ESRC / AHRC GCRF Indigenous engagement, research partnerships, and knowledge mobilisation
REPORT

Title of Project: AHRC/GCRF Network 'Racism and anti-racism in Brazil - the case of indigenous peoples'

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This report consists of two parts:
1. Description, comments, and conclusions related to the project itself.
2. Comments and conclusions about the topic 'indigenous engagement, partnership, and knowledge mobilisation' from the discussions of indigenous participants in the project's two events so far, and in the workshop held in Salvador on October 30.

I. The Project
Aims and Objectives:

The objective of this Research Network was to organise three events in Brazil and the UK bringing together indigenous leaders, artists and intellectuals with academics from the Humanities and Social Sciences with a view to discuss the current rise in racism and violence against indigenous peoples in Brazil, as well as strategies to resist it and contain it. This was be the first series of multi-disciplinary meetings ever to focus exclusively on racism against native peoples in Brazil; in other words, it was the first time that a group of academics met with indigenous leaders, artists, and intellectuals specifically to discuss violence against native peoples **as racism**. In addition, the Network has provided a rare opportunity for a group of indigenous leaders to meet Afro-descendant activists in Bahia, a region that hosts some of the most active and best developed anti-racism groups in Brazil.

Guided by recent theoretical debates on racism (including environmental and cultural racism) and environmental violence, as well as by the natives' own experiences, as discussed in loco and expressed in political documents and artistic works, the participants have been attempting to answer questions such as: How does racism against native peoples manifest itself? Why is racism against native populations growing so dramatically in contemporary Brazil in contradiction with politics of social-economic inclusion? Is racism a useful category to analyse current attacks against the native populations? How do cultural and environmental racism relate to racism more broadly? How is racism against native peoples propagated in the media and creative arts? How can the media and creative arts (including native media and arts) help to contain and revert the current increase in racism against native peoples? In which ways do the current economic and ecological pressures on the Amazon fuel (and are fuelled by) racism? How are indigenous leaders and their communities seeing the current rise in prejudice against them? How are they resisting it? What tools can traditional native knowledge bring to the debate about racism and the environment? What tools can current theories about race and ethnicity/indigeneity in Latin America bring to discussions about racism and prejudice against native peoples in Brazil? Can changes in the education system and school curricula help contain or revert the current rise in racism against native peoples? How does racism against native people relate to racism against Black rural communities and maroon communities?

By discussing the violence against native peoples **as racism** (a clear shift in parading), this Network will contribute to a better understanding of the nuances of racism in Brazil and the reasons for openly violent discourse against indigenous peoples having become more mainstream in the last decade. Above all, by understanding how racism against indigenous peoples operates, we will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of current and past tactics to resist it, and possibly come up with new suggestions of how to contain it. According to the original project, some of these suggestions

would be included in a document which would be drafted in the second meeting and delivered to representatives of the Brazilian government.

Methodology:

This Network was conceived as a discussion forum centred on the native participants. As such, it was thought as a research project focused more on impact on the native populations than on research outputs. The planned outputs were: 1) a non-academic book co-authored with indigenous intellectuals and distributed to indigenous participants and collaborators; 2) a website; 3) a document (the format was not specified) that would be delivered to the Brazilian government. The basic methodology of the project was therefore to allow the non-academic partner and the indigenous collaborators decide on the format and the content of the discussions. We refer to this in our discussions as 'protagonismo indígena' (indigenous protagonism).

Narrative of events: what happened, what changed, how we adapted...

Planning
In November 2017, immediately after the start of the project, the PI and Co-I travelled to Serra do Cipó, Minas Gerais, to be with the non-academic partner for a series of planning meetings. During these meetings, the PI and Co-I were often corrected by the non-academic partner, Ailton Krenak, who made it clear that the format the PI and Co-I were envisioning was not appropriate for this kind of partnership. First, he defended that we should not have panels or pre-determined topics, but general ideas of how to approach the topic of racism and a format that would allow the indigenous collaborators to speak without feeling intimidated. We decided then on a format that would include various 'rodas de conversa' (conversation circles). Each conversation circle would be kicked off by one or two indigenous participants, who would then pass the microphone to others members and so on. Krenak also emphasised the importance of allowing enough time for each conversation circle so that the indigenous participants could feel free to to talk without pressure. Moreover, he suggested that each day the events started and finished with rituals, and that we should include some activities in which participants could express themselves through drawing, painting, or dancing.

In order to include meetings for the general public and students at UFRB, we also organised two traditional (i.e. more academic in format) panels, one at the opening and another at the closure of the event, but even these panels were preceded by rituals organised by the indigenous students collective, and were chaired by indigenous students.

Problems prior to the first event

The main problems we found at the planning phase were related to the transfer of funds from the UK university to the partners in Brazil. Our original idea was that the funds for the first event should be sent directly to the Co-I in Bahia, while the funds for the second event should be sent to NCI, led by non-academic partner. The University of Manchester, however, insisted on contracts that would follow a UK university format (research accounts led by a university). This was not feasible for UFRB, a new and inexperienced institution. We then decided to send all the funds to NCI - an institution that had plenty of experience running funds for project partners, but the contracts team at the UK university could not move quickly enough to produce a contract because of the 'unusual nature' of our desired arrangement. Such lack of flexibility and, ultimately, mistrust led to much unnecessary stress, and the only possible solution was for the PI to use personal funds pre-pay for some of the travel arrangements of participants, and to be reimbursed later.

First event

The first event, in Cachoeira, was entirely led by the indigenous participants - the collective of indigenous students was crucial in the organisation: they took care of the food and beverages for the breaks and all the technical issues; they opened and closed each event with a ritual; and they chaired the panels. All conversation circles were led by indigenous participants. Non-indigenous participants and the general public only spoke after all indigenous participants had spoken, and when asked by the indigenous participants. Following Krenak's suggestion, the opening activity, led by artists Daiara Tukano and Denilson Baniwa involved drawing by all participants and the public. The opening and closing panels included a majority of indigenous participants as well. The event was filmed by two crews, one of them composed of a Guarani director and a Pankararu cameramen. They were also transmitted live by the indigenous Rádio Yandê. It is important to note, as well, that with Cachoeira being an important centre of Afro-Brazilian culture, with a history of Black anti-racist activism, it provided a particularly welcoming space for the discussion and interactions.

Second event

According to the original plans, the second event would take place at the Memorial dos Povos Indígenas, in Brasília. However, a personal tragedy involving one of the partners, and circumstances related to the change of management at the Memorial made us revise this plan and organise the event in the Co-I's new institution, Universidade Federal da Bahia, in Salvador. The event happened immediately after the elections, so, besides discussion meetings and workshop, which took place in the morning and afternoon during two days, we also included two large panels open to the public in the evenings, each one of them attended by more than 400 people. The PI and Co-I introduced the event (which called for an anti-racist alliance between indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants) but did not speak in the panels, which was formed exclusively by indigenous and black intellectuals, activists, and artists. Methodologically, we described this as the need to take 'two steps back' in order to listen to what black and indigenous activists had to say at this extremely grave moment when Brazil has just elected a president who has made many open threats towards indigenous and black people. Amongst the speakers was Sonia Bone Guajajara, who had been a candidate for vice-president in the first term of the elections.

The day meetings had two purposes: 1) workshop discussing the topics of this report (many of which had been raised in the various conversation circles and in the panels in the previous event), and 2) discussion of document to be handed over to authorities. In the workshop, the PI and Co-I took notes of the points raised by indigenous participants. In the discussions about the document, however, whilst the PI tried to insist on the need to write up a document, it became clear that the indigenous participants found the idea unproductive, not only because we were at a moment of transition into a new government, but also because of the new government's open hostility towards indigenous peoples. The PI raised the possibility of writing a document that would be delivered to an international institution such as UN or UNESCO. The indigenous participants, however, replied that too many of such documents have been delivered to international institutions with no results. Their unanimous conclusion was that this is a moment to go back to the communities and strengthen the ties and communication between the various communities in order to resist the attacks by the new government and their supporters. After the PI's questions about what kind of document would make this process easier, the conclusion was that we should not restrict ourselves to a written format, and that perhaps a video discussing racism against native peoples, that would be made widely available online, would be just as or even more effective.

Conclusions:
1. The project gained immensely by taking on board Krenak's suggestions to do away with academic-style presentations in favour of conversation circles and panels in which speakers gave short presentations, with no Powerpoint (there were two exceptions to this).
2. The inclusion of rituals was essential.

3. The PI and Co-I had to revise some of their original plans, which were often guided by a dominance of the written word, in favour of formats that favoured conversation, orality, and visuality.
4. It is important to leave enough time for the activities and not rush them.
5. 'Indigenous protagonism' is extremely important. The indigenous collaborators should decide, talk, and lead the project.
6. UK institutions must become more flexile to allow transfer of funds to indigenous partners.

II. Points raised throughout the discussions in the two events that are relevant to the topic 'indigenous engagement, research partnership, and knowledge mobilisation'.

When discussing racism against indigenous populations in our events, the relationship between academia and indigenous communities often came up. In the words of many participants in the project, universities are mostly racist in their attempts to collaborate with indigenous communities. Similarly to Christian churches, universities have committed epistemicide against indigenous peoples, and have repeatedly disrespected and disregarded native knowledge. Our workshop on indigenous engagement and partnership had necessarily to go back to those points, which are summarised here:

1. A frequent topic raised in our discussions about racism was the behaviour of academics who go into into communities to learn from elders, shamans, and other members of communities, and after their 'fieldwork' is done, they take that knowledge away without giving anything back to the community. All participants were adamant that this practice has to stop, and that any research with indigenous communities has to offer a return to that community. An anthropologist who was present at the first event observed that researchers have no funds, for example, to translate the work into the indigenous languages. The participants reply was clear: all projects involving indigenous communities must include funds to translate the work back to the indigenous languages. Some participants also said that the practice of sending a copy of the dissertation back to the village is not enough, as the technical language of the dissertation may not be understood by the majority of the community. It is the community who must decide what kind of return the researcher must give: one or more article in the native language, a video (many participants mentioned the fact that written language may not the best format for many communities, and that a video might be more accessible); or any other type of return that is discussed and agreed with the community. One participant related her positive experience with a group of researchers who wrote short articles based on their research and had these articles debated at the community.
2. Protocol. All research involving indigenous communities must abide not only by the ethics of research with human subjects released by the university or funding body, but also by the protocol of the indigenous communities. Before any research is carried out, all researchers must submit to the the local protocol.
3. Authorship: published works that involve indigenous knowledge must acknowledge the authors as authors and not simply as informants; that is, they must acknowledge indigenous knowledge as knowledge. When the issue of doctoral or master's degrees was raised (that is, the fact that doctoral and master's research must be carried out by a single author), the answer was that funding bodies and universities must find a way of dealing with native co-authorship. It was also pointed out that in some cases the indigenous knowledge may be more appropriately recognised in the form of co-supervision. In other ways, in the indigenous person, or persons, who is providing the researcher with knowledge must also approve the results. In any case, all participants were emphatic that there should never be a doctoral or master's viva involving indigenous knowledge without the presence of someone from that community.

4. Funding. In order for the funding bodies to recognise native knowledge, it is important that they fund projects directly with the communities, that is, without intermediation from non-native researchers or from national funding bodies. When in partnership with UK universities, it would be important to be able to create partnerships directly with the communities or with researchers in the community.

5. It is very important that the reference system used by researchers acknowledge other forms of knowledge production besides written books, articles or audio-visual media. Oral narratives, songs, and oral accounts by shamans, elders, and native intellectuals should have the same weight and prestige as other forms of knowledge production.

6. When entering in partnership with Brazilian institutions to research about native communities, UK and European funding bodies must make sure that these institutions welcome and acknowledge native peoples and native knowledge. One of the most pervasive forms of racism suffered by indigenous students in universities is their invisibility: the lack of acknowledgement from professors and colleagues of their identity as indigenous peoples. Another form of racism they suffer at universities is the lack of recognition for native knowledge. Funding bodies should find ways to influence Brazilian universities in order to make them more welcome to indigenous peoples and indigenous knowledge.

7. Funding bodies should consider funding journals that publish in native languages.