Kimapury Reflections: Values and Research Agendas in Amazonian Indigenous Research Relations

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Abstract

This chapter addresses the role of a "northern" researcher carrying out research with Amazonian Indigenous peoples. Reflecting on my long research experiences in the Purus River region, the states of Acre and Amazonas, Brazil, and my co-living and co-knowing with the Apurinã and Manchineri, I ask how Indigenous sovereignty and power can be accommodated with North-South relations. Indeed, can Indigenous agendas be combined with academic research at all? I discuss the relationships, impacts, and interactions in research. Then I analyze the local values and cultural protocols that have been taught to me very practically, materially, and immaterially not only during my fieldwork, but also in the longer research process. I then address the "path method" I learned as a way to produce knowledge and to contemplate changing situations. The researcher's relations and personal experiences are thus fundamental, even if the methodological practices can also be guided by studying Indigenous research methodologies. My research points to my constant attention to Indigenous agendas and their importance in the multiple relations of actors.

Keywords

research agenda – Amazonia – values – cultural protocols – path method

1 Introduction

"How will this benefit the community?" I soon heard this question in 2003 in the Brazilian Amazonia, where I had been carrying out research with different Indigenous communities. Amazonian Indigenous societies are conscious that they have been studied extensively, far more than the other local populations,

and that especially anthropologists have come to their territories, completed their theses and dissertations, yet hardly informed their 'informants' about the research process and its results. However, in the Southwestern Amazonia, where I have worked in the state of Acre, and in the Central Purus region in the state of Amazonas, also lived many non-Indigenous people, who were called *txai* (McCallum 1997; Virtanen 2014). This is originally a Panoan word for a brother-in-law. Even if it is a term for males, it has become a word used by different Indigenous groups for both women and men who had become trusted persons and contributed to the transformation in the community. These included those working in the government, Indigenist organizations and so forth, who had built long-term reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples. Some of them have had an elemental role in the demarcation of Indigenous territories in the 1980s and 1990s, and thus transformed the Indigenous histories. Especially by their co-living in the communities and becoming part of their social relations, these *txai*s had changed themselves as persons, as much as their relations with the Indigenous societies had changed the life in the communities. In that context, when asking for the first time about the benefit of my research to the community, the scale of possible benefits seemed like an impossible objective. I was not Brazilian, I was at the initial stage of my research, and still learning both Portuguese, Indigenous languages, and regional history. My knowledge of the Brazilian state structures was also quite minimal, even if I had in fact worked for the Brazilian state for two years.[1] How could I bring a change and transformation to the community as just a PhD student in Latin American studies? That question affected me strongly, and since then I aimed at doing research that could also be relevant for the communities, rather than merely covering gaps in previous research.

In academia, Indigenous scholars have been vocal about what is the relevance of research for Indigenous societies. Research can be relevant for a researcher and academic institutions, but not necessarily for Indigenous societies or the local community. Indigenous scholars in different parts of the world have asked whose interests does the research serve? Who has set the objectives of the research? How will the research results be disseminated and to whom? The issue of the purpose of research and its motivations, relevance, and how one can give back have been discussed in different Indigenous contexts (e.g. Bishop 1998; Kovach 2009, 112–115; Kuokkanen 2008; Kwaymullina 2016; Porsanger 2004; Smith 1999/2012). Furthermore, the roles of so-called outsiders or non-Indigenous researchers have been debated. Opinions differ from the perspective that considers that Indigenous research should only be for Indigenous scholars (Rigney 1999; Smith 1999/2012; Foley 2003; Wilson 2008) to those who recognize the valuable roles and forms of contribution that researchers from diverse

backgrounds can have, such as advocacy, cultural translations, and many other forms of interactions leading to community transformation (e.g. Boekraad 2016; Jones & Jenkins 2008; Kwame 2017; Olsen 2016; Sylvester et al. 2020). Therefore, in this chapter, I am interested in looking at Indigenous sovereignty and power in research, and how Indigenous research methodologies can advance more relevant, impactful, and transformational research for local communities. I ask can Amazonian Indigenous agendas be combined with academic research at all?

In this chapter, I reflect on my own journey as a researcher, and thus aim at contributing to the discussion on the researcher's role, impact, and relations when working with Indigenous communities. I am a non-Indigenous researcher, and I am grateful to my Apurinã and Manchineri teachers for our co-learning. In Southwestern Amazonia I have also learned from the Huni Kuin (Kaxinawa) and Yawanawa, whose lands I have also visited, as well as from encounters in local educational and political events with other Indigenous peoples. I have also worked for some time with several Sámi scholars who are geographically closest to me.

Research has taken me to different countries for long periods, but my closest relations are in Central Finland, where I have grown up in forested countryside. I have training in Latin American studies, anthropology, and religious studies, and I have contributed to various cross-disciplinary projects internationally that have also included archaeology and linguistics. I currently carry out research and teach in the Indigenous studies programme at the University of Helsinki, which is "my" North. This program works towards epistemic justices and the co-creation of knowledge. Its research agendas combine personal motivation, some are guided by available funding, but they substantially include Indigenous agendas.

The South in my research context is in fact the centre for my Indigenous research collaborators. Arawakan-speaking Apurinã (Pupỹkary) and Manchineri (Yine) live in the Purus River region in the states of Acre and Amazonas, Brazil, and they consider their lands to be the centre of the world. The former number some 8,000 persons, mostly in the state of Amazonas, while there are approximately 1,000 Manchineri in the state of Acre. The Manchineri belong to the Yine people, and a substantial part of the Yine also live in Peru. In Brazil, the Manchineri live on the Mamoadate reserve and its various settlements by the Yaco River, the River Acre reserves, as well as in urban areas. The Apurinã live in over 20 demarcated territories, which have very different socio-ecological environments, as well as in urban centres. My first research dealt with Indigenous youths, and my subsequent research work has dealt with Indigenous politics, Indigenous history, language revitalization, and protection of the biocultural landscape and heritage. Overall, my methodological choices

have been co-learning through ethnography, including conversational types of interviews, storytelling, participant observation, walks, and the production of visual materials (video recordings and photographs). I first collaborated with the Manchineri and later more with the Apurinã, but my contacts with both are still frequent.[2]

The Upper and Central Purus River in Southwestern Amazonia has been transformed by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Its biocultural landscapes manifest and materialize human history, knowledge, and ways of being. The Amazonian forests are shaped by long-term human-environment interactions, and the early human actions and processes of domestication have had an impact on the biodiversity of the Amazon (e.g. Pärssinen et al. 2020; Watling et al. 2015). Southwestern Amazonia contains monumental earthworks: numerous precolonial ceremonial sites and circular villages, both with carefully designed road structures (Saunaluoma et al. 2018; Virtanen & Saunaluoma 2017). This region has become one of my homes and I feel deeply connected to its land and peoples.

In the following section, I review the discussions on power and relationships in Indigenous research, comparing the contexts in the North and South, and then address my own research experiences in the Purus River, reflecting on the core values recognized in Indigenous research methodologies, namely relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocal relations, and how these "four Rs" are integrated into my Amazonian Indigenous research. I then discuss and present the "path method" that has allowed not only a more horizontal and inclusive research practice, but also a continued reflection and recognition of different research agendas. Finally, I look at the significance of the participants' role in the research process, and how both human and other-than-human actors restrict and open space for collective action and endeavour, and thus for a truly Indigenous agenda.

2   Relations (Un)Built in the Research Process

The history of academic research has been done by "colonial eyes" as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012, 444) puts it, showing a fascination with otherness and the commodification of Indigenous knowledges. These knowledges can be of interest to a wide range of actors, and there have been many cases of its misappropriation and misuse. In academia, today there are official Codes of Conduct providing tools for ethical research in different disciplines. They can protect Indigenous communities and their knowledges from exploitation, but Indigenous communities have also designed their own ethical guidelines for

research. Among others, *Te Ara Tika* (2010), guidelines for Māori research ethics, pay attention to relations and how they are built into the process, which is referred to as *Whakapapa*. *Whakapapa* also involves the future development of such relations. *Te ara Tika* identifies three levels of research: Kaupapa Maori, Maori centred, and mainstream. In Maori research, space is given for interaction and collaboration, but always in specific terms; so-called mainstream level also draws upon the local assessment and the local perspective.

Besides these Indigenous research ethical guidelines developed in different places, the literature on Indigenous Research methodologies has addressed requirements for good research practice where Indigenous peoples are concerned. Several Indigenous researchers have underlined certain values and issues when doing research in Indigenous societies. Different Indigenous peoples have different values, but at the core have been *relevance, responsibility, respect, and reciprocal relations*. Among others, these were mentioned by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) in the area of Education Sciences. Other issues have also been mentioned, such as honesty, caring, determination, inter-relatedness, kindness, sharing, trust, and giving back (see e.g. Bishop 1998; Hoffman 2013; Kuokkanen 2000; Porsanger 2004; Steinhauer 2002; Weber-Pillwax 1999, 2001; see Chapter 8).

The codes of conduct in Indigenous communities are largely set by oral traditions, as Willie Ermine (2007, 195) has noted. These can point to the boundaries, limits, and sacred spaces of clans, families, among other things, that touch upon who people are as humans, and their future aspirations (Ermine 2007, 195–202). In research they can become engaged as important methodological and ethical tools. For Ermine, ethical space in research refers to engagement and dialogue in which cultural differences are recognized, rather than legal instruments applied as universal tools. This can facilitate researchers in thinking critically how to relate with participants in a study.

At the same time, it should be recognized that there is already a long history of decolonial and inclusive research traditions that work towards social, epistemological, and environmental justice, among other things. These can be among the reasons for researchers from the North to do research in Indigenous communities far from their own lands. It has been noted that epistemic plurality is important for all humanity (e.g. Fricker 2007), and indeed Indigenous peoples form a great part of the world's socio-cultural diversity and the lands managed by them contribute to the planet's ecosystems. Furthermore, in different disciplines ethical engagement and making a difference to the communities is at the core of the research, such as in engaged anthropology (e.g. Low & Merry 2010; Sillitoe 2015), and community archaeology (e.g. Ferguson & Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006; McAnany 2016; Smith 2005).

Even if universities have recently opened up spaces for Indigenous knowledge (see e.g. Sumida Huaman & Brayboy 2017; see Chapter 1), deep structural power asymmetries between different knowledges and educational views still exist. Furthermore, even if Indigenous Studies programmes exist in Latin America and Indigenous peoples have power and a say in research about them, the situations are very different between the Global South and the Global North. The Sámi have participated in higher education for a longer time and have contributed to its Indigenization. Many Sámi scholars have also become successful in obtaining research funding and have thus led research projects. The same goes for Canada, the U.S.A., Australia, and New Zealand. In the Global South, such as in Amazonia, where Indigenous intellectuals and elders have produced and shared their knowledge for thousands of years, economically and educationally their situations are different. Yet, the linguistic, biological, and cultural diversity in their lands is exceptional, and at the same time severely endangered. Several Amazonian Indigenous peoples are counting on project funding and constructive collaborations to ensure a more robust and protected future. Indigenous peoples in the South have numerous needs for new knowledge, and the world's ecological situation, among other things, calls for a research in which different values, ideas of knowledge, and being are better understood. Besides their lands, many Indigenous peoples in the Amazon have lost their language, songs, stories, and environmental knowledge, and being able to participate in higher education is considered to be a way to bring this vital heritage and its riches back. It is in fact quite a recent phenomenon that Indigenous people are participating in postgraduate education in Brazil (Apurinã & Virtanen 2020).

In the context of the Global South, the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can clearly be recognized (Rigney 1999; Smith 1999/2012; Wilson 2008), but different researchers are needed to change the course of power relations and the planetary situation (see e.g. Virtanen et al 2020). In this effort, the question of *how* to do research and Indigenous sovereignty become primary. An Australian aboriginal scholar, Ambelin Kwaymullina (2016, 442), has addressed the debates on the roles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and notes: "acknowledging sovereignty changes the conversation from considering whether to engage respectfully with Indigenous peoples to a meaningful exploration of how, and more broadly, of the ways in which we all might live together so as to sustain the land upon which all depend for survival".

Nevertheless, as Kwaymullina (2016) points out, where respectful relations with Indigenous peoples are concerned, the question is not only *how* research should be carried out, but *whether* research should be carried out at all. There are also issues that people do not wish to be addressed. In Amazonia, this is the

case both with Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. Here the elders have guided many Indigenous teachers who in their training courses are asked to investigate communal topics for their course assignments. My Manchineri colleague, for example, was told not to study powerful traditional songs, as they could only be sung and spoken in certain restricted ritual spaces. Certain knowledge gaps should thus not be filled, because silence can be a means to protect Indigenous societies. On the other hand, some research topics require Indigenous participation if they are to be addressed properly. Kwaymullina (2016, 441) notes:

> Further, any argument that there are not enough Indigenous experts in a particular field ignores the vast body of Indigenous knowledge held by Indigenous peoples outside of the academy, including by the Elders. To suggest that only those Indigenous people trained in a Western knowledge discipline can speak to that discipline is to repeat past patterns of positioning Indigenous peoples as native informants rather than as sovereign peoples with our own knowledge systems which produce knowledges as valid as those of the West. Silence does not always exist to be filled by non-Indigenous scholars – or at least, not by non-Indigenous scholars alone.

Many of the Indigenous authors who have addressed the importance of limits, values, and cultural protocols in research have come from North America, Aotearoa (New Zealand), as well as from Sápmi, while Amazonian Indigenous thinkers have addressed more the power asymmetries, prejudice, and ignorance that exist in society and academia (Apurinã 2017, 2019; Kopenawa & Albert 2010; Santos 2013; see also Tapia 2014). Francisco Apurinã (2017, 501), who is one of the rare Indigenous persons to hold a doctoral degree[3] in Brazil, reminds us that in interactions of different people in research it is important "to know the difference, to understand the difference, and to learn with difference".

In my experience, cultural protocols and *how* research should be carried out are shown in interactions with Amazonian Indigenous societies, if one is open to recognize them. In Amazonian Indigenous communities where I have worked these protocols were taught while living and co-learning, and gradually they became a more robust part of my research practice. Relations are established in Amazonia in the context of local values and cultural protocols, and that requires experimental learning and shared paths. In the following section I will reflect on my own experiences as well as the dialogues I had with the Apurinã and Manchineri, from different places and of different ages, in my role as a researcher.[4]

**3   The Relevance of Research in the Indigenous Territories in the
         Purus River**

In my research context, non-Indigenous people are considered a social cate-
gory of its own (*payri* in Manchineri*, kariwa* in Apurinã), yet in the Amazon, as
well as in many other research contexts, some researchers form relations, can
become more related to the people, and can even be addressed by kin terms
through relational practices. Among other things, besides being *kariwa* for the
Apurinã, the Apurinã name, Iriana, given to me now places me in certain social
relations.

Bruce Albert, an anthropologist who has worked closely with the Yanomami
and Davi Kopenawa, has also noted that an ethnographer, if eventually gaining
the trust of the people, is evaluated on the basis of whether s/he is useful in
mediating between different worlds (Kopenawa & Albert 2010, 570). For the
community, it is crucial to have persons who know how to get into contact with
state offices, to open their doors, or introduce new skills and capacities that at
the local level people would not otherwise have access to. I feel I have many
roles in the Amazonian communities where I have worked, which vary from
intermediator to be taken into kin relations.

I first started working with the Arawakan-speaking Manchineri people, as
they invited me to be part of their project that aimed at cultural exchange with
their Yine relatives, whose territories were on the Peruvian side of the border.
My engagement involved a series of events that initially led me to the state of
Acre, one of the reasons being a new archaeological project of the University
of Helsinki together with the Brazilian universities, UFAC and UFPA.[5] My aim
was to understand how Indigenous youthhood navigated between their vil-
lages and urban areas, and what their present and future aspirations were. I
had lived in Acre for some time, and had become familiar with the Indigenous
youth movement and many Indigenous families living in the urban neighbour-
hoods. The youths wanted to tell their stories and struggles to the world, and
this shaped the content of my doctoral dissertation (Virtanen 2012). I decided
not to visit the Indigenous reserves, as I thought I would be a burden to the
people in the villages. However, Indigenous teachers who came to the training
course told me that I should visit the territories to gain a wider perspective on
Indigenous youth. At the same time a Manchineri[6] spokesperson acting in the
city considered me a potential actor for their new association and the contacts
they wanted to establish both nationally and internationally. Eventually, we
managed to arrange two different fundings for the Manchineri organization
that allowed a cultural exchange and travels between the Yine in Brazil (Man-
chineri) and Peru.[7]

My first official research permit was given for the Manchineri Indigenous territory, Mamoadate, and the second for both Manchineri and Apurinã. The research permits were issued by the Brazilian state, with the official approval of the community. The official research permit acquiring process gave me good knowledge about the required administrative processes. For the community, however, the official papers were not considered important, as approval is given by the community in the initial community meeting in which the researcher presents the research project idea, and its preliminary design. But even before that meeting, co-producing of knowledge can take place, as the researcher often meets with Indigenous leaders, as well as other actors, who can give their ideas and suggestions concerning the research aims and methods. Once the research takes place in the field, the approval is in fact re-given or withdrawn during each visit.

Following Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 173), decolonizing research principles involve reflecting on the relevance of the research with local Indigenous research interlocutors, and I learnt that research can be impactful at various levels. Studies in collaborative and engaged anthropology (Low & Merry 2010) note that social impacts can be made in various ways, transformations can also come through social critique and theory. Nils Oskal (2008) also notes a scientific-theoretical approach that includes Indigenous epistemologies is essential for Indigenous futures. In the context of Amazonian Indigenous societies' research, the key motivation of many anthropologists has been the communication and process of equivocation between different ontological systems (e.g. Viveiros de Castro 2012). My research interlocutors, however, were not so interested in academic debates.

The dialogues with the Manchineri and Apurinã communities revealed that there were urgent questions and challenges they wished to address with researchers. Among other things, both communities desired to have teaching materials in their own languages that could be used in schools. Such materials were lacking, as the contents of the teaching material received from the state were in many ways distant from the local contexts. With the Manchineri, who already had many trained teachers working in the village, we looked for funding, and co-produced a school book about Manchineri history (*Tsrunni Manxinerune hinkakle pirana*). With a new funding obtained we organized workshops with elders and Manchineri teachers, and put together a complied edition of oral histories.[8] The book is now used in Manchineri schools, and most of it is in the Manchineri language.

In the case of the Apurinã, only a few communities speak their Indigenous language, and therefore the revitalization of the language was one of the priorities that the Apurinã leaders talked about in their communities. As I had

also met with a Brazilian linguist, Sidney Facundes, working on the Apurinã and Arawakan languages, and who had already drafted preliminary teaching materials for Apurinã teachers and schools, we decided together that the primary topics of our collaboration would become the community planning and organizing of language workshops. This has involved co-preparing and co-producing teaching materials with Apurinã teachers and elders and it became one of the concrete ways of contributing to and giving back to the communities. The impact for the Apurinã society at large also came through capacity building. In the preparation of teaching materials and community language workshops, Indigenous leadership was essential, even if the work was funded by my university and other funders.[9] The books include, among other things, *Amu Asãkirewata Pupỹkary Sãkire!* (Let's speak Apurinã) and *Iũkatsupary Apaiaũkiku* (Writing in Apurinã), and my role in the publications has been to ensure that Apurinã perspectives and knowledge-making become integrated into the co-work, as well as taking care of the production phase.

As the communities live far from urban centres, and only a few have a satellite telephone connection, local Indigenous and pro-Indian organizations have acted as crucial intermediators in establishing agendas. Our research agendas thus had elements from different motivations. The language revitalization has brought a new valuation towards Pupỹkary sãkire (Apurinã language), and today it has become more visible and pronounced by the Apurinã, among other groups, in social media and WhatsApp groups.

My own research methods have greatly altered since my first fieldtrip, when among other things, my interviews were rather structured. Later, they became more conversational, opening up a space for deeper thoughts and new directions that the research interlocutors considered essential to contemplate, either individually or collectively. Conversations have continued in various contexts and we have come to co-analyze the situations and earlier discussions that we shared. Consequently, the community raised the topics of their biocultural lands, more-than-human perspectives, the efforts of their leaders to affect policy-making, land protection, traditional knowledge, and schooling, all themes which we become to address together. Some research topics were also motivated by academic debates, while others were driven by research collaborators' wishes to address urgently some issues.[10] My research agenda has been also dictated by cross-disciplinary research projects and invitations to write for specific edited volumes and special issues. My research agendas varied in emphasis, and combined various motivations, but throughout I wanted my work to be relevant to the community, and to show reciprocity, respect, and responsibility.

4 Reciprocal Relations in Amazonian Lifeworlds

Where Amazonian ideas of being are concerned, it is typical that subjects come to exist through beings. Consequently, reciprocity is a crucial value in Amazonian lifeworlds at the ontological level, as it contributes to the closer relationality of beings. Relationality, and returns to the community, among other things, are a crucial part of kin-making. As a person who is not from an Amazonian Indigenous community, learning what reciprocity means at the local level requires some time in experiencing it through communal relationships. Reciprocity for one thing is linked to generosity, and, for instance, good leaders are known for their generosity. Overall, much weight is placed on human interaction and social relations, and this is also expected from researchers (see Conklin 2010).

Furthermore, in very practical terms, materially and immaterially, reciprocity with my research interlocutors has meant exchanging knowledge and information of different kinds. People in distant villages were often interested in any new information dealing with their territories, including new legal issues, project funding, educational opportunities, but also just knowledge of my own country. Material contributions varied from fishing nets to generators, which were required in the community, as well as during our research and capacity-building workshops. Extra food and ammunition were transported from urban areas, and extra bullets were welcomed by hunters. Economically, the researcher had more power, but at the same time researchers were vulnerable and dependent on the local forest dwellers with their rich place-based knowledge. Furthermore, during my first field trips, I learned how social relations become materialized in exchange of objects, foods, and medicine, but also constant borrowing of different objects when needed. In the beginning, I was bothered that my sandals disappeared from the doors of the houses where I had been hosted. Over the years I became grateful that they were useful to someone and were at hand when needed. Meantime, I was grateful for the hospitality, healing, and different knowledges I have been privileged to receive in Amazonia.

Reciprocity has also meant travelling back to the community with my results and analyses, acting as a mediator for governmental agencies, or being involved in nongovernmental agencies' educational and environmental protection projects taking place along the Purus River. Returning the data and results thus happened in different forms and is an elemental part of maintaining my research relationships. Besides academic publications and more popularized communications discussing the topics that I saw to be relevant

for the communities, dissemination to non-academic audiences and actual co-production of knowledge with them are for me part of the research process.

Collaborative, participative, and community-based research methodologies have become popular in academia and can be considered a reciprocal way of doing research. However, being involved in the community in all its different phases has to be reflected on critically in Indigenous communities, especially in terms of distance and time. Most of the communities I have worked with live in forest areas, at a few days' distance from the closest place allowing a telephone or internet communication. Although inspired by collaborative and community-based research methods, aiming at co-formulating the objectives of the research, co-producing data, co-analyzing, and co-disseminating at a long-distance can be challenging (see Ritchie et al. 2013). Thinking that research should be reciprocal at the collective level is indeed challenging on a long-term scale, and it requires well-planned means that allow for communication with the whole community. In recent years, with the arrival of mobile phones, better internet connections, and the increasing use of social media, when visiting smaller municipalities, even those who live far from Internet connections would find a way to enter into contact with me (and me with them). However, the older people were not so familiar with new social media applications and needed someone to be their intermediator.

Researchers have recently also noted that research activities that adopt a participative approach can take a considerable amount of time away from elemental everyday tasks and the economic activities of communities, thus impacting them negatively. Therefore, research should find a suitable time in the communities' timelines (see Löf & Stinnerbom 2016). Reflecting on the researchers' results also requires its own time.

Over the last few years, fortunately some of the persons who participated in my studies were able to make their dreams come true and enter higher education, and become researchers themselves. Together we have written co-authored articles about Indigenous education and histories. With some Manchineri and Apurinã colleagues, I have moreover co-presented papers in conferences, which has been just one step in our analytical thinking, and could be described as a para-site (Marcus 2012) to my fieldwork sites. These "para-sites" become places for continued production of knowledge. Nevertheless, they depend on careful translations, time, and many other issues that are not easily solved. Even if there was funding, some of research partners' travels were cancelled because we did not manage to draw up travel documents in time and because of overlapping events in the communities.

Overall, interactions can also turn into friendship and collegiality, and today I receive a greeting or an exchange of news almost on a weekly basis from someone visiting a city from a distant village or living in an urban area. Sadly, however, power and privilege are not equally shared with my Apurinã or Manchineri academic colleagues. As a scholar based in a northern academia, it must also be recognized that I have more economic liberty to travel, discuss and disseminate research results than my local research collaborators. I can also participate in conferences and other debates to improve my knowledge of the ongoing debates. Yet, associated with these academic spaces, I make constant decisions on how to carry out my research and how to contribute to inclusivity (cf. Kwame 2017). Decoloniality is not about giving voice to others by explaining and reporting, and in this way empowering or emancipating others. It is more about changing the roles from objects to real subjects, as Kaupapa Maori does (Bishop 1998), and it is more about taking a critical look at a northern researcher's role in decoloniality and Indigenization (see Chapter 1). I have worked towards making research Indigenous-led, but even in our own university recruitment processes my aim to bring in Indigenous researchers has often failed. Despite the power structure in my own northern academic institution, we have with project funding managed to remunerate Amazonian Indigenous researchers and quite recently postdoctoral funding was granted to an Amazonian Indigenous researcher. In the communities where I work, I have tried to be transparent about the limitations in the academic world, such as the bureaucratic difficulties of a research project being fully locally led when funded by a research agency from my home country. Yet, this does not prevent drawing from cultural protocols as an essential starting point for research and interactions. This also includes other-than-non-human actors (see also Shawn 2008).

Reciprocity and interactions in the Apurinã and Manchineri communities is also manifested in their ways of relating with the environment, which I will address in the next section. Ideas of reciprocity and respect for master spirits are reflected in the social and customary institutions of many Amazonian Indigenous communities, which consider humans and the environment to be a continuum where all life forms are interconnected (Descola 2005; Turner 2009; Viveiros de Castro 2012). The values of reciprocity, care, relationality and conviviality become evident in many Amazonian Indigenous cultures, under the understanding that all lifeforms are dependent and sentient beings, which form different symmetrical and asymmetrical relations. Taking these ideas into account has meant for my research, not only thinking of the rights of individuals and the community, but also other-than-humans.

5   Respect for Diverse Amazonian Life-Forms

The value of respect, as underlined by Indigenous research methodologies, is in the Amazonian context crucial. It involves respecting those entities that are important for life-making, and, thus, are considered to have transformative roles. The Apurinã and Manchineri generally respect their elders as knowledge-holders, and also address them respectfully, but at the same time with care. Respect and care also extend to ancestors, to those generations that are now considered to be present in the form of birds, animals, and in different places. They teach in other-than-human forms, as well as through the dreams, songs received, and visions. The respect for other humans thus includes previous generations.

Collectively owned, produced, and shared knowledge is typical for what is called Indigenous knowledge. It is also intergenerational, and thus individuals typically come to know such knowledge only through their relations with other beings (Basso 1996; Berkes 1993/2012; Cajete 2000). Consequently, the relations and the context in which the knowledge and information are produced is an important issue for Indigenous epistemologies. Indigenous knowledge exists in relations, or rather it is a relational entity that does not exist individually.

Respect among the Manchineri and Apurinã also goes beyond humans, and includes several other-than-human actors. In my research, this has meant recognition of the master spirits of the game and trees, among other things (Virtanen 2019). Respectful approaches to the local other-than-human actors are a crucial tool to keep beings healthy, and disrespecting these norms can cause illnesses, accidents, and unsustainability in the community. These issues have been central in studying the Manchineri and Apurinã, not only in places where such beings are considered powerful, but also when pronouncing their names. Overall, other-than-human actors are elemental actors in bringing life and well-being, not only when exploiting the resources moderately, such as in hunting practices.

Therefore, the existing written historical records are limited in narrating their past, because research has shown that Manchineri and Apurinã history is entangled with other-than-human actors (Apurinã 2019; Virtanen 2019). As I became a collaborator in the projects addressing the precolonial past, I soon aimed at shedding light on the local Indigenous perspectives and concerns of the research. However, this was a result of my gradual learning of local values and onto-epistemologies that allowed me to integrate Indigenous perspectives into the cross-disciplinary projects. Including Manchineri and Apurinã values and temporality into the archaeological research in the Manchineri and

Apurinã regions has been done in small steps. Even if there are varying Indigenous approaches to precolonial geometric earthworks, among other things, Indigenous views reveal that the history of inhabitation was based on a different logic (Virtanen & Saunaluoma 2017) than the settler-extractive agencies who arrived after the colonization of the Amazonian lands (cf. Blaser et al. 2010). Ancient earthwork sites are constantly being destroyed by cattle farmers and new roads, and therefore archaeologists' work in identifying these sites is urgent. In these situations, the respectful way of doing research requires knowledge of Indigenous values and temporalities. These issues have in fact been discussed in the recent literature on the history, memory, cultural heritage (e.g. Erikson & Vapnarski forthcoming; Fausto & Heckenberger 2007), and collaborations between Indigenous peoples and archaeologists (e.g. Ferguson & Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006; Machado 2013, 2017; Smith & Wobst 2005), but having said that, the local context always has its own specific understandings and temporalities.

In my archaeological research, integrating Indigenous perspectives has given me a deeper understanding of what should be researched and what not (cf. Kwaymullina 2016). In archaeological projects I became aware how especially other-than-human actors required respect. There were several issues related to ancestors, who had to be addressed with extra care, and that as primary guides elders needed to be listened to carefully. This was particularly difficult when certain issues that were to be protected from research were precisely the ones that might guarantee sustainability, health, and well-being in the community. Among the Apurinã and Manchineri, there are deep aspirations to make better connections with their ancestors, because colonization caused a rupture in these relations (see also Machado 2017), and ancestral relations offer power and knowledge. As I have discussed elsewhere, the elders hoped that the ancient sites would be orally discussed among the community to educate the younger generations about the history of the territory and the entanglements of humans and other-than-human actors (Virtanen 2019, cf. McGregor 2004). This can also be understood in this context that most Apurinã students had not received differentiated schooling to strengthen their Indigenous knowledges and language (Virtanen & Apurinã 2019). This situation also motivated the PhD research of my Indigenous research colleague, Francisco Apurinã, who addressed the protection of the Indigenous sacred sites in the region (Apurinã 2019). Overall, the work on the protection of the cultural heritage, educative actions, and capacity building was regarded as possible only under cultural protocols and in relation with other local, regional, and international actions protecting the land and its knowledges. Thus, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors were needed.

6   Responsibility as a Long-Term Commitment

Local cultural norms are not necessarily told explicitly, but one learns them over a period of time by experiencing them. I realized that the most important things were told to me without asking, and the knowledge was shared with me. This happened when the community members, especially the elders and knowledge holders, felt that I had become knowledgeable enough in cultural norms, and consequently sufficiently responsible. I felt I was no longer told that certain information embedded secrecy, but I was trusted in a sense that it was expected without saying that I would understand that certain matters were told only to me and were not meant to be shared with others because they contained sensitive or sacred information. In the Amazonian understanding of knowledge-production, knowledge is a matter of social age, and one's own capacities to know certain things develop gradually. Thus, a researcher can evolve by gaining more experience, and through in-depth knowledge gradually understand what kind of information can be published in academic publications, for instance.

I have noted that co-knowing in the Amazon is not only about me as a researcher and communities, but is about collaborations in relations with other actors. This involves the environment, as well as governmental and nongovernmental organizations, artists and so forth, with whom we established collaborations. As an example, I could mention the information collection for the Funai, the Brazilian state Indigenous agency, as they requested a report on several issues that they required for demarcation processes of the Apurinã land to be extended (Baixo Tumiã), as the Funai had few human resources to do that; and co-leading of teacher capacity-building workshops with governmental and nongovernmental organizations (e.g. with Comissão Pró-Indio, Mapkaha, FOCIMP, Cimi). Acting in multiple relations with different actors requires knowledge of stakeholders locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, as well as time to become familiar with them. The responsibility can be viewed as how to be an actor in the multiple relations of other actors. As Elizabeth Sumida Huaman (2014) has noted about language revitalization, such efforts are useless if actors do not take into account broader matters such as government policy issues.

Responsibility as a value is crucial, but on the other hand, there are limits to it and to what we can do as individuals. For instance, in our projects to prepare and produce Indigenous school materials, there have been long delays that were related to many external factors. Among the state secretaries of education, the staff often changed, transportation took longer than planned, there was sometimes lack of funding, and most recently there has been the global pandemic.

Furthermore, in the efforts to protect the cultural heritage for the communities, huge damage by diverse economic actors has been beyond the influence of individual researchers. Large-scale resource extraction and infrastructure-construction projects, and even climate changes taking place in the Amazonian forest, drastically alter the biocultural landscape and local communities' ways of life. Among other things, these changes have already washed away a great part of the evidence of the precolonial past. One example is a precolonial location not far from the Lábrea municipality centre. This precolonial site, identified by an Apurinã family along the Central Purus River, is collapsing into the river, and is being washed away. In this location, one of the channels of the Central Purus River had changed its course, resulting in the collapse of a large area of riverbank, thus revealing an abundance of fascinating ceremonial ceramics. These ceramics were decorated with detailed geometric patterns, while some displayed extinct animal figures and motifs, representing distinctive styles of the Upper Purus. The variety of styles indicated that the site had been used for a long period of time. The Apurinã and the local Indigenist organization had saved the precolonial ceramics from falling into the river and had hoped that researchers would save and record the objects. Unfortunately, funding has not been found to cover the high expenses needed for travelling to and preserving the site.

In a similar manner, when I was in the municipality of Pauini in the Central Purus, my Apurinã friends led me to a site where pieces of finely decorated ancient ceramics could be found scattered on the ground, while the mouths of large ceramic pots could be seen poking through the surface of the soil. This is one of the very few sites in the Central Purus that was recorded in the Brazilian National Archaeological Research Project of the Amazon Basin in the 1970s, yet the Apurinã report further similar sites inside their demarcated territories in the region. As the locals showed me around the area, a tractor was clearing neighbouring land for a new house construction.

Furthermore, in the Apurinã territory of the Central Purus River, an Apurinã community leader asked for guidance on how to save ancient funeral urns that had been revealed in their territory. It was known that I collaborated with archaeologists and biologists in the Upper Purus River area working on precolonial geometric earthworks, but unfortunately the attempts to save the local cultural heritage has to date lacked financial backing. In this time of lacking resources, collaboration between researchers, state officials, and nongovernmental actors has become even more vital. During my recent years of working in the Central Purus, each trip has provided me with novel information about the precolonial settlements in the region. Until today, Indigenous perspectives on deep history have remained invisible in local schools, and marginal

in official regional cultural heritage discussions. Cultural heritage education in non-Indigenous and Indigenous societies is crucial for knowing better the regional history, and requires integration of in-depth knowledge of Indigenous ideas, connections to the land, and cultural protocols.

7   Sensitivity While on the Path of the Research Process

Learning with the locals in the Amazon has also taught me how the Apurinã and Manchineri invest plenty of time reflecting on what they call their path (*kimapury/hatnu*). One's capabilities, skills, and potential for future development are reflected individually by the people through their own feelings, intuitions, imagination, and discussion with others. Visions and dreams also indicate the paths to take as individuals and show the futures to come (Virtanen 2014). This exercise is characterized by a specific future present temporality; it is as though the future can be felt here and now.

Sensitivity to one's path and development is not, however, an individual effort, but is always related to other beings. Very practically this materialized in physical movement on the path, be it territorial or fluvial, when the Manchineri and Apurinã constantly encounter new paths, and the traveller has to decide which way to go. Even if it would be an individual journey, one is always relating – or avoid entering into the relations – with other beings. On those journeys and during the movement, animals, such as birds, among other things, are important communicators of the paths to take while moving and travelling. They indicate what dangers to avoid on the path.

For me, the path of research has become analogous to these reflections on one's future to come: constantly observing which way to take, according to the changing environment, contexts, their actors, and the resources along the way. As one moves on the path of research, every situation changes, and new beings are encountered who themselves are moving and related to other actors. I have also learned from my research interlocutors that the aim of the journey must be kept clear, but on the way, guidance must also be listened to carefully. The Manchineri and Apurinã pay careful attention to their elders, knowledge-holders, those with medicinal wisdom, and other-than-human actors who have other ways of perceiving the world.

According to my research interlocutors and hosts, different other-than-human actors communicating with the community have in fact played decisive roles in my research (see Virtanen 2014). This has also guided the community to reflect on how they could see my research in those relations they aspire to regenerate in the future.

Reflexivity is concerned with sensitivity, and not only cultural sensitivity. It is about deep listening, both to humans and other-than-human actors, as well as their interlinkages. My *kimapury* path reflection method has also guided me to research what needs to be attended to and to leave out elements that should be protected in silence (see Kwaymullina 2016, 440). Reflexivity has also guided me in connecting my research with relevant partners, so that it could have as much impact as possible. Overall, the *kimapury* (path) method has guided me to evaluate what kind of research agenda I have in my research, and I hope I have navigated accordingly.

8   Encountering and Raising Indigenous Agendas

Research has become a crucial place to regenerate more inclusive and equal relations. For me, critical tools in this effort have been the comprehension of local onto-epistemologies, values, understanding of community's relations, reflections in changing situations, but also avoiding burdening communities with my research. Thus, it is not only researchers, it is also participants who can make an impact and are thus crucial in the research process. The participants can be both human and other-than-human actors, and thus diverse actors can restrict or open up spaces in which Indigenous agendas can be shared and acted upon.

Debates about who can carry out research with Indigenous peoples (e.g. Rigney 1999; Smith 1999/2012; Wilson 2008) have been crucial. Today, ethical research and collaborations can effectively change academic structures and power relations. State politics are also indivisible from Indigenous research practices. Critical reflections on the researcher's agenda can reveal if a research is Indigenous-led, is led by a fully funding agency, or is led by an academic institution programme. Some research certainly still exists that is only about reporting *on* Indigenous peoples and theorizing, or is just about finishing an academic programme, and is conducted without any Indigenous agenda. For instance, in the North, so-called Lappological research (see Chapter 1) was largely carried out using this approach. Also, a research, if it is established only by certain funding opportunities, may not accommodate Indigenous sovereignty. Therefore, I would like to underline that Indigenous society's agency and participation in a research process and the ethical spaces created (Ermine 2007) are even more critical questions for all researchers working with Indigenous peoples, as academic life has become shaped by funding calls, journal impact factor numbers, and so on. In these situations, the question of power and Indigenous sovereignty in research still needs to be critically looked at. It is

elemental to ensure that Indigenous research agendas become recognized and raised in all studies that deal with Indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, research is also required in multiple relations with governmental, nongovernmental, academic, and Indigenous organizations and their new ethical spaces and co-production of knowledge. After the pandemic, this kind of research, and interacting more with local actors, such as Indigenous organizations, can produce transformative impacts, even without the researcher's physical presence in the field. Research with local organizations can save time for communities, which might be busy with other issues. This certainly requires larger thinking about relations, their history, and how these relations are formed at different levels.

The question that remains is what then is an Indigenous agenda? These agendas are constantly changing, and can be learned in the context of local relations, values, and cultural protocols. Additionally, the debates and discussions on Indigenous research methodologies in which local onto-epistemologies and axiologies are taken seriously can advance thinking, teaching, and research. Speaking from my own experience, it was only my long-term local experimental learning in the relationships with diverse community members and other-than-human actors in their social worlds that gave me an understanding of my impacts in the local Amazonian contexts. It was there that I learnt what the abstract values of relevance, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility meant in my own research context and relations.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1   In the Embassy of Brazil in Helsinki, Finland.
2   Thanks to social media and WhatsApp.
3   In social anthropology.
4   I have not explicitly reflected upon core values in research with my research interlocutors, as I am currently working on this with my Apurinã researcher colleague. Hence, this chapter

is not about Apurinã and Manchineri values and cultural protocols that could be taken as a guide in research.

5   Federal University of Acre (Universidade Federal do Acre) and Federal University of Pará (Universidade Federal do Pará).

6   They were also the third biggest group of Indigenous peoples residing in Rio Branco, and one of my initial ideas was to understand the motivations for moving and migrating to urban areas as well as approaches to what was called urbanity. Later my study involved the Apurinã and Huni Kuin, the first and second biggest groups residing in the state capital of Acre.

7   The projects were written and led by the Manchineri. My role was as a consultant and inter-mediator. The funding was received from the Brazilian (Projetos Demonstrativos dos Povos Indígenas PDPI) and Finnish government (Finnish Embassy in Brazil, Brasília).

8   The funding was granted by the Tokyo Foundation.

9   See Facundes et al. (2018) for a more detailed discussion on the co-production of teaching materials.

10   Such as the research paper on Indigenous groups in voluntary Isolation, initiated by my colleague Lucas Manchineri (see Manchineri et al. 2018). Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to reflect critically on different research projects carried out since 2003.

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