

The background of the slide is a close-up, high-angle photograph of numerous corn kernels. The kernels are arranged in a dense, circular, spiral-like pattern, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors of the kernels are varied, including shades of yellow, orange, red, purple, and white, which are distributed throughout the circular arrangement.

Radical Methodologies in Contested Places: Decolonising Practices in Central America & the Caribbean

Regional Encounter/Workshop
Managua, 21-24 February 2018

ORGANIZA:

AULA PROPIA
espacio de reflexión
e intercambio feminista

UCA
UNIVERSIDAD
CENTROAMERICANA

 University of
BRISTOL

APOYADO POR:



International Workshop Award
Antipode Foundation



COLABORA:



Report aim + outline



Aim:

Shaping/sharing reflections from the encounter between activist researchers on “radical methodologies” in the region.

Watch the Encounter videos in our blog:

<https://metodologiasradicales.wordpress.com>

Outline:


- The Encounter
- Participants
- Activities
- Open conference
- The Encounter/Workshop: Themes
- Reflections on Research
- Reflections within context
- Remaining challenges
- Reflections from practices
- Final Thoughts



“Universities never remember, communities never forget,
our role as researchers is to remember”.


Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Managua, 21.02.18

The Encounter: reasons

- 
- A decorative horizontal row of yellow corn cobs, partially visible on the left and right edges of the slide.
- Critique to western-centred paradigm of research
 - Uses and abuses of research: research as colonising
 - Decolonising Methodologies (Tuhiwai Smith) / decolonialism (Cumes)/ decolonizing practices (Cusicanqui)
 - “Epistemologies from the South” (de Sousa Santos)

Central America and the Caribbean as marginalised and read from South America, Mexico or US-Latino framework.

The Encounter: reasons

- 
- A decorative horizontal row of yellow corn cobs, slightly out of focus, spanning the width of the slide above the list.
- From objects of research to researchers and knowledge producers
 - Activism-Research-Activism
 - Sharing experiences of how collectives who are politically engaged are doing research
 - Beyond the critique → How are we doing research? → How do we do research differently?

Participants



- 18 activist groups/collectives doing or attempting to do research: 36 people
- 2 organisers: Aula Propia/UCA & Univ. of Bristol
- Support team: 4 facilitators + 3 social communicators + 2 students + many volunteers
- 3 guest facilitators:
 - Linda Tuhiwai Smith
 - Aura Cumes
 - Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

Participants



18 collectives from: Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Honduras, Colombia.

- Women's groups: sexuality, farmers, violence
- Indigenous (land) struggles: pacific & caribbean
- Disabilities
- Other histories/memories: underwater, post-dictatorship
- State Violence: disappearance, victims, repression
- Uses of new technologies: mobilising youth
- Traditional medicine/ holistic lives


Participants



“Investigación, afrodescendientes, discriminación y violencias” CEIMM-URACCAN (Costa Caribe Sur, Nicaragua)
“Indigenous Peoples Institute” IPI , Univ. Seattle (Seattle, “Ética y política” PolétikaH (Tegucigalpa, Honduras)
“Percepciones de Discapacidad” Colectivos Discapacidad (Seattle, Nicaragua)
“La otra historia del Caribe Sur” Centro Comunitario de Buceo (Costa Caribe Sur, Costa Rica)
“Salud Intercultural” IMTRADEC-URACCAN (Costa Caribe Norte, Nicaragua)
“Desposesión de tierras indígenas de Sutiaba” (León, Nicaragua)
“Otras visiones” UCA, Aula Propia, IMTRADEC (Managua, Costa Caribe Norte, Nicaragua)
“Saberes del Bosque y territorialidad” PRILAKA (Costa Caribe Norte, Nicaragua)
Estados Unidos)

“Experiencia colectivo Tierra y Libertad” Univ Antioquia (Medellin, Colombia)
“Mujeres defensoras de territorios campesinos” CEPROSAF (Ceiba, Honduras)
“Memorias y saberes locales” IILS-UCA (Las Segovias, Nicaragua)
“Intermediarios del dolor” FUNDAR (CDMX, México)
“Sexualidades y Trayectorias políticas en Iximulew” La Cuerda (C. Guatemala, Guatemala)
“Derechos de las mujeres” CEM-H (Tegucigalpa, Honduras)
“Luchas negra en Honduras” OFRANEH (Costa Norte, Honduras)
“Memoria como territorio en disputa” H.I.J.O.S. Guatemala (C. Guatemala, Guatemala)
“Audiovisual para reflexión política” Caracola Subversiva (Managua, Nicaragua)

Activities

- 
- 3 days encounter/workshop co-facilitated with guest facilitators, each day inspired by a keyword: research, radical, methodologies.
 - Open conference with 3 guest speakers “Old & New Colonialisms in Social Research”
 - Last day: visit and food sharing with indigenous community of Sutiaba in León: a history of resistance, dispossession, alliances and betrayals by the state.

Open Conference



Title: 'Old & New Colonialisms in Social Research'

Participants: all those already in the encounter and interested students, activists, feminists, and intellectuals

Content:

- critical views on social research from different political and academic experiences (Bolivia, Guatemala, and New Zealand)
- reflections against/with/in academy as we know it with thoughts, sounds, images, story-telling, and anti and decolonial statements.





The Encounter/Workshop

Themes



- Day 1 – **Research** - Linda Tuhiwai Smith
 - Critical Pedagogies
 - Mediating experiences
- Day 2 – **Radical** - Aura Cumes
 - Ancestral knowledges (saberres)
 - Bodies as political
- Day 3 – **Methodologies** - Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui
 - Disrupted gaze and images
 - Public space interventions



“Sometimes it's dangerous to speak of the present, that's why it's useful to metaphorise the past, fictionalise reality”.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

Managua, 23.02.18

Living word wall: a collective construction



Day 1 – Research

Knowledge

- Understand
- Comprehend
- To know
- Reality

Day 2 – Methodologies

How to do

- Steps
- Paths
- Continuing
- To arrive

Day 3 – Radical

Root

- Change
- Resistance
- Challenge
- Politicize






No-Occidentalcentrista Estructuras No-Mercadocéntrica
Posicionamiento Caso
Relaciones Fondo
Deber Cuestionar
Sobrevivencia Mente
Conocimiento Llegar Politizar No-Discriminación
Buscar Pensar Romper Propio Decidir Otra
Compromiso Racismo Causa Que Memoria
Tropicalizar sistema Parte Orden
Autocrítica Acción Del Repensarse Subvertir Desafía
Transgredir Explotación Opresión Popular Tensión Critica Fuera
Estructural Formas Diferencias Urgencia No-Partriarcas
Obstáculos Cumplimiento Campesinos
Anticapitalista Contracorriente Descolonial



“Sometimes methodology can be a straightjacket that limits our creative capacity/ability”.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui
Managua, 23.02.18

Reflections on Research


- 
- A collective experience/practices/action from which there are learnings that we want to share with others.
 - Translating experiences into communicable learnings: away from writing → new technologies: images, audio, video...
 - Challenging your own views: internal colonialism
 - How to re-value & question your own traditional / community culture
 - Learning as changing: the process must have changed you



“Language is important, what's inside the tongue speaks about our relationships, identities”.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Managua, 21.02.18

Reflections within Context

- 
- Violence – Repression – Militarisation
 - Imaginary of political activism no longer State-centred
 - Denouncing crimes: State & Corporations
 - Decolonial: Denouncing language → Collective learnings for action
 - Constantly adapting & creative → leaving what used to work behind - engaging old & new practices
 - Distance → not possible!
 - What are we creating in the midst of violence?



“Let's think in what we always say about indigenous people as excluded... words like exclusion form part of that language that hides and not reveals, in this case, the continuous dispossession”

Aura Cumes

Managua, 22.02.18

What worked during the encounter?




- Beyond a collection of methods, to develop instead an adaptive how-to-do
- Reversing/Altering order of things: embracing non-linear, messy, disruptive
- **Living word wall** – (re)constructing ideas - revisiting, changing
- **Storytelling** – multilayered – attention to language
- **What pisses you off?** Reflexive exercise bringing together:
 - Emotions
 - Positionality
 - Transformative




“I am worried about thinking of methodologies outside of practice”

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui
Managua, 23.02.18

Remaining challenges

- 
- Demanding a more respectful and dignified way of “research” doesn’t necessarily achieve it.
 - Alliances & collaborations are complicated (power). Different contexts/interests make things more difficult.
 - Knowledge extractivism still experienced and problematic.
 - Easier to demand + propose a different listening and engagement from others with our groups than from us with others.
 - Funding, writing, languages, publishing access, necessary pause, ways of sharing...

Reflections from practice

- 
- Challenging and moving away from traditional frameworks, methods, categories
 - Using them “strategically” for legitimacy
 - New Problems/Tension: how far can you go?

“Being complicit with colonization/colonizers”


“Blunting the edge of the only knife you have”



“How do we generate methodologies that construct political subjects that make political and social transformations”.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Managua, 21.02.18

Reflections from practice



How to step outside of traditional frameworks? 7 weeks later, in April 2018, a series of violent repressive acts by the Nicaraguan government against people protesting took place in that same space where we held our Encounter. We were pushed by reality, again.


The Nicaraguan revolt is ongoing: +300 deaths, unknown number of political prisoners, disappeared, and exiled.

Student movements resistance & push to:

- resignify the slogans + consignas from the revolution
- AND break the old categories of “right”+“left” to understand their realities
- how to create something different: proposals in the midst of violence
- alliances: at national & international levels, also being sucked into same categories

Collective desires, uses of violence, ways of organising, elections, political parties...

Final Thoughts

- 
- How “decolonising” practices and our learnings do not become a **new recipe**.
 - Central America & The Caribbean: violence, repression and militarisation. Implications for working within fear, targets of repression, violence, war context, impunity.
 - **Time + Spaces for reflection** become more relevant.
 - Necessity of intergenerational and multietnic spaces where groups carrying a work that defies traditional frameworks (political, research, pedagogical) can share their questions and learnings.



“Let's ask ourselves why if we are in colonized countries, and our research processes do not contribute to decolonize us... then from what privileges are we doing research?”

Aura Cumes

Managua, 22.02.18

