Human Rights, Anthropology and Communication: Implications of Research Committed to Indigenous Struggles (Salta, Argentina) *

⌈English Version⌉

Derechos humanos, Antropología y Comunicación. Implicancias de una investigación comprometida con las luchas indígenas (Salta, Argentina)

Direitos Humanos, Antropologia e Comunicação. Implicações da pesquisa comprometida com as lutas indígenas (Salta, Argentina)

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Abstract

Objective: this article presents a research case committed to indigenous peoples' organizations

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in the inter-Andean valleys of Salta, Argentina. The objective is to analyze how the research, extension and collaboration plans are articulated, from critical human rights, anthropology and communication perspectives. **Methodology**: the research refers to an interdisciplinary process with an ethnographic perspective, which methodological processes involve a set of academic and collaborative projects with an indigenous group, work with local sources, and participation in assemblies, meetings, and workshops. **Results:** the implications of carrying out committed research are analyzed, taking into account factors such as the economic-political context and political situations, local demands, and the conditions of the research work. **Conclusions:** the different instances of work and their interference in the redefinition of disciplinary fields in the pre-pandemic scenario are recovered, and some current challenges regarding research and collaboration practices are indicated.

Keywords: Committed research; Collaboration; Anthropology; Communication; Indigenous people.

Resumen

Objetivo: este artículo presenta un caso de investigación comprometida con organizaciones de pueblos indígenas en los Valles interandinos de Salta, Argentina. El objetivo es analizar cómo se articulan los planos de la investigación, extensión y colaboración, desde una perspectiva crítica de los derechos humanos, la Antropología y la Comunicación. **Metodología:** la investigación remite a una articulación interdisciplinaria con perspectiva etnográfica, cuyos procesos metodológicos involucran un conjunto de proyectos académicos y colaborativos con un colectivo indígena, el trabajo con fuentes locales, y la participación en asambleas, reuniones y talleres. **Resultados:** se analizan las implicancias de llevar a cabo una investigación comprometida, atendiendo a factores tales como el contexto económico-político y las coyunturas políticas, las demandas locales, y las condiciones del trabajo de investigación. **Conclusiones:** se recuperan las distintas instancias de trabajo y su injerencia sobre la redefinición de los campos disciplinares en el escenario anterior a la pandemia, y se indican algunos desafíos actuales sobre las prácticas de investigación y colaboración.

Palabras-clave: Investigación comprometida; Colaboración; Antropología; Comunicación; Pueblos indígenas.

Resumo

Objetivos: este artigo apresenta um caso de pesquisa realizada com organizações de povos indígenas nos Vales Interandinos de Salta, Argentina. O objetivo é analisar como a pesquisa, a divulgação e a colaboração são articuladas a partir de uma perspectiva crítica dos direitos humanos, da antropologia e da comunicação. **Metodologia:** a pesquisa refere-se a uma articulação interdisciplinar com uma perspectiva etnográfica, cujos processos metodológicos envolvem um conjunto de projetos acadêmicos e colaborativos com um coletivo indígena, trabalho com fontes locais e participação em assembléias, reuniões e seminários. **Resultados:** são analisadas as implicações da realização de pesquisas engajadas, levando em conta fatores como o contexto econômico-político e conjunturas políticas, as demandas locais e as condições do trabalho de pesquisa. **Conclusões:** as diferentes instâncias de trabalho e sua influência na redefinição dos campos disciplinares no cenário pré-pandêmico são recuperadas, e são indicados alguns desafios atuais relativos às práticas de pesquisa e colaboração.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa engajada; Colaboração; Antropologia; Comunicação; Povos Indígenas.

Introduction

For several decades, studies of indigenous alterities have been proposing a critical review of the traditional ways of knowledge construction in social sciences. In Argentina, the challenges demand an ethical review of the production conditions, the research effects and the hegemonic knowledge when considering the scenario established from the constitutional reform and its effects on the human rights of indigenous peoples[1].

Above all, the commitment to deal with the scientific knowledge asymmetries leads to a professional practice. This makes its role within the organizational dynamics explicit and its demands addressed to the State, and assumes precautions regarding the conditions of confidentiality and free, prior, and informed consent (Briones, 2013; Gazotti, 2015). At the same time, it involves the successful analytical adaptation approach to current indigenous demands within the framework of a critical commitment to the struggle for the recognition of their rights. In this sense, the challenge implies a convergence between indigenous concerns and research agendas that will have an impact on state policies and the ways of understanding and managing differences (Briones, Gorosito-Kramer, 2007).

Organizational experiences from certain theoretical-methodological perspectives leading to understand subaltern political processes become important (Manzano, Ramos, 2015). These approaches emphasize the role of indigenous peoples as political actors and subjects of rights who seek to account for the legal implications related to the recognition of difference, as well as the fields of forces in which these collectives are inserted and their relationship with the State (Briones 1998, 2004; Lazzari, Quarleri, 2015). The common interpellation in these studies requires problematizing the approach to the "indigenous question" that has historically been subject to narratives based on the myth of white Argentina, suscribed to in readings in terms of miscegenation (Briones, 2002) and forms of "Indian racism" producing social inequality (Álvarez Leguizamón, 2017). This takes on greater force in the case of the Kolla people who have challenged the criteria established by state and academic validation bodies to certify the authenticity of the indigenous (Espósito, 2017)[2].

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1. In 1994, the National Constitution of Argentina was reformed, incorporating Article 75 paragraph 17 which, in addition to recognizing ethnic and cultural pre-existence, established the duty to recognize "the possession and community property over lands they have traditionally occupied, and to regulate the transfer of other lands adequate and sufficient for human development."

2. Argentina recognizes the existence of 38 indigenous peoples. In the Province of Salta, where there are at least 14 indigenous peoples - nine recognized by the provincial government and another five in the process

This research addresses the creation of indigenous organizations self-ascribed to the Kolla people since the 1980s in the inter-Andean valleys of Salta, located in the north of the province of Salta, Argentina (departments of Santa Victoria, Iruya, and part of Orán). Both are guided by the ethnographic perspective from a conventional sense (Balbi, 2020) and the "genealogical" perspective in the sense of documenting singular historical contents and "local and discontinuous knowledge" (Foucault, 1996, p.19), and exploring the conditions that have influenced their disqualification or marginalization (Restrepo, 2008). Along with the possibilities of ethnographic fieldwork, genealogy seeks to glimpse "other histories" and spaces of knowledge production that can be thought from difference, thus contributing to build theory from the political praxis of subaltern group movements (Escobar, 2003, p. 61).

From a contemporary perspective of human rights, anthropology and communication, this paper's authors propose a reading of a research commitment to indigenous organizations. For this purpose, the authors rely on an experience of imbrication of interdisciplinary work with the agendas of the Association of Aboriginal Communities of Nazareno (OCAN) between 2013 and 2021[3]. The objective is to reflect on the implications of articulating research, extension and collaboration projects in contexts where political situations, local demands, and working conditions determine directions and possibilities. This requires, first, making visible epistemic and methodological alternatives to the modern-eurocentric knowledge model which are contextualized in their enunciation, temporality, and space. Second, it means critically reviewing the conditions that allow carrying out this type of proposal formulated in dialogue with the *struggles*[4] and demands of the indigenous organization the authors work with.

Methodology

In 2014, the authors' personal journeys about anthropological and communicational work were in the field, after each of them became involved in the

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of recognition - 6.5% of the population, i.e. 79,204 inhabitants, are recognized as indigenous. 21.6% (17,145 people) pertain to the Kolla (National Institute of Statistics and Census [INDEC], 2012). The Kolla people also inhabit the provinces of Jujuy and Catamarca in the northwestern Argentina.

3. Since 1998, this organization has organized 23 Kolla communities in the municipality of Nazareno. To reach this locality, one must cross the city of La Quiaca, in the province of Jujuy, and then travel 100 kilometers east along a winding dirt road that crosses the Abra del Cóndor at 5050 meters above sea level (the border between Salta and Jujuy), until descending to the municipal capital.

4. The native category of *struggle* (particularly the *struggle for territory*) refers to agreed ways of demanding creation and restoration of rights within the current legal framework that supports indigenous peoples.

management of the community radio FM OCAN[5]. In accordance with the commitment assumed and assigned in the "communication topic,"[6] the authors worked in the formulation and presentation of university extension projects and other state funded projects linked to community media management, content production, and equipment.

This convergence led to modifying the initial objectives of undergraduate and doctoral research of interdisciplinary approach and academic detachment. Thus, the research projects began to focus on reconstructing collective organization processes without neglecting affective, memorial, and territorial aspects.

In this way the authors approached a "committed research" (Katzer, 2011) which, as a situated and singular process, had particular characteristics as the relationship with OCAN referents became stronger. This positioning alludes to a perspective that redefines ethnographic work by linking it to "collaborative" tasks (Rappaport, 2007), in this case, the development and management of projects by the organization with the purpose of contributing to an area of intervention on the fulfillment of rights and local demands[7].

According to Leticia Katzer (2011), engaged research requires an epistemological and political positioning that addresses what the interlocutors demand or propose, beyond academic interests[8]. Within this framework of action, the authors conceive that the critical human rights perspective allows for a complex analysis of research in a relational manner, in addition to constituting a tool and a hegemonic legal language to manage such demands[9]. In this sense, this paper

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5. OCAN FM is the indigenous community radio station coordinated by OCAN since 2016. In addition to guaranteeing the right to communication of indigenous peoples, its communication project focuses on its own ways of building a local information agenda, in line with the territorial struggles of the organization. The authors delved into this topic in other articles (Milana, Villagra, 2018; Villagra, 2020).

6. In the OCAN assemblies, the issues discussed were usually classified into "topics" that allowed for a reflection on different aspects of social life, as well as on proposing different possible courses of action in pursuit of acquiring, recovering, or creating rights as indigenous peoples.

7. The reference to different projects allowed for both university extension and other funding, a territorial and committed articulation between research practices, and the demands of the indigenous organization.

8. The perspective of engaged research raises a set of questions about the role and dialogue of researchers with the interlocutors who are involved in the research process. In the framework of different academic discussions on anthropological work, there is a methodological and epistemological turn that proposes problematizing and discussing the ethnographic practice and method, adjectivizing this turn in terms of "engaged," "militant," "activist," "collaborative," or "decolonial" research (Rodriguez, 2019). Although, this article does not intend to discuss these notions and their adjectivations, these insist on the need to make political commitments to the people and organizations the authors work with and their unique demands for recognition.

9. This perspective takes up contributions from authors such as Joaquín Herrera Flores and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and argues that human rights should be described in the unique contexts in which they arise, based on their scope to denounce situations of inequality in access to the necessary goods for a dignified

focuses on the appropriation and re-signification that the interlocutors make of the legal norms, imbricated in the social fabric and struggles (Sánchez Rubio, 2009).

These unique articulations involved theoretical-methodological and analytical choices. In addition to appealing to several qualitative techniques and ethnographic fieldwork with brief and periodic stays in Nazareno, the experience of collaboration and involvement with projects linked to different areas enabled access to other fieldwork and other organizational sources. In turn, to build the conceptual perspective on indigenous organizational processes in the inter-Andean valleys, the authors appealed to three key lines: Cultural Studies (Hall, 1996, 2010; Grossberg, 2006, 2012), the anthropological field of collective politics (Manzano, 2013; Manzano, Ramos, 2015; Lenton, 2015), and studies on popular, alternative, community, and indigenous communication experiences (Mata, 2009; Kejval, 2009; Doyle, 2016). From this framework, historical forms of relationship with the State and practices of resistance were investigated (Milana, 2019; Villagra, Milana, 2020; Villagra, 2020) and a radio experience in the framework of local political processes was analyzed (Milana, Villagra, 2018).

In this context, different styles of national government were deployed whose policies affected the course of research and OCAN projects. During the period between 2007 and 2015, the presidency of the national government, held by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, held speeches linked to the historical reparation of human rights and an economic redistribution in terms of health, education, and communication, among others. In this situation, the indigenous movement gained visibility in the public and media scene, challenging the State to redefine its horizons of citizen inclusion. Then, between 2015 and 2019, the policies led by the Alianza Cambiemos, under Mauricio Macri's mandate were devastating in their budget cuts to different areas of the State, with effects on previous indigenist policies and on new symbolic borders of the nation around specific conflicts[10].

At the end of 2019, Alberto Fernández supported by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, assumed the presidency, once again bringing about transformations

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life (Gándara, 2019). The proposal emphasizes the importance of making visible different formulations of rights in a context of pluralism (Acosta-Navas, 2019). Then, it is possible to understand them as a hegemonic language that can clearly be used by the subaltern sectors to channel their specific demands and requirements.

10. These disputes became visible from the repressive role of the national security policy of the national gendarmerie enabled to manage conflicts originated from the advance of private companies on the territories of the Mapuche people. This had as a corollary the disappearance and death of Santiago Maldonado and Rafael Nahuel in 2018, through police intervention in Pu Lof in Resistencia, Cushamen, province of Chubut (Briones, Ramos, 2018).

in the approach to the country's social, political and economic problems[11]. However, the context that has emerged since 2020 as a result of the pandemic by COVID-19 has impacted the social organization of the country; while the national government allocated a large part of the budget to the creation of wards and hospitals for coronavirus patients and, later, to the vaccination campaign[12].

Along the way, investigations and ties to NACO were reconfigured. Different scenarios marked the possibilities of implementing joint projects, sometimes limited by the delay or lack of money, or because the priorities of the organization indicated how and when to execute a certain activity. However, the search to build support and alliances with internal and external actors of the organization allowed signifying the ways of building knowledge and practices collectively. This influenced both the NACO political project and the course of these investigations, which at the end aspire to be constructed as contributions to the visibility of indigenous struggles in the province of Salta.

Convergences between the Fieldwork and the Agendas of the Indigenous Organization

In 2013, Paula Milana began to participate in meetings between different indigenous organizations in the province of Salta as part of her Bachelor's thesis in Anthropology. The research referred to an analysis of the social policies and practices of "work" in the environment of the Kolla Indigenous Council of Iruya[13] (Milana, 2014; Milana, Ossola, Sabio-Collado, 2016). As a result of the field work in the assemblies, there was a shift toward another dimension that transcended that of work. This was the "land and territory issue," a set of issues that included the demand for community land titles and other demands related to land control. In relation to this struggle, through the Council, an articulation was promoted with the Qullamarka, the Coordination of Organizations and Autonomous Kollas Communities of Salta[14].

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11. To delve into the mentioned political situations, the authors suggest reading the contributions of Briones, 2015; Briones, Ramos, 2018; and Soria, 2019a and 2019b.

12. On March 19, 2020, Social, Preventive, and Mandatory Isolation (SPMD) was declared for all the country's inhabitants. Later, the provisions associated with the movement of people were oscillating between ASPO and Social, Preventive and Mandatory Distancing (SPMD), according to the epidemiological situation of each province or municipality.

13. The Iruya Kolla Indigenous Council (IKIC) is an organization formed in 2004 that represents the communities of the department of Iruya in the province of Salta.

14. Currently, the Coordinator brings together six indigenous Kolla organizations from the Inter-Andean Valleys in the province of Salta: Indigenous Community of the Kolla Tinkunaku town (ICKT), Association of

In 2014, Milana obtained a doctoral research grant from the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (NCSTR), which aimed to investigate the struggle for the Qullamarka territory from its historical present. Along with different contributions or tasks that included writing minutes, attending training, writing notes during the assemblies and subsequent delivery to the offices of the provincial government, the field work was carried out based on the organizational dynamics and the "Qullamarka Tinkunakuy" meetings, which are held every three months in different locations of the inter-Andean Valleys.

The research problem was changing along with the agendas of the Qullamarka, which assigned it a position of "allied." This implied getting involved with the Social Communication field, given that as a result of the debates and application of the Audiovisual Communication Services Law (ACSL) in 2009, the members of the Coordinadora were working for access to their own radioelectric frequencies.[15]. Thus, through an extension project[16], the magazine "Qullamarka-Tinkunakuy" was produced, with a circulation of four hundred copies, whose objective was to make visible the relationship between organizational processes and indigenous communication projects.

Emilia Villagra began her research in 2014 within the framework of the Bachelor of Communication Sciences course at the National University of Salta. She joined the Practice Chairs in Community and Institutional Communication and Popular and Alternative Communication, and joined different research projects[17] and university extension[18]. These aimed to reflect, systematize and accompany indigenous organizations that were working on the management and production of radio content during the application of the ACSL. This journey gave rise to her degree thesis (Villagra, 2016), where she addressed the

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Aboriginal Communities of Nazarene (ACN), Union of Victoreñas Aboriginal Communities (VAC), Kolla de Iruya Indigenous Council (KIIC), Upper Lipeo River Basin Indigenous Community (ULRBIC) and Union of the Kollas Communities in the lower Yungas-Orán area, Salta (UKCLY).

15. The ACSL recognizes the protection of "authorizations to people of ideal existence of public state law, National Universities, Indigenous towns, and the Catholic Church (...) on demand and directly, in accordance with the availability of the spectrum, when appropriate" (ACSL, article 37, 2009.

16. Extension project "Multiplying Voices: toward autonomous communication in the Qullamarka territory" (2015).

17. Research projects "Popular and alternative communication in border contexts. Part 2. Mapping of actors and experiences in popular sectors of Salta" (2014-2016) and "Popular, alternative and community communication in the province of Salta. Historicization, reconfiguration, and transformation of other communication experiences" (2017-2019).

18. Extension projects "basting networks in community communication. Support workshops for social organizations within the framework of the Popular Communication Management of Salta and Jujuy" (2014), "basting networks in community communication. Part II Support workshops for social organizations in the framework of the Popular Communication of Salta (2015)" and "Nazareno communicates." Training for the strengthening of a community radio" (2016).

construction of the community radio station FM ACN and its commitment to "autonomous communication" and with "identity" in the period 2014-2016.

Later, in 2017, Villagra obtained a doctoral scholarship also sponsored by NCSTR, initially aimed at analyzing the role of community media from the implementation of the station in Nazareno. Attuned with the field work carried out in the 2014-2019 period, the project was limited to understanding the political-communicational processes of NCSTR in articulation with the demand for land.

During that period, the authors worked on the formulation of "communication with identity" projects, financed by the Competitive Development Fund for Audiovisual Communication Media (CPACM)[19] and the University Extension Secretariat of the National University of Salta (UESNU). These calls constituted the first spaces for the presentation of projects from which the authors collaborated jointly in that the organization obtained financing for the economic, institutional and productive sustainability of the radio project.

From then, a considerable part of the research practices was assembled with the development of university extension projects as well as other state state financing. In this way, the university extension was constituted as a practice that prioritized the authors' training as undergraduate students and allowed establishing links between the territory and the public university. Likewise, it enriched the authors' undergraduate and doctoral theses, expanding the epistemological perspectives according to the political commitment to build, systematize and articulate social knowledge with the interests and demands of NCSTR.

Converging on the "communication issue," the joint inquiry into indigenous demands with a human rights perspective constituted the framework for various meeting instances with NCSTR leaders. In Nazareno, the authors also participated in religious festivities and activities planned by the organization, such as the "cambalache exchange" fair (2016 and 2017), meetings organized with the Undersecretary of Family Farming of the National Ministry of Agroindustry (USFF), the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (NIAT), and radio workshops on "communication with identity." Additionally, the authors accessed the organization's archives, including minutes of the assemblies (1999-2018) and records of school inspections that belong to the historical book of the Nazareno primary school (1909-2009).

In this way, after getting involved in the extension projects that each carried out, in 2016 the authors presented the first joint extension project[20]. Its initial

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19. The CPACM was created based on the provisions of article 97, paragraph f of the ACSL, which allocates a percentage of the funds collected by the Federal Authority for Audiovisual Communication Services to community, border and native peoples' audiovisual communication projects.

20. Extension project "Communication with identity: community media in the Qullamarka territory"

objective was to contribute to the management and production of content for its station called FM OCAN. From a collaborative work with the organization, they intended to create a magazine whose contents would deal with the search for an "own radio," the generated audiovisual content, and the discussion of how to sustain the medium. At the same time, the authors sought to build a systematization tool for indigenous political and communicational processes, respecting local perspectives and knowledge.

As a result of the consequences of the financial emptying of the Public University during the government of Mauricio Macri since the end of 2015, the project was paid for in 2018. This slowed down its development, not only due to economic limitations, but also because the objectives and interests of the organization at that time were different. For this reason, during a meeting organized with representatives of OCAN, carrying out a workshop to strengthen organizational and institutional ties was suggested, as well as promoting reflection and dissemination of the work done by the organization regarding the "land and territory issue." Thus, a space for the socialization of stories and knowledge of Nazareno was generated, in order to talk about the different notions of "territory that coexist and thus reconstruct the history of the municipality from the voices and memories of the inhabitants.

Along with these projects, closely linked to the authors' doctoral theses, they continued participating in the organization's work. In 2018, they prepared socio-productive proposals financed by the National Ministry of Social Development for the construction of an irrigation system in the community of Santa Cruz del Aguilar and the foundation of a storage shed in Nazareno. In addition, the authors participated in workshops in charge of the Public Defender's Office in Nazareno for the processing of the OCAN FOMECA registration required in 2019 to present new projects, of which one was the winner (its funds were deposited in 2021). The authors' role consisted of collaborating with the drafting of the projects, after participating in meetings to redefine objectives and their subsequent execution.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted investigations and the projects carried out by OCAN, and the authors had to resort to new forms of relationship such as virtual assemblies and network communication. From this place, they continued to accompany some activities, participating in assemblies and in the reformulation and execution of various projects that were managed between 2019 and 2021.

Finally, at the beginning of 2021 and together with a group of women from Nazareno, the authors presented a project to the Southern Women's Fund, called "Warmis from Nazareno for a good living: strengthening our voices and practices."[21] In this context, although the epidemiological situation continues to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors aim at influencing some economic and social aspects from the support of spaces for women's interaction.

Results

Theoretical, Methodological and Epistemological Perspectives to Address Indigenous People's Political Processes

As mentioned, the anthropological and communicational approach allowed for outlining a theoretical and analytical map in which the ethnographic perspective was central, not only to reformulate the objectives of the research according to the dynamics of the organization, but also to incorporating the theoretical place and protagonist of the interlocutors. In this way, the theoretical-methodological background was modified and built based on fieldwork carried out through brief and periodic stays, whose records on various activities allowed for bringing native points of view to the fore. This approach also allowed for knowing in depth the assembly of the indigenous radio stations of the Qullamarka. In addition to witnessing the construction of these spaces in their political and symbolic aspects, especially FM OCAN, the authors collaborated with their institutional management[22].

Although during the authors' disciplinary trajectories they analyzed specific aspects of the demands of organizations in the inter-Andean Valleys, when they began to collaborate they advanced in a new approach. Next, they point out some characteristics of this perspective and its connection with their research.

First, the analytical approach of Cultural Studies was fruitful in epistemological terms to work with indigenous organizational processes, since its proposal consists of building knowledge about places of enunciation and political actions from an interdisciplinary exchange that, without being restricted to a conventional academic work, demands a committed practice (Castro-Gómez, 2003).

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21. The project is financed by the Women's Fund from the South, within the framework of the program Leading from the South. This space accompanies organizations that promote the rights of women and LBTIQ+ people in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

22. Although the work was focused on the management of the OCAN FM radio station, the authors also participated in meetings and communication workshops in other towns and departments of the Inter-Andean Valleys.

This can be translated into what Stuart Hall (2010) calls "political vocation," which implies "understanding and intervening" producing a "knowledge-tool" that explores specific conditions of exploitation and domination (Restrepo, 2012, p. 157).

Second, the authors problematized processes of political subjectivation from an anthropological approach to indigenous collective politics. This field can be approached from practices of representation and participation of communities or organizations. It also requires paying attention to individual and collective trajectories, the way in which alliances are forged and negotiations between different actors are settled, without neglecting internal confrontations and disputes waged in those contexts (Lenton, 2015; Ramos, 2011). In dialogue with the proposals on "national and provincial formations of alterity" as configurations of social organization of difference (Briones, 2005), the authors also investigated historical forms of relationship of indigenous groups with the State, government, and resistance, as well as negotiation and articulation (Milana, 2019; Milana, Villagra, 2020).

In this direction, the authors' approach to the field of force in which the political project of both OCAN and the Qullamarka coordinator is framed, is associated with the genealogical commitment to account for knowledge and practices that, previously relegated, have emerged in current struggles (Foucault, 1996). This lens was achieved through an ethnography of the collective politics of organizations: recording their creative, singular, and unprecedented work of historical reconstruction, which also proposes new rights and policies questioning the hegemonic narratives promoted by academic and/or state spheres.

Finally, Studies on Popular Communication is another opportune field to carry out intervention practices in the territory and produce knowledge. It allowed for placing emphasis on communication processes and on the construction of meanings in everyday life, conceiving the media from mediations (Martín-Barbero, 1987). The authors combined this approach with that of "indigenous communication," a more recent field whose analysis focuses on the uses and appropriations of audiovisual media by indigenous subjects, the characteristics, possibilities, and limits inscribed in the regulatory frameworks and their articulations with respect to the struggle for territories (Lizondo, 2015; Doyle, 2018; Andrada, 2019). These approaches allowed for relating the communication processes with the political actions of the OCAN, understanding in depth the different edges that constitute its project (Milana, Villagra, 2018; Villagra, 2020).

The articulations between the three approaches entailed theoretical-methodological choices and analytical cuts aimed at understanding long-term processes in local contexts. In this direction, another lens tested with a view

toward identifying and explaining the conditions that made the formation of the Kollas indigenous organizations possible in the inter-Andean valleys consisting of a particular chronology of their struggles. The discernment of the scope of the indigenous organizational process from the eighties allowed for the historical and spatial contextualization of a set of significant events[23].

Based on this theoretical-methodological and epistemological background, the demand for the "communication theme" implied an approach from the field of Communication that was articulated with an anthropological analysis of the historical processes associated with the "land and territory" theme.

In particular, Emilia Villagra's doctoral research focused on analyzing OCAN's communication experience from an ethnographic approach, identifying political practices and unraveling how to build networks and alliances between different actors, beyond what happened strictly in terms of audiovisual production. In the case of María Paula, the doctoral thesis reconstructed and analyzed short- and medium-term processes associated with the formation of Kollas organizations in the inter-Andean valleys, paying attention to classifying forms of alterity from the academic and state fields, as well as senses of indigenous belonging.

Together, both investigations allowed for understanding the historical and political scope of the struggle for territory undertaken by OCAN together with other organizations from the inter-Andean valleys of Salta. Similarly, the shared concerns of recording and analyzing the work of organizations led the authors to forming their more complex view of communication processes, from the point of view of the actors, contemporary identity constructions, and territorial disputes in particular contexts. This was possible thanks to a constitutive ethnographic exercise of research intertwined with academic interests and organizational dynamics[24].

Next, the authors present how these inquiries developed into "committed investigations" tied to the management and execution of projects within the framework of OCAN demands.

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23. It should be clarified that, in Argentina, since the advent of democracy, multiple experiences of indigenous organizations became visible by raising different demands (Milana, Villagra, 2020).

24. The Social Communication and Anthropology careers of the National University of Salta present substantial differences in the ways of promoting the link between professional practice and what is conceived as territory. For instance, the curriculum of Social Communication program includes subjects associated with the management, design, and evaluation of social communication projects or policies; in addition, it considers professional practices with organizations, companies or institutions framed in socio-community interventions. For its part, the Anthropology program promotes a research-oriented profile that, although it insists on active commitment to the struggles of the actors with whom it relates, it does not offer forms of direct link, such as professional practices.

Project Management and its Implication for Collaborative Research: Junctures, Funding and Institutional Articulations

As has been pointed out, research and extension practices were woven together with the collective proposals articulated with OCAN, in a context marked by specific situations and periods of government that influenced actions in the field, in addition to far-reaching processes that also conditioned them.

According to the variable periodicity with which the authors conducted fieldwork, sometimes attending to "be there" (Guber, 2001), according to the ethnographic imperative of direct observation, without any particular activity, and at other times with a premeditated work schedule, our role was seen by the members of the organization in different ways. Sometimes as teachers and sometimes as technicians, but generally the authors' presence was associated with a figure of "allies," in their own words. This caused a shift in the horizons of the authors' professional practice, engaging with the demands of the organization.

Alternatively, the presentation and execution of extension projects was central, as it allowed the research to have a practical and territorial support that, in addition to having an economic contribution to finance activities, supported the design of workshops that promoted other ways of dialoguing and mapping the present.

In the quest to understand this complex plot, the authors are interested in highlighting several aspects that outline the limits and possibilities of collaborative research. In this sense, although the fact of reconfiguring the objectives of the research allows the linking of academic interests with organizational dynamics, the hierarchical reciprocal relationship that occurs in the multiple negotiations in the field defines different positions. In this case, the authors finance the economy by working in CONICET as scholarship holders, which translates into scientific texts and participation in research projects and programs. This also refers to asymmetrical logics of knowledge reproduction, insofar as the authors' privilege is given by the autonomy of research whose productions are not controlled by indigenous organizations. In the case of OCAN, its knowledge and experience are key tools for defending, demanding and creating new rights. Between both poles, with the intention of orienting the research according to the narratives, interests and concerns of the organization, the authors seek to attenuate those asymmetries between the academic work and the possibility of committing themselves to the political processes by collaborating in the elaboration of diverse materials such as, for example, the projects managed together with different indigenous referents and leaders.

Alternatively, the authors emphasize that both academic and collaborative projects were articulated in connection with funding provided by both the State and NGOs at that time. In a certain way, it is remarkable how, beyond organizational agendas, the power to articulate projects depends on managing subsidies considered relevant according to criteria formulated by funding agencies. It also depends on the circumstances and the investment in public policies that allow the implementation of programs, both in terms of human rights of indigenous peoples and science and technology.

As mentioned, this research became insufficient at certain times due to the scarce resources available to carry out the work, which, although supported by doctoral grants and extension projects, were not enough to pay for the field work (the money was quickly devalued or took a long time to be paid). Likewise, the pandemic context also had an impact on the inquiries and implied resorting to virtual platforms to continue linking.

Along the way, the authors employed different strategies that allowed combining research, extension, and collaboration practices. The frequency of the trips was made possible by the Secretariat of Family Agriculture (SsAF, for its Spanish acronym) and its "qualified technicians,"[25] a state institution that has been coordinating technical and productive aspects of family, peasant, and indigenous agriculture since the early 1990s. Thus, the authors sustained stays of between three and five days, at least until 2019.

Similarly, during 2015-2017, the authors attended the radio training courses given by the Public Defender of Audiovisual Communication Services in Nazareno, combining activities and proposals to strengthen the FM OCAN. However, the institutional articulations were not always harmonious. During the government of the Alianza Cambiemos, the SsAF suffered a brutal budget cut and the national government dismissed almost 400 workers throughout the country, 26 of them belonging to the province of Salta. This had an impact on territorial work and, in Nazareno, led to a decrease in technical assistance and the implementation of productive projects. The same happened with the Ombudsman's Office, which was affected by the interruption in its work with respect to public hearings, training and promotion of the right to communication.

Also, the authors identified certain limitations related to academic work. They refer to Argentina's science and technology model which, despite having

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25. In 1993, the World Bank-financed Social Agricultural Program was created, which belonged to the National Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. In 2007, this program was established as the Undersecretariat of Family Agriculture. That same year, the SsAF incorporated, as a result of a lawsuit filed by the indigenous organizations, territorial technicians belonging to each municipality and/or locality, who would be known as "experts" due to their knowledge and understanding of local problems.

numerous organizations and institutions that make up the National Science and Technology System, has historically allocated a smaller budget to the area of Social and Human Sciences. In line with the dismantling of the SsAF and the Ombudsman's Office, the scientific system was no exception. From 2016 to the present, the budget reduction paralyzed research projects and deteriorated the salaries of its researchers. Regarding this area in CONICET, a report prepared in 2019 (Instituto de investigaciones en ciencias sociales y humanidades, 2019) by fellows of the Instituto de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (ICSOH) of the National University of Salta, indicates that of the 450 researchers who entered the Research Career, 17.7% of a total of 2,595 of the applicants, only 38 correspond to the social area: 8.44% of the researchers who actually entered.

Furthermore, CONICET's productive matrix promotes a meritocratic and productivist logic, considering that research is satisfactory according to the number of publications in books or indexed scientific journals. Little evaluation is made of the territorial work or the conditions under which it is carried out. This impacts not only academic work, but also the possibilities of expanding reflective dialogues that promote an "ecology of knowledge" (de Sousa Santos, 2012).

These are some of the limitations encountered when building bridges between academic research and collaborative projects. In this case, the strategies and alliances described throughout this text were built through institutional and organizational articulations, which allowed the research processes not to be separated from extension and collaboration practices committed to indigenous struggles.

Conclusions

In this article a critical reflection on the practices of research, extension and collaboration in articulation with the demands and interests of a Kolla indigenous organization is presented.

Initially, work focused on indigenous communication projects that sought to contribute to the management of FM OCAN. Particularly, the university extension was particularly fruitful in order to combine the perspective of human rights and collaboration, as proposals committed to the indigenous struggles to build autonomous and dignified spaces to live in. In this direction, the authors will focus on reconstructing the organizational processes in the inter-Andean valleys, delving into the historical-political circumstances that operated in the formation of indigenous collectives. Over time, the work evolved into research

committed to organizational demands. The way in which the authors combined different projects modified their research interests in an attempt to understand and explain local political processes.

In this way, participation in the formulation and execution of projects related to various topics gave access to the organization's own sources and to meetings that otherwise would not have been possible to attend. It should be clarified that these sources, little considered by social studies in the region, were taken up again in the research.

However, this experience also denotes certain tensions linked to conventional academic logics, especially those promoted by organizations such as CONICET, which demand scientific standards that must be reflected in the publication of numerous articles in journals categorized as first level. This is paradoxical for proposals committed to social change and that criticize those ways of producing knowledge, even though such proposals are favorably evaluated.

In the case of the tasks required "in the field," and in accordance with Claudia Briones and Ana María Gosorito-Kramer (2007, p. 371), it is contradictory how nowadays, while ethnographic fieldwork is revalued, the deadlines required are more limited and the horizon consists of maintaining or "entering a career" in research. Even so, the authors tried to move away from the modes of knowledge production that characterize the university environment and gambled on linking themselves directly with the often urgent demands of both OCAN and Qullamarka. This shows the need to constantly review and reconfigure research and extension projects, taking into account particular interests, as well as the historical and political context in which they are developed.

Finally, the authors are witnessing an era that evidences the need to formulate proposals and discussions that consider new methodological approaches within the framework of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, the authors were not exempt from thinking and recreating strategies through virtual platforms and network communication that allowed maintaining contact. This required improving material conditions for connectivity, as well as devising new ways of linking research and projects articulated with indigenous organizations.

Currently, the project the authors are implementing with the women of Nazareno has dedicated part of its budget to the purchase of communication and connectivity equipment to strengthen virtual meetings and workshops. The authors also work within the framework of health protocols for outdoor activities, guaranteeing the necessary care.

However, for these projects to become a reality, it is imperative that the State and, especially the country's science and technology organizations, design encouraging alternatives so that the academic and scientific community can carry out field work with the respective health care or, at least, open the discussion at a general level to share possible disjunctions among their workers. Otherwise, in addition to the economic precariousness in which the authors find themselves, which continues to deepen, they are witnessing a virtualization of academic practices that does not stop in the face of exceptionality and has been called the new normality.

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