

33. Feeling through Knowing, Trusting through Feeling. Binaries and their Dissolution in the Americas (Workshop)

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Feelings are often seen as diametrically opposed to objective knowledge. Yet the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that trusted community members provided clarity amid general uncertainty by advocating for the use of vaccines (Silberner 2021). Still, there has been little analysis of their emotional expertise in creating community trust. What is knowledge without people who embody and feel it by vouching for, or trusting, it? For Dian Million (2009), felt knowledge is as scientifically relevant as seemingly objective knowledge. This includes powerful emotions such as trust and anger, which leave bodily traces. Similar to Gloria Anzaldúa, Kim TallBear, and other decolonial theorists, Million criticizes that emotions are often understood as a subjective pollution of objective purity, which is why there continues to be little research on the affective facets of knowledge production. This workshop aims to fill this theoretical and felt gap by discussing the connection between feelings and knowledge in the Americas. Through this we aim to elaborate on how knowledge is produced and received outside of our normative epistemological system, thus expanding our notion of what scientific knowledge means for anthropology.

Contributors to this workshop are invited to consider questions such as:

- What role do emotions play in seemingly objective truth?
- What is the relationship between emotional and scientific framings in political claims?
- What strategies can scholars develop to research knowledge through emotion?
- What may happen to knowledge production when the binary distinction between knowledge and feeling is erased?

Situating emotions in the subject: Emotion-based perceptions of Black birthers' experiences in Germany

Valerie Edwards, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

The title of the workshop, "Feeling through Knowing, Trusting through Feeling. Binaries and their Dissolution in the Americas" grasped my attention immediately, as I was writing the last pages of my master's thesis, which focused on Black birthers' experiences in German public maternity wards. My project nuzzled in

against a backdrop of epistemologically produced knowledge, or academic literature, on racial birth disparities and obstetric racism, mostly from the U.S. context. This seemed to homogenize Black experiences, emphasizing the structural dimensions of racism, often ignoring the more nuanced forms and individual, emotion-based perceptions of everyday racism, which often diverged from dominant anthropological theories.

Through my subject-oriented research approach, Black birth givers portrayed the dynamics between their birth narratives and their social realities in Germany, including valuable situated knowledge. The dynamics were an intricate interplay of both measurable, comparable" elements, such as socioeconomic positionalities, and unmeasurable, incomparable" elements of their individuality, like their personalities, self-perceived emotional resilience, communication styles, coping and healing mechanisms, or self-perceived positive dispositions. I would be very happy to further embark on this path of felt knowledge and its (dis)connection to knowledge" generated in academia.

The use of emotions as an analytical tool: Reflections from a cocoa plantation in San Martin, Peru

Amanda Jousset, University of Neuchâtel

In my research on cocoa cultivation in the department of San Martin in Peru, I question the place and the analytical use of emotions in the interaction with others. These emotions would they take place during encounters during fieldwork, but also during the elaboration of a corpus of data and during the analysis and writing process.

My aim is to use emotion as an analytical tool, as a way to accept the embodiment of our research and to explore the limit of the situated standpoint of anthropological knowledge production (Haraway, 1988). Through sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009), I also integrate other relations between human bodies, environments and international relations and encounters linked to the chocolate industry in a phenomenological approach of the lifeworld (Schütz, 1973). Concepts developed and used in Latin American anthropology, such as *cuerpo-territorio* (Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021) or *gore capitalism* (Valencia, 2018) are developed to seize the ambivalence of the passion and the violence linked to cocoa bean production and commercialization.

Igniting Emotions: Wildfires and Forest Management in Flagstaff, Arizona

Coral Iris O'Brian, University of Hamburg

Flagstaff, Arizona is a mountain town known for recreational tourism and forestry nestled in the largest ponderosa forest in the world. Increasing high severity wildfires are changing both the forests existence as well as framing how its residents respond to the forest and to forest management practices. Local reactions from foresters, loggers, Indigenous Hopi and Diné peoples, hunters, wildland firefighters, academics, and U.S. forest service employees revealed not only that their feelings towards wildfires differed, but different justifications for the cause of these wildfires were given. Some people attributed them to long-term planetary cycles, while others pointed to anthropogenic climate change explanations. These justifications were imbued with emotions shaped both by wider scientific and political narratives of climate change, but also by different felt experiences with wildfire and forests. Notably, there was a strong sense of enthusiasm for prescribed burning across all socio-cultural groups. Yet, some locals expressed feelings of helplessness and fear about wildfire futures rushing toward them. Emotional responses to changing forests have implications for the future of collaborative forest management, as felt experiences hold possibilities for mapping constructive action and identifying fragmentation, despite differences in politics, forest ontology, and explanations of causation.

Felt expertise: Analysing the entanglement of emotion and knowledge in Spain's domestic care work

Friederike Hesselmann, Goethe-University Frankfurt

In this workshop, I wish to share my PhD research on the junctures of feelings, knowledge and power in Spain's domestic care sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the overwhelmingly female workforce waited for a recognition of their expertise, impact, and importance. Instead, many suffered from mobility restrictions, unpaid work, threats, dismissals, and physical as well as emotional overload (Bofill-Poch/Gil 2021). However, a situation as extraordinary as a pandemic does not only lead to changed external circumstances. Rather, the perceptions, sensations and feelings of the workers themselves may also change. Many of my informants, who mostly migrated from Andean countries such as Bolivia and Peru, proudly emphasised the ways in which they care for the elderly, the weak, the sick with 'love'. Building on these statements and months of research conducted in Madrid, I argue that Andean domestic workers locate their expertise in their emotional capabilities. As such, they are able to use culturally embedded

knowledge on the junctures between health and emotions to care for the most vulnerable groups during a global pandemic. Such a felt expertise (Million 2009, Whittaker 2020) dissolves historically handed-down divisions of objective knowledge and subjective emotion and enables a reinterpretation of power relations within care work. As Gloria Anzaldúa said: "I live in this liminal state in between worlds, in between realities, in between systems of knowledge." (Anzaldúa 2000:5)