

YOUTH STUDIES **THE CHALLENGE FROM** **THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

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Plenary

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JEAN AND JOHN COMAROFF THE SOUTH OFFERS PRESSURE-TESTED PRACTICES, THEORIES, AND METHODS



“ Far from tracking behind the curve of universal history, always in deficit, always playing catch-up, the South has much to offer... it is often the first to feel the effects of, and deal with instabilities, insecurities, mobilities, change, its vast experience of “critical concerns of the present age ... about personhood, identity, difference, and belonging, about the state, sovereignty, governmentality, citizenship, and borders, about law, liberalism, and democracy, about labor and the politics of life, about history and memory ”

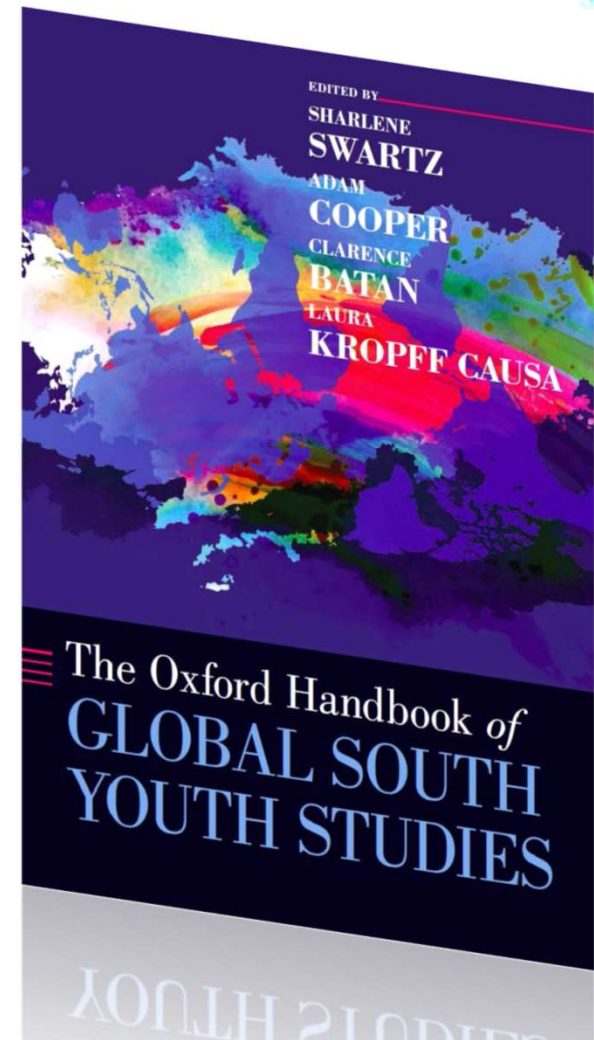
(Comaroff and Comaroff 2012, p. 19 *Theory from the South*)

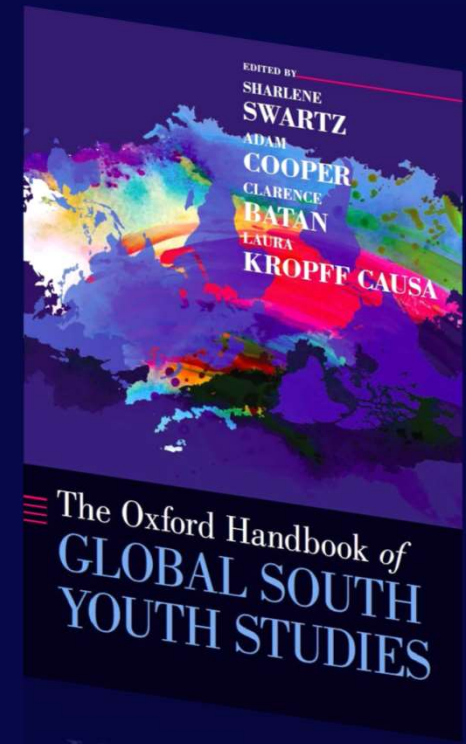
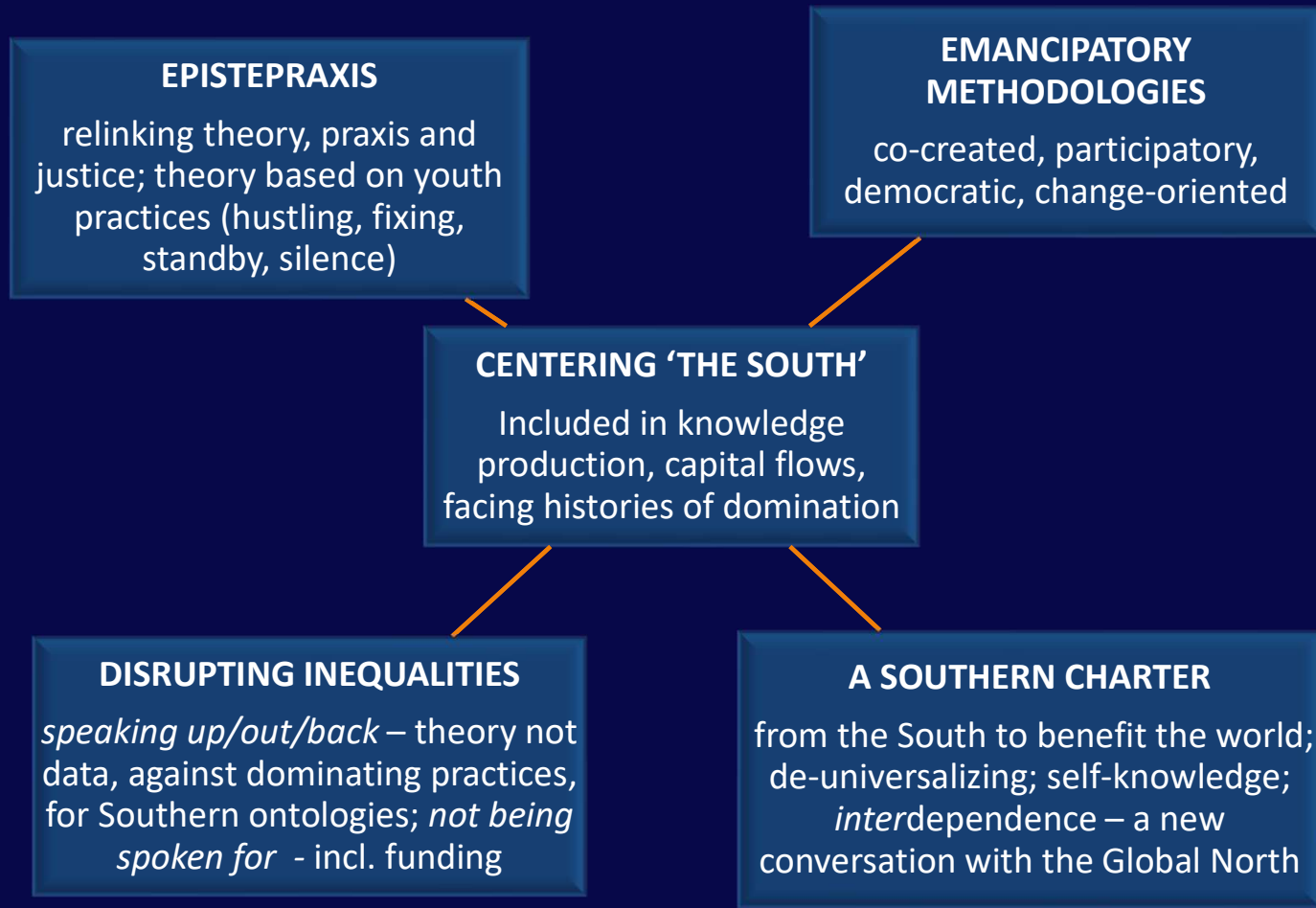
THE FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE

Youth Studies as it is, is “Global North Youth Studies”. Texts universalize the experience of Northern youth.

Southern youth have much experience in the crises that the North currently face.

Their needs to be space for Southern scholars to hone their theories and approaches as a “Southern Youth Studies”, and then for us to come together to formulate a “Global Youth Studies”.





DECOLONISING YOUTH STUDIES AND RESEARCH

A HANDBOOK IN THREE PARTS



1. Realigning theory, practice and justice
2. The Global South
3. Global South Youth
4. Youth studies, its forms and differences
5. Southern theory



35. Representations
36. Researching the South
37. Emancipatory methodologies
38. Interventions: Freirean inspired dialogues
39. Policy: Youth and the social contract
40. Southern Charter for a Global Youth Studies

EPISTEPRAXIS



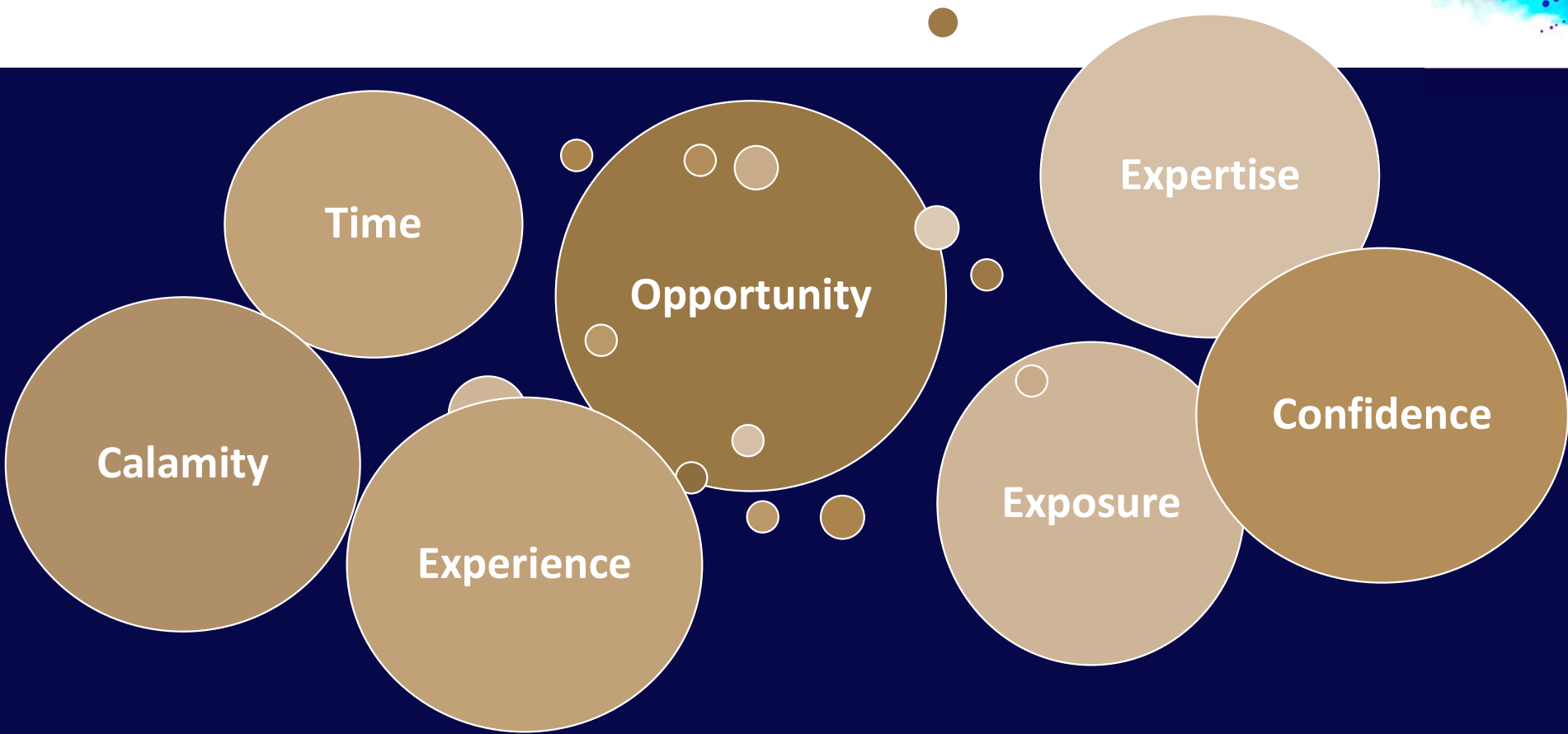
1. Refers to **Youth in the Global South** - those who have emerged in the postcolonial world marked by material, social and political precarity
2. Their everyday practices constitute **embodied forms of knowing**
3. Southern youth studies involves working alongside, documenting, and **acknowledging these practices**.
4. This exercise constitutes 'epistep Praxis' – challenging the boundaries between **knowledge, practice and politics**.
5. The aim of epistep Praxis is **socially just outcomes for youth** and forms of knowledge production that are more democratic.

A SOUTHERN CHARTER FOR GYS



1. Steve Biko's Black Consciousness – first alone, then together, with voice, power and vision
2. Fanon - despite emancipation the colonized still arrives “too late... everything has been predicted, discovered, proved, exploited... everything had already been said” (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 100).
3. Informed by the report of *The South Commission* led by Julius Nyerere (1990)
 - Solidarity and self-reliance
 - Move from subordination to interdependence
 - Responsibility for change rests with those from the South
 - Development of the South of benefit to the South and to the world

WHAT PREVENTS SOUTHERN CONTRIBUTIONS?



NAVIGATIONAL CAPACITIES

A new theory of youth development of critical importance to Youth Studies

Beyond theories of resistance, protective assets and resilience

Developing flexible capacities—in resource-poor contexts, that can be acquired and enlarged



THE DIFFERENCE RESISTANCE, ASSETS AND RESILIENCE?



💣* NavCaps vs. Resilience Theory

Resilience - the ability to withstand and recover from adversity, stress, or trauma. Emphasises adaptation, coping mechanisms 'bounce back'

💣* NavCaps vs. Theory of Youth Assets

Youth assets identifies internal (values, self-esteem) and external skills (relationships, opportunities)

💣* NavCaps vs. Resistance Theory

Resistance emphasise challenge and resistance to dominant social structures & norms that contribute to marginalization; explores the need for critical consciousness and collective action



**ASPIRE TO
POSSIBILITIES**

**ANALYSE
POLICIES**



**ACQUIRE
CAPITALS**

NAVIGATIONAL CAPACITIES

**ACHIEVE
OPEN
IDENTITIES**



**ACT
INDIVIDUALLY**

**ACT
COLLECTIVELY**



WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF NAVIGATIONAL CAPACITIES?



- 🚀 **Collective social mobility** - Captures marginality, adversity and disadvantage; speaks to **barriers and challenges** due to their socio-economic context
- 🚀 **Wellbeing, Human flourishing, Development** - does not address challenges faced by marginalised youth.
- 🚀 **Survival** - empowering young people with the **skills, resources, and networks** to navigate complex social environments
- 🚀 Goal of the theory is to **overcome barriers** and improve their socio-economic status, achieving a better life in terms of **opportunities, resources, and status**.