

Decolonizing Methodologies

(Concept Note)

Decolonization is a multi-level engagement with imperialism and colonialism. The discourse essentially revolves around the unequal power of defining, labeling, classifying and representing the other. Researchers, however, are concerned with a deeper critical engagement on methodological, epistemological and ontological levels. Colonialism accompanies violence incurred both upon the bodies and the minds with the lasting damage incurred upon the consciousness. Decolonization, therefore, begins with questioning the Western philosophies that delegitimize the indigenous ways of being and knowing. Whereas, decolonial thinking is substantial, it is not the sole or final step in the movement of decolonization.

Demand for decolonization has gathered force and momentum across the Global South. But what does decolonizing sociological research mean? Does it involve outright rejection of a Western intellectual tradition or underline an urgent need for epistemic shifts within disciplines? Is complete decolonization of sociological research possible? Reflecting on sociological traditions, how to break away from Eurocentrism within the discipline? How to assert a decolonizing methodological approach to research? How to think through methodological, epistemological and ontological levels to do the mechanical task of producing indigenous knowledge?

In this seminar, we intend to dig further into the question of ‘how we know what we know’ and explore the possibility of creating alternative methodologies for making liberating and emancipatory interventions. That is to say, to undertake a critical analysis of research approaches, philosophies of knowledge and ways of being that help us to counter colonial incursions in our thoughts and research practices. Most importantly, we seek to explore how radical knowledge practices can free us from colonial clutches in academia and beyond.

Along with the aforementioned questions, we would be engaging with following themes

- Eurocentrism, localized knowledge production and the global dynamics of knowledge in Sociology

- Education, curriculum and decolonization
- Indigenization, appropriation and re-colonization
- Undoing colonialism, dismantling gendered, racialized and power hierarchies.
- Research as a revolutionary practice, centering subaltern voices and deconstructing colonial narratives
- The relationship between language and power in the process of decolonization
- Post-colonial debates on objectivity, subjectivity and positionality
- Blind spots in methodological research and practices
- Indigenous ways of knowing and being