Call for chapter proposals to an edited volume

Reframing Transnational Researcher Positionalities: Decolonial Resistance and Cross-Border Dynamics of Knowing and Unknowing

The question of a researcher’s positionality and its subsequent impact on knowledge production has been central to feminist theorization and methodological development, within and across borders of disciplines and social contexts (e.g. Collins 2004; Harding 1986, 1993; Haraway 1999; Edwards 2002; Beck & Lau 2003).

In a global context, the question of researcher positionality has been closely linked to post-and decolonial critiques of the imperialist power structures that undergird prevailing Eurocentric hegemonies and persistent investments in Orientalism, othering, exceptionalisms, and therefore, binary constructions of the superiority/inferiority of ways of knowing among subjects located in hemispheric and global maps of West/East, North/South and Indigenous/non-Indigenous (Mohanty 1984, 2003; Mulinari & Räthzel 2007; Mignolo & Walsh 2018; Tlostanova et al. 2019; Walia 2013).

The question of researcher positionalities has recently been brought up for discussion by scholars who speak from feminist and migrant positions (e.g.; Cockburn 2007; Lapina 2018; Liinason 2018; York-Bertram, Lovrod, & Krol 2017; Zhao 2015) and addressed how these positionalities might challenge methodological nationalism in how they critically reflect upon the researchers’ insider/outsiderness (e.g. Carling, Erdal, & Ezzati 2014; Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014; Matejeskova 2014). Meanwhile, decolonial perspectives on neoliberal restructuring of higher education and research point to the dilemma that while these developments produce more transnationally mobile scholars, these scholars’ ability to take a role as active critic and conscience of society and its knowledge production regimes might be seriously constrained (Kidman 2019; Mok & Han 2017; Mullings & Mukherjee 2019).

This book intends to further address the question of researcher positionality and knowledge production from the perspective of researchers with experiences of travelling within, across and beyond different geopolitical locations, not only between East and West (Orient and Occident), South and North, but also across continents, such as Eastern/Southern Europe and Western/Northern Europe, or North/South Americas or East/West Africa. The book intends thus to address diverse liminal spaces (as distinguished from the so-called marginal sites addressed in earlier literature), as shaped by various forms/routes of transnational scholarship and how they are mutually shaped by larger forces, resources, and discourses. By doing so, the book will shed light on multiple historical and emergent hierarchies, new forms of inequalities/exclusions, and neocolonial practices of intersecting exceptionalisms.

More concretely, the book aims to expound, both theoretically and empirically on the following questions:

1) How are transnational researcher positions situationally constructed and institutionally conditioned? Which sets of power relations are at stake in such positionings and how do they operate both within and beyond the frameworks of coloniality and neo-liberalist knowledge regimes (Cannella & Koro-Lungberg 2017; Kuokkanen 2011; Mohanty 2013)?
2) What does having and/or claiming transnational positionality entail in accounting for the ways power systems inform and influence our research practices? What are the related methodological consequences/implications for knowledge production as abyssal (De Sousa Santos 2007) and/or interwoven situated (Haraway 1999) practices?

3) What can critical engagement with knowledge production regimes as situated through transnational researcher and participant positionalities offer in rethinking/framing the politics of knowledge as a decolonizing project that imagines alternative destinations for all kinds of social, material, scholarly and artistic capital?

This call for papers seeks empirical as well as theoretical contributions which explore one or several of the above-mentioned questions. We seek contributions that shed light on the shifting directions of migration and mobility flows, and the many conditioning transnational experiences that are involved in research practices. We also welcome contributions from different disciplinary, theoretical and thematic lines of inquiry, but particularly invite scholars of feminist, post-colonial/decolonial, indigenous and migration studies to contribute.

We invite interested authors to send an abstract (two versions: one extended abstract of maximum 750-1000 words and one shorter version of approx. 300 words) of the proposed chapter to Yan Zhao yan.zhao@nord.no, Magdalena Nowicka nowicka@dezim-institut.de and Marie Lovrod marie.lovrod@usask.ca before May 15th, 2020. The abstract must clearly state the title, question(s) for discussion within the framework of the book, theoretical or/and empirical ground, alongside with short bio(s) of up to 75 words per author.

References:


