

# **Decolonizing Research Methods In Practice**

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# My Introduction to the Decolonizing the Curriculum Project I

What is the [Decolonising the Curriculum](#) project

The term '**decolonisation**' means different things to different people. Often, we are using it to **highlight** the link between **present-day racial inequalities** and **broader historical processes of colonialism, and the existence of structural inequalities.**

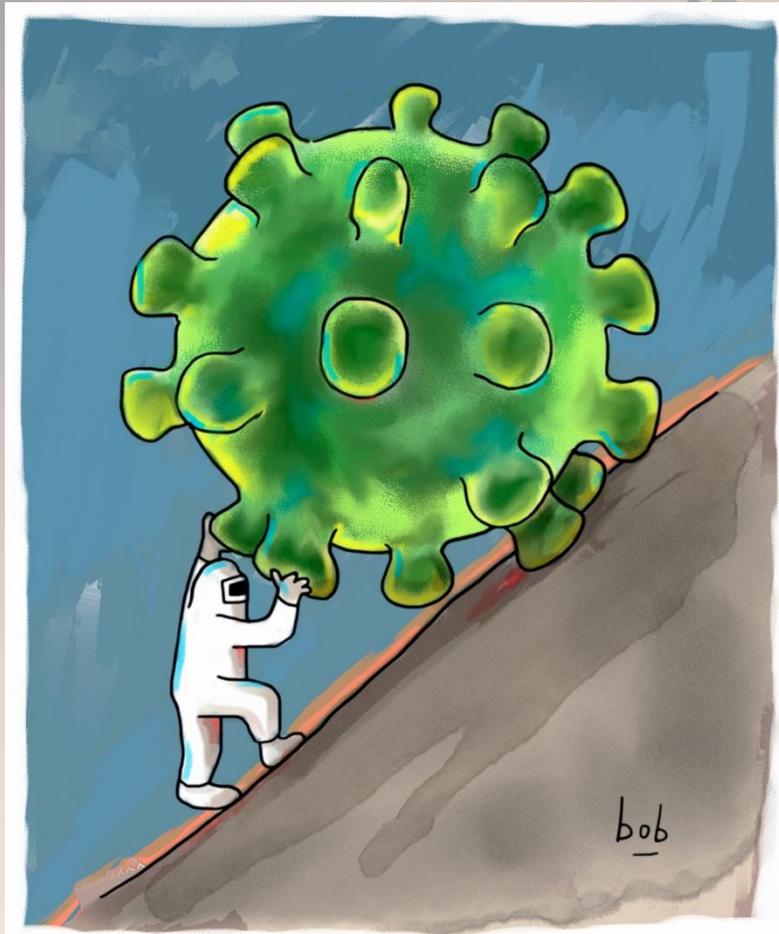
In the **context of education**, it is based on the observation that global histories of **Western colonial domination** have impacted on – and limited – what is **considered knowledge and whose knowledge is recognised.** This has in turn affected both.

# What we teach and **how** we teach

***What** seems much easier than addressing the problem of **how**...*

*By decolonising the curriculum, we seek to engage with what are in many instances the **problematic historic origins** of our disciplines, **unpack diverse bodies of knowledge and approaches** to learning, and to **explore ways to make education as equal and just** as possible.*

# My Introduction to the Decolonizing the Curriculum Project II: **In Practice**



**Summer of Reading and Discussing:**

**Tuck and Wayne 2012**

**Zuberi & Bonilla Silva**

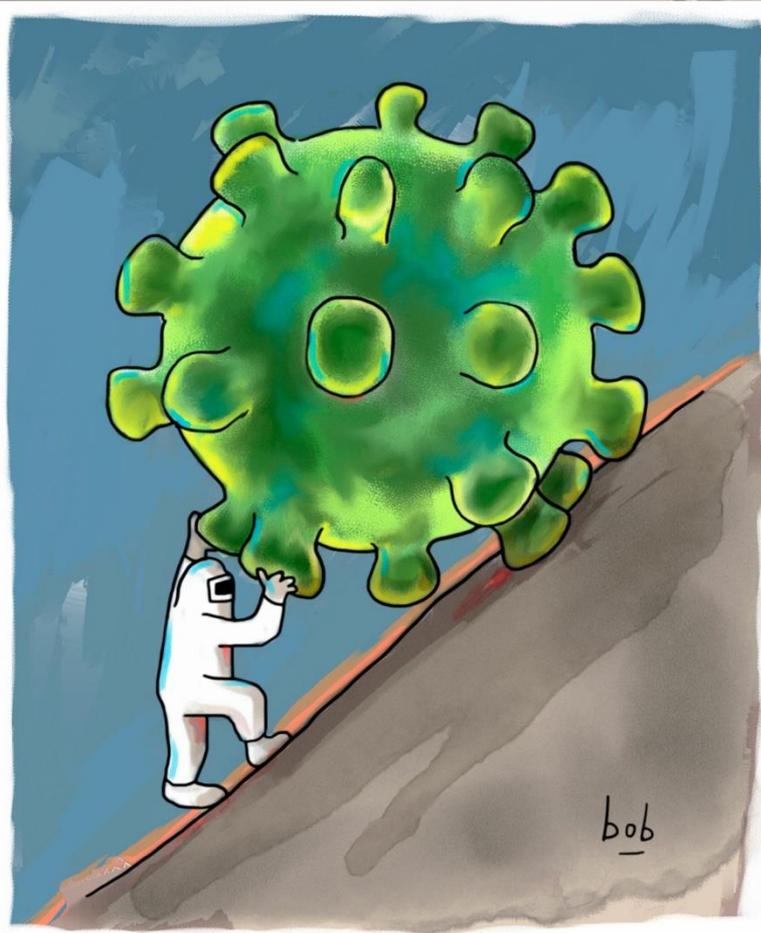
**2008 White Logic, White methods**

**Angela Davis Freedom is a constant struggle**

**Maree Brown Pleasure activism**

**Poetry of Rickey Laurentiis**

# My Introduction to the Decolonizing the Curriculum Project II: **Methods?**



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Tuck and Wayne 2012

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Laurentiis

# Arguments: Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva in **White Methods, White Logic**

- **White methods** blind or severely limit many social scientists from truly appreciating the significance of **race or racial stratification**.
- They relate a series of vignettes that in their opinion demonstrate (*effect of race, logic of quantitative methods, interpretation of data*)
- Can racial stratification be approached without at the same time treating race as a biological construct? *What would this mean in practice?*
- Statistical analyses are crucial part of evidence –**driven by biased logic?**
- Underdeveloped Theoretical Frameworks; Poor Presentation as Results
- No engagement with criticism:

Burton, Linda M., et al. "Critical race theories, colorism, and the decade's research on families of color." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72.3 (2010): 440-459.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and Gianpaolo Baiocchi. "Anything but racism: How sociologists limit the significance of racism." *Race and society* 4.2 (2001): 117-131.

- **Quantitative Methods** and CRT in perpetual opposition



# 3 Reasons this work chimed with me: Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva in **White Methods, White Logic I**

BUT, BUT



But you haven't considered....

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BUT, BUT

It is much more plausible that....



But you haven't considered....

We should be very careful about a word such as discrimination....

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BUT, BUT

It is much more plausible that....



But you haven't considered....

We should be very careful about a word such as discrimination....

Suspicion: If it was discrimination, something must be done about it; if it was social ties, it is an individual fault....

# 3 Reasons this work chimed with me: Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva in **White Methods, White Logic II**

<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/721733303?t=1624362366316>

HECKMAN: *I realized that the whole educational establishment, at least the establishment that looked at test scores and that valued schools and valued people by these test scores, really was just missing important dimensions of human behavior. And so that brought me onto a subject which has fascinated me and which I think is really important for success and understanding success and failure, and that is the notion of what I called noncognitive skills. By noncognitive skills, I meant skills that weren't measured by these tests. And what I found and that surprised me was that those noncognitive skills were extremely important.*

**Grit!!**



### 3 Reasons this work chimed with me: Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva in **White Methods, White Logic III**

## *Research & Politics*

#### **Ann Oakley:**

I thought I was redressing an imbalance in the research. Most of it had been from a masculine point of view and had reflected – **the vast bulk of sociology was about these really important issues to do with power and occupation, and social class defined** in male terms, and there was simply an enormous gap. You **didn't have to call yourself a feminist** in order to do that, any more than the men who did the rest of it called themselves masculinist. It was simply something that needed to be done. **And the way in which people talk about feminists and feminism is always to imply that people who identify themselves as feminists are, in some sense, biased, and, of course, they're no more biased than people who aren't feminist.** A lot of my research and writing has been informed by my desire to put women back on the centre stage along with men. But a lot of it has also been on a more general level about the uses of research to inform public policy, and women are recipients of public policy just as men are. (Part 1, p 33)

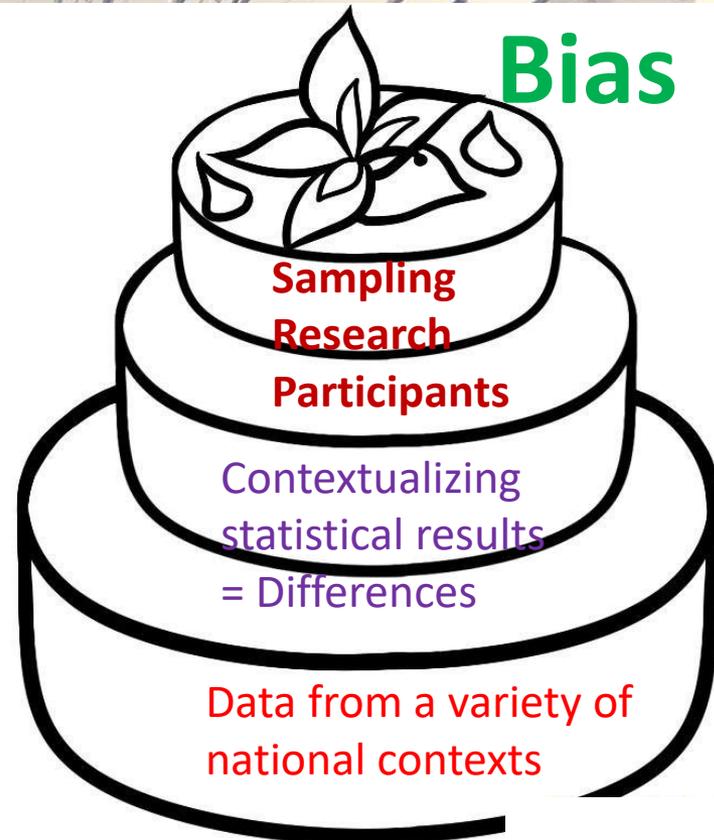
# How to present these complex problems to students?



- SC101 Researching Social Life I

**1<sup>st</sup> year undergraduate course**

# How to present these **complex problems** to students?



# Can QM be Reconciled with CRT I

**Examples: Sablan, J. R. (2019). "Can you really measure that? Combining critical race theory and quantitative methods." American educational research journal 56(1): 178-203**

Qualitative methods are not the only way to present counternarratives. **Yes, if:** Cultural assets are *operationalized, leaving no way for deficit interpretations. Institutionalized racism* is part from theoretical frameworks and interpretative explanations. *Reliability and validity techniques* of measurement theory can be combined: *developing new measures based on qualitative studies* working with communities of color.

# Can QM be Reconciled with CRT II

**Example: Reichel, D. and L. Morales (2017). "Surveying immigrants without sampling frames—evaluating the success of alternative field methods." Comparative Migration Studies 5(1): 1.**

Sometimes the question is about **sampling!**

The paper highlights that traditional methods – such as *random walk sampling* or telephone sampling – are also limited in providing results for the *target population*, due to the necessary exclusion of a certain part of the target population (i.e. lower density areas due to too high screening costs) and *potentially other limitations* (e.g. high refusal rates). The authors found that alternative methods such as *location sampling* can deliver even more accurate results as compared to the total target population.

# Can **QM** be Reconciled with **CRT III**

**Example: Müller-Funk, L. (2020). "Research with refugees in fragile political contexts: how ethical reflections impact methodological choices." Journal of refugee studies.**

It is potentially easier to follow ethical guidelines when conducting small-N qualitative studies or long-term ethnographies, where overall representativeness is not a major objective of data collection. The article has carved out how ethically conceived mixed-methods projects can and indeed should weigh up *ethical principles and representativeness* against each other, such as by actively including **refugees** as *partners in research projects, investing time in learning local languages and cultures* while also *considering security and national laws (employment, residence and travel regulations for refugees; research permits)*. It has advocated for a *refugee-centred approach* while avoiding over-researched localities and highlighted the difficult and ad hoc choices that I faced so as to **'do no harm'** to participants and team members. On the one hand, including refugees as research partners, spending long periods of time in data-collection locations and speaking the local dialect proved to be not only crucial for gaining trust among participants, but also helped immensely vis-à-vis more precise analysis. On the other, **the conscious choices taken also included the employment of refugees by bypassing national laws while also seeking official permission—done even despite the risk of jeopardizing the fieldwork and later the content of the research.** Producing sound data that has been collected in an ethical way in fragile contexts takes time—a rare commodity indeed in academia today. This article is thus also a call for 'slow science'.

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- Thank you!
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