

## **“THEY CUT THEM DOWN AND BURN THEM AS IF THEY WERE WEEDS”:**

Specialized instrument makers and the scarcity of bamboo in Bolivia



**Abstract:** My PhD-research entails a cross-cutting agenda that integrates both a greater understanding about the specialised working practices of Indigenous musical instrument makers in the Bolivian Andes and addresses issues of sustainability surrounding the harvesting and marketing of the raw materials, bamboos in this case, to make such wind instruments. My research is critical as there is evidence for the over-consumption of the raw materials as a result of the marketisation of the instruments – not only does this have significant implications for the ecology of the bamboos, but also the linked economies, livelihoods and culture of the Indigenous wind instrument makers. At the same time, there is a wider context of widespread deforestation and land use change, thus making bamboo an ever increasingly scarce resource. My fieldwork in Bolivia includes ethnographic research with bamboo collectors, and a round table discussion with key stakeholders on the topic of the sustainability of Indigenous wind instrument making in La Paz.

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