

SWDTP Webinar Handling data in decolonial research-20260430_120054UTC-Meeting Recording

30 April 2026, 12:00pm

1h 7m 28s

JC Jonathan Chow 0:06

Good afternoon, everyone. Lovely to see you all again. Some of you, some of you, this might be your first time, in which case an extra warm welcome. I think this is the 10th session in our webinar series now on data analysis. And today we're really excited to bring you a session

on handling data in decolonial research. If you've been to one of our webinars before, you'll know the drill. We will have each of our presenter do a 20 minute presentation and then followed by a five minute Q&A.

right after each presentation. I know we've got time in the end, then we will go into a further discussion or Q&A. So the chat function today is turned off. However, the Q&A feature is turned on. And so we encourage you to put your questions in the Q&A box.

throughout the session, which I will monitor. And when we get round to the questions and answers, if you would like to turn on your mic to ask your question instead, please raise your virtual hand and I will enable your mic for you. Captions are available. Just be mindful that they are automatically generated.

Without further ado, I will introduce our first presenter of the day then, Mercy Martin, a PhD researcher in the School of Education from the University of Bath. Over to you, Mercy.

MM Mercy Martins 1:50

Here.

I'll try to share my screen now.

Okay, can you just confirm that you can see the screen now, please? Do you understand?

JC Jonathan Chow 2:02

Yes, we can see your screen.

MM Mercy Martins 2:03

Okay, thank you and hello everyone. My name is Mercy. I am a final year PhD candidate at the University of Bath and I will be sharing a presentation on the messy realities of anti-colonial research. We're imagining language practises in Nigerian secondary school.

as part of the SWDTP Data Analysis webinar series.

So, in this presentation today, I have divided it into 3 parts. I think before I can look into the data analysis conversation, I have to introduce my research, what my research is about briefly, and then focus a little bit on the ethics and methodological decisions, then going to the data analysis, and then some concluding reflections.

while trying to stick to time. So I would continue quickly now.

So my research that I'm presenting today is part of my doctoral thesis, which the title is Agency and Resistance as Anti-Colonial Praxis, Reimagining Language Practise in Nigerian Secondary School. And to do the research, I had to go for a five month field work in a Nigerian secondary school. Nigeria has a colonial heritage.

the result of past colonial rule as is the case with most African countries. And as a result of that, English is the main language used in Nigeria as the official language in education and every other official setting.

For a little bit of context.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with over 200 million people. Right now, I think the statistics says about 236. We're also the most linguistically diverse nation in Africa and third in the world. We have about 500 languages, which account for 18 to 20 percent of Africa's linguistic diversity.

English is the most spoken language in Nigeria, followed by the Nigerian Pidgin. But the Nigerian Pidgin is not seen as a good enough language, so it is not really considered as a language in itself. English is the official medium, but then we have three other national languages, which is Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. Now, if you go to rural settings or rural places in Nigeria,

We have what they call like a homogeneous language group you find in school settings. But then when you go to urban schools, which I went to, you realise that in a classroom, you get to have students from many different language groups. I think in the school I went to, we had over 50 different language groups.

in the school. So that is the difference between urban and rural area in terms of language disparity or whatever.

So, the summary of language and education literature have always focused on the instructional part of language in the classroom, with very few literatures connecting

the issue of language use in education to broader issues of epistemic exclusion, gender issues or cultural issues.

and other socioeconomic issues. However, during the literature review, we found out that very little research have actually looked at other spaces within the school aside the classroom. And that is why this research, my research focuses on school language practices.

in non-classroom settings or non-classroom spaces, even though we understand that some of those spaces are influenced by what happens in the classroom. And the idea is to transform those practises that continue to marginalise indigenous or local languages and prioritise colonial languages, particularly in Nigerian case.

English.

So, to do that, my research had asked two questions. Although the main research as with other with most PhD has like babies, I just brought the justice to so it will look very like very succinct. So, how do how do school policies govern language practises within Nigerian secondary school?

Particularly, we're looking at how these practises and policies extend beyond the classroom, and if there are instances of students resisting these practices. And the second question is looking at how can the anti-colonial practises be employed to confront language practises in Nigerian secondary school. And particularly, we're looking at what are the avenues already available

or yes, avenues already available in the school that can be leveraged to amplify local languages. And of course, the second part of the question is looking at the obstacles to that. In this presentation, I won't really be sharing the findings. In other presentation, I have shared the findings, but I will just

stop here and now move towards like the ethics, methodological and data analysis, which is mostly what this particular webinar is about. So the ethics and methodology.

So when I was about going for my field work, as with most universities, we have to do what we call an ethics at Bath, where there is this big template where you have to explain what you want to do in the field, how you want to collect, how you plan to generate data, how you plan to access the field, the gatekeepers, everything, how you plan to manage your data,

how you plan to how you plan to do the entire research even before you go to the field. But then after you get this, after you get all this approved, they more or less tell you that you can go and do data, you can go and do your research in whatever country you're doing your research, which I found really confusing as because why?

is the, why is the UK giving me permission to do research in another country without putting into cognizance or making it a priority that, oh, you have to get approval from that country. But the decolonial researcher, I realised for me, getting the permission from the local ethics was even more important than institutional ethics. So that is what I did.

But then there was also a problem where I wanted to have a participatory research, but then I was limited by institutional frameworks that warranted that I had to do a full ethics, deciding the methods I wanted to use, even before meeting my collaborators to discuss what would work well for them. So to be able to ensure that I stayed true to my decolonial ethos,

by also engaging with what the institutions wanted from me, I decided to have two strategies. The first one was to design A flexible methodological design. Now, this design allowed me to say, oh, my research is broken down into two phases. The next screen, I'll show you what I mean by that.

And in my first phase, I plan to do this or this or this or this. So I had like about four different options, but I wanted my learners to choose from. And then the whole idea was if I give them, if I come to the field with already predestined methods of pre-approved methods,

The fact that there were many methods meant my collaborators had a chance to have a voice in the methods itself. And the second strategy was having a supplementary ethics as an in-between space between institutional ethics and anti-colonial, decolonial participatory research, where the university had given me approval of to do things in a certain way.

I go to the field and my collaborators had given me some ideas that are important to them and I wanted I want the ideas to be to be integrated into the research. What I had to do was to create a supplementary ethics involving or infusing all the ideas to make the research as much as it as much as it was mine.

I also wanted methods that amplify the voices of the learners, because most of the literature always came from teachers' perspective, adult perspective, policymakers' perspective. Very few focused a lot on the learners. And I wanted the learners to be at the forefront of the research. And I also had to navigate and negotiate my positionality as both an insider and outsider.

I'm A Nigerian. I went to school in the same city that I am doing my research in. I knew about one or two teachers that taught me in my secondary school. I went in this school that I was doing my research in. My age positioned me as not a teacher,

per se, not an average teacher, but closer to the ages of the students, while also closer to the ages of the teachers.

So sometimes they saw me as an insider because I was aware of the cultural nuances of the community. They know me, some of them knew me when I was younger. But also I was also seen as an outsider because I was coming in as a researcher. I wanted to understand the language practices. So I had to constantly navigate and negotiate that my that position.

So this is a table of my methodology where I divided my, because I was going to spend five months in the field and the five months was splitted in between two terms. And then after, for the first two months, they were going to be in one term, then there will be like a one month

break for Christmas and New Year, and then I was going to spend another two months. So what I did was in the first two months, I only engaged with the students. So initially, I had map making, and after map making, they had to choose between talk circle, walking tour, or informal conversation. But then they collaboratively said they wanted to have a talk circle because they felt

The groupings they had for the map making was safe, was a safe space for them to discuss why they chose the kind of map, the maps they chose. And then they wanted, they felt that the walking tour was too risky because it risks them talking about different places and teachers hearing them and punishing them. So this was the map making we had. And then the map was like,

pictures were taken of 10 spaces in the school where the students had to use colours to talk about spaces that they felt were safe for them to speak their local languages, which were greens, spaces where it was not safe for them to use their local language because they would more or less punish them 100 times, 10 times out of 10 times if they speak their local language of the Nigerian Pidgin in their spaces.

and spaces where it sometimes it is safe, sometimes it was not safe. For some of these spaces, they had like a definite yes or no, but for others, some students said red, some people said blue, some people said green, some people said yellow, some people said blue. So with the talk circle, we discussed the rationale for those colouring in those spaces.

And then after that, I did an observation where based on the map, I looked at those spaces and looked at like what was happening in those spaces based on what they had said to me. So during the Christmas period, I made sense of the data to help me design the second part of the research. And the second part was when I had to

engage with students, with students, teachers, parents, the principal, we had storytelling, focus group discussion, interviews, and then we also had drama. Drama was something that was added by the student that was not initially part of my initial methods. They wanted drama to embody and visualise their experience in the school in a place where the teachers and the principals and school authorities

were present for them to see how, what they were doing was evaluating their local languages. So after that phase, I did what they called the initial participatory analysis with my students, where some of the data was brought to the students for them to form initial codes while in the field. This was done to ensure that their voices remained

With the research, even after I left the field.

So these are some pictures from the drama. The drama took place for throughout the second phase. We had a lot of rehearsals and it was an amazing experience. The teachers were present and it also changed the teachers' perception to how they were policing and governing language practices.

And the students, even though they suggested the idea of the drama, they were not just idle participants, they were collaborators and we worked collaboratively together. For example, for the drama, based on all the stories they had told me, I discussed with them some of the ideas for the drama. We agreed on the ideas and then I created a script for the drama and gave it to them.

And they came back and cancelled some things and said things like, oh, some of these things you're saying, we won't say it like this, we'll say it like this. And it made them more or less be at the forefront of their own experiences, which is something that is very central to the colonial methodologies and research. It's about amplifying voices.

So some of the organisation tips that I had to do, more or less data management tips, when handling my data was because I had a lot of data, I had to create like an Outlook folder for research, for like research data generation. I had a folder that just wrote my name and my field work. And then the folder was divided by my phases because I had two phases just so that I won't get confused.

and I'll be able to like store the data properly. So I had phase one and phase two.

And in phase one, for example, I had map making, talk circle. And then phase two, I had like parents, teachers, I had interviews of parents, those kind of things. And things like maps that were co-produced by the students. What I did was we took

pictures of the map to have a digital copy, where the main copy were given to the students.

And then I use audio recorder on my phone for recording things like the focus group, interview stories, and the talk circle. So to ensure that, because I was having lots of recording, I had to save it with the group, the method, and the dates. And then I had in my journal written down like the date of the dates that I was doing the interviews so I can cross cheque to ensure that.

I wasn't getting confused with the mini data.

And then when I did the transcripts and I saved the transcript, I removed the recording to protect the anonymity of my collaborators. Now, in terms of data analysis, my data analysis was a messy process because at the end of my research, I had a lot of data. I had 56 maps. The maps were divided across 11 groups of 11 groups of students that did the talk circle. Some of the students were four, 5, 6. I think we had six of the highest of group of students and the average was like an hour. We had about 25 interviews. We had 14 stories. We had focus groups participate. So we had so much data. And because

My research is looking at how English is being positioned as a superior language to our local languages. The first strategy was to ensure that not all the methods were verbal, which is why map making was very important, it was a non-verbal method. But then even when we were speaking, because of the many languages that has been that we have in Nigeria, like I mentioned in the beginning, I didn't want a situation where if we had allowed them to use local languages, I can't hear local languages. So we came to a conclusion that, oh, we could use the Nigerian pidgin because everybody can hear the Nigerian pidgin and they can use English as well, but they were not under any obligation to speak good English with me. They could use the Nigerian pidgin.

And then, because of that...

When it was time for me to transcribe the data, the available transcription softwares were not picking up, first of all, some of these Nigerian pidgin words and the accent and slangs of the students, right? Because I wanted the students to be honest to themselves and share based on what they felt comfortable with. But by doing that, There was a limitation of using software to transcribe this many data sets. And then I had to choose between do I want to protect the voices of my collaborators or do I want to ensure that I save time and use the software, even though the software might not be able to, like,

get all the data from the student. So what I decided to do was, even though it took me a longer time and it was very stressful, I had to hand transcribe, like I had to transcribe the data sets instead of using software because the software were not picking the accent and some of the Nigerian pigeon. This was because I valued I do want to, I do want speed to take to take precedence over the voices of my collaborators or meet something that was very much important. And aside from that, I hope we also adapted thematic, Brendan Clark thematic analysis using the participatory data from the field. I didn't want a situation where Whenever I would go from the field was left because I was no longer in the field, but I wanted to ensure that the voices of my participants stayed true even after I left the field. So this is from a paper me and my first supervisor wrote about how we adapted the Brown and Clark six step to automatic analysis. So we added what they call the step zero.

Where the participatory data analysis with the learners that identified the codes were what we use as a starting point, and then we go, we went back into the data with the code provided by the learners, and then we started identifying the gaps where what the learners said is not something that was that what was.

What was in the data is not identified by the learners, and then we started adding new codes to add to that of the to the codes that were that were already identified by the learners. We were refining, merging, we were grouping the codes to bigger issues and trying to ensure that the teams reflected the general.

the central idea of the code. And then at some stage, we had to, at the end of the stage, some of the codes had to be rewritten, but not all of them. Some of them were the way the learners envisaged them. And for such instances, we made sure that

When we were writing the findings, we made sure to give the learners the, you know, we made sure to state clearly that this particular codes were actually co-produced by the learners. For example, one of the codes we had was conditioned reflex, and this was something the learners came up with during the participatory analysis. And so now in my findings, it is still conditioned reflex. So we ensure that that stayed true throughout the research.

So completing reflections, I think an anti-colonial or decolonial researcher amplifies the voices of marginalised groups or the groups that you're working with. You don't just see them as participants or places where you want extra data. So at every point in time, you keep asking yourself, how am I amplifying the voices of this group of

people that I'm working with? How am I ensuring that what they have said their body cues. For example, I had a journal where I wrote some of, I wrote some of the cues that the students had that were non-verbal and I ensured that those cues were also like interpreted in my findings. If for example, a student was not comfortable speaking and decided to keep quiet, that was very, that was an important data

more than just what is being said. You work within what is available, sometimes with the intention to disrupt inherited colonial practises like what happens in the school, other times navigating what is available, like with the ethics. You can question the ethics or you can create a supplementary ethics to allow you to do what you want to do for the community.

You also have to ensure that the voices of your collaborators are preserved at all costs. You have to ask yourself, what is the opportunity cost of maybe using software that may not pick up some of the things that your participants or your collaborators are saying, and which way of doing things will preserve their voices. And then lastly, you have to decide what is shared and what is preserved. Not all that is shared with you should be reported in your findings or should be reported where you're presenting your work. It is part of your duty of care to decide what to share and what to not share. So thank you very much. This is all for me.

If you have any questions, we'll be looking forward to answering them.

JC Jonathan Chow 22:22

That's wonderful. Thank you so much, Mercy. Lots of applause there for you. Oh, we already have a, what was that a hand? I did see a hand. The hand is now. Oh, there's another hand. Right, I will assume that this is an actual hand. And let's see, I will. Unmute. I will allow Rose to unmute themselves.

Y YARDE, ROZ KAYLOR-YARDE ETWARIA (Researcher) 22:50

I hope I'm unmuted.

JC Jonathan Chow 22:52

Yes, we can hear you.

Y YARDE, ROZ KAYLOR-YARDE ETWARIA (Researcher) 22:53

Oh, excellent. So Mercy, first of all, thank you very much. I'm at the beginning journey and as a black woman, I struggle with ethics and you've just helped me about how I'm going to negotiate. And I want to thank you for something that's really important because I struggled with this on a personal level.

Not everything that I find should I report, because sometimes I feel I'm selling out my own community for white people to absorb this knowledge and then use it to get their funding and almost marginalise us or use some of the evidence in a negative way. And that's been a struggle for me.

So, my question is...

How do we, and it's a difficult one, and I get it if you need to come back to it, where do we get to the place where we can own our knowledge and make the changes so we've moved away from the colonisation and the practises that come with it?

Because body language, as you know, we speak a lot with our body.

Our silences speak volumes. Yeah, I have white researchers who were sitting on panels and I'm thinking, you're missing half the cues. How do we get to the place where we own? We're decolonised and we can control and manage and speak in our own tongue. If it's too difficult, I get that.

 **Mercy Martins** 24:13

That's a very interesting question. And I think it is a difficult question, but it is also a very easy question because the truth is, for me,

You can only, I think for me, you can only do your part and just hope that other people are doing their part and together we'll get to that stage. I don't think it's a stage we can just get to from here to here, but I think resistance comes from ensuring that we do our part in our own work, in how we choose to present our work,

and how we choose to not report everything that is being said just for reporting sake, and how we choose to stand our ground, and how we choose to change how we report our findings, right? And I think this gradual step is how we get to that stage. But then it's not an easy feat. But I think the best thing you can do, the more realistic and critical thing you can do is to resist within your own rights and within your own sphere of influence. That's how I would answer the question, to be honest. And that's something I always talk to some of my colleagues that do the colonial and indigenous work. We keep battling this feeling where most times we feel like we also feel like a fraud because we are doing

the kind of work we're doing in a colonial institution. But then we have to go to where people listen to start the resistance. And that's just one way I think we can do it, in my opinion.

Y **YARDE, ROZ KAYLOR-YARDE ETWARIA (Researcher)** 25:34
Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

MM **Mercy Martins** 25:37
Thank you.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 25:42
Thank you both. Just a reminder to obviously feel free to stick questions in the Q&A. If you do have questions, you can access the Q&A feature just at the top of your screen there. But in the meantime, I'll ask one as well, if that's okay, Mercy. And I'll preface this by saying that I have very limited understanding of Nigerian society, but I also do come from a society with a colonial history, specifically in Hong Kong. And in Hong Kong, obviously, you know, it is a, at least when I was growing up, it is a society where English was certainly kind of, you know, the language that would socially mobilise you. And I think a lot of schools would also kind of leverage on that. and to kind of defend the importance of kind of speaking and teaching and also learning English as opposed to kind of more local tongues. Did you kind of face any resistance against your studies when you were approaching perhaps the schools that you ended up working with and how did you kind of address that?
Uh, resolve that.

MM **Mercy Martins** 26:54
Yeah, so I faced some resistance because the school felt that I was coming to talk to the students to do something that was against the school's ethos, but also the schools were also open because I was coming from the UK. So it didn't matter that I was coming to do certain kind of work, but it just mattered to them that they were collaborating with a researcher from the UK, which also speaks to the vast problem of coloniality as well. But also my research question too looked at the obstacles and the obstacles were very, very clear with parents, the adults, even the students talking about the obstacles.

to why using English is very much important. It's part of my findings, a very big chunk part of my findings, because for some students, if they don't speak English at this stage, it will ruin their global prospects. It will ruin their, because for example, a parent said to me, my child cannot go to university without passing English. So if the school feels like they have to punish him for him to speak English well, to pass English,

so you can have a future, I think is a good opportunity to cost.

So those are the kind of things I had to navigate and negotiate during my field. But that's why I kept saying that I'm not even talking about the classroom. I'm looking at non-classroom spaces. Nobody's saying that English has to come at a cost, where it is either English or local language. I'm saying they are both important, so they should both have spaces in the school as well.

So that was the conversation. But thank you so much. That was a very interesting question. Thank you.

JC Jonathan Chow 28:22

That's great, thank you. Let's see, I don't see any more questions now. So perhaps we could go on to our next presenter. If you do still have questions, oh, there is a hand at the last minute. Right, let's take that question as well. I will just unmute you now or allow you to unmute rather, Josetta.

MJ MALCOLM, JOSETTA (THEY/THEM) (PGR) 28:42

Oh, thank you, Jonathan. I did put it in the Q&A, but maybe I didn't do it right, so apologies. But thank you, thank you, Mercy. That was such an inspiring, wonderful presentation. I really, really relate to it. I hope you can hear me okay. So my question is, can you hear me all right?

MM Mercy Martins 28:59

Yes, I can.

MJ MALCOLM, JOSETTA (THEY/THEM) (PGR) 29:00

Great, thanks. So I'm really interested because I left it too late to really put in much participatory work in my ethics application. So, but I'm wanting to do like some form of like member checking and I'm at data analysis stage. So I'd love to hear a bit more about how that worked in practice, like what was the actual process?

of how you worked together on data analysis. How, you know, did you send initial codes? Did they review them, make their, you know, come up with their own? Thank you.

MM **Mercy Martins** 29:37

Yeah, thank you so much. So what happened with the participatory analysis was, if you remember the table I shared, I shared that after the phase one, I had a month where they were on Christmas and New Year holiday. So I leveraged that to quickly do some quick analysis of what we already had. And when I was doing the other data with the other participants in the phase two, I was always like, analysing quickly, roughly what was available. And so what I did was, I brought my research question to the students and I'm like, okay, these are my research question and this is the codes we have gotten so far. It is not 100%, it is about 70% of some of the recurring conversations coming up so far. And then they sat down group by group and talked about what they felt was important based on each of the research question.

So for example, when we asked them how does school policy extend beyond the classroom, they talked about the heightened surveillance, about how they were using cameras to surveil them. And they have very, very literal description. Like, you know, when we do research, you have really nice way of saying, oh, sonic surveillance. No, They write things like there are cameras everywhere, their eyes watching you, and then they were very open about what they felt were important based on the research question. So I had to use the research question to guide the conversation so they know what they are trying to answer, if that makes sense to you. So by the time I came back to the field, I had this lot of papers.

with everything the students have said and then I had to write them all down and then divide them based on the research question before going back into the data again.

When I had finished like transcribing the entire data, that is.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 31:29

Thanks, Mercy. There's a comment from Ross who we've heard from, just wondering if your work is ready for sharing. I know from conversation with you that you've just submitted your final draught to your supervisor, but perhaps I could put you in touch with Ross after the session.

session in case you did have anything you could share.

MM **Mercy Martins** 31:51

Yes, of course, that's lovely. We just finished one of the papers with my first supervisor. It will be out in June. One of my papers came out with my first supervisor on Monday. So of course, there will be a few things I can share. I'm happy to share as well. So thank you.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 32:07

Fantastic. I'll connect the two of you then. I see a question from Kate as well, but in the interest of time, can I just hold off on that and bring on our next speaker, Wesam Wekhyan, who is also a PhD researcher from the University of Bath, for this time from the School of social policy. Over to you, Wesam.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 32:31

Thank you, Jonathan. And thank you, Mercy. And congratulations, Mercy, for submitting your draft. That's fantastic. And I'm in this stage as well of thinking of how much more time I have left before I have to submit my first draft. So that was really nice to hear. And I enjoyed your presentation. Thank you so much for sharing experiences that a lot of us can relate to. I think so much that you said was something that I'll talk about as well in my own presentation and maybe a bit more about the struggles I faced with analysis and a decolonial analysis specifically. But before that, I think I figured out, we were trying earlier how to present my screen and I think I figured out how to do it. So if you guys see my screen, can you let me know?
Yeah.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 33:21

Yes, perfect. Full screen as well.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 33:22

That's fantastic. OK.

I think now all I need to do is switch to this. Yeah, okay, so now I have, yeah, we're set. So, yes, so hello everyone. My name is Wissam Mujian and I am a PhD candidate, yes, at the University of Bath, nearing completion, hopefully. Today, yeah, so I think

my screen is...

Is the slide changing or is it still the title slide?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 33:49

It is still the title site at the moment.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 33:53

And it's glitching as well.

Can you hear me? Ohh, I think...

JC **Jonathan Chow** 33:58

I can hear you.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 34:01

Yeah, is the audio clear or is my audio glitching as well?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 34:03

Yes, yes.

The audio seems to be clear for me at least.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 34:06

Sounds good, okay, yeah.

Yeah, that's fantastic. So what I'm going to do is I'm just going to share in a traditional way because what happened is I think it's not changing for you guys. The slides aren't changing. So let me just share it as the presentation is.

Like this. Okay. And then, yeah, so, yeah, so if you guys could give me a second, I'm just going to give a bit of a context on what this presentation will cover. And the word that I've used as a title for the slide is today's Talila. And Talila is a, it's a Bedouin word or a traditional word to talk about

or to describe a very intimate conversation shared in a specific context, but used in the more modern age as having a nice gathering and a beautiful conversation. So for today's talk, what I would like to talk about is my research experience around the use of decolonial approaches.

in my thinking alongside my own tribe.

I'm A Bedouin from central Jordan, and I come from a tribe that has kind of

supported me as a social network for my life, and yet I came and pursued my higher education in England. And this meant that the experience itself would put me in a situation where the context was no longer one with access to such a strong network. Rather, that change kind of came from, you know, leaving a rural tribal setting, a community, and moving abroad to Bath. And this had such an impact on my day-to-day that it intensely began to impact my PhD as well. And it showed me where the value I carried or sorry, what knowledge I valued in this life and the knowledge that I valued from home. I'd like to move to the next slide, but just for the sake of making sure everyone can hear me, can I just get a thumbs up if the audio is clear, if you guys can still see if, yeah, because I have, yeah, that's perfect. Yeah, that's all I needed. Thank you. Okay.

So excellent. So now I can speak freely. Yeah, so for a bit about my research, like Mercy said, you can really understand someone when you understand maybe where they come from and a bit about their background in their academic world. So for the context, my research explores the experiences of indigenous Bedouin women from my tribe, the Wukian, and they are a pastoral tribe that historically would seasonally migrate. Sorry if the video doesn't work, but you get maybe more of an image in the map. Yeah, so this community and this landscape, it carries profound Abrahamic religious significance. Oh,

Oh, wow. Hey, that's funny, actually. Sorry. So this video is a collection of shorts. That's so funny. It's a collection of shorts and one of them was a speeded audio. Anyway, so back-to-back to Mount Nebo and where I'm from. So this region is quite significant religiously amongst all three Abrahamic religions, because this is known to be the place where Moses stood and looked over the promised land. But it's also a place where Jesus was baptized. My tribe, I don't know if you can see my mouse or cursor on the screen, but my tribe lived seasonally between Mount Mbogo and this valley area here near the spring at the base of this mountain.

As continuous inhabitants of these slopes for thousands of years, Bedouin communities have been subjects of discussion, erasure, co-optation, political contestation, and this has happened from ancient empires to modern nation states. And it treats like these people, my people, myself, communities of people, as objects of analysis, and we talk a lot about what that experience will look like in an academic context when we delve into decolonial approaches. So what does it mean

to be treated as an object of analysis rather than an epistemic subject?

Yeah, so in starting the PhD, I found that my context of this place in central Jordan and the status that it had as a sacred location was politicised in academic literature across, well, you can say modern, but also quite classic literatures as well.

But it's an area that has always been, you know, perceived externally, colonially by biblical explorers in their travelogues. Orientalists, as you can see here, is Gertrude Bell, Orientalists and anthropological scholarships, even Zionists, colonial occupation, modern state making.

UNESCO International Heritage Development Projects, always understanding who the Bedouin is, but from an external lens.

So I wanted, yeah, I wanted to take some time and really question what does it mean for an organisation like UNESCO, an international organization, or even esteemed academics to take a look and claim whether something was considered intangible heritage. This is the framework that's used.

And what does that mean for Bedouin people or Bedouin communities? And I saw that it led to a lot of performative spectacles about what it means to be a Bedouin.

And I saw that a lot in the academic literature. And this led to a lot of epistemic marginalization. I found that I found that

in studying in the UK, there are certain ways in which academic research is considered rigorous. It's considered esteemed or peer-reviewed or accepted in certain contexts. And it doesn't necessarily align with some indigenous practises of knowledge production.

So, yes, so this is an image of the side of the mountain. And if you can see in the valley, that's where my ancestors, my tribe has had land for many years. The conflict, though, around my research was finding out that

This land in 1932 was purchased by the Franciscan custody, so it became under the ownership of the Vatican.

This was done in 1932 and 52 dunhams is, I'm not quite sure what would be the metric conversion for 52 dunhams, or if that is metrics, but the land that was bought in Mount Nebo and the Moses Spring, where my tribe ancestrally have lived and grazed for many years, was a purchase done through the state of the state of Jordan. And I think what I'm finding interesting in my research is what does it mean to call a place sacred and what does the sacred acquisition mean when you have communities of marginalised people, indigenous communities that are displaced, their pastoral traditions are becoming obsolete,

or transformed their understanding of tribe and community will shift and change. Yeah, so I don't want to spend too much time to talk about the location, but I do want to, you know, like I do want to get a chance to...

...speak a bit about my research and what was it that I wanted to try to understand from this dilemma that I felt I was, that was very personal to me. And I think this is something really interesting about Mercy's presentation and my own is how intimate and personal our experiences are with our research topic.

My doctoral research is examining relational epistemologies that emerge from Bedouin women's everyday practises in this area. I definitely use ethnographic fieldwork. I collected oral histories, and I began by looking into decolonial feminist methods and approaches. In the pictures, you can see different women.

Some who I know, some related to me, some who have passed, but women who are Jordanian and each kind of carrying a certain...

...maybe message in a visual or in a video footage. And overall, I felt that while I was trying to do research, what I struggled with in academic literature was that these women that I saw on a very regular basis appeared as carriers of culture or tradition, but their epistemic labor, their everyday practise of storytelling, of care, of moral reasoning and religious, or sorry, not just religious, but relational mediation, it was becoming something that was untheorized, or it was something that I felt was largely untheorized. And because of this, I felt that this led to a double displacement for Bedouin people.

So they are treated as historical or cultural objects rather than sites of theory. And Bedouin women are rendered visible as symbols, while their way of knowing or maybe their practise or their everyday or the way that they raise in family or how they live in family and commune is something that is Not conceptualized.

My data set, so on this slide you can see a few things that, you know, some things that I've collected that represent my data. So we took walks to very old landmarks and these are scattered across the area and you have historic remnants across Jordan and not just in Madaba, but in my region specifically, a lot of the tribal people, you know, historically have lived amongst these relics, these ancient relics. And so we do a lot of walks and kind of trips around to in our area to visit these sites. And I've done one-to-one you know, interviews with the women of my tribe. We did walk arounds, walkabouts, which come from like indigenous cultures in Australia, this idea of walking and

sharing. But had events as well where people came together, we hiked, we had conversation, and that led to a data set that was deliberately multimodal. And I worked with, like I said, you know, interviews, focus group sessions, and collected oral histories. But you know what I found out was when you sit in certain contexts, you have to be sensitive to the idea that maybe people approach sharing knowledge differently to the way that you might come comfortably with. So I definitely came in with my interview questions already and I had my ethics, I understood what I needed to do for my ethics approval.

But it's in the midst of doing the data collection that you start to notice, like Mercy said, that certain things you need to be flexible and see how you can adapt to the environment around you.

So a lot of the data I started to collect was also WhatsApp voice notes that were shared in digital spaces, photographs, community walks. And it led to my research becoming very embodied and reminding me what it meant to live amongst the tribe and how to have done work that you

Yeah, I think I think that's something I'll get to in a bit. What does embodiment mean to me? But I think what I found was that in doing research, you need to be present with the community in a way where you build rapport. And for me, that happened when I started to see how I couldn't really transcribe things like this. I couldn't transcribe a wedding ceremony. I couldn't transcribe a voice note from my aunt, which had such beautiful cadence and history and emotion. And I felt that reducing that to a text.

to a text transcript, it felt like a violation of the knowledge and it felt that when it came to analysis, that was what I kept feeling worried about and feeling like I wouldn't do justice to what was shared with me. So what I'm going to say next is not that that should intimidate anyone from doing research with an indigenous community or

feeling emotionally present. I think that tension is actually a beautiful thing. I think noticing it and not shying away from it, it's not, it's not a, it's not a negative quality of you. It's the opposite. It shows how much you are present with what you believe in and what you're working on.

So here I'd like to talk about what kind of curiosity I had and why did I find that conventional analysis was insufficient to me and why this data just, it didn't align with all I was reading. I found all this beautiful decolonial scholarship from Latin America that really was the groundwork that opened up my eyes to the importance of looking

into alternative ways of collecting data.

creative ways like Mercy was also mentioning. I really appreciate arts-based methods and finding ways that you can.

Yeah, rich knowledge that doesn't necessarily follow a Western individualist, maybe I would say sometimes egocentric process of data collection.

And the goal was to understand how these women in Jordan, no longer nomadic, no longer tribal, how did these communities use everyday practise to sustain and reinterpret and transmit their Bedouin tribal identity in ways of knowing in a certain way. So my research

was grounded in, you could say, like a grounded theory, but it was an understanding of how knowledge and epistemology within a tribe is created in relation to land and created in relation to faith and relational obligations and how the practices, they constitute alternative frameworks.

Um...

Yeah, and I think just for the sake of time, I'm going to just say a couple more things on this slide here, but mainly I was...

trying to see how we can move away from traditional ways of doing research that were built on maybe models that, like archives, or for example, looking at, you know, institutions and external theoretical frameworks to understand my own community, but rather looking at what knowledge comes from within that community itself. So relational, gendered, faith-inflected, everyday worlds.

Treating A Bedouin woman's life and practises as sites of theory and epistemic authority.

In my research, I found that writing, it's not separate. It's not a separate phase. It was something that was happening very fluidly. So I would read and I would listen and I would write. I feel the PhD for a lot of PhD students. I don't want to speak on anyone's behalf. But for my own experience, I found that the process, it showed me how

I needed to step away from this constraint and I had to be more flexible when it came to understanding work and work ethic and knowledge production. And it pushed me so much and the challenge was so significant that I realised there were so many different things that were

maybe a structure that I was trying to work within that didn't align. So I struggled in translating, not just between Arabic and English and not just between the dialect of a Bedouin dialect and a city dialect, but it was also translating this performative,

embodied day-to-day living into a thesis.

And yeah, I think I didn't want to lose. I didn't want to lose the heartbeat or like this relational ethic that we built together as a tribe and a community by following something that I thought that I thought was very intellectual. Yes, so.

Yeah, so epistemology and unlearning bureaucracies. And this is in the early days of my PhD. And I felt that tension between a university's demands and kind of what I was learning from the community, the responsibility and the trust that I had shared. Mercy was talking about this is so important, that feeling of not carrying a guilt and letting it

burden you, but being conscious and aware that you are in this tension between, you know, acknowledging you're working within an institution, but also trying to make sure you kind of build the space for yourself.

And how I did that was in my analysis, I often describe my research not as something that is a project I manage, but as a practise that I live. So yeah, I think I try to keep conscious that

being embodied is not a bias. It's not to be minimized. It's actually at the heart and the foundation of my research. I find that you must be, and it's not just during the collection of the data, it's in your day-to-day life. You have to honour that culture that you're working with because whether you are working with, you know, whichever group,

your research focus is, you know, you owe it to that community to be reflexive and honest about where you sit with what comes up in the conversations. And I think that transparency and that reflexivity is so interesting when you're an insider outsider.

Again, another thing that, you know,

I can relate to as well from what was said is how much of my experience in Bath informed my experience back home when I would do my field work and collect my data and vice versa, how much of my experience abroad was impacted by being amongst my community and that support. Sorry.

So the next thing that I noticed was that in order to feel like my research was creating the, yeah, the space for these types of conversations that I found decolonial or that I found participatory,

I relaunched my community initiative with the women from our village, and this is a cooperative where people came together to speak about heritage and identity and culture. We were a virtual archive online, and we were kind of hosting workshops for local talents that talked about the community's heritage and their stories.

And this was very helpful for my PhD because it also allowed me the time to sit with groups of women and notice how much more data, how much it felt less like data, and it felt more like...

some profound knowledge when it was happening in a group setting, in a shared space. So it was in these moments, starting up this initiative again and having meetings and collective meetings that it helped me remember that knowledge that's made and allows for the storytelling and the performative elements that are normal in day-to-day living. I think this is where I was slowly starting to better understand my research. And with time that happened, I think the longer I started to immerse myself with my community, the better I felt confident and understood, yeah, what was it that I was trying to present in my research.

So in this slide here, I'd like to talk about whose knowledge counts as, yeah, counts in a sacred landscape. And I think with indigenous societies, this is very interesting, or with any marginalised community, it's very important to understand what is it that is a source of or a space for knowledge production for them.

and what is something that they have strong ties to. And I think for a lot of indigenous communities, the relationship to land. And decolonial research very much talks about the importance of no longer staying within the understandings of decoloniality as a metaphor, but moving towards for some land back and for some other things, but

In the case of my research.

What do decolonial practises of data sovereignty, anonymity, and participatory action research even mean when we work in institutions that reward individual authorship, abstraction, citation, that enable colonial regimes and global capitalist environmental devastation to ancestral lands? What does it mean?

What is it that, you know, how can we get past that guilt that was mentioned in a really nice question that was asked a second ago? And I think for indigenous Bedouin communities, oral and visual data, they are precious. The data that you collect is so precious and it's a cultural asset that must be respected with your research. But I also think land is an epistemological domain in which knowledge is collectively constructed. And I can speak on behalf of what I've noticed amongst my community. And yeah, to not go too deep into my own research about what land means for my own tribe, what I think will be really interesting to kind of like.

say is, yeah, by integrating indigenous epistemologies or Bedouin women's

epistemologies that are rooted in embodied knowledge and shared community practise and alternative histories of land use and how to use the land, you begin to challenge the premise that land is a resourceless wasteland, like is the description of the area where our tribes are from, or land is this thing that can be used for the tourism industry in some ways. And rather, you can look at these epistemologies that come from the place itself and see how that is something we crave in modern society today and how that can benefit our day-to-day practises as not only academics, but as people.

And to conclude, sorry, I feel like I was, I feel like I'm a little over time. But to conclude, decolonial research is practical to me. And I felt that it was about building an infrastructure where data doesn't sit on a university server, but it serves as a resource for the village.

where my research is coming from, where this data comes from. And I felt that the divide between my thesis and my activism, it's not really a problem, but this tension was something, and there's so many nice academics that talk about the importance of being in the discomfort. It was my method. It was a part of my method. And I like the idea of looking at local epistemologies and prioritising community and collective knowledge production. And yeah, this idea of tribal epistemic inclusion, it's not a gesture and decolonization is not a word or a metaphor.

the understanding that there is a necessary act for academics to take a role where they, yeah, they look at decolonization as a way of exposing how academic, political, environmental, developmental stewardship, this idea of we're stewards or we know better or we're here to help, that we understand the stewardship has been used to justify erasure of these communities, many communities, and that we need to make the space for the community to be able to analyse their past and actively, yeah, curate their futures or our futures in my case. So I'm really sorry if I'm over time and I really hope that the internet didn't fail me.

through the presentation, but thank you guys for listening.

JC Jonathan Chow 57:37

Thank you so much, Wesam. The internet didn't fail you. We heard every single word loud and clear. I'm not even ashamed to admit that I lost track of time just listening

to your presentation. I mean, it was fantastic. What a way of intertwining your own story, your research, just into that.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 57:42

Yeah, that's great.

Yeah.

Oh my god, bless you. Thank you.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 57:55

Wonderful presentation. I know that I'm already seeing hands. I'm just going to post some links. I know we're running out of time, so I'm just going to post some links to participants just so we can hear from you what you'd like us to put on in the future. so that we can continue to invite amazing presenters like Mercy and Wesam. But I'll go jump straight into a few questions now. Can we have Ross first, please? See, I'm going to allow you to unmute. There you go.

Y **YARDE, ROZ KAYLOR-YARDE ETWARIA (Researcher)** 58:32

Thank you, love the presentation, love what you stand for. You touched my heart. I was struck by these words, giving back is part of the method, not an outcome added later. I'm working with childhood sexual harm and quite often I am told that because I'm doing the research, giving someone an opportunity to talk about what's happened is cathartic. I don't think that is enough. So I'm asking you in your research, what other things were you giving back or do you think I might be able to give back that you have used so that it isn't, so it's part of the method and not just saying, well, this will be cathartic for you to tell me about how awful your past was. If you've got any ideas, if you haven't, I get that too.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 59:24

Thank you. Thank you so much. And thank you for your question. I really, yeah, I found this is the part that really made me struggle with a PhD from the beginning, just feeling that it didn't feel enough, no matter, you know, what kind of data. I felt like I was coming in and doing something living. And I know from friends as well, there was always this desire to see how can we even financially in certain ways, provide some kind of compensation. And I feel, yeah, I feel trying to

trying to put myself in a situation where I do something that is authentic to me, that is within, like Mercy said, within your capacity. I found it was something that is necessary for me. And one of the things that helped me with that was the fact that I had done some community organizing,

prior to doing the PhD. And the initiative, I showed you guys a logo of it a second ago. This was an initiative we started pre-COVID, and it was a collective of women in the tribe that, you know, would meet regularly and talk about social concerns and issues and invited guests to the community. And I think for me, getting funding, helping a local initiative that

It was an initiative we started, but for me to feel like whatever resources and funding I can get from donating, you know, donors or from institutions and being able to be that intermediary, I think we come from a place of privilege, myself specifically, like studying at a university like Bath. It really did put me in a context where I was meeting and connecting and networking.

with so many groups and so many people. And I found that the story that we have access to.

It comes with responsibility and there are so many unique ways that you can go to the community and understand what is of need in that time and place and space, but finding a way in which you can do that without...

Yeah, without losing authenticity to yourself. And of course you can't, there are certain things you can and certain things you can't do and finding that balance and accepting your human and that you can only do as much as within your capacity to do. But I definitely would suggest looking into initiatives and groups. I think there's so many people like myself that I pursued the PhD because I was so frustrated with community organising and I felt

that we had so much to offer and so much to say and so much to do and so much I was learning, just learning. And I felt like I wanted to get it out. And when I got accepted at the university and I had that platform, I felt that that was what I needed to try my best to keep doing and be authentic and make the space very horizontal as much as you can. So I don't know if it really answers the question of I've...

just kind of, yeah, maybe rolled on about that. But yeah, it's, yeah, I don't know. I hope that kind of cleared up a bit. Yeah.

Y

YARDE, ROZ KAYLOR-YARDE ETWARIA (Researcher) 1:02:24

Thank you. Thank you. You answered the second question I had in my mind. Why did

you do the PhD? And it's that was beautiful to hear, but also about doing the support groups. Those are things that you can also do as part of the method to give back. And for me, that's the most important thing.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:02:37

Thi.
Yeah.

Y **YARDE, ROZ KAYLOR-YARDE ETWARIA (Researcher)** 1:02:43

because I'm from an extracted people and that is not my job. I want to make things better. So thank you very much and lovely presentation.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:02:47

Thi.
Thank you.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:02:55

That's it. Thank you. Next, Sarish.

ST **Sehrish Tahir** 1:03:00

Hi there, Asim. Thank you so much for such an excellent, deeply inspirational, and I would also say timely, relevant presentation. So thank you so, so much. There were a lot of elements in your project that related to mine, and I could see elements in there.

I am actually currently very much of the early stages of my PhD and I'm looking at young Muslim women of colour, how they navigate and construct their intersectional identities, especially in higher educational spaces. And I'm using critical race feminist perspectives, but I feel somehow a bit frustrated sometimes with those perspectives as well.

And in my ethics, I was supposed to do some sort of support resources for my participants. But now that I'm gathering data, I don't want to use them because they feel a bit, I feel like they feel a bit rude to my participants as if I am the uni or I am looking down on my participants that they don't have.

lives that are fulfilled or somehow it feels a bit of a pity on the participants. I've not used them, even though I'm supposed to give them and send them out after the

data collection. Now, my question to you is, I wonder how you have dealt with this academic white gaze on your project, because especially as it so often exoticizes projects that are looking into deeply decolonial and feminist work. I wonder how you have dealt with that. Thank you so much.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:04:45

Thank you so much as well. I really like your question. There was something I really felt while you were speaking when you were talking about sharing resource. Oh no.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:02

We can still hear you, examine. It's just your camera's frozen.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:05:04

Oh no, what's happening?
Can you guys still hear me?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:11

Yes, we can hear you, yeah.
Hi, Wesam, we can still hear you.
Hello, Wesam.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:05:29

Hi, can you guys hear me now?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:31

Yes, we can still hear you.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:05:33

On my day.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:35

Okay.
Um, but I don't know if we can hear, but hi, we can hear you.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:05:39
Hello?
Hello?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:44
Hello, hi, Wesam.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:05:46
Hi, can anyone hear me?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:05:47
Yes, we can hear you.
I get.
I don't think we Sam can hear us, but what I'll do is Sarah shall just connect you with we Sam after the session so she can respond to you. Tara, if I don't know if you've got it.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:06:07
Hello, can you hear me? Sorry.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:06:09
Hi, we can hear you, Wesam.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:06:10
Sorry, is it, can you guys hear me now? Okay, sorry, I didn't. Did you lose me for a bit or was it just that I'm losing my mind?

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:06:12
We can hear you.
We heard we heard you, but yeah, you didn't hear us. I was sorry, I was just suggesting because I'm mindful of time as well. I was just suggesting if maybe perhaps you could I could connect you with Sarish by e-mail after the session with that. Yeah.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:06:21

Maybe I couldn't hear you guys. That's alright. So I was just fumbling.

Yeah.

Yeah.

That would be great. Yeah. And I also have, yeah, maybe I can also speak to Taraf. I think this is my friend as well that I can speak to if that's all right with you guys. Yeah.

JC **Jonathan Chow** 1:06:39

Yeah.

Course, yeah, yeah, right. I will make sure to share emails.

All right, okay. Well, thank you very much to everyone who has joined us today.

Sorry, we're a bit over time, but I think if you've stayed to, if you stayed all this time, then perhaps you will also have really enjoyed the session or at least found it useful.

So I'd just like to give my thanks once again.

to Mercy, Martins and We Sam Wecken for their wonderful contribution today. And yeah, hope to see you at our next webinars. Have a good rest of your day.

WW **Wesam Wekhyan** 1:07:23

Thank you so much.

● stopped transcription