**Researching ''on and in'' Global South countries: Southeast Asia**

**Abstract**

Over the last decade, there has been a growing awareness that colonialism continues through various overlapping iterations of coloniality, such as through politics, economics, security, and academia. Academics from global north countries and global south countries have highlighted and called for the dismantling of coloniality in its different iterations. Perhaps the most vocal decolonising calls have come from global north academics wanting to decolonise global north academia in the form of epistemic decolonisation. As such, in this article, I call on global north academics researching on and in global south countries to employ decolonial methodologies to avoid inadvertently reinforcing coloniality. By utilising autoethnography and *critical decolonial reflexivity*, I offer ways for global north academics researching on or in global south countries to guard against reinforcing coloniality during their research.

**Keywords:** Decolonisation, Coloniality, Methodology, Research, Indigenous, Global North, Global South, Academia.

**Introduction**

Over the last few decades, calls for epistemic decolonisation have rapidly increased among some global north countries (hereon, global north countries include global north settler states) and global south countries. Especially after the initial Black Lives Matter Movement (2103-) and the Rhodes Must Fall campaign protests at Cape Town University in South Africa in 2015. Since these protests, a lot of literature calling for the decolonisation of global north academia, in the form of decolonising the university, social theory, pedagogy, curricula, classroom, knowledge production, and methodology, has been published[[1]](#footnote-1),[[2]](#footnote-2),[[3]](#footnote-3),[[4]](#footnote-4),[[5]](#footnote-5),[[6]](#footnote-6). That said, this article, in general terms, focuses on decolonising methodology, and specifically on how global north academics conduct research on or in global south countries because sometimes their attitudes and practices could inadvertently reinforce coloniality[[7]](#footnote-7). This situation, in some ways, mimics how non-white students are perceived and treated in global north universities[[8]](#footnote-8),[[9]](#footnote-9),[[10]](#footnote-10). That said, I am fully aware that some global south academics may also hold similar attitudes and engage in similar practices to their global north counterparts and, therefore, inadvertently could be reinforcing coloniality. I will explore how global south academics inadvertently reinforce coloniality in future articles.

Therefore, this article offers some ways for global north academics doing research on or in global south countries to guard against reinforcing coloniality, based on the work of indigenous and decolonial academics like Lind Smith[[11]](#footnote-11),[[12]](#footnote-12),[[13]](#footnote-13). That said, it is also important to mention that I am aware that the term indigenous may be considered problematic by some academics, given the diversity of communities that claim indigeneity based on language, culture, or claims to other identity registers[[14]](#footnote-14),[[15]](#footnote-15). However, I am using the term specifically to refer to communities that were present before European colonisation in countries that are today called global north settler states[[16]](#footnote-16).

Over the last decade, decolonising global north academia has gained much popularity among some global north academics and students, especially epistemic decolonisation[[17]](#footnote-17). The popularity has led to many publications, conferences, seminars, and workshops (online and offline) being organised by global north academics, students, and research centres. For example, a quick search using the Web of Science portal for the term 'decolonising' reveals that publications on decolonising have rapidly increased since 2000. Not only is most of the literature authored by academics based in global north countries, but the publishers are also primarily from the same countries. For example, academics at the University of London have published the most articles on decolonisation, suggesting that the UK is an important decolonial knowledge production centre. This situation could be interpreted as global north centres of knowledge production inadvertently reinforcing coloniality because they continue to dominate knowledge production, even on decolonisation[[18]](#footnote-18),[[19]](#footnote-19).

One of the most popular ways to engage in epistemic decolonisation is decolonising methodology. One reason for its popularity is that it makes academics and students aware of the dirty history of research and research methods in global north countries and global south countries. It also provides ways to conduct research that could help guard against reinforcing coloniality. By researching, I mean several things. Firstly, epistemological and methodological choices. Secondly, the recruitment of research participants, research assistants, advisors, and funders. Thirdly, fieldwork. Fourth, the dissemination of findings through articles, books, conference papers, specialist workshops and seminars. Finally, the advancement of the researched community through the research. There are several research methods under the banner of decolonial methodologies, which have gained much popularity among global north, global north settler states and, in some cases, global south academics and students. These methods are popular and important because they have been developed by decolonial and indigenous academics and are deemed non-invasive, non-exploitative and non-predatory. These methods are based on the knowledge production and dissemination practices that have roots among indigenous communities and global south countries[[20]](#footnote-20),[[21]](#footnote-21),[[22]](#footnote-22),[[23]](#footnote-23). These methods include but are not restricted to critical and autoethnography, art-based methods, storytelling, sharing circles, yarning, *pagtatanong Tanong*, learning from wisdom keepers, participatory research and *halaqas*[[24]](#footnote-24),[[25]](#footnote-25). For example, the *halaqa* is a research method that comes from traditional Muslim teaching and knowledge exchange practices, which is still used among Islamic institutions like universities, *Madrasas*, Mosques, Sufi circles and even in Muslim homes in the global north and global south countries and global north settler states.

Since Linda Smith's ground breaking book titled *Decolonising Methods*, which was published in 1999, decolonising methods has gained much popularity among global north academia. She discusses the colonial history of research and its legacy among indigenous communities in New Zealand, which is a global north settler state. Since then, many other academics have highlighted the depravity and racism of research during colonialism and its continued impact. As such, they have not only called for theoretical and methodological reflexivity but also raised important concerns about the dangers of decolonial research methods and epistemologies being assimilated or integrated into global north knowledge production paradigms[[26]](#footnote-26),[[27]](#footnote-27),[[28]](#footnote-28),[[29]](#footnote-29),[[30]](#footnote-30). For example, some indigenous academics[[31]](#footnote-31) argue that appropriation and integration can weaken indigenous epistemologies and assimilating indigenous knowledge into global north knowledge could mean denying the core differences between the two. Other indigenous[[32]](#footnote-32) academics argue that appropriation and integration can lead to global north epistemology marginalising and delegitimising what it does not consider knowledge because of its global dominance. This situation has meant that indigenous and global south research paradigms, theories, concepts, methodologies and imaginaries have either been marginalised because they do not meet global north epistemological standards or have suffered epistemicide[[33]](#footnote-33),[[34]](#footnote-34),[[35]](#footnote-35).

For some global north academics and students, methodological decolonisation may seem a simple and easy task, and decolonial methodologies may appear attractive methodological alternatives to those born out of the global north episteme. However, in reality, methodological decolonisation and using decolonial methodologies is not easy and reinforcing coloniality is an ever-present risk, despite the good intentions of academics and students. The primary reason for this is not the research methods themselves but how global north academia conditions the minds of academics and students to think, question, see, feel and behave. Here, I am referring to the colonised mind of the global north academic, which is the opposite of the global south colonised mind that academics like Alatas[[36]](#footnote-36), Alatas[[37]](#footnote-37) and Gu[[38]](#footnote-38) have explained in their excellent works on global south academia and academics. Admittedly, the colonised mind I am referring to needs more explanation, which I hope to do in future articles. However, for this article, it is sufficient to mention that the global north colonised mind suffers from a superiority complex based on cultural and intellectual superiority[[39]](#footnote-39).

This article has four parts. In the first part, I detail my methodological approach, which includes my motivations for writing the article from the perspective of a British-BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) academic, who works for a global north university in a global south country. It also includes the conceptual framing of the article and key terms that I use in the article. The second part of the article is to make global north academics researching on or in global south countries aware that using decolonial methodologies is not an easy task. In fact, those wanting to use them will need to think carefully and, on the one hand, justify their research methodology and, on the other hand, show how their research findings will benefit the researched community in substantial ways. Therefore, using decolonial methodologies entails more than having a diverse research team or inviting a global south academic to talk at a global north university. In the third part of the article, I discuss what indigenous academics and decolonial academics call the dirty history of research and research methods. This history, in most cases, is not taught in undergraduate and postgraduate social science degree programmes or research methods courses in the global north and, for this matter, in global south universities, which is why most academics are unaware of it. In the final part of the article, I suggest some ways that are informed by decolonial methodologies for global north academics to consider using to guard against reinforcing coloniality whilst researching on or in global south countries.

**Methodological approach**

This article is methodologically informed by decoloniality. In other words, it is written from the borders of different registers[[40]](#footnote-40). This part of the article is broken down into a few sections. In the first section, I explain my motivations for writing this article by employing autoethnography as a decolonial methodology because it offers a unique way to discuss personal experiences of coloniality along several registers that connect global north and global south academia[[41]](#footnote-41),[[42]](#footnote-42). That said, I am aware that some academics may disapprove of using decolonial methods because they deem them unscientific or due to other biases[[43]](#footnote-43). However, such positions do not acknowledge that decolonial methods have emerged from the critique of global north epistemology and methodology and the limited awareness of methodologies emanating from indigenous and global south knowledge production traditions[[44]](#footnote-44). Furthermore, Autoethnography offers me a way to think about and discuss my positionality and situatedness in relation to my research from the perspective of critical reflexivity and broader local, regional and global power structures and privileges, including those that privilege me[[45]](#footnote-45),[[46]](#footnote-46). As such, adhering to key decolonial goals, like addressing social justice concerns[[47]](#footnote-47),[[48]](#footnote-48). Importantly, autoethnography also enables me to start a process centred on reciprocity. On the one hand, this process involves co-knowledge production with global south academics (Southeast Asian) on why and how some voices and perspectives are silenced and diminished and others are not. On the other hand, why is the inappropriate treatment of global south academics and field researchers overlooked or downplayed? In the second part, I explain coloniality and decoloniality for the benefit of those readers who may not be aware of these basic and fundamental decolonial concepts but also to theoretically and conceptually frame the article as decolonial in orientation. In the final part, I detail the key terms I use throughout the article that has been developed by employing autoethnography as a decolonial method.

**Motivations**

I am motivated to write this article based on my personal experiences as a British-BAME academic working for a global north university in a global south country, whose research focuses on race, religion, criminology and different types of political violence. As an academic, I engage with a range of global north and global south actors. These include academics, religious and community leaders, embassies and NGOs (heron I will use global north and global south actors), with the latter, often funding research on political violence and community cohesion programmes. Although providing names of organisations, events, and programmes is good practice, however, in some instances, it is better not to do so because it may lead to loss of funding and livelihood for those involved, as well as a range of risks that are not always appreciated by some global north academics[[49]](#footnote-49).

Through my interactions with global north and global south actors, I have realised that their motivations for researching and funding research on political violence, disseminating research, accepting one perspective on political violence over another, and organising community cohesion programmes differ. On the one hand, it seems that the theoretical and conceptual understandings employed by academics and funders are underpinned and organised around coloniality, where Islam and Muslims are deemed as the kernel of extremism and political violence, with little reflection on other possible causes, be they local, regional and global[[50]](#footnote-50). On the other hand, the methodological approaches adopted by some academics and funders have, in some instances, led to research practices that appear predatory and exploitative, with little regard for the physical and mental well-being of the researchers that they employ[[51]](#footnote-51),[[52]](#footnote-52). One good example is how some funders expect global south academics to be available 24hrs a day, with little regard for their well-being[[53]](#footnote-53). The thought process behind such understandings and practices appears to be a product of the global north and global south colonised minds[[54]](#footnote-54),[[55]](#footnote-55),[[56]](#footnote-56)). The colonised minds I am referring to here can be understood as interdependent and based on an inferiority and superiority complex. Academics like Alatas[[57]](#footnote-57) and Gu[[58]](#footnote-58) have explained the colonised mind of global south academics in different ways, but all seem to agree that it is the product of an inferiority complex. They are suggesting some kind of lack in comparison to their global north counterparts along several registers, such as intellectual and cultural. Such a mindset has been many centuries in the making and is constantly being reinforced through different iterations of coloniality. Whereas the global north colonised mind suffers from a superiority complex, which is the opposite of the colonised mind of global south academics.

Like the theoretical and conceptual understandings, the community cohesion programmes also appear in some instances to inadvertently be underpinned by coloniality and designed in a way that preserves the socio-political status quo. In other words, they preserve the privileges of the dominant community and connected elites from minority communities. For example, some community cohesion programmes organised tend to employ a state-orientated understanding of religious discourses that appears to be centred on the War on Terror logic that imagines Islam and Muslim cultures as the cause of extremism and political violence. The funding for research on political violence and community cohesion programmes also appears to be based on the above-mentioned logic and imagination and connected ideological and political convictions that frame the global south's future as the global north, despite the apparent historical and cultural differences[[59]](#footnote-59). Therefore, Sardar's[[60]](#footnote-60) point about the future of the global south being the global north seems to hold true.

Based on these engagements, I feel it is important for me to encourage all the global north and global south actors involved in funding and researching political violence and organising community cohesion programmes to carefully consider whether their understandings, motivations and goals could inadvertently be reinforcing coloniality. Although the ways I suggest to guard against reinforcing coloniality are intended for global north academics researching on or in global south countries, however, I feel that they could also be helpful for global south academics, religious and community leaders, embassies and NGOs to consider. This is because political, religious, social and organisational status and identity registers do not preclude an organisation or individual from inadvertently reinforcing coloniality through attitudes, research and organisational practices. That said, the reason why I have chosen global north academics as the focus of my suggestions is because of the glaring power differentials that I have noticed centred on race among and between the global north and global south actors involved in funding, researching, organising community cohesion programmes, and the researched communities. Not being aware of power differentials can easily and quickly lead to unethical research practices. In other words, predatory or exploitative motivations, goals, and research practices that may follow colonial knowledge production relations[[61]](#footnote-61). That said, I am aware the aforementioned type of power differentials also exist between global south actors, which I will explore in future articles.

**Coloniality and Decoloniality**

Coloniality and decoloniality are perhaps the two most important concepts in decolonial thinking. Maldonado-Torres[[62]](#footnote-62) posits that coloniality is the process of racial domination and marginalisation that structured colonialism and has continued into the postcolonial era in different forms. We see coloniality working in global politics, economics and global north and global south academia. Mignolo[[63]](#footnote-63), a leading decolonial theorist, argues that modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin. For him, coloniality signifies the underside or the dark side of modernity, where exploitation, marginalisation, violence, and epistemicide occur.

Decolonial theorists, such as Maldonado-Torres [[64]](#footnote-64) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni[[65]](#footnote-65), argue that coloniality is composed of three main parts that condition all aspects of life in different ways, including the mind, identity registers and politics. These are the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being and non-being. The coloniality of power refers to how and why global politics and international organisations organise the world based on global north political and economic standards and imaginaries[[66]](#footnote-66). The coloniality of knowledge refers to how global north academia and attached epistemology and ways of sensing, thinking, imagining, feeling, believing and being and doing dominate how knowledge is produced globally. They dominate for three main reasons. Firstly, global north academia lays claim to universality, objectivity and neutrality, therefore marginalising other epistemologies and ways of sensing, thinking, imagining, feeling, believing and being and doing and, therefore, ways of producing knowledge. Secondly, dominant global north languages, such as English, French and German, are the main repositories of what is considered knowledge by global north academia. Thirdly, these languages provide the lexicon through which knowledge is expressed and understood. In turn, they construct a mental architecture by imposing on indigenous communities and populations from global south countries a knowledge system that is not their own[[67]](#footnote-67),[[68]](#footnote-68). As Taiwo[[69]](#footnote-69) posits, the knowledge system had already been rigged from before we were born (referring to himself as an African man and African people). The coloniality of knowledge has several negative ramifications for global south academia and academics. For example, global south academia and academics suffer from intellectual dependency, the captive and colonised mind and extroversion[[70]](#footnote-70),[[71]](#footnote-71),[[72]](#footnote-72),[[73]](#footnote-73),[[74]](#footnote-74),[[75]](#footnote-75)). In other words, there is a tendency among global south academics to mimic or copy their global north counterparts in terms of university structure, curricula, theorisation, methodology, and knowledge production. This is due to global north academia determining how global south academia should be organised, including 'what is taught and how it should be taught' in global south universities. The final type of coloniality is the coloniality of being and non-being, which structures how people are racialised and treated according to a predetermined set of racialised tropes[[76]](#footnote-76). For example, people occupying the zone of being are deemed more human than those occupying the zone of non-being. As such, the former are afforded human rights, material resources and social and political recognition, unlike the latter. One present (Ukrainian and Russian war) and obvious example of how the zone of being and non-being operates is the differential treatment that refugees fleeing conflicts and political turmoil from the global north and global south countries are received by global north countries[[77]](#footnote-77). For example, Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian bombardment are considered 'like us', meaning 'white and civilised' by sections of global north media, unlike those fleeing Iraq and Syria[[78]](#footnote-78). These opinions suggest the prevalence of hidden, ''pernicious racism''.

Unlike coloniality, decoloniality is the theory and practice of 'how to undo coloniality'[[79]](#footnote-79). It is "ways of thinking, knowing, being, and doing that began with, but also precedes the colonial enterprise and invasion. It implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to control life, knowledge, spirituality, and thought, structures that are clearly intertwined with and constitutive of global capitalism and Western modernity”. As such, decoloniality breaks the theory and practice binary, moves towards plurality and includes embodied experiences, such as emotions, feeling and ways of being. Therefore, moving towards pluriversal imaginaries and future realities[[80]](#footnote-80). As such, readers need to be familiar with both terms because understanding them will help to identify and guard against reinforcing coloniality while researching on and in global south countries.

**Conceptual framing**

The first term I will define is *global north global countries, global north settler states* and *the global south*. I use these terms to preface ontological, epistemological, axiological, academic, geographical, racial, political and economic differences between the global north and global south countries. However, I am aware that there are also differences between the global north and global south countries[[81]](#footnote-81). Furthermore, there is considerable debate among academics over the most accurate terms to describe the aforementioned differences[[82]](#footnote-82). I am also conscious of the fact that there are 'norths in the south and souths in the north', which makes it difficult to accurately describe the aforementioned differences.

The second term that I will define here is what I call *critical decolonial reflexivity*, which I employ, as a methodological approach to writing this article. Critical decolonial reflexivity entails turning the 'decolonial gaze' onto critical ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, believing, being, and doing, including decolonial ways. As a methodological approach, it is methodologically based on the one hand on border thinking, which is the space created 'outside of the inside by the inside' because of its exclusionary and marginalising practices based on race. On the other hand, it is based on 'double consciousness'. In other words, it provides a way of sensing, seeing, thinking, feeling, believing, imagining, being and doing that is based on the experiences of global south populations, indigenous communities from global north settler states and BAME communities from global north countries interacting with boarders in multiple ways (often conflictual). The experience also includes being forced to be on the borders because of exclusionary and marginalising practices and becoming aware of colonial difference, and constantly being a 'stranger in one's own home'. A strangeness that the BAME individual and the dominant groups in global north countries use to define the BAME and indigenous 'I' of indigenous and BAME communities [[83]](#footnote-83),[[84]](#footnote-84),[[85]](#footnote-85),[[86]](#footnote-86). Critical decolonial reflexivity also means acknowledging that the current ways of sensing, thinking, imagining, feeling, believing and being and doing are conditioned and continue to be conditioned by coloniality, irrespective of identity and political registers[[87]](#footnote-87),[[88]](#footnote-88),[[89]](#footnote-89).

**Critical decolonial reflexivity and decolonisation**

In this part of the article, I highlight how current decolonisation efforts in global north universities could inadvertently reinforce coloniality. My intention here is not to devalue the decolonisation work of global north academics and students because I am aware that decolonisation efforts face a lot of resistance from other academics, universities, the media, politicians and sections of the public. Instead, I simply want to show that decolonisation is not a simple or easy task for global north academics, who may wish to use decolonial methodologies because poorly thought out decolonial efforts could lead to moves to innocence and, therefore, inadvertently reinforce coloniality[[90]](#footnote-90).

The first criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that some of them imagine that attending events organised by their global south counterparts is not worthwhile because they will not benefit from them in any way. This situation means that the work of global south academics is through omission and knowledge production remains dominated by global north academics and academia[[91]](#footnote-91). The second criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that the events organised by global north academics, students and research centres based in global north universities tend to cater for academics and students from their region in two ways. By primarily inviting academics from global north countries and, secondly, by organising events at times that are suitable for global north academics and students. As such silencing global south academics and students through omission. This situation suggests that decolonising in the imagination of the organisers is something that only global north academics and students are interested in. The third criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that some of them imagine that decolonisation as a new field of study. A field born out of the global north intellectual and cultural tradition in isolation from other traditions and cultures. As such, they fail to acknowledge that decolonisation has existed for many decades in global south countries[[92]](#footnote-92),[[93]](#footnote-93),[[94]](#footnote-94). The fourth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that they tend to only call for what I have called elsewhere 'soft decolonisation'[[95]](#footnote-95). Soft decolonisation tends to centre on diversifying the curricula or recruiting BAME academics to show that the university is taking anti-racism seriously. However, such work has been taking place under other banners for a few decades now, with little success. One reason could be that universities defer responsibility reflects white fragility and racism that not only reflects white fragility but also reinforces whiteness and, more broadly, coloniality[[96]](#footnote-96). As such, the aforementioned decolonising efforts appear to be, on the one hand, a 'tick box and branding exercise', on the other hand, an exercise of ideological pacification, leading to 'moves to innocence' by universities[[97]](#footnote-97),[[98]](#footnote-98),[[99]](#footnote-99),[[100]](#footnote-100). This type of decolonisation arguably does little to address the deep-rooted causes of coloniality in global north academia. The fifth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that they tend to monopolise the decolonisation movement. This has resulted in two things. Firstly, global north academics are centre-staged by other global north academics, students and research centres, which fosters the impression that they are leaders of the decolonisation movement[[101]](#footnote-101). Secondly, a global north decolonial bubble dominated by and for global north academics and students. The sixth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work may be upsetting for some, but it is important to mention because it is based on the lack of 'self-reflexivity' among some of them regarding decolonisation efforts and attached privileges[[102]](#footnote-102),[[103]](#footnote-103). By this, I mean that there is little introspection on their positionality and situatedness when it comes to decolonisation work.The seventh criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work concerns academic criticism of decoloniality'. Here, I include myself because the criticism levelled at decolonisation is based on employing global north epistemology, and in doing so, global north epistemology is recentred through the backdoor[[104]](#footnote-104). The eighth criticism that can be levelled at the whole of the decolonisation movement because the movement has not adequately defined what decolonisation means and entails in global north countries and global south countries[[105]](#footnote-105),[[106]](#footnote-106),[[107]](#footnote-107). This situation raises several questions, such as, does decolonisation only concern the epistemic struggle against global north epistemic hegemony, as Taiwo[[108]](#footnote-108) asks? Is decolonisation something more than epistemic, as Tuck and Yang[[109]](#footnote-109) claim in the case of indigenous communities from global north countries? When will decolonisation (or decolonisations) end, and what are the post-decolonisation plans, or is it an endless process? The ninth criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is that they have a tendency to romanticise the past and trap global south countries into some kind of 'chattel property' of the global north countries, which entails some kind of 'mental servitude' and always needing to be saved by the global north[[110]](#footnote-110),[[111]](#footnote-111),[[112]](#footnote-112). The final criticism that can be levelled at global north academics engaged in decolonisation work is related to the fifth criticism, which is that they tend to 'read, cite and invite academics that only publish in a select few global north journals' that are part of the decolonial bubble. This leads to several issues from a decolonial perspective. Firstly, it leads to silencing as omission and silencing through dismissal of global south academics and, for this matter, some global north academics[[113]](#footnote-113). Secondly, it means that knowledge production on decoloniality is global north centred. Thirdly, it creates the impression that only global north academics and universities are concerned about decolonisation. Finally, it reinforces a global north decolonial bubble that seems to be designed (accidentally or otherwise) by and for global north academia and academics.

**Coloniality and research paradigms**

In this part of the paper, I discuss what indigenous academics and decolonial academics call the dirty history of research and research methods. By this, they mean the predatory, exploitative, racist and inaccurate research during colonisation[[114]](#footnote-114).

Academics like Ndlovu-Gatsheni[[115]](#footnote-115) have highlighted the dirty history of research and research methods. He argues that research conducted by academics from global north countries in global north settler states and global south countries has a dirty history because it was predatory, exploitative and informed by racist tropes that involved biocolonialism and intellectual exploitation[[116]](#footnote-116). Similarly, Smith[[117]](#footnote-117) argues that research during colonialism involved measuring and comparing the limbs and faculties of colonised people to determine their level of mental capacity, such as intelligence, based on global north standards. This situation, as Smith argues from her personal perspective, has left the Māori people traumatised and suspicious of academics[[118]](#footnote-118). Arvizu and Saravia-Shore[[119]](#footnote-119) also argue that the exploitation and inaccurate representations of colonised people has meant they do not trust academics. The trauma and lack of trust in global north academics is compounded by several other factors that reinforce coloniality, which I briefly mention here. Firstly, some global north academics still think it is acceptable to make archaeological digs on land that, for example, is held sacred by indigenous people[[120]](#footnote-120). This situation not only suggests that the global north academics have little care for the rights of indigenous people but also think, feel, and imagine the world along colonial imaginaries and therefore perpetuate colonial knowledge production relations. Secondly, governments of global north countries remain unapologetic about colonisation[[121]](#footnote-121). This situation is unfortunate and undermines the decades of anti-racist policies and education that these countries have rolled out. Thirdly, some museums in global north countries still possess the remains of colonised people and their cultural artefacts, which were brought back for either 'racialised research or as war trophies'[[122]](#footnote-122),[[123]](#footnote-123),[[124]](#footnote-124). This situation suggests that the grievances and the trauma of colonised people do not seem to matter to the governments of global countries. One reason for this could be that, for them, colonialism is something that happened in the past and, therefore, not relevant or important to their present or future[[125]](#footnote-125). That said, one would expect things to have changed since the end of colonialism, but this appears not to be the case. Instead, the opposite seems true because colonial modes of thinking, feeling, and imagining the world continue under different guises and are often justified by discourses on scientific and intellectual advancement[[126]](#footnote-126),[[127]](#footnote-127).

**The research process and guarding against coloniality**

In this final part of the paper, I suggest some ways that the global north academics can guard against reinforcing coloniality whilst researching on and in global south countries. The ways I suggest are informed by decolonial methodologies[[128]](#footnote-128),[[129]](#footnote-129),[[130]](#footnote-130). Admittedly, the ways I suggest for conducting research may be difficult for some global north academics to employ because of their research training, epistemological, methodological, ideological and political convictions, economic interest or due to pressure from their universities and research funders.

The first way is to examine what Tuck and Yang[[131]](#footnote-131) call the academic-industrial complex. On the one hand, doing so will mean highlighting how coloniality operates at different levels of global north academia, including the university, departments, departmental culture, academics mind, and the publishing industry. On the other hand, it implies that academics must engage in deep self-introspection and identify and address how their attitudes and behaviour could lead them to reinforce coloniality. However, this will not be an easy task, and global north academics serious about not reinforcing coloniality must understand the task is life-changing. It does not start and end at the university entrance. The second way is by learning about the researched community's religious and cultural beliefs, practices, and politics and simultaneously critically reflecting on how their ways (academics) of knowing, thinking, feeling, believing, being and doing condition their positionality and situatedness[[132]](#footnote-132). This will help them identify possible methodological problems and plan how to address them well before and during the research. The third way is by becoming students of the researched community, which will help them learn and understand the ways of thinking, knowing, feeling, believing, being and doing of the researched community[[133]](#footnote-133). The fourth way is by critically reflecting on their situatedness and privileges in relation to their research participants, the researched community, research assistants, translators and local advisers. Such reflection will help them to become aware of the unequal power relations that gives them considerable power to characterise, define, describe and foster perceptions of the researched community among the public and policymakers. As such, making them more conscious of the need to accurately and carefully report their research because not doing so could lead to negative consequences for the researched community, such as economic exploitation, political marginalisation and even violence, long after the research has been completed. In other words, academics have to factor in their research's 'unintended consequences'. The fifth way is by critically reflecting on the type of questions that they want to ask, why and how they want to ask them, the language they want to use to ask them, where (location) they will ask them and what type of answers are they expecting to receive. Critically thinking about such methodological concerns will encourage academics to reflect on their epistemology, methodology and positionality in relation to the research participants, the researched community, their research objectives and personal attitudes and behaviour. However, not doing so could mean that the research findings are inaccurate and the research objectives may not benefit the researched community, and the attitude and behaviours may harm the researched community. The sixth way is by not seeing their research participants and the researched community as repositories of information. Seeing them in such ways could lead to predatory and exploitative research and practices and unethical findings[[134]](#footnote-134),[[135]](#footnote-135). The seventh way is ensuring that the research participants and researched community are not seen or used as native informers or intellectual compradors. Seeing or using them in such ways could harm them, and the academic could be engaging in colonial knowledge production relations[[136]](#footnote-136),[[137]](#footnote-137),[[138]](#footnote-138),[[139]](#footnote-139). The eighth way is to include a duty of care in their research. Doing so will mean that the research participants and the researched community are not negatively impacted by the research but actually benefit from it[[140]](#footnote-140). The ninth way is to ensure that the research process, from the initial conceptualisation to dissemination, does not consciously or unconsciously lead to the silencing of the research participants and the researched community[[141]](#footnote-141). The tenth and perhaps the most important way is by making reciprocity a central component of their research process. Indigenous academics developed the concept to address the unequal power relations and to prevent predatory and exploitative research objectives, attitudes and practices among academics[[142]](#footnote-142). Reciprocity can mean several things, such as research collaboration between the academics, research participants and the researched community[[143]](#footnote-143). This situation means including research participants, the research community, and other stakeholders in the research as knowledge producers, beneficiaries and not just repositories of information[[144]](#footnote-144). Including reciprocity in the research will prevent the research participants and the researched community from being silenced and therefore allow them to become producers, owners and beneficiaries of knowledge about them. The final way is not to organise and use events as a way to gather information from global south academics, NGOs and educational institutions for their own funding and publishing purposes. Doing so will mean that the academics are engaged in predatory and exploitative research practices that are akin to colonial knowledge production practices.

The ways I have suggested here to guard against inadvertently reinforcing coloniality are by no means exhaustive, and I am sure other indigenous and decolonial academics can think of more ways. Nevertheless, I hope that the ways I have suggested will help global north academics to critically reflect on how they plan, conduct and disseminate their research and ensure that research participants and researched communities benefit.

**Conclusion**

Decolonising academia is not a simple task because it is hard and traumatic work, which impacts the mind, body, and emotions of those who engage in it. Therefore, the thinking and feelings generated by decolonising cannot be turned on and off like a light switch. The thoughts and feelings remain with the academic all the time, like a trauma. Perhaps the most difficult part of decolonisation is that, it demands academics make sacrifices that most academics are unlikely or unwilling to make for personal reasons or other convictions (Tuck and Yang, 2014).

With this in mind, I admit that changing ways to do research among global north academics may not be easy because of epistemic coloniality and a range of other interests. For example, academics using research methods based on decolonial methodologies will have to critically reflect on their positionality and situatedness, in relation to their research participants and the researched community. They may also have to recalibrate their ideological and political convictions, economic interests and academic career goals.

In this article, I have attempted to show that global north and, for this matter global south academics that want to use decolonial methodologies to research on or in global south countries should not assume that this will be an easy task. From all the ways I have suggested, I feel that four of them are the most important and should be incorporated alongside reciprocity as part of any research. The first way is for academics not to absolve themselves of their duty of care to their research participants, the researched community, research assistants, translators, advisors and stakeholders. The second way is not to see their research participants and the researched community as information repositories for their own economic and career benefits. Instead, academics should see and actively encourage their research participants and the researched community to become co-knowledge producers, owners and beneficiaries of the knowledge they produce about themselves. The third way is connected to the second. It entails not seeing or treating their research participants, the researched community, research assistants, translators and advisors as native informers or intellectual compradors for two main reasons. Firstly, this may lead them to experience negative consequences long after the research has been completed and published. Secondly, the academic could be engaged in colonial knowledge production relations, therefore reinforcing coloniality. Finally, the fourth is not to engage in predatory or exploitative research practices because these clearly demonstrate no regard for the research participants and the researched community and are akin to colonial knowledge production relations and therefore reinforce decoloniality.

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