Peace Culture and Cultures of Peace: Non-Western Epistemology and Decolonizing Peace Education in World Anthropology:

ALEXANDER HORSTMANN (SDAC, FAU, ERLANGEN)

Eduardo Restrepo and Arturo Escobar (2005)

- 'Other anthropologies/anthropology otherwise', on the contrary, suggests that the space in which anthropology is practiced is fractured – perhaps even more so today than in the past, and despite increasing normalizing tendencies worldwide – making it into a plural space. In other words, rather than assuming that there is a privileged position from which a 'real anthropology' (in the singular) can be produced and in relation to which all other anthropologies would define themselves, 'world anthropologies' seeks to take seriously the multiple and contradictory historical, social, cultural and political locatedness of the different communities of anthropologists and their anthropologies.

The Savage Slot

► In Trouillot's critical contextualization, anthropology emerged within a larger enunciative field structured, after the Renaissance, around the figures of Order (the West as is), Utopia (the West as it could be) and the Savage (the non-West). Anthropology ended up being entrusted with the Savage slot – the study of savages and primitives (see also Stocking, 1987). Today, 'the direction of the discipline depends upon an explicit attack on that slot itself and the symbolic order upon which it is premised' (Trouillot, 1991: 34).

Dominant Anthropologies

▶ Dominant anthropologies operate like normalizing machines that preclude the enablement of different anthropological practices and knowledge worldwide. To the extent that 'dominant anthropologies' operate from a paradigmatic and privileged epistemological position, they constitute apparatuses of erasure of difference and effect a given inscription of difference in the name of anthropological canons. For example, European authors working on Myanmar cite other European authors, but ignore Burmese authors, because Burmese authors do not publish in American Ethnologist and not in English.

Solidarity with the Democracy Movement in Myanmar in Germany

Democracy Movement in Shan state

Using PAR for collaborative Research and Social Intervention

▶ I argue that a world anthropology does not see neutrality as desirable. In PAR, the interlocutors not only give permission for the research, but are involved in the design of the research from the start. In PAR, the researcher is committed to the communities he works with. The researcher expresses the commitment by contributing to social justice. PAR is quite different from participant observation. Engaged anthropology means that the researcher emphatically endorses the communities and their life-worlds. Participant observation, if not handled with cultural sensitivity, can even be a burden or exploitative, especially about the use of the ethnographic data that are not returned to research subjects.

Resources of the researcher and Power-Sharing

▸ The researcher comes in with expertise (e.g., on ethnographic methods of seeing the world, with a distance), with resources and compassion. The activist-researcher thus becomes actively involved not only in the research, but really becomes engaged with the problems that the researcher comes to study and which the researcher wants to help to solve, e.g., lack of basic citizenship rights, lack of cultural rights or any rights at all. The researcher shares her/ his academic networks and resources, while the ownership of the project firmly lies with the local NGO or association. Partnership is constructed based on a philosophy of peace, equality and exchange.

▸ https://aizanka95.wixsite.com/myanmareducation/projecto-5

Polyphonic versus Dialogical

- A polyphonic research is preferred, in which the researcher´s voice is only one voice among many, and in which voices of interlocutors are stressed by extensive citation.

Western bias

▶ Although there are genuinely nice concepts existing, peace education, like other good concepts, suffer from ethno-centric assumptions about peace. It is not difficult to define peace, but it is much more difficult to apply Western concepts of peace to contexts, say, in Schengal, Northern Iraq, or in the Karen hills of Eastern Burma (Myanmar). Both groups have been affected by extremely grave human rights violations, massacre, burnings, rape, and other crimes of humanity. Western concepts of peace suffer from universal assumptions that are hard to apply in the local context. For human rights to be relevant, the research needs to be embedded in community concerns, community experience, and community design.

Community-Centered Approaches

▶ The stake for a world anthropology is to elucidate non-Western, community-centered approaches to peace in one world for informing contextualized and gender-sensitive peace education and teaching materials and design of delivery for use among young people. Using a holistic approach from the bottom-up, teachings materials are based on the expertise and concepts of the migrants and refugees.

Characteristics of a World Anthropology

1. A world anthropology is primarily interested in developing non-Western, community centered and gender-sensitive concepts

2. A world anthropology explores non-Western epistemologies by employing world ethnography with communities on the move.

3. A world anthropology is not limited to participant observation or thick description, but includes commitment, empathy, and social intervention. Ethnography creates a climate of togetherness.

4. A world anthropology includes local and international ethnography, spanning continents. For studying mobility, both temporal and spatial aspects are crucial.

5. A world anthropology applies anthropological concepts and ethnographic methods to the real world and use them to contribute to eco-peace systems.

6. A world anthropology is attentive to and encouraging of local knowledge and the expertise of the local community in the stake of fortifying local communities.

The Karen

▶ The Karen are a people of 5-7 million people living in Southeastern Myanmar, in Northwestern Thailand as well as in the Irrawaddy Delta. Approximately 80% of the Karen are Sgaw Karen speakers, a minority being Pwo Karen-speaking. Most, but not all Christianized Karen are from the Sgaw-speaking family. Other sub-groups of the Karen include Kayah, Bwe, Kayan, Bre, and Pa-o. The majority of Karen are Buddhist or Animist and follow a variety of local cults and local religious movements. Buddhist Karen follow the Mon-Khmer tradition of Theravada Buddhism, but they also follow millenarian cults and animistic traditions. The Karen people in the Myanmar-Thai borderland have formed or participated in, many religious (millenarian) cults – Leke, Talaku, Myitta Byamazoe and others to show that they do not belong to nor identify with the ethno-secessionist movement of the Karen Nationalist organization (Kwanchewan). Many Karen from the Pwo-speaking family are followers of charismatic Buddhist monks, notably U Thuzana, whom they regard as a future Buddha
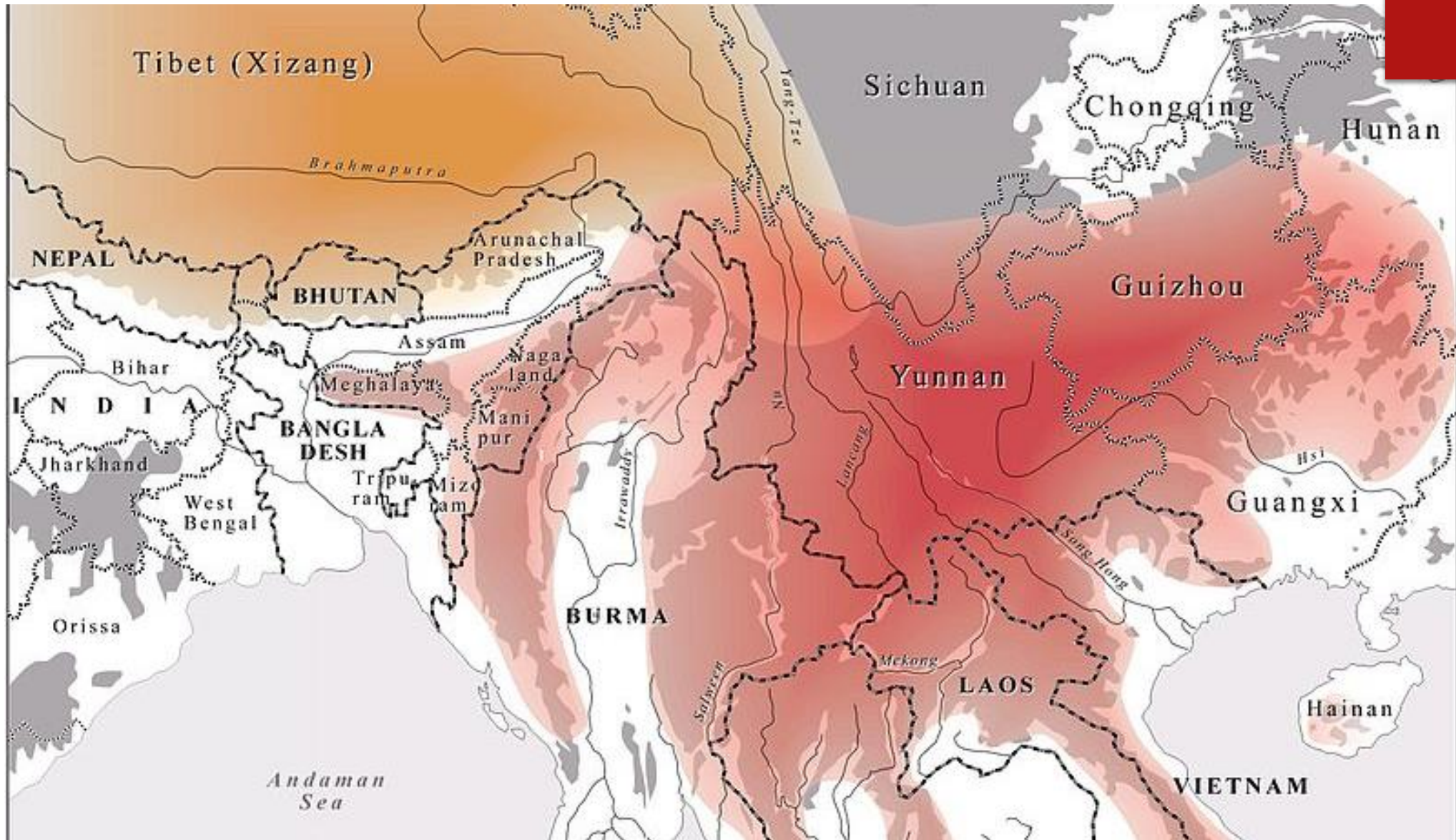
Fieldwork

▹ The approach was one of participant observation, but the author was not just physically there, but by immersing himself in the communities and becoming part of local and transnational support networks, the author committed to the Karen communities and the local organizations he worked with. The author gradually became an engaged activist for defending human rights of the Karen. The ethnographic fieldwork was starting out 2009 in Mae La refugee camp, Mae Sot town and migrant villages in Mae Sariang on the Thai border with Myanmar. For example, I was hosted by a Karen family in a very remote village in the village of Mae Sariang without road access. I travelled there for the "Stateless Children Day" to witness the plight of stateless children, stranded in the Thai borderland. I met a friend, Ray, who was assistant pastor in a chapel in Tha Song Yang, Northwestern Thailand.

Fieldwork 2

▸ Ray- a Karen informant and Ranger- joined the missionaries of the *Kawthoolei* Baptist Convention to visit other migrant villages and to encourage the villagers. Traumatized and upset about the burning of his village and the loss of his siblings, he joined the Free Burma Rangers on missions and stood behind for joining again if needed. Later, he has been employed by an Australian Free Church from Perth to work on a missionary project to open a boarding school in the liminal space between Thailand and Myanmar. He thus had to send money to his siblings to support their education in Thailand. Ray has married and he and his orphaned wife has received their first child. I thus recorded the life histories of young refugees and the way that they joined local organizations to help themselves and to help their community. After the opening of Myanmar in 2011, and the subsequent ceasefire in Karen state, I was able to visit Karen villages in Myanmar on regular trips. After the elections in 2015, spaces for civil society opened and the Free Burma Rangers established a health station in Karen state on KNU-controlled territory (Brigade 5).

Fieldwork 3

The research involved membership in Karen cultural associations and donations to the Karen New Year celebrations in Sheffield. Connecting to the Free Burma Rangers was smooth, and the family members very welcoming, but participant observation in FBR´s missions would have required a qualification as nurse. Most significantly, although the representation of the Karen as victims of oppression is essential for their own image creation, I never approached Karen informants as victims, but saw religion as a central and meaningful vehicle of social mobility, communication, aspirations, and hope. Many of my Karen informants had to struggle to make ends meet. There were young people looking for a future. Foreigners who come to the camp provide access to the outside world, sources of help and the promise of a better world (Dudley 2007: 94). Engagement with the Free Burma Rangers was a qualification in the humanitarian sector, a potential sacrifice and martyrdom for a higher reason, an adventure, and a contribution to the community. Increasingly, I regarded the Free Burma Rangers as a guerilla who walked into the danger zone with KNLA troops, regarded every of their action being instilled with the holy spirit.

Baptism in Mae La Ma Luang Camp

Stateless Children Day in Mae Saliang, Thailand.

The longest war

The Karen have suffered from one of the worlds longest wars, from military occupation, looting, persecution, forced porter, abuse and rape. Karen families were torn apart, the villagers fleeing into the forest or the mountains for cover and protection in hope to return. However, after the yearlong assault in the 1980s, the villagers fled to small camps close to the Thai border. However, they had to escape and cross the border after these scattered camps were also attacked, looted, and plundered.

9 refugee camps and resettlement

> In Northwestern Thailand, the Thai military had an interest to locate people in few camps and reduced the camps from over 30 to 9. More than 150.000 people were living in the overcrowded camps in a time. From 2005-2014, 76 000 Karen were resettled to the US, Australia, Canada, Norway, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, England, and Japan from the camps.

Mae La Refugee Camp, Northwestern Thailand
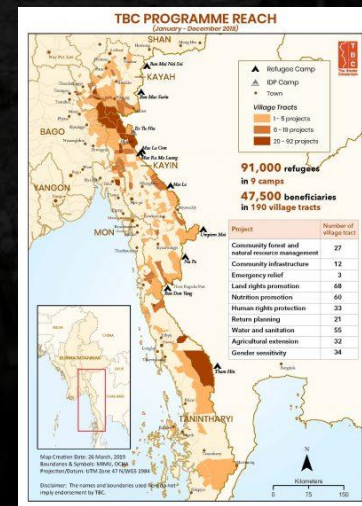
Engagement

▶ The Karen have founded their own international NGOs, are pioneers in migrant education and community health care. The Karen Human Rights organization carefully documents human rights violations and trains villagers in human rights documentation. Kesan has founded the Salween Peace Park to protect rainforest and watersheds against the assault from harmful development. In Tallinn, we have supported this process by collaborating with an Estonian NGO, Mondo. Mondo has invested into the education of poor children from the mountains of northern Shan state, and have built 90 primary schools scattered around Shan state and a youth community center. For their teachers training, the Shan NGO collaborates with the Karen. Both movements have clear imaginations of investing into the future. I engaged students at Tallinn University in a project course and they were involved in setting up a homepage and participated in the local project in Northern Myanmar as volunteers.

The Yazidi (Ezidi)

▶ Yazidi people are living in Kurdistan, Turkey, Northern Iraq, and Northern Syria. The Yazidis have inhabited the mountains of northwestern Iraq for centuries, and the region is home to their holy places, shrines, and ancestral villages. Outside of Sinjar, the Yazidis are concentrated in areas north of Mosul, and in the Kurdish-controlled province of Dohuk. For Yazidis, the land holds deep religious significance; adherents from all over the world—remnant communities exist in Turkey, Germany, and elsewhere—make pilgrimages to the holy Iraqi city and holy temples of Lalesh.

Northern Iraq Region
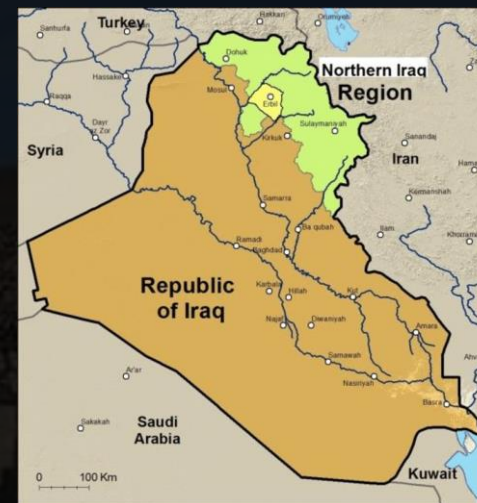
72 Genocides

▶ Yazidis began to face accusations of devil worship from Muslims beginning in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Organized anti-Yazidi violence dates to the Ottoman Empire. In the second half of the 19th century, Yazidis were targeted by both Ottoman and local Kurdish leaders and subjected to brutal campaigns of religious violence. "Yazidis often say they have been the victim of 72 previous genocides, or attempts at annihilation," says Matthew Barber, a scholar of Yazidi history at the University of Chicago who is in Dohuk interviewing Yazidi refugees. "Memory of persecution is a core component of their identity," he says.

The Genocide

▶ 03. August 2014, the Yazidi were encircled by the Islamic state. Tens of thousands of Yazidi people escaped to the rugged mountains, without water or food. 10 000 were not able to escape or believed that they will be spared. Old men and boys were all killed, about 7000 women and minor girls were raped, enslaved, and sold like sheep. Hundreds of women remain caught in Jihadist families in Syria and in Turkey. They have been raped repeatedly and brutally abused. Minor girls died, because they have been chained in the heat, with no water, for minor offences. Kurdish forces from the YPG from Rojava arrived and constructed a human corridor, so that tens of thousands of Yazidi could flee, although many died on the road. More than one hundred thousand Yazidi were displaced. Those who could afford the travel, found a place in Europe.

Towards Reconciliation?

▶ The Yazidi still have not recovered from genocide. Especially women who have suffered from sexual assault and residing in the refugee camps without therapeutical help have no purpose and many young people have committed suicide or are vulnerable to suicide. The returning Yazidi refugees live in a climate of insecurity, and especially fear a resurgence of the IS. Politics also do not play into Yazidi hands who are also divided between different Kurdish political parties and factions, especially between the KDP and the PKK. The latter has helped to open a human corridor that allowed tens of thousands of Yazidi to flee and has established a presence among some Yazidi today. The agreement of the Iraqi government and the Bharzani clan of the Kurdish Democracy Party (KDP) governing in Kurdistan Regional Government to administer and control the region of Schengal (Sinjar) has sidelined the Yazidi and the PKK. Moreover, tensions between the Sunni in Northern Iraq who have partly supported the IS and the Yazidi persist.

Yazidi Diaspora

- More than 150.000 Yazidi people are living in Germany today. I became involved with designing peace projects with the German civil peace service for a center of coexistence in Sinjar, and in working creatively with the Yazidi community and the Yazidi cultural NGO in Germany. In Germany, I offer a study program as peace change maker or intercultural coach for young migrants in the age cohort of 16-25 to become active in municipal conflict management, empowerment and participation.

Conclusion

▶ A world anthropology differs from global anthropology in that a global anthropology only studies transnational or global networks, while a world anthropology encompasses people in various places, including the diaspora (relating to violent displacement and refugee communities), in the one world. A world anthropology hence integrates both anthropological fieldwork and the application in peacebuilding education and training. The inclusion of the communities we work with starts with the research design, and becomes meaningful by creating a togetherness and a commitment, using PAR.

Conclusion

▸ Further, the spirit of inclusiveness and social cohesion is further strengthened by engaging in common activities and campaigns, and by developing community-centered and culturally sensitive concepts and teaching materials. The goal of a world anthropology is to overcome Western epistemologies and Western domination of knowledge by bringing both the research design as well as the implementation through further learning into one world anthropology. This world anthropology does not see the refugee community only as subject to be observed but tries to make the community and its knowledge visible and facilitates this process by using the available resources and expertise. A world anthropology does not see research and applied anthropology as distinct entities, but intervention of some sort for social justice creates trust and confidence in the field and solid research at the grassroots level guarantees the quality of the training in peace education or peacebuilding and conflict transformation. A world anthropology promotes dialogue and cooperation.

Conclusion

> In this case, a global anthropology or world anthropology is to overcome the distance between the researcher and the people by designing in a way to speak to the needs and ways of life of the community, without imposing a Universal model that turns out to be a Western model of knowing the world. Instead, we can use the resources at our disposal to empower community-owned projects.

Modernity/ Coloniality

▶ coloniality – defined as the subalternization of knowledge and culture of oppressed and excluded groups that necessarily accompanied colonialism, and which continues today with globalization – is seen as constitutive of modernity. There is no modernity without coloniality, so that the proper unit of analysis is not modernity (as in all intra-European analyses of modernity) but modernity/coloniality, or the modern/colonial world system.