

Abstract

Itxaso García deals in her doctoral project with the historical transformation of the Wixárika epistemic system on the environment since 1980s. The Wixáritari, an indigenous group originally from the region of Gran Nayar in the north of the state of Jalisco (Mexico), have preserved their knowledge system and culture with little Occidental influence due to the control over their territory. In the Wixárika epistemic system, environmental knowledge plays a key role in their social life and economical organization. Since the 1980s, when the first primary schools of the Department of Indigenous Education of Jalisco were built in the region, the reproduction and transmission of this knowledge has been altered due to the presence of an external epistemic system, represented by the public primary school, which interferes and, sometimes, comes into conflict with the local methods of production, reproduction, and transmission of knowledge. This project aims to analyze the transformation of the Wixárika environmental knowledge since the arrival of the public primary school to the communities, as well as the historical adaptation of the primary public school to deal with cultural differences and to contrast the shifting baselines of local environmental knowledge between generations that did not attend public primary school and those that did. In this context, Itxaso examines what the Wixárika community considers environmental knowledge and what its sources of information are, as well as how and by whom this knowledge is transmitted. Moreover, she analyses to what extent the public primary school has altered the process of transformation and transmission of the Wixárika environmental knowledge. The focus lies on the differences about the perception and understanding of environmental knowledge between the generations that did not attend the public primary school and those who have to determine the changes and possible generational amnesia.

This work is especially valuable in the current context of climate change since local knowledges on the environment are crucial for the protection and conservation of local ecosystems and habitats.