

24. Practicing decoloniality in the study of indigenous knowledge: experiences and perspectives from Latin America (Workshop)

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A growing interest in indigenous knowledge (i.e. on education, environment, climate adaptation and further fields) has developed in the academy and the public over the last decades. Anthropologists aiming to study indigenous knowledge face the demand of research associations and those who are studied to apply decolonial and participatory research practices in project design, realization, and dissemination of research results. The workshop invites to discuss the challenges and problems but also the possibilities and new perspectives that arise from this demand. We want to discuss past experiences and/or present new research designs that propose innovative models of decolonial, participatory, activist, or collaborative research and new approaches to the co-production of knowledge. We seek to discuss practical, methodological, epistemological, theoretical, and ethical aspects of practicing decoloniality in the study of indigenous knowledge in the Americas and invoke contributors to consider and discuss, for instance, how to integrate positions of indigenous communities in the process of application for funding; how to escape the Western logic of funding, that incites to 'collect indigenous knowledge as a form of 'precious asset' but is not fostering source communities; what capacity building in research projects means; what the study of different epistemologies and ontologies entails for the position of the anthropologists as translators or activists; how local and regional conflicts, which inevitably will take influence on the research project, can be handled; and how participatory research can be reconciled with the logics of the academic culture of publication?

Indigenous Editors and Sound Archivists: Quechua knowledges and the decolonization of archives

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Since 2021, Quechua Kañaris school teachers, writers, and elders (Northern Peruvian Andes) are compiling songs, oral stories, riddles, *yarawikuna* (song-poems), *kashwas*, and other manifestations of knowledge, transcribing those and creating a translation into Spanish for the publication of a bilingual anthology of Quechua Kañaris *oraliture*. This initiative originated in their community, inviting me for collaboration. In my presentation, I will discuss topics emerging of work

sessions regarding compiling community knowledge in a way that is aware and respectful to Quechua notions of authorship, a "normalized" way to transcribe Kañaris Quechua (a Quechua dialect without yet normalized alphabet); the conversations about revitalization of Kañaris traditional words and discussion on inclusion or exclusion of other Quechua dialects' expressions, the debates about the (im)possibility to translate Quechua concepts and affects into Spanish, the design of a publication for mainly readers among the Kañaris community, and the negotiations with the funding institution -a Peruvian University- about the guidelines of the publication and the distribution of the book. This experience sheds light on the possibilities of decolonizing epistemic and capitalist structures of book publishing in the Andes, a process based on the collaboration between Indigenous communities and Universities.

Native epistemologies in a popular educational project in Andean Bolivia

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In the Aymara- and Quechua-speaking communities in the province of Bautista Saavedra (northern Department of La Paz, Bolivia), from the 1980s onwards, an educational project set up by a Belgian agronomist and run by indigenous communities significantly altered social relations between Spanish-speaking townspeople and their campesino neighbours. The school, called Ayni Kusun, taught a "revolutionary" education, firstly by allowing its students to finish their high-school education using texts written in Quechua and Aymara, depicting people's daily lives. By becoming literate, campesinos no longer needed to rely on the townspeople for assistance, e.g. with regards to bureaucracy. The educational project also provided its adult students with a physical place in which to discuss their problems free from the interference of the townspeople. This became particularly important prior to the municipal elections in 1995, the first time that a mayor was elected locally from one of the indigenous communities rather than the town of Charazani. Prior to the election, campesinos discussed problems and possibilities of change, redefining also their relationship with the townspeople. This meant weakening ties of *compadrazgo/padrinazgo* (godparenthood), which campesinos contracted with townspeople out of self-interest, but which were also exploitative.

'Tell us something about yourself, too' – Reflections on Collaborative Research as a Reflexive Tool for Social Research

Miriam Friz Trzeciak, Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg

In my dissertation project, I examine how indigenous communities in the Southern Mexican borderland deal with different processes of mobility. In my research, I combine a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1998) with collaborative research methods carried out together with members from social and indigenous movements in 2012, 2013 and 2016. To translate decolonial theory into practice, I work with Sousa Santos' (2004, 2005) approach of 'Epistemologies of the South' and use a Situational Analysis approach (Clarke 2005), combined with participative methods (Borda 1987; Freire 1973).

Finding dialogical methods of doing research together with my research partners was not the only concern in the collaborative ethnography. Also, reflecting on the (asymmetrical) positionalities became crucial. Overall, the focus was on agreeing on collaborative ways for knowledge dissemination. Taking the perspectives of my interview partners as a point of departure, it can be shown that South-North mobilities do not only refer to global inequalities and the 'coloniality of migration' (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018). Rather, within the communal systems of governance (Tzul Tzul 2016), the mobility of individual members plays a formative role for the whole community.

On the challenge of practicing decoloniality, while being a 'one-woman-show'

Antje Gunsenheimer, University of Bonn

The demand for decolonial research, which means that the interests of those being researched are included into the research design, that they are enabled to use the research results for their own purposes and that they are actively participating in primary aspects of research, is a common expectation today. Nevertheless, if we are honest with ourselves, the implementation of those prerequisites falls short of expectations. Master's theses, doctorates and habilitations are still one-man/one-woman projects in our subject, which makes it difficult to acknowledge appropriately the contributions of those 'collaborative partners' and questions the seriousness of our efforts in that demand. Decolonial ethnographic research is also questioned in those instances where the 'source community' is itself embroiled in numerous conflicts among themselves and a common interest hardly recognizable. How does the anthropologist relate to this? Finally, how do we react when we have

to recognize that we are also 'used' and become a pawn in a completely different power game. The contribution discusses, what we can change in our own research as critically engaged researchers, in which areas framework conditions for financing and qualification have to change and, where are the limits to decolonial research practices in anthropology we have to acknowledge.