

USING FEMINISM AND DECOLONIAL ANALYSIS TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIPS TO NATURE

Biocultural scholarship seeks to understand the diverse ways people relate to nature. Yet studies to date haven't sufficiently considered social justice, with little exploration on how the role of gender, for example, affects biocultural approaches. Isabel Díaz Reviriego, Jasmine Pearson and Beatriz Vizuete reflect on how considering gender and power relations can result in more impactful research. (*People and Nature* doi.org/m97h)

Who was involved in this project?

Our author team was composed by early-to-middle career researchers from different corners of the world both from the Global South and North. We have highly interdisciplinary profiles and while representing backgrounds in ecology, economy, psychology, social science, gender studies, biology, political ecology and agroecology, we could be considered under the broad umbrella of sustainability scientists.

How did you find working with a group from different disciplines?

We really enjoy working with a diverse group of people from different disciplinary backgrounds as it's always enriching to see how everyone can bring their own unique yet complementary knowledge, skills and experiences to the same research question. Of course, working



as an interdisciplinary team comes with challenges too, especially in terms of communication which can sometimes lead to tensions and even conflicts later down the track.

What have you learnt from other disciplines that you would apply to your own work?

I (JP) really valued the critical discussions about decolonisation and critical feminist theories, initiated by co-authors from political ecology and psychology backgrounds. Listening to and learning from such perspectives inspires me to continue evolving as a reflexive researcher. Broadly speaking, interdisciplinary research has advanced my knowledge in ecology and natural science, helping to inform my own approach to addressing the social dimensions of conservation.

Were there any awkward moments?

Initially, there were diverse understandings of how a literature review can be done (e.g., systematic review, narrative review) and whether quantitative descriptions of the papers reviewed needed to be included. We ended up writing a piece with some parts described in more quantitative way and some others in a qualitative way. It seems this mixed approached worked

well in providing a nuanced picture on how biocultural approaches have considered gender and power issues.

Were there any surprising discoveries from this research?

The lack of critical reflexivity among studies we analysed was a bit surprising. While we were not expecting too many papers reflecting on positionality, 5 out of 70 seemed wild to us. Especially since the topic is gender, so you'd think positionality would be quite important in this field.

What advice would you give to anybody embarking on an interdisciplinary project?

To practice active listening and care. Caring about the interdisciplinary process can at times mean to disclose and discuss misunderstandings and potential disagreements. Avoid taking disagreement personally and encourage positive feedback. Being open to the unexpected, to unlearning and recognising others' skills, knowledge and academic worldviews – revising hegemonic knowledge and established practices can bring new insights and joy into our ways of working.

What non ecology paper would you recommend?

Turnhout 2024 (doi.org/m97i) call towards justice and pluralism in environmental sciences and inspire ecologists (and scientist in general) to reflect on what the knowledge they produce do and whether it contributes – or not – to addressing, transforming and replacing underlying colonial structures of science and dominant ecological approaches for a more ethical and legitimate knowledge production processes that can bring about transformative change. ✨

Isabel Díaz Reviriego, Jasmine Pearson and Beatriz Vizuete share a common interest in exploring matters of diversity, equity, inclusion, and participation in sustainability research. www.bioculturaldiversity.de