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Ñuu Savi: Pasado, presente y futuro. Descolonización, continuidad cultural y re-apropiación de los códices mixtecos en el Pueblo de la Lluvia

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English Summary

Ñuu Savi: Past, Present and Future. Decolonization, Cultural Continuity and Re-appropriation of Mixtec Codices into the People of the Rain.

This is a decolonial study about *Ñuu Savi* (Mixtec) pictorial manuscripts (codices), Mexico. The aim is the understanding of their cultural values through a holistic and diachronic way, studying living and historical-cultural heritage of Mixtec People, based on the re-integration of cultural memory and cultural continuity, linking the past and the present through the Mixtec language (or *Sahan Savi*) and from its own perspective. The final aim is the re-appropriation of this knowledge by the *Ñuu Savi* communities themselves.

The research is organized into three sections under the precepts of decolonization, cultural continuity, re-integration, re-appropriation, and re-introduction of the *Ñuu Savi* historical-cultural heritage. The first part, decolonization, exposes how the legacy of Mesoamerican peoples, the Mixtec people, and its codices have been studied by the “others” and for the “others” but not for the People of the Rain, the people who wrote these pictorial manuscripts centuries ago. This dissertation discusses the colonial trauma, the current condition of the Indigenous Peoples (Pueblos Originarios), and academia’s role as a perpetuator of colonization (by imposing methods, methodologies, and theories over the Indigenous Peoples heritage) and the internal colonialism. To deal with this, the author of this research, a cultural and intellectual descendant of *Ñuu Savi* People, a *sehe Ñuu Savi*, proposes the understanding of the Mixtec pictorial manuscripts from the language and worldview of the Mixtec people. This is implied the proposal, construction, and implementation of a decolonial Mixtec methodology or *Ñuu Savi* methodology. It means to be inclusive and respectful with cultural values and principles of the communities of People of the Rain and their free, prior, and informed consent as Indigenous Peoples. The first part is based on articles 3, 11, and 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The second is based on cultural continuity and re-integration. Cultural continuity is the key to understanding the cultural values of *Ñuu Savi* People through time, and the *Sahan Savi* language is the link between the past and the present. Thus, with concrete and well-founded examples, this dissertation shows that contemporary communities in *Ñuu Savi* are the cultural and intellectual heirs of the pre-colonial societies that lived in this historical territory. To enrich the understanding of the Mixtec codices, it is necessary for the decolonization and re-integration of cultural-historical heritage as a whole. It means the critical study of pre-colonial artifacts and settlements, pictorial manuscripts, colonial maps, 16th-century literature, and the living legacy of the *Ñuu Savi* communities based on cultural continuity, being aware that any continuity also implies changes. With this approach, it is possible to know the symbolic stratigraphy and cultural values of the signs, concepts, scenes, and themes contained in the codices, the sacred landscape contained in colonial maps, the intrinsic meaning of material culture, and even the function of pre-colonial sites, which implies an understanding in two directions, always complementary, from present to past and past to present. This second part is based on UNDRIP’s articles 25, 26, 27, and 34.

The third part of this work is based on re-appropriation and re-introduction of the codices in *Ñuu Savi*. This dissertation promotes that academic knowledge about the Indigenous Peoples (in general) and the Mixtec communities and codices (in particular) must be disseminated and reintegrated into the communities of origin, in a respectful and dignified way. At first, the re-introduction of knowledge about codices was carried out by conferences, workshops, courses, and classes. However, the most significant part of this work was the re-appropriation of *Ñuu Savi* pictorial writing by the communities. The workshops were organized

in collaboration with the communities, students, and the author. The Mixtec students created glyphs toponymic for their communities based on knowledge of the codices. One of these proposals was chosen by the assembly to become the official logo. It means that the knowledge of the codices was re-introduced and re-appropriated by the Mixtec communities. Simultaneously, to support the re-introduction of pictorial manuscripts in Ñuu Savi, the app “Códices Mixtecos” was developed, a project framed into Postcolonial Digital Humanities created by Mixtec researchers. This app contains a pictorial vocabulary with audios in *Sahan*

Savi language. The appropriation of new technologies by Ñuu Savi People for their cultural benefit is an act of resilience and resistance in the face of colonization. Finally, along with this work, methodologies have been designed and proposed for teaching codices in schools of different levels in Ñuu Savi and outside its borders, a collaborative work with Mixtec professionals, researchers, and, of course, the communities. A work that undoubtedly must continue because the codices are a Ñuu Savi legacy to humanity. This third part is based on UNDRIP’s articles 12, 13 y 14.