

Stream-Organizers:

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Stream 1

North–South collaborations in question: decolonial perspectives on management and organizational research

In recent years, concerns about the relevance and ethics of fieldwork in the Global South or in the majority world have intensified, raising fundamental questions about the politics of academic knowledge production (Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010; Scheyvens and Storey, 2014). Central to these debates are practices often described as “helicopter” or “parachute” research - instances in which scholars from the Global North collect data in the South but exclude local researchers and communities from later stages of analysis, publication, and credit (Lambert et al., 2024; Minasny & Fiantis, 2018, as cited in Haelewaters, Hofmann, Romero-Olivares, 2021). Moreover, power imbalances in funding and institutional control allow Global North researchers and agencies to shape priorities with little regard for local contexts, leaving Global South collaborators with minimal influence over studies that directly concern them (Haelewaters et al., 2021). Postcolonial and feminist theorists have expanded these critiques by highlighting how representation in academic writing can also reinforce domination - especially in depictions of women and “third world” subjects (Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1988). A postcolonial approach urges researchers to be responsible for how their work represents and affects the people and places they study. This means paying attention to every stage of research - from forming collaborations and designing methods and fieldwork to publishing and sharing results - and making sure the process is fair, inclusive, and accessible to the communities involved.

Important to note is that within today’s constrained and often unequal academic context, there also lie opportunities for scholars from the Global South to reposition themselves and challenge dominant modes of knowledge production. As Güliz Ger notes, “the outsider position of scholars from the Global South has its advantages”; it opens space for proposing “innovative dialogues that can transform the manner in which the international scientific community perceives phenomena and issues and produces knowledge.” Researchers from the South are not only products of their sociocultural realities but also producers of new understandings of North–South relations. By engaging reflexively with their positionality and context, Global South researchers can advance approaches, theorizations, and solutions often invisible to or unexamined by Northern scholarship. Such “sociopolitical researcher reflexivity” goes beyond methodological issues - it is also a form of intellectual courage: the courage to tell their own stories, to build theory from their lived experiences, and to move past the mere application of Northern models (Ger, Suarez & Nascimento, 2019).

This stream examines international research collaborations between scholars from the Global North and African countries through decolonial and postcolonial perspectives. Drawing on Feyerabend’s analysis (2023), which argues that historically rooted problems require a critical reflection on scientific study - long shaped by a colonial gaze and asymmetrical power relations and now increasingly scrutinized across disciplines - the stream situates contemporary research collaborations within this epistemic and historical context.

Against this backdrop, the stream focuses on recent developments in international research cooperation. In recent years, discussions around fairer research agreements, participatory forms of knowledge production, and more equal modes of collaboration between the Global North and the Global South have intensified. The stream critically asks to what extent established status hierarchies, perceptions, and mutual expectations have actually changed, how hidden power mechanisms (Bourdieu, 2015) continue to operate within collaborative settings, and how these dynamics shape the design, implementation, and utilization of joint research projects. At the same time, the stream reflects on emerging forms of (neo-)colonization in international research contexts, for example with regard to knowledge appropriation, funding regimes, publication practices, and institutional dependencies.

Contributors are invited to identify shared challenges, make structural tensions visible, and explore possibilities for mutual learning and epistemic reconfiguration.

Possible topics and guiding questions include:

- How do unequal dependencies, funding regimes, and institutional hierarchies shape who proposes what topics, who decides on research designs, and who gains recognition in international research collaborations in organizational and management research? In what ways do “helicopter” or “parachute” fieldwork practices manifest in management and organization studies, and what alternative methodological arrangements can mitigate them?
- How can decolonial and postcolonial perspectives be translated into concrete research practices and epistemic commitments within organization and management research?
- Which topics, research questions, and theoretical frameworks dominate current North-South collaborations in management, and which voices, issues and knowledge remain marginalized and silenced?
- What roles do publishing regimes, editorial boards, , and funding agencies play in reproducing or challenging colonial and neo-colonial forms of knowledge production in management research?
- How can more just, reflexive, and sustainable forms of international collaboration be developed?

The stream welcomes conceptual and empirical contributions from diverse disciplinary backgrounds that critically analyze international research collaborations and foreground alternative perspectives and practices. Qualitative research, including autoethnographic approaches, is particularly welcome.

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