

Collective Thought as Anti / Decolonial Practice:

Strategies and Methodologies for Collective Knowledge Creation



This workshop will be provided by El Cambalache from its Department of Decolonial Economics.

El Cambalache is a moneyless economy project located in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas and is made by and for women and everyone who we know. In El Cambalache everything has the same value. Here people exchange things they no longer need for things, skills, knowledge and mutual help that people want to share. El Cambalache was founded in 2015 and is based on anti-systemic and anti-capitalist values for local social movements.

WHEN: OCTOBER 25TH - NOVEMBER 23ND, 2021
DUE DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: OCTOBER 4TH, 2021
ONLINE FROM EL CAMBALACHE, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

THIS COURSE FOCUSES ON CREATING COLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PRACTICE

WE NEED OTHER OTHER FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE CREATION

This workshop focuses on participatory methodologies to create inclusive, diverse forms of knowledge creation drawing on contemporary and historic examples as well as those from the experience of El Cambalache Collective. These methods/strategies are particularly useful for investigators and activists studying networks, social movements; social media; diverse economies; ethnographic ecologies; commons and commoning; interconnection with non-human others and multi-species agency; intergenerational collectives and systems in general that are constituted by multiple actors with collective agency. The workshop is elaborated with examples and experiences rooted in historical processes of capitalism and its alternatives, both in Chiapas, Mexico and in some regions in the Global North and South whose processes reverberate in the region.

THIS COURSE WILL COVER

- Practices for creating collective research methods and forms of analyses as support for decolonial projects.
- Sharing experiences with El Cambalache as a contemporary example of an anti-capitalist and non-hierarchical project.
- Investigating the economic history(s) of the Americas. These history(s) that have been attacked and made invisible by the coloniality of capitalist power. We will focus on how to apply a decolonial perspective and practice to this investigation.
- Sharing experiences, knowledge and ways of undermining coloniality in the creation of knowledge.

FOR WHOM?

The practice, research and theories of non-capitalist economies included in this course were developed by and for all of us in order to bring about social change. For this reason, it is designed for people interested in creating, practicing and collectively researching noncapitalist economic projects to be carried out in their places of residence or research. Everyone is invited to participate – women, BIPOC and LBGTIQ++ are especially invited.

COURSE PRESENTATION

It is widely recognized that capitalism is the economy of coloniality. The power structures that exist to maintain the myriad forms of oppression implicit in the distribution of wealth furrow the same ruts of hierarchy that they have for centuries; perpetuating the capitalist system. A number of scholars have reflected on the lack of decision-making power that capitalism produces for both workers and consumers because of the hierarchies, extraction and exploitation that are essential for the functioning of the economy.

Decolonial theory recognizes that many forms and systems of knowledge exist beyond what is limited to the Western Episteme of the minority world. Collective forms of knowledge created within and beyond the limits of the academy are, across many geographies, developed in communities; social movements; online through social media; non-capitalist economic spaces; cooperatives; collectives; through commoning; grassroots settings; collective processes of assembly; self-government; and indigenous community spaces among many other spaces. These forms of knowledge are often invisibilized, de-centered and de-valued within the capitalist economic system. However, collective forms of knowledge creation and decision-making have been essential for surviving and overcoming many of the worst forms of violence and oppression within colonialism; slavery; impoverishment as a mechanism of state violence; coloniality and intersectional oppression to this day.

In order to dismantle coloniality our research methods would do well to be anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and enveloped in a process of the redistribution of power. A future with different power structures than those we have today will benefit from collective strategies for creating economies and other networks that are anti-capitalist. In El Cambalache we have found that our non-hierarchical spaces support conversation, reflection, questioning, practice, stumbling, care, and the creation of both method and theory through exploratory practice. Non-hierarchical research practice supports the recognition and centering of experiences that are not typically understood as meriting veracity. This is because the creation of knowledge is steeped within those same colonial structures that imbue value

across the minority and majority worlds. However, we can act to value what is not valued in the capitalist system to create economies, networks, practices and knowledge that heals our colonial wounds.

As we live through what seems to be an endless succession of crises and violence around the world it is important that scholars and activists instrumentalize their privilege of recognition as a producer of knowledge to support those truths resultant from collective forms of knowledge creation and to center the assemblages of voices normally marginalized by the academy. This workshop seeks to work with scholars and activists to methodologically privilege collectivity as a unit within the creation of knowledge that goes beyond the focus group, co-research or scholars compiling gathered interviews in order to create theory from a consolidated body of data. Drawing on literature and media from practitioners in decoloniality, anti-coloniality, decolonial feminism, anarchism, cosmopolitics, organizational studies, diverse economies, the radical black tradition, movements for social change and more, we will provide tools and examples for moving the creation of knowledge towards a collective processes while questioning those supposed necessary hierarchies associated with ethnography.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://cambalache.noblogs.org> | Tw: LaCambalachera |
IG: Elcambalachesancristobal | FB: Cambalache Sancris Tobal |
Contacto: taller@Cambalache.casa



WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The workshop will be delivered online using the Moodle platform in English and Spanish with simultaneous translation. Before the start of the workshop each participant will be given a username and password upon payment of the course (or an agreement with El Cambalache on a moneyless work exchange). The first session of the workshop will be on October 25/26 so that we can all introduce ourselves and get to know each other. There will be a small amount of study material between workshop sessions and participants are expected to review it. Each session will be held at TWO DIFFERENT TIMES per week, in order to adapt to the DIFFERENT SCHEDULES of our participants. Everyone is welcome to choose the day and time that is most convenient for them, or to participate in both or to participate in both sessions live if they wish and are able



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTIONS- OCTOBER 25/26

The first session of the workshop will be an introduction to the topics covered and a space to get to know each other.

VALUING COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE CREATION- NOVEMBER 1 / 2

Facilitated by Erin Araujo, Maira Pino Ponce and Belkis Rojas

In Capitalism / Coloniality the production of knowledge is centered on the individual as a unit of thought and theorization however, in many minority world (and some majority world) settings the practices and knowledge that most benefit the creation of well-being, healing, and social change involve the harmony and polyphony of multiple experiences of both humans and non-human others. We will study and critique how honoring the collective voice is a tool that resists oppression and create spaces for flourishing.

INTERSECTIONAL, DECOLONIAL, COLLECTIVE THOUGHT AND PRACTICE AS METHOD- NOVEMBER 8 / 9

Facilitated by Erin Araujo, Tito Mitjans Alayón and Guadalupe Díaz Hernandez.



Diversity in collective thought is important for the flourishing of collective practice. By analyzing and subverting the mechanisms of intersectional oppression inherent in coloniality we can work to instrumentalize privilege and create collective benefits for all collaborators.

**HORIZONTALITY AND COMPLEXITY IN COLLECTIVE ACTION AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION-
NOVEMBER 15 / 16**

Facilitated by Erin Araujo, Josefa Vázquez Martínez and María Elena Morua

Most people of all races and ethnicities internalize coloniality and racism. However, although all people internalize coloniality and racism, because of structural issues, there are social groups that structurally activate coloniality. It is important that people who are racialized as white and people in general who benefit from systems of coloniality recognize that their presence and voice have implications within the flow of conversation and collective process. To avoid structural racism-based micro-aggressions in spaces working towards horizontality, it is important that people racialized as white have strategies for subverting the tendencies to receive more time, recognition and energy in meetings.

Valuing others in a collective process can become problematic and constrained within the prescribed hierarchies of a capitalist/modernist society. In the process of collectively undermining capitalism/coloniality, horizontality is a tool that can support valuing the other and all that is not valued in capitalism. Non-hierarchical practices can be part of a larger project of realizing social change when members of the collective have the space and respect to agree, disagree, debate and think creatively around each plan of action and the knowledge that emerges from those interactions.

**INCORPORATING COLLECTIVITY IN RESEARCH AND SOCIAL CHANGE-
NOVEMBER 22 / 23**

Facilitated by El Cambalache Collective

While researchers in community or scholarly settings are accustomed to bringing together data sets that express multiple points of view often the theorization of the work is left to the individual outside of the space where the data is created. This often leads to the creation of knowledge that reflects the positionality of the researcher or research team rather than the very people that contributed the initial data. This process has led to negation of the agency of communities and collectivities while furthering paternalist projects of development, conservation and economics that are then imposed on the very same communities and others that contributed to the initial data. This session supports researchers in breaking that cycle.



IMPORTANT DATES

- Application deadline: October 4th, 2021.
- Date for notice of acceptance: October 11th, 2021
- All payment or agreement for moneyless exchange due: October 24th, 2021
- Workshop dates: October 25th or 26th through November 22nd or 23rd, 2021 depending on participant's location
- Schedule: For participants located in the Americas, Eastern Asia, Indonesia and Oceania: Mondays 6-8pm UTC/ GMT -5 or CDT
For participants located in the Americas, Europe, Western Asia, Africa, and India: Tuesdays 10am-12pm UTC/ GMT -5 or CDT

****SPACE IS LIMITED****

COSTS

Cost for participants from countries with a high access to money (in US dollars)

\$500 - \$350 Solidarity price for well employed participants or collectives who want to participate with a single contribution. This price is suggested for people who have some kind of funding for their professional development or can afford it because of their high salary level. This price contributes some support to other people, with less economic possibilities of work, so that they can pay less.

\$350 - \$200 Students and participants who can afford it because they have access to some type of financing or are collectives that want to participate through a single contribution.

\$200 - \$80 Students, grassroots activists and participants who have little access to money.

Cost for participants from countries with little access to money (in Mexican pesos):

\$5,000-\$3,500 Solidarity price for well-employed participants or collectives who want to participate with a single contribution. This price is suggested for people who have some kind of funding for their professional development or can afford it because of their high salary level. By paying this price, you will contribute in supporting other people who lack economic resources or whose access is very limited, and who want to participate in the workshop, so that they can pay less.

\$3,500-\$2,000 Students and participants who can afford it because they have access to some type of financing or are collectives who want to participate through a single contribution.

\$2,000 - \$800 Students, grassroots activists and participants who have little access to money.

If for any reason you are unable to cover the fees, please ask for moneyless exchange options to cover prices.

All proceeds from this workshop will go to support El Cambalache's research, community and decolonial work.

HOW TO APPLY

Please fill out the form and send it to (<https://share.mayfirst.org/apps/forms/q8SYfC2yCAiALzgw>). Your CV and a max. 1,000-word letter of motivation to Dr. Erin Araujo, (cambalach@autoproduzioni.net and taller@cambalache.casa) explaining why you would like to participate in the workshop and what types of projects you could work on in the workshop.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS:

Belkis Rojas Trejo. She is a woman from Andean Venezuela, with a degree in History and a Master's degree in Ethnology. Diploma in Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology. Retired Professor and Researcher at the University of Los Andes, Venezuela. Currently belongs to the group of women generators of the collective El Cambalache, San Cristobal de Las Casas, Mexico.

Erin Araujo PhD. Geographer of feminist, decolonial and anarchist diverse economies. Originally from New York, USA. She has been living in San Cristobal de las Casas since 2007. She is one of the founders and generators of El Cambalache as well as a member of the ACME journal editorial collective. She studies, practices and writes about moneyless economies in the majority world of the Americas.

Guadalupe Díaz Hernández. Originally from the south-southeast of Chiapas, Mexico. She has lived in San Cristobal de Las Casas for 25 years. She has actively participated in collective work with children, youth and adults from the Catholic Church. Currently she participates in the organization of the Koltamba Coffee (mutual aid, in Tzeltal language), in the space of PROART (Handicraft Products) and she is a generator in the collective El Cambalache.

Josefa Vázquez Martínez is originally from Venustiano Carranza, Chiapas. She has lived in San Cristóbal de las Casas for 20 years. A Tzotzil indigenous woman, single mother and feminist, activist, founding member and generator of the collective El Cambalache, an economy of goods and services based moneyless exchange.

Maira Pino Ponce. Originally from Santiago, Chile. Member of the collective El Cambalache since February 2020. Designer and embroiderer dedicated to the repair of garments and to share knowledge about the embroidery technique. She participated in Coohebra, a women's cooperative dedicated to extending the life of clothing.

Maria Elena Morua. Originally from Monclova Coahuila, Mexico, she has been living in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Mexico for 4 years. She has a degree in Psychology, , has participated in popular education collectives, and is currently a generator of the collective El Cambalache.

Tito Mitjans Alayón. PhD. Activist and Afro-feminist historian, transmasculine non-binary. Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies of Latin American and Caribbean History. Recently finished his doctorate in Feminist Studies and Intervention in Chiapas.