

Decolonizing¹ Knowledge to Eradicate Poverty

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Abstract

Poverty studies need to be carried out in new ways since the established ones have not had the support to catalyze policies that eradicate it. So it is, that has increased the number of poor. The objective of this essay proposes a different manner of generating knowledge about poverty. Here it is established that, instead of observing deficiencies, we look at potentialities that support the generation of transdisciplinary alternatives to reconstruct life projects. This document presents a reflective analysis - method used - on the concept of the decolonization of power with the objective of justifying the urgency on the decolonization of the academic knowledge that is cultivated on the poverty. It is considered the need to include the thinking of the poor about how they look at themselves and how they manage to "bullfight" the uncertainty and the social and ecological complexity in which they live. But not to create charity, or paternalistic projects, but so that this procedure is taken as potentialities. Finally, this paper proposes that theory and practice shall be built on an alliance of - erudite and daily knowledge - to form knowledge-generating chains. In order to create solutions "handcrafted, born of a strong sense of community: intercultural and interdisciplinary - based on the pluri-diverse and the multi-universe. This would trigger a new look on poverty, remove adverse labels to place potentialities, strengths and hopes of all those individuals who have survived the grievance and adversity that the one-dimensional vision has imposed.

Keywords: decolonization, knowledge, poverty, coloniality of power, otherness

1. Introduction

The methodological frameworks that form part of research projects do not allow the inclusion of people's knowledge because it is denounced knowledge and because researchers are also conditioned by "their position [...] in the capitalist production system, in the ideology that this produces or imposes" (Foucault, 2013: 434). Then the truth produced by the intellectuals of globalized capitalism creates barriers through definitions, which diminishes the depth of the reading of reality. This context is fundamental in the creation of intricate administrative, political and economic processes. Processes that in turn simplify the meaning of poverty with learned and structured words in foreign languages, often incomprehensible to the poor. However, definitions -not inclusive of the thinking of the poor- are unfortunately also accepted and internalized by the same labelled people, assuming the story told by those who define themselves as experts on poverty; nullifying their conception and definition of themselves.

"[...] there is a system of power that hinders, prohibits, invalidates that discourse and that knowledge. It is a power that is not only historically located in the higher instances of censorship, but also submerges more deeply, more subtly, in every fabric of society. The intellectuals themselves are part of this system of power, the idea that they are the agents of "consciousness" and of discourse belongs to this system" (Foucault, 2013: 434-435)

The globalizing system has its channels to construct or deconstruct. One of these channels is found in science and technology, the knowledge that is recreated in these spaces are the intellectual foundations that feed the

¹ Decolonization as seen as a deconstruction is a different concept from mainstream decolonization. This is based on the fact that the decolonization that Peoples of the Third World lived, was only legal since it just freed them from European power and control. But it was not a process that transformed cultural, social, political and economic colonization. Those who replaced the old oppressors subjugated the colonized Peoples.

processes of design, construction and implementation of public policies. Else Øyen (2004) throughout her work argues that the studies on poverty begin from standardized assumptions that result in a uniform definition so that the investigations, many times, are a representation of those models; constructed from the social and economic interests that are reflected in the methodological structuring, a search to reify the *objects* of study, eliminating social and ecological complexity, the reason: to facilitate the implementation of the plans designed to "fight poverty". The main axis of this design has to do with the categorization of the poor through the distribution of income. Perhaps the candid thinking of the non-poor is based on the perception that people in poverty simply need to increase their income per capita to quit that problem. For these experts, poverty is an issue of income; its reading is a judgement and in no way supportive, not being able to understand that those people are *hostages* of structural circumstances, which are barriers impossible to break. Political, economic, social and cultural structures disregard everything different from what is established, among those are: culture, the way of seeing the world and the ways in which human beings wish to live or to rebuild their life project. With this *silly* gaze, programs are created without the interests of people located in the territory concerned; what is even more serious is to think that the transfer of "successful" strategic plans from a distant country - which also turns out to be poor - will be successful in another part on the planet. However, these assumptions do not work out, since the conditions are different in every way.

It is important to take into account that, although we belong to the same species, the difference is what unites us and separates us. Therefore, this aspect should be the platform of the programs of social development established in article 6, mentioned below, especially when there are laws stating that everyone has rights that support their path to the achievement of well being and happiness.

Article 6 of the General Law of Social Development establishes that education, health, food, housing, enjoyment of a healthy environment, work and social security, and those related to non-discrimination in terms of the Constitution are rights for social development. (Congress, 2016: 3)

All Mexican citizens have the right to access these programs, but only have the possibility to compete for planned and rationed resources in government programs. This is not much use because in reality these programs are made with palliative intent and, consequently, do not strengthen life projects as officially proclaimed (Bourdieu, 2002). The bureaucratic framework makes a pitiful reading about poverty that fails to free the "hostages" of their circumstance because this is a structural condition:

[T]he fact of opening competitions to everyone is not at all a risk to privileges, one can conclude that the Jacobin tradition is mystified when it tries to persuade itself that, by defending the competitions, it advocates a revolutionary conquest (Bourdieu, 2002: 67)

It is highly possible that by opening a series of calls to action or competitions for programs to *combat poverty*, people truly believe it is possible to bring the vulnerable a possibility of having a decent life. However, the administrative forms or styles of allocation provoke strife that divides Peoples and, for the most part, catalyse the formation of power reserves within the localities, whether urban or rural. The conventional view of how to make the poor stop being so is based on the technocratic illusion that they need technology to increase their income, so the programs to combat poverty are designed in packages that include fertilizers, antibiotics or nutritional supplements, among others (Easterly, 2013).

2. Categories or Tags

In an earlier work (Santiago, 2004), the result of an investigation is that extension agents, in the eagerness to place the programs, create territories in dispute during the allocation process. These external characters to locality become economic leaders, polarizing life projects by offering local actors "the material salvation" in exchange for signatures and identity documents, used for their own interests. These extension agents demand compliance with requirements that in practice are structured categories, many of them discriminatory rules, a masked organization justifying the need to detail whether the subject in question fits or does not fit into a given program. Fitting in a category is the key that gives access to resources, what is not contemplated is that there are no strategies, nor provisions that make it possible for resources to reach everyone. Arturo Escobar (2007) explains that the boundaries constructed to delimit the categories of poverty are framed and materialized in case studies, established formulas, standardized recipes that do not include the context in which the person has his life detailed; resulting in tags and reifications that subjects them to "objective" processes of management and administration. Which means that:

[T]he categories [tags] determine the access to resources, so that people have to adjust to the categorization in order to succeed in their relationships with the

institution. A key mechanism operating here is that the whole reality of a person is reduced to a single feature or characteristic (access to land, for example, or inability to read and write). In other words, the person becomes a "case." It is rarely understood that the case is more a reflection of the way in which the institution constructs "the problem", and the whole dynamics of rural poverty is reduced to the solution of a number of "cases", with no apparent connection with structural determinants, and much less with the common experiences to the rural population (Escobar, 2007: 190).

The definition of the problem and the definition of variables by those interested in researching the poor sculpt the results of a reality that is shaped according to the imaginary and the interests of a group of "experts" in constructing their theoretical framework and methods to use. Researchers restricted by the conditions of scholarships and financing, are conditioned to frame their work within a higher objective: human well being; well being that does not hesitate to sacrifice those who stand in their way to concrete it. The mystique is soaked in ideologies, values and practices of the institutions where researchers have been formed; the one that guides them to create ties and social relations with the makers of supreme rules and to be in solidarity with them. For the case of some social scientists that, immersed in this context, carry out investigations that justify the hegemonic ideologies, categorizing the poor as the Other² because it is not in the field from where it is being observed. Strangely, it turns the poor into a chameleonic being because it becomes visible and invisible at the same time; just take a look at all those "daily bullfighters"³ at the traffic lights (see Photo 1), who risk their lives in order to be favoured with a few coins from the motorists. These "daily bullfighters" are visible, but in a matter of an instant they are invisible to the sneaky eyes of a society that does not know how to understand their situation and avoids looking at them so as not to be infected by that evil called poverty.

² The Other in this article is not used in Lacanian terms, but as the otherness that is disdained by whom has the control and the power to make it invisible.

³In this document we call Daily Bullfighter to people who walk among cars selling things, offering their services to clean windshields or begging. Day in day out, same landscape at the traffic lights in Puebla, and most cities in México. Children, young and old people "bullfighting danger" to survive.



Figure 1. Daily bullfighter: A little boy at the traffic lights

Source: Own photograph taken in September 2016.

That furtive glance is loaded with tags: ignorant, negligent, conformist, apathetic, bad example, ugly, dirty, among other things⁴. These tags are distributed through different media, agencies and institutions, as part of an indoctrination; disciplining society to make their own decisions in the light of a reality based on a colonizing, homogenizing and subjugating thought. Foucault (2014: 27) explains that "discipline is exercised over the body of individuals and security, [...] it is exercised on the population as a whole." This means that both the population that looks with mistrust at poor and the poor themselves being labelled by those who are in charge of providing security, in an effort to safeguard the values of a welfare that they consider superior to that of the masses of the poor. In this sense, it will be possible to hear the privileged population say, when villages are deprived of water to create dams or to supply it to big cities: "someone has to sacrifice for the good of the country", that benefit of the country is considered a superior welfare but has a structural failure: to benefit some and leave others in helplessness.

The growth of the number of poor people demands to generate strategies that remove the validity of those tags. In this sense, it is required an investigation that deconstructs them, in order to begin the deconstruction, a very important premise is to find the mechanisms that conceive them, materialize them and make them functional. In this context, it is important to know: What responsibility lies behind research on the poor and their resources? What is the ideology that goes through the definition of the poor as lazy, dependent, among others? How important is it to categorize and label the poor in political, economic and cultural terms? Who benefits from the detailed dissection that is made of them? Who owns the information's outcome? Who paid to have it done? It is important to know all of the above, since much of the research that categorizes the poor is the foundation used to design policies and consequently, various programs to combat poverty. But what kind of policy do the policies to combat poverty have? How do the politics of the policy of combat to poverty indoctrinates those who implement

⁴ An analysis is made in previous works of how fishermen were deprived, practically out of their hands, 10000 hectares to build Huatulco Bays, in Oaxaca. The argument was that such a heavenly place could not remain in the hands of people who had no idea of the wealth where they were settled.

public policies? Finally, does the way of representing the poor perpetuate poverty? In a more concrete way, all these questions can be summarized in two, according to the thinking of Jacques Derrida (1989), the questions would be embedded in the question What must be deconstructed in order to define poverty and the scientific method that scrutinizes it? Understanding that these questions seek to be "an act of decentralization, a radical dissolution of all claims of absolute, homogenous and hegemonic *truth*" (Krieger, 2004: 183).



Figure 2. Daily bullfighter: little children at the traffic light

Source: Own photograph taken in September 2016.

As for Else Øyen (2004)⁵, she analyses how the poor have been represented and talks about how the majority of us act consciously or unconsciously. She also considers the ways in which the poor can remain poor, taking up their words: we are perpetrators of poverty through actions. On the other hand, Tuhiwai (2012 [1999]) in his book "Decolonizing methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples" says that research on indigenous people -people who are mostly poor- has been a process that exploits and colonizes them again and again, recurrently. At the time of the colony it was done more directly, through the sword and the cross; but now the ways of colonizing are subtler. The problem instead of diminishing increases and in this growth the academy has much to do with the ways in which it analyses the phenomenon. Therefore it is required that the academy establishes new starting points to do research with a new point of view.

[T]he essential point is to take into account the fact that there is a talk about [poverty], [but we must find] who does it, the places and the points of view from which it is spoken, the institutions that incite it and store and disseminate what is said, in a word. The global "discursive fact" and "the carrying out of this" [on poverty]. (Foucault, 1998 [1977]: 10).

At the same time, research has to be established and promoted from the areas of poverty, from vulnerable areas, from the perspective of those labelled as poor, from the word of the poor. In this way, it will be established an interpretation of poverty from within themselves, with proposals for the reconstruction of life, projects that are based on the potentialities they maintain, discard, invent or reinvent through confronting uncertainty and social and ecological complexity.

3. The Coloniality of Poverty

According to the twenty-third edition of the Royal Spanish Language Dictionary (RAE), colony means "territory outside the nation that made it its own, and ordinarily ruled by special laws." It also defines it as "a set of people

⁵ According to Øyen (2004: 1) the representation of poverty has taken place in three phases: a) storytelling -life stories-; b) studies focused on clientelism and development research; and (c) knowledge built on poverty reduction.

who, from one territory, establishes itself in another." In these two definitions of the word colony what is relevant is how one territory becomes another, but that belongs to a different nation. That is to say, it is invaded and at the same time rules are imposed so that the group of people that come to settle in that territory live, not according to the existing rules in the invaded territory, but with special laws created and transferred to appropriate "adequately" of all that it contains - flowers, minerals and individuals of the *human and not human species*. Colonization entails the transfer of culture and social forms of the nation that imposes itself on a territory; this transfer can be in a *peaceful* way, but sometimes it is violent or at some historical moment it becomes violent. When this colonization is violent, relations of power are put into circulation; which leads to imperialism because it extends to achieve absolute control of the territory. Domination is not only physical, it is also emotional; since its inhabitants are labelled, classified and reified to facilitate their management according to the interests of the class that dominates the territory. Colonialism:

[...] it strictly refers to a structure of domination and exploitation, where control of political authority, production resources and labour of a given population is held by another of different identity, and whose headquarters are also in another territorial jurisdiction. But not always, nor necessarily, imply racist relations of power (Quijano, 2007: 93).

Quijano (2007) emphasizes at the end of the definition that colonialism does not imply racist relations of power; these power relations are built from the ambitious look on the colonized territory, but above all because in most of the times this economic, cultural and/or social expansion happens in a violent manner. He further argues that colonialism is an ancient action, but that it engendered a new form of subjugation of peoples, which he calls "coloniality"; action that is constituted by relations of power becoming more devastating than the same colonization, because it is based on the conformation of hegemonic structures that subjugate and deny the other that originally lived in the territory. Coloniality is:

[...] one of the constituent and specific elements of the world pattern of capitalist power. It is based on the imposition of a racial/ethnic classification of the world's population as the cornerstone of that pattern of power, and operates in each one of the planes, areas and dimensions, material and subjective, of daily existence and at scale (Quijano, 2007: 93).

This type of structure draws fine lines that divide the populations, materialized by actions backed by laws that benefit the interests of the dominant minority. Tags are created to exclude and are available in the social imaginary through all means available, they are applied regularly to the incomprehensible Other. What is seen as a threat and carries a risk to the stability defined by those who build freedom and Eurocentric democracy. In other words, a system of visible and invisible distinctions is constructed, [it is necessary to make relevant that] the invisible constitute the foundation of the visible ones "(De Sousa Santos, 2010: 13). The negation of the Other creates a framework of knowledge that legally institutionalizes a series of injustices protected by justice. A clear example of this is present in México. In 2012, 8502 indigenous people were imprisoned for not knowing how to defend themselves against what they were accused of, the prosecution was carried out in the dominant language, Castilian; also they did not have access to a translator (Padilla, 2013). Many of these unjust acts, committed in the light of justice, have their roots in the ambition to deprive, either of resources or of dignity, backed by the law. The injustice of justice is possible through separations concealed by humanitarian rules where the brokenness of the reasons for living of the Others is hidden. The rules are applied uncensored, cynically, under the eyes of legality (De Sousa Santos, 2010). A second example of this posture is the imposition of the construction of the Independence Aqueduct by the Sonora government in the Yaqui territory. This aqueduct still has the purpose of transferring annually 75 million liters to the city of Hermosillo, Sonora, México, water that will benefit the industry⁶, rather than the citizens. The Yaqui people managed to suspend construction; but the bidding went ahead. Yaquis, are invisible, they do not exist. The town's spokesman, Mario Luna, told the newspaper La Jornada "even though we have won and been given the right to the court, the government does not stop the project and has launched a campaign of hatred against us" (Olivares and Camacho, Monday, June 21, 2014). The rule of law is broken, by looking the other way, closing ears, listening carefully to the interests of those who feed the globalized market to, and setting a price to a common good, water, cultural foundation of a People; but above all of their survival. The transfer of water puts the Yaqui people at risk and pushes them to become ecological migrants, future poor individuals in foreign lands. Ultimately, laws are applied selectively,

⁶ The labour park in Hermosillo, Sonora offers industrial cisterns to stock up on water and never lack it. <http://parquelabor.mx/caracteristicas/>

leaving indigenous peoples without their legitimate right to water. In view of the foregoing, it can be affirmed that the structure of "Western modern thought" advances by operating on abysmal lines that divide human from subhuman in such a way that human principles are not compromised by inhuman practices "(De Sousa Santos, 2010: 19). In other words, the justification for superior welfare, such as the "generation of jobs" through the growth of industry, is a catalyst for genocide towards the Yaqui people. It is important to see that these justifications are backed by scientific knowledge committed to hegemonic processes. In other words, information is considered a truth that can be used to strip people. The scientific truth is clothed under the framework of the value-neutrality of science and, therefore, of technology. The argument of the objectivity of diagnostics and the construction of knowledge, artefacts, and technological and non-technological systems disdains traditional knowledge or knowledge of people, labelling it as simple, prejudiced or backward; but it should be emphasized that labelling knowledge implies also labelling culture and the procedures that underpin it.

3.1 Coloniality of Power

The strategy of categorizing the poor through tags turns them vulnerable, disposable, manipulative, invisible and rescue objects from "charitable souls" who wish to redeem their faults, without removing the real reason for poverty: the coloniality processes to those which they are subject and perpetrate poverty. The adjective poor in the dictionary, is described by the RAE as: Needy, who does not have what it takes to live; Humble, of little value or entity or unhappy, and Sad⁷, the word poor encloses a sidelong glance over the shoulders, and from that look assessments are made that do not include the version of those who are being valued. Thus, the poor is created, establishing unbalanced cognitive territories. "Today as [in colonial times], the creation and denial of the other side of the line are constitutive of hegemonic principles and practices" (De Sousa Santos, 2010: 19).

Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, (2007) scholars of the concept of coloniality of power argue that the world has not been completely decolonized because the process was limited to legal-political independence of the peripheries with respect to the central countries; but colonization has remained in the structures of all political and economic organisms that control social life of colonized peoples. So new alternative processes must come into play to achieve a more evolved release.

[Decoloniality] will have to address the heterarchy of the multiple racial, ethnic, sexual, epistemic, economic, and gender relations that the first decolonization left intact; [...] [in addition] is a process of long-term resignification, which cannot be reduced to a legal-political event (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007: 17).

The value-neutrality of tags, which is created by the Western hegemonic knowledge, must be reshaped through a dialogue of consciousness with all that knowledge that has been devastated in the process of conquest. Methodological boundaries need to be redefined and relaxed, to fit everything that has been labelled as irrational or, worse yet, ignored. Colonization brought with it single-disciplinary concepts and theorization that eliminated and made invisible the knowledge of ordinary people, knowledge that is not heard because it is said that they lack scientific truth. This characteristic, defined from the "coloniality of power" (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007) submitted the knowledge of the people, common, traditional or vernacular knowledge. Michel Foucault describes it as a process where:

"... historical contents ... were buried, masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations [...] [are] a whole series of knowledge that [are] disqualified as non-conceptual knowledge, as insufficiently elaborated knowledge: naive knowledge, hierarchical knowledge Inferior, [is] knowledge below the level of scientific knowledge required "(Foucault, 2000: 21).

3.2 Disqualification to Transplant Techniques and Products

Disqualification does not allow people to describe themselves outside the parameters of categorizations, in this way their history is made up and in that construction the history of those who make it is also shaped in terms of the control and power that can be exerted over the Other; that is to say that in classifying the fraction at a disadvantage, the fraction with greater possibilities is also invented in order to be able to distance itself from those it considers inferior, hence universal history mainly pictures Western world's history as the civilized and carrier of the truth. Luis Villoro (1998 [1950]) in his book "The Great Moments of Indigenism in Mexico" unravels how the structure of colonial thought is rooted in public policies to become welfare programs managing order and control through the hands of a few, heirs of those who arrived in brigantines beyond the sea.

⁷ Spanish dictionary. Edition of the Tercentennial. Visited on September 15, 2016. Available online: <http://dle.rae.es/?id=TSXVHEa>

From the time of the colony, the conquered were defined; although, the curious thing about this categorization is that authors who never set foot on American soil made it; still the intentionality was to put distance between a wild continent using the reason as a metric. "Universal reason, the Western instrument of domination, implies as such an instrument the conversion of every object into its image and likeness. [...] [it] will become thus, the rational in the model of things, in the primordial exemplar of all that exists" (Villoro 1998: 116). With the slogan of making the territory more liveable, the Spaniards initiated a process that still prevails to this day, to convert the inhabitants of the original peoples and later to transplant techniques and products with the objective of erecting on these social structures the control and the power to define their destination. The original societies were represented since then. The description of the forms of life and customs of the Mesoamerican cultures has been in function of the meaning that the Westerners use. During the colony, the definitions fluctuated between two feelings and meanings: one that praised the material part, the splendor; and the other condemned the spiritual side for its practices, which were defined as pagan. The pagan tag based the acts of subjugation that the peoples lived. Although the Peoples of America achieved their independence, the original Peoples only entered into that independence through recognition of the magnificence of their material achievements; however, they are kept out of that cultural independence, due to the incompatibility of their cultural, religious, economic and political behaviours with regards to the dominant culture.

4. The Decolonization of the Representation of the Poor

The usefulness of vulnerable societies in their colonized condition for members of the dominant elites has had a historical context. For example, during the colonial period, the Mexican indigenous - a stripped-down and colonized society - were profitable for the Jesuit priest Francisco Xavier Clavijero who succeeded in getting the history of the continent into the annals of universal history, but he did not take the alive native -his contemporary- no, he speaks and praises the individual who participated in the construction of the great Tenochtitlan, an indigenous of the past. From the culture Culúa-Mexica, he elaborates a great argument to build the bases of Mexican nationality. It is on the shoulders of the glorious past that he builds the defence of his homeland: America. (Clavijero, 2000). Today, as in the past, the heirs of historically vaunted characters go unnoticed when they stand at the corners or run through the rows of cars when the traffic lights are red, bullfighting danger everyday.

The representation of the poor is colonized by the point of view that defines it, but there are also behind them expropriating interests. In this sense, when it is said that there is freedom for all to build a plan of life that concretizes their well-being and happiness, it is important to emphasize that the definition of freedom does not provide the possibilities for all to achieve; then that freedom to progress becomes an unattainable chimera; plus turning also into a frustrated experience because it is used to stigmatize those who do not make use of it. "It is not enough to guarantee the law and the consent of others, there must be adequate social conditions. Not all individuals are free if they are not in a position to make their choices of life a reality" (Villoro, 2005 [2001]: 23). To ensure freedom without restrictions requires not only political commitments, but also all other agencies and institutions must implement actions based on the desire to decolonize (Quijano, 2000) the ways in which the poor are represented. Therefore, new methodological schemes are needed to understand the complexity and uncertainty of people trapped in this socially and ecologically unfair context. The academy, but with greater emphasis the intellectuals that conform it, is responsible for partial representations or focused on colonizing thoughts, because the results of the projects seek the deficiencies and frame them in numbers and schemes that do not allow the potentialities to be seen. In other words, it is necessary to put on the table the resistance strategies that individuals construct in the daily life.

4.1 Intellectuals and Their Responsibility

The academy has to analyse itself and reconnect with its purpose, making each citizen a realizer of fair and democratic destinations with the tools that are provided in a classroom. It is vitally important to start building a new vision that emanates from a direct relationship with reality, restructuring knowledge-generating systems, those that design strategies or models so that privileged sectors of society can be more competitive. Strategies or models analyse little or no socioecological impacts that each system or artefact designed, constructed or put into practice exert on society and ecosystems. Giving priority to the good of mankind, ethical valuation ceases to be an objective, if possible it hides and shapes the externalities; however, they do not talk about how they will impact the lives of the most vulnerable, nor how much poverty they perpetrate. Much less it is established who will be responsible for these externalities. The intellectuals dissipate collateral damage with the argument of the generation of jobs and the impulse of the economy. The reality is that in the same way Eurocentric countries define peripheral countries as underdeveloped. In this sense, Western culture, putting itself as a starting point and end, cuts everything that is different because it does not fit into its concept of development, its vision is

unidirectional and not a plural view. Individuals belonging to the dominant society classify the individuals who depart from the scheme copied from the West. However, it must be clear that the construction of knowledge and its impartiality has the obligation to create free spaces outside the injustice of justice. Although Peoples became independent the dependent structure is maintained, it has never been eradicated.

In Latin America the main result of independence was the removal of the “Oligarchic state” and some of its instances in the social existence of the population of these countries. But neither its historical/structural dependence on the global coloniality of power nor the modes of exploitation and domination inherent in this pattern of power were eradicated or altered sufficiently to give rise to a democratic production and management of the state, resources of production, nor of the distribution and appropriation of the product. Neither the debate managed, despite its intensity, to free itself from the hegemony of Eurocentrism (Quijano, 2014: 21).

If in the processes of dependence, modes of exploitation and domination were not eradicated in their entirety, it means that power over the most vulnerable only passed from one hand to another. The countries remained colonized, but now by an internal power of *national* character, power that “in the interests of capitalist progress renounced to social justice” (Lozano, 2003: 11). Those left behind became a drag on the modernizing evolution of the country, through processes of control and power they were renamed to distance them from the dominant political, cultural and economic spaces; generating silences for the information to be decontextualized, hidden, invisible, complex (Foucault, 2012). Economic salvation is written in crooked lines, used as a tabula rasa, efficient in the discretion for the granting of programs or the exercise of public policies. There is freedom to compete for financing, but a large number of people are not within that range, for that narrower range there are freedoms based on a policy of freedom with fewer obstacles to achieve it. For the vast majority, however, there are no accesses that lead them to build a life project that evolves to achieve dignity and longed for well-being. It is important to visualize that in many cases, it is not because of a lack of capacity to successfully complete the procedures, but in the social reality, the right conditions do not exist. The complexities in which administrative processes are developed “invite” corrupt characters to rob people in need of those resources. People can choose a way of life; but a great number of obstacles must be overcome in order to achieve or die in the attempt.

5. Epistemic Decolonization as Transformative Axis

The internalization of an intellectual process of decoloniality within the academy is urgent and essential; we cannot speak of doing good to society through knowledge that is recognized as neutral. The academy must free itself from the constraints imposed by the institutions that grant funding and condition the political and economic direction of research projects. The academy must free itself from tags imposed by institutions that provide financing and condition the political and economical path of the investigation projects; on the contrary, based on the premise that “knowledge is free of moral values and therefore in itself it does not pose ethical problems (Olive, 2000: 57)”. This means that ethical problems are made available to those who make use of that knowledge. Knowledge, therefore, is a means to achieve certain purposes determined by the interests of those who use them. Academics embrace the Pilate syndrome when they use knowledge to transform ecosystems for the good of humanity, such as diverting a river to carry water to transnational corporations or contaminating it by mining. Knowledge in both cases has been created to materialize clearly visible goals, no matter any possible externalities.

The academy is in the choice of respecting the social contract that is based on making social conditions possible for all, so that they are able to make their reasonable choices of life a reality (Villoro, 2005). David Barkin (2012) in his work called “Towards a new social paradigm” questions the intellectual practice that serves as a transmission chain for the ideology that constructs more injustices rather than alleviating them, to the point of breaking the natural structures on which life itself depends. In this sense, the question arises as to which instruments would evaluate the practice within the facilities where the research is carried out, as well as in the places where teaching is practiced. It is necessary to construct ethical tools that take away the neutrality of knowledge and its instruments, thus counteracting the extension of the roots of malignity (Barkin, 2012)

Santiago (2015) and Santiago *et al.* (2012) analyse how the academy has worked mostly to create citizens unable to make critical analysis on the so-called modernity ethics and its sister the industrialization. However, when academics participate in the transformation of students, turning them into modern, addictive consumers, or specialized predators of the planet, it does not take an important reference in its indoctrinating processes: the finite of the source that supports the model that is distributed in the classrooms, Nature. It is necessary to establish as a central point in teaching and research, that modernizing and industrial processes

rest in a very special parasitism: it is designed in such a way [...] that the host, who has completely subordinated the host [Nature], must now take care that the latter shall not be extinguished (Echeverria, 2016: 10).

Nature and poverty go together because both suffer the injustice of justice. The visible deterioration of social and ecological conditions requires special attention from public policies and from the academy to create ways out of crisis circumstances (Escobar, 2014). The technical knowledge that is used in the study centres goes against life itself, pushing students to think that resources are infinite and that having a frugal life without belonging to the ostentatious modern world is a mistake. "Most of the -expert- knowledge from the state and the academy on these issues [...] are anachronistic and archaic, and can only lead to a greater ecological and social devastation" (Escobar, 2014: 14). The excessive looting of natural resources has caused large territorial stripes to be lifeless, this situation not only devastates the lives of nonhuman species, but also the individuals of the human species that are located in those places. By looting without measure migration processes are created for economic reasons, but that have a deep background in ecological reasons. Economic migrants are also ecological migrants, long before the environmental contingencies caused by climate change. In this sense, the proposals issued by political and academic institutions have the mystique of a world that is falling apart. It is therefore necessary to create new intellectual and political contexts that dismantle the tags marked as neutral and create spaces to move towards inclusive, democratic, solidarity, empathic, reciprocal, in a word, human definitions. An epistemic decolonization is necessary so that a fair dignity returns to those labelled poor. The academy must deepen its theoretical and practical postulates, recognize that modernity from its capitalist borders produces the opposite of the promised abundance and that makes the race of technological and scientific growth tragically increase the mass of marginalized and exploited. The insurgency of a liberating and supportive rationality must emanate from the academy because it is the academy that implants the vulgar thought in the citizenship when they are students.

5.1 Transdisciplinary and Intercultural

Epistemic decolonization must be permeated not only by pressing issues of poverty, but must navigate organically and vigorously the underlying issues. Issues mainly as gender, nature, interculturality which are part of the culture of discrimination of everything that is disdained for not being Eurocentric. It is time to recognize that unidisciplinarity has managed to put knowledge in a dead end, leaving out the thought that in the world there are other worlds. Without a doubt, it is imperative that the academy leaves its world to explore other knowledge that indicates the connection of its knowledge with other knowledge. In this way it would be able to create interhuman methodological spaces that lead to the dismantling of old tags that invade and deplete the lives of different people. Therefore, an intercultural and transdisciplinary science must be created to be able to be in intellectual and personal conditions of including the traditional knowledge or the knowledge of the common people in the understanding of local, regional, national or international reality. The academy must make a radical challenge to all postures that point to development, such as progress, economic growth, competitiveness, a market that promotes excessive consumption, automated technologies that displace the dignity of workers, among other issues. It is very clear that the intellectuals situated in the firm belief of Eurocentric progress must have the will to break with concepts that until today are considered the pillar of knowledge, therefore, have the characteristic of indisputable. Global warming, for example, can be an evil on the planet that leads to scientific and technological reflections that look up to the traditional knowledge as a source of wisdom indicating how to create new relationships between human species and other species; resulting in a harmonic relationship between all the individuals that inhabit the planet.

The plurality through the dialogue of knowledge must be immersed in the academic reflections. It is stated here that the deconstruction of poverty tags must have ethical platforms where inter and transdisciplinary processes achieve fair exchanges of knowledge and material systems. The vernacular knowledge should be valued as a knowledge that would give the experts the pertinence, because it arises from their coexistence with complexity and uncertainty, resulting from the environmental and social crisis. The daily or vernacular knowledge must be valued because it constitutes microscopic lens that are not available to the experts so it is indisputably urgent to integrate them into the diagnosis and construction of solutions.

Orthopedic thinking and indolent reason can not adequately guide us in the face of this uncertainty because they create knowledge (modern science in the hegemonic conception that we have of it) that poorly knows the limits of what allows us to know the experience of the world and knows yet less the other knowledge that share the epistemological diversity of the world (De Sousa Santos, 2010: 66)

The views and opinions are the freedom that the poor would have to define what is good or not good for them,

what injustices underlie hegemonic justice. Esterly (2013) in his book "The tyranny of experts. Economists, dictators, and the forgotten rights of the poor" presents definitions on political freedom of poor peasants from different latitudes, generally they all agree on the possibility of expressing their opinion on what is right or what is wrong for them, as well as having the right to dignity and respect. The tyranny of experts does not allow poor people to openly declare what affects them. A clear example is found in poverty eradication programs built by experts based on other ecosystems and other social systems. Not to accept them as they are constructed would be a form of resistance; but that due to poverty conditions are accepted. Finally, these programs fail, largely because the opinion of that knowledge denied by Eurocentric intellectuals is not present. The new epistemological constructs would be in the possibility of building bridges between vernacular (daily or traditional) and modern as an intercultural, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary processes to understand the environmental and social crisis in a plural, respectful and dialogued way. Academic interdisciplinarity would have to focus on the problem, create an imaginary that interprets the scenarios that by interlacing create a complex system and consequently variables immersed in uncertainty. However, it should not be forgotten that in transdisciplinary analyses it is indispensable "[not to exclude] the importance of the temporal dimension, first it will be necessary to locate analytically the multitude of vectors that cross it and with it the infinity of problems to solve" (Llanos, 2013: 60). Therefore, the alliance of scholarly and everyday knowledge must form chains of knowledge generation that together create "craft" solutions that result from a strong sense of intercultural and interdisciplinary community based on the pluriverse and the multi-universe. This process would unleash a new look on poverty, remove the tags and, conversely, begin to look at potentialities, strengths and hopes in all those individuals who have been able to learn how to survive in times of tort and adversity that the one-dimensional vision has imposed.

6. Conclusions

The decolonization of knowledge is an aspect that must be taken seriously by the academy instead of seeking formulas that fail specifically because they are not harmonized with the political, cultural and economic knowledge of the "object" population. The knowledge of the poor population is born from other parameters, often based on traditions or are the result of devastating experiences. Therefore, the knowledge that is constructed in a distant desk does not contemplate the complexity and the uncertainty that the individuals in poverty live on a daily basis. Experiences indicate how to behave in certain circumstances, they make a different definition of what risk or danger means to the rest of society. The risks and dangers within capitalist society are framed in the monetary imaginary. In this way, the risk for an entrepreneur is to invest in unskilled labour, which regularly comes from the world where risk and danger means safeguarding life. Unlike the world away from the marquees of the success promoted by modernity, the vast majority of citizens strive to keep their project of life afloat, maintaining two or more jobs at a time. When the economy suffers a setback an ordinary man has to resort to less legal strategies, such as taking a knife and storming bystanders or, in more legal matters, stand besides a traffic light to join the bullfighters everyday and ask for coins to clean windshields. The problem of poverty has to be analysed more deeply and find the strands that have not made it disappear, but increases day by day. A place where labeling thinking about the poor is generated at School, it is within the academy where ideas and thoughts of things are constructed and tested. Therefore, the academy, to decolonize itself, must introduce variables that it considers to be unscientific; these variables have to do with the knowledge of the people. The inclusion of these knowledge, within the framework of the interdiscipline, would put on the table the complexity and the uncertainty that people live, as well the everyday knowledge would carve out better the solutions and a tailor made suit would be made according to the social and ecological territory where the problem is. In other words, the analysis of the problem would have to question poverty, necessarily, from a perspective that seeks to understand the passages through which those traditional definitions pass, what is the "lubricant" that socializes them? What are the interests that mobilize them? From which political, economic and cultural environments are they generated? Who owns the information that is produced? What are the procedures and what are the effects that are programmed? Who will benefit and what will be those benefits? More specifically, the questions deserve to be answered through less sustained research into the triumphant paradigms of successful and competitive technoscience. Looking at poverty from epistemic decolonization would lead to a social process of eradicating malicious tags of poverty. It would create a process of solidarity and reciprocity against social and ecological crisis that humanity is facing.

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