Situating Decolonial Strategies within Methodologies-in/as-practices: A Critical Appraisal

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Abstract:
Whilst work on decolonising methodologies has persisted for more than twenty years, engagement remains uneven. Despite rich discussions of indigenous methodologies and decolonial thinking that supports this transformation, Ndhlovu notes the enduring challenge of 'methodological stasis' (2021), where Western knowledges, research practices and methods continue to dominate. This paper argues for the value of new critiques and concepts to further decolonial efforts. It first situates a discussion of methodological stasis in considerations of social change, arguing for the need to consider the diversity of methodologies when evaluating the extent or direction of change. It then argues that though depictions of methodological fractionation support critiques of dominant Western knowledges, they fail to provide new strategies for change. The concept of methodologies-in/as-practices is thus presented as an alternative starting point, drawing from practice theories, which foregrounds the interlinking of diverse researching practices and researchers inside and outside academia. Exploring how methodologies-in/as-practices connects to and contrasts with decolonial, postcolonial and feminist contributions, the paper establishes how this concept supports new trajectories for decolonial thinking and methodological change. It demonstrates how discussions of methodological techniques, philosophies and autobiographies can be critiqued and re-situated through engagement with this concept, producing openings for new decolonial links and interventions. Furthermore, engaging with the case of practice theory methodologies for this critique outlines crucial steps towards decolonising the tradition of work the concept draws upon. Methodologies-in/as-practices is thus shown to support the spiralling work of undoing and redoing, unlearning and relearning central to decolonising methodologies.

Main text:

More than twenty years after the publication of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonising methodologies* (2012), the impact of her call to transform methodologies and research agendas remains uneven. Rich activity has emerged around indigenous methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Wilson, 2008), the (un)teaching and (un)learning required to decolonise universities (Gutiérrez Magallanes et al., 2018), and how to extend insights to various disciplinary and professional communities. Yet we can also ask whether discussions only appear to have progressed "while actually going nowhere at all, remaining safely encamped within a familiar world of fundamental concepts" (Abbott, 2001, p. 147). The challenge of what Ndhlovu calls 'methodological stasis' (2021, p. 196) remains, as Western knowledges, research practices and methods continue to dominate even within the disciplines where researchers have most enthusiastically sought transformation. Incremental change in methodological textbooks and curricula leave many students to develop an understanding of methodology through traditional dichotomies and allegiances, despite strong critiques of how core methods such as interviews and surveys reproduce problematic versions of globalised Western understandings (Gobo, 2011).

This paper starts from the position that "changing the terms … of the conversation" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 459) about methodologies is a challenge not of methodological change but of complex, social change. There is, of course, a strong precedent for this because numerous authors have tied epistemic injustices to historical inequities and diverse decolonial interventions. For example, the importance of geo-politics and varied forms of capitalism are central in discussions of decoloniality (de Sousa Santos, 2014; Mignolo, 2009) and the Indigenous People's Project outlined by Smith (2012, Ch 6) addresses politics, spirituality and land alongside methodologies and research. Yet the need to evaluate what more can be done in the face of methodological stasis suggests the importance of extending these conversations and critically considering what methodologies look like when starting from a concern for social change.

The contribution of this paper is to draw critical attention to methodological diversity and methodological change, in order to identify strategies that support further decolonising efforts. Mignolo asserts the importance of varied strategies for border thinking because "Decolonial tasks have to be pursued on many fronts, all of them interrelated in their march towards pluriversal modes of existence" (2020, p. 616). Though personal experiences as a mixed-race migrant inform my own engagement with discussions of decolonising, this paper is also informed by my interactions in sub-fields which have not been quick to engage with decolonising methodologies and retain different concerns and focuses. The question of how to further decolonise methodologies when some empirical fields and sub-disciplinary debates are not strongly engaged with discussions of decoloniality is thus a 'live' question in my own learning, teaching and mentoring.

In the first section of this paper, I draw attention to articulations of the diversity of and changes in methodologies. In doing so, I address tensions in how they might (not) connect to processes of decoloniality and introduce an understanding of 'methodologies-in/as-practices' which extends critiques and visions of social change. I then use practice theory methodologies as a case to a) demonstrate how 'methodologies-in/as-practices' can

resituate the limitations of particular types of methodological discussions, and b) support bridge-building to feminist and decolonial work seeking to transform methodologies.

The chaos of methodologies? Characterising diversity within methodologies-in/as-practices

Both discussions and enactments of methodologies in the social sciences are continually evolving. For example, Savage and Burrows articulate a 'coming crisis in empirical sociology' (2007) and the need for methodological innovation to address transactional social data and the changing roles of non-academic organisations. This prompted not only debates about whether there was a crisis (Crompton, 2008; Savage & Burrows, 2009; Webber, 2009) but also a manifesto for 'live methods' (Back & Puwar, 2012) and a 'perpetual inventory' of *Inventive Methods* (Lury & Wakeford, 2012). This is only one of many depictions of the state of methodologies. Besbris and Khan, for example, set out a struggle within sociology, the solution to which is not methodological innovation but their concise title: 'Less Theory. More Description' (2017). Savage has also identified a movement from a privileging of causality to articulations of descriptive methods coming from very different sociological traditions (2009). Given such accounts, it is important that Ndhlovu's call to challenge methodological stasis (2021) is read as a critique of the direction and nature of change, not a claim that change is not already happening. Starting from this awareness of ongoing change, the questions become: why do some methodologies not seem to be changing as much, and why do some changes remain unconnected to the aim of decolonising?

This section therefore focuses upon concepts for thinking about the diversity of methodologies and how they might change. I present two depictions which situate diverse methodologies in processes of social change, considering how each could inform strategies for addressing methodological stasis. These depictions are not definitive or exclusive - there are, of course, others that might have been crafted. Nonetheless, they highlight how different understandings of social change undergird strategies for the future. Most importantly, they support my argument that efforts to decolonise methodologies can benefit from further critical consideration of where methodological stasis might exist and how connections could be built to shift it.

The first depiction draws from the work of Andrew Abbott. In the first chapter of *Chaos of Disciplines,* he starts with the question: "How does social science change?" (2001, p. 3). Providing a descriptive account of how particular theories, methods and sub-disciplinary fields have developed in sociology, he develops an extended metaphor, suggesting the differentiations observed over time can be understood as a process of fractionation, whereby existing distinctions become reconfigured into more specialised forms over time. In the case of methods, for instance, he notes the division (particularly acute in the US, where Abbott worked) between quantitative and qualitative work (2001, pp. 10-11). This division, however, is not straightforward. Looking more closely at quantitative methods, he notes it is possible to identify approaches that are more qualitative (involving scaling and clustering) and those that are more quantitative (e.g. regression). Likewise, some qualitative methods involve formal measures, more akin to quantitative work, whilst others remain strongly interpretative.

Following these processes over time, Abbott shows, each distinction between different types of approaches is incorporated into further refinements, so that the overall discussion develops like a branching tree with more and more specialised fractals in each generation. Differentiation occurs as scholars articulate their contributions to methodological development, often reintegrating affiliations and distinctions from longstanding debates. One example is how the articulation of 'mobile methods' (Büscher & Urry, 2009; Büscher et al., 2011; Fincham et al., 2010) continues traditions of qualitative, interpretative research whilst simultaneously emphasising a distinction between mobile and immobile methods, one Merriman notes should not be over-claimed given historical precedents (2014).

In his book, Abbott identifies such fractals not only in terms of methodologies, but also sub-disciplinary differentiations and theoretical developments. He therefore argues that the development of social scientific academic knowledge, by virtue of both interactional and rhetorical positioning, proliferates greater and greater specialisation through fractionation. This fractionation can for Abbott feed innovation when someone starts a new fractal by integrating an idea not normally aligned with that lineage. Yet it also creates several problems. The first is of understanding each other's position within multiple lineages. As Abbott puts it:

> If I tell you I am a positivist, you in fact know only that in my usual domain of interaction most people I deal with are more interpretive than I. Unless you can already identify that usual domain of interaction, you don't really know anything more than you knew before I spoke. Relative to you, I might be strongly interpretive. (2001, p. 12)

A second problem is that this fractionation can significantly limit what can be discovered, as previously established approaches, even if endlessly reconfigured, "will not allow us to explore very many of the possible knowledges of society" (Abbott, 2001, p. 30). Though few researchers today might introduce themselves as positivists or interpretivists, Abbott notes that this is indicative of where the chaos of fractionation has led us: "We run into each other on some street corner, our disciplines and subdisciplines having brought us there by varying routes, and we try to locate one another's past and present by discussing our rules for traversing the labyrinth of our fundamental conceptual structure" (2001, p. 33). The fractionated lineages that shape how concepts, arguments and communities have evolved thus continue to be perpetuated despite sometimes murky views of these histories and dynamics.

There are several insights that this depiction of change can bring to considerations of methodological stasis and social change. Firstly, though not engaging explicitly with considerations of decoloniality, the process of fractionation can be read as a process whereby racialised, colonial knowledge structures have been perpetuated. Mignolo's call to a praxis of 'undoing and redoing' (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 120) can be understood as a prompt to stop the perpetuation of existing lines of fractionation, to re-set the terms under discussion and re-organise the communities debating them. Indeed, Mignolo's focus upon escaping and countering disciplinary knowledges (2009, p. 162) is particularly relevant in this context as Abbott highlights the importance of disciplines within fractionation.

Yet, decolonial arguments could also be read as themselves a fractal within theoretical lineages in the social sciences. On one hand, they forward considerations of epistemology,

knowledges and justice that are shared by postcolonial scholars. Yet these areas of work are also distinct – taking into account different geographic histories, placing different emphases on cultural, material and socio-economic dimensions, and pursuing different aims (Bhambra, 2014). As Mignolo summarises: "The de-colonial shift … is a project of de-linking while post-colonial criticism and theory is a project of scholarly transformation within the academy" (2007, p. 452). Likewise, though racism and interactions between racialised groups have been linked by some to discussions of decoloniality (Shilliam, 2016), for others they remain separate[i]. Diverse engagements are found between but also within decolonial, postcolonial and racialisation work.

Recognising this, the challenge is not only to re-cast the terms and dichotomies of methodological discussions, but to engage scholars whose theoretical and methodological paths have taken them away from these concerns. A depiction of fractionation can be helpful in thinking through the progressive entrenchment of ways of knowing and using methods in specialised groups. In this sense it suggests that the seeming lack of change in some aspects of methodologies is linked to the reinforcement of fundamental binaries and differences by subsequent groups of scholars. Abbot also provides a kind of answer regarding the disconnect between some methodological changes and decolonising efforts – for him specialisation and the importance of articulating innovations in relation to previous work largely entrenches, rather than shifting, the terms and concerns within fractals. This metaphor, however, fails to provide particularly fruitful openings for developing strategies to address potential methodological stasis. Abbott's depiction suggests it would be unlikely for future change to make any one theoretical or conceptual intervention dominant across a discipline. Furthermore, his own suggestions for how to address fractionation – innovating methodologically, hiring new faculty, re-writing cannons (2001, pp. 150-152) – do not go beyond common considerations within discussions of decolonising.

Neither does Abbott's discussion address the role of non-academic practitioners in methodologies or social change. The term 'scholars' has been used above because for Abbott it is researchers within academic institutions that are of concern. Yet, as Wimmer and Glick Schiller highlight, the knowledge production within sub-disciplines such as migration studies is powerfully shaped by not only academic actors but also governmental and public ones, who set priorities, funding and evaluation mechanisms that embed methodological nationalism (2002). Those who are not formally trained undertake research as well, which Smith notes makes 'research' a very problematic term for many indigenous people (2012, p. 2). Her account of how the colonial travellers' tales in New Zealand fed into a problematic culture of research highlights explicitly that those acting as 'researchers' went about their research alongside other practices such as surveying, trading, botany, or missionary work (2012, p. 85). Addressing the problem of methodological stasis thus requires attention both within and outside of academic circles.

Though Savage and Burrows start from a very different concern for the relevance and expertise of sociologists in empirical research, their interest in looking outside of sociological circles is relevant here. They note that "social research circuits now proliferate so extensively, using such a variety and range of methods, that we need to place our own internal sociological squabbles on one side" in order to deal with collective challenges (2009, p. 765). The waning interest of "many powerful social agents" in methodological

tools such as surveys and interviews (2009, p. 765) is a reminder both that non-academic actors can significantly influence directions of methodological change, and that methodological change is ongoing, albeit not necessarily in decolonising trajectories.

To further extend this thinking about the complexity of actors and processes involved in social and methodological change, I therefore propose a second depiction of the diversity of methodologies, what I call methodologies-in/as-practices. Grounded ontologically in practice theories, this concept extends considerations of how practice theories might destabilise dominant concepts in relation to pressing social issues (Shove, 2010). Here methodologies-in/as-practices is used to support critical analysis of the diverse communities and pathways to change that exist for varied researching practices.

Methodologies-in/as-practices

Methodologies-in/as-practices starts from understanding the world as comprised of diverse research practices and diverse (researching) practitioners. This position is an extension of the understanding "that practices consist in organised sets of actions, that practices link to form wider complexes and constellations – a nexus – and that this nexus forms the 'basic domain of study of the social sciences' (Giddens, 1984, p. 2)" (Hui et al., 2017a, p. 1). To consider methodologies *as* practices involves a curiosity for the doing of methodologies – how they are planned and performed, responding to specific problems and empirical sites. As organised sets of actions, they are repeatedly performed in both consistent and changing ways, and their consequences may be immediately perceived or more cumulatively noted as accretions of skills, material traces of evidence, shared understandings and assumptions. Though people can try to identify and name practices from the outside, there is a strong recognition of the gap between such attempts and the experiences of practitioners, which makes this concept oriented towards empirical investigation and collaborative researcher engagement.

Methodologies, however, can also be identified *in* practices that are not predominantly focused upon (academic) research. The interviewing that happens in journalistic settings, for example, integrates some of the shared activities, skills and understandings of academics' interviewing, whilst not adopting others. Methodological change and innovation around online social media platform data is happening within practices prioritising consumer analysis, corporate R&D and data marketisation rather than contributions to disciplinary knowledge. The dynamics of such practices, and the architectures that maintain them, are distinct from those supporting the production of academic research. Methodologies are also *in* practices insofar as they are interlinked with and affected in different ways by them. Academic researching is shaped by the practices of protecting data outlined in the General Data Protection Regulation and public policy making, as well as teaching, professional mentoring, ethics approving and journal peer reviewing.

There are several ways that this concept of methodologies-in/as-practices contributes to ongoing discussions about methodological change in general, and decolonising methodologies in particular. Firstly, as a fundamentally relational concept, it resists the pushing aside of experiences and concerns outside of academia. My use of the formulation in/as draws from Lave's discussion of learning, where she notes the importance of 'both

and' in understandings of praxis (2019, p. 6). Lave highlights how "Culture produces learning, even as learning always produces culture, in relations that are themselves cultural and historical" (2019, p. 6). So too methodologies and diverse researching practices mutually shape and relate to each other in ongoing, evolving processes. This links to the key decolonial point that social scientists need to consider the activities of practitioners outside academia more attentively. This is not only because they are generating interesting data, innovating methodologically, or have had their concerns ignored and erased through historic practices of researching. Social scientists need to attend to the activities of diverse practitioners because methodologies have never been exclusive territory. People may not be called 'researchers' but nonetheless "search and record, they select and interpret, they organize and re-present, they make claims on the basis of what they assemble" (Smith, 2012, p. 17). This point, which Smith makes so forcefully, is inescapable when methodologies are addressed in/as practices.

Methodologies-in/as-practices thus transforms the terrain of critique within discussions of methodology by centring diverse (researching) practitioners and practices. It is not necessarily enough to only acknowledge and restate dimensions of geopolitics or platformisation as a nod to the existence of practitioners that have been marginalised in discussions of methodologies. If our work is not accessible to and engaging with practitioners in varied sites, then there is space for beneficial change. Methodologies-in/as-practices undermines deficit thinking in discussions of methodologies by refusing to cast methodological practices, and conversations about them, as the sphere of only trained academics. The ontological flatness (Schatzki, 2016) of methodologies-in/as-practices is a challenge to discussions of methodology that support or privilege only the ongoing reproduction of academic researching practices.

Secondly, whereas postcolonial studies put significant focus upon discourses and the critique of dominant narratives, methodologies-in/as-practices invites consideration of both discursive and embodied, practiced dimensions of the social world (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002). As Schatzki puts it, practices involve both doings and sayings, and thus both might be reproduced and extended or changed (2019). This creates new opportunities for exploring how we might move beyond methodological stasis. There is space, for example, to question pre-reflexive dimensions of habitual activity that can reproduce problematic cultural dynamics in research encounters. Methodologies-in/as-practices could also support analysis of how the unequal distribution of embodied skills amongst those involved in researching might challenge efforts to shift teaching and mentoring dynamics and enact widespread change.

This emphasis also raises questions about the relationship between theoretical discussions of decoloniality and pathways to decolonise methodologies. For those first encountering discussions of decoloniality, there are multiple dimensions of key concepts and arguments, which could prompt varied responses. Some might easily agree with depictions of the assumed universality of a Western timeline and history (e.g. Smith, 2012) yet have more scepticism about the operation of a colonial matrix of power (originated by Quijano and expanded in Mignolo, 2007). Likewise, calls to find other ways to live, speak and think might resonate whilst those immersed in other theoretical lineages or addressing different social challenges might resist the prioritisation of considerations of modernity, knowledge

structures and 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2009). Though Mignolo's discussions of 'de-linking' (2007) might seem appealing in theory, what that means for individuals in practice might be unclear, and for practitioners outside academia the barrier of engaging with theory can be particularly high. By encouraging empirical curiosity about practices and sites in which de-linking or undoing might occur, methodologies-in/as-practice facilitates a consideration of change that is not dependent upon full integration into the discourse of decoloniality. Involving people in transformative practices can happen alongside ongoing discursive disagreements (e.g. Kelty, 2010). This concept opens up space then to question how envisioned pathways to change differentiate between minimum thresholds of understanding and obligatory agreements or points of passage.

A third way this concept extends existing discussions is by facilitating detailed critical analysis and planning of varied pathways for change. Studies of practices have highlighted that changing complex nexuses does not depend upon first changing people's understandings. Rather, change can be precipitated in many ways. As Schatzki notes, practices are characterised by openness – they might be extended through being re-enacted, but they might not (2019, p. 28). This indeterminacy is fundamental - no matter how likely it may seem that they will be re-enacted, this is never guaranteed until it has occurred. Likewise, many activities that could have potentially led to change fail to do so, as social life is filled with happenstance. Social change then can only be identified after the fact because the ability of any chain of actions to precipitate change isn't clear until after they have been performed (Schatzki, 2019, p. 122). While Schatzki makes no attempt to typify the activities that have incited successful social change, others have. Shove et al. (2012, Ch 5), for instance, discuss how practices might change through bringing new materialities, meanings or competences into them – as when the introduction of televisions or fridge-freezers into homes transformed interlinked practices of leisure and of food production, transportation and storage. They also note how the ongoing monitoring and feedback that occurs when practices are performed can lead to change (Shove et al., 2012, Ch 6). Kemmis and colleagues (2019; 2013) suggest practices are supported by architectures that shape how they unfold, and can be critiqued to identify opportunities for change. These include what they call cultural-discursive arrangements, but also material-economic and social-political ones. Analysing these arrangements might take many forms. One can consider professional languages shared across sites inside and outside academia. One can query material resources that outline procedures for doing methods, and which circulate independently of the epistemological concepts that, in one time and space, undergirded them. One can examine relationships whereby personal networks allow for the flow of new methodological ideas between some practice communities and not others. Interventions for change similarly take on varied forms – terms and concepts, but also the immutable mobiles (Latour, 1987) of methods and the community engagements that build new relationships between diverse practitioners.

By inviting a consideration of diverse, interlinked practices, methodologies-in/as-practices directs critical attention to what might foster change in any one site within the nexus. Moreover, by inviting attention to situated enactments and interlinkages, methodologies-in/as-practices supports an analysis of what needs changing and what existing practices we can build upon. In this way, indigenous methodologies and projects are already a part of methodologies-in/as-practices and might be supported to grow as much as other (aspects

of) practices might be desirable to constrain. As Chalmers notes, the enactments of and relationship between indigenous and decolonising methodologies "will ultimately depend upon who uses them, why they are used, and where they are practiced" (2017, p. 99). The problem of methodological stasis could in this way be taken up by analysing exactly which practices and communities have integrated changes to decolonise methodologies, and the dynamics by which that has or has not affected other (potentially) interlinked practices. Most importantly, methodologies-in/as-practices offers ways of thinking about shifting established practices which are open to not only those already embedded in or close to indigenous communities or lands of the global South, but also to those in subdisciplines or positionalities that are currently much further (geographically, theoretically or politically) from discussions of decolonising. Without engaging those groups, the challenge of methodological stasis will be hard to shift.

Finally, the orientation of methodologies-in/as-practices towards learning about and adapting understandings after encounters with practitioners lends an accessibility that comes from remaining close to lived experience. Some might want to engage deeply with its theoretical underpinnings, and to examine the diversity of theoretical strands that comprise what has been called a loose 'family' of practice theories. Others outside academia may be more concerned with how this concept encourages consideration of their experiences: How has your practice been changing? How have any new materials, ideas, skills or relationships been included? What is most important about things that haven't changed as much? How are 'good' and 'bad' distinguished or corrected within your community? How do other organisations and groups constrain your activities? What do those unfamiliar with your practice often misunderstand? What challenges are important in the community engaged in this practice? What opportunities do you see for beneficial change? What links to other communities might support your practice? How is your community responding to discussions around diversity, racism, social justice, truth? How might we build relationships together? Practitioners thus remain experts of their own experience, and are seen to hold the potential, in each moment, to make changes to the practices they "'carry' and 'carry out'" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 256). Discussing and reflecting upon such changes opens up considerations of future change. Aspects of this approach resonate strongly with decolonial thinking, but the differences in terms of how doing and thinking, situated enactments and shared epistemologies are seen to relate offer opportunities for new explorations.

After having articulated the challenge of methodological stasis, Ndhlovu highlights potential ways forward. There is a need, he suggests, to discuss messy encounters, escape dualisms, and develop "methodological approaches devoted to finding connections, points of confluence, and opportunities for transfer of concepts" (2021, p. 199). It is towards this aim that methodologies-in/as-practices can contribute. By providing a conceptual bridge for diversely-situated people to reflect upon methodological practices and how their changes and links are emerging, it supports processes of (un)teaching and (un)learning that are central to decolonisation (Gutiérrez Magallanes et al., 2018). Whilst this section focused upon outlining the concept and highlighting its value in extending discussions of methodological stasis, decolonising and social change, the next section focuses upon its potential to support critiques of and interventions in specific methodological discussions.

Decolonising practice theory methodologies

Though, as the last section argued, methodologies-in/as-practices offers opportunities to extend the work of decolonising methodologies and support discussions of methodological change, it is important to recognise that the practice theories it draws upon are themselves in need of decolonising. After a brief introduction to practice theory, this section uses methodologies-in/as-practices to critically analyse discussions of practice theory methodologies and extend an important decolonial counterpoint. Though of particular use for practice theorists, this critical analysis also demonstrates how examining specific methodological discussions can support efforts to build links in support of decolonising methodologies.

Practice theories[1], and the methodologies they inform, are not unified but multiple. Indeed this 'family' of theoretical work has been discursively brought together by authors noting ontological similarities in previous work (Reckwitz, 2002). While earlier practice theorists did not work or interact as a community, many authors now do (Hui et al., 2017b; Schatzki et al., 2001) and researchers today devote varying attention to authors within the broad family. Both theoretical and empirical contributions to practice theory are interdisciplinary, with engagements across sociology, philosophy, anthropology, education, and organisational studies.

Unsurprisingly, this has contributed to varied methodological approaches (Jonas et al., 2017c; Spaargaren et al., 2016). Some have suggested the existence of different 'camps', with Jonas et al. noting that more contributors to their edited collection on methodologies aligned themselves with ethnography or ethnomethodology than other qualitative or quantitative approaches (2017b, p. 254). This, however, simplifies a more complex set of discussions, with, for example, authors engaging with social constructivism (Halkier & Jensen, 2011), exploring time-use data (Anderson, 2016; Mattioli et al., 2016), and discussing how to operationalise understandings of practice (Lamers et al., 2016; Sahakian & Wilhite, 2014). Some authors have engaged with the idea that there might be shared principles for 'practice theory methodologies'[2], while others have argued that there is no such thing (Shove, 2017).

In many instances, these discussions have reproduced what have been recognised as problematic epistemological assumptions and have left unquestioned the dominance of Western concerns and cases. Methodological discussions, in particular, have clear resonances with what Hammersley identifies as ideal typical genres (2011) corresponding to historical changes within the social sciences. Yet I agree with scholars who have suggested there is potential for practice theories to contribute to dewesternising research (Jin et al., 2020). The decentering of individuals that Smith notes is important for decolonising methodologies (2012) has been a concern for practice theorists (Reckwitz, 2002). More remains to be done, however, in finding ways to embed a consideration for groups, communities, and extended social relationships into discussions of practices. Maller and Strengers' discussion of how 'practice memories' (2013) can be shared intergenerationally

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[1] Where the singular is used in this paper, it is for grammatical ease (e.g. practice theory methodologies).
[2] See contributions on https://practicetheorymethodologies.wordpress.com/

in families is an important intervention in this space. Yet culturally-specific understandings, such as filial piety or *guanxi* in the East Asian context, necessitate further discussion of how practices, practitioners and performances can be more fundamentally intertwined than often acknowledged. Smith highlights that the Maori understanding of *whanau*, an expansive term referring to extended family, has been used to ground important research (2012, p. 171), and an important aspect of decolonising practice theory research will be to consider how proactively making space for such understandings can further destabilise assumptions of the primacy of individuals. Engaging with deeper intercultural investigations could also help to unsettle the dominance of Western everyday practices in areas such as consumption and sustainability research.

Understandings of knowledge within practice theories also align with some discussions of decolonising methodologies. Smith argues, drawing upon Hall, Foucault and Said, that the problem is not the singularity of a Western system of knowledge or rules of classification, but that "some knowledges are more dominant than others, some are submerged and outdated. Some knowledges are actively in competition with each other and some can only be formed in association with others" (2012, p. 45). Many practice theorists would be in complete agreement. It is not necessary for them to accept an argument that there has been an epistemicide (de Sousa Santos, 2014) because practice theorists already acknowledge that practices, and knowledges they incorporate and perpetuate, are variously positioned and empowered. Some concepts and assumptions come to suffuse areas of social life – as with ideas of convenience (Shove, 2003) or creativity (Reckwitz, 2017) – but others may fade away. Practice theorists and Smith converge in the understanding that currently marginalised or less widespread knowledges are not permanently relegated and "can be extended" (Smith, 2012, p. 177) and that the same practice can be enacted with very different knowledges in different locations (e.g. Wang, 2009). Whilst practice theorists have not yet given significant attention to indigenous or otherwise marginalised knowledges, there is a basis from which to do so.

These general observations about potential convergences between practice theories and discussions of decolonising methodologies point to important areas for further development. Yet the previous section argued that addressing methodological stasis in the context of significant diversity necessitates more detailed considerations of situated methodologies. In the following sub-sections, I look more closely at three different types of methodological discussions within practice theory, drawing upon Hammersley (2011). I start by briefly characterising each ideal-typical articulation of methodology, and then critically consider how that discussion is situated in methodologies-in/as-practices. From this starting point, I identify openings and extensions that help change the terms of these discussions and explore resonances with work to decolonise methodologies. While some aspects of this exercise are specific to communities engaged with practice theories, both the process and particular dimensions of methodologies-in/as-practices discussed within it have potential to be applied in other methodological communities.

Decolonising methodology-as-technique

Hammersley's first "broad genre" of 'methodology-as-technique' (2011, p. 20), focuses on the articulation and justification of methods as a set of 'how-to' procedures accessible to

novices. Most explicitly this can be found in debates about the role or prioritisation of interviews or observations as key methodological techniques (Jonas et al., 2017b; Schmidt, 2017, p. 15), with suggestions that observation is the "gold standard" (Halkier, 2017) or that interviews require justification (Hitchings, 2012). This way of talking about methodologies is also found in Nicolini's well-cited discussion of zooming in and zooming out of practices (2009, 2012). Inspired by actor network theory and discussions of collage, he argues for a "toolkit approach" (2012, Ch 9) – "the rationale for my intended eclecticism is programmatic: to the extent that practice is a multifaceted and multi-dimensional phenomenon, it can only be approached through a toolkit-logic" (2009, p. 1395). As such, Nicolini articulates what he calls 'theory-method packages' drawing upon different theoretical contributions to practice theory. These packages are to be woven together through the repetition of two methodological and analytic movements – zooming in to see how practices are conducted in specific settings and then zooming out to understand how multiple practices are connected. In laying out his toolkit, Nicolini clearly prioritises usability and broad suggestions of techniques over theoretical coherence. Though theories of practice undoubtedly hold common tenets, which allow them to be spoken of as having familial resemblances, they are also marked by consequential differences. To advocate for "switching theoretical lenses" (2012, p. 219) is therefore about making it practicable to draw widely from the family, and downplays the work that might be needed to acknowledge and position the diversity of philosophical traditions and priorities so assembled.

Methodologies-in/as-practices provides a base from which to both acknowledge and refuse dimensions of these discussions. Tools and techniques can circulate and become integrated into diverse methodological practices, and in drawing attention to the existence of 'theory-method packages' rather than simply methods, Nicolini is highlighting that methods are not neutral or unencumbered. In this way, decolonising discussions might start from a concern for how methods and the understandings underpinning them are interlinked. Yet focusing upon switching lenses within practice theory could also minimise important considerations of broader histories of methodologies and research. Colonial histories matter, for instance, in how theory-method packages can perpetuate knowledges and social relations that are at the very least neglectful of other voices and in some cases support significant injustices.

Whilst authors who drawn upon Nicolini's work already make repeated movements zooming in and out on their empirical site(s), this repetition is also needed in acknowledging and attending to how methodologies-as-techniques are differently positioned within methodologies-in/as-practices. By pushing an understanding of theory-method packages to interlink with work beyond practice theory, helpful questions therefore arise. Which practitioners or communities are using specific theory-method packages? Where are opportunities to forge links to decolonising concepts, indigenous methodologies and practitioners outside academia? Whose concepts are underpinning the mechanics of how researchers methodologically and analytically zoom in and out? How can a comparative apparatus be assembled which is interlinked with practice theories whilst also supporting the decolonising of methodologies?

It is important in such reflections that the goal does not become too narrowly focused upon finding or evaluating new techniques. Such an approach leads Gobo to very problematically

suggest that indigenous methodologies remain peripheral because they "bring about little technical innovation" (2011, p. 433). Rather, inspiration can be drawn from authors like Thambinathan and Kinsella who demonstrate how decolonising practices such as critical reflexivity shift considerations and enactments of techniques, such as the writing of interview questions (2021).

Decolonising methodology-as-philosophy

The second of Hammersley's ideal types, 'methodology-as-philosophy', focuses upon the reflexive consideration of theoretical traditions that have conflicting priorities and ontological underpinnings, questioning their debates and implications for research (2011, p. 22). Within practice theory literature, Robert Schmidt articulates and positions a distinct methodology-as-philosophy – what he calls praxeology (2016, p. 43). The work of Bourdieu, he suggests, offers a distinct praxeological approach focused upon: "access[ing] and understand[ing] the objects of inquiry in the process of their ongoing social production, transformation and destruction" (2016, p. 44). Schmidt's praxeology draws attention to contrasts and priorities rather than rules – highlighting that contra ethnomethodology's interest in successful enactments, people should be seen as also engaged in criticism and subversion of practices (2016, p. 54), or that importance should be given to observable game playing, not suppositions of interiority (2017, p. 13). The precedent of existing philosophical positions is thus important to the identity of praxeology as a distinct methodology. Schmidt's is only one of several articulations of methodology-as-philosophy within practice theory. For example, Schäfer, starting from a dissatisfaction with Bourdieu's work, articulates what he calls a transitive methodology (2017). It draws from other inspirations within the family of practice theories – particularly affinities with actor network theory and calls to follow the actor. The diversity of theorists within practice theory means that methodology-as-philosophy can highlight varied methodological implications, depending on whose work is foregrounded. This can contribute to the methodological heterogeneity that Jonas et al. note (2017a) and is particularly acute for novice researchers.

Starting from methodologies-in/as-practices, this heterogeneity isn't surprising. Whilst some articulations of methodology-as-philosophy have sparked rich and enduring communities of practice – as with feminist methodologies – such emergences haven't reduced the overall complexity of the landscape. Therefore, whilst some have advocated for the collaborative development of new decolonised paradigms (Held, 2019), the continual extension old ones raises questions about the likelihood that a new paradigm could consolidate diverse fractals or effectively acknowledge the messiness of encounters that Ndhlovu notes.

Seeing these debates as part of methodologies-in/as-practices, however, raises the question of how particular philosophical traditions reverberate in methodological practice. Though practice theorists have largely grounded methodology-as-philosophy in particular authors, there are other traditions that retain a more pluriversal approach. Feminist methodologies, for instance, prioritise not particular authors but types of activities that support a trajectory for change – reflexivity, attending to silences and absences, extending participation, representing diversity and difference, centring embodied experience, privileging relationality. Though emerging from different theoretical discussions, many of these activities can be used for decolonising methodologies (Chalmers, 2017). Similarly concerned

with new ways of doing, Smith outlines 25 'projects' within an indigenous research agenda that might be conducted by diverse researchers (including lawyers, health workers, policy analysts) (2012, p. 143, Ch 8). These include claiming, celebrating survival, gendering, intervening, networking, reframing, envisioning, protecting, and democratizing (2012, pp. 144-162). Rather than seeking to change methodologies from a basis in the philosophies of post-positivist inquiry (e.g. constructivist, hermeneutic, feminist, action research, or poststructural critiques (2012, p. 169)), Smith's intervention is to direct us towards transformative activities that can be integrated into practices or methodologies.

This analysis of diverse methodologies-in/as-practices highlights that practice theorists might shift their understanding of how philosophy grounds methodologies to prioritise not authors but projects and doings that support desirable change. These efforts could beneficially build upon Schatzki's distinction between integrative practices and dispersed practices (2002, p. 91), where the former are well established around particular aims and ends and the latter are a more generic type of activity that can be identified as a component part of diversely situated and performed practices. While discussions of research have often treated it as a complex integrative practice that is reproduced by academic communities, Smith's emphasis on the researching of many different groups (2012) is a push to attend to researching as a widely dispersed activity, with varied dimensions and consequences. In addition, the types of activities, or for Smith projects, noted above can be seen as dispersed practices, and they have a particular potential for social transformation that comes from the ability to be integrated into many different practices and then create change from within.

Practice theorists have already recognised this potential for doings to support change. Couldry and colleagues, for example, discuss how dispersed practices such as searching and sharing via digital platforms are linked to changes in how (little) people prepare before leaving the house to go to a new location (as a map is always searchable on-the-go) (Couldry, 2012, p. lvii) and how journalists go about their work (Cammaerts & Couldry, 2016). Such considerations of dispersed practices reinforce the potential for change to unfold in varied ways. Efforts to further support, amplify, promote, proliferate and interlink the types of projects Smith names with feminist, practice theory, or other methodologies is thus one way of seeking changes to existing configurations of methodologies-in/as-practices. Whilst practice theorists have devoted much less attention to dispersed practices than to integrative ones, this provides a means of bringing discussions of methodology-as-technique and methodology-as-philosophy closer together by asking which doings could or should be prioritised by practice theory researchers, and how these interlink or resonate with broader calls for methodological change.

Decolonising methodology-as-autobiography

Hammersley's third and final ideal type is 'methodology-as-autobiography' (2011, p. 25). Here reflexivity is taken even further, suggesting the embodied craft of research can never be adequately captured by general rules. It must therefore be learned through experience and exposure to descriptions of researching that may indeed contravene widely held methodological tenets. Shove, for example, does not think practice theory methodologies exist because of her understanding of how theory and method interrelate. Engaging with practice theory, for her, inspires questions that are then responded to through methods

(Shove, 2017). Though at first inclined to argue that practice theory sparks distinct questions, by the end of her piece she questions even this, and thus does not hold that philosophically practice theory informs a specific methodology. She does not see the opportunities or challenges of shaping appropriate methodologies as of a different order than for other social scientific researchers. This position echoes discussions of methodology-as-autobiography. The specificity of each pairing of theory and method to answer research questions makes it for her unnecessary to draw broader connections around philosophy or technique.

As Hammersley notes, however, this kind of approach can end up minimising "the role of general discussion of methodological issues and methods, and to forget the necessarily normative character of the task" (2011, p. 42). Over-emphasising the uniqueness of methodology-as-autobiography can constrain opportunities to (re)construct normative priorities for research methodologies in response to discussions of decolonising research. It can also obscure the challenge of acknowledging limitations in how we locate ourselves relative to others – a crucial aspect of decolonial (un)learning (Gutiérrez Magallanes et al., 2018).

By proposing methodologies-in/as-practice, I resituate methodology-as-autobiography and Hammersley's other ideal typical genres. Rather than engaging in a discussion about the extent to which practice theorists might have distinct methodologies, theoretical starting points, or rules and techniques, I am calling for further conversation about how we work within methodological diversity and for change that decolonises methodologies. Though some people's autobiographies, communities or research concerns have already brought them to this conversation, for others this is unfamiliar territory. The critical analysis above highlights how methodologies-in/as-practices can support critique of the absences within specialised debates, foster links between different methodological discussions, and build bridges between practice theory, feminist and decolonising methodological practices.

Diversity, decoloniality and new trajectories

Given the entrenchment of methodological assumptions in public and academic discourses, as well as the continual reproduction of legacy research practices in schools, universities, charities and corporations around the world, significant systemic change requires more than engaging those already exploring decolonial strategies. This paper has thus focused upon the challenge of how to further decolonise methodologies, given the diverse and fragmented ways research is currently understood and performed.

Methodologies-in/as-practices does not replace the valuable work that has already been done by scholars aiming to decolonise methodologies. Rather, it establishes a different starting point from which further work might follow. Diverse strategies are needed to support delinking from problematic assumptions and build a pluriversal world where many knowledges (and their practices) thrive (Mignolo, 2007, p. 453). Methodologies-in/as-practices contributes to this work by directing critical attention to existing and potential changes within a diverse nexus of methodologies. Inviting an examination of the diversity of practices then undergirds exploration of new links and bridges between practices, which could support decolonising aims.

Admittedly, this concept draws upon understandings developed within a predominantly Western academic literature. For some, it might therefore not be deemed appropriate to forward the work of decolonising and delinking. My position, however, is that as a concept that supports and extends existing discussions of decolonising, it has the potential to support the spiralling reflections, undoings and redoings, that move away from the reproduction of problematic aspects of researchings and towards a multitude of promising ones. It is therefore not a place to stop, but a device that helps to undo some links while building others. Having demonstrated that it can support a critique of even the practice theoretical literature undergirding it shows its promise in evolving and changing conversations about decolonising methodologies.

Importantly, it supports an approach that remains curious about multiple types of change, and diverse possibilities for connecting and aligning changes with decolonising aims. The things that might circulate, interlink or be taken up more widely to address methodological stasis are diverse: concepts and techniques, no doubt, but also dispersed practices and processes that facilitate dialogue between existing communities.

Though this paper has presented a conventional academic argument about the value of considering methodologies-in/as-practices, and has been written with one unified authorial voice, taking up the concept needs not respect those bounds. Stories of methodologies-in/as-practice might rightly spiral as dialogues between multiple characters, as in the style of Peter Cole's excellent paper on 'trick(ster)s of aboriginal research' (2004). In the hands of a trickster, such as Cole's Coyote and Raven, this concept and others might be pulled and prodded, testing the limitations of our disciplines, practices and understandings. Continuing to decolonise methodologies will undoubtedly benefit from further interventions that undermine the normalcy of our ways of writing, citing and responding.

We need, however, to start somewhere, and as I have demonstrated, methodologies-in/as-practices effectively opens up considerations of the social change required to decolonise diverse, and often opposing, methodological traditions and communities. There is not one clear path or easy solution beyond methodological stasis. But as Smith notes, "Research begins as a social, intellectual and imaginative activity… It is at its core an activity of hope" (2012, pp. 202-203). Doing things differently is therefore always possible. Methodologies-in/as-practices articulates a space for continuing this work of seeking transformation amidst diversity.

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