DECOLONIZING SOCIAL RESEARCH

TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PARADIGM OF RESEARCH

Narcisa Paredes-Canilao
University of the Philippines Baguio
TOPICS

- Module 1 – Understanding and Doing Decolonization
- Module 2 - From Decolonization to Indigenization
- Module 3 - Constructing a Paradigm of Indigenous Peoples Research (IPPR)
Module 1A: Understanding Decolonization
WHY DECOLONIZATION?

MADI-AKON!

I bring enlightenment
In Asia and other non-Western Regions of the world, the Social Sciences and the practice of social research were introduced by Western colonizers.

Since the 18th century...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Influence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>French, German</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1900s</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1870s</td>
<td>German, Amer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Euro., Amer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>British</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1750s &amp; 1900s</td>
<td>Sp; Euro., Amer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Euro., Amer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>American and Eur.</td>
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The social sciences were used by colonial scholars and administrators to:

- train second-level manpower for colonial administration
- conduct policy researches on populations, urban, rural and industrial sociology and psychology, economic planning, etc.
- diagnose, predict, and control social problems.
The first uses of research on the colonized were unfortunately connected with their more effective, systematic, and scientific colonization.

Social research came with a body of social science knowledge which found local populations pathological or abnormal and wanting.

This justified the imposition of cultural imperialism.
Phases of Cultural Domination of IPs

- Denial and withdrawal
- Destruction and desecration
- Denigration and marginalization
- Redefinition and token utilization
- Transformation and mainstreaming
- Commercialization and commodification

Virgilio Enriquez (1994:7-40)
INDIGENOUS SOCIETIES WERE DECLARED PATHOLOGICAL JUSTIFYING NORMALIZATION BY COLONIAL EMPIRE

PATHOLOGIES:
1. Undeveloped
2. Primitive
3. Godless
4. Lawless
5. Superstitious
6. Inefficient
7. Stagnant and Unprogressive

NORMALIZATION:
1. Development
2. Modernization
3. Christianization
4. Government
5. Science
6. Technology
7. Industrialization and Market capitalism
The abuse and misuse of research, on IPs
Ten ways to be researched (colonized):

1. Having your genealogy and identity (cell-lines) stolen, patented, and copied.
2. Having the umbilical cord blood of aborted babies ‘farmed’.
3. Having your cultural institutions and rituals patented either by a non-indigenous person or by another indigenous individual.
4. Scientific and political reconstruction of previously extinct indigenous peoples.
5. Dying and then coming back to life as a flock of sheep or variety of tomatoes.
Ten ways to be researched (colonized). . . . Cont.

1. Creating virtual culture as authentic culture
2. Feeding consumption, tuberculosis of the marketplace
3. Creating sovereign reservations for the elite.
4. Commodifying indigenous spirituality
5. Denial of global citizenship.

L.T. Smith (1999: 100-103)
Today, there is a PERSISTENCE of THESE USES AND ABUSES OF RESEARCH DUE TO THE PHENOMENON OF MENTAL CAPTIVITY, OR COLONIAL MENTALITY.

We have been emancipated from colonization and yet our minds remain in captivity.
To effectively combat these we need:

- Decolonization through indigenous theorizing and empowerment
- Counter-domination through indigenous research methods
- Empowerment through indigenous resistance to oppression

Virgilio Enriquez (1994:41-82)
Module 1B: DOING
DECOLONIZATION!
FROM MENTAL CAPTIVITY
A TYPOLOGY OF META-ANALYSIS

Free your mind!

Academic dependency,
Educational neo-colonialism,
Eurocentrism,
Negative imitation,
Orientalism,
Postcolonial criticism,
Rhetorical theories of the social sciences
1. Academic dependency

Condition whereby Third World scientists are dependent on their counterparts in the West for concepts and theories, research funds, technologies of teaching and research, and the prestige value attached to publishing in Western journals.

S.F. Alatas, 2006
Today there is a continuing dominance of the so-called “WORLD SS POWERS” Germany, France, Britain, and North America
Dimensions of academic dependency of Third World scholars upon the World SS Powers

Dependence on:
- Ideas
- Media of ideas
- Education technology
- Research and teachers’ funding
- Investment in education
- Western demand for skills
The Global academic division of labor today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World SS Powers</th>
<th>Third World SS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical thinkers</td>
<td>Empirical data gatherers only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can conduct own and other country studies</td>
<td>Can conduct own country studies only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative studies</td>
<td>Single case studies only</td>
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(SF Alatas, 2006:71)
Exercise:

Going through the dimensions and indicators of academic dependency formulate a sentence on how to combat each.
How to resist academic dependency:

- Putting books authored by non-Western scholars on the syllabus or in the Canon
- Deconstructing Western concepts and Models
- Creating space for the reclaiming of local knowledge

V. Enriquez, 1994: 79-82
2. Educational neo-colonialism

The continuing impact of former Western colonial regimes and some advanced nations, [including developed ones] in the areas of educational system and intellectual life.

3. Eurocentrism

The procrustean forcing of cultural heterogeneity into a single paradigmatic perspective in which Europe is seen as the unique source of meaning, as the world’s center of gravity, as ontological ‘reality’ to the rest of the world’s shadow.

4. Negative imitation

The blind or *uncritical* copying of Western social science which “pervades all levels of the scientific enterprise, to include problem-setting, analysis, abstraction, generalization, conceptualization, description, explanation, and interpretations.”

S. H. Alatas in S.F. Alatas, 2006
5. Orientalism

A discourse . . . by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.

Said, 1978, p. 3.
6. Postcolonial criticism

The form of social criticism that bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once-colonized Third World comes to be framed in the West.

7. Rhetorical theories of the social sciences

Whereas the traditional way of assessing social theories focused on their logical or empirical dimensions, rhetorical approaches recognize social science as textual activity, thus rhetorical techniques employed by authors in order to “mislead, misinform and persuade, rather than expose and clarify” are the objects of analysis.

Alatas, 2006, p. 46.
What are the common findings of the various types of meta-analysis of the social sciences?
All knowledges are situated

- The social sciences are a socially and historically situated knowledge
- Social science concepts are derived from lay or everyday life concepts
- The influence of culture, gender, class, race and historical-social factors on social scientific knowledge
HISTORY OF EMERGENCE OF THE SS

The social sciences, or the scientific study of society, emerged in response to the massive societal problems of European societies during the Age of Modernity (17th to 19th centuries).
As these European societies transformed from traditional to modern, industrial, scientific, nation-state, and early capitalist ways of life, social problems arose: urban crowding, unemployment, poverty, criminality, alienation, absence of community, etc.
POSITIVISM

Positivist social science was the logical choice, and became the mainstream approach.

Positivism is the application of the methods developed in the natural sciences to the scientific study of society.
Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions of Positivism

- Objectivity
- Subject-Object separation
- Empiricism
- Rationalism
- Scientism
The Age of Enlightenment

The intellectual climate that nurtured positivism. It venerated ideals of:

- Humanism
- Rationality
- Individualism
- Science
- Progress
These ideals are now shown by metatheoretical critiques to have been infused with the biases of social thinkers:

- personal (gender, class, race or ethnicity, religion, etc.)
- social (economics, politics, etc.)
- historical (industrial revolution, scientific revolution, secularization, etc.)
- cultural contexts (world views, ways of life, canonical texts, etc.)
The social sciences, and by implication, social research, are, so to speak, “indigenous” to those regions where they originated.
Without indigenization projects throughout the world, only one set of indigenous (Western) discourse would dominate.
Module 1C:

A META-ANALYSIS OF MATH
(or Cultural Critique)

What values do you teach when you teach mathematics?

Western mathematics: A secret weapon of cultural imperialism?
Procedure of Cultural Critique

What is cultural critique?
It is the attempt to show the cultural biases behind knowledges claiming to be objective, universal and value-neutral.
First step:

Scrutinize a knowledge claiming to be universal, objective, and value-neutral, for example, mathematics.
Second step:

Expose the actual culturally specific values and biases (ontological, epistemological, ethical) that this knowledge has. For example, in the case of mathematics, what are the Western cultural values presupposed by it?
A cultural analysis of math reveals that it is infused with Western values:

- Objectism
- Atomism
- Rationality
- Prediction and control
Third step:

Point out, that there are or were equally valid knowledges marginalized by the rise into dominance of this allegedly universal knowledge.
Fourth step:

Point out how knowledges of other cultures contain different cultural values, ontologies, and epistemologies.
Some cultural values of indigenous maths unearthed by ethnographers:

- Everything is interconnected
- Knowledge is observer-related
- The value of subjective or emotive knowledge
- Human beings are to adapt themselves to the world, rather than to adapt the world to themselves
- Reality is too complex and too dynamic to be reducible to algorithms and exact knowledge

(Contrast these to the assumptions of positivism)
Fifth step:

Show how this knowledge has achieved dominance and hegemony due to power-knowledge manipulations.
In the case of Western mathematics, Colonial rule propagated Western ways of counting wherever it went, as the one, true, and valid mathematics through:

- a colonial-ordained administration
- commerce, and
- education
Module 2: INDIGENIZATION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE & RESEARCH
WHAT IS INDIGENIZATION?

The reliance on a peoples’ own, native, local cultures, knowledges, discourses, and histories as resources.

It is the recovery of subjugated indigenous historical experiences and cultural practices as guides for cultural resistance and transformation (cultural politics).
Indigenization of the social sciences

A movement spearheaded by Non-Western, specifically Asian social science faculty and practitioners to challenge the reign of Western social science and seriously think of local or indigenous alternative concepts, theories and methodologies.
Indigenous social science

“Indigenization requires the turn to indigenous philosophies, epistemologies, histories, art and other modes of knowledge, which can all be potential sources of social science theories and concepts.”

(Alatas, 2006: 86)
Initially there were two types:

• Indigenization from within – the process by which key indigenous concepts, methods and theories are semantically elaborated, codified, systematized, and then applied.

• Indigenization from without – the modification and translation of imported materials which are ultimately assimilated theoretically and culturally.
ISSUES OF INDIGENIZATION

• Is indigenization a wholesale rejection of Western social science?
• Endogenization or indigenization?
• From parochialism to Universalism
Is indigenization a wholesale rejection of Western social science?

“Indigenization is not about a counter-parochialization of native social sciences to offset parochialism of Western social science,” (Mukherji in Alatas, 2006: 88)
Endogenization or indigenization?

endogenization - there is no place for exogenous influence.

indigenization - the indigenizing of exogenous elements to suit local requirements.
From parochialism to Universalism:

“It should, therefore, be apparent that the projects involving indigenization of knowledge around the world seek to contribute to the universalization of the social sciences by not only acknowledging but insisting that all cultures, civilizations and historical experiences be regarded as sources of ideas. Indigenous social scientists should contribute on an equal basis with their Western colleagues to international scholarship.” (Fahim, in Alatas, 2006: 87).
Thus indigenization is tantamount to universalization. “Indigenization and universalization are one and the same thing.” (Alatas, 2006: 87)
MORE WORK TO BE DONE:

1. Theoretical indigenization
   “Furthermore, the project of indigenization has to be carried out at the level of ontological assumptions, epistemology and axiology, and empirical theory.” Kim in Alatas, 2006:88

2. Indigenization from various indigenous peoples’ perspectives, as distinct from nationalist perspectives.
Module 3:
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PARADIGM OF RESEARCH (IPPR)
RESEARCH MENUS FOR IPS AND RESEARCH

- AIPS - Add IPs and Stir
- SRIP - Social Research and IPs
- IPPR - Indigenous Peoples Paradigm of Research.
Conceptualizing IPPR

• IPcentric research – the grounding of research theory and practice upon indigenous concepts, theories, and methodologies.

• IPPR – an emergent paradigm of research grounded on IPcentric research.
Paradigm here is understood in the sense of T. Kuhn’s paradigm shift.

Social research from an indigenous perspective will not fit in with existing paradigms.
From Eurocentrism to IPcentrism

IPPR effects upon Eurocentrism the same paradigm shift that was effected by the Copernican revolution, in the true sense of the term, upon the Ptolemaic geocentric worldview.
STRATEGIZING IPPR
Bringing IPs from the margins to the center
• Does not stop at decolonization, but follows the logical conclusion of decolonization which is the identification of concepts, theories and methodologies from their own perspectives.

• Research problems need not be confined to IP concerns. Can branch out to non-IP matters. Because what happens elsewhere can have an impact on indigenous peoples.

• Does not conduct only empirical but also, and more importantly, theoretical and metatheoretical studies.
• Does not limit itself to single case studies but comparative studies.
• Is not funds driven, but emanates from actual research needs of community.
• Is not dictated by research trends or directions from the West.
• Interdisciplinary not only in the social sciences but also with natural sciences, language studies and humanities.
The recourse to indigenous language (discourses) is a very important strategy for decolonization. The African writer, Ngugi wa Thiong’o is among the many nonwestern thinkers who advocate massive and powerful recuperations of pre-colonial cultures, and recourse to one’s language is ‘a necessary first step’ (Ngugi, 2004:285-90).
Research Agenda for IPPR:
Remembrance and Resistance Researches
Recovering indigenous discourses
Rethinking Development
(Indigenous indicators of development)
Rethinking the viability of Western SS frameworks, concepts, and methodologies
Activity

We will engage in the activity of *IPcentric* paradigm-building where we will identify indigenous knowledges, values, ways of life and discourses, which will serve as the theoretical or even metatheoretical base from which we will identify corresponding indigenous methodologies, research problems, and programmatic research ethics and procedures that can be used.
IPPR

- IP Metatheory
- IP theories and concepts
- Methodologies and Research Programs
Resources for Indigenous Metatheory of research

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<th>Ways of life</th>
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<td>Knowledges</td>
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<td>Values</td>
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<td>Discourses</td>
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