCTION

The decolonization of the mind is a concept that has taken center stage in academic studies and global discourse, especially in this new era marked by increased awareness of colonial legacies and their continuing impact. The concept is rooted in the idea that colonialism impacts physical and economic conquest and how we think, perceive, and understand the world. In the colonial era, education systems and dominant discourses were designed to entrench the dominance of colonial culture, often by downplaying, trivializing, or erasing local or indigenous values, knowledge, and perspectives (Filatova, 2023).

History as an academic discipline has long been dominated by a Eurocentrism perspective, where global historical narratives are often viewed through European experiences and interests. Decolonizing history challenges this dominance by highlighting the interconnections between European history and the histories of formerly colonial territories. Decolonial perspectives emphasize that many of the structures of modernity, including in the political, economic, and cultural spheres, are heavily influenced by colonialism and imperialism. In this context, decolonization of the mind seeks to identify and address the vestiges of colonial thinking in various disciplines and cultural practices (Meghji, 2021).

In recent decades, decolonial theories have influenced various fields of study, including history, sociology, psychology, and education. For example, in the study of psychology, decolonial perspectives challenge psychological constructs that regard individual experiences in Eurocentric modernity as universal standards. It is seen in how decolonial approaches reveal the epistemic violence that occurs through the imposition of modern individualist norms on societies with different lifestyles (Adams et al., 2020). This perspective also shows the importance of considering local cultural contexts in understanding individual psychological development, which is often overlooked in traditional approaches (Bhatia, 2020).

In history, decolonization of the mind demands recognition of the contributions of knowledge from different civilizations, not just European ones. It involves reassessing historical narratives previously ignored or reduced by Eurocentric views. For example, history is often

seen as a story of progress defined by European standards, while the contributions of other civilizations are ignored or downplayed (Copeland et al., 2020).

In this new era, the decolonization movement is limited to academia and various social and cultural life aspects, including art, education, and politics. For example, curriculum decolonization has become a critical topic in education, especially in countries with a long colonial history. It includes integrating non-European perspectives into the curriculum and criticizing and revising educational materials supporting colonial narratives (Behm et al., 2020). The movement has also been adopted in gender studies, where decolonial concepts challenge gender norms dictated by Eurocentric modernity (Tudor, 2021).

Decolonizing the mind also has far-reaching implications for understanding human rights and social justice. Many modern concepts of human rights are derived from colonial history, and there is a need to reassess how these concepts are applied and understood in today's global context. Some scholars argue that to understand and advance human rights truly, we must acknowledge and address the colonial legacy inherent in these frameworks (Eckel, 2010).

Overall, the decolonization of the mind is a complex and multi-dimensional process that demands a change in how we perceive and understand the world. It is about adding new perspectives and overhauling ways of thinking that have long been internalized in global power structures. A key challenge in this process is identifying and overcoming lingering colonial biases and building new knowledge and practices that are more inclusive and just.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to explore the decolonization of the mind from a historical perspective in the new era. A literature review is an essential method in qualitative research because it allows researchers to understand and conceptualize various theories, concepts, and findings from previous research. In the context of decolonizing the mind, the literature reviewed

includes studies that address the impact of colonialism on knowledge structures, education, and social consciousness. The literature also includes works that explore how different societies and academics have attempted to address and dismantle colonial influences in various disciplines.

Literature searches were conducted through major academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest, using keywords such as "decolonization of the mind," "postcolonial theory," "Eurocentrism in history," and "decolonizing education." The studies selected for review included relevant journal articles, books, and book chapters published in the last two decades to ensure that the resulting analysis reflected current discussions and thinking in this area (Filatova, 2023).

The main emphasis of this literature review is on critically analyzing how colonial discourses continue to influence knowledge structures and social institutions in the postcolonial era. For example, in a study conducted by Filatova (2023), it was found that although colonialism has formally ended, many educational institutions and intellectual discourses still operate within Eurocentric frameworks, which often exclude or marginalize perspectives from Third World or Indigenous peoples. In a broader analysis, this literature also highlights how postcolonial theories have been developed to challenge and revise such dominant narratives, focusing on the importance of epistemic inclusion and recognition of local knowledge (Adams et al., 2020).

In addition, this literature review also considers critiques of existing decolonization approaches, which are sometimes accused of focusing only on symbolic or rhetorical aspects without making substantive changes in power structures or the way knowledge is produced and disseminated (Steele, 2018). This critique leads this research to more deeply explore how decolonization of the mind can be applied more concretely in academic and social contexts and how this can impact the distribution of knowledge and power.

During the analysis, the researcher also examines various methodological approaches used in studying the decolonization of the mind. For example, critical ethnography and case study

methods often reveal power dynamics and knowledge practices in institutions dominated by colonial discourses. By comparing these various approaches, this research aims to identify the most effective methods for uncovering and addressing colonial legacies in contemporary contexts (Meghji, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Decolonizing the Mind in the Context of Modern and Postcolonial History: Perspectives and Implementation

Decolonizing the mind is one of the central themes in contemporary academic discussions, particularly in the context of post-colonialism. The concept reflects a systematic effort to dismantle the colonial legacy that has long dominated how we understand and analyze the world in academia and everyday life. Decolonization of the mind focuses on eliminating colonial paradigms that have permeated disciplines such as history, anthropology, sociology, and education. In history, for example, decolonizing the mind challenges dominant narratives that often focus on Eurocentrism perspectives, which glorify European achievements while ignoring the contributions and views of non-Western societies (Filatova, 2023).

In Indonesia, studying the decolonization of the mind has become a significant concern in understanding how colonialism has shaped people's worldviews and ways of thinking. For example, in education studies in Indonesia, the concept reveals how curricula and teaching methods implemented during the colonial period still impact today. Decolonizing the mind in this context seeks to replace this legacy with a more inclusive approach that values and integrates local perspectives and diverse cultures. According to one researcher, the application of decolonization of mind in education is essential not only to change how we teach and learn but also to build a stronger and more independent national identity (Vlok, 2019).

Furthermore, decolonizing the mind is limited to curriculum changes and involves re-understanding global history. This process emphasizes that decolonization should be seen as a political phenomenon that ended colonial domination and as a fundamental cognitive and epistemological change. In the Indonesian context, the research shows that the transition from colonial rule to independence brought political change and changed how people viewed their history and national identity. The research highlights how local historical narratives began to be developed as part of efforts to assert a national identity free from the influence of colonialism (Benda, 1965).

In addition, decolonizing the mind also involves critical reflection on how colonialism has shaped social and political structures in different countries. In Africa, for example, decolonization has been recognized as a crucial moment that ended colonialism politically and began a new period of intellectual development. Studies in Africa show that decolonization is concerned with forming new postcolonial states and with intellectual efforts to break free from the influence of European colonialism that had shaped how people thought for centuries (Bamba, 2023).

In a broader context, the decolonization of the mind has also impacted various other disciplines, including anthropology and sociology. In Indonesia, research has shown that Eurocentric approaches still dominate social and cultural studies, often ignoring local perspectives and traditional knowledge. To decolonize these disciplines, academics in Indonesia have begun to integrate more inclusive approaches, which value the richness of local cultures and knowledge. It is essential to change how we understand society, create more equitable knowledge, and represent human diversity (Steele, 2018).

In addition to changes in academic approaches, decolonization of the mind has also been instrumental in changing how people view their identity and culture. In Indonesia, decolonization of the mind has encouraged people to value their cultural heritage more and to question the dominant narratives that colonial powers have long instilled. It is seen in various social and cultural movements that seek to revive local traditions marginalized by colonial-driven modernization. Decolonizing the mind thus becomes a tool to dismantle colonial legacies and rebuild cultural identities that are

more authentic and rooted in local experiences (Adams et al., 2020).

However, decolonizing the mind can be challenging. Many challenges are faced, including resistance from those who benefit from the status quo and difficulties changing long-entrenched power structures. In Indonesia, for example, despite a growing awareness of the importance of decolonization, many educational and government institutions still operate within a colonial framework. It suggests that decolonizing the mind requires sustained and collaborative efforts from various parties, including academics, practitioners, and the wider community (Meghji, 2021).

On the other hand, successful decolonization of the mind also requires structural changes that support the adoption of a decolonial perspective. These include reforms in the education system, public policy, and how knowledge is produced and disseminated. In Indonesia, there is an urgent need to develop educational policies that support the integration of local perspectives in the curriculum and encourage more inclusive and representative research. In addition, it is essential to create spaces for dialogue that enable the exchange of ideas between different groups of people so that decolonizing the mind can be more effective and sustainable (Mehta & Henriksen, 2022).

As such, decolonizing the mind in Indonesia and elsewhere is a complex and multi-layered process that requires various parties' active engagement. It is not just about changing how we think but also about changing how we live and interact with each other. We can build a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future by recognizing and addressing lingering colonial legacies. Further research and collaborative efforts are urgently needed to achieve this goal and ensure that decolonizing the mind brings real and impactful change to society.

Implications of Decolonizing the Mind for Education and Social Policy

The decolonization of thought in the context of education is an increasingly prominent movement, especially in former colonial countries, including Indonesia. This decolonization process aims to dismantle and reform the education system that was previously built on Western values and perspectives. Education in many former colonies, including Indonesia, has long been dominated by curricula that still need to reflect the diversity of local cultures and knowledge fully. As a result, many generations are educated with perspectives that do not consider local wisdom and traditional knowledge. Therefore, this decolonization effort is essential to ensure that education includes global views and local perspectives that are often marginalized.

In the Indonesian context, decolonizing education not only means removing or replacing Western-oriented curricula but also includes the development of pedagogical approaches that are more inclusive and relevant to local contexts. For example, the implementation of Curriculum 2013 in Indonesia still shows a tendency to maintain values based on the Western worldview, while materials related to local knowledge and traditional wisdom still need to be improved in application (Wicaksono & Sayekti, 2020). A review of this curriculum shows an urgent need to integrate more local content so that education in Indonesia can better reflect its rich culture and history.

The decolonization approach has also influenced the teaching and assessment methods used in various educational institutions in Indonesia. For example, the recently implemented Merdeka Curriculum requires educators to be more flexible in designing learning, focusing on knowledge transfer and developing learners' characters and competencies by local values (Aditama et al., 2023). It is an essential step in decolonization efforts, as it allows for more adaptive education to the needs and context of Indonesian society.

In addition, decolonization efforts in education also involve developing methodologies that are more responsive to local contexts. Research has been conducted in some areas to see how educational approaches based on local knowledge can be integrated into the formal education system. For example, in some schools in Indonesia, approaches such as Indonesian Realistic Mathematics Education (PMRI) have been applied to improve students' mathematical communication skills with Islamic nuances, which are not only culturally relevant but also contextually for students in a particular

area (Yuliyanti et al., 2021). This approach shows that decolonization in education is about replacing content and how the content is taught in a way that respects and reflects local values.

In another study, implementing Lesson Studies in Indonesian schools has also shown success in developing teachers' pedagogical competence, positively impacting the quality of education in these schools (Syafa'ah & Rohman, 2021). Lesson Studies, initially an approach developed in Japan, have been adapted to consider the local Indonesian context. They show how international practices can be adopted and transformed to meet local needs, an essential step in decolonizing education.

Studies on the relevance of education in Indonesia to the thought of Muslim scientists such as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd also show that education rooted in local or regional values and philosophies has strong relevance to contemporary education. For example, research found that many of the educational principles in the Merdeka Curriculum align with the thinking of these two figures, especially in terms of the importance of education focusing on developing learners' characters and competencies (Muhamad et al., 2023). It strengthens the argument that education detached from colonial influences can be more relevant and practical locally.

To decolonize education in Indonesia, it is also essential to look at the role of local wisdom-based education in improving students' life skills. Implementing the local content curriculum in Indonesian schools has shown positive results in developing life skills relevant to local needs (Supriyanta, 2021). It includes practical knowledge of local culture, environment, and economy, often overlooked in more globally oriented curricula.

In addition to the curriculum, decolonization also impacts the teaching methods used. For example, implementing project-based learning methods in Indonesian schools has improved students' skills, especially in collaboration, communication, and problem-solving (Basit et al., 2023). This method allows students to learn through hands-on experiences and projects relevant to real life, which is very different from the traditional educational

approach that is more theoretical and focused on memorization.

Ultimately, the decolonization of education in Indonesia is a complex and ongoing process. It involves not only changes in curricula and teaching methodologies but also changes in how we consider legitimate and valuable knowledge. By integrating more local and non-Western perspectives in education, Indonesia can develop an education system that is more inclusive, relevant, and responsive to the needs of its people.

Decolonizing the Mind in Education: Challenges and Critiques in Indonesia

The decolonization of the mind in the context of education has become an increasingly discussed topic in various countries, including Indonesia. However, although this movement has attracted the attention of many parties, the decolonization process is open to various criticisms and challenges that need to be faced. One of the main criticisms of the decolonization of the mind is that it is often perceived as an elitist discourse mainly discussed in academia without impacting the wider community (Thomas & Thompson, 2018). This criticism arises because decolonization is often perceived as a theoretical issue far from the general public's everyday reality. In this context, decolonization of the mind may be seen as exclusive, which is only relevant to those in academia, thus receiving less attention from the wider community.

There are also concerns that some decolonization initiatives may reinforce stereotypes and dichotomies between the West and non-West, exacerbating cultural and social tensions (Linstrum, 2015). In Indonesia, efforts to highlight local perspectives and reject Western influences could be perceived as a polarizing move, potentially creating divisions in an already culturally and religiously diverse society. Such critiques emphasize the importance of a more inclusive approach that does not create antagonism between cultures.

In sociology, decolonization of the mind is often seen as a challenge to traditional approaches that focus too much on Eurocentric perspectives. However, some argue that more than decolonization in sociology may be

required to address broader issues of racialization and coloniality in global society (Itzigsohn, 2021). This opinion suggests that decolonization of the mind needs to be followed by more fundamental reforms in understanding and studying existing social structures.

Furthermore, criticism of the decolonization of the mind also arises from educators who see that this approach sometimes ignores practical needs in education. For example, in a study conducted by Hermawan (2020), it was found that despite the push for curriculum decolonization, many educators feel that the biggest challenge today is how to ensure the relevance of learning to students' needs, especially in the context of digitization accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Hermawan, 2020).

Another criticism comes from implementing multicultural education as part of decolonization efforts. Although essential, Lestari and Sa'adah (2021) state that multicultural education in Indonesia often focuses on formal aspects and has yet to fully integrate into students' daily lives (Lestari & Sa'adah, 2021). This education is often delivered in theory without practical application, reducing its effectiveness in creating deep multicultural awareness.

Furthermore, challenges also arise in decolonization efforts in the educational technology sector. In their research, Aini et al. (2023) pointed out that the application of blockchain technology in education certification in Indonesia faces security and credibility issues, which can be an obstacle to the application of technological innovation in education being decolonized (Aini et al., 2023).

To conclude, while the decolonization of the mind in education faces significant criticism and challenges, it is essential to recognize that this process also brings excellent opportunities to reform education to be more inclusive and relevant to local contexts. Decolonizing the mind is the first step in delving deeper into how education can be redesigned to accommodate a

diversity of perspectives and needs without ignoring existing social and cultural realities.

The Future of Decolonizing Thought: Toward a More Inclusive Global Mindset

The future of decolonization of the mind depends on the ability to integrate. Decolonization of the mind, especially in the context of education, is often seen as one of the essential steps in dismantling the dominance of Western discourses and paradigms in global knowledge. However, while the concept has received much attention, criticisms and challenges have arisen in urination, especially in Indonesia. One of the main criticisms is that decolonization of the mind is often perceived as an elitist process, which is only relevant for academics without any real impact on the broader community (Fahrul Rozi, 2020).

In Indonesia, this critique is reinforced by the fact that decolonization needs to be fully implemented in curricula and broader educational approaches. For example, despite efforts to introduce inclusive education, there are still many barriers to overcome in practice, especially regarding infrastructure and human resource support (M. et al. Putra, 2020). Many inclusive schools in Indonesia still struggle to provide adequate facilities and spaces for children with special needs, suggesting that there are still significant challenges in implementing the concept of inclusivity, which is part of the decolonization of education.

There are also concerns that some decolonization initiatives may reinforce stereotypes and dichotomies between the West and non-West, exacerbating cultural and social tensions (Ali et al., 2021). An approach that focuses too much on distinguishing between "Western" and "non-Western" may risk creating greater polarization instead of building a more inclusive and holistic understanding.

On the other hand, challenges in decolonizing the mind are also seen in the difficulty of integrating local and non-Western perspectives into formal education. Some studies show that despite efforts to adopt a more inclusive approach, such as unique spaces in inclusive schools, logistical challenges and a greater understanding of children with special needs still need to be addressed (Fitria et al. Thu

Trang, 2022). Decolonizing the mind in education requires more than just a change in discourse; it also requires profound structural changes in the education system.

In sociology, critiques of decolonizing the mind include the view that more than these efforts may be needed to address broader issues of racialization and coloniality in global society. For example, traditional approaches that focus too much on Eurocentric perspectives still dominate many sociological studies in Indonesia, hindering efforts to develop theories and practices more relevant to local contexts (Tri et al., 2021). These challenges suggest a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach is needed to achieve more effective decolonization, including educational aspects and broader social and cultural dimensions.

Nevertheless, despite these criticisms and challenges, the decolonization of the mind still offers an excellent opportunity to change how we understand the world and build a more just and inclusive society. This process requires broader engagement from various stakeholders, including academics, policymakers, and the general public, to ensure that the resulting changes genuinely benefit all. For example, in the context of inclusive education, research shows that teachers' authentic happiness and high job engagement in inclusive schools can contribute significantly to the quality of education that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all students (I. Agustina, 2020).

Overall, the decolonization of thought in this new era demands a more inclusive approach, focusing on dismantling colonial discourses and building a more pluralistic and equitable knowledge system. It includes developing theories and practices more sensitive to local contexts and breaking the dominance of Western narratives and paradigms in global knowledge (Imanuel Adhitya et al., 2023). Decolonizing the mind thus offers an excellent opportunity to change how we understand the world and build a more just and inclusive global society. However, to realize this requires commitment and collaboration from various

parties to create authentic and sustainable change.

CONCLUSION

The decolonization of the mind is a crucial process that seeks to dismantle the colonial legacy embedded in various disciplines and social structures in the modern era. It involves acknowledging and revising historical narratives dominated by Eurocentric perspectives and integrating non-Western perspectives that have often been ignored or minimized. In education, decolonization involves overhauling curricula and pedagogical practices to reflect a wider diversity of cultures and knowledge. This process also emphasizes the importance of understanding how colonialism has shaped mental and institutional structures that still impact today. By challenging and reconstructing the thinking inherited by colonialism, decolonization of the mind serves as a tool to redress historical injustices and create a more inclusive and just society where different voices and experiences are recognized and valued. Decolonizing the mind is essential in achieving a more comprehensive understanding of our history and global reality while paving the way for a more egalitarian future.

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