

Short CV

Mónica Espinosa Arango is Associate Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Universidad de Los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia (Uniandes). She received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Massachusetts in 2004 under the direction of Arturo Escobar. Prior to this, she earned a BA in Anthropology from Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá (1992), and an MA in Anthropology from the University of Florida, Gainesville (1996). She obtained a Fulbright Scholarship from 1996 to 1998. Since 2007, she has been teaching at the Department of Anthropology at the Universidad de Los Andes and is currently the Director of the Graduate School at the College of Social Sciences. Before arriving at Uniandes, she taught in the Department of Social Sciences at the Universidad de Puerto Rico-Arecibo, from 2004 to 2007. Espinosa's research and teaching integrate the sub-fields of political and environmental anthropology. She has done extensive ethnographic and ethnohistorical research on indigenous authority systems, state formation and nation building in the Colombian Amazonia (Middle Caquetá River and Amazon River) and the southwest Andes (Cauca and south of Tolima) with Andoque, Cocama, and Pijao indigenous peoples. She is the author one of the most detailed studies on the indigenous leader Manuel Quintín Lame (1883-1967), who led a renowned indigenous mobilization in southwest Andes during the first half of the twentieth century. Her book *La civilización montés: la visión india y el trasegar de Manuel Quintín Lame en Colombia* (2009) received a third-place recognition in LASA's Monserrat Ordoñez Award (2010) and the "Mención de honor" in Social Sciences from the Fundación Alejandro Ángel Escobar (2010). Espinosa has been a LASA member since she was a graduate student at UMass and served as Associate Editor of Anthropology of the *Latin American Research Review (LARR)* from 2016 to 2020.

Espinosa has studied the forging of indigenous political subjectivities in the Amazon and the Andes, as well the transformation of indigeneity after the 1991 constitutional change and the multicultural turn, paying special attention to the relationship between the State, the long-term pattern of political violence, and the pluralism and political experimentalism of indigenous pueblos. Her approach has privileged the perspective of indigenous intellectuals, sages, artists, and women leaders, and has focused on the spatial and temporal dimensions of social memory, systems of authority, cultural politics, and the role of indigenous mobilizing and organizations in the twenty-century regional history of democratization in the southwest Andes. Currently, Espinosa works on the experimental field of anthropology of life. She combines a political ecology of life with landscape biography, weather-world phenomenology, and multispecies ethnography. She has extensively collaborated with Colombian archeobotanist Sonia Archila, on her research about first human populations in the Checua River Valley on the eastern Andes cordillera, combining registers on lifeworlds, biota and mineral resources (9500 cal BP- 1500 AD). She is also a senior member of the transdisciplinary research group *Ecological History and Social Memory (EHMS)*, whose work focuses on the Volcanic Complex Doña Juana Cascabel and the buffer areas in the Colombian Andes massif. EHMS received the prestigious award "Dejar huella-2022" as one of the three best collaborative research programs at Uniandes with largest impact among local communities. Espinosa's research at EHMS is oriented to analyzing multi-scalar sociopolitical and environmental tensions surrounding State intervention and environmental and territorial policies in the National Natural Park Doña Juana - Cascabel. She works on a critical perspective of disaster risk reduction in tropical volcanic environments based on an ecopolitics of care. The recognition of local knowledges—particularly regarding resource management, agricultural adaptations and socio-ecosystemic resilience—is of special relevance as well as the analysis of rural economies and cultures in northeast Nariño with and after the boom of illegal poppy cultivation. She also keeps ongoing research on Manuel Quintín Lame's utopia and universality from below.

Recently, she has joined Misak intellectual and traditional medicine apprentice Julio Cesar Tunubalá in his research on traditional midwifery, reproductive health, and territorial harmony in the southwest Andes, following his own interpretation of cosmopolitics. She also works with Yenny Gómez, an intellectual and women leader from Nariño, about the rural families' lifeways transformations during the last three decades and the empowerment of women amidst the slow violence, toxicity and socioenvironmental conflicts brought by the poppy boom and the state's disregard of *campesino* populations.

Espinosa is the author of [Convivencia y poder político entre los Andoques del Amazonas](#). Editorial Universidad Nacional, 1995; [La civilización montés: la visión india y el trasegar de Manuel Quintín Lame en Colombia](#), Ediciones Uniandes, 2009; and [El poder en plural. Entre la antropología y la teoría política](#). Ediciones Uniandes, 2014, co-edited with Alex Betancourt, professor of Political Science at the University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras. She is finishing a trilogy on Lame consisting of the essays: [Missing the political: a southern critique of political ontology](#). *Anthropological Theory*, 2021; [Democracy against the grain: indigenous politics in Colombia's southwest Andes](#), *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 2022; and the upcoming "Emancipation heterodoxies: between Walter Benjamin's Thesis on the Philosophy of History and Manuel Quintin Lame's Wild Civilization". She has authored and coauthored articles and book chapters on the volcano-páramo Doña Juana and the interconnected human lifeworlds, the symbolism of water in Lame's mobilizing in the Saldaña River Basin, and the new experimental wave of more-than-human and multispecies ethnographies based on the volcano-páramo Doña Juana case study. Espinosa strongly advocates horizontal dialogues between scientific and local knowledges, and transdisciplinary and collaborative research that engages with indigenous and rural peoples' dilemmas and perspectives in the context of Colombia's turbulent modern and contemporary history.