

Workshop – Case study research design and methods in political ecology
15.04.2021 and 22.04.2021
14-17 h

Objectives

The aim of this workshop is to offer theoretical and practical tools for the design and implementation of political ecology research projects, both for academic purposes and in collaboration with social movements. It will provide an introduction to basic principles of social research design and qualitative investigative methods, focusing specifically on the “case study” method and its application to the analysis of concrete situations of socio-environmental change and conflict.

Format

The workshop was originally thought as based on in-person group work, combined with short lectures and discussion. We have adapted this as much as possible to the online format. You will prepare in advance a draft research idea on a topic of your choice (following the guidelines given below). During the workshop, you will work individually, in pairs and in groups in order to improve your research idea and turn it into a well-structured proposal. After the workshop, you will send it again in refined form; you will be evaluated according to your ability to apply key concepts and principles defined and practiced in the workshop.

Structure

The workshop will be structured into two sessions. In the first, we’ll work on the basic components of a research proposal (research topics, questions and problems) and on linking case studies to theory. In the second, we’ll focus on the practice of doing and writing political ecology research, and discuss issues such as research ethics, positionality and reflexivity.

Assigned readings

Session 1 – 15.04.2021

Required readings

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G.G. and Williams, J. M. (2008), *The Craft of Research*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3 (“From Topics to Questions”) and 4 (“From Questions to a Problem”).

Additional readings (optional)

Burawoy, M. (1998). The extended case method. *Sociological theory*, 16(1), 4-33.

Cox, L. (2019). Pedagogy from and for social movements: a conversation between theory and practice. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 30(1), 70-88.

Crang, M., & Cook, I. (2007). *Doing ethnographies*. London, SAGE.

Driscoll-Derickson, K. & Routledge, P. (2015). Resourcing scholar-activism: Collaboration, transformation, and the production of knowledge. *The Professional Geographer*, 67(1), 1-7.

Session 2 – 22.04.2021

Required readings

Valenzuela-Fuentes, K. (2019). Militant ethnography and autonomous politics in Latin America. *Qualitative Research*, 19(6), 718-734.

Boilevin, L., Chapman, J., Deane, L., Doerksen, C., Fresz, G., Joe, D. J., ... & Winter, P. (2019). "Research 101: A manifesto for ethical research in the Downtown Eastside." Accessible at: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubccommunityandpartnerspublicati/52387/items/1.0377565>

Additional readings (optional)

Bookchin, N., Brown, P., Ebrahimian, S., Enmedio, C., Juhasz, A., Martin, L., ... & Sitrin, M. (2013). "Militant research handbook" Accessible at: http://www.visualculturenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/MRH_Web_SinglePage.pdf

Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group (IPSG) of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) (2010) "Declaration of key questions about research ethics with indigenous communities". Accessible at: <http://www.indigenousgeography.net/IPSG/pdf/IPSGResearchEthicsFINAL.pdf>

Menton, M., Milanez, F., de Andrade Souza, J. M., & Cruz, F. S. M. (2021). The COVID-19 pandemic intensified resource conflicts and indigenous resistance in Brazil. *World Development*, 138, 105222.

Spencer, D. (2011). Emotions and the Transformative Potential of Fieldwork: Some Implications for Teaching and Learning Anthropology. *Teaching Anthropology: A journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1(2).

Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An international E-journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), 374-385.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2012) *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. 2nd edition. London, Zed Books.

Before the workshop

1. You will have to prepare in advance of session 1, and bring to class, a tentative, one-page draft research idea, explaining the topic for your research project, motivation and how you plan to carry out the research. This could be based, for instance, on the topic of your Master's thesis—but could also be a research project you want to develop for a social organization, a public sector institution, a cooperative, etc. In the draft, provide details about the following:

- What you want to investigate (your research topic and aims, the questions you want to answer, what specific case you will focus on)
- Why you want to investigate it (what motivates you to research this topic, personally and politically, and why it is important that others know more about it)
- How you plan to carry out the research (e.g., what evidence you will need, how you will access it; which theories or concepts will guide your investigation)
- How you plan to approach your study “subjects” or “partners” (how do you envision your relationship with the groups/movements you will study (with), what challenges do you foresee in your research with them)

2. Before session 2, read and reflect about how power affects you as a researcher and activist; take as inspiration if you wish from [Julie Diamond's proposal on "Power Print"](#). Try to bring some ideas about potential opportunities, challenges and limitations you may find before, during and after developing a research engaged with social-ecological transformation.

Assignment and evaluation

After the workshop, each of you will hand in a reworked and improved research proposal, of no more than 750 words, following the guidelines that will be given in class. The proposal

must be handed in by 13 May. It will count as 10% of the overall grade of the module. Late proposals will not be accepted, except for documented exceptional circumstances for which an extension has been agreed in advance of the deadline.