

Rethinking de-colonial dualism

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Abstract

'Rethinking de-colonial dualism' proposes a partial criticism to Grosfoguel's decolonial project from two different perspectives: the first one has taken globalization studies and Arjun Appadurai's 'scapes theory' as a starting point to reshape the understanding of the complexities and interconnections through which modernity and globalization have evolved. Taking this complexity as keystone to deconstruct the decolonial replica of the North/South confrontative dualism, the text introduces the critique to Appadurai proposal underlining the lack of political activism and historical reflexion, particularly in relation to the structures integrated in power and privilege. In the text I argue that it is only by adopting the radical emancipatory approach taken by Grosfoguel on the one hand, and Appadurai's complexity on the other, that a more realistic and holistic approach to context-specific research and action can be achieved. In the second part of the text 'Rethinking de-colonial dualism' I transit from theory to practice through Farah Ahmed application of the Islamic Research Method and the implementation of Halaqah as a decolonial research method. Ahmed proposal is taken as a practical example, understanding the decolonial project as an exercise that, taking into account the proposals of both Grosfoguel and Appadurai, insists in an approximation to methodology based on dialogue to overcome dual confrontation.

Key words

Dualism, epistemicide, complexity, Scapes Theory, decoloniality, globalization, Islamic Research Methods, Islamization of Knowledge, holism.

Since the publication of *'The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities'* by Ramón Grosfoguel in 2013, the Puerto Rican author has emerged as an influential figure in the decolonial project. By reshaping post-coloniality he has given form to a current of thought that, through both theoretical analysis and activism aims at uncovering colonization as the matrix through which modernity has been imposed globally. Grosfoguel proposal has created consensus in defining modernity as a power system imposed through both genocide – that is, the annihilation of large segments of population – and epistemicide – the systematic destruction of alternative ways of knowing. Furthermore, epistemicide is used by Grosfoguel to describe what is conceptualized as the 'Western University' as the institutional framework from which Western epistemological norms – characterized by rationality, individualism, and materialism – have colonized knowledge production from the 16th century onwards.

'Rethinking de-colonial dualism' is an attempt to synthesize the proposal of this intellectual and activist in regards to the so called 'Global South'. Through this analysis, the study aims to unpack Grosfoguel's approach to the critique of the Western University, which he describes as a racist and sexist system of knowledge production. The text proposes a critic of Grosfoguel duality between 'Indigenous methodologies'¹ and Western methods. This critique is developed through the 'Scapes theory' proposed by Arjun Appadurai's and Farah Ahmed Islamic Research Paradigm and the application of Halaqah as a research method.

My interest in this specific line of the decolonial project is to investigate on research methods ingrained in the social, cultural and political contexts of contemporary Islamic thought understood as a specific epistemology of the Global South. To this aim I find necessary to uncover the main features of the decolonial criticism of the Western University in order to test and confront Grosfoguel's dualism. In doing so I will argue that the dichotomy between what is considered the South and the North replicates the same dialectics that the theory seeks to criticize: essentialism. This reasoning, I will argue, imposes a confrontation that is foundational to the division of knowledge production into Western and non-Western epistemologies. In my understanding, the clear cut between Western and non-Western is highly problematic and erases the possibility of methodological and epistemological dialogue. In order to overcome this polarity this paper proposes a case study which puts into practice a discursive approach to bridging the gap between *indigenous epistemologies* and Western methods proposed by Fatah Ahmed's application of *halaqah* framed on the 'Islamic Research Principles'.

¹ In this essay I use the term 'Indigenous Knowledges' (IK) as, although I considered highly problematic, is still being used extensively by decolonial thinkers including Ahmed (2013) and Grosfoguel (2005).

Coming back from the South

Ramón Grosfoguel is internationally recognized for his work on decolonization of knowledge and power, as well as for his contributions to international migration studies and the political economy of the world-system. After graduating in sociology from the University of Puerto Rico in 1979, Grosfoguel moved to Philadelphia, where he continued his academic development with a masters in urban studies, followed by a Ph.D. in sociology at Temple University. In 1993 he moved to Paris, where he furthered his research through a postdoctoral fellowship at the Fernand Braudel Center/Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. He is currently part of the group Modernity/Coloniality (MC) at UC Berkeley.

Grosfoguel approach to the decolonial project focuses on the structural links that shape the relationship between modernity and colonialism. For Grosfoguel the effects of European colonialism did not end with decolonization and the independence of former colonies during the 19th and 20th centuries, but continue to persist through a particular system of thought: Western epistemology. He proposes a decolonial turn in order to undertake an epistemological decolonization that corrects the universalistic and historical deformations adopted by Eurocentrism and modernity, two processes that he considers to be in deep crisis. His most influential publications are *'Unsettling Postcoloniality: Coloniality, Transmodernity and Border Thinking'* (2007) and *'The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities: Epistemic Racism/Sexism and the Four Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16th Century'* (2013).

Grosfoguel is heavily inspired by Enrique Dussel's historical and philosophical work focused on the demolition of the world-historical narratives of Eurocentrism. In his texts, Grosfoguel discusses epistemic racism as being foundational to the knowledge structure of the West. He argues that Westernized structures of knowledge do not have their foundations in the Enlightenment period and the development of rationality and the modern sciences, but rather are to be found in what has been called 'the dark side of Enlightenment'. Following Grosfoguel's reasoning the 'dark side of Enlightenment' encompasses the four genocides and epistemicides that occurred in the long 16th century (1450-1650) against Jews and Muslims following the conquest of Granada in 1492, against indigenous peoples in the conquest of America during the 16th century and beyond, against Africans kidnapped and enslaved in the transatlantic slave trade, and against women burned at the stake for witchcraft in medieval and modern Europe. Following Dussel's theories, Grosfoguel argues that these four genocides/epistemicides were not only part of the logic of the expansion of global capitalism, but were also supported by Enlightenment reasoning and its focus on man as the measure of all things. When in the 17th century Descartes developed his theory summarized in the famous sentence 'I think, therefore I am', in the common sense of the times this 'I' could not be an African, a Muslim, a Jew or a woman as these subjects were already considered inferior under the global racial/patriarchal power structure of the time which considered their knowledge inferior. The only one left as epistemologically superior was the Western man. Thus, the four genocides/epistemicides are constitutive of the racist and sexist epistemic structures that produced the epistemic privilege which gave authority

to Western man's knowledge production while imposing inferiority upon the rest. From this juncture, Grosfoguel elaborates a critique of Western structures of knowledge by proposing that from its origins Westernized universities internalized the racist and sexist epistemic structures created by the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century. The 'lack of rationality' in non-Westerners and in women epistemologically excluded them from the Westernized university's knowledge structures.

For Grosfoguel, the call for decolonial action can be summarized by three main demands: Firstly, to acknowledge the provincialism and epistemic racism and sexism that constitutes the foundational structures of the Global North as a result of the genocide and epistemicide that characterize the colonial and patriarchal projects initiated in the 16th century. Secondly, to break with the universalism whereby everyone is defined in terms of an epistemology based solely on the Western man. And thirdly, to bring epistemic diversity to the canon of thought in order to create a pluri-verse of meanings and concepts where the inter-epistemic conversation among many different epistemic traditions that create new signifiers the redefinitions of old concepts.

Since the publication of Grosfoguel 'The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities: Epistemic Racism/Sexism and the Four Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16th Century' in 2013, his particular view of the decolonial project has grown in popularity as a system of thought rooted in activism and the demand for social justice. This popularity, however, has not made him exempt from criticism.

In this respect, three major contradictions put into question the highly original and well-meaning approximations of Grosfoguel's decolonial discourse. Critics have highlighted a tendency to divide the world between good (the South, the non-West) and evil (the North within the North, the hegemonic Western epistemology), as well as hastily proposed bridges between antagonistic southern forms of knowledge and politics, without a careful analysis of real practices of negotiation and hybridism. Furthermore, Grosfoguel decolonial discourse has likewise been brought into question for its high level of abstraction, in the form of conceptual inflations combined with a lack of attention to the pragmatics of knowledge production, and the associated political struggles in the history of real communities and social movements. And Lastly, although some departments at UC Berkeley where Grosfoguel developed part of his academic career might be considered as forming part of the 'Global South', they are in any case rooted in the Western university's epistemological ethos. As I will argue Grosfoguel's dualism in fact replicates the theory/practice divide, which has been identified by the decolonial project as a fundamental outcome of Westernization.

Duality vs. complexity: The global 'scapes' theory.

Based on what we have seen till now, the fight against cultural imperialism can be linked to the decolonial proposals made by Grosfoguel. However, this correlation, which might seem logical, is being challenged in a variety of academic circles. The one that I consider most interesting for the present account is theorized by the Indian-born academic Arjun Appadurai through his original approach to globalization studies.

In his best-known work, *'Modernity at Large'*, Appadurai lays out his theory of disjuncture. For him, the *'new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order'* (Appadurai, 1996). This order is composed of different interrelated yet disjunctive global cultural flows. He organizes the different ruptures, tensions and conflicts brought about by globalization through five different dimensions or 'scapes': *ethnoscapes* (or the migration of people across cultures and borders), *mediascapes* (or the use of media, which shapes the way we understand our imagined worlds), *technoscapes* (or the cultural interactions through technology), *financescapes* (or the flow of capital across borders) and finally *ideoscapes* (or the global flow of ideologies).

Furthermore, Appadurai articulates a view of cultural activity known as the 'social imaginary', which is at the same time composed of the five dimensions of global cultural flows. The different global cultural flows or 'scapes', which shape the 'social imaginary', are far from being static or fixed entities, but transform, adapt and contradict each other. For example, a dominant ideoscape in a particular nation-state can be challenged by very different deployments of similar concepts in the mediascape as well as by population movements in the ethnoscapes. An imagined homeland providing a mediascape for a diaspora can create new local ideoscapes at their sites. Financescapes create ethnoscapes through investors' movements and new local combinations through grey markets. In the same fashion, imagined or fictional and factual representations often blur into each other in providing such repertoires. Ideoscapes are similar combinations of images used by both states and opposition movements. They are often constructed from variants of Enlightenment ideas such as human rights and democracy, used as 'keywords' in local ideologies.

Appadurai argues that global diffusion and new technologies have loosened the coherence of the Global North ideology in which these concepts were originally held together, turning them into elements ready for new combinations. In his understanding, different contextual conventions deploy each concept differently in each setting, giving it a different local meaning. Local receptions of meaning will vary with the rough translations given to various concepts, the resonances with elements of local cultures and the different balance of hearing, seeing and reading in each context. Appadurai believes that it is this disjunction between the 'scapes' that provides the conditions for global flows. As he says *'Money, commodities, and people chase each other around the world seeking new combinations'*.

At this juncture, the points of crossover and disagreement between the decolonial project

as seen by Grosfoguel on the one hand, and the proposals from globalization studies as theorized by Appadurai on the other, become quite revealing. To this end, three main areas of concern can be defined:

Firstly, the difference in meaning between the terms 'epistemicide' and 'ideocide'. Interestingly enough, whereas Grosfoguel talks about 'epistemicide', Appadurai employs a different term: 'ideocide'. In his understanding, social uncertainty combines with ideological certainty to create pressures towards 'ethnocide', along with a growing tendency towards 'ideocide', whereby entire peoples, countries, ideologies or ways of life are declared to fall outside humanity. As a result, they are subjected to 'social death', either through under-recognition, complete silencing or direct destruction. Thus, while the description of 'ideocide' resonates with the concept of 'epistemicide', a more attentive analysis will reveal that 'ideocide' does not refer to a specific social or cultural institution or group, as in the case of Grosfoguel's concept, but rather is applied to the diversity of 'scapes' described before. Appadurai's proposal therefore stands in opposition to Grosfoguel's dualism.

Secondly, the clear division between Global North and Global South in decolonial thinking becomes misleading when we take into account the complexity highlighted by globalization studies. Indeed, another fundamental difference that marks the opposition between decolonial studies and globalization studies is the duality clearly traced by Grosfoguel between 'the West and the rest' in contraposition to the complex and overlapping global landscape described by Appadurai. Like other scholars of globalization, Appadurai has evolved from a view of globalization as a force for affirmative hybridity to a more nuanced position in which violent reactions against hybridity are also recognized. This shift is crucial to our analysis, as it can also be applied to how the decolonial project argues about the dichotomy between, on one hand, the 'Western University' and, on the other, 'Indigenous Epistemologies' as two well-differentiated blocks that form two antagonistic ways of understanding knowledge production and dissemination.

The third main area of concern is the clash between the perception of the decolonial project as a fundamentally activist and counter-hegemonic endeavor, in contrast with Appadurai's descriptive account of globalization devoid of any political agenda. It is certainly striking that Appadurai proposes imagination and complexity as the cornerstones of his proposal, which he applies to the present but does not translate onto the crucial relationship between history and power. Furthermore, Appadurai rarely stresses the sense and reality of exclusion of regions of the planet that become, forcibly or not, delinked from global capitalism, a delinking that can also be applied to individual and group mobility or the lack thereof. This is, in fact, the fundamental criticism to Appadurai's theory of the 'scapes': it lacks a historical account of the systems of oppression, and overlooks the issue of political agency, which is precisely what the decolonial project is based on.

The question would be, then, how to rearticulate Grosfoguel's decolonial concepts in light of Appadurai's solution to a dichotomy-based analysis, while at the same time setting both propositions in motion in a real-world context?. What follows is an attempt to do so through

the non-dualistic approach proposed by the 'Islamic Research Principles' as argued by Farah Ahmed.

Halaqah and the 'Islamic Research Principles'.

Farah Ahmed's *Exploring Halaqah as Research Method: A Tentative Approach to Developing Islamic Research Principles within a Critical 'Indigenous' Framework* is taken here as the base from which to think about the discourses that make up critical and indigenous research methodologies through an analysis of the Islamization of knowledge. Ahmed's practical proposal is used here as a benchmark from which to engage with alternative epistemologies, adopting a dialogical approach with respect to the ones proposed in the so-called Western academia, in order to underline the existing interlinkages while at the same time proposing new avenues from which to enrich both research traditions.

Following Ahmed's reasoning, 'for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, Islamic education has become a point of resistance, revival, and renewal, a shield against the onslaught of Western culture from colonialism and neoliberalism and the consequent de-legitimization of Islamic and other ways of knowing' (Ahmed, 2012). As previously seen, one of the cornerstones of the decolonial project is to identify research from Western perspectives as an extension of the colonial endeavor. In doing so, Grosfoguel's aim is to reclaim intellectual space that places alternative indigenous worldviews at the center. As we will see, following Grosfoguel's overall view and adopting Appadurai's complexity, Ahmed's practice-based research approach successfully links alternative and critical pedagogy and indigenous knowledge methodologies, proposing a method that encompasses both Western qualitative methodologies and Islamic research methods. Furthermore, Ahmed demonstrates that 'Islamic worldviews share many of the concerns of indigenous knowledge and critical pedagogy', while at the same time challenging colonial concepts of progress that privilege knowledge constructed in the global North.

Even though the history of Islamic thought is intimately linked to the development of modern European thought, it is normally regarded with suspicion by Western academia, which considers it to be invalid due to its rejection of the secular rationalist and empiricist model. In order to better understand the different approaches to the method proposed by Islam, Ahmed introduces us to Al-Faruqi's work, which constitutes one of the main contemporary Islamic research approaches: the 'Islamization of knowledge'. Although this concept may appear to imply some form of Islamic political agenda, I believe it is important to follow its genealogy in order to understand the positive implications that it can bring when applied in combination with Western qualitative methods.

The 'Islamization of knowledge' was initiated in 1977 through a series of World Conferences of Islamic Education. The aim of the conferences was to distance Islamic research from political and tendentious influences, and to underline the tradition of dialogue and

exchange between Islamic research and other schools of thought. Like other indigenous knowledge movements, 'Islamization of knowledge' is part of a postcolonial repositioning within the social sciences, and thus naturally has a critical and political dimension. Its main figures are Ismail Al-Faruqi (d. 1986), Syed Ali Ashraf (d. 1998) and Syed Naquib Al-Attas (d. 2006), whose legacy is now being developed by the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (USA), the Islamic Academy in Cambridge (UK) and the Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization in Malaysia. The aim of 'Islamization of knowledge' is to develop research and education on the basis of the Islamic paradigm, which is rooted in the concept of oneness or holism.

Before analyzing the methodological propositions of the 'Islamization of knowledge' approach, and with the aim of gaining a clearer picture of the variety of research schools within Islam as well the possible interconnections that can exist with the decolonial project, it will be useful to look at the different approaches to Islamic research that do not fall within the 'Islamization of knowledge' research corpus.

The first divergence from the 'Islamization of knowledge' is the one proposed by the so-called 'Traditionalists'. The 'Traditionalist' perspective 'responds to western cultural hegemony self-consciously locating itself in a wider renaissance of pre-enlightenment thought. From the Traditionalist perspective rationality, secularism and positivist science limit itself to a narrow way of looking at reality, which is opposed to holism. In their perspective, western science is an *anomaly and a deviation* from a reality that is also conformed by a spiritual and sacred dimension. The Traditionalists defend this position by underlining the multiplicity of beliefs that exists globally and emphasizing that secularism is, in fact, a minority in the global context. For the Traditionalists the spiritual and the sacred are essential elements of human knowledge and it is only through a revival of the different indigenous knowledges that humanity can recover its natural holistic epistemology' (Nasr, 1989). For them, the Enlightenment was the breaking point in which the joint tradition shared by medieval Christianity and Islam was lost. Indeed, Nasr sees the Traditionalist movement in Islam as an aid to the revival of the *sophia perrenis*, an awareness of the sacred that exists in the Western intellectual tradition as well (Nasr, 1989). While both movements, the 'Islamization of knowledge' and the Traditionalists, share the idea that there is a need and a necessity to learn from modernity and postmodernity, they both agree on maintaining the classical tradition and the Islamic paradigm as their inspirational force.

A second alternative to 'Islamization of knowledge' is the one proposed by the Ijmali Movement. The Ijmali Movement is less of a structured and institutionalized school of thought than a heterogeneous group of intellectuals related to the British-Pakistani scholar Ziauddin Sardar. For Sardar, tradition was, in fact, the key aspect of human activity, the one that provided meaning, identity, and agency. In that respect, his stance on modernity and postmodernity is much more radical, directly rejecting their interference. In his perspective, they are both dependent on Western secularism. Interestingly enough, the Ijmali movement proposes a 'transmodern' approach, a term that has also been employed by Dussel and Grosfoguel. In Ijmali transmodernism, traditional cultures draw on their own epistemologies

and ontologies to transcend modernity and to generate a more authentic and just plural reality. In fact, this is the basis of Ijmalī criticism of 'Islamization of knowledge': its subordination to Western epistemologies unrelated to and disengaged from indigenous knowledges. Sardar's view, however, is not blind to the uncritical and fossilized stances characteristic of the ulema, the Islamic theological scholars. Instead, he proposes to engage with Muslims that react to and interact with contemporary issues, while accusing the ulema of having little knowledge of the complexity and problems of the modern world. In any case, the problem of an 'authentic methodology' is not resolved. Sardar himself recognized that methodology was a constant point of discussion amongst classical scholars and that the interaction with 'other' ways of knowing is essential and has a long tradition within Islamic scholarship. His criticism to the 'Islamization of knowledge' movements is in step with the criticism posed by the Traditionalists: the subordination of its proponents to modernity.

Along these lines, 'Islamization of knowledge' views can be seen as having some parallels with the Western interpretivist paradigm and its multiple meanings, but they differ on an essential issue: as opposed to the interpretivist paradigm, 'Islamization of knowledge' is qualified with the existence of an ultimate objective truth in the metaphysical realm. As Ahmed notes, 'the Islamic concept of fitra (human nature) would accept the qualitative dimensions of Interpretivism. Islam requires the study of human societies to be approached from a human, not scientific perspective. Human beings differ from the material world and are not amenable to 'examination' in the same manner' (Ahmed, 2013). Thus, for the proponents of the 'Islamization of knowledge', positivist and postpositivist methodologies are inappropriate for social research. Quantitative methods may be useful in gathering data but should be used within a qualitative methodology centered on human beings. Following this line of thought, the scientific notion of objectivity is not possible and values should be openly declared because no human exists without values. 'Islamization of knowledge', then, takes into account Western approaches to scientific research based on a positivist ontology, but draws attention to its limits. 'Islamization of knowledge' also respects objectivity, but only if its fallibility is taken into account. In fact, in this respect, Islam comes closer to relativism and the interpretative paradigm in the sense that it acknowledges the limits of a totalizing and objectifying research endeavor. The obvious difference between relativism or interpretivism and 'Islamization of knowledge' is that neither of the former would accept the principal mandate of Islam, i.e. the internal coherence and uniqueness of the Qur'an as the guiding text of Islamic research.

Taking this diversity into account and underlining the connections between Islamic research and more particularly the 'Islamization of knowledge' project, Ahmed bridges the gap between theory and practice by proposing what she describes as the 'Principles of Islamic Research'.

The Principles of Islamic Research as summarized by Ahmed can be resumed in six main points:

1. The primacy of the Qur'an and the prophetic sayings. As the revealed texts, these are the ultimate guiding forces for Muslim researchers adopting the Islamic paradigm.
2. Combination of classical Islamic scholarship and sciences with a range of other research methods: On the one hand, classical Islamic methodologies that naturally generate holistic meanings and moral guidance on the application of knowledge for human and environmental sustainability. On the other, research methodologies that become compatible with Islamic epistemology once the Islamic paradigm is made the conceptual framework within which the methodology operates.
3. Use of all human faculties of understanding. That is the intellectual, the rational, the intuitive and the spiritual. Human understanding of the natural, social and human worlds cannot be reduced to the empirical/rational dimension alone. A more holistic approach needs to be accepted in order to recognize multiple forms of human meaning and knowledge. Research must be rigorous and peer-reviewed to ensure validity and authenticity.
4. The necessity of centering the human situation in research. Research should meet the holistic needs of human beings as individuals and as a collective. In order to do so, the methodological approach should be holistic, qualitative and interdisciplinary.
5. Adoption of Islamic ethics and etiquette about interacting with one's own and other communities.
6. Enforcing collaborative, participative, transformative and useful research: Research should serve the people researched, it should empower and offer practical and real solutions and improvements, and include the researched in all stages of the research process, including dissemination and application.

One of the key characteristics of the Islamic Research Principles proposed by Ahmed is the importance of emphasizing context as essential to any research endeavor. This approach to the unavoidability of the context involves naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological and biographical research. In doing so, it empowers the researcher to develop a method that goes beyond the scientific and positivist model. The question would then be how to go from theory to practice. What kind of format would the integration of the Islamic Research Methods and 'Western methodologies' take on?

A practical example of such an endeavor is proposed and practiced by Ahmed through the application of *halaqah* in her study involving Muslim mother-teachers using critical

indigenous education to meet the needs of Muslim children in contemporary Britain. '*Halaqah* is a spiritual circle-time instituted by the prophet Mohammed in his *tarbiyah* (education) of early Muslims; it is constructed purely orally with students and teacher sitting in a circle on the floor. An integral part of traditional Islamic education, *halaqah* continues to be a core practice in Muslim cultures. *Halaqah* is credited with the transformation of personalities, empowerment of individuals and communities through a social-justice agenda, and the development of Islamic intellectual heritage, including sciences, arts, and mysticism' (Zaimache, 2002). Ahmed's application of *Halaqah* in the context of critical pedagogy included *halaqah* as critical theory, reflexive conversation, participant collaboration and interactive dialogical discourse. By adopting narrative enquiry and auto-ethnography as well as participant empowerment and spirituality, it may successfully bridge the gap between Islamic and Western methodological traditions. This conception proposes a form of narrative enquiry rooted in participative, collaborative, dialogical and spiritual reflexive conversation through auto-ethnography, and thus constitutes a critical-theory approach with an awareness of post-colonial indigenous knowledge perspectives, applying the interpretative paradigm within the context of Islamic epistemology and Islamic values.

Conclusion.

My partial criticism to Grosfoguel's revision of the decolonial project has developed from two different perspectives: the first one has taken globalization studies and Arjun Appadurai's 'scapes' theory as a starting point to reshape the understanding of the complexities and interconnections through which modernity and globalization have evolved. From my perspective, an important task to be developed is the application of Appadurai's 'global scapes theory' to the critical analysis of how 'Western academia' operates, breaking down essentializations and dichotomic assertions. Taking its complexity as the keystone to deconstruct the decolonial replication of confrontational dualism, I have also tried to introduce criticism to Appadurai's proposal by underlining its lack of political agency and historical reflexion, particularly regarding structures of power and privilege. What I have tried to propose is that it is only by adopting the radical emancipatory approach taken by Grosfoguel on the one hand, and Appadurai's complexity through the 'scapes' theory on the other, that a more realistic and holistic approach to context-specific research and action can be achieved.

The second critical perspective on Grosfoguel's thesis is based on Farah Ahmed's research paper, where she explores *halaqah* as a research method. In her paper, Ahmed investigates the Islamic Research Principles in order to propose a research method that integrates academic research into the 'Islamic way of life'. In this respect, Ahmed's perspective on research could be considered as integral to the decolonial discourse regarding the macro category 'indigenous epistemologies of the Global South'. Confronting a self-enclosed identification of the later, Ahmed does not adopt an intransigent and essentialist approach to her research method by proposing the Islamic Research Paradigm as a sole source from which to build up her methodology. On the contrary She is fully aware that 'it must be recognized that all contemporary researchers are to some degree influenced by the

dominant positivist and interpretive paradigm as we work in a specific postcolonial context' (Ahmed, 2013). By adopting a dialogical approach between Islamic Research Methods and the ones proposed by Western social sciences, Ahmed breaks through the decolonial polarization between North and South and acknowledges the positive effects of developing a more comprehensive and holistic perspective.

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