

RMC 2023

Research Methodology Conference

Decolonising Research Methodologies and Method

organised by

The London Institute of Social Studies, UK

in partnership with

Birkbeck, University of London, UK, and

Research Centre for Global Learning (GLEA), Coventry University, UK

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Research Centre for Global Learning (GLEA)
Coventry University
Whitefriars Street,
Coventry, CV1 2DS
United Kingdom
+44(0)24 7765 7688
globallearning@coventry.ac.uk
<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/global-learning/>

The London Institute of Social Studies
Hamilton House,
4 Mabledon Place,
London, WC1H 9BD
United Kingdom
+44(0)20 7953 0228
info@thelondoninstitute.org.uk
<https://thelondoninstitute.org.uk/>

Birkbeck, University of London
Malet St, Bloomsbury
London WC1E 7HX
United Kingdom
+44(0)20 3926 3926
<https://www.bbk.ac.uk/>

**RMC-2023 Research Methodology Conference
Decolonising Research Methodologies and Methods**

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Keynote Speakers

The questions we ask, the voices we use: is a move towards more diverse message carriers and a rethinking of methodological approaches a means to decolonising research methods

Gillian Stokes

Assistant Professor, Social Research Institute, University College London, UK

Striations of Empire in Social Science Research: Decolonising Methodologies in Geography and Education

Steven Puttick

Associate Professor of Teacher Education, University of Oxford, UK

Empowered from Below: Learning from African descendant decolonial and anti-racist struggles

William Ackah

Senior Lecturer in Global Development, Peace & Conflict, SOAS University of London, UK

(Im)possibility of doing 'decolonial' work in neo-liberal Universities

Arinola Adefila

Associate Prof & Deputy Director of Scolpp, Staffordshire University, UK

&

Saba Hussain

Assistant Professor in Education and Social Justice, University of Birmingham, UK

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ORGANISERS

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KEYNOTES

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Empowered from Below: Learning from African descendant decolonial and anti-racist struggles

William Ackah

Senior Lecturer in Black and Community Geographies, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

In this paper I want to step back from the specifics of decolonising particular research methodologies within social sciences and to critically consider what it was our ancestors were engaged in their struggles against colonialism and racism in the C20th. From activists fighting for their independence from imperial rule across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, to Black students fighting for recognition for their histories and lived experiences on US campuses, African descendants were engaged in struggles for liberation. They wanted to bring about systemic change on campuses, communities, nations and whole societies. So I as a Black scholar influenced and impacted by those struggles what am I engaged in today under the umbrella of decolonial and anti-racist and what I am encouraging others to embark on? Drawing on the inspiration, ideas and practice of those ancestors who were focused on liberation and change I want to posit that our research practice must be geared towards systemic change and the liberation of our peoples from the impacts of racism and neo-colonialism. Saying it or writing however is relatively easy, doing it and living it in practice is much more complex. This work will explore the dilemmas, possibilities and imperatives for taking action.

Striations of Empire in Social Science Research: Decolonising Methodologies in Geography and Education

Steven Puttick

Associate Professor of Teacher Education, University of Oxford, UK

Education promises empowerment, transformation and freedom, and geography education adds hope of more sustainable and equitable futures through greater understanding of the world. Yet these same forces are also used to reproduce deeply unjust hierarchies and unequal distributions of multiple forms of capital and opportunity. This talk is about unpicking, disentangling and addressing some of the deep striations of Empire that are routed into the geographical tradition and which have shaped social science research more widely and in the case of geography education in particular. Drawing on experiences developing a collaborative digital course for doctoral students seeking to think 'otherwise' about research methodologies and to address and unpick the striations of Empire shaping social science research, the talk will reflect on some of the dynamics emerging from collaboratively teaching decolonial geographies and decolonizing methodologies including: trust; transdisciplinarity; and the significance of co-presence.

The questions we ask, the voices we use: is a move towards more diverse message carriers and a rethinking of methodological approaches a means to decolonising research methods

Gillian Stokes

Assistant Professor, Social Research Institute, University College London, UK

In the UK, Eurocentrically evolved research methodologies and the methods applied to elicit insight into research questions, dominate published academic literature. Implications of approaching research questions from a standpoint that may not culturally fit the world views of the populations under study, is a topic of concern. As the discourse surrounding decolonisation becomes increasingly evident in academia and beyond, inclusion of diverse world views must be considered as a priority.

The importance of including diverse perspectives and experiences in research, especially underrepresented and other marginalised populations, is recognised by increasing numbers of researchers. Moves towards including diverse stakeholders in research have gathered momentum over the past three decades. Researchers across many disciplines now involve stakeholders in various points of the research process from design through to dissemination. Inclusive methodologies, such as Public and Patient Involvement, Participatory Action Research, co-production and other approaches, have been developed to actively include those directly affected by the research. However, is a lack of diverse representation in academia impacting on the research questions being asked, the methods employed, and the way that findings are understood and disseminated?

Decolonisation of research has been defined as “a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels” and has “a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices” (Smith, 2012, p.606). In short, the undoing of colonial ideologies and the inclusion of more diverse races and ethnicities in the academic arena. Decolonisation is a continual process that, with concerted effort and willingness, should moderate existing power imbalances and inherent biases that are deeply embedded within academic thinking and research practices. Yet it is difficult to envisage that decolonisation of research methods can be achieved in the UK academic system. A system where, from teaching of theory to publication of findings, the methods employed are still so heavily entrenched in post-colonial Eurocentric thought. Furthermore, the numbers of senior and/or published academics from global majority backgrounds, particularly those of African heritage, are so small.

This keynote focuses on potential ways to reimagine research methods to ensure cultural sensitivity throughout the research process by the active inclusion of diverse perspectives throughout the academic process. It calls for a move to broaden critical thinking, expand theoretical positions and embrace new methodological approaches. A cultural shift in power is needed to allow space for diverse academic minds to rethink and develop more culturally sensitive methods and contribute. This requires a change in the research methods landscape. In conclusion, there are no easy or quick wins to mitigate the imposition of Western ideologies within research. Rather a need exists for a continued push to include the voices of those who have been oppressed by colonisation. Decolonisation will not prevail if no action is taken to include, not only the narratives and perspectives of oppressed populations, but their active input in all aspects of academic practice from classroom to publication.

(Im)possibility of doing ‘decolonial’ work in neo-liberal Universities

Arinola Adefila

Associate Prof & Deputy Director of Scolpp, Staffordshire University, UK

&

Saba Hussain

Assistant Professor in Education and Social Justice, University of Birmingham, UK

As outlined by Held (2019) “...academia has almost exclusively been focusing on Western paradigms and approaches to research...This manifestation of ontological oppression is a result of Western science being exported around the globe from Europe alongside imperialistic and colonial attitudes”. It is therefore surprising that Universities in the Western world especially in the UK are increasingly calling for ‘decolonisation’- of curriculum, of education and of research. Scholars have called this phenomenon ‘intellectual decolonization’ (Moosavi 2020), ‘decolonization hype’ (Behari-Leak, 2019, p. 58) and as ‘in vogue in the academy’ (Izharuddin, 2019, p. 137). Notably, this push for decolonisation is coming at a time when Universities across the board have increasingly come under criticism for high fees, neoliberal managerialism, precarity of staff, rampant racism, and sexism. While acknowledging that there is range of important ‘decolonial’ interventions starting from programmes of reparations (viz University of Glasgow) to decolonization of curriculum across the sector (to varying degrees), this keynote draws attention to the (im)possibility of decolonial work in Universities by calling attention to three issues. First the question of university as the gatekeeper/owner of resources such as space, of knowledge paradigms, research, etc. We also address the challenges of the University’s complicity in simultaneous dehumanisation and selective “rehumanisation” of staff and students. The keynote calls for a pragmatic facilitation of conditions for diverse kinds of encounters: between students and staff, among students, among staff but also between the neoliberal university and its staff and students. Through a dialogical presentation the speakers would like to imagine what these new encounters may look like?

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PRESENTERS

Physics to Law via Decolonial Space: developing a transdisciplinary research methodology

Mukesh Chiman Bhatt

Birkbeck, University Of London, United Kingdom

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Decoloniality seeks to restructure epistemic paradigms after delinking its knowledge base from the structure imposed during the modern period of European colonisation. These paradigms then need to be reconstituted in novel forms reflective of traditions other than that of the currently dominant North Atlantic “Western” axis. At its best, it ought to be transdisciplinary and across cultural and social boundaries. In STEM/STEAM disciplines the scientific method is a dominant paradigm that developed coincident with the period of modernity. The paradigm has been exported to the many cultures formerly under colonial rule that has entered quotidian use and has also been extended to other disciplines other than the original physics experimental sciences. The method has historical antecedents in European cultures, but also has historical homologues with analogous predecessors and antecedent concepts in non-European cultures. These cultures did not remain static: they continued to develop scientific traditions and philosophies in the centuries before and after 1500 CE. Networks of trade facilitated and extended networks of knowledge easing its transfer between cultures before and during the modern period. Recognising historical links and cultural exchanges allows for the recognition of commonality of concepts, of approaches and of perspectives. This allows the introduction of culturally specific analogues into the application of the scientific method without losing the core usability of the most successful paradigm in human history.

The approach also recognises the continuing and irremovable influence and presence of modern science and technology in the daily lives of all cultures. Care however has to be taken to avoid contradictions, although the introduction of new perspectives may provide new methods of prediction inherent within the scientific method. Examples of current research will include the inclusion of culturally specific uses (Pacific and African) of astronomical data into space exploration and space law; of South Asian cosmological narratives integrable into astrobiology and Big History; the transdisciplinary commonality of culture-specific (Indo-Sino-Buddhist) concepts of universal origin showing the role of physical conservation laws in economics and finance and thence to the economic basis and analysis of law; Buddhist concepts in quantum mechanics and neuroscience; and the development of culture-specific psychologies from Indian philosophy and Confucian norms. This approach also has viable consequences for space law, for space exploitation and exploration through its settlement and therefore for terrestrial societies.

Education Values in Governance: Internalised or detached? A narrative study of Indonesian private higher education institutions

Benih Hartanti

Birkbeck, University Of London, United Kingdom

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their governance are uncritically viewed as embedding values. Consequently, values are not examined and are merely viewed as sets of standards,

procedures, and measurements. Indonesian HEI governance practices are conducted in accordance with the government principles of Good University Governance (GUG). These principles mainly focus on performance indicators and measurement. Despite their majority, Indonesian private HEIs exhibit insignificant improvement, insufficient involvement in quality development, and internal issues constantly arise (e.g. corruption and conflict of interest). It indicates that HEIs take education values for granted. In my study, I seek to understand and conceptualize values-based governance by answering the following question: How have education values been framed and enacted in Indonesian private HEI governance practices? The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of my current research methodology. Guided by social constructivism and critical paradigms, I will employ a narrative inquiry methodological approach. Using experience-centered inquiry, I will collect stories as data through active interviewing and focus group discussion while positioning myself as an insider and an outsider. Analysis process will employ reflexive thematic analysis integrated with narrative commonplaces. My research findings will contribute to the institutionalisation of education values as actors' interpretive practices through HEI governance elements.

Collaborative Online International Learning: Stories from the Metaverse

Roberto Jr Figueroa

University of the Philippines Open University

The metaverse is a computer-generated virtual world in which people can interact with each other and digital objects. As the metaverse becomes more widely used, it is becoming increasingly important to comprehend its impact on individuals and society as a whole. This paper presents a case where the metaverse was used for evaluating collaborative online international learning (COIL) activities while empowering participants by showcasing their world-class talents as contributors of the open educational resources collective through virtual exhibits. The exhibitors were participants of a COIL initiative that involved online activities that aimed to facilitate cross-cultural exchanges and global learning among universities of three countries: USA, Japan, and the Philippines.

Keywords: metaverse, collaborative online international learning, reflections

Writing the fragmented self from the margin: decolonising autoethnography within contexts of displacement

Lina Fadel

Heriot-Watt University, United Kingdom

Autoethnography has in recent years been recognised and celebrated as a decolonial endeavour. Whether autoethnography can live up to its potential in contexts of displacement is but one of the many questions with which this paper grapples. This paper provides a conceptual re-theorisation of autoethnography as a site of power contestation and argues that this contestation is inevitably articulated in our personal narratives when we write from a specific site (e.g., a position of displacement or marginalisation). I argue that while autoethnography is essentially a postmodernist epistemology that seeks to move away from canonical ways of being and knowing, this research method is yet to fully embrace the potential

of postmodernist philosophy in order to examine the link(s) between identity, liminality, power and narrative within uniquely chaotic and non-linear contexts of displacement.

Drawing on my first-hand experience with migration as a displaced scholar from Syria living and working in the UK under different but interrelated identities (student, academic, mother, migrant, refugee, immigrant, citizen) I ask: can there be a decolonial autoethnography that allows for disrupting linear and coherent temporalities that dominate conventional Western traditions? Can there be a decolonial autoethnography that does not reproduce privileged knowledge? What are the methodological choices available to me as a displaced scholar? What does it really mean to write (about) the displaced Syrian self from the margin, within contexts of loss and displacement? In addressing these questions, this paper borrows insights from postcolonial and postmodernist traditions in attempting to expand linkages between western and Arab conceptualisations of identity, selfhood, and narrative. I defend the use of 'fragments' (Pandey, 1992) and 'schizophrenia' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1977) in establishing a decolonial autoethnography of displacement that acknowledges displaced selfhoods as chaotic, divergent and fragmented 'wholes' that can, and must, be thought of beyond a European intellectual lineage. I argue that establishing a decolonial autoethnography starts with 'centring the subject' not by facilitating the move from margin to centre but by allowing her to choose and celebrate her individual, and unique, ways of being, even from the margin. Moreover, a decolonial autoethnography would cultivate safe spaces that allow for fragmentation and chaos. Only by normalising these experiences as unique expressions of the self that do not, and should not, conform to an institutionalised set of standards, autoethnographic research can enable the researcher to claim the margin as centre. There is undoubtedly a need to allow for a reckoning with the displaced self's fragility and fragmentation and plurality (schizophrenia) of the self, and push back against a Eurocentric obsession with order, rigour and credibility.

Keywords: Decoloniality, autoethnography, displacement, postmodernism, identity, narrative, postcolonial theory

Participatory Action Research: Bridging design and autonomy

Andrea Navarrete Rigo

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

This paper explores the use of participatory action research (PAR) as a means to move from a Social Design framework and embrace Autonomous Design. While Social Design aims to alleviate specific problems within marginalized communities in the Global South, Autonomous Design reframes such practices through decolonial lenses by promoting autonomy, seeding and fostering alternatives to development with the potential to turn communities into autopoietic systems. This paper presents a comparative analysis of a methodological proposal (design workshops facilitated in four different communities within Latin America) that includes six exercises: (1) defining objectives, (2) identifying individual qualities; (3) identifying problems; (4) historical review; (5) land recognition; and (6) proposing action lines. Hence, the comparison among the workshop results allows us to establish the benefits and contributions of adopting PAR within an Autonomous Design framework regarding (a) the promotion of decolonial strategies that allow reorienting socially engaged design practices; (b) exploring democratic ways of learning and knowledge production; (c) its contribution towards

accomplishing collective objectives, increasing autonomy and self-determination; and (d) creating conditions to practice decoloniality by building self-awareness (individual roles and contributions within the collective sphere), perception (available commons and resources), and relating the last two.

Keywords: Participatory action research, Autonomous design, Decoloniality, Social learning

Anthropology Fieldwork and Changing India: Reflections on Memories of Fieldwork

Daljeet Singh Arora

Independent Researcher, Australia

In his book *Orientalism*, Said utilised the term “Orientalism” as a critical concept to describe Western conceptual lens through which non-western societies have been understood.

Writing about the impact of Said’s work, Thomas (1991) noted “polarisation of views” within anthropology with several critics of Said demonstrating misgivings towards reflective anthropology. On the other hand, Sax (1998) noted that “the so-called Orientals were compelled to live in this constructed Orient” which in itself was a product of European Enlightenment.

While Said’s work implored anthropologists to be reflective and to acknowledge the lived “colonial” experience of the “Orient”, he “was not always welcomed as a friendly critic” within anthropology (Dirks, 2004).

The concern with decolonising anthropology is not only a commendable enterprise, it has its own history and trajectory within anthropology. This history has received further impetus recently wherein the institution of the University has been challenged by questioning the politics of the University in contemporary world (Mogstad and Tse, 2018).

This is of great importance, especially for a student of anthropology who is not associated with the discipline institutionally, noting that any conversation to decolonise anthropology must content with the fact that anthropology emerged and developed as a discipline alongside colonisation of a large part of the world which was rationalised within modernist traditions.

My interest in the current article, however, is on fieldwork which has remained central to not only the construction of knowledge in anthropology but also in imagining anthropology. This is true for anthropology as it is taught in universities as well as in its applied aspect where anthropology is considered to have “real world” applications. Writing about fieldwork, Margaret Mead (1964) notes, “We still have no way to make an anthropologist except by sending him into the field: this contact with living material is our distinguishing mark” thus underlying significance of fieldwork in anthropology.

The present article discuss how anthropological fieldwork becomes the primary ‘social’ site to understand and record a society despite its ethical challenges. The article reflects on fieldwork organised in two different communities in India, locating the anthropologist in the midst of claims and counter claims.

I engage in this exploration through reflecting on my missed, rough and partially forgotten experiences and memories of learning anthropology in India, through fieldwork. I highlight the process that I undertook in situating myself within the communities I worked with in “co-

creating data”, developing relationships that continued beyond fieldwork and negotiating different representations and meanings, including my own.

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Keywords: Orientalism, Fieldwork, India

Overcoming hegemonic gateways: writing workshops in Sub-Saharan Africa

Matt Smith

University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Along with a network of academics and organisations including e/merge Africa and the EdTech Hub, Dr Matt Smith has been involved in the creation and hosting of an as-yet-incomplete series of writing workshops and support sessions which have been intended to support emerging researchers over a period of ten months. These workshops have drawn together emergent African researchers who are at a disadvantage in being published due to the hegemonic gateways of colonised Global Northern academic norms, and we have aimed to support this group to both explore their context more fully, and to gain acceptance for publication in high-quality journals. We've also looked to allow researchers who are marginalised in other ways, such as through gender, to access these opportunities and participate more fully in global debate.

We have encouraged participants to explore critically and engage actively in processes that will make academic research writing more inclusive and less constrained by the current and historical values and experiences of colonialism and colonality, in all their forms. This has involved critical discussions of injustices embedded in research design, publishing processes, definitions of what is deemed reputable sources of knowledge, and what is considered as rigorous methodology.

This presentation will – briefly – cover the design of the workshops, open a debate around the issues highlighted above, share ongoing results and allow for a wider discussion about decoloniality, research and writing.

Keywords: Decolonisation of research, Overcoming hegemonic gateways, Sub-Saharan Africa, Writing Workshops

Participatory Research Methods: Some Critical Reflections

Shannon Sahni

Birkbeck, University Of London, United Kingdom

My contribution would include a friendly yet critical reflection on the core ethos of participatory research (PR) which includes an interest in 'marginalised' communities, equal research relationships and alternative research outcomes. I believe this is especially needed as PR is growing popularity and is routinely heralded as 'democratic' and 'liberating' yet its underling ideologies are rarely critically reflected upon. My critique firstly recognises that the PR ethos rests on essentialised understandings of the 'marginalised' as entirely powerless beings. I offer an alternative nuanced account which recognises power and powerlessness amongst marginalised groups, such as prisoners. Secondly, I observe how these essentialised understandings underscore the drive for 'equal' research relationships, where the PR facilitator is often expected to 'empower' the 'marginalised'. I note how these relationships and practices, not only rest on an oversimplified understanding of 'power', but also mirror and mimic 'old' colonial ideologies visible in 'historical' civilising missions. Lastly, I offer a critique of PR and the outcomes of empowerment as regurgitating and resting on neo-liberal ideologies of individuality, responsibility, and entrepreneurship, where the structural roots of social problems are often evaded, depoliticised, and transformed into individual burdens which are placed on the shoulders of the 'marginalised'.

The Power of Participant-Made Videos: Exploring Everyday Home-Making Remotely During COVID-19 Pandemic

Meiyun Meng

Birkbeck, University Of London, United Kingdom

The outbreak of COVID-19 has presented significant challenges for qualitative researchers who conduct face-to-face fieldwork. This paper explores the virtual delivery of qualitative research in response to COVID-19 restrictions and offers methodological insights into studying the social world. It describes the changes to ethnographic fieldwork in Shenzhen, China, in response to national and international lockdowns. The original research was designed to explore people's everyday practices, life stories, and subjective feelings related to home materialities. The approach involved using a video ethnography 'home tour' and video-elicitation interviews to elicit participants' memories, experiences, aspirations, and imaginations related to specific home objects. However, travel restrictions and physical distancing orders imposed in China necessitated converting the in-person study to a remote approach. This paper details the adaptations made to the research, including the use of participant-made videos and online video-elicitation interviews. Moreover, I also discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with these modifications. This study contributes to the growing literature on conducting 'resilient' fieldwork during the COVID-19 pandemic and provides insights into using virtual methods for qualitative research.

Keywords: Ethnography, COVID-19, home tours, video-elicitation interviews, participant-made videos

Is unpaid work a burden? Decolonising discourses around women's reproductive roles

Sonia Hoque

University College London, United Kingdom

This paper will problematise academic methodologies dominating a specific discourse using a decolonial lens: the feminist agenda to reduce Global South women's unpaid care/domestic work (UCW).

UCW is often referred to as a 'burden', and studies suggest Global South women submit to this role due to gender norms (read: local culture, traditions). Inspired by Mohanty's critique of the 'othering' of 'Third-World Women' by Western feminists, and Gayatri Spivak's contention that colonised people are unable to speak for themselves, this paper will primarily argue for broadening academic methodologies to centre voices of Global South women, to understand whether UCW is universally experienced as a 'burden'.

Theorisation of the labour of social reproduction as a site of oppressive gender relations has been a focus of Western feminist academics for several decades. Research can be traced to second-wave liberal feminists constituting mainly White, Western middle-class women seeking equal opportunities in the workforce, demanding wages etc. Feminist economists have recently developed knowledge by calculating values for women's UCW, with the aim of influencing policy-makers (Rai et al., 2019).

I argue that current methodologies used to study women's UCW are primarily economic and lack diversity or in-depth engagement on Global South women's lived realities. Drawing on post-structural and post-modern approaches in feminism, as well as post-colonial influences, this paper will argue that methods used to research UCW may distort multiple realities for Global South women. Drawing on feminist epistemology debates, the importance of difference will be highlighted, namely how identity factors such as class, age, ability, religion etc. may impact women's perceptions of UCW. Viewed through this lens, the tendency of Global North based/educated feminist academics to refer to Global South women's reproductive roles as oppressive becomes problematic. Furthermore, I will argue the current discourse may perpetuate colonial stereotypes of Global South women as living unfulfilling lives (where they undertake primarily UCW).

That UCW can be a fulfilling and positive experience is widely overlooked in the GAD discourse (incidentally, the positive aspects of paid work are studied widely). However Black feminist writers such as bell hooks describe motherhood as 'humanising labour' which has a role in defining Black women's identities (1984), a point also made by Chilisa and Ntseane, (2010) who emphasise African women's power via relational worldviews of motherhood, family, sisterhood and friendship. My paper thus draws from Narayan (1989) who says 'Western feminists must learn to think within powerful traditions which not only oppress women, but also confer a high value on women's roles as wives and mothers which are highly praised in many non-Western countries'.

Therefore, qualitative-interpretivist empirical methodologies may deepen understanding around Global South women's experiences of their complex reproductive roles. Methods drawing from anthropology, participatory methods, and even using media as forms of knowledge, could challenge portrayals of Global South women's lives as 'burdened' with UCW. Given the current study of UCW is dominated by economists, resistance to such methods would be unsurprising. However, I believe taking up this challenge is imperative to shield

against criticism of overly-theorising Global South women's lived realities. Another suggestion is developing epistemic communities/alliances around UCW which include and elevate researchers from Global South countries, to address power imbalances in knowledge production in feminist academia.

Keywords: Decolonial feminism, Unpaid care work, Interpretive methods

Living and Working with the Jah Hut of Peninsular Malaysia: Experiences and Lessons in Decolonizing Fieldwork

Vishalini Arumugam
University of Nottingham Malaysia

The Orang Asli (meaning 'original people') are the indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia. They are a minority group, marginalized and engaged in a constant struggle to maintain their identity and control over their lands and resources. My research on indigenous agroecology and food sovereignty involved extensive fieldwork with three Jah Hut communities (a subgroup of the Orang Asli) in remote and rural areas of Pahang, a state in Peninsular Malaysia. The communities' past experiences with academia and the State are steeped in exploitation, mainly for their traditional knowledge, sans recognition or compensation. Taking cognizance of this delicate and challenging situation, and with the realization that there is scarce resource or literature on the subject, it was necessary to devise a process/framework for engaging and working with the community in a manner that was practical, meaningful, empowering, equitable and just. The resultant framework involves three phases of research: (1) pre-fieldwork process and procedures (community consultation and consent); (2) researcher conduct during data collection (compensation and recognition); and (3) post-fieldwork engagement (sharing of translated knowledge/data). Amongst the underlying elements that support the framework include employing a collaborative and participatory approach, always being respectful and ensuring culturally appropriate data collection methods, and reflexivity and critical self-reflection at every stage. Examples on practical ways that these elements may be operationalised will be shared. This framework may be utilized by researchers who wish to work with indigenous communities, particularly the Orang Asli.

Keywords: indigenous research, decolonizing methodologies, community engagement, decolonizing fieldwork, participatory approach, culturally appropriate data collection methods

Chimurenga Methodologies: Diasporic Entanglements, Colonial Afterlives and the Struggle of Thinking Other Worlds

Roselyne Masamha and Lennon Mhishi
Engaged Consultancy Ltd & Pitt Rivers Museum - University of Oxford, United Kingdom

This discussion offers Chimurenga, the Shona word for the Zimbabwean war of liberation, as an anticolonial epistemological gesture and insurrectionary cognitive territory. In a move to a more holistic approach to scholarship on Africa, Zimbabwe in particular, Chimurenga as a site for resistance in direct response to colonial imposition – is examined beyond the context of singularly being a form of political resistance, but rather as a philosophy that informs

methodological approaches to the demands for decolonisation. Chimurenga in this context, represents how subjugated knowledges and their attendant methodologies can re-emerge from a disqualified status within the knowledge hierarchy and become understood in their complexity. We position therefore, Chimurenga as a knowledge system in its own right, which not only asserts visibility as more than merely a historical event - but additionally functions to reclaim variously grounded approaches to knowing, forging other possibilities of knowing and imagining the world from a different place. In this sense, a Zimbabwean, African and consequently planetary place - not in the sense of speaking for or over a planet, but thinking in planetary terms.

A Chimurenga planetary position, simultaneously historically grounded yet expansive, recognises the vast and enduring transnational histories of coloniality, how places and spaces across geographies are intertwined and implicated in these relations. Such a recognition also positions Chimurenga not as solely 'local' as will be evident, as it pertains to Zimbabwean history. Chimurenga is a node, a specific instantiation of the impulse towards some form of emancipation, manifest in the African struggles for land, sovereignty and self-determination, yet resonant and echoing throughout the planet for the dispossessed and marginalised, especially those bearing the brunt of enduring colonialities. This planetary position encapsulates, in other terms, where we know the world from, how we know, and thus shapes the claims to knowledge and authority, beyond the binaries of subjective/objective, local/global, amongst others. It is worth reiterating here that Chimurenga is not in this way indigenous/traditional as it relates to the past, but as it exists to the present, as part of histories of resistance and refusal, premised on an appreciation of cosmologies and knowledges that exist and occupy a significant place in the lives of anticolonial thinking and practice in the present.

As an enduring oppression, coloniality, then demands Chimurenga methodologies to be similarly enduring, if not as they have traditionally been understood, then as progressing and adapting desiring of multiple freedoms, and a refusal of knowing the world, seeing the planet, through imperial lens. As act of material and epistemic defiance to perpetually being defined through the perspective of imperial thought. Chimurenga here also demands a deep discomfort with coloniality as normative knowledge practice, and the attendant hierarchies. A philosophy and practice of refusal must reject containers, spill over, onto and beyond. We approach this, as Zimbabweans inhabiting the elsewhere of 'diaspora' and ask: What can a recuperative Chimurenga epistemology offer us methodologically, as part of the wider work of resisting coloniality and freedom struggles transnationally, foregrounding indigenous ways of knowing and being?

Keywords: Chimurenga, coloniality, resistance

I Am My Sista: Introducing Sista Circles to Qualitative Inquiry

Rachel Odufuwa
Lancaster University, United Kingdom

Where are Black women's voices in qualitative inquiry? If the Black Lives Matter, or more specifically, the Say Her Name protests taught us one thing it is that Black women's lives start to matter when our voices start to matter. However, such sentiments have not migrated to

qualitative scholarship which continues to marginalise Black women scholars' voices and to deny them the space to be at the forefront of introducing new methods to qualitative inquiry, or as Evans-Winters (2019) puts it to 'play with or theorize methodological moves' (p.1). Such marginalisation risks erasing Black women scholars and invisibilising our sociocultural perspectives (Evans-Winters, 2021). However, as the existing literature shows, Black women qualitative scholars have a long history with qualitative research whereby despite their struggles with the white hegemony in qualitative inquiry, Black women have nevertheless sought to 'make good' with qualitative inquiry by synthesising tools of qualitative inquiry with Black women's cultural ways of knowing.

In her work, Dillard (2016), for example, introduces *Endarkened Feminist Epistemology* (EFE) to articulate how our knowledge of reality is strengthened when situated within the historical roots of global Black feminism. More specifically, Dillard's (2016) work reveals how an African American teacher's engagement with African feminist epistemologies enabled her to adapt her teaching to fit culturally relevant ways of teaching when teaching Black children in Ghana. As well as Dillard (2016), many other Black women scholars have made significant contributions to qualitative research by utilising Black feminist thought with qualitative research (Davis, 2009; Evans-Winters, 2019; Waters, 2016).

Taking inspiration from Dillard (2016) and the many other Black women qualitative scholars, I have adapted traditional qualitative focus groups within my research to make them more culturally relevant to Black women. More specifically, I will be inviting Black women from a range of UK universities who are engaged in their university's diversity and decolonising networks to take part in sista circle discussions, whereby we will be discussing current Higher Education decolonising and diversity agendas and futuristic directions for these agendas. Sista circles are peer support groups wherein Black women make sense of their experiences by engaging with each other (Davis-Maye et al., 2022). In terms of theory, sista circles are situated within Black feminism (Dunmeyer, 2022), and centre around the production of knowledge through lived experience and dialogue (Collins, 2015).

Originating from the US, sista circles have been around for decades, but as a research method, they are a foreign concept because they challenge what is considered 'legitimate' and 'rigorous' research (Lacy, 2018). More specifically, they challenge the unequal power dynamics between the researcher and the research participants, which have traditionally existed in qualitative research methods such as focus groups, whereby the researcher is the only one taking and the participants are the only ones giving. By contrast, sista circles aim to establish *true reciprocity* between the researcher and the participants, whereby all are sharing, giving, and taking from the research process. As such, I aim to introduce sista circles as a way of bringing alternative ways of doing qualitative research from the margins to the centre, which overall builds on the existing literature regarding Black feminist thought in qualitative research (Waters, 2016; Dillard 2016; Evans-Winters and Love, 2015; Davis, 2009).

Keywords: sista circles, reciprocity, whiteness, Black Feminist Thought, culturally-situated inquiry

Gatekeeping of researcher positionality: should this be the norm in research with/on racially minoritised participants?

Janet Ramdeo

University of Surrey, United Kingdom

In 2020, Dr Addy Adeleine and nine other Black academics, researchers, community representatives and professionals involved in research wrote an open letter to UKRI to highlight the inequalities in the award of £4.3 million to explore Covid-19 and its disproportionate impact on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. They noted that none of the funding was awarded to Black academic leads but that one member of the awards assessment panel was co-investigator on three of the six successfully awarded studies. They raised in their letter the apparent lack of critical reflection on the inherent systems, processes and power imbalances and questioned the balance of panelists who have specific specialism and training in race, ethnicity and inequality as an independent field of inquiry. They further noted concerns presented by Black individuals, many of whom have repeatedly expressed a desire to challenge and study the impact of systemic and structural racism but are invisible when appropriate research funding is awarded. In this situation, questions arise about who was gatekeeping the qualifications, backgrounds and particularly the positionality of the academic leads awarded this funding. Why did the awarding panel neglect to consider that “members of affected communities should be leaders in the response and not just be supportive voices within the research framework”? What made the successfully awarded academic leads most suited to explore the experiences of racially minoritised communities when Black academic leads were bypassed?

Gatekeeping in social science research is often associated with access to participants, particularly vulnerable, marginalised or minoritised communities, for data collection purposes (Aaltonen and Kivijärvi, 2019; Emmel et al, 2007; Singh and Wassenaar, 2016). However, this paper raises the question of whether there should also be gatekeepers from conception to dissemination that ensure that researchers consider and articulate the researcher/researched power dynamics and ‘who they are’ in the research process involving these communities, particularly when there is not a match between the researcher and researched. The ethical approval process will generally require researchers to consider power imbalances and whilst some ethnographic researchers explicitly express their positionality in the dissemination of their research, this is not consistent and the depth of reflexivity varies. More problematic is the broader issue of who is being afforded the opportunities to conducted funded research with minoritised communities without gatekeeping whether they are justifying ‘who they are’ and what makes them the most appropriate researchers to conduct this research, as highlighted by the open letter to UKRI.

In research that specifically involves racially minoritised communities, locating the researcher in areas related to social and political contexts of the research and the researched group, including the impact of ‘race’ and ethnic differences or similarities, and researcher ontological and epistemological beliefs which influence their research are particularly pertinent. Researcher positionality “reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study” (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p. 71), influencing how research is conducted, its outcomes and results. Holmes (2020) notes that some aspects of positionality are considered fixed, such as social identities (gender, ‘race’/ethnicity, skin-colour, nationality) whilst other aspects are more fluid, subjective and contextual, such as political views and

personal life experiences. Fletcher (2010) notes that the researcher positionality, and specifically researcher biographies related to 'race' and/or ethnicity, problematises fieldwork and permeates all stages of the research – from “the questions they ask, to those that are ignored, from problem mutilation to analysis, representation and writing” (2010, p. 2). Positionality is informed by reflexivity. Reflexivity is the concept that researchers “should acknowledge and disclose their selves in research, seeking to understand their part in it, or influence on it” (Cohen et al, 2011). Although much has been written about researcher positionality (Manohar et al, 2017; Milner, 2007, as examples), articulation of a researcher's position relies on the researcher's willingness to declare their ontological and epistemological standpoints in relation to the researched group, the importance researchers place on discussing this concept, the openness to be critiqued on researcher/researched differences and power structures which are presented or omitted in research outputs and who, if anyone, is asking them 'who they are' in relation to their researched community. Although positionality statements are increasingly being included in outputs, not all researchers conducting studies with racially minoritised groups explicitly acknowledge their positionality. Should this be a choice or an expected norm? Who could and should hold researchers accountable for acknowledging and disclosing their selves if the researcher themselves do not?

I am a racially minoritised Early Career Researcher (ECR) but I was not 'race' matched to the Black women participants in my own research project. During the research process and in disseminating my work, I experienced multiple forms of checks and balances through gatekeepers who forced me to robustly articulate my positionality and who I am in the research process, making the researcher biography inescapable. Was this to authenticate my suitability to carry out research with Black communities in a way that the example of the UKRI failed to do? This paper presents an autoethnographic perspective of the experiences of being asked four specific questions by a range of stakeholders through the research activity and publication process, acting as gatekeepers about my positionality. I then raise the question of whether the practice of gatekeeping researcher positionality should be embedded in the research process with racially minoritised participants, from conception to dissemination, and who or what processes could potentially act as these gatekeepers.

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Keywords: Researcher positionality, Gatekeepers, Racially minoritised communities, Accountability.

Where language and gender meet: addressing intersectional challenges to empower female engineers in Gaza

Caroline Burns

Northumbria University, United Kingdom

The paper shares the methodological, ethical and linguistic deliberations and choices we made in attempting a decolonial approach on a British Council-funded research project: English as a Medium of Education (EME) and Gender. The project (ongoing) aims to understand the gendered experiences of female academics teaching and learning in STEM subjects, in contexts where English is the medium of instruction but is not the participants' first language.

The project brings together academics in the MENA region (mainly from Palestine), and UK academics with English as an additional language, to share their experiences of learning/teaching STEM subjects in English. All around the world, but particularly so in Palestine, English is commonly viewed as the language needed to access employment opportunities and to participate in the global circulation of knowledge and access resources, which are mostly in English. Yet English also carries the burden of being a colonial language, maintaining linguistic and epistemic hierarchies between the Global North and Global South (Bhatt, Badwan and Madiba, 2022). Thus, the project is looking not only at what is gained by EME, but also what is potentially lost. In the Gaza Strip, where female academics face considerable challenges to building careers, the project may have particular relevance, especially given the marked deepening of these constraints after 15 years of siege and a resulting poverty of resources and opportunities for cross-border mobility.

The project facilitated 3 rounds of online conversations between participants in the two regions. In Round 1 (October 2022), a Story Circles approach (Deardorff, 2020) was taken to create a safe space and build trust. Round 2 (March 2023) consisted of shorter, less structured, sessions, with only an ice breaker followed by 2 questions – one on language and the other on gender - to allow the conversation to build naturally. To amplify the voices of the female academics, men were participants in the first round, but not in the Round 2 sessions, which were also facilitated by the project's female Co-Investigators. Round 3 is planned for

September 2023, with the Arabic-speaking members of the research team leading and translating, in an attempt to decentre English as the default language for research and education.

Initial coding of data from Round 2 suggests that the women are united in their belief that there is a need for a common global language to facilitate the global circulation of knowledge. While some reservations were voiced about language loss and identity loss, our so far has indicated a general acceptance of the English language as a vector for learning and teaching engineering.

Views are mixed as to whether gender is a barrier to progression in the field, with some noting country of origin as more important bias, although it is generally agreed that women take longer to progress in their career than their male counterparts. While some are angered by this, others appear more accepting of other duties assigned to them as women and are proud of their ability to manage both a family and an academic career. Participants working in the UK have experienced discrimination in relation to the following intersecting characteristics: gender, age, nationality, religious identity and negative perceptions towards 'non-native' speakers of English. Participants freely admitted that their previous perceptions of gender issues in the Global North/ South had been challenged by these conversations.

In Round 3 we also hope to focus on potential responses to the disadvantages experienced in relation to the intersectional characteristics identified above.

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Keywords: English as a Medium of Education, gender, intersectionality

The arduous art of facilitating dialogue: working towards a dialogic pedagogy of disruption

Kevin Brazant

London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom

In addressing calls for Decolonising curriculums, some universities have sought to rebrand and focus on their educational offer as one that espouses values of social justice. Inspired by Freire's dialogic pedagogy and emancipatory education this paper proposes a conceptual framework based on a literature review of teaching practices in Higher Education that scaffolds 'dialogic' teaching delivery. In a bid to disrupt monologic teaching, understood as the transmission of ideas from lecturer to student, also referred to as 'banking education', recent studies have shown a more promising outlook for fostering critical dispositions within students. However, this is overshadowed by the difference in attainment outcomes between BAME students and their white counter parts, with little attention given to the threat posed to 'dialogic' teaching where students feel alienated by the curriculum and overall teaching process. A recent study in 'silence in academic talk' has revealed how the most well intentioned dialogic approach can become susceptible to further alienating students. This paper proposes a six step framework in dialogic teaching, that diligently facilitates a learning process that averts

the threat to these approaches, by scaffolding dialogic teaching as an inclusive, equitable process as set out as follows:

1. Pedagogy is disruptive to traditional forms of monologic teaching discourse and cognisant of the interplay of power; creative co delivery and redistribution of power between teaching staff and students as part of learning and teaching.
2. A Facilitation style by teachers that exudes Flexibility, intuition and compassion; teaching staff are encouraged to respond in the moment and be present to where students are at in relation to their learning. This means sometimes abandoning set, rigid agendas to address other needs of anxiety and fear with encouragement and compassion where appropriate.
3. Modelling an emancipatory pedagogy that goes beyond classroom discourse and achieves action in the world; using Freire to develop a critical consciousness that enables students to bring in their lived experience, and to make meaning in relationship to themes explored as part of their learning with the intention of praxis.
4. Teaching as co-constructing knowledge and mediating understanding of the curriculum with more able learners and academics; the process of scaffolding students' learning and knowledge, where academics and students mediate understanding of newly introduced ideas and concepts through dialogue.
5. Developing criticality, and a curiosity to learn; through critiquing the ideas of others as witnessed through debate and classroom interaction to develop collegial learning communities that has social and cultural capital, moving from an alienated position to one of engagement with ideas.
6. Predicated on principles for fostering a dialogic HE environment; learning is seen as a collective endeavour between the teacher and students working together to achieve the learning tasks. It is cumulative that teachers and students build on each other's ideas and is purposeful, with teachers ensuring that dialogue is designed to achieve specific educational goals.

Keywords: dialogic teaching, Inclusive Learning, Social Justice Education, Higher Education, Critical Pedagogy

Decolonising the quantitative methods classroom

Rima Saini

Middlesex University London, United Kingdom

A challenge with social survey research is that of categories. Particularly how we grapple with the colonial problematics of classification and codification. This stretches to both the use of categories in existing, secondary social data as well as within the surveys that undergraduate and postgraduate social science students in UK universities create as part of their own data collection projects. Socially constructed, hierarchised group differences are reflected in the way social survey researchers categorise 'demographic units', whether by gender, nationality, ethnicity, social class. Research which uncritically and crudely wields these types of categories can risk reinforcing group differences (Hall 1988; Walter and Anderson 2013) and erasing the distinct experiences of those subsumed under these groups. This is why we must work against, when working with, these categories (Gunaratnam 2003).

Questions related to which groups have historically been framed as subjects of knowledge, and which objects, are key in the undergraduate or postgraduate quantitative classroom, where students grapple with social data collection. This is often with an overwhelming focus on its technical rather than political dimensions, with issues of ontological security and axiology rarely underpinning pedagogy. There are further issues in relation to some of the analytical methods we utilise in the quantitative classroom (particularly those that were developed by eugenicist statisticians to, crudely and erroneously, linearly model differences between constructed racial groups) and the assumptions we reproduce about the value of quantitative methods based on notions of objectivity and neutrality.

This paper thus argues for the salience of a decolonial approach to survey design in the undergraduate quantitative classroom in UK social science degree programmes. Teachers as well as practitioners of survey design must be mindful of further essentialising the 'othering' that social survey research can propagate. Decolonising quantitative methods pedagogy entails thinking about the subjectivating practices of Whiteness (Youdell 2010) that occur in the quantitative classroom, particularly where marginalised students (as is often the case in post-1992 Universities with ethnically diverse student cohorts (UCAS 2021)) research or analyse marginalised groups quantitatively. Survey design should thus be approached in a critically reflexive manner (Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021) that examines how our own beliefs, judgements, and practices impact our decision making, our research participants, and also considers symbolic harms meted out against the researcher.

The role of our social position in our methodological choices (Walter 2020) is often had as a matter of course in the qualitative classroom, but tend to be under-addressed in the quantitative classroom. In non-quantitative classrooms students may be engaging with in-depth discussions and deconstructions of the relationship between socially constructed categories of race and gender, processes of racism and racialisation, and hegemonic whiteness and power. These discussions must also enter the quantitative classroom where social survey design is being undertaken, and where secondary social survey data is wielded.

This paper will set out a number of approaches that quantitative teachers can use to decolonise social survey design in the quantitative classroom. These will be situated within a UK context and drawn from the author's recent quantitative methods undergraduate and postgraduate teaching experiences in the disciplines of sociology, criminology and politics primarily, their praxis in decolonising social science curricula, and from reflections already outlined by the author (Zwiener-Collins et al. 2021) specific to the decolonisation of quantitative methods pedagogy in Politics.

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Keywords: Decolonisation, Quantitative methods, Pedagogy, Social surveys, Categorisation, Codification, Critical reflexivity

What could Decolonisation offer Nationalism Studies? And what could Nationalism Studies offer Decolonisation?

William Kerr

Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

Nation-states are the dominant political structure of the contemporary world; further to that it is seen as the natural way to organize the world, with people of a given territory being ruled by their co-nationals, in what is normally called methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Schiller, 2002). The question of decolonising nationalism studies is thus one that has a lot of potentials. In this paper, I want to explore what this might mean methodologically: First in terms of what decolonisation could offer to nationalism studies, and second in what nationalism studies could offer to our understanding of decolonisation. First, I will look at the key works of Ernest Gellner (1983) and Benedict Anderson (2006) to show how a decolonial reading can highlight and expand on elements of their theories, respectively Gellner's parable of the 'blue' people and Anderson's study of creole nationalism, to show how colonialism can be integrated into theories of the emergence of nationalism. Secondly, I will then examine how methodological nationalist assumptions can figure within decolonial texts. By looking at 'Decolonisation is not a Metaphor' (Tuck & Yang, 2012), I show how nationalist assumptions about links between territory and people can still exist even in one of the most avowedly decolonial texts and how this can affect the overall argument. Methodologically, there is a value in being able to consider both what decolonisation can offer to understand nationalism, as well as what understanding nationalism can offer to decolonialism.

Keywords: Nationalism Studies, Decolonisation, Social Theory, Methodological Nationalism

What is the impact of different models of pre-registration nurse education on student learning outcomes and diversity? A scoping review

Albert Amagyei, Rosie Kneafsey, Julia Carroll, Amanda R. Amorim Adegboye
Coventry University
 & Laura Strumidlo
Oxford Brookes University, United Kingdom

Background

Nursing education is going through accelerated changes to meet the needs of modern students as well as provide solutions to the current and future nursing recruitment challenges. Alternative models of pre-registration nurse education aside the traditional campus learning degrees have evolved in the UK and globally. These include blended learning degrees, online learning degrees, nursing degree apprenticeships, recognition of prior learning and pre-registration masters/ accelerated masters. However, little is known about the impact of these routes on student learning outcomes, diversity and retention.

Aim

The oral/poster will present the findings of a scoping review which answered the following questions:

1. What models of pre-registration nurse education are documented in the literature?
2. What is the existing evidence for the effectiveness of the different models in relation to student learning outcomes, diversity and retention?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities associated with each model in relation to student learning experiences?

Methodology

We searched CINAHL, EMBASE, MEDLINE, PubMed and OVID PSYINFO databases to retrieve eligible papers. Papers were eligible if they reported on a model of pre-registration nurse education excluding blended learning degrees and their impact on students learning outcomes. The review was conducted using Arksey & O'Malley (2005) methodological framework for scoping review

Results

A total of 52 papers from 14 countries met the inclusion criteria for the scoping review. Five of these were UK based papers. Four models of pre-registration nurse education were revealed of which apprenticeship nursing degrees and accelerated nursing programs were identified as main stream routes to nursing education, however, their research design, mainly descriptive, resulted in limited contribution to knowledge on their impact on student outcomes. Despite online learning being demonstrated in most studies as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, they were adopted as components of a programme of nurse education. Nonetheless, online learning when compared to traditional learning contributed greatly to positive student learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The review revealed that the alternative models of pre-registration nurse education appears to have consistent positive impact on nursing student learning outcomes, retention and

diversity outcomes. Online learning proved to be an effective pedagogy that was either similar to or more effective than class-room based degrees in relation to student learning outcomes including academic performance, learners satisfaction and clinical and transition skills.

Keywords: pre-registration, Nurse education, Nursing students, Accelerated nursing programs, Recognition of prior learning, Online learning

Gendabicod: Decolonial Research Methods of Reciprocity to challenge Academic Extractivism

Mónica Sánchez Hernández
University of Bristol, United Kingdom

When you research Latin America, how do you instigate: is it collaborative research or rather academic extractivism? Collaboration has been presented as the quintessential aspiration in academic research. Yet, “collaborating” within a world of unbalanced relations of power may perpetuate existing oppressions. More so, when the distinctions of “they” the participants and “us” the researchers are imbricated within research design. Following feminist theorists who sustain that in a patriarchal societies no female-male relations could be equal, I argue that when entering lop-sided relationships in fieldwork, the bare minimum is to acknowledge such disparities and to later act upon balancing them as much as possible. Reflective accounts on positionality or approaches such as Participation-Action-Research have proposed alternatives to academic extractivism. However, as decolonizing methodologies suggest, there is an urgent need for further accountability to aspire for respectful collaborations.

This paper will be presenting a research design that tried to address some of the issues of an unbalanced relationship between “the Other” participants and “Us” the researchers of the pilot study “Understandings of manhood and models of masculinity at the CRHEVM in Oaxaca, Mexico”. Using art-based methods as elicitors of conversation and reciprocal interaction, the study inquired empathetically about the meanings and aspirations of -being a man- of males who have been criminalized upon serious-offenses or intimate-partner violence in a region marked by homicides, femicides, and feminicides.

Decolonisation of Narratives in British Museum: An Ethnographic Lens

Luyao Zhu
University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

For many people, the British Museum is a national educational institution closely associated with the empire and colonialism and a crucial place for decolonisation. In the British Museum’s social media comment area, there is always some voice of advocates returning collections which came from conquered and colonised countries and areas forming a new force that opposes the ethical and physical inequalities generated by the past colonial power. However, such decolonising power from the public often fails to enter the inner museum or works little in institutional decolonisation. For this reason, the essentialist interpretations in curation create the image of an authoritative institution and passive public which excluded the ordinary public visitors’ narratives in the museum space. In the paper, the ethnographic conversation is used to gather museum visitors’ discourse data for discovering and analysing the decolonising

power of those “passive visitors” in order to challenge the top-down authoritative knowledge discourse and the existing structure of knowledge production in the museum. In the conversation, visitors demonstrate critical historical thinking about colonialism and decolonialism.

Upon analysing ethnographic conversation field notes, three key findings emerged:

1. Decolonial immanent critiques occurred more frequently in cultural fields closely related to visitors, which the visitors themselves could activate by comparing the interpretation of artefacts in the museum with their previous experiences and knowledge.
2. In the BM context, visitors were likely to feel passive regarding their personal opinions and discourses, as the dominant educational approach involved singular knowledge transmission with limited interaction, consequently creating a passive message receiver image for visitors.
3. People’s attitudes towards decolonialism could potentially create an emerging identity category with political tendencies against placing cultures, races and epistemologies in hierarchical ranks or producing a dominant culture.

These findings indicate that visitors demonstrate strong potential for decolonial immanent critique in the BM space. However, their opportunities to activate and express their opinions and discourses are limited. In future decolonising museum studies, it would be promising to discover what the general public may bring to the museum.



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