



# **EPISTEPRAXIS**

## **RECOGNISING THE PRACTICES OF YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH AS KNOWLEDGE**

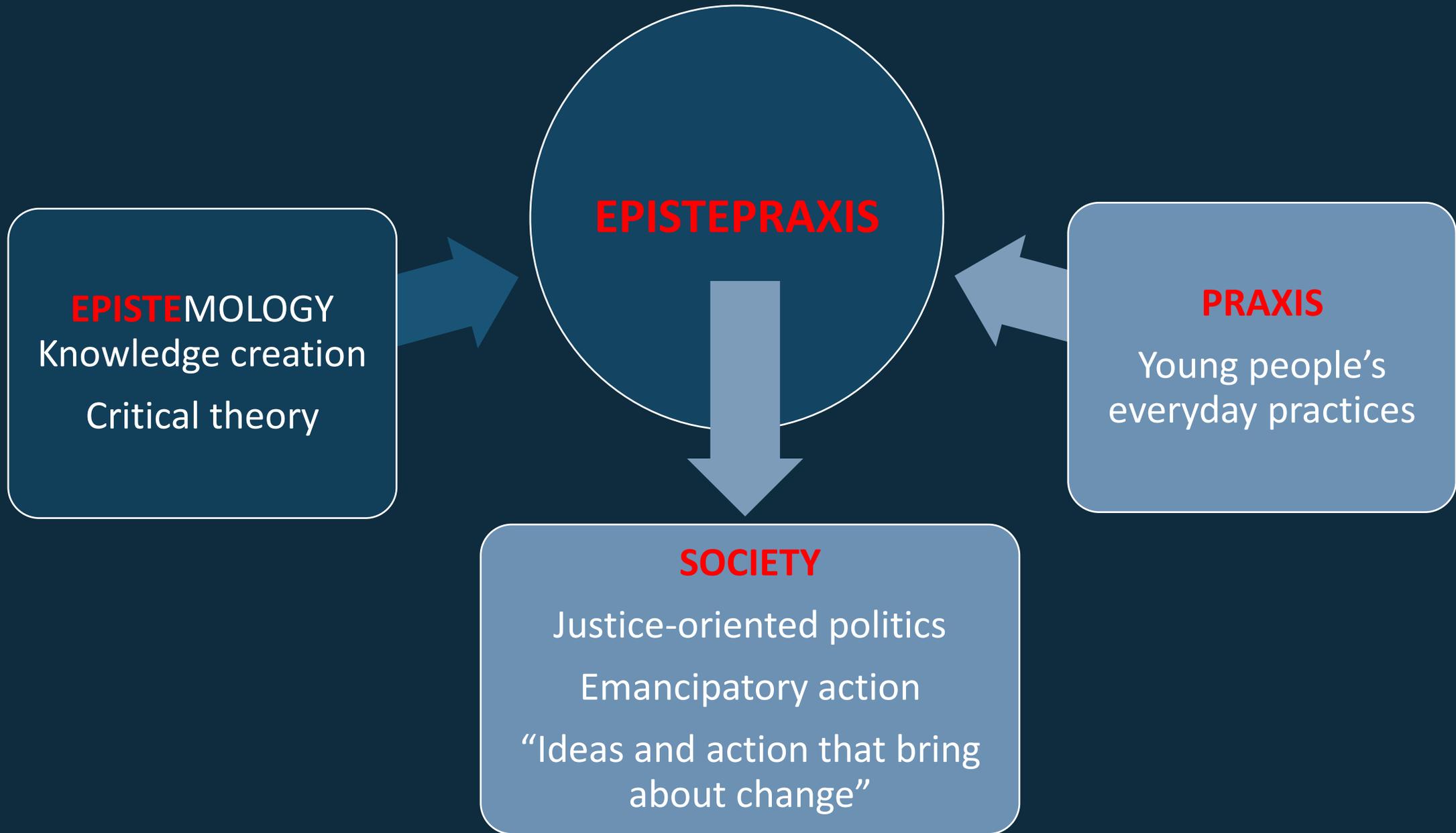
**World Congress of Sociology, Melbourne, Australia**

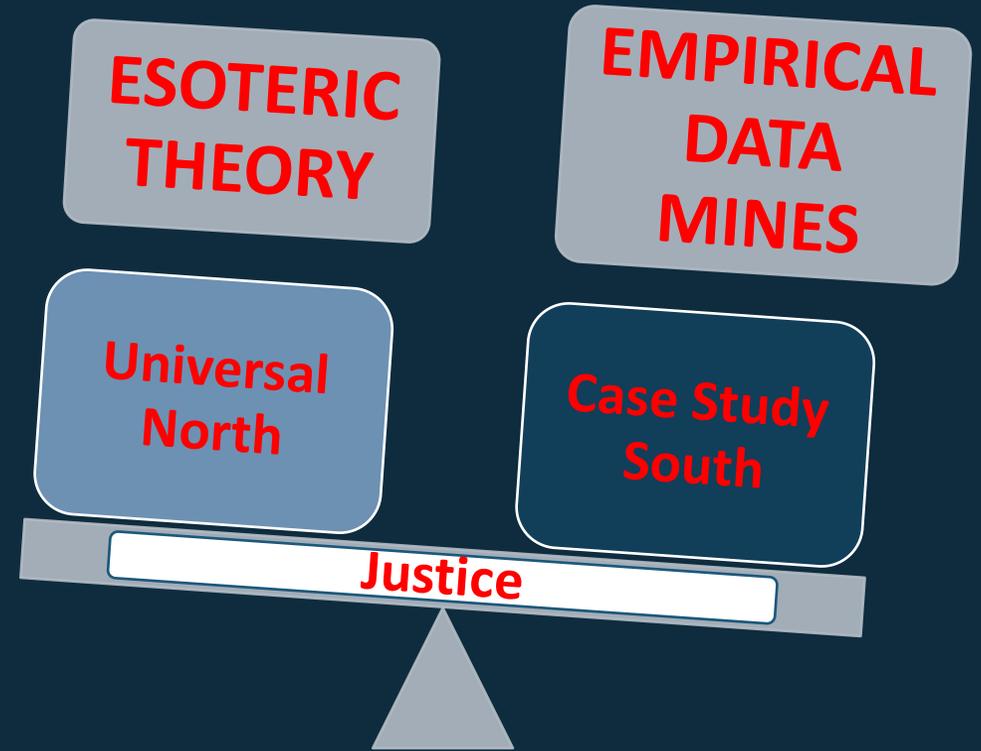
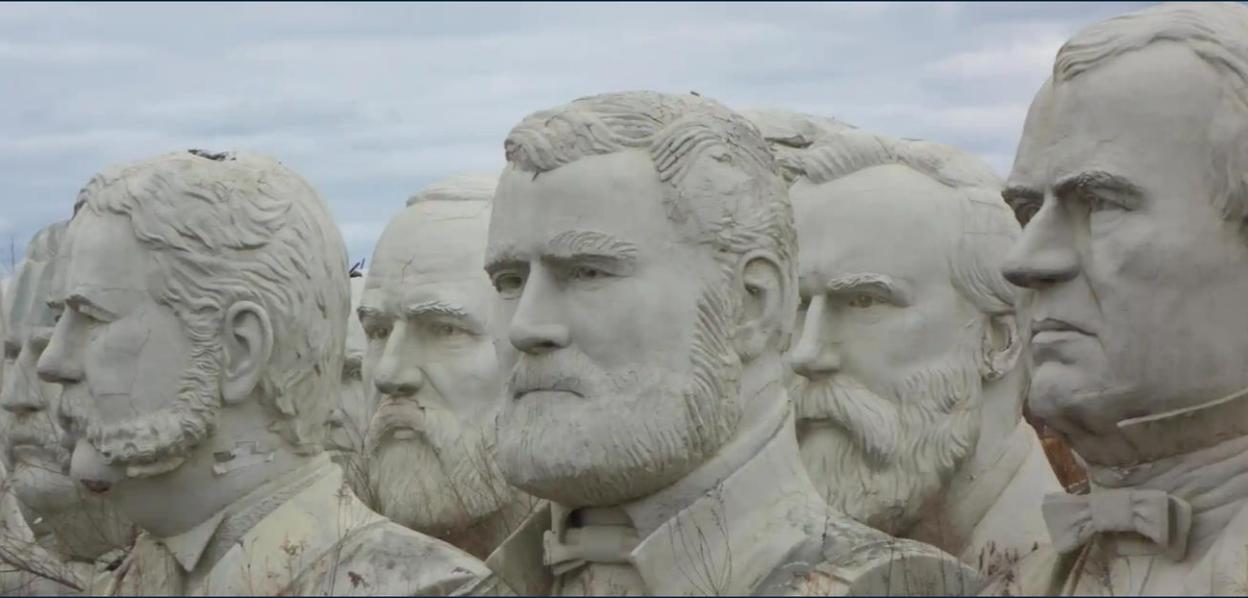
**25 June to 1 July 2023**

**Sharlene Swartz, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa**

**30 June 2023**

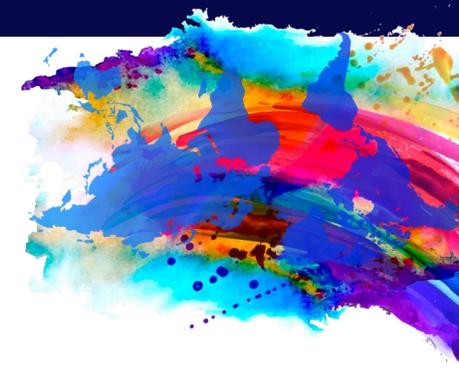






The colonized still arrives “too late... everything has been predicted, discovered, proved, exploited... everything had already been said” (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 100).

# BOAVENTURA DE SOUSA SANTOS *EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE SOUTH* (2015)



It is time for a new relationship between knowledge creation, grassroots practices, and politics ... an epistemological tradition that follows Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire and South African Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko in intentionally catalyzing social justice by centering the oppressed, one that most importantly, **“starts from the premise that social practices are knowledge practices”** (Santos, 2015, p. 157), that draws on **“subjectivities that rebel against conformist, routinised, repetitive social practices and are energized by experimenting with liminality... eccentric or marginal forms of sociability”** (Santos, 2015, p. 98).

# EPISTEPRAXIS

1. Intentionally linking theory with practice and justice outcomes
2. Recognising the practices of youth in the global south as knowledge
3. Employing research methodologies that are more likely to create theory-justice-practice outcomes
4. Operationalising and evaluating our efforts towards this aim



# EPISTEPRAXIS



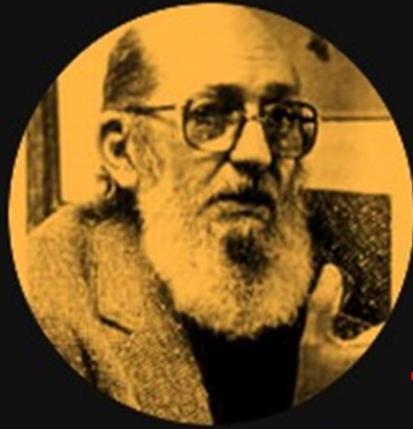
“ Youth in the Global South emerge in the postcolonial world in relation to material, social and political precarity, with their everyday practices constituting embodied forms of knowing. Research with Southern youth therefore involves working alongside, documenting, and acknowledging these practices. An exercise that constitutes a form of ‘epistep Praxis’ – challenging the boundaries between knowledge, practice and politics. ... this notion of epistep Praxis asks how the Global South can contribute to a global Youth Studies that seeks to promote socially just outcomes for youth and forms of knowledge production that are more democratic. ”

(Cooper, Swartz, Batan and Kropff Causa, 2021 *Handbook of Global South Youth Studies*)



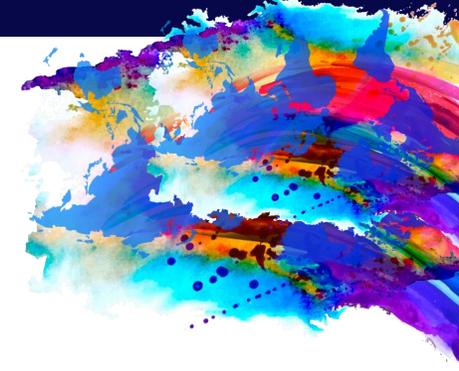
# EPISTEPRAxis

Intentionally linking theory with  
practice and justice outcomes



- the justice

“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”



Paolo Freire - *Pedagogy of the oppressed*

- the theory

Question posing versus bank deposit education

- the praxis

'THE IMAGINATION  
IS TODAY A STAGING  
GROUND FOR ACTION,  
AND NOT ONLY  
FOR ESCAPE'

- ARJUN APPADURAI

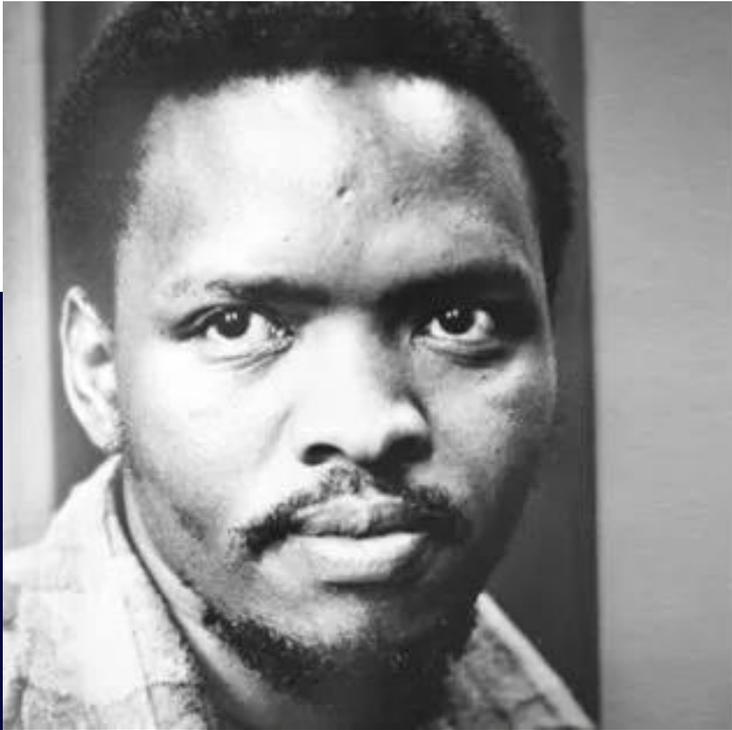
- the justice

Aspiration avoids exit – both  
apathy or violence.

- the praxis

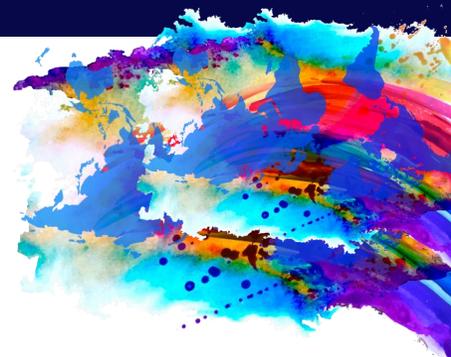


Aspiration unbounded by cultural  
restraints - the theory



## **Steve Biko**

**As angry as  
we have the right to be,  
let us remember that  
we are in the struggle  
to kill the idea  
that one kind of man  
is superior to  
another kind of man.**



**- the justice**

## **BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS – the theory**

Black people need to reflect on “the cause of their oppression – the Blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude” - **the praxis**



# EPISTEPRAXIS

Recognising the practices of  
youth in the global south as  
knowledge

# 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 ”

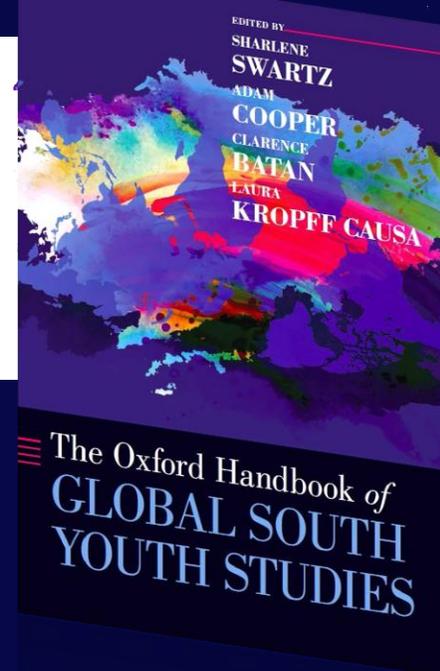
(Comaroff and Comaroff 2012, p. 19 *Theory from the South*)

# 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

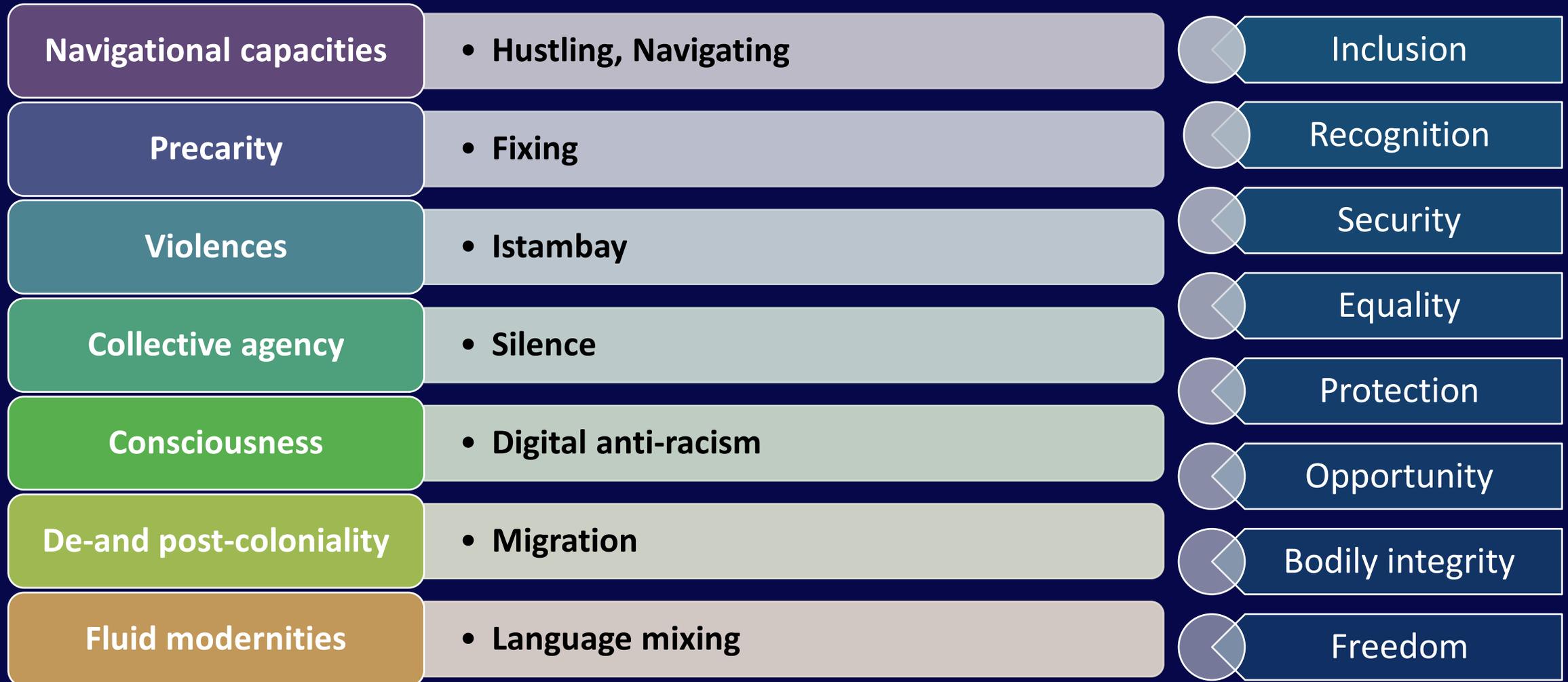


35. Representations
36. Researching the South
37. Emancipatory methodologies
38. Interventions: Freirean inspired dialogues
39. Policy: Youth and the social contract
40. Southern Charter for a Global Youth Studies



YOUTH STUDIES  
GLOBAL SOUTH  
THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

# THEORY - YOUTH PRACTICE – JUSTICE EFFECT



# NAVIGATIONAL CAPACITIES

A new theory/framework 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





# EPISTEMPRAXIS

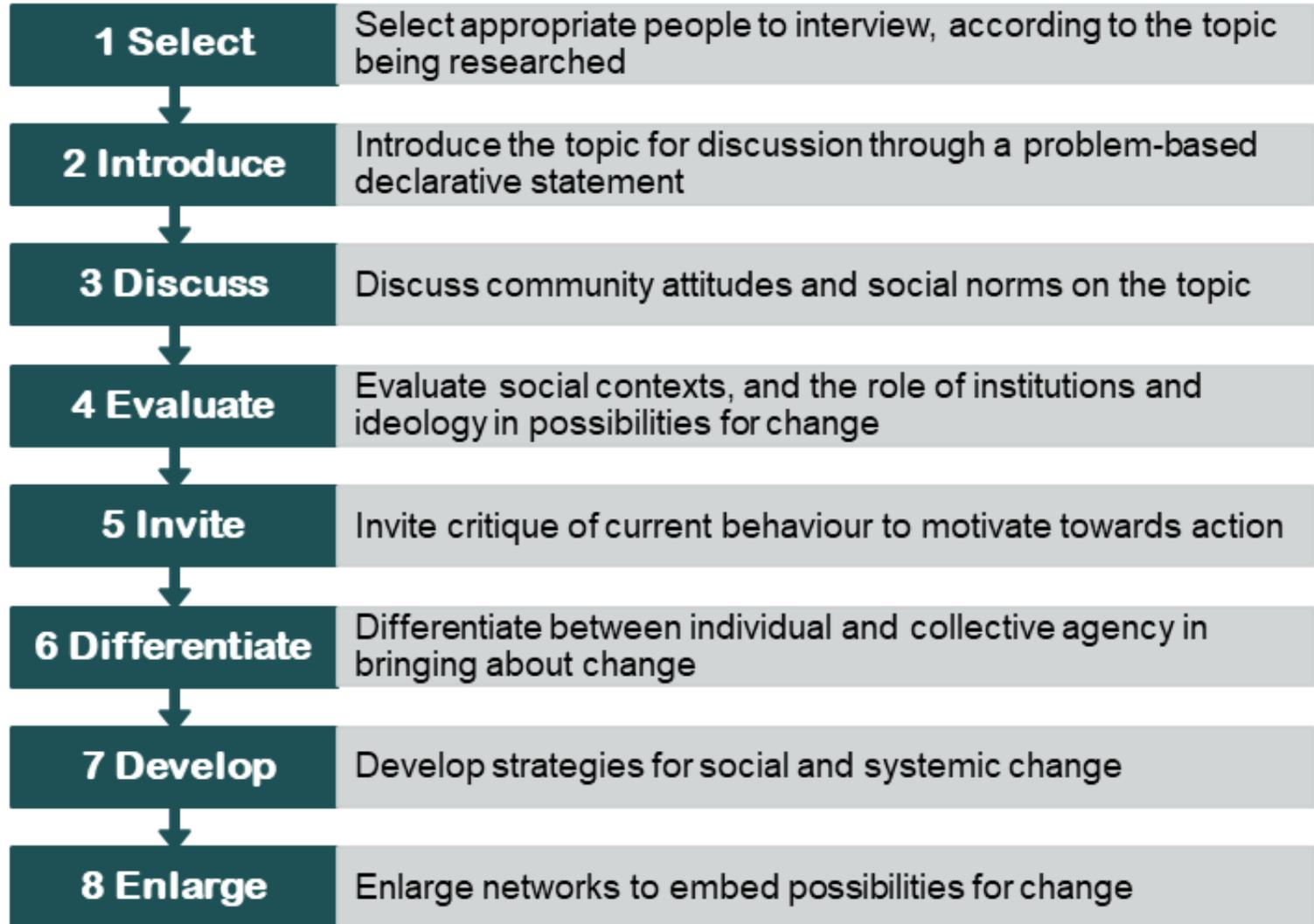
Employing research methodologies that are more likely to create theory-justice-practice outcomes

# SOCIAL NETWORK INTERVIEWING

Co-research,  
emancipatory research,  
participation

Developing capitals  
through research

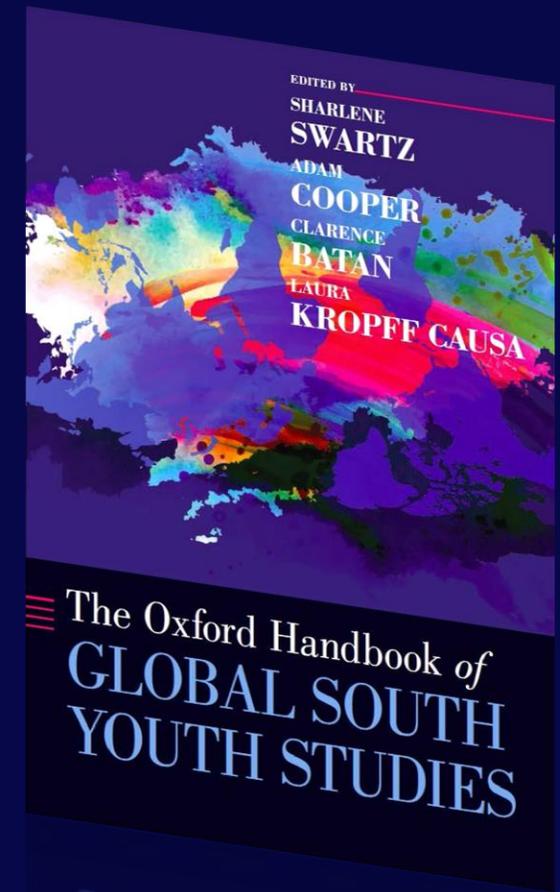
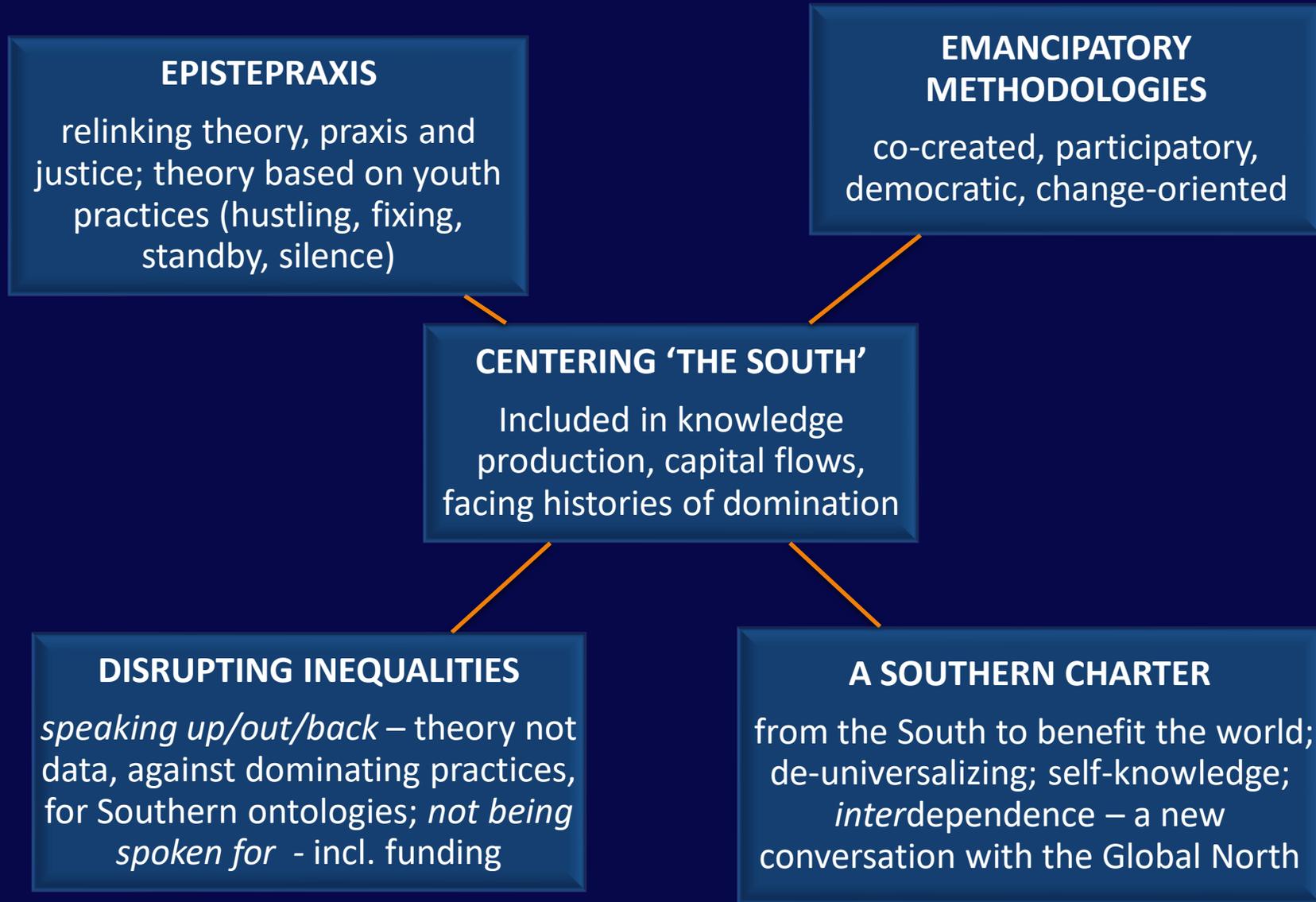
Drawing on motivational  
interviewing and nudge  
theory





# **EPISTEPRAXIS**

**OPERATIONALISING AND  
EVALUATING OUR EFFORTS  
TOWARDS THIS AIM  
– the next steps**



# DECOLONISING YOUTH STUDIES AND RESEARCH