



Social (In)justice, Indigeneity and Sustainable Future(s): Recognition, Interrogation and Re-Existence

Description

The aim of this workshop is to develop a sustainable dialogue between Swedish and Chilean academic/activist communities, focusing on the relationship between indigeneity, social (in)justice, and sustainable futures from interdisciplinary approaches across the Humanities, Social and Natural Sciences.

The workshop is unique in offering a relational mode of enquiry by exploring the applicability of decolonial thought to Nordic and Latin American indigenous contexts and by enriching and nuancing them through Sámi, Mapuche, other indigenous people as well as heritage speakers' perspectives. We focus on three dominant frames which shape the material realities of indigenous and other multilingual communities in Chile and Sweden: **Recognition, Interrogation and Re(existence)**.

In Chile and Sweden, indigenous communities share a history of dispossession, displacement and erasure, coupled with nonrecognition of rights (Laula, 1904, Stenberg & Lindholm, 1920, Öhman, 2010). In reiterating that modernity's achievements are inseparable from racism, hetero-patriarchy, economic exploitation, and discrimination of non-European knowledge systems (Quijano, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007), Sámi thought has explored (including the gendered effects) the loss of subsistence economy and the introduction of the market, often with adverse effects for these communities (Eikjok, 2004; Dankertsen, 2020; Kuokkanen, 2007). (SGD N° 5). Similarly, Mapuche and other indigenous peoples from Southern Chile such as Kaweskar and Selknam, have confronted the exploitation of natural capital; the stigmatization and criminalization of their claims to their ancestral territory; access to water, and also access to the ocean and its resources (SDG N° 14). They have also advocated for preserving biodiversity and the recovery and valuation of their language and culture (Calbucara, 2014). Furthermore, while indigenous communities are marginalized through deterritorialization, repression and racist discourses (van Dijk, 2009), their culture is appropriated and commodified by dominant communities that support a neoliberal development model (Richards, 2010). Recognition of unjust expropriation of the human environment and natural resources and its consequences for social and economic development and sustainable communities (SDG N° 11) is our first frame. Besides, we will investigate how preserving indigenous people's culture and knowledge systems can help raise awareness towards the protection of nature (SDG N° 14 and 15). Mapuche cosmivision, for example, considers a code of ethics and behavior related to nature's protection (az-mapu), where energy (newen) is produced by the convergence of critical natural elements such as land and water.

Within this frame, a key question that will be addressed is: **how do we improve the productive potential of our societies while ensuring equitable opportunities for all?** An aspect that is

central for social justice and equitability is language and how individuals choose to use their multilingual competencies (The Douglas Fir Group 2016; Spotti and Blommaert 2017). Languages, particularly heritage languages mediate culture, habits and knowledge (cf. the ecological perspective, de Sousa Santos 2017; Saguy & Kteily 2014). The heritage language goes through simultaneous processes of loss and acquisition. The marginalization of heritage language could imply a partial loss of knowledge, history and culture at the same time as a dominant language gains public platform. In Sweden, the possibility to develop language competence and literacy does not account for the socio-economic and political challenges that multilingual groups face (Reath Warren 2017; Ganuza & Hyltenstam 2020; Donoso et al. 2021; Baeza & Österberg 2021). In Chile, multilingualism is not the norm but it is a desired outcome. Nonetheless, minority languages in Chile (including the languages of new migrants from Haiti) are overshadowed by colonial languages such as Spanish and English.

Intersecting with the historical recognition of indigenous epistemes, we, through our second frame, interrogate the role of the State as a crucial actor in ensuring good life on earth. This includes considering the Chilean current constitutional debate around political reforms and acknowledgement of indigenous rights (SDG N° 16).

The final frame of the workshop is to formulate and advance positive models of re-existence (Albán Achinte, 2006), rather than mere resistance, to recreate the intersecting indigenous ideas of good life as opposed to the neoliberal de-futured global condition we are all forced into. In doing so, we maintain the idea of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. The workshop will entail academic presentations, a field visit, and a session dedicated to poetic and artistic performances.

Expected outcomes

The workshop format of presentations coupled with field visit (Day 1) and art and poetry (Day 2) will enable :

- a) building intersections between theoretical frameworks and empirical case studies;
- b) bringing research and activism together;
- c) enable interdisciplinary conversations.

This interface, we envisage, will be productive for generating research synergies, building future collaborations in relation to writing, grant-making, teaching and promote meaningful intercultural experience.

Possible site-visits

Visiting an indigenous community, a museum or a nature reserve in Punta Arenas. Patricia Estivill Viarnés, a tourist guide in Punta Arenas (Magallanes Region), and a long-time activist on environmental issues and indigenous people's culture and worldview, has agreed to assist us in planning the trip and she will be willing to act as our guide.

Planned activities

On the first day, we will have two panels comprising of three presentations each (six in total). In the second half of the day, we will organise a field visit to a neighbouring site, in collaboration with Patricia Estivill Viarnés, a long-time activist on environmental issues and indigenous people's culture, in Punta Arenas. The site will stand as an empirical case study and correspond to our ongoing research discussions.

On the second day, we will have two panels comprising of three presentations and in the second half of the day, we will have sessions devoted to poetry and art, whereby the artists will illustrate the discussions initiated during the course of the workshop.

We will maintain a good balance between presentations and discussions/reflections of our participants.

Contact details

Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, Uppsala University (suruchi.thapar-bjorkert@statsvet.uu.se)

Alicia Noemi Salomone, Universidad de Chile (alicia.salomone@u.uchile.cl)

Rakel Österberg, Stockholm University (rakel.osterberg@su.se)

Enrique Sologuren Insúa, Universidad de Chile (enrique.sologuren@uchile.cl)