



Grant NCN „Polonez 1” - strona projektu



Indigenous youth's livelihood strategies in an era of globalization: mobilities, knowledges, and identities

Numer stażu/fellowship number: 2015/19/P/HS202073

Projekt jest realizowany w ramach grantu Polonez 1, przyznanego przez Narodowe Centrum Nauki (UMO-2015/19/P/HS202073).

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The project is conducted in the frames of Polonez 1 grant awarded by National Science Centre, Poland (UMO-2015/19/P/HS202073).

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 665778.

Więcej informacji o projekcie można znaleźć w zakładkach po lewej stronie (idea projektu, wydarzenia, publikacje, teren, wykonawcy, kontakt).
More information about the project can be found in the tabs on the left (project's idea, events, publications, fieldsites, researchers, contact).

Idea projektu/Project idea

Indigenous youth's livelihood strategies in an era of globalization: mobilities, knowledges, and identities

A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Research Project

This project aims to investigate indigenous youth's lifeworlds in an era of economic and cultural globalization. Whereas it is well-established that the invention of youth as a life-stage and a social group was part of industrial modernity, the lived experiences, self-understandings, and ways of relating to the world of contemporary indigenous groups in Latin America are not well-known. The aim of this project is to examine how indigenous youth devise diverse livelihood strategies and envision a future for

themselves within and outside their rural communities in the context of their increasing integration into transnational economies.

Indigenous livelihoods and identities have been shaped by a history of colonialism, subordination to the dominant national culture and incorporation into global markets. Throughout Latin America, indigenous communities were isolated from each other in the process of subordination to the nation-state. Being in insulated places allowed indigenous peoples to maintain their native languages, ontologies, epistemologies, and forms of life rooted in the use of local natural resources. We know that indigenous peoples have been the custodians of biodiversity in Latin America and that the preservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity are mutually dependent. Indigenous forms of knowing and relating to the environment have allowed the preservation of local ecosystems and the continuous re-creation of agricultural practices. Struggles for territory, to regain lost lands, and to maintain their language and their right to know in diverse ways, that is struggles for cultural transmission, remain central features of contemporary indigenous politics and identifications. Drawing on long lasting engagements with indigenous peoples in Mexico and Ecuador, we recognize the eco-metaphysical truth of their beliefs, rituals, values and practices, and we take the political, ethical, and methodological stance of approaching research as a process of thinking with indigenous youth, and their families and communities; that is, a process of mutual learning.

Contemporary processes of economic, political and cultural globalization have unsettled depictions of indigenous peoples as rooted in place and culturally stuck to themselves. Neoliberal globalization has set young generations on the move in search of life and labor opportunities. Indigenous youth migrate to the cities and transnationally in search of labor, accessing globalized consumption practices and styles, transcultural knowledges, and reconfiguring sociability patterns and identities. The mobility of indigenous youth, the diversification of their livelihood strategies, and their transcultural experiences pose critical challenges to conceptions of indigeneity as well as to the inter-generational re-creation of agro-ecological knowledge that has shaped histories of sustainable socio-ecological relations. Indigenous youth have become political and economic actors in their communities thus altering local power structures in the hands of elders. In this historical context marked by a global environmental crisis, mass unemployment, deepening inequalities, failed livelihoods, exclusionary politics and violence, this project poses critical questions for the future: Who is going to preserve native crops varieties and agro-ecological knowledge adapted to particular locales for long periods of time if indigenous youth seek economic opportunities beyond traditional forms of production to improve their living conditions? How are indigenous youth envisioning a future for themselves and their communities and on what grounds of memory and experience are they devising diverse livelihood strategies? How are indigenous youth positioned in relation to the transmission and use of the land in their communities?

Ethnographic studies of indigenous communities, classic or otherwise, have rarely incorporated youth as research participants. That is, indigenous youth's experiences, self-understandings, knowledges and life projects are unknown because they have not been looked for. This research project situates youth at the center of the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of contemporary indigenous communities. It seeks to investigate indigenous youth's livelihood strategies in relation to their knowledges and identities in an era of globalization. Of crucial importance is the aim of elucidating the underlying historical forces at play in the recent surge in adolescent suicide and youth's chronic illness and disability, making them unable to work, in indigenous communities

that are in the process of abandoning subsistence livelihoods. We seek to make this research relevant to support the continuation of life and the regeneration of relations with humans and with the world. Constructing a comparative research design with youth in Mexico and Ecuador, from indigenous communities marked by different yet convergent historical trajectories, we seek to contribute to the understanding of the role youth have in the dynamic process of reproducing and transforming cultural memories, knowledge and identity, as well as in the struggle for sustainable forms of life and the transformation of unjust social relations.

The project is conducted by Dr. Carpena-Méndez (Oregon State University, USA) with the collaboration of Dr. Wierucka (University of Gdansk, Poland) from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2018. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 665778. The project is conducted within the frame of of Polonez 1 grant awarded by National Science Centre, Poland (UMO-2015/19/P/HS202073).



Wydarzenia/events

(for English version scroll down)

Projekt trwa od 1 stycznia 2017 do 18 lipca 2020.

Realizacja poszczególnych zadań projektowych:

Kwiecień 2017:

Udział w międzynarodowej konferencji Latin American Studies Association w Limie (Peru): organizacja panelu *Learning and Dialogue of Knowledges in Indigenous and Peasant Struggles for Livelihood* i czynny w nim udział wystąpienia:

Josefa Carpena Mendez, *Indigenous Pedagogies and the Intergenerational Re-creation of Knowledge in Migrant-Sending Communities in Mexico* ([abstrakt](#))

Aleksandra Wierucka, *Re-creation of Traditional Knowledge Among the Huaorani of Eastern Ecuador* ([abstrakt](#))

Maj-czerwiec 2017:

Badania terenowe w Ekwadorze, wśród migrujących do miast grup młodzieży Huaorani; podczas badań zostało przeprowadzonych ponad 50 wywiadów z młodymi ludźmi z kilkunastu osad. Podczas tygodni spędzonych wśród Indian Huaorani zebrane zostały dane dotyczące mobilności młodych ludzi oraz ich planów na przyszłość.

Kwiecień-maj 2017

Organizacja panelu “Agricultura Familiar, Afro-indígena y Campesina en América Latina desde el Dialogo de Saberes”, Latin American Studies Association, Lima, Peru, April 29-May 1, 2017. (Invited Workshop, FARS Section, co-organized with Tirso Gonzales, PRATEC, Peru).

Project lasts since January 1st 2017 till July 18th 2020.

Implementation of project tasks:

April 2017:

Participation in international scientific conference organized by Latin American Studies Association in Lima, Peru: panel organization (*Learning and Dialogue of Knowledges in Indigenous and Peasant Struggles for Livelihood*) and presentation of original papers:

Josefa Carpena Mendez, *Indigenous Pedagogies and the Intergenerational Re-creation of Knowledge in Migrant-Sending Communities in Mexico* ([abstract](#))

Aleksandra Wierucka, *Re-creation of Traditional Knowledge Among the Huaorani of Eastern Ecuador* ([abstract](#))

May-June

2017:

Fieldwork in one of the project sites, in Eastern Ecuador between Huaorani youth migrating to cities. During fieldwork over 50 interviews with young people living in several settlements were conducted. Weeks spent with Huaorani people yielded data regarding young Huaorani mobility as well as their plans for future.

April-May 2017

Panel organization “Agricultura Familiar, Afro-indígena y Campesina en América Latina desde el Dialogo de Saberes”, Latin American Studies Association, Lima, Peru, April 29-May 1, 2017. (Invited Workshop, FARS Section, co-organized with Tirso Gonzales, PRATEC, Peru).



Publikacje/Publication

W projekcie planowana jest publikacja artykułów naukowych oraz dwóch książek – będziemy na bieżąco o nich informować.

Scientific articles and books will be published during the project – information about them will be posted here.



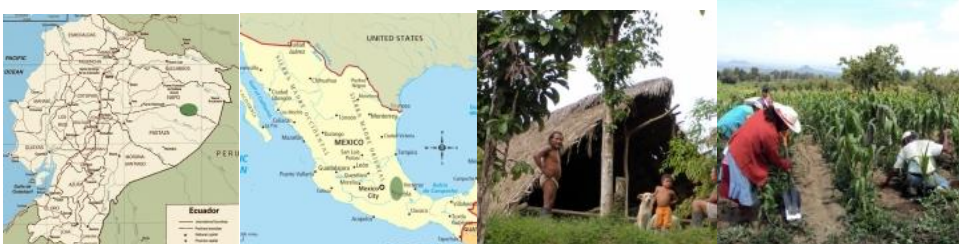
Teren/ Fieldsites

Nahua youth from farming communities in Mexico

Neoliberal globalization has eroded local subsistence economies and intensified human mobility across borders, incorporating non-traditional actors such as children and youth as well as new sending areas in the global South and new destinations in both the global South and North America and Europe. In the context of economic and agrarian restructuring, Mexican indigenous farming communities without previous experience in transnational migration were rapidly incorporated into transnational migratory circuits at the end of the 1990s. Children and young people have been central actors in these new migration processes. In Nahua communities, forms of everyday life have been recently disrupted by rapid processes of youth out-migration to the USA in search of labor and life opportunities. Nahua youth in their teens and early twenties, who had spent their childhood helping their families in corn and beans seasonal farming, took the lead in circular transnational migration. In this fieldsite we attend to the specificity of the reconfiguration of indigenous practices of relatedness in transnational migratory contexts through the experiences and agency of children and youth.

Huaorani youth from communities in Ecuador

Many changes have been introduced to Huaorani everyday life since their full contact with Western culture in 1958. Successive generations gain different experiences as they grow up in changed reality. Young Huaorani are exercising many opportunities as well as threats that were not known to their parents and grandparents. Many of them leave their settlements in order to gain better education or job that will enable them to achieve new goals. Their indigenous knowledge and practices are being challenged as they try to keep their identity while at the same time to adjust to requirements in the city. In this fieldsite we attend to specify whether some balance in these challenges can be achieved. Again, the reconfiguration of indigenous practices through the experiences of youth will be the main focus.



Wykonawcy/Researchers

Principal Investigator:

Fina Carpena-Méndez has a doctoral degree in Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research deals with neoliberal globalization and transnational migration as they are experienced and simultaneously re-shaped by children and young people. She has worked on the transnational circulation and hyper-mobility of Latin American migrant children and their families in Celtic Tiger Ireland. Carpena-Méndez is conducting multi-temporal ethnographic research on Mexican rural livelihoods and economic restructuring, new migrant-sending rural communities, indigenous adolescents and youth's circular migration to urban areas in the U.S. and return migration to rural Mexico, transnational families and the children left behind. Her research produced in collaboration with indigenous migrant youth in Mexico and the U.S. offers critical opportunities for comparative perspectives on youth, knowledge and cultural identities in the context of rapid socio-economic transformations. Dr Carpena-Méndez had been a visiting scholar at the Center for US-Mexican Studies and the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego, University College Cork in Ireland, and has taught at Oregon State University. Her publications include a co-authored book, "Childhood and Migration in Europe" (Ashgate 2011), and a co-edited book, "Transnational Migration and Childhood" (Routledge 2013). She is Chair of the Food, Agriculture and Rural Studies Section of the Latin American Studies Association.

Scientific partner:

Aleksandra Wierucka has a doctoral degree from the University of Gdańsk and works as an anthropologist in Department for Cultural Studies. Her research deals with traditional cultures of the Amazon and traditional Amazonian shamanism as well as development perspectives of indigenous youth. She conducts her research in Ecuador, Poland and Russia (Buryatia). Dr Wierucka has been a visiting scholar in Riga Stradins University (Anthropology Department). Her publications include a monograph "Huaorani of the Western Snippet" (Palgrave 2015) and four co-edited books, as well as numerous articles. Dr Wierucka is a member of American Anthropological Association, Latin American Studies Association, Association for Cultural Studies and Polish Society for Cultural Studies.



Kontakt/Contact

Kontakt/Contact:

Projekt jest realizowany na Wydziale Filologicznym (Instytut Badań nad Kulturą, Katedra Kulturoznawstwa)

Project is hosted by the Faculty of Languages (Institute of Cultural Research, Department for Cultural Studies)

**Katedra Kulturoznawstwa
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