

Living in times of climate change

Weather-related understandings, realities, and entanglements among Guarani people in the Bolivian Chaco

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Abstract

Since climate change became an issue of public concern worldwide, the weather has attracted increasing attention and come to stand as a common ground for joint action between Indigenous people and governmental and non-governmental actors in the Bolivian Chaco. Despite becoming a common cause, the management of weather through mitigation and adaptation strategies takes place under ontological differences and power imbalances. Accordingly, it poses problems of sidelining non-modernist comprehensions, conceptualizations, and enactments of what is known as weather, and of displacing indigenous world-making practices on behalf of climate resilience. These problems have been latent even during the Morales Government, despite being inspired by the ideals of de-colonization and *Vivir Bien*. Based on eleven months of fieldwork conducted in two Guarani communities between 2015 and 2016, this thesis explores Guarani weather-related reality on “its own terms,” and considers its entanglement and power interplay with the State, modernity, and climate change issues during what might be the last period of the Morales’ administration.

Drawing inspiration from research, working under the umbrella of the so-called “ontological turn” in anthropology, this thesis takes difference seriously, moves away from dominant assumptions about weather and climate, and engages in a relational perspective that looks at the complex and dynamic relationships between people and their surroundings and at the interconnection of the spheres of social life. Inspired by Latin American studies of coloniality and modernity, this study also draws attention to oppressive aspects and power interplays that shape indigenous lifeworlds and world-makings. By approaching the particularities and radical differences of Guarani people’s lived experiences, understandings, practices, and social relations concerned with “weather,” this dissertation contributes to bringing the radical alterity that the dominant climate reality eclipses to the fore. While, by addressing the partial connections, entanglement, and power interplays of local “weather” issues with the *Karai* world and with the dominant context of climate action, this dissertation shows how Guarani reality *becomes* articulated with the *Karai* and is accordingly enacted under broader and coercive socio-political conditions that discourage the emergence or strengthening of multiple/alternative worlds.

Keywords:

weather, climate change, entanglement, ontology, coloniality, hybridity, modernity, non-human agents, agriculture, partial connection, radical difference, Guarani people, Bolivia