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Archaeology and Politics

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Introduction

This entry considers the institutionalization of the archaeological discipline in the context of modern Western science and puts forward the idea of "archaeology as politics." The analysis takes place from a South American perspective and takes a different stance from the widespread treatment on the subject which is based on the presumption of a division between science and politics as exclusive domains (although recognizing some influence of the latter). That is, it is not the intention of this entry to differentiate between archaeology and politics as separate spheres, which would imply the acceptance of the possibility of being able to "manage" at will the political side of archaeological practice in time and space. On the contrary, it is considered that archaeology is politics and its disciplinary practice inscribes power-knowledge relations both at the micro- and macro-political levels.

The dual anchorage of archaeology in modernity and in the unfinished transmodern reconfigurations predefines the political origin of absolutely all actions and choices involved with the production process, reproduction, and management of scientific knowledge. This is related to the geopolitical conditions implicated in the generation of knowledge and which preestablishes the preeminence of science over other forms of knowing. Geopolitical contexts refer not only to the physical space but also to the sociopolitical, historical, epistemological, academic, and editorial (among others) scenarios, through which certain forms of knowledge are generated and installed over others (Walsh 2007). To account for this, some historical trends will be discussed that have occurred in South America in general and in Argentina in particular, regarding the interrelationships between archaeological practices, theoretical frameworks, and political contexts. The geopolitics of knowledge impact not only the forms and conditions of producing and reproducing knowledge (i.e., science, academia, publishing companies) but also the definition and management of places of interest (e.g., historic sites, protected areas) and materiality (e.g., memorials, monuments, heritage, artifacts, museums) promoted by different sectors and actors with commemorative, recreational, educational, and cultural purposes. In this context, archaeology as discipline provides discourses, narratives, lifestyles, places, and objects located in time and space, thereby becoming a contemporary device in the classification of stories, landscapes, people, and their relationships from an Anglo-Saxon, colonial, and modern knowledge perspective.

Historical Background

Archaeology from a Political Perspective

Anthropology and archaeology as disciplines have a modern origin and are associated with the centers of political and economic power of liberal industrial countries (e.g., England, France, Germany, and the United States). Since its beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, social sciences in general and archaeology in particular developed in relation to these power centers and became institutionalized as a knowledge-producing enterprise. In this historical constitution of disciplines in Western thought, there are two foundational assumptions that characterize modern social sciences (Lander 2003). On one hand, the existence of a universal metanarrative from which all peoples and world experiences are classified and ranked, with European industrial society considered the most advanced expression of this development. In this context, the first "articulations of cultural differences in chronological hierarchies" appear, activating classifications of premodern, traditional, and/or primitive. From this perspective the forms of knowledge that were developed to understand the "other" societies came to be the only valid, objective, and universal ways of understanding the world. Through this Eurocentric view which organizes time and space, a mechanism of colonial and

imperial knowledge was installed and naturalized that preestablished the superiority of the product of science over other forms of knowing (Restrepo 2007). The ideal of knowledge in modernity, besides being characterized by its objectivity and universality, is predefined as disembodied and ahistorical, that is, by its possibilities of transcending and disregarding persons, times, and places. This is connected with the ontological rupture between body and mind, an initial separation in the modern Western tradition, which places human beings in an external position and instrumental to their environment (Lander 2003). This reinforces abstraction and distancing as main heuristic elements in the construction of knowledge.

According to the Porto Rican philosopher Maldonado-Torres, if scientific knowledge is recognized as the only valid way of knowledge, cognitive faculties in racialized subjects (the "other" colonized) are denied, which provides the basis for the ontological denial and epistemic disqualification of the latter (Maldonado-Torres 2007). Descartes' cogito ergo sum gives primordial importance to the epistemological and expresses the sense of coloniality of knowledge, "others do not think, thus they are not." So, "not thinking becomes a not being signal in modernity" (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 145), and thereby exclusion, subalternation, and/or denial mechanisms are generated for all that is different from the way of thinking of the modern, Western, and white "us." The epistemic disqualification referred to by Maldonado-Torres can be linked to the concept of "epistemicide" proposed by Santos (2006), to refer to the death of alternative knowledge caused by the installation of the idea of scientific knowledge as the only valid and rigorous way of understanding the world. Consequently, this monoculture of knowledge, as it discredits and disqualifies "others," shrinks and reduces the present by eliminating different contemporary conceptions that do not fit within modern canons and scientific principles (Santos 2006).

Moreover, there is no doubt that the relationship between politics and archaeological practice has begun with the emergence and development of the discipline in the nineteenth century (Trigger 1989). However, discussions about the political implications of archaeology or on the uses and abuses of the past emerged only in the last decades of the twentieth century. Archaeologists' late treatment of these discussions can be seen as a result of disciplinary institutionalization which sought to cover archaeology with scientific status guaranteeing objectivity and neutrality. Simultaneously, the development of the firm belief that archaeology is synonymous with the past helps to install the view of the professional's role as being free from the vicissitudes and particularities of its own time. In that sense, the practice of archaeology, under the precepts of modern scientific thought, is inscribed and mediated by the denial of its contemporaneity reflected mostly in political, Eurocentric, and racist terms. Some academic theories, such as diffusionism and evolutionism, were the conceptual frameworks for the construction of national identities in different countries of South America and which white Europeans used to legitimate their treatment of indigenous peoples. At the same time, different archaeological investigations sought to demonstrate the historical discontinuities between high pre-Hispanic cultures and contemporary native groups. The cultural historical synthesis of large regions and areas was one of the main objectives of the South American archaeology in the early decades of the twentieth century. In this context, diffusionism and racial studies were one of the main mechanisms to explain the migration patterns of human groups through space and time (Politis 1995).

It was not until the 1970s and 1980s that scientists began to reflect deeply on the close relationship between the archaeological work and nationalist practices, as well as the sociopolitical contexts in general. The emergence of Latin-American social archaeology in Mexico and Peru, with its theoretical orientations in historical materialism and neopositivism, saw attempts to explain social phenomena scientifically. This movement sought to link the past to the present and aimed to be a weapon of liberation for the people. Issues relating to their origin and status as exploited or the transience of social

classes, institutions, and behavioral patterns were explored (Lumbreras 1974). Latin-American social archaeology was therefore characterized by the development of an original theoretical approach which sought to provide the basis for generating emancipatory political positions rather than academic positions. The most significant contributions were made in Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, and Cuba; however, the influences of this approach were restricted to those countries during the 1970s and early 1980s. In this regard, it has been suggested that social archaeology was associated with temporal contexts where the political model of the nation state tended towards a Marxist ideology (Oyuela-Caycedo et al. 1997).

Moreover, not all Marxist archaeologists ascribed to the tenets of the Latin-American social archaeology. Among them, some American archaeologists close to Marxism began to explore the political implications of the discipline and archaeological praxis and to discuss issues relating to the procedures and uses of the past such as ownership of archaeological materials, authenticity, ethnicity, restitution, and cultural resource management (Trigger 1989; Kohl & Fawcett 1995; McGuire et al. 2005). The emergence of post-processual archaeology in the Anglo-Saxon context also contributed to a deeper analysis of the relationship between archaeology and politics and broadened the discussion about the implications of professional practice and the role of the archaeologist (Shanks & Tilley 1987). The organization of the first World Archaeological Congress (WAC) in 1986 promoted the analysis and discussion of politics in archaeology and especially its inclusion in the research agenda (Ucko 1987). The founding objectives of the WAC, which among other things sought to promote indigenous peoples and defend their rights, were to activate relationships with and the participation of archaeologists from peripheral countries and engage in their sociopolitical issues. These were novel proposals that challenged the idea of a neutral archaeology and promoted other ways of considering professional practice.

In the 1990s, the vision that archaeology had consolidated, due to its origin, an inescapable political dimension and that nationalism is just one of many possible manifestations of this nature can be expressed both in its political and scientific activities (Silberman 1995). Some observations may be made in relation to this idea of archaeology and also in reference to the excision of political and scientific domains. Regarding the former, this assumption is still accepted without much discussion, and it appears that the political domain in archaeology is *one* dimension (Kohl & Fawcett 1995). This idea implies that the discipline must inevitably have other dimensions that are not political and that there is some possibility of disaggregating its components. Moreover, considering scientific and political activities as independent areas, besides representing the possibilities of disaggregation of archaeological dimensions, is part of the neoliberal agenda which is sustained by ideas of neutrality, detachment, and objectivism. As mentioned at the beginning of this entry, by its origin, scope, implications, overt and hidden actions, and omissions, archaeological practice is always inherently political. In this decade, and in some South American countries, constitutional reforms have recognized the preexistence of indigenous peoples and have consecrated certain fundamental rights such as the communal ownership of land as well as rights to health care, to education, and to practice their culture. These rights, established by the nation state, will become in the future significantly relevant for the indigenous peoples in their relationship with archaeologists.

The beginning of the twenty-first century heralded the deepening and multiplicity of voices associated with the politics of knowledge in archaeology. This development gave rise to changes in the ways archaeologists began to consider archaeological practice through an understanding of the plurality of agents involved. In recent years there have been, in different contexts of world archaeology, diverse theoretical and methodological approaches in the light of decolonizing thought that have tried to account for the involvement, participation, and coproduction in archaeological research projects of actors and historically

marginalized sectors (McNiven & Russell 2005; Smith & Wobst 2005; Gnecco & Ayala 2010).

In its disciplinary history, much of South American archaeology has developed behind closed doors privileging knowledge construction from a Western and white perspective. One could argue that this way of looking at archaeological practice in much of South America is a result of the theoretical and methodological influences from the historical cultural school and the processual archaeology that predominated and still influences this part of the Americas. Moreover, in Argentina in particular as well as in some other South American countries, democratic governments have alternated with coups d'état and military governments that have significantly influenced the development of archaeology in these regions through the promotion of national archaeologies (Politis 1995). In general and in brief, it can be said that in Argentina during democratic times, science advanced and academic activity progressed in many directions. During these moments, archaeological research consolidated, systematic financing research projects began, important national and international scientific events occurred, and new undergraduate and graduate careers were created. Conversely, during military periods, there were setbacks in research, some universities and anthropology careers were closed, and there was ideological persecution and discrimination (Politis & Curtoni 2011).

In recent years, especially since 2003, the Argentine government of President Néstor Kirchner promoted a progressive national and popular model, with a clearly defined foreign policy and South American connection, which meant a change in style and conception of international integration of the country. In the twenty-first century, this has been favored by the surging conditions in the South American scenario, generally characterized by a neoliberal exhaustion – through policies of market liberation; the emergence of social and political movements that put forward alternatives of production and management; the revaluation of the State versus the market, shown in the regulation and promotion of social equality; debt reduction and the proposal of autonomous relations with the United States; and, finally, the search and strengthening of processes of regional integration represented by the Mercosur and Unasur (Ayerbe 2011). This economic, political, social, and cultural repositioning, which has occurred in several countries in South America, has affected and still are affecting, to varying degrees and depth depending on national contexts, the ways to consider archaeological practice as well as its own theoretical elaboration. In Argentina, in recent years, discussions about the ethical dimensions of archaeological work and heritage management have been activated, and the participation and involvement of indigenous peoples in archaeological research projects has seen the emergence of new issues and problems of inquiry. For example, issues relating to local situations have been considered and claims and disputes raised by local groups (e.g., indigenous peoples, peasants) have been addressed in archaeological congresses (e.g., relating to territorial dispossessions, the destruction of sacred places, repatriation of human remains and associated materiales, and the destruction of sites).

Key Issues

Archaeology, Knowledge, Politics, Power

Since its conception, production, reproduction, distribution, and consumption, knowledges generated within academic institutional frameworks bear their geopolitical, geo-historical, and geo-cultural imprints ("knowledge" is used in plural in this entry with the intention of presenting the idea that knowledge in singular refers to the Eurocentric view while the plural makes reference to the Latin-American conception of the possibility of multiple knowledges). Referred to as the body politics of knowledge (Castro Gomez & Grosfoguel 2007), knowledges possess a place, context, body, color, and gender in their origin (Castro Gomez & Grosfoguel 2007). Thus, they are contingent, situated, and traversed by relations of space and power. These conditions may also express the senses of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being, which characterized ways of

knowing developed and imposed in colonial modernity (Lander 2003). The concept of the coloniality of power refers to strategies of modern exploitation and domination that had their origins in the naturalization of racial hierarchies and the ordering and classification of "otherness." The coloniality of knowledge is related to the central role of epistemology in the process of elaborating knowledge, which can allow reproducing colonial schemes of thinking and controlling all forms of subjectivity, of culture, and of production and reproduction of knowledges (Quijano 2003). Finally, the coloniality of being refers to the colonized subjects' lived experiences and histories and their impact on language forms (Maldonado-Torres 2007). Under these conditions, Western science's epistemic colonialism is imposed from the definition of the "zero" point as the main model of knowledge through which the world can be observed from a neutral, objective, and absolute locus (Castro Gomez & Grosfoguel 2007).

In Argentina, the thinker Arturo Jauretche reflected on the reality of the country in the 1950s in terms similar to those involved in the concept of the coloniality of power, by considering the geopolitical and chronopolitical dimensions of knowledge. In his essay on "pedagogical colonization," he said that under the appearance of universal values, "only relative values corresponding to a certain time or geographical location, whose appearance of universality arises solely from the power of universal expansion given by the centers that originate them" are still being introduced (Jauretche [1957] 2004: 99). Also, through national projects, the intellectual elites or "intelligentsia," according to Jauretche ([1957] 2004), identified the universal values of "culture" enshrined by the centers of power, thereby excluding all preexisting understandings. The ideal promoted by the "intelligentsia" was to create Europe in America through the destruction of indigenous peoples who were seen to be an obstacle and through the denial of all local values and possibilities of regional creations. Thus, the process of "Europeanization that was practiced did not consist in the incorporation of European values to the existing culture, but in its outright derogation" (Jauretche [1957] 2004: 102).

Hegemonic narratives are furthermore added that imposed some axiomatic formulations, discursively constructed, posing the lack of continuity between the pre-Hispanic past and contemporary indigenous peoples. In his book, *The Prophets of Hate and Yapa* (*Yapa* is Quechua word meaning gift that the seller gives to the buyer), Jauretche ([1957] 2004: 102) expressed, "The misunderstanding of our pre-existing as a cultural, or rather, understand it as anti-cultural, contributed to the fact that the pre-existing were deprived of all means of expression. It was not enough with the massive replacement of the native population by immigration flow. Intelligence became 'intelligentsia' and assuming that culture was exclusively imported it became one of the most effective tools to uproot the local elements of pre-existing culture." The idea of progress in America could materialize if both the past and the present were denied, "hence the insistence of American denial and anxiety about being European. This historical pattern caused a method that later became norm. Reality was replaced by abstraction" (Jauretche [1968] 2002: 30).

The effects of the coloniality of power and relationships with knowledge management have been criticized and denounced by various Argentine thinkers such as Ortiz Pereira, Manuel Ugarte, Scalabrini Ortiz, Jauretche, and Fermín Chávez, who sought to think of reality both from their own and from concrete needs. It was a way of seeing things "from here" because "the inability to see the world from ourselves has been systematically cultivated in our country" (Jauretche [1957] 2004: 108). Pre-Hispanic past denial and the denial of contemporary indigenous peoples became part of the essence of the modern cosmovision and modus operandi established from colonial order. For example, in the search for defining the identity of the pampas promoted by state authorities and based in the multicultural synthesis, "the indigenous" fluctuates in a complex way, being at times present as a figure of recognition and reparation and at other times absent ignoring their current claims and concessions. This is a consequence of the action of two simultaneous processes called the

"specific invisibility" and "generic visibility" (Curtoni & Chaparro 2008). Specific invisibility refers to the strategies of concealing, silencing, and denying that operate on the "indigenous being," on the concrete needs of the communities, their rights, and claims, as well as on political activism and its representatives. Different narratives have been attempting both to enunciate the absence of indigenous people in the region and to challenge the legitimacy of existing identities. In parallel, generic visibility mechanisms are generated, generally staged by state power, and associated with reparation, recovery, and revaluation of "the indigenous" actions. The preferred forms of expression of this process are the materialization or the monumentalization of "something" referred to as the indigenous world, without any discussion and consensus with local communities about what and how and with the intention of visibilizing actions and demonstrating political awareness. These constructions objectify indigenous agency and relationships. The official authorities' discourses are also activated which promote multicultural integration as a way of overcoming historical controversies (such as indigenous and white Creoles). In this search for Pampa identity, the "indigenous" fluctuates unanchored in different forms, being at times synonymous with the past, in the best case, in miscegenation, and in others and expressed as patrimonialized and/or monumentalized figures (Curtoni & Chaparro 2008).

These strategies, together with racist and ethnocentric elaborations, formed the basis of nation-constitution projects in different countries of South America in general and Argentina in particular (Politis & Curtoni 2011). Social science and archaeological practice taking place in these spaces of power were not free of ideological-political influences promoted by the colonial modern imaginary. Thus, the criticism of the colonial construction of knowledges requires an epistemological-political positioning that attempts to "decolonize" disciplinary foundations. This dual dimension is expressed in terms of methodology with the statement that there are no definitive and unique rules which guide research (see Haber 2011), together with the acceptance of other views and extra-academic elements in the construction of knowledges and at the political level with the critique of science's hegemonic, globalizing, and exclusive stance. The premise of the decolonization of knowledge is to make clear the place and relationships from which knowledges are produced and to analyze the institutions that produce and/or are managers of it and point out its power effects. It also entails transcending the senses involved in the "zero point" challenging detachment and neutrality and recognizing contamination and agreement in the generation of knowledge (Castro Gomez & Grosfoguel 2007).

Future Directions

In this sense, what is necessary is not just alternative knowledge, but new ways of producing and reproducing them (Santos 2006). These could rise from an intertopic criticism about the global imposition of knowledge, leading to the promotion of different and multiple places of enunciation though interrelated, coproduced, and pluriversal. The practice of archaeology "from here" (Jauretche's) results in a rupture with the academic-scientific privilege and status as the legitimate producer of universal knowledge construction, and on the other hand, it activates decolonizing procedures of instituted knowledge (pedagogical decolonization), thereby promoting new ways of knowing. What is sought with these statements is that the construction of knowledge is historically situated, i.e., not Eurocentric or based on the scientific rationalism of liberal modernity. Overcoming Eurocentrism implies, among other things, an anchorage of space in terms of the spatial, social, bodily, linguistic, epistemic, and political sense so as to activate our incorporation in concrete spheres of pluriversality where other bodies, languages, concepts, other knowledges, and epistemologies coexist. These "other spaces," where different knowledges are organized together with other epistemologies, cosmovisions, and rationalities, are prior to the interests and motivations of the academic field.

Therefore, neither do peoples and groups forming these spaces and knowledges, as well as the places themselves, need to be empowered (paternalist attitude quite common in some postcolonial and postmodern discourses) nor do they need the academic concourse or the "expert" wink to manage a position of credibility, legitimacy, and existence. On the contrary, it is essential to establish decolonizing processes at the subject's level in terms of its "pedagogical colonization," its scientific language and disciplinary practices, and its disincorporation, in order to overcome academic arrogance and the exclusion caused by epistemic hierarchies of the global coloniality and its incorporation – in the sense of embodiment – to local situations.

Throughout history and even in some current contexts, archaeology has developed and been installed as a hegemonic biopolitical device whose narratives construct and control stories, places, subjects, and their relations from a Anglo-Western, scientific, modern, and colonial production standpoint. Thus, archaeological practice is always inherently political, and it reflects in different ways and intensities the complex and dynamic interrelationships between interest groups, archaeologists, and sociopolitical contexts. The analysis of the relationship between archaeology and policy exhibits complicity between modernity and coloniality and the generation of knowledge as an ideological/political product. The subversion of this mode of production, which has been institutionalized and naturalized, involves at least the effort to place the constructions of knowledges together with and from local pluriversality and from geo-chrono-political stances so as to invert the relationship and thus retrace the itineraries of the archaeological politics in the light of other interests and other ways of knowledge production.

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Cross-References

- ▶ Decolonization in Archaeological Theory
- ▶ Indigenous Archaeologies
- ▶ Local Communities and Archaeology: A Caribbean Perspective
- ▶ Social Archaeology
- ▶ South American Archaeology: Postcolonial Perspectives

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Archaeology and the Emergence of Fields: Environmental

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Introduction

Environmental archaeology is both an extension of general archaeological principles and an area of study in its own right. Formally acknowledged in the 1950s, it has grown significantly since then – so much so as to give rise to the fear of ever-increasing "silos" in the discipline of archaeology. Environmental archaeology uses proxies to investigate site context and forensically pursues artifacts and ecofacts to elicit data. Rigorous taphonomic investigations are intrinsic to methods used in environmental archaeology.

Definition

Environmental archaeology investigates the site environment at the time of human activity. The principal aim is to determine the link between changing patterns of human activity and local, regional, or even global environmental change. In this way, the environmental record can be used to make causal inferences about changes in the archaeological record.

Humans continually respond to their environment and any change to their familiar surroundings invokes changes in their response. This change is discovered in the archaeological evidence through the use of a number of subdisciplines. For example, paleoethnobotany (study of fossil plant remains), zooarchaeology (the study of vertebrate remains), geomorphology (study of landscape formation), palynology (study of past pollen regimes), geophysics (study of dynamic landscapes), landscape archaeology (the cultural landscape of the site), human biology (human remains), and human ecology (living in the landscape) are some of the subdisciplines in