

Editorial

# Anti-Racist Perspectives of Sustainabilities

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This Special Issue centers on anti-racist and decolonial perspectives of sustainability [1,2]. Both anti-racist and decolonial perspectives inspired the hope for building an anti-racist community as a form of sustainability, particularly among the Indigenous, transnational immigrant, and settler communities [3,4]. Although a significant number of academic researchers introduced anti-racist and decolonial perspectives in their sustainability work, they have not considered anti-racism and decolonization as a source of knowledge and understanding for the Indigenous, transnational immigrant and settler communities, how to be responsible for being anti-racist and decolonial to the communities and why anti-racist and decolonial perspectives are important to understand “sustainability”, i.e., a system of reciprocal social relations and ethical practices, as a framework for building sustainable communities. Further, studies have failed to explain how to decolonize the Western concept of sustainability from and within cross-cultural perspectives [4–7]. The contributions to this Special Issue initiated these transdisciplinary questions that challenged not only our static science and social science mindsets, but have taken the responsibility to practice anti-racist and decolonial perspectives in our everyday functions.

With a focus on anti-racist and decolonial perspectives, this Special Issue advocates for the Indigenous perspectives of sustainability, Indigenous knowledge systems, and Indigenous knowledge methods throughout the research process. Contributions recognize Indigenous peoples’ historical and ongoing colonization and marginalization, and seek to address these injustices by placing Indigenous peoples at the forefront of research. Indigenous researchers and scholars, Vizina and Gordon, prioritize the involvement of Indigenous communities in the research process. Both studies emphasize the importance of respecting Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and cultural protocols, and seek to challenge dominant research paradigms that have historically silenced Indigenous voices and perspectives. Anti-racist and decolonial perspectives often draw on Indigenous research methodologies and approaches, such as oral history, storytelling, and community-based research. Vizina and Gordon incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives, such as Indigenous feminist theory or decolonial theory, to address the complexities of the ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous communities. Indigenous contributors in this Special Issue support Indigenous peoples’ empowerment and self-determination through research grounded in their perspectives, values, and knowledge systems.

Decolonial and anti-racist scholars, Kayira, Lobdell, Gagnon, Healy, Hertz, McHone, Schuttenberg, and Kerr, critically discuss how anti-racist and decolonial perspectives of education seek to address the systemic inequalities and injustices that exist within educational systems, and promote educational practices that are inclusive, equitable, and empowering for all students. Both studies showcase how anti-racist education involves recognizing the ways in which racism and discrimination manifest within educational systems, including biases in the curriculum and pedagogy, disparities in access to resources and opportunities, and the overrepresentation of certain groups in disciplinary and special education programs. They suggested how anti-racist and decolonial perspectives are helpful for implementing inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices, incorporating diverse perspectives and histories into the curriculum, and promoting social justice and equity across all aspects of education. They demonstrate the importance of decolonial



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perspectives in recognizing how colonialism has shaped educational systems and contributed to the marginalization and erasure of Indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems. They suggested that decolonization involves promoting educational practices that respect Indigenous and non-Western ways of knowing, and prioritize diverse communities' perspectives, experiences, and needs. This may involve incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum and teaching practices, promoting bilingual and multilingual education, and ensuring Indigenous communities control their educational systems and curriculum.

Anti-racist health researchers, Raihan, Chowdhury, and Naidu and Chowdhury T Contribution explored sustainability from anti-racist perspectives of health research. They critically observed how racism and discrimination impact health outcomes, and sought to address these issues through their research. They explained that the anti-racist approach acknowledges that racism and discrimination can manifest in many forms, including systemic inequities in access to healthcare, health policies and practices, and disparities in health outcomes across different racial and ethnic groups. An anti-racist perspective of health research involves examining the way in which race and ethnicity intersect with other social determinants of health, such as socioeconomic status, education, and access to healthcare. It involves taking a critical approach to research methodologies and ensuring they are inclusive and do not perpetuate existing biases or stereotypes.

The study by anti-racist and decolonial researcher, Bhawra, critically discusses the challenges in traditional Western climate change policy and practices that may be rooted in colonialism and perpetuate existing power imbalances and injustices. The anti-racist approach acknowledges that Indigenous and local knowledge systems, marginalized or ignored by Western science, may hold valuable insights and perspectives of climate change and environmental sustainability. As suggested, the key aspect of anti-racist and decolonizing climate change research involves building trustful relationships, respecting traditional land-based knowledge and practices, Indigenous governance, and actively seeking and incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into research design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This includes recognizing and respecting Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, and ensuring that Indigenous communities control their data and research processes. Another critical aspect of decolonizing climate change research is addressing the power imbalances within research partnerships and ensuring that Indigenous communities and local organizations are active and equal partners in the research process. This may involve building capacity within these communities to increase engagement in research and advocacy around climate change, and providing resources and support to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

Anti-racist solidarity scholars, Hurlbert and Oliver, explore the responsibilities in decolonization for challenging the underlying assumptions and values that inform traditional Western approaches. Their studies explain how taking responsibility creates many opportunities for meaningful reconciliation and food security that may be more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. This involves recognizing and addressing the ways in which colonialism has shaped our worldviews, practices, and systems of power, and actively working to promote inclusion, equity, and social justice for all.

This Special Issue's contributors tried to decolonize research methods from community-led and community-engaged methods in their participatory research. For example, when working with a community, contributors used narrative research, told a story together, and equally owned that story. The scholarship from their research also looks very different and its audience is not restricted to scholars. The outputs have a social impact on the community and are defined within the collaboration between researchers and community members. The main goal was to promote learning that leads to social action for anti-racist solidarity as a form of community-led sustainability.

### List of Contributions

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**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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