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## Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues With Psychology

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Danilo S. Guimarães



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# Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues With Psychology

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Jaan Valsiner

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## SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

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# DISCOVERING THE REAL AMERICA

Jaan Valsiner

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Columbus had it all wrong. He thought he could reach India and capture its riches. Instead, he reached the coast of the continent—later to be named “America”—and set up the starting point for five centuries of misunderstandings. First there was the misunderstanding by the conquerors of the lands. Colonial powers can be strong in occupying new lands but are inevitably weak in understanding how the conquered people live. Their egocentricity of feeling in power makes them blind to the social and psychological complexities of the people they governed. But they could manage—brutal force has masked many weaknesses of the powerful all through human history.

Then came the missionaries. The conquered people had to be shown how to “see the light” of the deities imported from Rome. Their misunderstandings of the local peoples’ ways of being was made possible by their own devotion to their beliefs. If one believes too strongly in something, the possibility to understand something else is clouded by the belief. Yet they succeeded—churches were built all over the continent, from North to South, and the habit of detecting and pardoning of the sins of the local populace became a means of their spiritual conquest of the peoples of the land.

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages ix–x.

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Finally—psychologists arrived. They are a special kind of people—pretending to be free from any religious convictions and not on a mission of capturing souls. Instead, they give advice, administer tests, and try to educate the natives in the mores of the White men. There was no doubt on their minds that the natives had much to learn from them, but not vice versa. So—discovering the Americas did not help the discoverers too much—they failed to discover themselves through their relations with “the natives”. Psychology found its way in the various social strata of the people of European descent, but had no connections with Amerindian realities.

The present volume—the courageous initiative of its Editor, Danilo Silva Guimarães—is a notable milestone in psychology’s making sense of the native American mental and social worlds. It brings together the whole range of voices of Amerindian people over the large area ranging from Mexico to the very South of the Americas. It was a courageous undertaking because the goal of sieving through the knowhow of Amerindians from which our contemporary cultural psychology could benefit was constantly in jeopardy. And for good reasons: There exist various political sensitivities of the Amerindian communities in each of the American countries in which they live. There are long-term economic, legal, and political grievances of the Amerindian communities who have been driven out of their original lands, lakes and rivers. The provision of modern technological amenities as many of them migrate to towns does not compensate for the tensions of identity that they experience. Secondly—the project of this book was courageous in terms of bringing the spiritual worlds of the Amerindian peoples to scientific psychology.

Western psychology—even its new and cultures-devoted branch we call “cultural psychology”—is not well prepared to deal with the complexities of human experiences encoded in the Amerindian *psyche*. So—the project could have failed, had it been “torpedoed” from both directions—from Amerindian historically substantiated suspicions towards the “White man’s knowledge”, and psychologists’ Eurocentric authoritative but blind stand. It did not fail—and the present book presents a new look at the psychology of Amerindian peoples based on their own experiences. It is a powerful testimony for the need in psychology as science to overcome its fragmentation of knowledge and the pragmatic dominance of methods over methodologies.

Psychology over the last century has been separating methods as tools—to chosen at one’s will or accepted social fashion—without considering the context of the general visions of the world, particular psychological phenomena, and theoretical derivations from them (“the methodology cycle”—Branco & Valsiner, 1997). This was of course the main mechanism to create a booming and buzzing “empirical science” where fashions for theoretical “umbrellas” replace one another (e. g., “cognitivism” takes over from “behaviorism” as the leading credo of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) making the accumulation of ever-more-fragmented empirical data not only possible, but also ideologically desirable. This is precisely a movement in the opposite direction from the Amerindian—as well as most other cultural—traditions. The “semiotic gap” between contemporary psychology and the

ways ordinary people feel is growing, rather than becoming reduced. This growing gap enhances the possibility that knowledge becomes violent—first against its own sources (the “just plain folks”), and then, eventually, against the knowledge makers themselves. Psychology’s limited potency for finding solutions to many social and psychological problems stem from its own knowledge fragmentation.

How can our focus on Amerindian perspectives—brought together in this book—assist in this process of stopping knowledge fragmentation and potential violence? As the contributions to the book summarily show, the belief that introduction of representative democratic governance systems is no easy solution. “Democracy” has been the major battle call of the occidental world, which, since the vicissitudes of the French Revolution of 1789, has been trying to conquer the rest of the world in spirit—paralleled by international monetary loans. The latter have to be paid back (or pardoned), the former—are supposed to stay and govern the cultural traditions which may have historically different traditions of democracy. The “democracy of the elders” in a segmented society is rather different from the one where political parties beg for support from the “just plain folks”, yet shy away from outright “buying” them through some goods-for-votes bartering schemes (called “corruption”). Or—where it becomes an accepted media strategy by the losing candidate in an election to label the winning by one’s opponent “a fraud” and insist on re-counting of votes or re-election. There is no single democracy but many, and even established democracies undergo change in their social organization in given countries. The Amerindian peoples have had long history in being forced to “participate” in their particular hegemonic “democracies” of their countries, with the expected result of feelings of unease, distrust, and alienation.

Where does a democratic mentality begin? Instead of building it “downwards” from sweeping social movements—revolutions, election results, transfers of power from military dictatorships to elected parliaments—let us begin from the other end. That is “democracy for two”—for two persons related to each other by some relation: marital, parent-child, patron-client, friend-friend, enemy-enemy, etc. At this junction, my interlocutors from the Amerindian tradition would exclaim—“quite wrong! Never two, always many!”. And this is true—from the generalized Amerindian ideological perspective where community is the field within which “any two” would be seamlessly immersed. And more than that—most social organization around the World is based on more-than-“twos” (Chaudhary, 2004). Yet for analytic clarity the minimal order of any relationship is that of two— $A < \text{RELATES WITH} > B$ . The processes involved in “relates with” are to be understood in this “minimal Gestalt” in order to make sense of the “maximal gestalt” (of “community”) and of even hyper-maximal gestalts (“society”). All the “community” and “society” relations are complex structures of RELATIONS OF RELATIONS the forms of which establish new Gestalt qualities not reducible to the original relation between the minimal Gestalt of two-in-relation.

The “democratic mindset” is a special form of the relation  $A < \text{RELATES WITH} > B$ . It involves the freedom of expression and the “majority rule” in deci-

sion making. Yet the “majority rule” within a unit of two parts involves full (2 of 2) concordance about some joint action plan. Consequently the specific tactics of the process of relating—persuading or coercing the other in complementation by agreeing, neutralizing, or resisting by the other—acquire the centrality in this “minimal democracy”. In order to arrive at the “majority rule” of 2 of 2, the process involved needs to be asymmetric in social power or efficiency of persuasion. As a RELATION involves mutuality, the asymmetric forms of it include counter-action possibilities. So—the “freedom of speech” by one (A) is paired in a relationship with the “freedom not to listen” (B). The result of such match is neutralization of the persuasion efforts. We can observe that in numerous places—from the complaints of long-married wives about their husbands that “he does not listen”, or from social groups who recognize that even if their voices can be “heard” it does not mean that they are “listened to”. Something like this is present in the case of dialogues of Amerindian peoples with their “hegemonic societies”—in contemporary “democratic societies” they can express their views, but is it guaranteed that anybody listens? Part of our democratic societies is the freedom to ignore. This renders the democratic governance remarkably slow in instituting social change—while the discourses about the *need for such change* can be rampant.

In fact, the relations between the Amerindian and Eurocentric perspectives that are depicted in this book are analyzed as a form of such unit A<RELATING WITH>B (see Figures 17.4 and 17.5 in Chapter 17. The notion of *semiotic walls* in the relationship is one of the vehicles through which the relationship leads to mutual misunderstandings. However, I want to point out that the same mechanisms can also lead to mutual understanding, respect, and—improvement of our knowledge in general. Walls are constraints that both separate and unite, they direct the processes of relating in some—rather than other—directions. Hence there is hope that after five centuries of Amerindian struggles for being heard, and two centuries of psychology trying to establish its own identity as science (Valsiner, 2012), the learning from Amerindian experience can revitalize psychology. Cultural psychology has a chance—and the present book can serve as a vehicle for such breakthroughs.

— Jaan Valsiner  
Aalborg-Chapel Hill  
January, 2015

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## DEDICATION

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For the Mbya Guarani people of the *Tekoa Pyau* and *Tekoa Itu*, in the Amerindian Land of Jaraguá, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

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## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Danilo Silva Guimarães

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Ka'araju. Aýma aje'i xeayu hague ju axau kata, iarami aje'ima xeayu rive, aýma amombe'u juta koo petyngua'i kova'e ramingua'i ma jareko rive vy he'y py jareko'i, kova'e ma nhambojerovia ramo nhanepytývo va'erã'i havi. Há'e va'e regua remã xeayu kuri aje'i! kova'e petyngua ma ýma nhaneramoĩ kuery oiporu'i araka'e, oiporu mavy nhembojaru e'y tataxinã'i oiporu, ko toryai rupi he'y'i oiporu araka'e nhaneramoĩ kuery. Há'e rami vy haepy opu'ã tamavy onhembojere'i tataxinã'i omboguejy'i! há'e vyma omonhepyrõ'i, joguero guata'i aguã reguare oja pyxaka mavy oiporu araka'e nhaneramoĩ kuery namingua'i, rire ma kova'e axauka! há'e guima oĩ ju peteĩ, ojapyxaka pa'i mavy omboguejy ju petyngua'i! há'e vyma mbaraka mirĩ'i ju omoparã'i he'ia rami, há'e vyma omoparã'i ma vyma oporai'i mborai'i voĩ opy re nhembojaru rupi he'y nhaneramoĩ oupi'i araka'e, omoparã'i mbã'e rã pa ojapyxaka'i ko nhanembou are kuery tape'i rupi oo maramo mba'emo ndoikoĩ aguã regua ju kova'e mbaraka mirĩ! kova'e ramingua'i ýma oiporu araka'e namingua pe nomopytã mbai! nomoĩ hague! Namingua rive'i ete'i oiporu araka'enhaneramoĩ kuery, rire ma kova'e axauka ju. Há'e rami vyma ojapyjakapa mavy, há'e vyma omboguejy naminju ojapo'i, ta há'e guima uguata'i aguã ma mbo'y'i omoĩ araka'e uguata'i tamavy nhandeva'e ete'i rami ojexauka'i aguã namingua mbo'y'i omoĩ'i, oo maramo nhande'i va'eri ramo nhande'i va'e reko py meme uguata'i ovy aguã ju namingua mbo'y'i omoĩ, há'e vyma ojopy ma tapevy uguata jogueravy tape rupi

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages xv–xvii.

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hetarei ri oovy jogueraa há'e ae iramo há'e rami hae avi oo tamavy ma ko tape'i ojopy ovy, tapere mba'eve ndoikoi aguã rupi ojapxaka'i nhaneramo'i kuery oguata'i tamavy! Nopu'ã tema rivei nda'evei rei ojexara'u mboae rei rire ma, kova'e ara ma nda'evei teri nhapu'ã i aguã he'i, kova'e ara ma ko nhanderape ojoko'i tevoi imoiny tanhapu'ã eme ranhê he'i araka'e joupe upe'i ayu opoi'i mavy nhaneramo'i kuery! ay nhandekuai harami he'y ju ikuai araka'e, nda'evei mava'eri nopu'ã tema nhea'ãi py tujakuei araka'e yma opita'i va'e kuery. Há'e rire rima kova'e regua reguare heta va'e kuery oipota ramo amombe'u ndaikuaapai havi hae py, aikuaa peve'i rive ri amombe'u! va'eri iporã vaipa ma he'i arami tapere mba'emo ndoikoi, toiko eme'i tavy ore rape tove toroaxa porã'i tapere mamorã roapy! He'i ague rupi rive'i ko amombe'u ramo kova'e haema há'eve'i... (Natalício Karai de Souza personal communication in December 17, 2014, concerning four of the Mbya Guarani devices he handcrafts)<sup>1</sup>.

My intention starting this book with some words in an Amerindian language is to show psychologists how challenging it can be to listen and talk to people, two of the most basic and most relevant devices for the psychological practice. Translation is usually a hard task, and it is even harder when the temporal distance between the linguistic families is longer than 10 thousand years. Before taking this decision, in one of my chats with Natalício Karai de Souza—a Mbya Guarani artisan from the *Tekoa Pyau*, in Jaraguá, São Paulo—he explained to me that one of the graphic designs he and his wife use to include in the baskets they produce

<sup>1</sup> Translation of de Souza's speech: Good afternoon. Now I'll show you what I have just talked about, when we recorded the audio. Now I'll tell you about the use of the pipe. We use this device in sacred moments. This pipe, if we use it with faith, it is useful for many things too. I have talked about it in the audio recording. In the ancient times the pipe was used by the wise ones because the pipe is very sacred. Then, only the very wise could use it. Before the elders woke up to do something, they walked in circles until they completed three rounds, smoking and asking God for protection in order to be able to leave the house and do their activities. The pipe had this use, and so I'm showing you this pipe and telling you a little about its history. Then, comes another instrument. After doing the ritual and finishing smoking, the elders take the shaker and start playing and singing the sacred songs. Why do they do it? They do it for Nhanderu to protect them in their paths. The shaker had this use and in the ancient times it was made like this one, without graphic designs in the surface of the shaker, without feathers; like this, without anything on it. That's a little of the history of the shaker. After the elders finish the canticles, they put the shaker in its place. Then they pick up the collar and put it around their neck, and follow their path. This kind of collar was worn to show that they belonged to the Guarani Nation, so that they would be recognized in the places they moved across throughout their journeys. When they travel, in groups or even alone, they always ask for God's protection. But these travels depended a great deal on the last night, on the dreams they had. In the dream it is shown to them if they can follow their path or if they need to wait some more. In the day after the dream they communicate to the others if the trip can happen or not. Today everything has changed; it is not like it used to be. Even when the great wise elders give advice, not all the people respect their knowledge anymore. Then many times accidents happen along the path. In the ancient times, we believed very much in dreams and people really respected each other. I do not have all the knowledge, but I'm telling you non-Indians, a little of what was passed to me in my childhood. This is a little of what I learned from the elders. It's a small piece of what I've learned. But I'm very happy for sharing a little of this knowledge with you. May we follow our paths free from harm, may we reach our destiny. Thank you very much. That's all.

means "the infinite path". He associates it with the trajectories a person can follow in his/her life. Moreover, he advised me about taking care as we walk the paths of our lives and about the need for protection from possible perils and challenges on the way. At this moment, I informed Natalício about a book I was editing with the participation of psychologists from diverse countries of the Americas that work with Amerindian peoples. I said that one of the main concerns of the book was strongly connected to the challenges found in the paths of dialogue between psychologists and Amerindian peoples, as remarked in the title of the book. He became interested and emphasized the relevance of this kind of work for his people. Then, I asked him about the possibility of preparing some Mbya Guarani traditional objects to compose the cover of the book. Furthermore, I asked him to tell us the meaning of each of these objects he called "instruments" of the Mbya Guarani people. His speech was recorded in front of his house and we have made a transcription in the original language with the help of Roberto Veríssimo de Lima, another Mbya Guarani who lives in the same *Tekoa*<sup>2</sup>. Natalício explained the uses of the Mbya devices in the infinite paths of life, and spoke also of the relevance of the dream in guiding the wise men and women to their destiny, respecting themselves, their company, and the beings of the cosmos on their way.

This book was divided in four sections—preceded by the introduction—that lead up to the final chapter. It aimed at organizing a large spectrum of issues in interethnic and intercultural soils, presenting polemics in the scope of the following categories: the terms of the dialogue, the situated topics of dialogue, implications of non-dialoguing, and possibilities of dialogue. The papers submitted by the authors evoked these topics; they were not previously defined until the reading of their content. We hope these chapters and the outcomes of their organization will offer good opportunities for the advance of cultural psychology.

The first section present the terms of the dialogue, that is, how the western culture constructed semiotic devices to understand cultural and personal identity. They also explore how some notions used to identify Amerindian peoples differ from their proper self-identification, leading to miscomprehensions that guide diverse public policies in which psychologists take part. The second section focuses the territories of dialogue between psychology and Amerindian peoples, but not in the geographical sense. The territories of dialogue are the important thematic fields that are recurrent topics of Amerindian claims, as the struggle to obtain better audience in the State politics, the urban context as a place for the Amerindian lifestyle, the dialogue between the educational system and traditional wisdom, and the inclusion of traditional practices in the health care system. The third section focuses on the implications of non-dialoguing with the Amerindian peoples. For a long period, the constitutions of American states have excluded the Amerindian peoples from the equitable participation in the main decisions of the societies. The direct extermination of peoples, occulted from the history of the nations,

<sup>2</sup> *Tekoa* is the term used by Mbya Guarani peoples call the sacred land their communities live in.

as well as assimilationist policies and multiculturalist ideologies, contributed to the perpetuation of their suffering, although not achieving the aim of extinguishing the memory of their pre-Colombian roots. Finally, the chapters of the fourth and last section present a hope for the future, showing how different initiatives on the interdisciplinary psychological framework can become available and open to the perspective of the other.

The final chapter presents a selection of discussions from the previous contents of the book in dialogue with some preliminary ideas I have been developing from a semiotic and constructivist approach to the field of cultural psychology. Therefore, the observations do not intend to indicate what is essential from each chapter of the book. On the contrary, each chapter was written independently and offers proper and autonomous paths to the elaboration of the relation between psychology and Amerindian peoples. They are not reducible to my considerations here. Nevertheless, I took this opportunity to interact with some of the insightful ideas of the authors.....

Availability and openness in the process of constructing dialogues are hard tasks because they demand the confrontation of preconceptions, in spite of the recognition that differences are continuously being produced. Therefore, the approximation efforts of both psychology and Amerindian peoples imply simultaneously the multiplication of differences, that is, a dialogical multiplication.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following the paths of dialogical multiplication, which guided the construction of this book, was only possible due to the progressive availability of the Amerindians to our work in São Paulo, Brazil. In special, I would like to express my gratitude to the Mbya Guarani people, in the name of Roberto Veríssimo Lima, Sonia Barbosa de Souza, Cleodinei Martins Carceres and Ivandro Martins da Silva, who receive the support of the wise elders of their communities in our partnership. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Emerson de Oliveira Souza, a Guarani teacher that lives in the urban context of the biggest Metropolis of South America, constructing a relevant articulation with persons of many different Amerindian groups that have migrated to the city. Besides, I'm thankful for the contribution of Lumena Celi Teixeira, coordinator of the workgroup Psychology and Amerindian Peoples from Latin America<sup>3</sup>, who spread this book's project amongst the members of the workgroup, many of whom became authors here. I would also like to express my gratitude to the authors, who do their best to collaborate with relevant reflections about the situation of the Amerindian peoples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My credit to Melina Bertholdo's efforts and collaboration following up our Amerindian Support Network at the Institute of Psychology of the University of São Paulo, and to all the students and researchers associated to our

<sup>3</sup> The workgroup belongs to ULAPSI, União Latinoamericana de Psicologia (Latin American Union of Psychology).

research group in Cultural Psychology. I acknowledge the Department of Experimental Psychology (IPUSP) and the Post Graduate Program in Experimental Psychology for funding our field of research and extension-program projects, and the Laboratory of Verbal Interaction and Knowledge Construction, coordinated by Professor Livia Mathias Simão (IPUSP), for housing our supervision meetings. My special thanks to Professor Jaan Valsiner (Aalborg University), who provoked me to edit this book and gave all the necessary support for its accomplishment; his encouragement and intellectual wisdom are the fuel that have made this book progress. Finally it is relevant to mention the contribution of CNPq-Brazil<sup>4</sup>, for the fellowships and funding, which were of great importance for the realization of some steps that culminated in the production of this book. Many other persons and some institutions could be added to this acknowledgement session; nevertheless, I've selected some which were more closely related to the fulfillment of this joint venture. I believe that these persons and institutions are representative of others, which direct or indirectly support the construction of a more respectful and responsible trajectory in psychology's dialogues with Amerindian peoples.

<sup>4</sup> CNPq, Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (National Council of Technological and Scientific Development)

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Danilo Silva Guimarães

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This book is about the possibilities of cultural psychology understanding processes that are at the boundary of Amerindian discourses and practices and the discourses and practices that are present in diverse institutions of the state societies surrounding them: the hospital, the school, the urban context, the relation with the law and politics, the scientific construction of knowledge, among others. We are not focusing the psychology of Amerindian peoples, as the ways these peoples construct analogical meanings about psychological processes, although these meanings take a central role in dialogue, due to their difference in relation to the western psychological conceptions. Additionally, we are not focusing transcultural comparisons of psychological processes privileged in western societies. On the contrary, our focus comes from the practical and applied work of psychologists in the construction of interethnic dialogues with Amerindian peoples.

We consider that the challenges faced in the applied psychology conducted in different countries of the Americas can be an important source of disquieting and productive reflections concerning general issues of cultural psychology nowadays:

Lately more and more voices are heard proclaiming that the problem of general psychology is a problem of the first order. What is most remarkable is that this opinion does not come from philosophers who have made generalization their professional

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages xxi–xxxiii

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habit, nor even from theoretical psychologists, but from the psychological practitioners who elaborate the special areas of applied psychology: psychiatrists and industrial psychologists; the representatives of the most exact and concrete part of our science (Vygotski, 1927).

Our aim is to put into focus diverse concrete situations in which psychologists are invited to give practical support elaborating special areas of applied psychology, beyond psychiatry or industrial psychology. The relation between practical psychology and the construction of general knowledge guides our work. If the different areas of applied psychology are still the source of insightful ideas for our cultural science, the context of Psychology and Amerindian peoples is one of these special areas that deserve a careful attention. Nevertheless, differently from Vygotski's (1927) integrative aims evaluating the historical meaning of the crisis in psychology, the contemporary situation of psychology shows that we are far from achieving a methodological and theoretical unity. Nevertheless this book aims to cover the universal processes of differentiation and dedifferentiation through an observation of diverse ways in which the autochthon societies of the Americas struggle for the maintenance of their integrity at the same time that making themselves different to the non-Amerindian society. These processes can only be observed from a psychological perspective attentive to the Amerindian resistance against the efforts of the intellectual apprehension of their identity from the minds and societies that belong to the western worldview.

Additionally, the opportunity of cultural psychology to dialogue with the Amerindian processes of cultural differentiation and dedifferentiation in relation to other cultures can be fruitful to understand cultural and personal differentiation and dedifferentiation as general processes, with implications to the understanding of the fragmentation of the psychological field and the multiplication of psychological views.

### MEETING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: A RECURSION IN HISTORY

"[...] our meeting—it can take place now, come into being next year or wait ten years, and it happens all the time" (Ailton Krenak, 1998).

The question of meeting other people is a basic issue that affects all cultures over the world because the subsistence of the social and personal life depends on the interaction with the environment and its surroundings. Surprises and ruptures of expectancies are constitutive ingredients of the meetings between different peoples. The other person, as the other culture, is built in contrast with oneself, our culture. On the other hand, alterity can also refer to different aspects of our relation with the environment: the other of the human being can be the non-human beings (i.e. a stone, a tree); the other can be an infra-human (i.e. an animal) or hiper-human (i.e. spirits, deities). Each culture creates ways to distinguish the 'us' from the 'them', and gives values to these distinctions.

Culture regulates the ways we relate with others, for instance, allowing some of them to participate in some social circumstances (i.e. to carry a dog inside the airplane) or regulating the conditions for some others to participate in specific situations (i.e. when a ticket is needed for someone to enter into a theater play). We are also in contact with the others that belong to the past and with imagined others that belong to future generations. Our meetings with the other, the one that is different from us, sooner or later, always happen bringing smaller or greater surprises. The hard issue is what we do at each moment.

Few centuries before the milestone foundation of the first laboratory of psychological research by Wundt, in Leipzig, 1879, European peoples were suffering the psychosocial impacts out of their encounter with the diversity of things and peoples around the world (Figueiredo, 1992). The dissolution of internal borders and the meeting with external borders allowed the emergence of new ethnic mixtures, linguistic hybridism, religious changes etc. Renaissance was not only a period of openness to the ancient European history, but also of intensified meetings between peoples beyond the borders of each feudal territory within Europe, including lands overseas. Cultural shocks were provoked in different dimensions of the interactions between languages, religiosities, uses and customs, rituals, and so on.

The relatively stable life around a well-known territory with small villages became ruptured by unknown variations and novelties; the local population and language was invaded by foreign dialects and accents; the social hierarchy started to be questioned; the clear distinction between center-periphery was confused; as well as the well-defined notions of regularity and order. Instead of a world plentiful of meaning and integrity, with durable personal and collective identities, the new emergent socio-cultural field brought the diversity and complexity of unusual ways of being human.

The limits of the Christian civilization were confronted. Although some retraction of Christianity because of the expansion of the Turkish-Ottoman Empire was being compensated by the European expansion to Africa, Asia, and America, "also these new boundaries had innumerable dangers, from the real and imaginary perils involved in the great navigations to the contact with radical forms of alterity, therefore, unexpected and potentially hostile realities" (Figueiredo, 1992, pp. 36). Within a diversified setting, the fear concerning the boundaries and the boundary-beings leads to the hypothesis that intense emotional reactions are consequences of the exposition to the variety of things and peoples, especially when the new combinations and mixtures are extremely hazardous to the stability and to the organization of the culturally dominant world.

These new combinations and mixtures tended to escape the control of the western societies, but, on the other hand, they were a golden opportunity for the blooming development of ideas in human sciences. Todorov (1993) remarks that the conquest of America was an unprecedented event in the history of humanity because the issue of the other—American indigenous peoples—was accompanied by the discovery of the totality of the global world.



Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, a Brazilian polymath, was able to show how the Amerindian peoples were perceived through the lens of European projections concerning foreign peoples that was already present since ancient times. On the other hand, he also shows how new ideas in philosophy and human sciences, about the nature of society, civilization, culture and personality, were built out of the contact with the different Amerindian peoples (Melo Franco, 1937).

Different strategies emerged, along centuries, as efforts to re-organize the chaos in such a complex socio-cultural field. Until the 18th century, a series of transformations took place in the pool of intellectual life: the religious reformation; the construction of consistent philosophical systems, in which rigorous rational deductions were in the core of the immanent phenomena concatenation; the strengthening of empirical studies, from Galileo to Newton, the Empiricism of Bacon, and further on, reaching our times. Therefore, cosmological, philosophical, and scientific formulas emerged along this historical moment as a solution to the gaps and uncertainties of an unbalanced natural and social world (cf. Cassirer, 1932/1994).

### THE RECONSTRUCTION OF AMERINDIAN PEOPLES IN THE WESTERN IMAGINARY

The first time the Whiteman saw an Indian he was undressed and playing with a bat. (...) The Whiteman asked the Indian who he was and the Indian, as he didn't understand Portuguese, answered in his language: I'm killing (playing with) a bat. We call bat kaxi. Hence, the Whiteman gave the name: "you and your people are Kaxinawa (kaxi-nawa)" (Lindemberg Monte, 1984, cited via Lagrou, 2007, p. 182).

Modern psychology, similarly to modern anthropology, emerged from the great interest that involved the European academy in the end of the 18th century concerning the search of the laws of social and psychological development. The historical and evolutionary approach guided the first studies of the *Société des observateurs de l'Homme*, founded in Paris, 1799 (Jahoda, 1982). Researches from different areas of knowledge construction have participated in this society—i.e. zoologists, naturalist philosophers, psychiatrists—and there were no strict boundaries between the scientific programs. During the process of emergence of new ideas and solutions for the unexpected meetings and experiences, each part in the dialogue created meanings out of their cultural background.

The question of ethnocentrism permeates the work of many psychological, anthropological, and sociological analyses of the 19th and 20th centuries. It was based on the naturalistic Western view according to which human history is "the story of man's rise from primitive savagery to modern science and civilization" and that "human reason would rise and eventually triumph over the brute forces of nature" (Ingold, 2004, pp. 210–211). The ethnocentrism of the classic theories is grounded in the fascination of the European intellectuals to the lifestyle of the "natural peoples" in opposition to the "person with culture" (Valsiner, 2000). The conquest of America is a paradigmatic example that gives rise to a series of reflec-

tions on the topic of cultural and supposed biological differences between human beings (Todorov, 1993), as the human condition of the Amerindians was object of doubt for many years to the religious and scientific studies (see also Lévi-Strauss, 1952).

Out of the empirical studies and speculations of Western intellectuals, Amerindian peoples were reconstructed in their imaginary through associations with dichotomist fantasies: on one hand, the Amerindians were considered savages and inhuman—evoking the feelings of fear, anger, and violence. On the other hand, Amerindian peoples could be associated to the ideals of purity and harmony with nature—evoking the images of the paradise on Earth and the *noble savage*, and mobilizing the interest for approximation, conviviality, and appropriation of their wisdom and traditional lifestyle (Melo Franco, 1937).

Both positions, the one that opposes moral judgments, (good or bad in an axiological plan) and the one that opposes the intense or invasive identification with the other to avoidance attitudes (praxiological plan), do not contribute to the construction of responsible conviviality between different peoples in our multiethnic world (Todorov, 1993). On the contrary, these dichotomies ultimately eliminate the cultural differences in favor of one perspective (the good one, the one that attracts the most) or promote strict separation between cultures, as if one could live independently from the other.

If, on one hand, we can avoid a dichotomous position that does not allow the dialogue with the other, on the other hand, it is not being supposed here that it is possible to assume a neutral, impartial position in the process of relating with the other. The question of the psychologist's positioning is especially relevant to interethnic and interdisciplinary studies concerning cultural sciences, especially when the absence of consensual criteria which allow the construction of hierarchies and comparisons among different cultural mythologies and cosmologies is presupposed.

In this sense, a counterpart of social sciences is the conceptions that the subjects of study have about whoever "the researcher" may be. In the general sense it amounts to the meanings they construct about the Occidental cultural worlds and their corresponding psychology. Conceptions and meanings that the investigated peoples construct about the researcher and the psychologist constrain their relations and, consequently, limit the process of intervention for health care, educative or scientific purposes, as far as the process of data collection implies, at some level, interventions over the people investigated.

### THE ONTOLOGICAL ROOTS OF DIFFERENT CULTURES

Tupi or not Tupi, that's the question.

—Oswald de Andrade (1928, Antropophagic Manifest)

Therefore, researcher and research objects (or subjects) are linked in such a way that it becomes impossible to assert an impartial point of view. The search for

a general knowledge construction is a goal that implies the inclusion of researchers' personal perspectives—their theoretical-methodological options, beliefs, values, ethical concerns, etc.—as a constitutive part of the produced knowledge. Scientific truth is only achieved from a very particular point of view or ontological route.

The question of what is taken for granted by a social group is related to mythological constrains in the construction of the subjectivity of otherness and the objectivity of things in the world. Descola proposed four “ontological routes” which lie under cosmological understandings and practices over the world, and that are assumed to coexist in our multiethnic world:

Either most existing entities are supposed to share a similar interiority whilst being different in body, and we have animism; as found among peoples of the Amazonian basin, the Northern reaches of North America and Siberia and some parts of Southern Asia and Melanesia. Or humans alone experience the privilege of interiority whilst being connected to the non-human continuum by their materiality and we have naturalism – Europe from the classical age. Or some humans and non-humans share, within a given framework, the same physical and moral properties generated by a prototype, whilst being wholly distinguishable from other classes of the same type and we have totemism – chiefly to be found among Australia's Aborigines. Or all the world's elements are ontologically distinct from one another, thence the necessity to find stable correspondences between them and we have analogism—China, Renaissance Europe, West Africa, the indigenous peoples of the Andes and Central-America (Descola, 2008, n. d.)

These four ontologies were constructed from an analysis of ethnographic materials that observed the meanings expressed in mythological narratives, ritual practices, social behavior and the ways people from different cultures guide their relation with other bodies, either as subjects or as objects. In other words, there are communitarian constrains which constitute what is supposed to be apprehended from life experiences, with consequences to human actions and knowledge construction.

As each cosmology has a perspective on reality, that guides cultural practices, the proper definition of reality is a field of divergences that many times cannot find a common ground that allows the production of consensus. Consequently, the relation with otherness, i.e., from different ethnic societies or heterogeneous cultural places within a particular society, leads to transformative and unpredictable outcomes for the participants of the relation.

People from western societies are used to relate with the world as if it was constituted by discrete things or rules. All of them have their place in the scientific encyclopedia. Alike to what we do with different knowledge socially built in scientific and non-scientific grounds, in everyday life, we are used to buy some things in the supermarket and drop off what someone else considers not useful. Different cultures can be taken into account in a similar way, as providing devices to the use of the psychological system of a discrete individual. Then we

ANIMISM

TOTEMISM

NEBULOUS  
FIELD

NATURALISM

ANALOGISM

FIGURE 0.1. The Four Ontological Routes.

construct our private collection of souvenirs from different parts of the world, listen to music from everywhere, visit the collections that are placed in museums, or go sightseeing in a village in the middle of Africa in order to have a fruition or to learn something useful to our lives. In some sense, a copy of almost all these things—documents and audiovisual registers—are at our disposal in the internet, but the way they are organized—as passive realities submitted to the subjective interest of the researcher or consumer—indicates their positioning in a particular ontological route. That is, to organize things of the world as a collection of objects that we can intentionally manipulate presupposes the particular perspective of the naturalistic route.

Differently, the Amerindian perspectivism presupposes that

Each subject [...] has his own viewpoint as “sensible reality”, and considers the viewpoint of the Other as a supra-sensible or “supernatural” dimension of his own experience. From this, the event that for each subject is exclusive and truthful, is considered by him from a double viewpoint, his own and that of the Other (Lima, 1996: 37).

The consequences of subjectifying instead of objectifying the other are not merely epistemological but existential, because the other and the world as active substances guide our way of being in the world. To face the perspective of the other and the world as active substances leads to processes of shared construction of reality or to the fragmentation of the socially constructed realities. But to have a specific perspective implies possibilities and restrictions for human actions, perceptions and imaginations, at the same time that the crossing from one ontologi-

cal route to the other can leave deep scars on those who are able to survive the journey.

In the boundaries between the traditional Amerindian societies and the Western naturalistic ways of life, suffering experiences can reach great proportions. For instance, the indigenous population in Brazil largely decreased since the 15th century, when the Europeans started to colonize the so-called American territory, until the end of the 20th century. The population estimated to be in some millions of people belonging to more than 1000 ethnic groups in Brazil alone was reduced to 200,000 people belonging to about 220 different groups, who speak 170 different languages. Among the many reasons responsible for the extermination of these peoples are armed conflicts, epidemic diseases, social and cultural disorganization, and assimilation policies. The process of colonization affected differently each society and nowadays it is estimated that more than 80 indigenous groups in Brazil remain isolated.

Over the last two decades, Brazilian demographic censuses show small population growth in most communities. Nevertheless, diverse studies have been demonstrating (cf. Guimarães and Grubits, 2007; Souza Deslandes and Garnelo, 2010; Aureliano and Machado Jr., 2012) augmented diagnoses of mental illness, drug abuse, domestic violence, and the index of suicides committed by persons belonging to Amerindian communities that were destabilized by the contact. These implications were noticed from the first years of the conquest (Todorov, 1993), showing that the boundary between cultures cannot be a comfortable place to stay. Therefore, an important challenge of indigenous societies remains: how to dialogue with the surrounding western-based society without losing their own ethnic-cultural integrity?

#### AMERINDIAN MYTHS, FAIRY TALES AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Science in her trance  
Will make the sign of the cross  
And we will light bonfires  
To appreciate the electric bulb.

—Tom Zé (2003, *Ogodô ano 2000*)

Culture channels subject's actions, suggesting some valuable goals, while preventing others; giving opportunities for actions, but also putting barriers and pointing to dangers, so configuring acceptable limits for them, culturally expressed as tacit shared zones of tolerance and taboos (Boesch, 1991). Gadamer (2010) discussed hermeneutically the origins of modern thinking, encompassing the relation between *Myth and Logos* and *Myth and Reason* in the Western culture. He dates three historical weaves of Enlightenment—ancient Greece (century 5 b.C.); the Enlightenment of the 18th century (French Revolution); and the secular institutional organization of the State, in the 20th century. Gadamer is concerned

with the possibility of recognizing the extra-scientific truth, existing in the ethical values of the Mythic expression:

From the myth to the logos, to the disenchantment of reality: this can be the meaning to which history is addressed only if the disenchanted reason could possess itself and achieve an absolute self-positioning. Nevertheless, what we see is the phatic dependence of reason in relation to the economic, social, and State superior power. The notion of an absolute reason is an illusion. Reason exists only as historic and real (Gadamer, 2010, p. 62).

Gadamer is concerned with the scientific image of the world, raised through a methodological criticism in relation to the religious tradition and the control of subjectivity, to achieve the truth and the efficient intervention over nature and society (i.e. Bacon's empiricism and Comte's positivism). In Greece, the *logos* was a way of structuring the precursory mythological narrative, and from the Myth to the Logos, science appropriated the rationalist thinking. On the other hand, hermeneutics proposes that the self-reflexivity of rational thinking is only achieved through a sort of subject-subject relationship that happens in the concrete historical life. This genetic tension between rationalism and other narrative-based thinking echoes in the background of knowledge construction in western tradition.

Studies on the history of sciences reveal that they became devices for controlling symbolic-cultural elaborations, in conflict with the so-called mythological and fictitious ideas of 'other cultures':

Among these and other givens, there first of all figures the new inseparability between science and fiction. No legitimate use of reason can any longer guarantee the difference between what it would authorize and what it would relegate to fiction. As opposed to the dominant modern philosophy, which seeks a philosophical "subject" capable of offering this guarantee—a purified subject, stripped of anything that would lead it to fiction—the positive sciences do not require their statements to have a different "essence" from creatures of fiction. They demand, and this is the "motif" of the sciences—that they be very particular fictions, capable of silencing those who claim "it's only a fiction". For me, this is the primary meaning of the affirmation "This is scientific". This is why the search for norms was in vain. The decision as to "what is scientific" indeed depends on a politics constitutive of the sciences, because what is at stake are the tests that qualify one statement among other statements—a claimant and its rivals. No statement draws its legitimacy from an epistemological right, which would play a role analogous to the divine right of the traditional politics. They all belong to the order of the possible, and are only differentiated a posteriori, in accordance with a logic which is not that of judgment, the search for a ground, but that of the foundation: "Here, we can" (Stengers, 1993/2002, pp. 79–80).

The quest for validation criteria to the supposed correct knowledge is remarkable from the experimental model of Galileu and posterior philosophical epistemological debate addressing the attainment of empirical data and theoretical

formulations. For the objectivists' and rationalists' epistemological approaches in science, the correct knowledge should be unique. The idea of universality in science can be associated to the Western cosmological-philosophical conception of the ontological unity of the cosmos (cf. Fausto, 2008), which contrasts with the Amerindian cosmologies and even with diverse thoughts on multiplicity and alterity that started to become prominent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, thanks to the influence of the thinkers from other societies.

Precisely when some fictional discourses produced in the scientific grounds become more than fiction, they can be turned into a representation of a bidding system of reality. As so, these discourses can acquire a deeply cultural or mythological function, when they are converted into "a system of explanation and justification for which no rational proof or deduction is or can be given. It somehow encapsulates firm and unquestioned ideas of reality, its reasons, and consequences" (Boesch, 1991, p. 123). People guide their actions according to a small number of values that they are not usually aware of (Descola, 1998). These values, found in diverse myths and rituals, are socially reproduced. Myths are constantly reaffirmed by each community, spreading "a pattern of intelligibility that allows the articulation of understandings about the world, society, and history, which are hidden in the thresholds of consciousness" (Lévi-Strauss and Eribon, 1990, p. 182). They guide social symbolic practices, providing values for personal actions of the participants in a particular cultural field (Boesch, 1991).

Contemporary anthropological debates are pointing to the fact that Amerindian cosmology implies a peculiar ontological understanding of reality, challenging the classical ethnographic studies based on cross-cultural comparisons among tribal groups in America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania (cf. Overing Kaplan, 1977). The globalized world allowed the exchange between some of these cosmologies, but when more than one point of view interact, different orientation systems, which configure the universe of each being, take place. The awareness of the mixed diversity can allow us to avoid both eclectic and dogmatic postures.

### CONSTRUCTING A CONSENSUAL GROUND FOR THE DIALOGUE WITH AMERINDIAN PEOPLES

Who comes from the outside does not understand how the Amerindian politics works. So, today, we need to work with the Amerindian politics, but together, in parallel with you.

—Mariano Fernando, *Mbya Guaraní Chief* (CRPSP, 2010)

Contemporarily, the approximation of psychology to diverse cultural and ethnic groups is taking into account the respectable anthropological background as an important reference for this sort of dialogue and the evidence that different traditional cultures have never dichotomized affect and reasoning, myth and logos.

Addressing these societies, psychologists are grounding their practices and conceptions on some ethical-political premises in their collaborative work with indigenous communities (CRPSP, 2010). These premises consist on taking into account the particularities of each community, avoiding reproducing historical impositions adopted by the national society. The professionals need to be able to learn the culture which they are working with, studying the specific setting of difficulties in each concrete situation. It is also necessary to understand and respect notions of health and disease from the perspective of the concrete culture, apprehending the subjects in their objective-subjective integrality. Construction of communicative channels between peoples, professionals and cultures in this situation can be a hard and unavoidable task. Cultural psychology can be a stage for collaborative (mutual and reciprocal) knowledge construction.

Nevertheless, the routes for mutual and dialogical understandings between different ethnic-cultural perspectives are not direct or transparent (Rasmussen, 2011). For instance, many centuries of cultural differentiation are constitutive of the boundaries between psychology, as a scientific elaboration belonging to a cultural tradition, and Amerindian peoples, their practices and conceptions. Additionally, considering the five centuries of the conflictive meeting between the western and Amerindian traditions, it is not hard to imagine that the construction of communicative bridges for dialogue is challenging for cultural psychology.

The anthropologist Susan Rasmussen (2011), converging with diverse approaches on symmetrical anthropology, goes deep in this assertion. For her, a truly balanced dialogue:

[...] requires infrastructural as well as theoretical and representational changes that empower local anthropologists from societies that are usually studied by western anthropologists. Such changes would include providing local scholars with better access to academic and publication structures, and facilitating their travel to study the societies of the anthropologists who studied them. (p. 174)

The ethical perspective in this situation is, then, the construction of conditions for differed cultural expressions and the exercise of attentive listening of the expression of the other. It implies the development of the self-perception of the limits of the present situation in the process of dialoguing with the other and the creation of paths for possible dialogues as a continuous and creative process. We would call this process as the movement of differentiation and dedifferentiation in which the construction of identities and alterities takes place. Consequently, psychology can seek for constructing the conditions to multiply our dialogical possibilities in the transit between different existing and emerging cultures (Guimarães, 2011; 2012).

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## SECTION I

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# TERMS OF THE DIALOGUE

Danilo Silva Guimarães

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Columbus knows perfectly well that these islands already have names, natural ones in a sense (but in another acceptation of the term); others' words interest him very little, however, and he seeks to rename places in terms of the rank they occupy in his discover, to give them the right names; moreover nomination is equivalent to taking possession.

—Todorov (1993, p. 27)

In the interethnic dialogues with Amerindian peoples, it is regular to observe distinct semiotic process guiding the understanding of the terms used in the dialogue. The meaning construction of a word depends on the situational and cultural system that apprehends and uses it. The same is valid for interdisciplinary dialogues, more or less intensely. The chapters of this section discuss how differences between cultural and disciplinary conceptions influence the work of the psychologist with Amerindian peoples. The knowledge about history and the impacts of the colonial process is a pre-requisite to understand the contemporary process of differentiation and dedifferentiation in relation to the other cultures and/or ethnicities, undertaken by the members of the communities. Additionally, this section addresses the environment and its constituents as a key point to start understanding epistemological, political and legal dimensions of the Amerindian paths in the dialogue with psychological issues.

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The meeting with Amerindian peoples exhibits plenty of situations involving mistakes and misunderstandings in the meetings between different cultures. It is usual that Amerindian ethnic communities receive different names from the foreigners that enter in contact with them. These names hark back to efforts of the stranger in order to identify a people, to understand them in their specificity as an integrated whole. Sztutman (2005) asserts that the names Portuguese Jesuits used to label their Amerindian allies (against French invasion of South American lands during the fifteenth century) "vary from a chronicle to the other, and few could be known about the people criteria of division" (p. 137).

On the other hand, the implications of external labeling and its unavoidable mistakes were developed in diverse Amerindian myths. These indicate ways to elaborate inherent communication challenges between different peoples. For instance, the ethnologist Lagrou (2007) maintains that if there had been no difficulty in communication, the foreigner would have called his interlocutor *huni kuin* (truly human), instead of Kaxinawa. That is the way those who speak Pano call themselves. But in concrete meetings with Amerindian peoples, the communicative situation involves a perceptive mistake. That is, each culture in the dialogue has an ethnocentric perspective.

Usually the ethnonym that identifies a group of persons as a people comes from the outside (from the stranger). Colombo designated the populations he met as Indians because of a mistake. Other designations follow the same equivocal path: When the anthropologist Aparecida Vilaça asked an indigenous person if he enjoyed the fact of being a Wari<sup>1</sup>, she received the answer *we are Wari only because you said so, before that we didn't know it* (Vilaça, 2006). This dialogue between the anthropologist and the indigenous person happened forty years after the first pacific meeting of Wari peoples with the non-Amerindian society. When the non-Amerindians met these peoples, in the sixties, they presented themselves as differenced subgroups, instead of a unified people. Governmental reports registered them differently until achieving the term Wari, as something that could provide a stable definition. Nevertheless, for the Amerindians, the communities were in continuous transformation and temporary stabilization from their inter-group dynamics.

From the internal perspective of most peoples, there is a label that recognizes and asserts themselves as "truly human beings." Considering oneself human in opposition to other beings is a basic universal ethnocentrism, present in every culture (Lévi-Strauss, 1965/1984). The exterior perspective of the observer does not allow them to construct a neutral designation; it is made from some observed characteristics. Equivoques are inherent to the process of making a culture intelligible to another (Viveiros de Castro, 2004):

[...]The equivocation is not that which impedes the relation, but that which founds and impels it: a difference in perspective. To translate is to presume that an equivocation always exists; it is to communicate by differences, instead of silencing the Other by presuming univocality—the essential similarity—between what the Other and We are saying. (Viveiros de Castro, 2004, p. 10)

The interethnic field of negotiation is, in this sense, marked by the crossing sights of natives and strangers, which demand creative adaptations in order to maintain minimum control over unavoidable equivoques. The way the terms are used in dialogue is a way to control the inherent process of equivocation. The process of dialogue is always multidirectional, because each participant in a dialogical situation constructs particular meanings at the same time they express themselves through diverse semiotic devices in the interactive process. The situation of the dialogue depends on the way someone presents themselves to the others; the expressed words in the context of interaction produce partial connections with alterity, that is, the addressed. Although the dialogical situations are the stage for multiple meaning constructions, the control of the discursive forms guides and constrains these possibilities.

The use of specific terms in the dialogue is associated with efforts to avoid the inherent variation of the meaning in the dialogue. Some of these meanings become sediments in the cultural field:

(...) human practices, in repeating a thousand times, become fixed in the consciousness as logical pictures. These pictures have the rigidity of a prejudice; its axiomatic aspect, precisely, is only due to their thousand millions repetitions. (Lenin cited via Vygotski, 1934/2001, p. 73)

Amerindian peoples continue struggling to reframe diverse terms and their meanings built in the western societies, in order to free themselves from the conceptual stranglehold of the western naturalistic cosmologies. One of these meanings comes from Davi Kopenawa, the Yanomami Shaman, in a proposition about what is education. According to him, to learn the foundations of his tradition takes as much time as for the non-Amerindian to learn how to draw their words:

The white men draw their words because their thinking is full of forgetfulness. We keep the words of our ancestors inside us for a long time and continue transmitting them to our children. The children that do not know anything about the spirits listen to the Shaman songs and after that they wish to have their moment to see the *xapiripë*. It is because of it that, in spite of being very old, the words of the *xapiripë* are renewed. They amplify our thinking, making us see things far away, things of the ancient people. It is our study that teaches us how to dream. So, those who do not drink from the spirit breath have short and smoky thinking; those who are not seen by the *xapiripë* do not have dreams, can only sleep as an axe on the floor. (Kopenawa, 1998, p. 2)

<sup>1</sup> Wari is the ethnonym for an Amerindian people that lives in the Brazilian state of Rondônia, near the boundary of Bolivia, which were in contact with the Brazilian society for the first time in the fifties.

Kopenawa contrasts his Yanomami conception of education, study, teaching and learning to the western conceptions. A complex set of practices and conceptions are articulated in his speech: forgetting versus keeping/renewing the ancient words, listening to music and viewing the spirits, amplifying the thought and learning how to dream. These are hard tasks to elaborate in life, which are, furthermore, in conflict with the school models of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, Amerindian peoples need to manage both systems. For some of them, as the Mbya Guarani from São Paulo, asserting that is important to appreciate the non-Amerindian education as well as the traditional education (Ideti & Duwe, 2010).

An additional instance of an Amerindian reframing of western-made concepts is related to another reflection from Kopenawa about the notion of natural environment. He does not use this notion, instead, he says he prefers to stress they want to protect the forest. The notion of natural environment denotes a separation between human life and nature, but to Amerindian peoples, nature is the place where culture takes place. To live in nature is not opposed to the typical human way of life. Many Amerindian peoples claim they can teach how to live in harmony with nature (Ideti & Duwe, 2010), a task that they consider the modern sciences failed. Additionally, the Amerindian conception of health is also related to the condition of keeping the traditional way of life in the environment, as far as managing unavoidable changes.

For them, the natural zone is not an untouched one, on the contrary, the relation with the environment presupposes the non-reducibility between nature and culture. The discourse concerning the protection of the forests is connected to the struggle to secure territories to cultivate the Amerindian way of life. On the other hand, the proper conception of territory as something fixed, as a demarcated area belonging to a people is not compatible to the indigenous understanding of the territory, most of the times. Many Amerindian peoples were used to move across the lands, expecting to find other peoples in the way. In this context, the state nations' territories or private properties were not meaningful in these paths, originally guided by a different cosmological view. Nevertheless, now that the process of privatization of the lands does not allow them to walk and live constantly migrating, Amerindian peoples' struggle for land demarcation is one of the main ways of safeguarding their existence.

From that, the terms education, natural environment, territory, and health are reframed in the processes of differentiation and dedifferentiation that permeates interethnic meetings with Amerindian peoples. These processes also demand the reframing of psychological conceptions.

Vygotsky asserts "the word, when labeling a fact, provides at the same time the philosophy of the fact, its theory, and its system" (1927, p. 326). The same notion used within different systems is not referring to the same things, leading to diverse challenges in the dialogue between different psychologies and among these psychologies and other sciences. Therefore, psychology needs a methodology to investigate the construction of the meaning of the terms in the dialogue

in order to avoid the eclectic use of terms, as if they could easily be incorporated from a system to the other, or translated without suspicion. The chapter "Tzotzil Person Model: A Guide to Understanding Indigenous People's Behavior and Thought" brings a challenge to psychological approaches that understand the person through classic psychological theories. How do the terms that guide our conception of the person need to be remodeled in order to allow psychologists to better dialogue with Amerindian peoples?

Another requirement for the production of dialogues in the psychological work is to be able to innovate, through the production of temporary stabilities in such inconstant stages of mutual affectation:

Culture is made visible by culture-shock, by subjecting oneself to situations beyond one's normal interpersonal competence and objectifying the discrepancy as an entity; it is delineated through an inventive realization of that entity following the initial experience. (Wagner, 1981, p. 17)

The notion of culture as a semiotic mediator is built taking into account *differences* between human ways of handling and refinement when producing several sorts of outputs, such as artifacts, concepts, beliefs, mind-bodies, landscapes and so on. Culture emerges from a socio-historical and psychological situation in which the differentiation between sorts of mind refinements become relevant. From the dialogical tension in the boundaries between cultures emerge the possibilities of comprehension of the culture of the other and our own culture through the process of differentiation. Therefore, we need to include ourselves and our culture as a constitutive part of the discourse we produce about the others.

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## CHAPTER 1

# TZOTZIL PERSON MODEL

## A Guide To Understanding Indigenous People's Behavior and Thought

José Sánchez Barrera

The Maya people are distributed in 32 local groups related by the languages they speak, known as Maya Languages (England, N. C & Elliott, S. R., 1990, p xvii). At the time of the Spaniard Invasion of Mesoamerica (1492 a. D) these languages were distributed in the regions now called Guatemala, Belize, a part of Honduras, and a part of what is currently Mexico. It is necessary to identify the languages because the peoples are identified by the language they speak, and that is the name they receive. The following languages are the 32 ones still existing at the above region (I cite them by their name in Spanish): achí, acateco, aguacateco, chicomucelteco, chontal, chuj, chol, choltí, chortí, itzá, ixil, jacalteco, cakchiquel, quiché, lacandón, mam, mopán, mochó, pokomam, pokomchí, kanjobal, kekchí, sacapulteco, sipacapeño, tectiteco, tojolabal, tzeltal, tzotzil, tzutujil, uspanteco, yucateco, huasteco. Twelve of which (chuj, chol, chontal, yucateco, tzotzil, tzeltal, tojolabal, mochó, mam, huasteco) have been spoken in Mexico for many years, and a certain number of them have been introduced into my country by people escaping the president Ríos Mont's extermination war. Being that the case, the following are the maya languages now spoken in Mexico (INALI, 2009a;

*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 7–23.

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INALI, 2009b): akateko, awakateko, chontal de Tabasco, chuj, ch'ol, huasteco, ixil, jakalteko, kaqchikel, k'iche', lacandón, mam, maya (above called yucateco), qato'k, q'anjob'al, q'eqchi', teko, tojolabal, tzeltal, tzotzil. The total number of maya languages (those currently spoken at Mexico and those currently spoken at Guatemala) is 32.

The Tzotzils are a group of Maya people inhabiting the Chiapas State Highlands in Mexico. There are eight tzotzil municipalities. In each of them, a particular Tzotzil Dialect Variant is spoken; nevertheless, all the variants are (more or less) intelligible to all the Tzotzil people. I have so far emphasized the language because, in Mexico, a conspicuous trait to identify a group is their language; in other views, a group is a tribe, or a nation. I speak of a linguistic group, not a racial one, although this characteristic is also implied, together with a specific genotype. It is necessary to identify the linguistic (racial or social) group because this paper's objective is to present and to explain the person model of the tzotzil people and show psychologists and social scientists how such a model could help us get closer to the indigenous people of America, in order to design therapeutic, educational, communal, and work assistance programs for them, and so forth.

## I

As a first step to coherently describe the Tzotzil Person Model, we must, at least, take a look at the concepts of culture, sign, symbol, symptom, and grammar, looking at them from a systemic point of view. I will do this here and in the following section.

'Culture' is a very usual word, and for that reason, in many cases it is not well used or it is applied in an obscure way; but being this word very important for the purposes of the present paper, in the following lines I will establish a unique meaning of culture. The word 'culture' has, at least, three meanings: a) encyclopedic knowledge we acquire by reading books: in this sense we sometimes say that a man is more cultured than another; b) regional traditions, such as the particular way a certain community celebrates independence day, and c) all knowledge acquired by experience since the moment of birth in the community to which one pertains. This last one gives context to the phrase: "Culture is everything we do," and it is the only meaning I will give to the word 'culture' in this paper.

As a consequence of the aforesaid, culture is a model of the world in which all the possible human relationships exist, and the way such relations are established and maintained; culture defines, so to speak, all that is related (related entities), and what relates (relating entities of) all the facts of the world; fact is understood here in the same sense that was proposed by Wittgenstein (1979). Thus, because the development process of each people is a particular one, each culture is unique, in such a way that cultures are incommensurate, bringing as a consequence the impossibility of translating the cultural categories of one culture into another, although they are explainable. By 'incommensurability,' we must understand the circumstances under which two or more models are incompatible in structure.

In consequence, their categories are only valid inside the model itself. Such a model will let us clearly notice concepts such as world, person, health, and sickness, among others, in interrelation. It allows us to think and design therapeutic procedures, or approaching strategies, to the Tzotzil indigenous community of Mesoamerica, so the model will also help us to solve the hermeneutic horizons (Tzotzil and Western) of incommensurability.

Consequently, we accomplish to clarify to ourselves the individual's self-cognition, the environment concept and how they interact in all sceneries (or, to be prudent, in the most important) of his life by means of a Gestalt concept of self that could help the psychologists and other professionals to design and apply diverse projects and programs addressed to Mexico's indigenous communities.















So far, I have been using the terms Mesoamerica and Mesoamerican without a definition; although I do not consider a profound analysis of these concepts to be necessary, I must at least declare the geographical, cultural, and historical connotations of the term 'Mesoamerica.' To guarantee its precise technical value, here I only use it in the first two senses. Therefore, the term Mesoamerica refers here to a territory that expands along the Pacific Ocean shore from the southern half of the state of Sinaloa, in Mexico, to the border line between Costa Rica and Panama; and along the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, from the south of Tamaulipas to Costa Rica. Because of its cities 'high level of organization, this territory was called Mesoamerica (Kirchhoff, 1943). In Kirchhoff's point of view, building cities is the activity that defines this region. The worldview that has characterized it for the last two thousand years is shared as well by people whose niche is located outside this great region: the nowadays Raramori (called Tarahumara by almost all the Mexicans) are a good example of this last point.

I assume Kirchhoff's term and use it in a non-historical manner to label an ancient surviving world vision (called in Nahuatl *toltecayotl*) for which there is no name in Spanish. This worldview was —and nowadays is— not included in the official education programs. What does exist indeed, is an absurd attitude produced by a surviving European reminiscence in the Mexican educational policy that does not let the everyday Mexicans realize there exists an ancient Mesoamerican vision intermixed in a non-pure Christian vision, that instead of being really Christian, is Marianist (a common catholic term referring to the cult to Christ's mother), with the Virgin Guadalupe who is Coatlicue on disguise, in the centre of the rite. I will develop these ideas on another occasion. It is now necessary to introduce some aspects of language, sign and symbol that will help me to explain the Person Tzotzil Model as a tool to approach the Tzotzil behavior and thought processes.

## II

I consider Symbolic processes (*i.e.* those brought about by means of symbols or signs, such as memory, language, perception and so forth) as being cognitive processes too. These have two ways of existing: conscious processes and auto-

matic ones. About the first ones, as their name points out, every man or woman knows them, willingly controls them; the second ones are not voluntary and occur involuntarily in the individual's everyday life; these processes do not depend of any conscious control. In some cases (for instance when one talks), the decision to begin the process is conscious, but the fact of keeping on speaking is automatic. Because in the symbolic processes language has a central role, in the following lines we will see how they are expressed.

We think with concepts and speak with signs and symbols. Although anyone interested on the topic could find definitions of sign and symbol in any book of linguistics, it is necessary to consign here, because they are an important part of this essay's structure. A sign—to say it in few words—is any entity that, by association, can substitute any other entity; it has as a relevant trait arbitrariness. For instance, the graphic set 'nacaztli' can substitute the phonic set [nakásAi]; and this the figure , what in his time, substitutes the human's body corresponding part; the same for [čiči] 'chichi' ; [ištéskaL] 'ixtezcatl'  and [amóšLi] 'amoxtl' . And we can invert the symbols and signs, thus [čiči] can be substituted by 'chichi' or , depending on what exactly the speaker wants to express. The same is true for other examples. And, of course, here we are not beginning from zero when we use these signs, because I am already assuming a substitution, I have been using the signs , ,  and  as if they were the corresponding things of the world, as if they were the referent, being the case that they are also representations just like [čiči] and 'chichi.' Because of this convention it is necessary to talk about these topics in the text. I will be leaning on it with the hope its function is clear. Consequently, let's keep on pretending that this , for instance, is not a representation of eyeglasses, but the eyeglasses themselves. And we must have in mind (whatever it is) that the real things of the world can also be signs of the figures: , , , .

An important point about the sign is that this is an entity that, no matter the theoretical problems its definition provokes, fulfills two basic prerequisites: a) it can become sensible (perceptible) and b) for a defined group of users it indicates an absence in itself. Saussure (1998) calls 'signifier' the part of the sign that can become sensible; and the part of the sign that is an absence in itself is called 'meaning'; and it is called 'signification' the relationship between these two ones. I would add to this that signifiers without meaning do not exist, such kind of things would be simple objects, sounds, because they lack the signification relationship; and because meaning does not exist without a signifier, it is clear that such a relationship is of a necessary nature. This characteristic is useful when we consider communication, symbolic systems, or language, because a phonic set that has no meaning isn't a word, nor has a sense, although it exists as electromagnetic waves in the air; just how Ducrot says, about the signifier without meaning: "... it exists but does not signifies (Ducrot, & Todorov, 1980, p. 122). Let's talk about the symbol.

The symbol has almost the same characteristics as the sign; the only difference is that the first one is motivated, and the motivation is established by resemblance and contiguity association (or some other). Let's see an example. The word 'fire' means "fire," but it symbolizes 'passion' in a non-necessary relationship between the symbolizer (fire) and what is symbolized (passion); it is a non-necessary relationship because in this case symbolizer and symbol can exist independently, by their own. That is so because, concerning the sign, between signifier and meaning there isn't any relationship from the beginning, the nature of both is different; but concerning the symbol there exists a certain homogeneity between symbolizer and what is symbolized: it doesn't occur (it is not possible) for someone to say "the ice of my passion," because passion is understood as fire, as flame, as heat. But 'heat,' 'flame,' 'fire' and 'passion' have since the beginning their own semantic values, the association here emerges from the contiguity (in space and time) or resemblance between all these terms, what gives the motivated nature to the symbolization relationship. And allow me a last comment on the phrase "the ice of my passion," which I will label 'F,' to be clearer: Of course, any poet or writer can give F a special context, and create for it various senses! But the example here deals with F alone in a particular context. If we change this last one, we change the relationship and we change the sense. The example above deals with a common context, not a special one, like those that the poets create.

Even in semantics books, there is another concept generally associated with sign and symbol, which nevertheless has a different, original character. It is the symptom, which I must mention here because it will give us a little help, although it is not indispensable to the model I am about to design. The sign has an arbitrary relationship to the referent whereas the symbol has a motivated one. The symptom, on the other hand, does not have a relationship with the referent, but rather an inclusion, since the symptom is indeed a part of it. For example, smoke hasn't any (neither arbitrary nor motivated) relationship with combustion; it is a part of combustion, as well as temperature is the sensible part of infection in animals. Thus we can see the basic difference between these three categories (sign, symbol and symptom) is that the first two relate entities, but the last one has a different behavior, relating nothing at all. It is a part of an entity: the smoke is to the fire just as the leaf is to the tree. If I say the symptom is not indispensable in this essay it's because communication is accomplished with signs and symbols; and perhaps with signs in the first instance.

A relevant characteristic of the sign is that it is systemic (the symbol is so as well, but hereafter I will only mention the sign, having always in mind what was said above about the two categories). It has a certain articulation that depends on the users' worldview.

When we talk about linguistic signs we cannot avoid thinking of words, concepts and the relationship between them. They eventually take part in an ample system, the grammar, which has an important role in man's everyday life. Aiming to define these terms, I emphasize the fact that one pertains to the order of the

objective<sup>1</sup> (the word), and the other to the order of the subjective (the concept), and both are elements of an unbreakable continuum. Nevertheless, because of the technical difficulties surrounding them, it is necessary to deal with these terms separately at first.

To define 'word' is not easy, but there is a convenient operational definition that says 'word' is an entry of the dictionary; I accept it for the moment, because we need an initial value to build more complex symbolic systems, considering especially the fact that the unity of meaning is not the word, but the phrase.

About the concept, The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1977) points out a concept (from Latin *conceptum*<*conceptus*<*concupere* to conceive) is "1: something conceived in the mind; 2: an abstract or generic idea generalized from particular instances (p. 233)." Bourne et al. define the concept as "any regularity of real or imaginary events or objects possible of being described (p. 221)." And an old book of logics written by the professor R. Alatorre Padilla defines the concept as "the representation of an object at the level of thought, without affirmation or denial (p. 140)." This author also presents several classifications of concepts, but we can leave them aside, and it is unnecessary to keep on searching bibliographical sources, since they all suggest the fundamental aspect of concept is the generalization formed as a function of objects' relevant traits in the individual's thinking mind<sup>2</sup>. That's why the concept pertains to the order of cognition. The concept, certainly, is an idea. Perhaps because the terms word and concept exist, and maybe for this reason only, it is possible to enunciate them separately, but in human reality they are inseparable. Words without meaning do not exist, nor are there words without sense; it is the same: if it has no sense, it is not a word. Yes, the word finds its sense in the phrase, but even the isolated word has its sense in the lexical system of the language.

For the sake of better understanding of the relationship between word and concept I propose what I will hereafter call "the invisible man hypothesis." In H. G. Wells' (1992) story "The Invisible Man" people can only see the invisible man when he wears clothes, but indeed they do not see the invisible man, what they really see is the clothes he wears; these clothes acquire a certain tension in that circumstance, like volume and action; the same clothes have no tension, nor volume, nor nothing when the invisible man isn't using them; they are thrown away on the floor or arranged inside the closet; they can be ironed or wrinkled, but they have no volume nor activity. So are words and concepts. That is, if we want to understand well, we must understand the word as a set formed by a phonic element and a cognitive one; the phonic element without the cognitive one is like the invisible man's clothes alone; in this case it is just a noise; a sound without any value nor sense. The cognitive element without the phonic one is an idea we do not see; it is an idea we do not listen; it's like the nude invisible man.

<sup>1</sup> A good virtuous simple definition of these terms understands objective as public and subjective as private.

<sup>2</sup> In the thinking individual's mind

Back to the point, I hope it is clear now that the dualities word-concept and language-thought are a whole in themselves, where the audible or visible part is the symptom of the other just as smoke is a symptom of combustion; of course not in the way Watson said, for whom thought was subvocal language, i.e. covered behavior, faint contractions of the systems of musculature (1926); I affirm that what really happens is the realization of a necessary correlation between the public part (language) and the private part (thought) of the same event. This does not mean that language and thought are the same, but that thought doesn't occur without language, and language without thought does not form a sign, because the sign signifies, and if there is no signification relationship between signifier and meaning there is no sign either; that is, necessarily the word has two elements and the operational definition of word proposed above implies them: one element is material (phonic or kinesthetic, for the deaf-mute), the other is symbolic (cognitive). What we usually call concept is the cognitive part of the word; what we usually call word is only the phonetic or graphic part of it. But we still need to take a look another kind of relationship: the language and culture one. Let's do it.

Although I have just mentioned the meaning of culture in the scope of this paper, it is possible to add some words to that definition: culture is a symbolic system formed by the concepts of world, person, life, death, time, space and so forth. As we can see, this is an explanation of paragraph "c" and of the phrase "culture is everything people do," in page number two of this paper. But there is more, man only does, knows, recognizes, and performs what is delimited by the cultural frame of which he is a part. The world is the real or ideal totality of created things, from people's point of view, of course; this means that the worldview is another facet of culture.

Man begins to acquire culture since the very moment of his birth (the same happens with language), and even during gestation develops in a particular cultural environment, so language and culture are two moments of the same social manifestation because culture is action and thought, and a conceptual scheme too, that's why it is another cognitive process and is expressed in human action; therefore, we summarize all the above well when use the phrase "culture is everything men and women do." Let's discuss this paragraph a little more.

Grammar can have an ampler role beyond the rules for combining lexical elements to make good phrases. It can do that, and because of that have the role of a symbolic set that signals the man's relation with the world; but not the man in front of the world, it signals the relations of man inside the world. The child doesn't begin learning isolated sounds and then little by little acquiring the grammar to the whole language; no, he doesn't do that. What he does is, in the first place, apprehend a sort of relationship grammar, he apprehends his own relations, his manner of being in the world. He then begins to recognize the meanings and phonemes around him that, in accordance with "the invisible man hypothesis," clothe the grammar.

Being it necessary to determine exactly the content of the last paragraph, we must pay attention to the fact that the child, from the very moment of birthing, begins to establish space and time relationships, which define his place in the world; he acquires the symbolic structures inherent to the person concept, to the life and death concepts; and also the ways of being and behaving, according to the tradition of his culture.

From an ontogenetic perspective, we can see *Homo Sapiens* learns culture and language at the same time and the child manages it very well, in most of the cases, to the age of twenty four months. This happens when the child—who at three months of age already identifies his (her) mother or he (she) whom the child lives with more time—has advanced enough (without knowing at the moment how much) in the construction of his way of being in the world, i.e., the grammar categories that defines man's being in the world.

Undoubtedly, in all epochs man has wanted to understand man. So, man has passed from one tradition to another in search for an answer to his interest, designing models of knowledge which sometimes fructify early, and sometimes don't fructify at all. This is so because it is not the efficacy, as an abstract value, that maintains cultural traditions, but the social power of the intellectual leaders. And these men (the intellectual leaders, whoever they were) sometimes do as the drunkard who looks for the keys beneath the nearest street-light because there he indeed can see; but he lost them (the keys) at the gate of his house, where there isn't light. So, we have seen trials to explain the fact that the child speaks well at the age of two years without taking into account the fact that the child begins to learn language at the very moment of his birth. That is, he/she begins—at the very moment of birthing—to acquire signs that sign his place in the world; and so begins the grammar.

In the end of this section, because this theme fundamentally belongs to hermeneutics, it is indispensable to precise the limits of our point of view, taking into account that culture and language are integrated into a solid scheme made of signs and symbols about our being in the world. These schemes of categories describe effective elements of life in human communities since the moment of birthing. They fix themselves in the mind during the first months of existence, and are finally learned as linguistic value systems which we can call confidently 'grammar.' Because culture and grammar are two elements belonging to the same continuum, both are cognitive schemes of life; beyond them there is nothing, cognitively speaking. That's why the limits of interpretation are the limits of culture, categorized in grammatical values.

Perhaps, in this section I overstepped myself, but I have a genuine intention. I just want to show minimal data for identifying the role of cognitive models in the human's world understanding. And the Tzotzil Person Model shows us what a person is and how he/she integrates constituting a whole with the world.

### III

In this section I will, at last, introduce the Tzotzil Person Model. But first I introduce the Western Culture Model in order to establish a frame to compare, at least, two ways of looking at the world: the Western one and the Tzotzil one. Besides, it is healthy not to assume everyone is conscious of the Western culture's central traits. Instead of that, let's explain them.

The Western culture's central Traits are five: anthropocentrism, individualism, pragmatics, manichaeism, dualism.

1. **Anthropocentrism.** This trait refers to the fact that in the category set that forms the culture i.e. the world model as above said man is located at the centre, and all that exists is organized around this concept (man). This includes the gods, which are conceived (invented) in man's image and resemblance, with human characteristics such as passion, hate and pleasure: the Greek gods are good examples of this; they fall in love with men's daughters, take different forms to deceive and seduce them and make them pregnant. This trait is also observed in the Western man's ecological attitude: the Western institutions try (in most cases) to preserve environment as a personal benefit, or for the sake of future generations, but not for the sake of avoiding useless destruction or of considering nature worthy of high regard in itself.
2. **Individualism.** According to this concept the personal prestige in front of the community is obtained depending of personal profits; social dynamics is determined by competition between people to be the first in all circumstances in life. Consequently, men (and women) are encouraged to be number one everywhere, and this wouldn't be bad if it were to be number one for instance in helping people to live or be comfortable; but the purpose is to be the number one despite of the community, even when it is not possible to achieve such an aim for the sake of the people. The neo-liberalism and the *encomiendas* established in *Mexihcatlalli* (the Aztec territory), after the destruction of *MexihcoTenochtitlan* (the Aztec capital) by the Spaniards, are good examples of this.
3. **Pragmatics.** Here what is useful is the category nucleus, and truth is what is useful; here all that is useful for our immediate aims is worthy. Take, for example, a pragmatic inhabitant of the sea shore who fishes everyday what he needs per day, and every day he needs just two fishes because fishing is scarce by the sea shore where he lives; but one day he finds six fishes, and catches all of them, because he thinks he cannot lose the opportunity of catching six fishes, although he knows very well he will throw the excessive fish in the trash because he only needs two fishes. A very clear example of pragmatics was referred by the magazine *Scientific American* one year after the first Golf War (which was commanded by George Bush, the father); the story that happened in Middle Asia is

as follows (I quote from memory): the invaders' air fleet was bombing Bagdad's most important sites; the Iraq government had as defense a certain number of Scud missiles which could hit some places in Israel; they threw them; most missiles missed their target; but it was terrifying to see them in search for a victim. The US government offered the Israeli people the famous Patriot Missiles as defense, which had a very important difficulty: in the long run they produced because of air contamination the same or more deaths than a Skud that gets its target. Thus is pragmatics.

4. **Manichaeism.** All that exists, in symbolic terms, is divided into two entities: good, bad; positive, negative; white, black; day, night; god, devil; sky, earth; heaven, hell; man, woman; and so on. And all divisions (that is the good and bad division, for instance) are immovable. There doesn't exist a good entity that at the end of the day becomes bad, or a moment between day and night that isn't day or night; or a devil not so devil that makes goodness instead of badness. These are immovable categories at all times, places or circumstances.
5. **Dualism.** This category is analogous to (and perhaps it derives from) the one above, but dualism is applied to the person, that is, this category belongs especially to man. The importance of this concept depends on the fact that western thinkers accept or at least behave as if man were formed by two parts: soul and body. The first one inhabits inside the body and is immortal; the body is mortal and it is the niche of soul during life time. From here derives a person model which is better understandable in Table 1.1:

Very well, some relevant traits of Western culture have been heretofore presented, and in the fifth item the person model of this culture; but there are still some words to be pronounced about the person model we have just seen. At the Western world when the personal pronoun 'I' is pronounced, independently of any grammatical connotation, this deictic manifests the I's hermeneutic sense in

TABLE 1.1.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the First Correlation (Soul-Body) is Enough to Express the Model; The Other Three Ones Just Show Equivalent, Usual Examples in the Western Intelligentsia Environments.

Western model of person	
SOUL	BODY
MIND	BRAIN
RES COGITANS	RES EXTENSA
SPIRIT	MATTER

a circumstance where the 'I' is composed by *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (or soul and body, and so on); it is not possible for one of these binomial terms to be absent without betraying, or destroying, the model. Man, for the Western world, is soul and body together (soul-body), a body without soul or a soul without body is not conceived, at least in the real world, in the world of fantasy, on the contrary, everything is possible.

This model causes serious troubles to scientists who work on any of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, i.e. the sciences of spirit, if he or she is not aware of the Western particular traits that form a Christian nucleus, because Christianity is the heart of the Western worldview. And yet there are social scientists who behave as if this model were a natural or universal one.

And now let's shift to the Tzotzil Person Model; but first we have to establish some agreements on terminology about this topic for the sake of easily identifying the relevant characteristics of the culture (the worldview) inside which the Tzotzil people actually live and have lived for the last three or four thousand years. We must in a symbolic way of speaking approach this people now.

It has been already said the Tzotzils are Mayas from the Chiapas Highlands; but it is necessary to introduce a general term to identify the culture that has been developed and actually survives at Mesoamerica: such a term is 'toltec,' from the Nahuatl word **toltecatl**. And this word is convenient for our purpose because it is applied to everything that emerges from the metropolis, the big city where thousands of people live in accordance to the social rules and traditions accepted by the community. This is a gentile noun from '*Tollan*,' which means a big city (a megalopolis); thus 'toltecatl' means "he/she who inhabits a megalopolis." This is not a Tzotzil term, it's a Nahuatl one; and although it was frequently used in ancient times to talk about the big cities it is still used by scholars with the same meaning. Nowadays there is a modern city in the Hidalgo state, in Mexico, called 'Tula.' This term is derived from the word *tollan*, but the original name of the city is *Xicocotitlan*, that is *Tollan Xicocotitlan*. Some other examples of ancient cities' full names are the following: **Tollan Cholollan**, **Tollan Teotihuacan**, **Tollan Tenochtitlan**, and even **Tollan Chichen Itza**.

So, the gentile 'Toltec' is related to the big city inhabitant and signifies every kind of knowledge originated and cultivated in the megalopolis (i.e. *tollan*). That's why this term is correct to nominate the Mexican culture whose development begins at any place that could be the origin of the Olmeca people, passes over Monte Albán, La Venta, Uxmal, Cobá, Kabah, Palenque, Yaxchilan, Tikal, Quiriguá, Copán, and gets its great, magnificent expression at Teotihuacan. All the people who inhabited these (and others like these) ancient cities (and their relating influence areas) are Toltec; and their descendants are Toltec people too. All the Mesoamerican people share the same worldview; also the same understandings on life, death, person, time, and space; they have the same calendar, the same

gods, and the same numerical system. And so, they are not a mosaic of cultures; we are presently looking at a great culture that has certain regional variants.

What has been said allows us to conclude that the Toltec category is a correct one for this cultural tradition, and I must say, there surely is one word in each of the other Mesoamerican languages for naming this culture, and what a pity! I don't know how to translate Toltec to Tzotzil, but let's leave the search of such words as an objective for future research and now let's take a look at the Tzotzil society's characteristics: meritocracy, predisposition to the community and interaction with the environment.

1. **Meritocracy.** The individual gains prestige among the community's people by the *cargo* system, which determines a set of responsibilities, mostly of religious type, and expensive to accomplish. Let's see what a *cargo* is. The majordomos (man servants) of the saints, called *alférezes* (in singular *alférez*) in Chiapas (the English meaning of this word is not pertinent here: second lieutenant), take charge of the *cargo* during one year. During this time they must carry out the everyday rituals, and prepare and accomplish the saint's celebration day on the corresponding time. It is necessary to pay the powder for the fireworks, the food for visitors when necessary, the *pox* (a spirituous beverage from the region) in the day of the saint; during the whole year the *alférez* is spending money for different circumstances that range from taking care of the saint's image (photograph or statue), cleaning or washing the saint's clothes, and buying new ones when these are too old, which is expensive. Besides this expenditure, we must take into account that during the *cargo* year the *alférez* cannot (he has no time to) do his own work; he cannot prepare his cornfield, where he also produces beans and other vegetables like cucumbers, cabbage, gourds tomatoes, chili and so on. Those who have money to pay for the saint's party, including all the rest of the expenditure, have the cargos, and as a rule they finish the *cargo* year with a debt that takes them various years to pay; but they also finish this year with the satisfaction of "being somebody"; i.e. somebody important for the community; thereafter he becomes a respectful person who is taken into account to solve community problems when it is necessary. Having more merit for having served the community, he has a more valuable opinion.
2. **Predisposition to community.** This trait is manifested by the fact that persons prefer open environments, such as plazas, marketplaces, church atriums, etc.; a practical consequence of this preference is the collaboration in community work that reinforces the group cohesion. Between some other people as *Nahuatl* and *Zapotec* the consequence of this trait has a name, to wit: '*tequio*' for the *Nahuatl* and '*guelaguetza*' for the *Zapotec*. But here it is necessary to explain that '*guelaguetza*' is a social

institution that consists of collaborations of all kinds to celebrate birthing anniversaries, wedding ceremonies, saint-patron parties, and so on; actually, all kinds of celebrations; and there are still regional dances; but these last dances are a *guelaguetza* consequence, **they are not the *guelaguetza*.**

3. **Interaction with environment.** The mountains, the caves, the wells are places that have especial symbolic meaning for the Tzotzils, every one of them is related to life. Everyday life develops in a mountainous environment, because so is the region; but for the people living at such places, the mountain is not only their habitat, it is as well their *modus vivendi*; from there they obtain timber, firewood, plants for commerce and food; occasionally meat from hunting or fishing. All that depending on the necessary quantity; it is uncommon for a man to take from the mountain more than he really needs. This may be so because the *chanuletik*, a certain entity that assumes animal forms such as a rabbit, turkey, coyote, jaguar, hawk, hummingbird, weasel, etc., inhabits all mountains, especially the sacred ones. Since these animal forms fit intimately with the Tzotzil Person Model, let's see it at once; it will explain in a good manner what I am trying to communicate here (Figure 1.1).

We can have some idea about this figure's meaning from sole observation, but I know it is not enough. It is yet necessary to clarify the particular meaning and sense of each of the three model categories above; which I will do in the following lines. All three concepts have strongly hermeneutic contents; the most easily explainable is '*TAKOPAL*,' which means the body; an ensemble of muscles, bones and brains. This word is also used for alluding to the body of the sheep, horse, pig and cow; it is what a corpse becomes when a man (or woman) dies. But it isn't a person yet, since a person is the complete set formed by the three categories above mentioned. *Takopal* is a word associated to (but not equal to, nor synonym of) '*k'uxbol*,' that means, "a) human peoples believed to be sacrificed for the construction of bridges or electric plants; b) yeast for making cane liquor" (R. M. Laughlin 1975, p. 200)). The first meaning of this word is the most important for us now, but the second one is not negligible at all, because a person's life can be the yeast for all life in the world. Let's stop this analysis here, and let's keep the first word in mind as a category of the model we are introducing now. Let's talk about '*chanul*.'

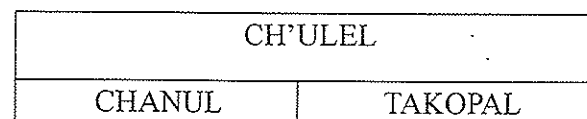


FIGURE 1.1. Tzotzil Person Model



The term '*chanulil*,' which is the general form of the word (possessed by somebody, not by anyone in particular) and '*chanul*' (grammatical form that indicates the noun is possessed by somebody who we know well); the two forms are derived from the word '*chon*,' that means snake or animal, in general. Depending upon the model, the concept *chanul* is concerned with a person's part that comes to life in the forest in animal form in the precise moment the other part we have just called *takopal* (and can be *k'uxbol*) comes to life in the house. *i. e.* we are not talking about a companion, a life mate; what is really born in the forest is a person's part itself. The *chanul* has the same relation to man, in terms of the Tzotzil Person Model, than the hand or the finger has to man on the western Person Model. Any forest animal can be a person's *chanul*, but if somebody has a butterfly as *chanul*, he will not live too much because of the short life of butterflies. The *chanuletik* (plural of *chanul*) that have the longest lives and are the biggest ones are the most powerful animals, like the coyote, cougar, and jaguar; with just a curious exception—but its astonishing trait disappears if we consider its hermeneutic value, which is great—the humming bird (when it has the *chanul* function) is more powerful than the jaguar. Let's explain this a little.

I will try to explain why the humming bird is more powerful than the jaguar but I confess what follows is not an explanation nor a hypothesis, it is only a conjecture; nevertheless, I think it has certain heuristic value, and a blurry answer is good when we haven't any other one.

There is a myth among the *Nahuatl*s that tells us that when the *Aztec* god *Huitzilopochtli* (whose name means: the humming bird from the left side) was about to be born, his brothers the *Centzonhuitznahuac* (the southern four hundred ones) attempted to prevent his birth, and went running to *Coatepec* with the intention of killing him. Nevertheless, unfortunately for the *Centzonhuitznahuac*, *Huitzilopochtli* was born in time to defend himself with a fire ray weapon. *Huitzilopochtli*'s brothers escaped almost safe, because they spotted their skin. The *Centzonhuitznahuac* are jaguars, and this story explains the reason why this kind of feline has spotted skin; and *Huitzilopochtli*, as we already know, is a humming bird.

Well, the story above is a *nahuatl* myth, not a Maya one (and remember the Tzotzils are Mayas), but remember as well that the Mayas and the *Nahuatl*s belong to the same ancient culture. And this is the only datum explaining why the humming bird is more powerful than the jaguar. It is necessary to keep on studying this topic. For the purpose of this chapter, it is enough.

The word *ch'ulel* is related to the adjective '*ch'ul*,' which we can translate by 'saint,' 'sacred' or 'divine.' This concept is associated with the most important aspects of the world, those that take a part in the meaning of life for the Tzotzils, like the wind, water, mountains, and caves. According to this model, it is related with *chanul* (an animal living at the forest) and *takopal* (the body as matter) to integrate a fundamental whole, which is the origin and sense of life.

The *ch'ulel* is strong because it represents the forces of life, nevertheless it is a person's fragile element, formed by thirteen parts which can be separated by the effect of a strong emotion or by any enemy's ill will. If, for instance, somebody is frightened by any happening, the nearest relative or some other good willed person sweeps the place where the event occurred with a cloth or a mass of branches. He or she does this with the intention of getting back the lost *ch'ulel* pieces that fell to soil, because if these pieces are not recovered the person falls ill, and eventually dies. The fact that the person does not die and eventually heals means that the sweeping was effective.

The Tzotzil pronoun 'I' is 'vo'on.' And now from the person models' (Western and Tzotzil) point of view, we can notice that, although grammatically speaking we can translate one pronoun by the other, I and vo'on do not pertain to the same hermeneutic horizon; that's why the Westerners and the Tzotzils have different attitudes towards life and the world. In accordance with the Tzotzil Person Model, when we pronounce the pronoun vo'on we are not only referring to the organic system delimited by the epidermis; but in this pronoun we are including the mountains, the caves, the springs, the general environment which is the life niche; and if we look very carefully, life itself is included. That is to say, we must not understand the niche of life like a place where life develops; but as an integral, multidimensional, interactive concept; *i.e.* there aren't empty niches, in the same manner that there isn't any life without a niche. We are talking about the Tzotzil man's life: the reason why the word *takopal* is associated with the word *k'uxbol* is because this last one manifests the life offering (gift) in society (to society). And *chanul* is the man's mountain bred, untamed part that does not let the community dissociate from its origin and life spring; that's why, in the model, the *ch'ulel* comes in contact with the other two categories, as if it were the unifying force coming from the wind, the rain, the mountain.

#### IV

In this section, the last one, I will present, with the help of what has been said above, this paper's conclusion, which will consist of some examples for applying the Person Tzotzil Model in designing therapeutic, educational, communal, and work assistance programs.

Now we can easily see that from the Tzotzil life point of view, one's self cognition and the ancestral environment constitute a person-environment integral model that demands care, for the sake of the preservation of the world order (natural and social order), which is the guarantee for human health and wellbeing.

Let's talk about health, and this will be the only example we will see here. Health is a consequence of world equilibrium. If this equilibrium breaks, it is necessary to reconstitute it with prayers at the caves or mountains, or at the correspondent sacred sites for the specific case. And this is the health-sickness binomial for the time being it is not a process. Nowadays when the Tzotzil man or woman gets sick, he or she goes to the Westerner allopath or homeopath doctor, he or she



eats the medicinal substances the doctor prescribes; nevertheless, for the sake of healing, it is more important to pray in the sacred sites (not in all of them, but the quantity depends on the seriousness of the case). The praying reconstitutes the world equilibrium. This praying is the *sine qua non* condition for health because a part of the person (the *chamul*) inhabits the mountains and caves which also require attention and treatment. So, if there isn't praying in the healing process the western medicine is useless.

Understanding the Tzotzil person model is not only useful for comprehending the health-sickness process, it is useful as well to correctly design therapeutic, educational, communal, work assistance programs, etc. It is also useful to dialogue at the same pragmatic level. Any national or regional government, that sincerely wants to dialogue and to make accords with the Tzotzils, needs to clearly understand this model, and if it does not, it will just behave like a foreign invader government, making it impossible to establish any kind of social program.

General psychology appeared on the world in the very moment a man wanted to tame a dog, a horse, an ox, an elephant, a camel and all the other important animals for man; it appeared as well when a leader (any kind of leader) wanted to train his successor, or a man wanted to educate his child, when he behaved or misbehaved. It is the same story *mutatis mutandis* for all the other sciences related to man and everyday life.

Academic psychology begun with Wundt's laboratory at Leipzig, Germany; but the whole of the modern science model was initiated during the Enlightenment (period that begun with the publication of Newton's *Principia mathematica philosophiae naturalis*), and it is still in construction. All the sciences have progressed since then, and psychology as well; operant conditioning, Gestalt theory, psychoanalysis, neuropsychology, etc. they are undoubtedly good approaches; but although some of these: (the humanistic approaches) have a cultural bias, they all lack a non-Western spirit that could permit us psychologists to approach some other worldviews, many of which are part of our cultural environment in the Americas.

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## CHAPTER 2

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### **NEITHER *TUPI* NOR *TAPUIA***

#### **Free Determination and Social Policies in the Historic Trajectory of the Brazilian Indigenous Peoples**

Bruno Simões Gonçalves

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In the past twenty years, the complex social dynamics that shapes identity processes in Latin America has been undergoing a robust recovery of principles and values concerning life before the military coups that spread throughout the continent during the 1960s. After three decades under the mantle of a polarized western world, the continent has now become the stage for a renewed cycle of social processes of redemocratization. One effect of these processes is the confrontation of the rationale of socio-cultural homogenization, characteristic of the formation of centralized and unitary Nation-States. In this context, political subjects that had been theoretically and historically relegated to supporting roles are now emerging from the invisibility into which they were forced. They are imposing a new inter-relationship of forces in the region, raising old questions about Latin American identity and its specificity. Starting from forms of organization that echo not only recent history, but also the entire history of domination of the past five centuries, the sense of formation of these identities, their roots, and their historical horizon has been reframed. The identity dynamics of the indigenous peoples are at the

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 25–43.

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apex of this multifaceted political-cultural process of organization. Relegated to silence by a power pattern, as well as control of labor and the social consciousness; the indigenous peoples of the continent have been constructing alternatives to overcome the enigma of colonization on its economic, cultural, and inter-subjective levels. A process that has lasted for more than five centuries, the *Coloniality of Power* translates this heterogeneous rationale in which modernity, the State, and ethnic identities combined into a complex whole that is in constant movement. As a portrait of this unequal and resistant relationship between ethnic peoples and the Nation-State, the process of contact between Brazilian indigenous peoples and the Brazilian State directly reflects the contradictions inherent in many Latin American countries, where a colonial power pattern is structurally reproduced, thus recreating the rationale of domination embedded in its origin during each subsequent historical cycle. In this sense, the new identity dynamics that have been forged by the indigenous populations transgress historical stereotypes and reframe the meaning of ethnicity inside the Nation-State. The present article is a discussion about this process.

### THE COLONIALITY OF POWER

The indigenous social movements have played a central role in energetically reclaiming their subalternized identities, challenging analysts and scholars to unravel the new historical sense that appears to be emerging from the action of these groups. The Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano is a notable figure among those who have attempted to understand this new reality. In the past twenty years, he has developed a robust reinterpretation of the historical formation of Latin America and of Modernity itself. For this purpose, he coined the analytical category of the *Coloniality of Power*, which directly critiques the Eurocentric expressions of the Humanities and proposes a multifaceted interpretation of the relationships of power throughout the various dimensions of human life on the continent. In other words, instead of a reflex theory proposing the existence of a spatial center viewed as the origin of a certain order, which expands in a progressive and homogenous manner to the outer edges, Quijano proposes a game of mirrors in which different territories with their historical and social specificities mutually interrelate and modify each other, thus creating a heterogeneous whole which determines itself not by a center, but by a power pattern that is present in all these interrelations. The *Coloniality of Power* is this pattern. Rather than a linear movement, in which the entire system revolves and evolves around a single center, it is instead a multi-axis movement in which each and every one of the structural units is modified and modifies the others in a field of relations that are discontinuous among each other, but which are oriented by a heterogeneous whole that is maintained through the same pattern of relation and domination. He writes:

For us, the Latin Americans of today, this is the greatest lesson that we can learn (...): the historical structural heterogeneity, the coexistence of historical periods

and structural fragments of forms of social existence, of various historical and geo-cultural origins, are the main mode of existence and movement for all of society and all of history. Not, as in the Eurocentric view, the radical dualism associated, paradoxically, with homogeneity, continuity, unilateral and unidirectional evolution and "progress." (Quijano, 2005b, p. 73)

Originating with the colonial invasion of America, the pattern of power based on colonialism and in its specific rationale—the Eurocentric rationale—has continued throughout the past five centuries in the form of capitalism. It was the domination of the Americas and the accumulation of wealth thanks to the free labor of Indians, Africans, and mixed-race people, plus the exploitation of the continent's innumerable natural resources—mainly silver and gold—that made it possible to dominate the trade and transport routes on the entire planet. The invasion of America gave birth to global capitalism.

Thus, we can state that the *Coloniality of Power* was the social measure that made the geo-political configuration of the current world possible. The *Coloniality of Power's* capacity for penetration and permanence in our past and present social reality only became possible due to its two structural beams: racialism and the control of labor by capital.

Racialism is the social classification of the population according to their phenotypic characteristics, giving rise to the concept of *race*. The idea of *race*, supported by a body of scientific theories appropriated for the purposes of domination and exploitation, served to create criteria indicating the place of individuals in colonial society according to their position in the social hierarchy. Constituted from a Eurocentric perspective, racialism aims to create a social classification that justifies the pattern of domination characteristic of the *Coloniality of Power*. According to Quijano, this classification can be described as:

the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of race, that is, a supposed distinct biological structure that situated some in a natural position of inferiority in relation to others. This idea was assumed by the conquerors as the main constitutive and foundational element for the relationship of domination that conquest required. (Quijano, 2005a, p. 37)

Thus, once the social classification based on *race* was established, the hierarchical structure necessary for the control of labor by capital was created. It was geared towards the production of goods for the global market, forming different modes of association for the work that had historically been practiced by native peoples, who came to participate in a new configuration of control of the production/distribution of the assets. There was a specific type of work for each *race*. A racial division of labor was imposed as a means of controlling capital in the *Coloniality of Power*:

[...] each form of labor control was linked to a particular race. Consequently, the control of a specific type of labor could be at the same time a means of controlling

a specific group of dominated people. A new technology of domination/exploitation, in this case race/labor, was developed in a way that it appeared to be naturally associated—which has been exceptionally successful to the present day. That is, the various existing modes of production, as well as the dominated peoples, were organized around the axis of capital and the global market. (Quijano, 2005a, p. 41)

### COLONIALITY OF POWER AND BRAZILIAN INDIGENOUS HISTORY: THE DOUBLE IDENTITY

In order to construct this brief reflection about the trajectory of the indigenous populations in the search for their autonomy and political determination, it is first necessary to demonstrate that we will do this while taking into consideration some criteria for determining what we consider to be *indigenous peoples*. Here we will restrict our definition to the individuals or groups that identify as ethnic, varied cultures, or native peoples that view themselves as separate from the dominant society. The importance of this specification is demonstrated when we remember that a significant part of these populations was not only exterminated, but taken—often with their own consent, as a form of resistance—to become part of the contingents that comprised villages, rural and coastal hamlets, farms, plantations, rubber plantations, neighborhoods, and villas throughout our territory. The indigenous way of life is fundamental in the formation of the Brazilian population, especially in the poorer segments. We can affirm, remembering the anthropologist Eduardo Viveiro de Castros, that *in Brazil everyone is Indian, except those who are not*. Or, as Mércio Pereira Gomes explains:

This (indigenous) legacy is not restricted to the physical aspect, nor to the agricultural and artisanal assets, the legends, customs, and ethos, which have been recognized by Brazilians since the work of Gonçalves Dias, Euclides da Cunha, and Capistrano de Abreu. It includes subtle ways of being, both urban and rural, which come from this unequal relationship dating from the beginning of the Luso-Brazilian colonization. (Gomes, 2005, p. 62)

Thus established the initial differentiation between the focus of this study and the possible scope of the term *indigenous* together with its possible identity paths, we will be even more precise: According to 2010 census data from the IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), in Brazil there are 869,000 individuals<sup>1</sup> who self-identify as indigenous (around 0.4% of the Brazilian population), belonging to around 35 ethnicities and speaking 294 languages. Despite the heterogeneity of traditions, worldviews, and experiences of contact, these subjects share a common movement of historical resistance to the expansion of the national society. In the portion of the American continent that is currently identified as the Brazilian territory, this process began in the year 1500.

<sup>1</sup>According to FUNAI (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*—National Indian Foundation), there are around 400,000 indigenous people in Brazil. The difference is due to the fact that the FUNAI studies do not include “villageless” indigenous people—that is, those who live in the urban environment.

### The Colonial Period: The Double Identity

It is estimated that at the time of the European invasion, around ten million people lived in the territory where Brazil is located today, belonging to 600 different people groups, each with its own social organization, history, and ways of life. The great majority of these peoples lived from hunting, fishing, gathering, and basic agriculture, and did not produce economic surpluses in different classes. In other words, they were egalitarian peoples.

However, this enormous plurality of cultures existing among the native peoples of the continent was not identified as such by the Europeans, who, believing themselves to be arriving in India, used the generic term *Indians* to refer to the innumerable peoples living in Brazil. Europeans landed on the Brazilian coast and organized the system of exploitation viewing everything and everyone as commercially-viable merchandise. Based in this ambition of conquest and the *Coloniality of Power*, two representations of indigenous people were created in the colonial era, which are present to this day in society's imagery. Created from the distinction between Indian allies and Indian enemies of the colonization venture, the indigenous policies divided the native population into two identity matrices, both geared towards the justification of the domination and enslavement of their lives. Two famous passages from letters written in the early days of colonization portray this double view of indigenous people. The image of the Indian ally—tame, innocent, able to be Christianized and serve as a submissive laborer to the dominators—is thus described by Caminha, in the famous letter reporting the discovery of Brazil:

They seem to me to be people of such innocence that, if they could understand us, they would quickly become Christians (...) If the settlers, who will stay here, learn to speak their language well and understand them, I have no doubt that they, according to the holy intention of Your Highness, will be able to be made Christians and believe in our holy faith, to which it pleases our Lord to bring them, because it is certain that these people are good and of good simplicity. And any nature that we might desire to give them can be lightly imprinted. (Oliveira & Freire, 2006, p. 48)

The image of the indigenous person as a barbarous, savage enemy of the Europeans, who defied the colonial power, is very clear in the description by the Franciscan Andre Thevet, for whom the indigenous people,

Whose lands stretch from Cabo de Santo Agostinho to the region of Maranhão, are the most cruel and inhuman of all the American peoples. They are no more than scoundrels who are used to eating human flesh in the same way that we eat mutton, if not with even greater satisfaction (...) There is no beast in the deserts of Africa or Arabia that so ardently appreciates human blood as these extremely brutish savages do. Thus, there is no nation that can approach them, whether Christian or otherwise. (Oliveira & Freire, 2006, p. 52)

Another very well-known image that illustrates this ambiguity in the interpretation of the indigenous character is in the work of the Dutch painter Albert Eckhout. As researcher Edileuza Santiago do Nascimento explains,

The division between the two attributed identifications—the portrayals of “tame Indians” and “savage Indians”—is very clear in the four works painted by Eckhout: Two of Tupi and Tapuia women from 1641, and two of Tupi and Tapuia men from 1643. The Tupi woman is shown partially dressed, carrying a child in her arms and holding tools for work; in the background, a clear sky and a village with signs of urbanization, indicating the accessibility of indigenous labor for serving the white man. The Tapuia woman is portrayed naked, holding a severed human hand and a basket with a severed foot, indicating that they were cannibals. There is a sky filled with storm clouds in the background. (Nascimento, 2009, p. 73)

Thus, divided between the *tupi* (tame Indians) and *tapuia* (savage Indians), the social construction of the indigenous people and all the policies relating to them during the colonial period were configured. Whether to justify the Jesuit missions of catechization, or, at the other end of the spectrum, the use of force to perform genocide and decimate entire villages, the reduction of the indigenous cultural multiplicity was an important tool used in the Crown’s economic, political, and military ventures. That is, from the beginning of colonization, the double discourse constructed around indigenous people had the objective of putting them at the disposition of the expanding colonial mercantilist model.

However, the contact between the colonizers and the native peoples cannot be reduced to the extermination/miscegenation dichotomy; that is, based only in the views of the dominators. Starting from the initial bartering, wars, epidemics, and catechization, throughout all the events and historical periods of colonization, there were innumerable forms of resistance and reaction to the unfolding process of domination. Alliances among multiple peoples, episodes of religious messianism, the rise of indigenous leaders, and mass suicides are described during the period, showing that from the earliest days of the invasion, the indigenous peoples used their dynamism and creativity to forge their own identities in contrast with the non-indigenous people. In addition, we cannot forget that even with the processes of subalternization and miscegenation, strategies to survive extinction were also often used.<sup>2</sup>

### The Pombaline Period

A second important phase in the policies relating to indigenous peoples implemented by the imperial power began in 1757 with the creation of a collection of

normative articles known as Directory of the Indians. Conceived by the 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of Pombal, representative of the Enlightenment and the enlightened despotism of Portugal, this collection of measures aimed to concretize the enlightenment ideals of separation of Church and State. In practice, this meant the expulsion of the Jesuits and the other religious orders responsible for the catechization of the indigenous peoples. From that point on, the indigenous people came to be considered orphans under the guardianship of the government. The villages were placed under the jurisdiction of directors and later of judges responsible for regulating life according to secular principles of civilization and citizenship. With their new status as “free vassals” as a new justification and legal arrangement, the dominant discourse presented the Indian as one who needed to be “taught” and “adapted” to the labor system for the citizen and free worker. In fact, Pombaline policy resulted in an increase in the exploitation of indigenous labor and in its gradual adaptation to the model of trade and agricultural exports that continued to expand. In this context, the image created of the Indian became one of a lazy loafer—the savage Indian who, once captured, proves unsuited for regular and constant work. A treacherous and incapable Indian, who would need to set aside his indianness and be assimilated into the surrounding culture in order to overcome this bad nature. Based on this rhetoric, terms like *mestiço* and *caboclo* (both terms used to describe people of mixed race; the latter referring specifically to mixed Indian-white people) arise in political and scientific discourses, becoming a widespread designation for indigenous people who are absorbed as manual laborers serving the new owners of their lands. As the anthropologist Mércio Gomes explains:

Thus, ironically, the first sense of citizenship with which the Indians were blessed by Portugal annulled the relative autonomy of the villages where they lived. With the entry of non-indigenous people, to whom were given economic and political incentives to marry indigenous women, the new villas came to be dominated by whites and mestiços [mixed-race people], who imposed a hierarchical mode of social relations on the Indians that reduced them to the lowest social condition of the Brazilian social pyramid, progressively robbing them of all their political autonomy and almost all their cultural life. In many ways, the majority of the poor Brazilian people are descended from this unequal relationship. (Gomes, 2006, p. 59)

The groups or peoples that continued to rebel or to exist at the margins of the colonial system were persistently persecuted and massacred. Between 1808 and 1811, four royal charters were enacted permitting the creation of arrest groups to attack non-submissive indigenous people groups that threatened the “development” and the territorialization of the Luso-Brazilian domain. The war and extermination of the indigenous groups also echoed in the scientific debates of the era. The main defender of this repressive posture in Brazil at the time, the historian Francisco Adolfo Varnhagen, supported the colonial wars and the extermination of the indigenous people, arguing that these measures would only accelerate the “natural” process of the indigenous peoples’ extinction.

<sup>2</sup> The war of the Potiguar people against the Portuguese (1646), the war of the barbarians in the Northeast (2nd half of the 16th century), the revolt of the Manao Indians led by Ajuricaba in the Amazon region (1720), and the Jesuits and the thirty peoples of the missions (1600–1750) represent a few examples of the indigenous resistance to the colonial power during the first three centuries of the invasion.

Still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the context of a declaration of the republic and the need for a legend about the nation's founding, there arises the "Indianist" literary movement (a movement that idealizes the Indian as an essential element of the nation), whose main writer is José de Alencar. If the discourse of the savage Indian evolved into the image of the indolent and lazy Indian, the indigenous person idealized by Alencar corresponds to the new representation of the tame Indian ally—who despite being brave and courageous, becomes a benevolent and sweet servant in the name of the creation of a new race. A vainglorious version of Rousseau's *noble savage*, Alencar's romanticized Indian is represented as a pure, virginal being existing in perfect harmony with nature, as well as being the locus of the sacred and the mythical past of Brazil. Redefining the untainted inhabitant of the earthly paradise present in many religions as the image of the Indian ready to be catechized at the beginning of colonization, the indigenous person described by Alencar is a mythical and morally courageous hero who does not hesitate to sacrifice his origin and his past to merge with the European, thus creating the inhabitant of a new nation. In the face of European cultural superiority, the Indian does not hesitate in revealing himself and delivering his secrets, thus abandoning his immaculate origin and disappearing as a "pure race" to resurge as the mixed-blood Brazilian of European dominance—an image of national pride.

Yet again, whether through Pombaline policies of village takeovers, genocidal wars, or the romanticized view that has become so deeply rooted in the national imagination, indigenous people were denied the right to an original construction of their own identity and historical trajectory. Guided by exploitative worldviews and economic interests, the images constructed of the Indians left only very narrow spaces for affirmation of the identity of the native peoples—spaces that were always expanded thanks to the resistance and reframing of the different ways of indigenous life. Whether fleeing to ancient villages, disguising traditional rites within the religion accepted by the oppressor, or forming insurgent groups, the indigenous people continued a constant process of social resistance that culminated in organized revolts of longer duration such as Cabanagem in Pará (1831–1838) and Canudos in the Northeast.

### *The Tutelary Regime in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the policies relating to indigenous peoples adopted by the State were known as a *Tutelary Regime*. After 1870—the year in which the Paraguay War ended—the Brazilian government adopted a series of measures to guarantee the occupation and defense of the Amazon region, such as the installation of telegraph lines, military posts, and agricultural villages with the aim of encouraging economic activities in the entire region. The main objective of these initiatives was to advance in the process of strengthening and territorializing the National State in regions that were poorly exploited by the market. That is, after the occupation and domination of the entire coastline, the inland regions, and the national borders, it was time to expand the model of occupation related

to a particular concept of progress to not-yet-"developed" frontiers. For this, a new initiative to invade and occupy areas traditionally occupied by indigenous populations was necessary. Thus, giving continuity to the legislation that viewed indigenous people as orphans under the responsibility of the State and maintaining the ideological system with positivist ideas of the era, the *Serviço de Proteção ao Índio* (SPI—Indian Protection Service) was created in 1910. As Mercio Gomes explains:

SPI was born as a secular, anti-religious, evolutionist, and nationalist entity, believing that the function of the Brazilian State would be to provide material and moral conditions so that the Indians could freely progress and overcome the animist state in which they lived, in order to enter the positive state, and thus eventually become Brazilian citizens in the full sense. (...) The future of the Indian was, therefore, disappearance as a specific people group, to become Brazilian. (Gomes, 2006, p. 60)

Given to the command of Marshal Cândido Rondon, thanks to his recognized qualities in the form of peaceful contact with the Indians,<sup>3</sup> the SPI was the agency responsible for mediating the relations between the Indian, the State, and national society; that is, managing the incorporation of individuals possessing generic indianity (intermediate stage of evolution) into civilized social ways. Indigenous life was under tutelage. With the SPI, the disciplinary framework for the so-called *tame* Indian was expanded.

The main actions of the SPI were geared towards the "pacification" of indigenous peoples in areas of colonization. These could be expansionary border areas where the SPI would combat the rationale of exterminating the *savage* and the rule of "a good Indian is a dead Indian" that guided many settlers descended from Europeans, mainly in the South. The SPI also aimed to reach more isolated regions, the so-called expansion frontiers of the civilizing process, where the initial contact with and "attraction" of the peoples who lived there was performed. In both situations, the strategy was to pacify the indigenous people through military approach techniques, subsequently offering them medical-sanitary treatment and formal education with civic objectives of transforming them into national laborers, usually agricultural settlers. Often, this practice meant epidemics, hunger, and misery for many of the recently-contacted peoples. It was also through the action of the SPI that the work of anthropologists came to be an important factor for determining the indigenous policies, mainly regarding the demarcation of land. Representing advancement in the contact of national society with the indigenous people, the demarcation of the Xingu Indigenous Park in 1953 was symbolic, as it utilized anthropological categories such as historical memory, ecological integrity, and demographic growth in its implementation. The Xingu Park is the great

<sup>3</sup> At the time, Brazil initiated a strong movement against the image of "Indian exterminator." In this sense, the civilizing positivism defended by Rondon presented an interesting alternative for constructing the rationale of equality and citizenship as universal rights, since it integrated the indigenous lands and peoples without the need—at least, the explicit need—for violence.

symbol of the humanitarian worldview of the indigenous activists of the era, who sought a way for the indigenous lifestyle to adapt and “evolve” according to its own free will, without being “trampled” by the surrounding society’s greed and thirst for “progress.” The demarcation of the Xingu Indigenous Park broke the tradition of using indigenous land as a source of labor, and served as the basis for innumerable other demarcations that occurred in the 1970s after the creation of the National Indian Foundation (Fundação Nacional do Índio—FUNAI).

Created in 1967 to continue the policy of tutelage and integration into national society, FUNAI was set up to try to adapt indigenous policies to the military government’s developmental project. More bureaucratized and assimilationist than SPI, this new agency sought to accelerate further the processes of seizing and exploiting traditional indigenous lands. The emergence of FUNAI and the creation of the Indian Statute in 1973, which regulated land, education, health, and other rights for indigenous people, were the most important milestones in the indigenous policies of the dictatorship. From an ideological point of view, in general, they did not change the evolutionist paradigm that aimed for a supposed progressive integration of the indigenous population into Brazilian society—that is, a mixed society, yet white and Europeanized in its dominant values. According to Oliveira and Freire (2006), the “paradox of tutelage” characterized policies regarding indigenous people in these two moments. In his own words:

Does the tutor exist to protect the indigenous people from the surrounding society, or to defend the broader interests of society in dealing with the indigenous people? This ambiguity is part of the very nature of the tutelage; the actions it begets cannot be viewed only in a humanitarian sense (pointing to legal or ethical obligations), nor as a simple tool for domination. It is in the intersection of these causes and motivations that the key to Brazilian indigenism must be sought. (Oliveira & Freire, 2006, p. 118)

#### *Indigenous Movement and 1988 Constitution.*

One of the most important consequences of the tutelary regime was the emergence of new forms of political and cultural resistance on the part of the indigenous peoples. If, on the one hand, the State’s integrationist policy caused immeasurable damage to the indigenous peoples, on the other, it allowed the rationale that ruled the surrounding society to be better understood by these peoples, thus generating the possibility of creating their own empowerment initiative beginning in the 1970s. One thing that contributed to this phenomenon was the creation of a specific ministry to indigenous peoples by the Catholic Church, the (*Centro Indigenista Missionário*—(CIMI—Indigenous Missionary Center) in 1972. The creation of civil society organizations supported by progressive wings of the universities also dates from this era. They were the first NGOs dealing with indigenous people that emerged to occupy the space left behind by the political and financial emptying of the state agency, FUNAI. Supported by these institutions and aware

of the need for their own organization, independent of the tutelary agents, the indigenous people held innumerable meetings and assemblies throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Little by little, peoples who had never encountered each other began to see themselves as common historical subjects, despite belonging to distinct peoples and communities. Indigenous fronts for collective rights were created, and the historical processes specific to each people gained visibility. Numerous indigenous organizations and leaders emerged, which came to act as interlocutors with the State and the various institutions. This is how the Brazilian indigenous movement was born and developed. As Gersem Baniwa explains:

In Brazil, what we can call a Brazilian indigenous movement has actually existed since the 1970s; that is, a collective and coordinated effort by indigenous leaders, peoples, and organizations establishing a common agenda in the battle. It was an extremely rich period, mainly regarding the indigenous mobilizations from the local and regional levels to the large mobilizations for indigenous rights in the beginning of the 1980s, in the constitutive process that would culminate in important victories in the 1988 Constitution. (Luciano, 2006, p. 48)

A fundamental legal milestone in Brazilian indigenous policies, the 1988 Constitution represents the theoretical and legal overcoming of the tutelage, beginning with the recognition of indigenous peoples’ civil capacity. The Letter of 1988 also recognizes the Indians’ ethnic diversity and political organization, as well as their collective rights as indigenous peoples. It was also the first time that the legislation about the indigenous lands took cultural and ethnic belonging to a particular territory into consideration. In other words, the 1988 Constitution inaugurates a phase of indigenous policies in which the State transcends the double identity of the Portuguese-speaking colonial heritage, recognizing the autonomy of the indigenous people as different people groups, each one being keepers of their own knowledge. Although many of these changes have not yet been implemented in practice to this day, the Constitution represented an important advance in the battle of the indigenous people. Gersem explains:

The third (identity) perspective is sustained by a more civic worldview, whose milestone was the enactment of the 1988 Constitution. This worldview sees the Indians as owners of rights and, therefore, of citizenship. And it is not a common, single, and generic citizenship, but rather one based on specific rights, resulting in a differentiated—or, better, a plural—citizenship. Here the indigenous peoples win the right to continue their own ways of life, their cultures, their civilizations, and their values, as well as being guaranteed the right to access other cultures, technologies and values of the world as a whole. (Luciano, 2006, p. 129)

One of the main consequences of the recognition and valorization of the indigenous way of life is the change of the meaning given to the *Indian* or *indigenous* identity. With the emergence of the indigenous movement in the 1970s, the advancements of the 1988 Constitution, and OIT 169 of 2003, there is a striking



process of recovery in the self-esteem and pride of being Indian. Before, thanks to a five-hundred-year imposition of attributed values, being *Indian* was experienced by the majority as a source of shame or fear—but in the past thirty years this scenario has begun to reverse. Starting from the organization of the Brazilian indigenous movement, the indigenous peoples reached the conclusion that it was important to maintain and promote the generic denomination of “Indian” or “indigenous person.” From that point on, the terms have been used as a mark of identity that characterizes the political organization and strengthening of the native peoples of the Brazilian territory. Now, beyond the homogenizing and discriminatory sense, being Indian is to have a collective and multiethnic identity. It means that the person is a participant in a universe formed by immense cultural and cosmological diversity, but sharing common history, interests, and destiny; whether in the colonizing process, the battle for legal rights, or the search for socio-cultural autonomy.

#### A NEW BRAZILIAN INDIGENOUS IDENTITY?

With the consolidation of the indigenous movement and the growing revalorization of indigenous identity, two phenomena have emerged in the last two decades that specifically refer to the increasing pride and political direction seen among Indian peoples. It is fitting to mention these phenomena briefly and systematically.

Also called resurgent, emergent, or resistant peoples, the indigenous ethnogenesis is a process of retaking indigenous identity by groups that had stopped identifying as indigenous due to ongoing processes of physical and symbolic violence. Occurring mainly in the Northeastern region of the country, the ethnogenesis is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it is difficult to demarcate its possible amplitude. How many subsumed peoples must still exist in Brazil, with their voices silenced, but still living? Surrounded by the socio-political space that the organized initiative has achieved, each year more peoples declare themselves to belong to an ethnicity that had been silenced by the colonizing violence. However, as indigenous ethnogenesis is a phenomenon that generates great political unpredictability, we can already see the conservative counterpoint to this process. Mainly concerned with the legitimate claim of the re-ethnicized peoples for the demarcation of their traditional lands, sectors of society and of the Brazilian government have resumed the predominant discourse of the 1950s, once again defending criteria such as skin color, language, and alleged racial purity for the recognition of the authenticity of these populations’ demands. In practice, it is clear that the return of these criteria are nothing more than the manner found by the political and economic elite to secure their interests against the legitimate demands of the resistant indigenous peoples.

Another important theme that has recently been discussed by the indigenous movements involves the urban Indians. According to data from the 2010 IBGE census, the number of indigenous people who live outside villages totals around 324,000; that is, around 36% of the total number of the country’s indigenous

people. Living in intense contact with national society, with few distinct cultural traces, and depending economically on labor relations that are not determined by their traditional territory, the urban indigenous people raise new questions within the debates about the trajectory of indigenous issues in Brazil. It is not that the phenomenon of migration from villages to the urban environment is new. Already in the 18th century, with the dismantling of villages by Pombaline policy, there are records of a strong indigenous presence in urban environments. However, it is only in the last two decades that, thanks to the aforementioned advances, the history and identity processes of the indigenous people living in the cities have gained greater visibility. Originating, in the majority of cases, in communities where the traditional ways of life have become unsustainable, the urban Indians frequently hide their Indianness with the fear of not finding employment in the city. However, this reality has been changing day by day, and with the increase of self-identifying Indians in the cities, specific demands from these populations also arise. Just like the Indians in the villages, the urban Indians need differentiated public policies in the areas of health, culture and education. However, they are policies that are also different from those implemented in their villages of origin, since the urban reality imposes new forms of social interaction and concrete means for their cultural reproduction.

Another important phenomenon is the role of indigenous people in the social battle for rights. Often brandished as a personal and political value, the “warrior” dimension of indigenous identity—present in many Amerindian cosmologies—has emerged day by day as a trace of collective identification. Whether in the battle for land, for rights to education and health care, for access to new technologies, or in daily life and social interaction, the idea of the “warrior Indian”—commonly used as an exotic and stereotypical characteristic—has been transformed “in favor” of their demands for rights and political organization. It is common for manifestations in support of claims to utilize performances where the warrior “nature” and ethnicity of indigenous people is emphasized as a value utilized in their political battles.

Directly related to the battle for rights is the recognition of the proximity of their demands to those of other social groups. In the rural environment, the battle for land and for the implementation of rights that take into consideration the socio-cultural diversity of the rural population has been a unifying factor for *quilombolas* (communities descended from enslaved Africans), riparian communities, *caiçaras* (fishing communities), *caboclo* (Indian/white mixed-race) populations, communities affected by dams, and landless workers; that is, for a great diversity of groups that, despite differences in their specifics, have a common agenda of claims before the State and before society. In the city, peoples’ initiatives for housing, health care, and decent habitation have also forged close links with the urban indigenous people. In general, the indigenous populations have increased their participation in areas of battle and claims that are not defined solely by the ethnic issue. Although this gives rise to a new field of conflicts, this approxima-



tion establishes a relation in which indigenous people tend to no longer be treated as an exogenous element of national society.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the differentiated notion of the Brazilian indigenous populations about the place and condition of what we generically call "consciousness." Increasingly studied by researchers and publicly explained by the Indians, the notion of consciousness as an attribute that is not restricted to humans is striking, and can be found in indigenous peoples with various levels of relationship with national society. One of the roles such relations plays is to provide a religious matrix for worship and practices that are considered non-indigenous. Reserved for the exotic place of religion itself (perhaps the primitive word would be fitting here) and, in recent years, as the basis for another epistemology that is not rooted in the fundamentals of Cartesian modernity, the cosmological notion of a universe in which other beings—visible and invisible—have their own will and are capable of intentionally transforming the world is being considered little by little. My hypothesis is that, together with the notion of the Indian as a warrior, this vision of the world in which mankind is not the only being that possesses the capacity of giving purpose to his actions, will be one of the fundamentals that will buoy the identity dynamics of the Brazilian Indians and their various battle fronts for rights, with the example of what has been happening energetically in other countries of the Latin American continent.

### LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

The current political situation of the indigenous issue in Brazil presents demands that require critical positioning. With this attitude, professional interventions will be improved in order to maximize the initiatives of the Brazilian indigenous population in different spheres of activity. In this sense, one of the main pillars of this activity should be the deconstruction of the social processes that shaped the creation of national States, beginning with the exploitation of these populations and their territories. In other words, it is necessary to produce professional interventions that are geared towards reversing the historical subordination of these populations—and others—in the context of the formation and expansion of capitalist societies. In the specific case of Latin America, with its particularities in the ethnic-racial area, this means that it is necessary to develop professional practices that unveil and dismantle the colonial-mercantilist-capitalist matrix that is at the root of our social inequalities. Before being treated as essential details or unchangeable aspects in the constitution of the identity universe of the continent, the ethno-racial particularities should be understood as dimensions that are immersed in the broadest socio-historical processes of the continent. In the field of psychology, Liberation Psychology, proposed by Ignacio Martín-Baró, is a recognized proposal that aims to construct its practice with the psycho-social reality of Latin America as a horizon. As he explains:

Latin American psychology must decentralize its attention on itself (...) It is the real problems of our peoples that should constitute the primordial object of our work, and not the problems of other latitudes. And today, in Latin America, the most important problem faced by the majority of the population is oppressive misery, a condition of marginal dependence that imposes an inhuman existence and deprives them of the ability to define their lives. Therefore, the peremptory objective need of the majority in Latin America is the historical liberation from the social structures that keep them oppressed. (Martín-Baró, 1986, p. 22)

Thus, for Martín-Baró, the construction of a Psychology faithful to the Latin American reality should primarily address the "real problems" that afflict the majority of the population of the continent's countries. In this sense, it is fundamental for psychology to be able to overcome the tendency that aims to limit it to a field of intervention in which the individual is understood as isolated from their historical context and from the relations of power that shape the society where they live.

In this path of "decentralizing the action of itself," Martín-Baró calls attention to the need for psychology to create bridges with other disciplines such as those in Humanities, thus creating a field of reflection where the psycho-social dimension of the human being intertwines and is linked to education, sociology, philosophy, among other areas.

In the specific case of Liberation Psychology, well-known influences include the pedagogy of the oppressed by Paulo Freire, the *Methodology of Participatory Action* by the Colombian sociologist Orlando FalsBorda, as well as a collection of reflections on the philosophical category of Liberation, developed by various thinkers. Another category in Latin American thought whose influence is used in Liberation Psychology is the Theory of *Dependence*, which explains the character of the direct relationship between the inequality of Latin-American countries and the force that imperialism exercises over our territories, thus proving the need for emancipatory practices in this domain; that is, Liberation practices. The linkage of Liberation Psychology with other disciplines of Humanities presents itself as a possibility for psychology to open its field of analysis to determinations of the inter-subjective and cultural universe, explaining, through contributions from different areas of psychological knowledge, possible paths for reflection and action that traverse distinct paths of the existing order; that is, critiquing the processes that tend to distance individuals from the social determinations of their reality. Martín-Baró writes:

The relation between personal and social alienation, between social and collective power, between the liberation of each person and of an entire people, has generally been very unclear in Psychology. It has contributed to hiding the relationship between personal distancing and social oppression, as if the condition of these people was something in distant history and as if the sense of behavioral disorders was limited to the individual level. (Martín-Baró, 1986, p. 226)

This ideological construction of a system, in which the dominant power patterns obliterate inequality relations, must be evidenced. It is then necessary to establish a field of relations in which liberating actions can be produced; these actions lead to a praxis that critiques the structures of domination inherent in the Coloniality of Power. Liberation Psychology aims to strengthen relationships grounded in a political and ethical commitment to the uniqueness of individuals and their expression in egalitarian social relationships. In this sense, we can highlight the fact that Liberation Psychology is intimately related to activities carried out with communities; that is, with community psychology. It is in the direct relationship between psychology professionals and the community—in its various senses—that Liberation Psychology finds its sphere of activity par excellence. It is also in the community work that one of the essential fundamentals of the liberation process can be more fully implemented: the critical cultivation of the identity and historical memory of groups and individuals.

Community social psychology is responsible for providing the methodological and empirical base for Liberation Psychology, since the community, as a privileged space in the dimension of daily life, is saturated with social relations that are mired in oppressive practices. A difficult concept to be delineated, the idea of community enters psychology beginning with studies in experimental psychology in the 1940s, in which the objective of the psychologist's work was to guide attitude transformations in the sense of individuals adapting to social groups integrated with modern societies. In this approach, community was understood as a consensual and homogenous collective unit, from which conflict should be removed, the main objective being overcoming the "delayed" stage in its process of modernization. Only beginning in the 1970s did this view come to be contested, with the critical review of the intentionality present in the professional act. Based on critical theory, this approach aimed for transformative action in the sense of denying the structural inequalities of capitalism, thus promoting the "awareness" of the members of the community about the determinations of their social condition. Liberation Psychology can be included within this approach. Giving a summary of this perspective, Gois defines community psychology:

To do community psychology is to study the conditions (internal and external) of man that prevent him from being a member of a community, and the conditions that make him one, and at the same time, in the act of understanding, to work with man based on these conditions, in the construction of his personality, his critical individuality, his self-awareness (identity) and a social reality (Gois, 1993, p. 117).

In the specific case of indigenous populations, the community issue gains even greater importance, as it was the encounter with the indigenous populations of the continent that fueled a large part of the utopian constructions that filled the imagination of settlers and their ideals about "community" life as paradise on Earth. In other words, indigenous life was present in the idea of community far before community psychology professionals became interested in the current life conditions

of indigenous people. In this sense, not only is the indigenous universe a new field for community psychology, but also a place for inquiry into the very nature of community life, acting as a privileged space for understanding the professional practice of community psychology in its radicalism.

The recovery of the historical memory of the peoples is another challenge that Liberation Psychology presents us. Remembering Walter Benjamin, it is necessary to go against the grain in the history experienced by different populations of the continent. Recovering historical memory is rescuing the historical process of inequalities from the point of view of the marginalized, thus generating a memory of resistance that can support future collective projects. Thus, the task for Liberation Psychology is to question the current reality through historical deconstruction, transforming relationships based on a power pattern of domination into normalized relationships. Naturalized and homogenized as a continuous space without contradictions, the social reality of the underlings is a place full of contradictions where the psychologist can help in developing social practices that deconstruct the structures built around the Coloniality of Power. The psychologist should strengthen the body of knowledge, worldviews, and accumulated experiences that form the historical memory as a living reality. It is by penetrating the complex mesh of meanings of reality and historical-cultural constructions that Liberation Psychology can offer support so that the different populations can "recreate" their own history. In this sense, it is the psychologist's role to offer conditions for the populations to be able to position themselves critically concerning the historical roots of their subordination, enabling a field of relations that makes "another" history visible, one which unveils common processes of domination.

It involves recovering not only the sense of one's own identity, not only the pride of belonging to a people as well as having a tradition and a culture. It involves, above all, rescuing those aspects that served yesterday and serve today for one's liberation. Therefore, the recuperation of a historical memory involves the reconstruction of a model of identification that, instead of imprisoning and separating peoples, opens their horizons to their liberation and fulfillment.

Performing the above mentioned type of community social psychology, includes unearthing the processes of resistance and the inventiveness of the peoples in the face of the colonial-mercantilist-capitalist power matrix, in other words, their historical memory. This way, we enable a liberating praxis together with these peoples. As Martín-Baró points out, liberation is, therefore, the social process that allows the recognition of different historical memories as participants in a single model of domination. Concretizing Liberation Psychology practices together with indigenous peoples is therefore configured as a critical intervention. It not only recognizes these populations' specific identities and bodies of knowledge, but also contributes to these traces being a place for recognizing a greater totality of social relationships in which domination and the possibility of liberation confront each other.

## CONCLUSION

Brazilian society faces today the challenge of unraveling the overlap between identity formation and our centuries-long structure of oppression and domination of the peoples. Such a phenomenon is typical not only of Brazil, but all of Latin America. According to reflex theory, we are a continent that is full of ghosts. Phantoms created by the racist worldview and practices and by the exploitation of various peoples of the world who have lived here for centuries. Unseating the Coloniality of Power and its intellectual binding thus becomes the horizon of another, less anomalous and less ghostly modernity. The historical formation of Brazilian indigenous identity reveals this process of forced invisibility. Through the attributed identities and the historical resistance of these peoples, we capture the perverse rationale of the Coloniality of Power in its ethnocentric center of gravity, which does not recognize the importance of these peoples in the historical trajectory of our continent. In this game of mirrors, the indigenous peoples seek to strengthen their ethnicity in the relationships of power with the State and with various forms of organization in civil society. In other words, the Indians have sought to empower their identity as warriors and owners of a unique knowledge in direct and active relationship with the other forces of society. In this path, contesting actions articulating their ethnic condition and their position as subalternized peoples have become more visible.

Neither *tupi* nor *tapuia*, Brazilian Indians enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century as possessors of knowledge and ways that are in constant movement, not only in the search for their own emancipation, but also acting directly within the complex relationship of forces that shape Brazilian society in its various spheres.

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## CHAPTER 3

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# PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE REGARDING ETHNOCIDE

## A Transdisciplinary Approach in the Context of Human Rights

Juan Cristóbal Aldana

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The purpose of the following document is to show the contributions of Social Psychology, validating it in one of the most difficult roads in the spectrum of psychosocial issues: Ethnocide. This term implies the understanding of the causes and consequences related to the elimination of peoples with particular identities. The processes that lead to ethnocide are ultimately human catastrophes caused by man himself. They are classified as crimes against humanity, democracy and human rights, and are considered as dehumanizing processes within societies.

In this context, it is pertinent to describe certain subjects related to genocide, such as restored justice, cultural and community rehabilitation, and psychosocial support. Approaching the issue solely from the psychological perspective would be insufficient; such a complex phenomenon should not be reduced to categories that refer to the individual's mental health such as mental disorders and imbalances. Our attention cannot be focused only on surviving victims of genocide or relatives of victims killed in armed conflicts.

The *raison d'être* of social psychology is to explain and propose interventions not only from the point of view of an individual psychology, but rather from social categories involving cultural, anthropological, sociopolitical, ethical, and legal dimensions, among others. Ultimately, the psychosocial reasoning implies deciphering historical, social, cultural, emotional, and spiritual codes, not from a particular problem or situational time, but in their integral dimension in human life.

In this context, this document is an invitation to reflect on the different processes observed by Social Psychology, when addressing a complex problem such as Ethnocide. We aim at showing the benefits of an approach that includes the experiences of historical research. We also hope to introduce professionals, students and academics to the psychological effects of war, in an effort to develop strategies to benefit the health of populations that are susceptible or vulnerable to the phenomenon of ethnocide. Aiming at collaborating with interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in the field of Social Psychology.

## A HISTORICAL APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY

### 1. From Race to Ethnicity

It is relevant to begin by understanding the concepts of race and ethnicity, since they are closely related to the phenomenon of ethnocide. To the Spanish language dictionary (2009), the concepts of race and ethnicity are ambiguous, revealing the controversies around these concepts in Western societies. In the dictionary, the term "race" has seven different meanings; among these, there is reference to the division of biological species, heredity, lineage and caste. But it identifies only one race: *the human race*. The term "ethnicity," on the other hand, is identified with its origin: it comes from the Greek 'ethnos' meaning people. It refers to community, language, and culture. It also uses the definition of race as affinity: *communities by racial affinities*.

According to sociologist Guillaumin (1992), in the article *The vicissitudes of the concept of race*, the concept of "human race" emerged at the dawn of the social sciences, in the early XIX Century, as a mechanism of legitimating and justifying "Western superiority." To Guillaumin, this concept served as a tool to the interests of colonialism and the Nation-States' ideals. Later on, to overcome the negative bias associated with the term, the concept of *ethnicity* appeared mid-twentieth century, with a more critical vision, in detriment of the use of the notions of *tribes or races*.

Torres-Parodi and Bolis (2007), in their work on the concept of the evolution of race, explain that the introduction of the concept of "ethnicity" was an effort to overcome the problems caused by the concept of race, a generator of serious conflicts and aggressions and producer of false feelings of identity. The invalidity of the term race is confirmed because it presupposes the allocation of external biological differences in qualitative categories, thus breaking down its scientific support. Other scientists from the social and human sciences have proposed simi-

lar considerations: the philosophy of the Frankfurt School (Habermas, 1993), the analysis of the micro spaces of power by Foucault (1976), Fanon (1965); Guillaumin's (1992) sociological studies on colonialism, the social psychology of Taifel et al. (1971), in his thesis on Social identities and the minimum group; as well as the works of Sheriff, Echeverria, and Villa (1995), with their theses on social conflict and categorizations. Nevertheless, these authors are not the only ones who questioned the concept of race.

Concerning the meaning of ethnicity, it defines human groups in units called 'peoples.' Peoples are defined as traditional units with a collective consciousness, and a historical and cultural identity. They differ from others by sharing common territorial bonds. However, for Torres-Parodi and Bolis (2007), the concept of ethnicity cannot overcome the negative bias of the antecedent concept, since ethnicity is sometimes erroneously used as a euphemism for race, poverty, or as a synonym for a minority group.

The difference between these two terms lies in the fact that while the term ethnicity originates from the effort to understand the human differences based on cultural factors (nationality, tribal affiliation, religious affiliation, faith, language, or traditions), race specifically refers to the distinctive morphological factors of these human groups (skin color, body frame, height, facial features, etc.). But both have served to legitimize colonization, slavery, domination and extermination of human beings, as we shall see further on. From the last century until nowadays, racism is practiced towards class, culture, gender and other identities. Now, it could be said that the concept of race should be diluted in scientific and everyday use. And ethnicity can be sustained to the extent that international justice can use it to advance in the prevention of crimes of war, genocide and other massive violations of human rights.

We will now mention some relevant contributions from Social Sciences which reinforce the thesis of this article.

Again we turn to the French sociologist Guillaumin (1967), in her work on the historicity of the *concept of race*. She proposed that two major categories are visualized in the XXVI and XXVII centuries: the super-human, identified with the aristocracy, and the subhuman, identified with the journey men, craftsmen, and servants. They are used to justify social differences (or classes) as part of a natural order and are subsequently reassigned to legitimize slavery. For Guillaumin, the notion of race intends to take into account all forms of exclusion and minorization with or without biological theorization. Beyond what is ethnic, Guillaumin indicates that her conceptualization encompasses the racism of a particular social class, which leads to the naturalization of negative differences and of all forms of oppression of minorities. And more so, in a formally egalitarian and modern society, that leads to the exclusion phenomena of social groups: ethnic, gender, and sexual diversity, disability etc.

Guillaumin places biological categories within the human species, as a system that has been utilized to implement pseudo-biological ways, which is where rac-

ism is created on a daily basis. Meanwhile, Foucault (1976) analyzes the definition of race and its implications to the origin of racism. The proposed methodology, a sort of hermeneutics of history, analyzes racism and reveals how the notion of "race" has changed its meaning in the nineteenth century. He explains that the "falsifiers of history" justified the war of the races by means of biological conceptions, articulated to evolutionism and psychological theories, stating that there are human races that degenerate the white race. In his historical course at the school of Paris, entitled "Society Must Be Defended," in 1976, Foucault discussed the "power" structures from a historical approach, analyzing the war of races, the building of the State racism. Also, the control of the consciousness, body and basic biological traits (i.e. the control of the state over the biological dimension and intrinsic processes related to life as birth, aging, illness etc.)

For Foucault, racism is the metaphysics of the death in the twentieth century. It is referred to violent acts characterized by the vigor, the force, and the pressure of one race over another. Ultimately, racism is linked to a binary relation that organizes the war of races. Finally it can be said that for Foucault the notion of race introduces a separation between what must live and what must die. It can be a way of fragmenting and producing imbalance in the biological field, by means of the implementation of hierarchies and qualifications of races in categories such as good and bad (Foucault, 1992).

Thinkers like Habermas (1992), in his work related to national identity; Foucault (1975) with the genealogy of racism; and Sharif (1961), with the theory of hegemonic culture, demonstrate how the concept of human classification is instrumented to legitimize the domination and exclusion of human groups for belonging to a determined social class, culture or gender identity.

De Lucas (1991) shows how State racism is legitimized in the exclusion of foreigners, and the Spanish magazine of cultural criticism *Archipelago* in his number 12 edition, entitled *Designation of Origin: Foreign*, publishes in 1993 a series of articles that clearly show that the concept of race is and has been an instrument of domination and segregation and that until then, the scientific community had not been committed to its eradication, and presents an analysis of the genealogy of racism, and class ethnocentrism.

Torres and Bolis (2007) from the Organización Panamericana de la Salud, indicate that "The vast majority of experts in the field agree that, from the scientific and anthropological point of view, the concept that human beings can definitely be divided and classified in different 'races' is unfounded. There is only one race: the human race. Therefore, the notion of race is not a biological entity and should be understood in the light of history and of social relations. This evolution is reflected in the international guidelines of the struggle against discrimination."

The concept of ethnicity is manipulated and racial categories are misused. Ethnicity should be used to understand cultural differences in order to historically analyze the construction of cultural identity through the exchange and coexistence of different groups, and as a research tool, to demonstrate that migratory

processes, cultural exchange and a blend of cultures are the only ones capable of ensuring the survival of cultures. In all of the 190 independent states, there are currently about 5,000 ethnic groups. In most of the world, ethnic diversity is part of human geography.

## 2. The Contentiousness of Inter-Ethnic Relations

The idea that a national state is ethnically pure or homogeneous is being increasingly questioned. It has a very high and unacceptable price. Currently, it is not possible to observe a state with a homogeneous culture. On the other hand, multi-and-intercultural societies have historically contributed to the richness of humanity with their capabilities and mechanisms of adaptation and survival.

Despite the fact that in almost all states there is ethnical, cultural and religious diversity, the political, economic and cultural identity of the group in power very often becomes the characteristic that defines the nationality. The groups that antagonize the dominant culture (in some cases minorities and in others majorities) can be seen as an obstacle to the construction of a homogeneous identity.

The adoption of values of the dominant group can be an excuse to exterminate or homogenize human diversity. Ethnic, religious and cultural tensions may be regarded as explicit causes, but the underlying ones can have a political and economic origin from power groups.

These groups often politically exploit the need for a homogeneous cultural identity, in order to overcome the state's social problems, through the seeking of support to create ethnic, religious or cultural rejection in favor of the dominant group. Conflict is a logical consequence when only one group takes control and uses the power to further their own interests at the expense of other groups.

If the state is part of the conflict and its institutions are weak and ineffective, the result can be an ethnic cleansing (ethnocide) or a massive violation of the basic rights of the discriminated group, causing humanitarian disasters that lead to forced and massive displacement of this population, as has been the case with the Palestinians and as were the events in Chiapas, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia (Aldana, 1999).

Muslims from Kosovo and Bosnia had no place in the ultra-nationalist vision of "Greater Serbia," of Christian Orthodox obedience (Aldana, 1999). In South Africa, the apartheid ideology excluded from citizenship peoples who were not white. In Guatemala, 58% of the population is indigenous and has suffered a prolonged extermination as a people, dating back to the colonial period, bearing its greatest ethnocide tragedy between the years of 1978 and 1983.

Members of other non-dominant groups may be first exposed to racism (the case of "negritude" in South Africa), second to forced assimilation (the case of indigenous peoples of Mexico), third to persecution (the case of the Mapuche people in Chile and Argentina), fourth to expulsion (as in the case of the Palestinians) and last to genocide (as in Guatemala and Rwanda).

Humanitarian crises caused by the ethnic factor are the criterion by which people are deprived of the protection of their own governments, since conflicts are internal and require the mediation of institutions of the government itself.

On the other hand, ethnic and religious tensions are susceptible to manipulation by extreme or fundamentalist forces. The clearest example of this is "*irredentism*," which is the attempt to bring together under a single political and religious entity territories administrated by different states that have played important roles in conflicts that have generated refugees, such as in the Horn of Africa and in former Yugoslavia. Somalia's ambitions to annex the Ogaden area, belonging to Ethiopia but inhabited by Somalis, provoked a war in 1977, and until today the population of a large part of the region is still not settled due to ethnic tensions in addition to other factors such as political instability, economic collapse and the ongoing drought.

The context of the Cold War and the formal decolonization (although it was not political and economic) caused these conflicts between great powers to sponsor various ethnic frictions. The breeding ground for the development of ethnic and religious conflicts was thus created, breaking the historical balance between collectives and artificially strengthening the situation of economic, military, and diplomatic groups. This model supported certain minority groups in power and acted against the majority of the population who were protesting for social and human rights, and who were antagonistic to those who held the power. The interests of the countries that had colonies and the superpowers in the military-political confrontations led attempts to reach an agreement or achieve reconciliation in countries involved in ethnic conflicts; they became puppets of the struggles of others, beyond their own interests. The Cold War was dominated by ideological conflicts. The nineties was the beginning of a new era of ethnic and religious violence.

Currently the refugees produced by ethnic conflicts represent the majority of internally displaced persons worldwide. They are addressing the international community to seek protection and material assistance. Allegedly ancestral hatreds and fundamentalism can be contrived and artificially maintained by economic, political and strategic interests. Let's not forget that the military industry is profiting at a global level and that conflict situations generate illegal trafficking of materials and natural resources.

It can be observed that during the last 20 years, during the era of democracy and the end of the Cold War, many ethnic conflicts were rooted and exacerbated by geopolitical interests, as in the Middle East (the occupied territories of the Palestinian people; Iraq with the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds), in Africa (the Darfur region of Sudan; the great Lakes region), in the former Soviet Union (the Russian minority in Georgia; the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno Karabakh area and Chechnya with Russia), in Southeast Asia (Burma, where the military dictatorship faces 21 ethnic groups; Sri Lanka, where the Tamil minority faces Sinhalese), and in Latin America (Colombia's indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants are trapped by the oldest conflict of the region; the Mapu-

che people in Chile and Argentina are displaced, just as the Indians of southern Mexico, Chiapas and Oaxaca are harassed by government agencies). In Guatemala, the impunity of the ethnocide promoted at the times of the armed conflict still remains.

These are some of the illustrative examples of the existence or risk of ethnocide in the world of the XXI century and the heterogeneity of the states, from the ethnic point of view.

## MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO ETHNOCIDE

### 1. *Ethnocide From the Standpoint of Anthropology*

From an anthropological perspective, persecution, enslavement, expulsion, ethnocide, and racism deepen as a result of a set of social and political factors, in terms of natural resources, labor, education, citizenship, population, and nationality, which have taken into account that ethnic diversity is a problem.

If a historical review was made over the last 200 years, we would find that significant political, media professionals, and intellectual groups have formulated degrading categories on ethnic diversity, exposing peoples as barbarians, savages, treacherous, vindictive, rebellious and vulnerable to manipulation, or even devoid of soul and therefore without humanity.

The power elites of a specific group justify exclusion models based on these categorizations, which form the racist theories constructed during the Age of Enlightenment and European romanticism, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

All these elements involved exploitation through slavery, expulsions from regions rich in natural resources, and ethnocide against people that were more resistant to the processes of domination.

It should be added that despite the internalization of liberal principles of the late nineteenth century, the imperial culture continues in the power groups and to a lesser extent in other layers of society.

The characteristics of a State are formed by racism, mainly entrenched in the oligarchies, active in the following dimensions:

- a. Western culture in colonized countries will always reject the indigenous and native traits, which in sociology are identified as popular and as cultural diversity of the folkloric.
- b. Detainer of a universal truth: imposes social and cultural systems.
- c. It has been legitimized subsequent to genocide and forced assimilation of diverse or different groups.
- d. These characteristics become part of a natural order: racism, as a behavioral category in everyday interaction of social relations, which draw accursed and despicable pictures of one another. (Aldana, 2008)



## 2. *Ethnocide From the Legal Perspective*

Ethnocide is part of a repressive political strategy of the state societies in which entire villages are burned or bombed with their inhabitants in them (Aldana, 2008). Other forms of ethnocide involve individually or collectively denying the rights to enjoy, develop, and transmit one's own culture and language.

Sometimes, the mere fact of belonging to a cultural group is blameworthy and consequently leads to persecution, murder, imprisonment, disappearances or expulsion from one's own territory. More destructive forms of ethnocide, such as massively eliminating peoples, exist and are applied. This was the case in Guatemala with the so-called Scorched Earth, and more recently in the Middle East, in the Gaza West Bank in the Palestinian territory.

In these two examples, two international crimes are simultaneously present: ethnocide and genocide. In the case of Guatemala, between 1954 and 1996, Scorched Earth was applied, leaving death and desolation over more than 400 indigenous rural villages. More than 200,000 were estimated dead and missing, 83% of which were of Mayan origin. The army and paramilitary groups were responsible for 93% of the deaths and disappearances, while only 3% correspond to the guerrilla groups. There were more than 626 massacres, about 300 refugees in southern Mexico and a million internally displaced people.

In the case of the Palestinian territories, from 1948 to 2010, the conflict has left thousands dead and 80% of the economic infrastructure devastated. Nearly 30,000 homes, 200 schools, and 20 hospitals were destroyed. It left tens of thousands of homeless people and children have become military targets.

The first international conference on racism held in Durban, South Africa, in 2002, argued that for Genocide to exist in the International Law the following points must be considered:

- a. Extinction and destruction of civilizations and cultures.
- b. Massacres and forced assimilations.
- c. In view of potential or declared resistance, forced integration policies are implemented, perpetuating the domination of one culture over another.
- d. Genocide is the responsibility of a State, its rulers, and economic groups with political power.

Other, more complex legal forms would be derived from exploitation relations, as a result of the processes of colonization, specific political-economic and socio-cultural structures.

Colonization brought destruction and modification to the structures of colonized people, while the imposed culture and development models only served to deepen the process of destruction undertaken by the colonizers, who were never interested in helping colonized people. This is apparent in the final document against racism presented at the World Conference on racism of the United Nations

(Durban 2002). Colonization only ruined the entire third world, and it has never been able to recover.

For centuries, the colonial powers, easily identifiable to this day, plundered the wealth of the colonized countries for the benefit and on behalf of their citizens, to secure their own economic and social development.

Currently, neocolonialism is what perpetuates the domination and exploitation of the countries caught in the machinery of the system. One of the most important factors in maintaining this situation is the cooperation offered by the former colonial powers, which use a number of constraints to impose their will on the former colonies: these are considered sovereign states, but in reality they have no means or power (Vázquez & Aldana, 2008). In this unequal relationship between the assisted and the assistant, the latter imposes its will and thus maintains the general orientation of new or existing structures in the economic, social and cultural spheres.

Whichever way decolonization was achieved, be it by negotiation or in a violent manner, it has led to the same results of disastrous dependence and exploitation everywhere, maintaining an unjust economic world order. Developing countries, mainly former colonies, insist that it should be revised to achieve a fairer balance (Durban, 2002).

The forced assimilation processes are developing various mechanisms of land dispossession, forced relocation, forced migration, alien education, ideological penetration and a lack of respect for cultural expressions.

Human rights in the context of international justice, has advanced in the field of genocide and is beginning to surpass the content of the vision of Western nations (Taxon, 2005).

The fact that many of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' articles were constructed with Western countries' values may be criticized. At the conference in Durban, in 2001, the United States and the European Union recognized the negative effects of the civilizing processes, settlers, and economic systems of domination in countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In this context, countries that were victim to the process of colonization, illegal occupation and that were subjected to genocide have gained formal rights in the subject of international justice, such as the agreements of the International Labour Organization Convention 169, that refers to the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries; Convention No. 111, that refers to the Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; the Convention against the crime of ethnocide of UNESCO against racism and discrimination; and the proposal of the Universal Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

With regard to genocide, the United Nations' definition is based on the following postulates (Toxón, 2005):

- a. To murder or injure members of a group.
- b. Serious assault to physical integrity.
- c. Serious assault to the physical and mental integrity of the members of a group



- d. International group submission to conditions of existence that involve its physical or partial destruction.
- e. Measures oriented to hinder births within a group.
- f. Forcible transfer of children of a group to another group.
- g. Alliance intended to commit genocide.
- h. Public direct incitement to commit genocide.
- i. Attempted genocide.
- j. Complicity in genocide.
- k. Attempt and complicity are punishable.

Concluding, genocide is considered a crime against humanity, contemplating murder, torture, enslavement, exile, and other atrocities against the civilian population before or during war.

### 3. *Genocide From the Psychosocial Perspective*

In order to study the psychosocial effects of ethnocide and to be able to contribute with elements to prevent it, meaning should be given to the collective sense of not forgetting, or remembering, those who died because of genocide, leading to a collective sense of remembering affectively and with dignity. As Rigoberta Menchú expressed in her speech during the presentation of the report on Ethnicity and the Guatemalan State, in 2003: "they wanted to exterminate us as a culture and here we are, we have gone through the dark of night and we are alive before the horror of extermination."

Social-psychology takes on significance when it becomes a denunciator of this human tragedy, transmitting testimonies of survivors and trying to understand this drama from its cultural, political, legal and ethical context. To understand pain based on the contextualized holistic vision of injustice and dehumanization of the weak.

The terror produced by genocide has psychosocial effects on populations and communities. This deconstructs their identity through the extermination of the culture. The death of entire populations produces generational traumas in the entire population. It obstructs the bonds of community support through mistrust, fear and silence, in addition to a number of individual effects as psychosomatic illnesses, severe mental disorders, suicides, among others.

There is also passivity before the inequalities and an aversion to all forms of political and social organization to deliver justice to the group responsible for the genocide.

Besides eliminating a culture, ethnocide also seeks to break all sources of natural support for a group, that is to say, their human referents (health workers, elders, spiritual leaders, women etc.). Those who manage to live cannot continue to play a significant role in their group.

In some villages, women are carriers and transmitters of culture, thus they become targets of extermination in order to slow down the birth of their offspring

(Gómez, 2005). The elderly carriers of cultural and spiritual history are exterminated in order to break ancestral links.

For many peoples, the dead are the link between life and death. The dead care for the living through dreams and therefore the living take care of the dead. In this regard, cemeteries and massacred people were vanished (Gómez, 2005).

A community without referents is thus constructed, with unresolved grief (missing and dead buried in mass graves) within a collective emotional climate where trust relationships are damaged, blamed, stigmatized. In summary, in a permanent process of deterioration of their physical and mental health.

### PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF IMPUNITY ON SURVIVING VICTIMS OF GENOCIDE

The lack of justice and impunity leads to permanent suffering, therefore genocide is legitimated as a violent and abhorrent assault in regards to the standards of concordance. Unpunished genocide is represented by the destruction of values and of peaceful coexistence beliefs, thus creating power spaces that result in new forms of violence, selected killings (sicariato), organized crime, gangs, etc. As a result, the hope for justice is diverted to other political interests and is forgotten, losing social interest in clarifying the history of genocide that Cabrera (2004) called the behaviors of unpunished power (Cabrera 2004).

These behaviors caused the relatives of the victims and the survivors of genocide longer periods of fear and pain, of living with the memory of repression, of meaningless time, time of disgust, shame and confusion; making it difficult for the implementation of mental health policies to address post-genocide.

Some of the political consequences are constructed as social representations:

- a. The social denial of what has occurred
- b. The attribution of responsibility to the victim
- c. The attribution of psychological characteristics to victims of political repression: from subversive to democracy-destabilizing, and the dilution of public-institutional responsibilities
- d. The occurrence of ethical dilemmas in public debates (amnesty laws pardons)
- e. The taking of justice by the community; social construction of the need for privatization of security due to state inaction (lynching, kidnappings)
- f. Absence of policies for the implementation of preventive models and the use of repressive violence instead.
- g. The manipulation of social consensus (Cabrera, 2005).

The political consequences and psychological impact can also be looked at from four opposite dimensions: Impunity vs. Justice; Denial and silencing vs. Knowledge and revelation; To be trapped in the past vs. Looking to the future and integration (Cabrera, 2005).

We could say that these political and psychosocial consequences of impunity create the conditions for a social representation of impunity as a microphysics of power, which sustains itself and has the effect of reinforcing the feelings of helplessness, passivity and submission (Foucault, 1976).

A collective behavior is perceived, oriented into accepting authoritarianism and inhibiting the participation of unorganized sectors of society, especially the most impoverished. This diminishes the relevance of social and economic problems and makes addressing social insecurity a priority, based on the limitation of rights (Vázquez & Aldana, 2008).

These collective behaviors are strategies to contain the development of a participatory culture, of a historical consciousness and promotion of dignity. During armed conflict, most of these forms of control were established; the ones inherited from the imperial oligarchic culture were reinforced and others were modified.

Racism is still part of the everyday life of Guatemalans; this manifests itself in a false perception of the genocide, which interprets it as a war between terrorists and the army. In this way, the genocide of the Mayan people in Guatemala remains forgotten.

Some of the more relevant points could be highlighted:

- a. Rupture of socio-cultural models through the imposition of models of violence and omnipotence, which exalt the identification with the image of the enemy and the transformation of sinister behavior into an ideal.
- b. Promotion of aggressive behavior in the social sphere.
- c. Prevalence of skepticism towards the ideals of justice, because confidence is altered when expectations of justice are frustrated.
- d. Social Confusion: with the establishment of the death penalty comes a questioning of the defense of the right to life.
- e. Corruption in the justice system: a challenge to the sense of equitability and impartiality of the law and justice.
- f. The coexistence of victims-victimizers alters the mourning of the victims.
- g. Personal crisis and fear of re-experiencing trauma: the search for an explanation to the arbitrary and senseless loss relieves intense suffering (Cabrera, 2004).

The correlation between violence and public insecurity is a consequence of the permanence of the repressive State apparatus which, in spite of having changed strategies due to mobsters' economic interests, still remains a tool for the maintenance of daily fear.

The social climate that is being built promotes the persistence of feelings of fear, helplessness, and insecurity. Experiences that are kept in certain situations: inhibition of social denouncement due to the risks of re-experiencing trauma and fear of reprisals. Ultimately, feeling threatened or suspected of inhibits social participation. All these factors complete the cycle of impunity in post-conflict transitions and post-ethnocide.

Impunity finds a fertile ground in the authoritarian culture of many democratic transitions. The authoritarian syndrome maintains a dynamic abuse in the dominance-submission relationships. The authoritarian link is articulated by the notion that majorities do not know how to defend their dignity and their rights and have difficulty respecting the rights of others.

Some social effects of authoritarianism are deepening victimization, distrust of others, and blind adherence. Distrust appears as a strategy to guard against new abuses. This dynamics of abuse involves the need to conceal identity in order to avoid the possibility of being controlled.

Therefore, by deepening victimization and distrust, authoritarianism paves the way for blind obedience at the expense of critical judgment. The reason why authoritarianism creates tension is its invisibility. Therefore, to realize authoritarianism is to understand the reasons of the burden, of the lack of motivation, of fear, of our distrust and our passivity.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Ethnocide challenges us to define the forms of psychosocial reparation; we should begin to reflect on the extent to which it is possible to repair an injury of this magnitude. We must also consider that this reparation is complex:

To empirically demonstrate the relationship between justice and psychosocial reparation and outline which elements are authentically repairers and on what basis, to examine the processes of collective oblivion and memory and, in the associated notions of guilt in the sociological sense, deepen the study of the impact on our countries on the second and subsequent generations of both violence and other forms of reparation. With the exception of the well-known European studies on the offspring of survivors of concentration camps, there is still little existing literature in general (Grupo De Acción Comunitaria, 2003, p. 60).

But also, the process of historical repair of genocide, in the collective memory of the people who have suffered it, is a key concept from the *pedagogical ethics*, which is defined as follows:

The movements for social transformation have an alternative, ethically just and humane project when fighting for justice against the crimes of humanity. For indigenous peoples that are victims, the fight against genocide represents the resistance against the colonial past. Forgotten by justice, they become part of the marginalized social classes, fighting against the oppressor or perpetrator of genocide. (Dussel, 1978, pp. 86-87).

"Reparative justice is born with the movement for the abolition of slavery, which is reclaimed from history" (Gómez, 2007, p. 383). First and foremost, the historic reparation calls for equality, liberty and the pursuit of rationality with

regard to the damage produced, to violence, the forms of discrimination, racism, marginalization, etc.

Historical reparation is then linked to justice to the extent that inequalities persist and are reproduced in different ways, and constitute a new colonization of power. Inscribing the past into the present implies forms of violence such as: genocide, massive displacements, ecological destruction and dehumanization, involving both measures of compensation and of social transformation (Gómez, 2007).

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## SECTION II

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# THE SITUATED TOPICS OF THE DIALOGUES

Danilo Silva Guimarães

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Multiculturalist perspectives tend to see the Indians as populations separated from the global society, with a specific worldview, imposing that they need to conserve their culture and traditional way of life to continue being 'Indians.' But what should we think when an Indigenous group conceives their own tradition in a different way from what the 'whiteman' believes to be the 'true one'? The case of the Iaminauás, from Acre, that many times prefer to live in the urban universe, allow some reflections about the indigenous identity and the relations between the native communities and the so-called 'civilized' world

—Sáez, (2008)

The recurrent deprivation of traditional lands and the destruction of the conditions for cultural subsistence are sources of great suffering to the Amerindian ethnic groups. This section will explore some of the recurrent situations where psychology meets Amerindian peoples and has been struggling to increase the dialogicality in the interethnic workflow: the Amerindian presence in the urban context, in the political representation carrying out the social control of State institutions, in the school and health care system.

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 61–66.

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Amerindian peoples inhabit social places or institutions of Western societies. Nevertheless, in their processes of differentiation and dedifferentiation, these common places can be reconfigured in proper and diversified ways. Although the indigenous peoples are used to live in the cities since the foundation of the first urban centers in the American territory, the presence of indigenous peoples in the Brazilian cities, for instance, is usually a surprise (Nosso Chão, Sousa, & Passerini, 2002). The stereotyped vision that identifies Amerindian people to life in forests, refusing their presence in the urban context, is historically produced. The stereotype creates difficulties for the active decision on people's way of life. Nevertheless, Brazilian census asserted that around 40% of the self-declared Amerindians in Brazil live in the cities (IBGE, 2012). The urban environment, on the other hand, is historically hostile to their presence. If in the past they were considered as cheap workforce, nowadays they suffer with the absence of recognition of their ethnic specificities.

Considering the Amerindians lived traditionally in diversified ways in their communities, nowadays there is still great variety in the ways they express their pre-Colombian roots in the cities and in the forest. The construction of ethnic and personal identities is linked with complex and multifaceted processes:

Diverse Amerindian communities decided to resist the social process of sterilizing homogenization, refusing to be assimilated in the involving socio-cultural field, aimed at the accumulation of goods and the indiscriminate use of natural resources. The situated topics of the dialogue are focused here as the underlying situation of the meetings and actions. Each dialogue happens in a very specific and concrete extra verbal situation (Voloshinov, 1976) that needs to be taken into account if we are aiming to understand the active process of meaning construction. Additionally, the situation of the dialogue presupposes the active positioning of each participant in the field of tensions that is inherent to interethnic meetings. These active positions move the boundaries of a mutual affective process.

Active participants in a dialogue bring different perspectives to the relation, constructed out of previous life experiences, cosmological backgrounds, ontological trajectories and relatively fixed preconceptions. In the constitution of the underlying situation that crosses the particular perspectives in the dialogue, allowing it to happen, it is a challenging task to take into account the surmounting of intolerance in intercultural relations and the construction of collaborative coexistence among peoples. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the situation in which each cultural conception is cultivated is particular, the utterances emerged from different cultural fields (Boesch, 1991) are articulated to an open-ended system that constrains (Valsiner, 1998) their meanings. In the interethnic border, the notions of person, environment, education, health care, social management and others are usually transfigured, demanding efforts addressing the creation of particular common grounds to interpersonal sharing.

Consequently, the role of the psychologist in such an interethnic border expands and becomes more complex. The dialogue of psychology with indigenous

peoples presupposes revisions on the reductionist science and professional references, the disciplinary fragmentation of knowledge. The constitution of dialogues between professionals and researchers belonging to different areas and cultures is key to overcome dogmatisms, but it cannot be identified to the sterile eclectic approach. The relevancy here lies in communicating through differences, once the eclectic approach converts all in the same, breaking the possibility of exchanging meaningful actions.

The profitable contact with other peoples is possible and is valued by many indigenous mythological discourses and in their cultural practices. The search for contact with the diversity of the cities is an important dimension of this openness. Amerindian societies are not closed, as the European feuds were in the medieval age. At the same time, ethnic and personal identities are not fixed or immutable, that is, all human traditions are transformed along the time. In the anthropological report of Sáez (2008), the Iaminauás preserved and reproduced their cultural practices in the cities, as ceramics, body painting and festivities. At the same time, they have learned and appropriated new elements to their tradition.

On the other hand, considering most of the communities that could preserve their traditional territory, the presence of western culture cannot be considered minimized. First, many Amerindian persons keep their contact with the traditional community in spite of living in the cities, visiting their families frequently. Second, the social apparatuses of the State, as school, social assistance and the health care system are present in the communities of the countryside. Third, the mass media and the marketing have transformed Amerindian people in consumers of western goods. Therefore, contact with the western cultures produces challenges to the ethnic-cultural elaborations in the cities or in the forests.

Although participating in the western institutions and politics, Amerindian peoples are managing to keep their own way of elaborating political issues, preserving their ethnic-cultural position in the process. It can be noticed in the construction of a sort of parallelism of interdependent realities. In this territory of dialogues, the relation with otherness does not lead to a dialectical synthesis, but the differences between the self and the other are maintained. The notion of working together is constantly rectified by the notion of working in parallel, as in the report of the Mbya Guarani Chief Mariano Fernando "It is very difficult to work in parallel, to take both together [...] today, we need to work with the Amerindian politics, but together, in parallel with you [...]" (CRPSP, 2010, pp. 46–49). As it is well known from geometry, parallel lines never meet. It is an effort to balance together the processes of differentiation and dedifferentiation.

The educational environment is another dimension of the disquieting construction of common grounds for dialogue. The school is an institution that promotes a set of viewpoints on the reality of human social life. At the same time that children, at school, learn skills, techniques and acquire knowledge, they also learn the 'rules' of good behavior, rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, the submission to the rules of the established order and/or the "ability to manipulate

the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression" (Althusser, 1969/1980, p. 128). The school is the capital social institution working for the reproduction of modern capitalist relations of exploitation, in substitution to the church and the family (Ariès, 1962; Patto, 2008). Therefore, Amerindian peoples are struggling to reconstruct the underlying relations of the educational setting, aiming at introducing their cosmological view in differenced ways of guiding the activities in the school.

The Amerindian search for a differed education, able to include crucial principles of their cultures, is an instance of the liberating role of the school. The experience of the school can be an opportunity to practice the dialogue with the surrounding society, without losing the original tradition. The Guarani and Kaio-wá educator, Valdelice Veron, recovered the words of the *Nhandesy*<sup>1</sup> Júlia Cavaleiro<sup>2</sup> who argues that "the wisdom in life [according to the traditional principles] teaches us to think correctly in the correct time." On the other hand she also stresses, "I would like that my grandchildren studied in order to never forget who they are, to be responsible, solidary and committed with the *tekoha*."<sup>3</sup> It expresses an ambivalent relation with the formal learning that can be observed in other situations of the Amerindian dialogue with State institutions (Guimarães, 2015).

Concerning the situated topic of health care, Brazilian legislation preconizes that the dialogue between public services and the Amerindian populations should guide major or minor adaptations in the public services that serve them. Three excerpts of the Federal Law 9.836, from September 23, 1999, that formalized the Amerindian public system of healthcare, emphasize the issue of communitarian participation. The actions and healthcare services

ought to, necessarily, take into consideration the local reality and the cultural specificities of the culture of Amerindian peoples; and the model adopted to the Amerindian health care has to follow a differed and global approach, including the issues of healthcare assistance, sanitation, nutrition, habitation, natural environment, land demarcation, hygiene, education and institutional integration.

The SUS (Unified Health System) is the back end and reference for the Subsystem of Amerindian Healthcare, and needs to be adapted in its structure and organization in the regions where Amerindian populations inhabit, in order to propitiate the necessary integration and attendance in all levels, without exception.

Amerindian populations have the right to participate in the college institutions that formulate, follow up and evaluate health politics, as the National State and/or Municipal Councils of Health.

<sup>1</sup> Elder and venerable woman.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Nhandesy Julia Cavaleiro Veron, recorded by Valdelice Veron in December 25, 2009, during the Guaxire party, at the Indigenous land Takuara, municipality of Juti.

<sup>3</sup> The sacred territory in which a Guarani community lives.

Although Brazilian law has advanced in the determination of dialogical approaches to Amerindian issues related to the health care system and educational system, under the label of differed health and education, for many Amerindians, their experience is far distant from it (cf. Carta de Manaus<sup>4</sup>). On the other hand, also concerning the health care system, one of the main complaints of the Mbya Guarani from São Paulo, Brazil, is because decisions are usually taken from top to bottom and are not able to grasp the local peculiarities of the situated communities (cf. Huvixa Kuery Nhembo'a Ty<sup>5</sup>).

Therefore, one of the main challenges of the State health services, educational and political institutions is to approach the emerged issues dialogically, which means, to build an equitable setting for interethnic efforts, making the necessary partnership for finding solutions to the faced difficulties possible.

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## CHAPTER 4

# AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON PSYCHOLOGY

## Deep Immersion in Indigenous People's Dramas

Rosa Suárez<sup>1</sup>, John Sabogal<sup>2</sup>, and Doris de la Hoz<sup>3</sup>

Que el sueño es el cielo del adentro, la puerta al mundo verdadero.  
Que los árboles son de carne y los ríos son de sangre,  
Que los Pájaros son pensamientos y las lluvias son recuerdos  
Y el cielo está Lleno de antepasados despiertos.

—William Ospina

The emergence of new and complex social processes with global character has posed unprecedented challenges to contemporary social sciences regarding theories as well as work methodologies. One of the increasingly complicated phenomena is the migration of indigenous people toward Latin American cities, a process of “ethnization” of the urban context and of “urbanization” of the Latin American indigenous communities (Yanes, 2004). It demands thorough attention and

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an ethical and theoretical reformulation from traditional psychology. The present text outlines some theoretical reflections concerning the relationship between psychology and indigenous people. It is the result of the work done with an Embera community in displacement condition in Bogotá, Colombia, accompanied for more than three years by the Indigenous Subjectivities Research Group<sup>4</sup>, from National University of Colombia and Incca University, as a part of the line of research on Social Subjectivities conducted by Professor Rosa Suárez. During the whole process, we have attempted to articulate academic reflection, research—guided by reflexive ethnography (Guber, 2001)—and professional action, with the purpose of contributing to the solution of Amerindian's problems.

In response to some theoretical deliberations, our work with the Embera community has been guided by psychology; mainly from the perspective of social constructionism (Gergen, 2007). However, throughout the text we will propose some reflections about subalternity and decolonial perspective, next we will theorize on the city as a scenario of cultural transformations. We use the notion of existential territory to explore possible subjective correlates of these changes. We finally consider the assumption of an inter-cultural perspective as necessary to the ethical-political exercise of psychology in the indigenous context.

### PEOPLE FROM THE CORN

Somos Embera. Venimos de la naturaleza, somos hijos del agua,  
Del okendo, de nuestra madre tierra, por eso la defendemos.  
Somos pueblos Indígenas con historia y cultura propia,  
somos del territorio, de la Naturaleza.

—Second Embera Congress, 2012.

In Spanish, Embera means “people” or “humanity” (Losonczy, 2006). The ancient Embera were *Bembara*: “People from the corn,” (Vasco, 2002) residents from the Colombian and Panamanian Pacific coast. Four hundred years before Spanish entrance, the Embera arrived as migrant groups from the Amazonian region to the Colombian Pacific coast, crossing the *Nudo de los Pastos* (Vargas, 1990) and bringing cultural practices such as shamanism. These groups shared language, cosmovision, forms of territorial mobility, decentralized governance, a family-based organization, and cultural practices adapted to their traditional way of life in the rain forest. When they arrived to the Pacific coast, they settled in the inter-fluvial area between rivers Atrato and San Juan, near to high part of Chocó Departament (Vargas, 1990; Losonczy, 2006; Villa & Houghton, 2005). During the colonial period, the Embera carried out a strong resistance, fighting against the Spanish armies. They organized themselves in residential groups with strong war-

riors, who were scattered once the confrontations against the colonists culminated (Losonczy, 2006). After the consolidation of the colonial regimen, the Embera displaced their territory to the low area of Atrato River, increasing their dispersion and mobility. Toward the end of XIX and early XX centuries, after independence and creation of the Colombian republic, the constitution of new towns toward the countryside, in the most mountainous areas, contributed to the disintegration of Embera's villages and facilitated the process of republican colonization (Ulloa, 1992). With the white population's increase in the territories inhabited by the Embera towards mid XX century, the progressive constitution of asymmetric and hierarchical relationships with the communities altered their cultural practices and diminished their autonomy (Vasco, 1975).

At the present time, the Embera are one of the most numerical indigenous peoples in the country, with approximately 93.000<sup>5</sup> individuals who, in spite of belonging to relatively differentiated groups, share social, cultural and historical features which identify them as an indigenous nation. The Embera live mainly in dispersed establishments in majority located in west Colombia, but as a result of their historical tendency to migrate and disperse (Vasco, 1985; 1990), they are in more than ten departments of the country (Losonczy, 2006). Among the Embera, it is possible to distinguish the *Dóbida*, or “river people,” who live close to rivers, the *Oibida* or forest inhabitants, and the *Eyadiba*, or mountain men (Losonczy, 2006; Ministry of Culture, 2010). Following a more widespread division at the moment, the Embera are divided into four groups with relatively identifiable differences in terms of dialect, culture and territory: the *Embera Chamí*, located in mountainous (i.e. coffee axis) regions; the *Embera Katío*, distributed in Chocó and in some high areas of national geography. Finally the *Dóbida* and *Eperara Siapidara* both with a smaller population and residents respectively in north of Chocó and south of the Pacific Coast (Ministry of Culture, 2010).

The Embera are characterized as farming groups that also practice hunting, fishing, and gathering (Vasco, 1975). They are an eminently endogamic people (Vasco, 1975; Losonczy, 2006), generally organized in nuclear families (Montoya, 2010), of patrilineal and patrilocal character. This means that descent is passed on by the man, and the postmarital residence belongs to him. Their traditional political organization does not comprise permanent nor centralized headquarters (Losonczy, 2006), although they presently assemble town councils (*resguardos*) and associations of town councils at a regional level. According to specialized literature (see Eliade, 2001), a central figure in their social organization is the *jaibaná*, the shaman of community. The *jaibaná*, or traditional doctor, is responsible for healing illnesses and mediating relation between the Embera and the *Jais*, or spirits (Vasco, 1985; 1990). We will look further into the role of the *Jaibaná* when we approach recent cultural transformations undergone by the

<sup>4</sup> Some of their members, from the year 2010, have been Sonia Gaitán, Eduardo Ramírez, Mónica Contreras, Pedro Marín, Diego Montero, Karol Vanegas, Marisol Pulido, Paula Caicedo and John Sabogal.

<sup>5</sup> Approximate quantity, from the data used by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia according to the official information emitted from the Census of 2005 by the Administrative National Department of Statistic.



Embera. About Embera's material culture, it is necessary to highlight the basketwork (Ulloa, 1992) made with vegetable fibers of the territory, the corporal painting with symbolic-ritual uses and the handmade fabric, which has played an important role as an economic option for displaced families living in urban centers (Cabrera et al., 2009; Montoya, 2010).

Recently, the Embera have arrived to big Colombian cities as a result of socio-political violence that has affected the country for more than 50 years: Embera people have migrated specially to search for security and better life conditions due to serious violations of their collective rights. Because of the State's lack of responsibility towards this community and to the dynamics of armed conflict, they have resorted to taking refuge in big cities of the country. According to Cabrera et al. (2009), it is possible to distinguish four aspects that motivate the recent displacements of Embera communities, but all these aspects are strongly bound to the State's historical abandonment. In the first place, the threats and pressures of armed groups that affect their cultural practices and autonomy; second, difficulties to satisfy basic needs, and as a consequence, alimentary insecurity; third, internal political conflicts; and finally, warlike confrontations among armed groups. If we keep in mind their historical tendency for dispersion (Vasco, 1985; 1990), these factors make the Embera's diaspora, as we call it, more complex.

#### STITCH BY STITCH WE'RE KNITTING THOUGHTS.

In 2010, before the inopportune arrival of hundreds of Embera families to the city of Bogotá, the Indigenous Subjectivities Group began its work, attempting to understand, from the accompaniment of community and from social research, the phenomenon of displacement, its collective implications and the emergent cultural devices of the urban context. Recapturing some elements of the action-research (Lewin, 2009), we attempted to articulate professional intervention and social research. Our aim was to motivate a horizontal dialogue with the community throughout the execution of social projects, framed in critical reflections on challenges of psychological accompaniment and with attention to cultural differences between the indigenous world and western tradition. The imperious necessity to transcend the logic of assistance led the Group to promote spaces of participation and invigoration of social and organizational fabric, searching for paths and new forms of community work by questioning the role of psychology as a discipline.

Exploring alternative methodologies to the canons of traditional psychology, bound to positivism and individualism (Bruner, 1991; Gergen, 2007, 2009), we outlined intercultural encounters with other indigenous groups of the city like *Pastos*, *Nasa*, and *Eperara Siapidara*. "Intercultural Soccer Championships" and encounters were executed, which were also negotiated with the leaders of these communities in a space that we denominated "Intercultural Table Range" (*Mesa-Fogón Intercultural*), in allusion to the bonfire, a traditional symbol of communion and a promoter of horizontal dialogues. These activities aimed to strengthen the organizational process of the Embera through dialogues with other communi-

ties in the city, in which they shared their accumulated knowledge, experiences and organizational processes. Throughout the work with the community, academic reflections from the field of psychology, and in particular from the perspective of socio-constructionism, progressively questioned the role of the psychological discipline in relation to the natives. These reflections are presented next to the beginning, with the psycho-philosophical approach of constructionism, the notion of reflexivity in relation to Indigenous People, after we will supplement the discussion from decolonial perspective and considering the challenges that these dynamics impose.

#### *Socio-Constructionism, Reflexivity and Indigenous People*

In the last decades, the postmodern philosophical current, founded by Lyotard (1992) and preceded by the "School of the suspicion"—Marx, Nietzsche and Freud (Ricoeur, 1990)—has expanded its reach to all the human sciences, finding in psychology and particularly, socio-constructionism, its biggest exponent (Gergen, 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 2011). This perspective questions positivism, individualism and traditional empiricism in psychology (Gergen, 2009). Its central thesis is that reality is not independent and foreshadowed; it is a socially and historically located construction:

The fundamental idea of social construction seems simple, but it is at the same time profound: everything we consider real has been socially constructed. Or, what is still more radical, nothing is real until people agree it is. (Gergen & Gergen, 2011, p. 13, free translation)

In the center of constructionist analysis, two vital aspects are considered: language and social relationships. Language—Gergen says (2007)—is the means by which we build our reality, which constitutes and conditions our life. In turn, relationships constitute, more than the individual's internal processes, the psychological phenomenon; micro-social interactions and cultural marks—understood as lattices of meanings (Bruner, 1991, 2003; Gergen, 1996)—build the human being. Criticizing the internal-external and individual-society dualisms, socio-constructionism emphasizes relationships and discursive elaborations in the making of reality. Language is not seen as a reflection or mirror of the world, but considered as its manufacturer (Gergen, 2009; Rorty, 1983). In addition, this critique passes to understand language in the use inside a pragmatic conception. As a result, this perspective questions objectivity and truth, as well as all modern fundamentalisms that ignore their own cultural and historical roots (Gergen, 2007).

Starting from the work experiences with the Embera community, we propose that the adoption of a constructionist psychological orientation in the accompaniment of indigenous peoples is an alternative to the historic subaltern condition of natives in the social level and inside psychology. In its critique to western basic principles, such as The Truth and The Objectivity, both modern speeches bound to

an Eurocentric and colonial logic (Castro-Gómez, 2005), constructionism opens the possibility of horizontal dialogues with indigenous communities, looking for collaborative constructions towards more democratic and diverse forms of life (Gergen, 2007, 2009). In the same way, constructionism's relational view does not admit an isolated understanding of the indigenous world. On contrary, indigenous identities are considered as social historical constructions that depend on creation of shared meanings (Gergen, 1996). This relational view on indigenous issues approaches to contemporary formulation of notion like *indigeneity* (*indigeneidad*) (Merlan, 2010). This last concept is understood as a relationship field where alterity and filiation are being constantly basted. Then, from the constructionist point of view is possible to say:

[...] indigenous cultural practices, institutions, and politics become indigenous articulated to what is not considered indigenous. In other words, the indigeneity condition is at the same time historically contingent to and bearer of the non-Indian condition. Therefore, it is never a 'solid reality.' (De la Cadena & Starr, 2010, p. 12; free translation)

Throughout our work experience with the Emberas, the adoption of this constructionist turn, and especially its relational view and self-criticism, unchained an inquiry on ourselves as researchers, since we participate in an indigenous and non-indigenous discursive and relational field. For this reason, reflexivity emerged as an investigative perspective in the sense that it allowed us to "gauge" our colonial condition and the possible reproduction of indigenous dependency. Reflexivity is focused on a strong critique to intellectualism, understood as a frank objectivism which obviates the researcher's relationship with the researched (in Ghasarian, 2002, in reference to Bourdieu). This perspective proposes a constant reflection on the determinations and constraints of the adopted theoretical posture, making an interpellation to the epistemological core that obviates theoretical limitations and fixes a contemplative view (Guber, 2001). In our experience, we adopted reflexivity, understanding it as a constant process of "return to ourselves" (Ghasarian, 2002), which departs from a critique on objectivity, enunciated by constructionism (Gergen, 2009), to a recurrent question on researcher's social, political and historical conditioning (Guber, 2001). According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (2005), the adoption of reflexivity is indispensable because researchers not only perform fieldwork, but rather they work *inside* the social field, understood as a space of forces, disputes and powers among fellows (Bourdieu, 2007). Without a doubt, psychologists inevitably participate in indigeneity as social field, and for that reason the relationships of power between indigenous and non-indigenous, professionals and community, should be constantly examined.

### *The Challenge of Subalternity and the Coloniality*

Following this reflexive proposal, it is necessary to point out the existence of a subaltern condition of indigenous inside western contemporary societies. This

dependency does not happen on fringe neither in a tangential way to the academy; on the contrary, the indigenous world has been marginalized in relation to euro-centrism of social sciences and psychology. Although perspectives such as constructionism are conscious and recognize different from Western forms of life (Gergen, 2006, 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 2011), indigenous people's subalternity is impossible to hide. The concept of subaltern, from postcolonial studies, allows the denouncement of the current situation of the indigenous communities and the perception of challenges of psychology in this field. Subaltern conditions are represented by social actors who are not listened to and are structurally silenced; as Spivak (2003) proposes, in the colonial and capitalist societies, it is not possible to see the silence of subordinate sectors as independent of the academy; on the contrary

The subaltern is so partly because **academic knowledge** cannot represent him correctly, since this knowledge is a practice that actively produces **subaltern conditions** (produces them in the same act of **representing** it). (Beverley, 2004, p. 23, added emphasis and free translation)

The subaltern condition is then a necessary "antithesis of the hegemony," because if subordinates could "speak" in the sense of constraining us to listen to them, they would challenge their subaltern condition (Beverley, 2004). In our disciplinary case, psychology have presumed and promoted universal models (of intelligence, personality, health, etc.) from a positivistic perspective, which ignores cultural contexts and history (Bruner, 1991; Gergen, 1996). These disciplinary elaborations operate under a western and euro-centric logic which labels non-western peoples as abnormal, under-developed, uncivilized, etc. For these reasons, making silent the indigenous peoples, has subordinated them into psychology, which is sustained by coloniality (Castro-Gómez, 2005) and has universalized one culture: the Western culture. The fundamental reason for the indigenous subaltern condition is the maintenance of *coloniality* and for this aspect we will approach to *decolonial* perspective, and so to aim possible difficulties and challenges of psychology in its work with indigenous people.

Departing from postcolonial studies with a relativist view on western knowledge, which provincialize Europe (Archila, 2005) and question their historical hegemony (Beverley, 2004), an alternative way of interpreting Latin American society arises in the beginning of XXI century: the Program of Investigation of modernity/coloniality (Escobar, 2003) or, in others words, the decolonial perspective<sup>6</sup>. This conception's central thesis is that colonial hegemony is constituent of modernity, in opposition to the orthodox vision that considers conquest and colonization of America as an event of beginning of modernity. On the contrary, the decolonial perspective intends that modernity and coloniality are mutually

<sup>6</sup> To find some academic articles and texts in English about decolonial perspective is recommendable to search in Decolonial Translation Group's website: <http://www.decolonialtranslation.com/english/>

dependent events (Castro-Gómez, 2005), introducing the subaltern indigenous world into the double category colonizer/colonized (Bonfil Batalla, 1972)<sup>7</sup>. The euro-centric myth of modernity (Dussel, 1995, mentioned in Castro-Gómez, 2005) which attributes it only to Europe's endogenous development and intellectual, economic, and political "superiority," is rejected in a vehement way by the decolonial perspective, adopting a planetary vision (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010), and recognizing that the colonial/modern hegemony constituted Latin America as the first global periphery (Escobar, 2003).

Decolonial perspective differentiates *colonialism*, as a territorial and economic expropriation of the Amerindian cities, from *coloniality*, the predominantly cultural dimension of the political-epistemic expropriation that condemns indigenous knowledge, subjects and cultural "outlying" systems, to the past of euro-centric modernity (Castro-Gómez, 2005). Coloniality has survived colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) and cannot be seen as an overcome phenomenon, since it continues shaping power relations among diverse ethnic actors (i.e. indigenous/non-indigenous). To understand these processes, decolonial perspective proposes three concepts which explain to a great extent indigenous subaltern condition and which are themselves challenges to psychology: *coloniality of power*, *coloniality of being* and *coloniality of knowledge*. The first concept refers to society's hierarchical structure and distribution of powers based on the "superiority of races," justifying subaltern conditions through supposedly objective biological inferiorities (Quijano, 2000; Restrepo, 2012). The *coloniality of being* is understood as the impossibility of forming a subject outside the Eurocentric and western canons (Castro-Gómez, 2005), inducing people to ignore, delegitimize or discriminate indigenous and afro-descendants (Walsh, 2006a). This notion has, to a certain point, been legitimated by positivist and individualist psychology (Gergen, 2009), because it universalizes western way of life as a norm and a psychological parameter for all other civilizations. Finally, the *coloniality of knowledge* refers to the exclusion of non-western knowledge (Castro-Gómez, 2005). It delegitimizes forms of knowledge that do not follow precepts of "rationality" established in modernity.

The theoretical elements presented above allow us to open debate on the role of psychology in contemporary indigenous issues. The reflexive critic and the epistemic, ethical, and cultural mismatch required by psychology in its work with indigenous is a challenge for the discipline not only in terms of dialogue with other human sciences; it demands above all that we recognize the indigenous voice, avoiding representing it in the sense of speaking *for* them (Beverley, 2004), because this action would reproduce coloniality, and on the contrary we must propose generative dialogues that allow intercultural relationships.

## CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS: THE EMBERA LIFE AND TERRITORY IN MOVEMENT

We have briefly exposed our experience of psychosocial accompaniment of an Embera community of Bogotá, making a theoretical claim for constructionism as a suitable psychological perspective and introducing the debate on reflexivity, the subaltern condition, and coloniality. These reflections aroused also from the three years spent with this community in a continuous process of action, academic reflection, and social research, which mutually contributed to the understanding of some aspects of the Embera's displacement to the city. We will now attempt to sketch some cultural transformations of the Embera in their Diaspora to the city, conceptualizing the dynamics of cultural change, beginning from the dialectical fusion/friction between the indigenous and western world. Later, we will formulate the question for the urban as scenario of territoriality; we attempt to use the concept of *existential territory* (Pinzón, Garay, & Suárez, 2003) in a bid to understand some of these transformations. Finally, we will consider *Jaibanismo* and the political organization of the Embera as two particular dimensions where the conceptualized notions are evidenced.

### Embera Paradoxes: Cultural Fusion and Friction

The analyzed constructionist turn centralizes the concept of culture as the motor of the psychological phenomenon (Bruner, 2003, 2012; Gergen, 2007). This revitalization of cultural constructions in psychology allows us to understand some transformations of indigenous communities in urban contexts. Understanding culture beyond a conglomerate of customs, traditions, and shared institutions, alternative psychological perspectives conceptualize it as a symbolic system built by meanings which give sense to our lives (Bruner, 1991; Gergen, 2007). These meanings are elaborations of a linguistic type (Bruner, 2003; Gergen, 2009), relationally guided interpretation marks, through which we live in community. In criticizing the idea that reality is entirely comprised in the mind of a decontextualized subject, this conceptualization counteracts the individualistic tradition of psychology (Bruner, 2012; Gergen, 2007).

On the other hand, the notion of culture makes reference to social aspect constituted but also to dynamics possible to be create, because culture "is not only guided for canonical aspects, but to the dialectical among its norms and what humanly possible" (Bruner, 2003, p. 33, free translation). To explore cultural transformations through psychology is in fact to interpret the metamorphoses in meanings people and collectives attribute to the world. The arrival of indigenous communities to a plural and chaotic new context, the urban one (Delgado, 2007), is a complex process permeated by the logic of coloniality, characteristic of places where the western world is imposed as the only truth (Escobar, 2003; Restrepo & Rojas, 2010). The cultural transformations that alter their traditional forms of

<sup>7</sup> It is worthwhile to remember that Spaniards believed to have arrived in India, for this reason they called Indian or indigenous America's people.

life should be considered inside the dialectics between the fusion and friction of languages, practices and meanings (Briones, 2010).

In these dynamic cultural transformations, that fuse and divide indigenous and non-indigenous forms of signifying the world, indigenous communities develop strategies of family protection and economic maintenance where traditional and modern elements are mixed (Tambianh, 1989, mentioned in Cabrera et al., 2009). In a continuous tension between the amalgam and the rupture of meanings, paradoxical hybridizations emerge, where sociocultural "processes [...] that existed in separate form [...] combine to generate new structures, objects and practices" (García Canclini, 2001, free translation). This point of view guarantees that psychological, social and cultural processes cannot be considered in dual crystallized categories, but inside interchangeable flows where the contradictory cohabits. A particular example registered in the case of the Embera community is the *hybridization* between the traditional and the western handmade designs. As expert weavers, it is significant to find among their craftwork bracelet or handmade accessories with shields of Colombian soccer teams or other urban-western symbols. At the same time, it is possible to find fusions between jaibanismo and western medicine (Gaitán, 2010), which will be object of posterior analysis.

These cultural transformations are framed in power relations that evidence the contradictory sense of the mixtures (García Canclini, 2001), in a dynamics of constant friction/fusion (Briones, 2010) which can be inside coloniality (of power, of being, and of knowledge) taking asymmetric forms, or these mixtures can be inside intercultural and generative dialogues. Examples of these last generative fusions are some relationships between the Embera people and other indigenous communities of the city, where medical knowledge (i.e. with Amazonian shamans) is exchanged, in spontaneous intercultural dynamics that emerge from horizontal dialogue. In the other side, the complex and contradictory character of these transformations can transform it equally to coloniality exercises which privilege western logic against the traditional world. This complexity can be noticed in Emberas who stop speaking their language, start dressing in a western way, and using sophisticated electronic apparatuses, phenomena that imply the advent of border subjectivities between the indigenous and non-indigenous way of life.

#### *Diaspora and the city: the Embera Existential Territory*

The particularity of the Colombian context, where the armed conflict is the fundamental cause of the arrival of indigenous communities to city, makes it difficult to abstract and generalize the phenomena analyzed above. In the case of the migration processes and displacement of the Embera, it is possible to identify three historical "waves" or moments of their Diaspora to the cities (Cabrera et al., 2009). The first began in the 1970s, with the progressive discoveries of gold mines and the respective arrival of merchants and mestizo miners. Between the 1980s and 1990s, the second wave took place with the incursion of armed groups who began to dispute territorial domain of the Pacific coast. Finally, the third

wave of displacements happened in the beginning of the XXI century with the worsening of confrontations, threats and other violent actions against the indigenous communities. These phenomena evidence that the Embera's displacement to the cities is bound to territorial disputes that result in the communities' search for protection in new lands. These conflicts have inevitably produced the exhaustion of these areas and the city has become the last option of refuge. In addition to the dynamics of armed conflict, the Embera's migration to urban context is also associated to their historical dispersion and constant mobility (Vasco, 1985, 1990; Losonczy, 2006), and for this reason category *diaspora* allows us to understand their geographical and cultural mobility.

Conceptually, diaspora implies mobility and permanency in a territory, not only in a physical sense, but culturally and psychologically dimension; it indicates the indigenous' (dis)connection with their native territory and the corresponding nostalgia for it, but at the same time it involves cultural opening and constant travel (at multiple levels: cultural, social, psychological, etc.), in a round trip between the indigenous and the urban-western logic (Clifford, 2010). These periods of permanence in urban locations are spent in diasporic residences, where both exile and complete assimilation are avoided (Clifford, 2010). In an oscillation between the native territory and the city, the urban and Embera traditions conform a partner-space: "a social-spatial reality of connection inside dispersion [...] [that] presupposes a distance in relation to the place of origin as well as a postponed return" (Clifford, 2010, p. 226). Such dynamics have been evidenced in our work with the Embera community: we observed one-week trips to their original territory due to social events such as marriages, and also longer stays, when the return to the city is postponed in order to work in the area of origin. These constitute migratory, sporadic, momentary and semi-unpredictable movements involve unquestionable transformations in the meaning of the territory and the peculiar form of living in the urban context.

The cultural changes that mark Embera's territorial and cultural diaspora emerge in a new scenario: the urban context. It is of vital importance to thoroughly consider this phenomenon. The "urbanization" of indigenous communities (Yanes, 2004) comprises relocations, to make city as territory, but one social space where traditional forms of communal life are confronted by the logic of the urban context. It means, a territory in which exists proliferation of precarious, superfluous and chaotic relations (Delgado, 1999). Contrary to the fraternal and warm communal context associated to the rural area, in the urban reality the norm is plurality and heterogeneity; superficial, segmental and impersonal relationships (Delgado, 2007). The indigenous' logic of communal relationships is faced with the urban dynamics, an entropic energy, full of mobility, with a precarious equilibrium of social relationships and a constant disintegration of social ties and bonds

(Delgado, 1999). However, inside the urban logic, where a courteous inattention<sup>8</sup> is the rule, the ethnic mark that relapses on indigenous communities as the Embera people implies a constant alterity and differentiation, a permanent question for the one who presumably is not "normal" (Delgado, 2007), due to an exotic way of being and thinking. Because indigenous people are considered nearer to nature than to culture (Delgado, 2007), they are always compelled to explain why they speak, eat, dress and think in a certain way: they live the constant indigenous alterity in the urban context.

Under this lattice of urban tensions and power relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people, where colonial and intercultural fusion/friction dynamics take place, several disciplinary questions emerge: Can psychology say anything about indigenous' cultural transformations? Which implications of diaspora are of subjective character? A form of understanding them from a relational perspective in psychology is to ask how the cultural processes are related with the personal dimension. With this in mind, we explored the notion of existential territory (*Territorio existencial*) (Pinzón, Garay & Suárez, 2003). First, we understand territory as a culturally built space, a symbolic elaboration in which the collective means the place where inhabits (Karadimas, 2008), considering that subjects are constituted in this geo-cultural lattice, and they adapt and make body their territory (Pinzón, Garay, & Suárez, 2003). The territorial impromptus and new urban relocations of the indigenous communities always include emotional, cultural, symbolic and material processes that compose personal identity and induce language and relationship reconstructions. Concretely, we understand the existential territory as the symbolic space where subjects adapt to and embody their territory, so subjects give life of practices and languages from their cultural area; in other words, it is the biographical construction of the space where subjects inhabit (Pinzón, Garay, & Suárez, 2003).

In the Embera's diaspora, characterized by the connection in dispersion (Clifford, 2010), subjects take part in their territoriality, as a relatively indelible print incorporated in their body (Gaitán, 2010). The subjective meanings built *in* and *about* territories bear personal correlates coming from relationships and discourses (Gergen, 2007, 2009). In the case of the Embera community, two eloquent examples can be considered. In the first place, the resistance of many Embera women to use footwear in the city is a practice which allows us to approach their existential territory (Gaitán, 2010). It derives from a collective memory of walking barefoot that has survived the changes imposed by the city's asphalt. As a subjectively adapted cultural outline, the Embera's existential territory endures and transforms at the same time, it is a flow where the native territory and the urban context are fused and confronted. At the same time, the "emberization" of certain urban areas, where communities re-signify streets, squares and parks

<sup>8</sup> Term, coined by Erving Goffman (mentioned in Delgado, 2007) to characterize a form of sociability in public urban spaces, where fellows remain strange to one another, avoiding interaction (i.e. to look at each other assiduously) and ignoring "kindly" the other person.

construct in their encounters, experiences and knowledge, we consider that this is a form of re-constructing indigenous existential territory in city. As a part of these practices, the Embera have found places to develop sports activities such as the soccer game, configuring scenarios of community encounter, reconstructing social relations, and "emberizing" the urban context<sup>9</sup>.

### *Jaibanism and the Embera Political Organization in the City*

Since the theoretical elements presented above, we will explore two cultural spheres of the Embera community in Bogotá. In the first place, we will sketch some elements of *jaibanismo*, or traditional medicine system, exploring possible transformations and new dynamics in the urban context. We will propose some reflections about the Embera community's organizational process, which is permeated by dynamics of power and coloniality. As has been mentioned, the *jaibaná* is the traditional Embera doctor; he is specialized in the domain of the *Jais*, whom we can consider as the spirits or essences of all things in the world (Vasco, 1985). After extensive years of learning with *jaibaná* teachers, or in encounters with shamans from other indigenous communities, the *jaibaná* looks for the domain of bad and the good *Jais*, with the purpose of being able to cure and to make sick (Vasco, 1985). Given that shamanic learning selects multiples knowledge in several places, the journey in search of understanding is considered a source of prestige and power for the *jaibaná* (Losonczy, 2006). Their knowledge is practiced in the "jai song" (*Cantar jai*), a curing ritual where *jaibaná* attempts to extract the bad *jai* out of the sick person's body and, in certain occasions, to identify who performed the evil. This ritual begins in the night and extends until dawn, and during its course the shaman sings repetitive songs in an altered state of conscience, generally associated to the ingestion of some psychoactive substance<sup>10</sup>. They also wear a ceremonial adornment for the task (cane, bank, biao or banana leaves, wooden anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures) (Vasco, 1985, 1990).

Some urban transformations of *jaibanismo* are associated to its coalition with western medicine, for example in some case *jaibanás* pray pharmaceutical medications (Gaitán, 2010). This is fusion of cultural framework and different medical traditions where *jaibanás* re-signify their ritual practices and their role inside the community's health. The presence of the *jaibanás* in Bogotá leads them to find new *Jais* in this territory, since according to their vision, the hills which surround city contain powerful *Jais* and traditional doctors look to possess and control

<sup>9</sup> In these sport games hybridization processes are equally visible: the Embera people use uniforms of western teams, most foreigners (Brazil, Barcelona, Chelsea, etc.), but their teams have many times names in Embera. For example, one of the teams was call Do Kabú (Pure River) and their uniform was a European team one, a genuine fusion and friction which involves both indigenous and western symbols.

<sup>10</sup> Formerly the *jaibanás* used "chicha" (fermented drink of corn), although at the present time, especially in the city, liquor is used or another alcoholic western drink, which reflects in some measure hybridization processes in course.

these spirits. Another paradigmatic example is the experience of a young *jaibaná* who ingresses in nursing school in a university of the city, a process of fusion and friction of traditional and western experiences and knowledge. In conclusion, urban context transforms in a paradoxical and contradictory way the shamanic exploration, at the same time this new context is a scenario for transformations—many times in a colonial manner—of traditional practices.

In continuity with the elements examined above, *jaibanismo* is involved with organizational and political processes of the community, and, in spite of its role, was formerly more appreciated and important (Vasco, 1985). The Embera people in Bogotá share a form of political and community organization related with the presence of a *jaibaná*, a figure of knowledge and protection. One of the most evident transformations in the organizational sphere is the generational shift of the leaders, because at the moment younger people with good skills in Spanish and knowledge in managing institutions are chosen to represent the community (Cabrera et al., 2009; Gaitán, 2010). In a certain way, this fact reflects colonial dynamics, since western systems are imposed to internal organization processes. Because many families are currently living in temporary lodgings adapted by the State,—acquired in part due to the pressure of the Embera leaders and communities—their organizational process is framed in complex power relations, marked many times by an ethnocentric logic which diminishes the autonomy of community. In particular, some limiting conditions to Embera's organizational processes are limited consultations to leaders by State institutions, hierarchical relationships between the State representatives and the community, restrictions on the *jaibaná's* rituals and quotidian prohibitions about entrance or exit from lodgings. The absence of horizontal dialogues, reflected in the imposition of western outlines (respect feeding, education, health, etc.), mark colonial relationships between the political organization of the Embera and the institutional state actors.

### INTERCULTURALITY AS AN ETHICAL-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Throughout the text we have proposed some theoretical reflections on the role of psychology in the indigenous context. We signaled contributions of constructionism as a work perspective, arguing in favor of reflexivity (Guber, 2001) as an endeavor to transcend psychological introspection and self-centered narration (Ghasarian, 2002) and critically transform possible ethno-centered outlines and colonial suggestion of psychological interventions. Later, we exposed the decolonial perspective to argue how coloniality, considered as the imposition of euro-centric outlines of thinking, living, and being, ignores the indigenous particularities (Castro-Gómez, 2005), produces subaltern conditions in communities when it obviates their voice, and proposes vertical relationships in an attempt to civilize presumably “late” communities or integrate them to the modern discourse of progress and development (Vieco, 2010). Finally, we examined some cultural transformations soon after the indigenous diaspora to urban context, intending that this processes happen in continuous dynamics of fusion and cultural friction

(Briones, 2010), where indigenous people re-signify territories, incorporate such significances at a personal level—existential territory—and move in a fluctuating and contradictory way between the indigenous and western world.

Motivated to propose alternative forms of exercising psychology with indigenous communities, we propose, concluding these reflections and opening new discussions, as necessary to assume *interculturality* as an ethical and political perspective for a generative dialogue—following as we will see to Gergen (2007)—with indigenous people. In harmony with decolonial turn, interculturality has been proposed as a suggestion against hegemony to think a new society from difference, criticizing colonial legacy (Walsh, 2006b) and contributing ethical and political elements to construct relations in multicultural societies. Interculturality should be understood as a different construction, as “different ways of thinking and acting in relation to and against modernity/coloniality, it is a paradigm thought across political praxis” (Walsh, 2006b, p. 21, free translation). This ethical-political option for relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people is reflexive to *multiculturalism* and critical towards *multiculturalism*, in which cultural differences are recognized but an interrelation is not proposed (Raesfeld, 2008). On the contrary, multiculturalist conception of inclusion is guided towards capitalism (Walsh, 2011). As an adjective, the multicultural notion makes reference to societies with great cultural diversity (Hall, mentioned in Restrepo, 2012); but multiculturalism is the group of policies, discourses and ways of relation chosen by culturally diverse societies. And we emphasize, these multiculturalist discourse generally are guided to “incorporate,” “deny” or “erase” differences (Restrepo, 2012); that is to say, it is a perspective founded on coloniality. On the contrary, interculturality should be considered as the horizontal *dialogue of knowledge*, as “establishment of bonds between different cultural groups based on mutual respect” (Raesfeld, 2008, p. 180, free translation).

As a relationship perspective, from which psychology should be thought in its work with ethnic and indigenous people, interculturality is based on the construction of *generativity dialogues*, understanding generativity as “skills to challenge hegemonic thought in culture, posing fundamental questions about contemporary social life [and searching for] new ways of social action” (Gergen, 2007, p. 62, free translation). Constructing intercultural relationships between psychology and indigenous people is an alternative to coloniality, an option “to construct from people and as request facing subaltern condition” (Walsh, 2011, p. 102, free translation). The recognition of reality as a construction built by subjects in relation (Gergen, 2007) is an invitation to establish generative dialogues of knowledge, action and experiences. It is a challenge which shakes psychology to de-center its western and traditional Eurocentric logic and to propose intercultural relationships that nurture its work with indigenous communities.



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The concept of political representation has a long history, but it is not until the modern times that representative democracies and political representation emerge and consolidate as strong institutions. Currently, the concept is associated with the idea and conduct of democracy, which is why it is not casual that in its analysis it is related with other concepts that refer to practices, procedures, and political institutions.

This turns it precisely into a multidimensional and relational concept<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, political representation is here considered as *performance* and therefore as *responsiveness* of the representative towards the ones they represent.

The diversification, pluralization, and complexity of contemporary democratic societies have introduced serious problems of political and more precisely institutional and organizational nature within these societies. One of them is specifically political representation. The magnitude of the problems in this matter is such that some authors talk about the crisis of political representation (Abal, 2004; Chueca, 2004; Gargarella, 1997), manifested in an evident political and ideological detachment between representatives and the ones they represent. However, even though many specialists in the field agree on the crisis of political representation, it is important to point out certain matters.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge what a liberal or representative democracy actually is, identifying its boundaries and outreach. Representative democracy adopts the principle that each individual is recognized as a universal citizen, and in that sense no one can make any distinction -being it linguistic, ethnic, religious, cultural, of gender, or class- in respect to their political and social rights. All this, taken to a governmental foreground and considering political representation, entails the implementation of actions decided by the majority according to their own political preferences, but it also implies the commitment to respect the existence of minorities and their preferences.

Secondly, it is also important to acknowledge the structure and organization of societies in which this type of democracy developed. Such societies were generally conceived as structurally and organizationally homogeneous, since they were inserted within the State-Nation dichotomy. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of contemporary societies is commonly acknowledged; not only political, but also cultural and social pluralisms are visible. Also, heterogeneity itself implies the existence of groups with cultural, ethnic, and linguistic characteristics of their own, defined not only by the number of people who belong to them but fundamentally by their distance in relation to political power: such groups are cultural, ethnic or linguistic minorities. In relation to the government and political representation within the State, cultural pluralism implies a positive acknowledgement of differentiated political and social rights, which become compensatory for these minority groups in respect to the social, political and cultural status of the majority.

These two issues, the normative principles of representative democracy and the existence of diverse pluralisms within contemporary societies, produce a tension on a normative, institutional, and organizational scale. Therefore, the ques-

tion is precisely how to accommodate together the individual's universal citizenship along with the existing cultural and social pluralism. In this respect I affirm that diversity and difference would require, as a political and logical consequence, a differentiated political treatment, with the aim of compensating and reverting social, economic, and political inequalities that are in many cases dreadful.

Based on all these elements it can be said that more than a political representation crisis -an idea that alludes to a malfunction of the political and institutional elements of representative democracy through a model of structurally homogeneous societies- what happens is a divergence between the normative model of democracy, with its principles, and the current social, political, and cultural reality. This does not involve the need of a revision of the model or one pertaining to the basic principles of democracy, since these principles continue as universally valid. What is intended is the political, institutional and organizational articulation of such principles, taking into account the reality of cultural pluralism. All of which belongs to a scheme of democratic perspective.

Specifically, regarding political representation of indigenous minorities, the problem resides, in normative and discursive terms, in political representatives' attachment to the democratic principle of universal citizenship<sup>2</sup>, and consequently in their omission towards the cultural differences that are an inherent part of the members of current societies. In other words, they neglect the ones they represent.

Paradoxically and in violation of the principle of universal citizenship, what is observed in terms of the existing political representation is a functional representation which responds mainly to the preferences of the so called interest groups (Espinoza, 2004), or to the particular interests of political parties with parliamentary representation (Béjar, 2006a). It goes without saying that indigenous minorities are, based on their *statu quo*, politically defenseless groups due to the lack of a substantive political representation in the government and in the places where decisions and deliberations are made. This translates into the absence of public policy which collects interests and the lack of implementation of compensatory measures designed to promote the universal citizenship that have the other members of the same society.

In the present analysis it is argued that, besides its evident relation to the political institutions of democracy, this matter is also associated to the political culture in society and the political subjectivity of its members. This is how the theoretical framework is presented next, as well as the most frequent approaches in the study of political representation. The ones particularly presented here enable an integral study of indigenous minority groups, considering political culture and political subjectivity.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND APPROACHES

Several theoretical approaches can be found in the specialized literature which relate to the institutional, subjective, and cultural factors in respect to the political representation. They will be analyzed next.

### *Political Representation—Theoretical-Conceptual Framework*

At present, a vast literature alludes to the notion of political representation and its meaning within the context of liberal democracies. In spite of the relational and multidimensional nature of this concept, a univocal definition can be found: neither the government nor the production of legislation and public policies is in the hands of the people, or better yet of the citizens, but of governing leaders and legislators, authorized by the same citizens. For this reason it is convenient to point out the distinction which Pitkin (1985) makes between the two fundamental dimensions of political representation. The author distinguishes between a descriptive representation and a substantive one. The first one refers to whom and what should represent, which implies for example the institutional design of legislatures. When the basic requirements of democratic elections are met, in other words, when they are free, competitive, and regular, delegation or authorization and accountability arise, and with them representation. On the other hand substantive representation alludes to what it is precisely that makes it representative, in light of representation being also an activity, that is, a performance of the representative. This is where the controversy between mandate and independence emerges. For Pitkin, the contradictions derived from such controversy are resolved if it is assumed that representation means to act upon the interests of the represented, but in a responsive and sensible way. However, in this perspective, it is not clear why representatives should behave in this manner, since the only binding element between representatives and the individuals they represent is the electoral process. In this way, descriptive representation could be seen as a specular process, for instance a College of Professionals that reflects the characteristics of the members they represent, like the College of Teachers, Psychologists, etc. Here the representation is equal to the identification and relation between the representatives and those who they represent. In contrast, representation can also be judged considering the results and not the arrangement of the College. What is crucial here is that the decisions of the deliberative body are effective, meaningful, and substantial to the social groups they are directed at (Reynoso, 2004, p. 48).

In liberal democracies there is always a political distance between representatives and the ones they represent concerning political duty. Such distance overtakes the limits of the performance of bureaucratic-administrative entities, where citizens can participate in the development and implementation of diverse government programs and even in some public policies, to allude to one of the central matters in the government's duty: the political decision making.

For this reason, institutional mechanisms have been built to assure a greater political binding between the one who delegates authority and the one who exercises it. These concepts are basically derived from the notions of mandate, accountability and responsiveness.

This way, Przeworsky (1998) and Manin, Przeworsky, and Stokes (1999) distinguish two main models relating representation and democracy and particularly with elections: a) representation as a mandate, and b) representation as responsibility, control, and accountability. Representation as a mandate consists in the citizens' election, in electoral campaigns, of a political proposal (as well as of the consequences derived for the lives of the people) and of the politicians who will be in charge of their implementation. In short, the winner platform is the mandate that the government and legislators must obey.

Nonetheless, besides the conditions which should be observed, like the coincidence of interests between representatives and the individuals they represent, politicians have incentives to deviate from the mandate in order to pursue the benefit of the public, or to keep loyal to that purpose even if the voters have to pay a high price for it. Since political circumstances change over time, the issue is if the mandate really means the performance of the government and legislators in compliance with the interests of the voters. Perhaps for this reason, there is no democratic system where the politician is legally obliged to limit himself to his electoral platform (Manin, 1997). On the other hand Stokes (2001) studied mandate violation in Latin American democracies and concluded even though such violation is not incoherent with the built representation, it does constitute an indicator of the quality of democracies.

Representation as responsibility and control conveys the idea that citizens can induce rulers and representatives accountable for their actions, with the intention of penalizing them in the case they are not acting on behalf of people's interests or re-electing them if they did their pertinent duty. Nevertheless, responsibility alone does not guarantee that the representatives will act in the benefit of the citizens. For this reason it is necessary to consider once again the notion of responsiveness. Again, the question emerges as to how representatives can be made to act in favor of the public interests. In answer to this, Przeworsky (2001) refers two types of mechanisms: forecast and retrospection. In the first one, elections define the mandate for the government and their representatives, since the forecast vote has the purpose of choosing the best representatives and the best policies. On the other hand, in the retrospective mechanism, elections are also there for the purpose of making governments and their representatives responsible for their past actions, this way citizens can push them to be responsive. It goes without saying that this mechanism is only possible where there is a re-election of the representatives.

The present political science, which incorporates the new institutionalism under the point of view of the agent-principal model<sup>3</sup>, intended to build political representation in a precise manner through the delegation processes and accountability. In this model, which implies a hierarchical and asymmetric relation between the parts, the aim is to create institutions that motivate the agent (rulers, representatives or politicians) to act in favor the interests of the principal (the ones governed, represented, or the citizens). It is mainly for this reason that account-

ability mechanisms are designed, introducing positive and negative incentives for the agent, as well as the possibility of citizens to monitor their performance.

According to O'Donnell (2000), accountability has two dimensions: a horizontal and a vertical one. The first one consists of the supervision and inspection by autonomous state entities of the performance of other state agencies, in other words, the various levels of government are accountable to each other; although this dimension in itself does not create responsibility.

For its part, the vertical accountability is a complement of the first as it involves monitoring and control between parties that are not equal. This dimension divides itself in two types: electoral vertical accountability, in which the elections are a mechanism to induce the responsibility of the government and representatives, and vertical social, related to the critics the media and society make to the government. The vertical mechanism may contribute to processes of horizontal accountability manifest.

In a conceptual-theoretical sense, the notion of political representation has undergone a deeper elaboration<sup>4</sup>, rooted in the concatenation with democratic, politic, and legal aspects (Accarino, 2003; Dusso, 2004; Mansbridge, 2003; Martí, 2006; Peruzzotti, 2004; Presno, 2004; Rauber, 2003; Rodríguez, 1996). Luna (2007) suggests a possible research agenda for Latin America and lays out a diagnosis in regard to the studies of political representation, concluding that the limitations are: a) the emphasis almost uniquely to a national level; b) the predominant use of compared cross-national indicators or case studies with N-small; c) the application of a synchronic temporal perspective, in addition the use of theoretical frameworks that favor formal institutions over informal ones and socio-structural factors which also have an impact on them.

Urbainati and Warren (2008) state that the studies related to political representation are being led mainly by a) a political outlook in which electoral representation competes with new types of informal representation; b) the interest in the justice of electoral representation, mainly towards minorities and women; c) a renewed emphasis on the political trials within the democratic theory and d) a new evaluation showing that participation and representation are complementary forms of citizenship. The existing bond between political representation and democratic deliberation is an issue which takes special importance in these studies (Elster, 2001).

The democratic political representation is simply unthinkable without a deliberation at the same time. Therefore, beyond a normative perspective, Béjar (2006b) concludes, after showing the contributions of deliberation as well as the discipline towards the construction of a democratic parliamentary representation, that between those two dimensions there should be a complementarity relation.

Political representation pretends to establish a tight link between representatives and the ones they represent. To citizens, however, perspectives are limited, in the sense that representation wears out throughout the process of authorization and delegation of authority that takes place in democratic elections. But in respect

to the leaders and representatives, and in spite of the institutional mechanisms already described, there are no clear political criteria as to why public interests should be defended; it is a vague interpretation that is resolved according to political circumstances (Rocha, 2005a).

Once again the need to focus the analysis on the issue of substantive political representation from the point of view of responsiveness arises. The English term *responsiveness* is generally understood under the meaning of sensitivity, but other authors like Morlino (2007) use the notion of *reciprocity*. For this author reciprocity is the ability to meet the interests of the governed when executing the policies which respond to their demands (2007, p. 39) and it is at the same time one of the five dimensions<sup>5</sup> that should be considered to empirically tackle the quality of democracies. On the other hand, for this same author, the best way to measure reciprocity is to examine the government's legitimacy, as it relates to the presence of attitudes and behaviors that confirm the satisfaction with the existing democracy.

These arguments lead up directly to the sense of performance considered in the present essay in respect to the political representation. Although there is no great development in this point particularly, it is indeed necessary to mention Eulan and Karp (1977), who have showed that reciprocity allows observing political representation as a course of action.

These same authors specify that from this point of view reciprocity includes four components: the public policies put in the center of political processes, the services which are guaranteed to individuals and groups by the government, the distribution of properties and tangible goods to voters, and the extension of symbolic goods to obtain loyalty and support for the government.

In relation to Mexico, Rocha (2012) argues that after the democratic transition occurred in the country, what is now present is a type of political interregnum where nothing substantial happens to consolidate democracy. Giménez-Welsh (2006) makes an institutional and procedural analysis of the democratic transition with the aim to uncover what has really happened in the country in regard to the representative and deliberative democracy, concluding by stating that it is the result of the decision and interaction of the political elites within political, economic and social contexts (2006, p. 93).

#### *Substantive Political Representation, Cultural Pluralism, and Indigenous Minorities*

Studies on the existing relation between these variables are practically inexistent. There are, of course, normative and theoretical considerations about democracy and multiculturalism (Ibarra, 2005; Kymlicka, 2003; Kymlicka & Straehle, 2001; Salcedo, 2007; Zapata-Barrero, 2001). Firstly it is necessary to place the normative, institutional, and organizational problem which has been described, in respect to the acknowledgement of a universal citizenship and the contrasting generation of differentiated rights in a positive way to compensate and revert inequalities of diverse nature. In regard to the normative dimension, Requejo

(2004), after critically looking over what is nowadays meant by the notion of democratic citizenship in culturally plural contexts, points out that it is fundamental to regulate a *liberal politics of acknowledgement* of cultural realities in a way that it becomes part of the principles, institutions, and rules of collective decision in liberal democracies (2004, pp. 215–216). This cultural pluralism must however be assumed in the public sphere, as a value to protected and not taken for granted (2004, p. 209).

This same idea is assumed by Kymlicka (1996). He states that cultural minority groups should be included in the deliberation processes and decision-making regarding the policies which affect them, with the aim to compensate social differences. However, there are people who believe that this shouldn't be done, as it could contribute to further extend the division between groups and impede a greater social and political integration. Such is the case of Sartori (2001). With all it covers, cultural pluralism is a reality and therefore authors such as Hechter and Okamoto (2001) have already studied the political consequences of the collective action of minority groups, noting that its emergence is due to the formation of social identities that are themselves distinctive, own to overcome the free-rider behavior through group cooperation, and the development of institutional structures that promote demands for greater autonomy of such groups.

Specifically regarding political representation, Kymlicka (1996, p. 195), goes a step further the suggestions he himself makes for the descriptive representation, and states that the challenge is that of empathy: it is necessary to create a political culture in which people are able and willing to put themselves in the place of others, as well as to really understand and therefore to represent their needs and interests. This outlook on empathy comes really close to Pitkin's notion (1985) of sensitivity and again it leads our attention to the substantive representation as reciprocity in the performance of the representatives.

In addition to the classic authors and texts on indigenous matters, a number of studies on native Indians, in the framework of the so called *indigenous emergency* in Latin America (Bengoa, 2007), have fortunately been conducted in Mexico in different disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, and even in multidisciplinary approaches (Carrillo, 2006; Montemayor, 2008; Serna, 2001; Warman, 2003). Constitutional and legal matters concerning specifically minorities' human rights have recently been analyzed, in the framework of the so-called multicultural citizenship (Caamaño, 2004; Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, CDI, 2007; Stavenhagen, 2000). In fact, an issue of great importance is the political and legal autonomy of indigenous people in the framework of their insertion in a determined state (López Bárcenas, 2005), as is the case of Mexico, assumes a national identity (Béjar & Rosales, 2002). In Latin America, a description of the government experiences within and from cultural diversity has been made by Leyva, Burguete, and Speed (2008).

Regarding the political representation of indigenous minorities in Latin America, Waldman (2004) adds the problem of democratic deficit in the region, a prob-

lem of insufficient political representation of such minorities. The same author indicates that it is necessary to build a new relationship between the state and minorities; the Indian's demands for a multiethnic and multicultural society question not only their own state of marginalization, but also the social, political, and cultural relations ruling in Latin American societies (2004, p. 211).

Regarding Mexico, Singer (2004) analyses political representation facing the demands of constitutional acknowledgement of indigenous rights that where strongly inspired by the uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, on the first of January, 1994, and she states that, in the present state of exclusion of minority groups and in the framework of the construction of democracy in the country, the challenge is precisely the institutionalization of respect and acknowledgement of the cultural identity and rights of these groups (2004, p. 229).

#### *Institutions and Substantive Political Representation of Diversity*

Studies on political institutions have been carried out in a copious manner since the so-called new institutionalism from rational choice theory (Knight, 1992; Peters, 2003; Shepsle, 1999; Tsebelis, 1990), and from historical neoinstitutionalism (Hall & Taylor, 1998; Peters, Pierre, & King, 2005; Rosheim, 1996). According to Tsebelis (1990, p. 96), institutions are defined as "the formal rules of political or social games and therefore as constraints operating on individual or political actors. Each actor will try to maximize his objectives while remaining inside the institutional constraints." In this viewpoint the idea of institutional conflict is assumed, summarized by Knight (1992, p. 19) in this way: "Rather than conceiving of social institutions as the product of efforts to constrain social actors as a collectivity, social institutions are conceived of as a product of the efforts of some to constrain the actions of others with whom they interact."

Brennan and Hamlin (1999) offer an alternative interpretation in respect to the representation susceptible of operating in an enriched motivational framework emphasizing considerations of expressive type -in the sense that what makes an actor or assembly representative is the exhibition of a particular competence and virtue- over the instrumental type. Moreover, this interpretation is able to reconnect the political theory of rational actor with many of the concerns of traditional political theory.

Equally, Goodin (2004) argues about the need to represent diversity, stating that specular representation, or the "politics of presence," anticipates relatively lower levels of diversity among those who are being represented, but if the represented groups are numerous, or highly heterogeneous, "or too cross-cutting," a large number of representatives will also be required. Nevertheless, not all distinctive features inherent to diversity must be represented, but rather the fact itself of the existing diversity, in other words, only the genuinely important situations for society, in the framework of public policy. To this author, this last idea should be conceptualized as "the simple fact of there being diversity" instead of "all the peculiarities of diversity amongst us."

Besides this, Powell (2004) has analyzed political representation in the perspective of comparative politics. For the particular case of substantive representation, the author points out that they started analyzing the existing link between citizens' preferences and the position of their representatives. This situation has been stressed out in further studies, emphasizing electoral speech and the better structuring of their positions in respect to the topics that are important to the citizens. Finally the same author states that his analysis was directed towards the collective correspondence between citizens' preferences and the representatives' positions, and to critically analyze the existing literature on this matter.

#### *Political Subjectivity and Substantive Representation of Indigenous Minorities*

This matter is not new, however it does, considering the existing literature, require a more precise treatment based on the convergence of disciplinary theories which correspond to two ontologically diverse dimensions of reality: psychological and political<sup>6</sup>. In this sense I have proposed the concept political subjectivity in order to subsequently articulate this with the dimension of the institutions and political culture. All this, as has already been stated, has the purpose of enabling an integral approach of politics.

This is why it is first necessary to clarify what is understood by political subjectivity. This comprises the set of cognitions and emotions whose contents refer to the political scope, always within the framework of dynamic and context in which is inserted a subject, and finally is translated into the varied expressions that manifest behavior (Rocha, 2002, pp. 3-4).

It is thus crucial to know and analyze citizens' as well as representatives' political subjectivity in order to approach the factors which determine the performance of the latter and the corresponding responses from the first. This is certainly an analytical resource which will let us observe the related subjective matters which, to a certain extent, determine and are determined by political institutions. In the case of the citizens we have found that "individuals think and define politics, democracy, and the institutions through elaborations that are distinguished more by its simplicity than criticism and imagination. Their political subjectivity is permeated by information of common sense, it responds to a descriptive dimension, it refers to the empirical facts of the political life of a country through a highly negative evaluation and it is mainly centered on values, purposes, and aspirations, that in the institutional scheme and government practices. It is also distinguished for its inability to formulate elaborate thoughts which go beyond generalizations, abstractions, and common places, and that outline, in a prescriptive sense, ideal forms of politics, democracy and the functioning of the institutions to make them happen (Rocha 2005b, pp. 97-98).

This general consideration is ratified by the observation of various national and international surveys<sup>7</sup> concerning the political culture of Mexicans.

In this direction, the approaches are limited. However, there are some studies which stand out for their novelty, such as the one carried out by Gimete-Welsh

(2004), who addresses political representation from the viewpoint of semiotics, with the goal of investigating the different types of representation from different related fields. The author deepens this perspective, coupled with discourse analysis and multiculturalism, in a broad study which looks into the way legislators process political representation in light of human rights initiatives and the indigenous culture. He finds that beyond institutional matters, political representation is built into the cognitive surroundings of the legislative process, in other words, in the intra-institutional inter-subjective relations as well as inter-institutional ones in a specific place and time. This is the reason why representation must be seen as conceptual networks and cognitive maps (Gimete-Welsh, 2010).

On the other side, although some studies are settled in this perspective they lack simplicity, and even though they use psychosocial theories they verge on platitudes. An example of this is shown by Jiménez-Ottalengo and Solórzano (2007), who study citizens' social representation of legislators and their duties in order to identify the social capital they have accumulated. Equally, but this time with highly ambiguous concepts, there is the study presented by Jiménez-Ottalengo (2004). Here the author stipulates, after an ontological confusion about social representation and political representation, an inclusion relation from here to there. In the author's words: "political representation is a dimension of social representation which manifests in speech" (2004, pp. 181-182). In this regard, individuals' social representations of certain objects or events are mental constructions, whereas political representation is precisely a political institution. They are different ontological objects that also require different epistemologies.

Regarding the substantive representation of indigenous minorities and its relation to citizens' and representatives' political subjectivity, literature is practically nonexistent. Singer (2005), refers specifically to the political representation of indigenous people in Mexico, conceptually does not include any new and rather is directed to undertake a count of how descriptive representation has evolved. The Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI, 2006) published a study on how the indigenous image is perceived in Mexico. In spite of the specific revision about discrimination, stereotypes, and myths surrounding indigenous people, the main conclusion of this study is that for the common Mexican, indigenous people are invisible, they simply do not see them or know them (2006, p. 6). This study provides some input regarding Mexicans' subjectivity towards indigenous groups, but the question is to know how legislators represent subjectively to indigenous and how it influences their political representation.

#### *Political Culture and Substantive Representation of Indigenous Minorities*

For this matter, it is crucial to point out the critique carried out by Rocha (2006)<sup>8</sup> concerning the concept of political culture. In the vast literature surrounding this topic, the use of the concept has the purpose of resolving the lack of existent knowledge the relation between the factors of a political life and the causes of behavior of individuals. With this concept, he intends to reduce the epistemic

distance between the subjective and the objective in politics. However, the concept is subjectivized when the intention in using it is to provide explanations about attitudes, values, and political behavior of mankind considering only these aspects and to omit the role and influence of structures, institutions, the political actors and the power they exert over people's subjectivity. Although Almond (1999) acknowledges this by highlighting the influence of the structure and the performance of the political system in the cognitive attitudes and expectations of individuals, he states that political culture is the "subjective" part of the political system and it reduces in this way a broad concept to only one of its components.

I argue the idea that it is more fruitful to talk about political subjectivity and not about political culture, if we are discussing attitudes, beliefs, values, and political behaviors. An integral approach should include not only the analysis of the facts, processes, and political phenomenon which take place in society, but the analysis of people's subjectivity as well. In other words, it should consider representations, opinions, judgments, emotions, etc., that people make about those same facts and political processes.

Since the concept of political culture is broader, it could perhaps be used to refer to an entirely more developed reference system that would include the systematization of empirical data and theoretical elaborations in respect to political institutions and political subjectivities of ample sectors of a determined population. Without diminishing in any way use, the problems pointed out could be repaired with the existing relation between this and political subjectivity of individuals. In my personal viewpoint such relation is inclusion.

### COROLLARY

Political representation in its various definitions intends to assure a stronger link between political leaders and the individuals they represent. However, for the citizens, the scope of such perspectives are limited, in the sense that representation wears out in the process of delegation and authorization of authority practices through clean and competitive periodic elections. The role of elections is such nowadays that it is considered as a genuine instrument of democracy (Powell, 2000). But in spite of the institutional mechanisms already described in this study, there are no clear political criteria as to why political leaders should act in favor of the interests of the public. It is such a vague notion that it allows diverse interpretations according to the political circumstances.

The paradox of representative democracy seems to lack solutions, at least in democratic societies which also present gigantic social and economic inequalities amongst their members, and consequently limited access to political scenarios for the majority of the population. Without being the only solution, they could try to step ahead through the search of institutional mechanisms that promote a greater political participation from citizens in issues which concern them and affect their lives.

Specifically regarding political representation of indigenous minorities, it is necessary to advance conceptually as well as institutionally. In a theoretical sense, it is necessary to resolve the contradictions inherent to the liberal conception of democracy regarding accommodation of already existent cultural, ethnic, and linguistic pluralisms. To achieve such articulation is a major challenge of modern democratic thinking. On the other hand, the lack of an institutional design capable of articulating the universal equality of citizens with their inherent cultural and ethnic differences is today one of the main complaints. In the perspective here presented, the consideration of diverse factors that place themselves on a cultural, subjective, and institutional scheme could be of help to such purposes.

### NOTES

1. This statement implies that its conceptual elaboration requires an articulation with other categories to present the political links amongst them. Some of these concepts are: electoral systems, voter turnout, political participation and democracy. Research showing these connections are Brennan and Lomasky (1993); Vallés and Bosch (1997); Loenen (1997); Millar et al. (1999); Brennan and Hamlin (2000); and Rivero (2003).
2. In this respect, Béjar (2004, p. 57) shows, in the case of Mexico, that from the 500 legislators of the LVIII Legislature, 63% consider they represent citizenship in general. However, the author points out that the way in which legislators perceive their representation duty is contradictory, since they also tend to defend the lines established by their parliamentary group in a way not always advantageous for the citizens (2004, p. 74).
3. In this respect, Miller (2005) explains the political evolution that the agent-principal model has undergone.
4. There is no harm in saying that it is essential to continue visiting the classics. A good conceptual historical outlook in regard to parliamentary representation is found in Valencia (2007).
5. The other four dimensions are, according Morlino (2007, p. 30), the rule of law, accountability, the total respect for civil, political and social rights and, finally, the progressive implementation of greater political, economic equality and social.
6. Here I draw your attention to the need to build bridges among various disciplines which may adopt the same object of study from their own perspectives. This is an epistemological argument which contravenes much of what has been written in the so-called Political Psychology. I state that the psychological knowledge in this matter is necessary, but insufficient.
7. There is no need to present here the specific results of the various surveys related for example to the trust towards the institutions, or the support to democracy and the satisfaction within itself, amongst other relevant top-



ics. In general the results of such surveys coincide and fit into the statement presented above in respect to the subjectivity of Mexicans. The alluded surveys are Los Mexicanos de los Noventa [Mexicans nineties] (Beltrán et al., 1996), the research Ciudadanos y Cultura de la Democracia. Reglas, Instituciones y Valores [Citizens and Culture of Democracy. Rules, Institutions and Values] (Flores & Meyenberg, 2000), Encuestas Nacionales Sobre Cultura Política y Prácticas Ciudadanas [National Surveys Political Culture and Citizen Practices] (ENCUPs) (Secretaría de Gobernación, SEGOB, 2001; 2003; 2005; 2009; 2013), as well as the Informe Anual de Latinobarómetro (Latinobarómetro, 2013). At the same time there are a couple of compilations which analyze in detail the ENCUPs, results and others are, Deconstruyendo la Ciudadanía [Deconstructing Citizenship] (Secretaría de Gobernación, SEGOB, 2002) and Demos Ante el Espejo [Demos in the Mirror] (UNAM, 2005).

8. An author who seriously critiques the term political culture is Knight (2007). For him, such concept does not have any explanatory function since it is a term which could be considered in the best-case scenario added and descriptive.

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## CHAPTER 6

## SCHOOLING AND CHANGES IN CHILD AND FAMILY LIFE IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES OF MESOAMERICA

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This chapter focuses on the role of schooling in the lives of children and families in Indigenous Communities of Mesoamerica. In many communities around the world, school is a taken for granted and unexamined part of childhood (Hernandez, 1994; Rogoff, Correa-Chávez, & Navichoc-Cotuc, 2005). However many everyday practices that are common in middle-class highly schooled communities (for example engaging in child focused activities, mini language lessons and other similar teaching and learning scenarios) are modeled on school and are rare in communities that have not had an extensive history of schooling (Briggs, 1991; Fortes, 1938/1970; Gaskins, 2010; Heath, 1983; Morelli, Rogoff, & Angelillo, 2003). Similarly, in many communities that don't have a long history of schooling, children participate in community activities fully in ways that are rare in highly schooled cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, Correa-Chávez, Navichoc-Cotuc, 2005). It has only been in the last few generations that extensive, compul-

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sory schooling has become widespread and extended from the US and Europe to Indigenous communities in Mesoamerica (Meyer, Ramírez, & Soysal, 1992). And as people participate in cultural institutions like school they may adopt practices common to that institution in other areas of their lives (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003).

In this chapter we examine the issue of schooling and change by first presenting some historical background of schooling in Indigenous communities of Mexico and then presenting research that has noted the changes in the lives of mothers and children once schooling becomes a central institution of childhood. We end by presenting a case from some of our current work where mothers from a P'urhépecha community in central Mexico reflect on their own childhoods as well as their children's childhood and changes associated with increased schooling.

### THE INSTITUTION OF SCHOOL

In many rural pueblos of Mexico, especially those that have historically had little access to Western schooling, life has been organized according to recognizably Indigenous practices for many generations. This is often true even if the populations of many of these communities no longer identify as Indigenous, particularly if the Indigenous language is no longer spoken (Bonfil Batalla, 1996; Frye, 1996; Vigil, 1998). For example, residents of a Nahuatl town in Central Mexico refer to themselves as Mexicans or mestizos (mixed race), even though they continue to pass down traditional Mesoamerican practices and beliefs including stories, moral values, and cosmological concepts (Lorente, 2006). Reflecting on his own experience growing up, Urrieta, whose family immigrated to the United States from a P'urhépecha town in Michoacán Mexico wrote:

I heard older relatives in Los Angeles and Michoacán saying, "When we were Indians," while at other times, "When we were more Indian." This was also made more confusing when referring to people of nearby pueblos in the Pátzcuaro region as being *mas indios*, or "more Indian," as if being "Indian" was something that could be diluted, lessened, or changed. (p. 149)

These changes in Indigenous identity in Mexico were promoted in large part by the Mexican Revolution of 1910 which sought to homogenize the many Indigenous groups and create a Mexican identity. Therefore many communities went from being Indian to *campesino* (Urrieta, 2003). This process was promoted and guided in part by school, as one of the expressed goals of mass schooling in Mexico was to "modernize" and homogenize the countryside (Bonfil Batalla, 1988; Stavenhagen, 1988).

This process is exemplified by tracking participation in Indigenous practices of residents of a West Central Mexican town that up to a generation ago considered themselves Indigenous. Residents of this town that have had little involvement in Western schooling participate in some Indigenous practices that can be traced back centuries, whereas highly schooled residents that move to nearby Guadalajara (one of Mexico's largest cities) only participate in an attenuated form of

these practices. In contrast, people whose families have resided in Guadalajara for generations and whose families have attended school for many generations tend to not have knowledge or experience of these practices (Najafi, Mejía Arauz, & Rogoff, 2007).

This program of national assimilation continued throughout the 1960s, when the Mexican government developed a specialized school system for regions with Indigenous populations named "Indigenous" and later "Bilingual Education" as part of the policy of integration in the national education system. The teachers were Indigenous, although not all of them spoke a native language. Their mission was to facilitate children's Spanish learning with help from the teacher, who would explain the content in the children's own language. The teachers were sent to their first school after a short introduction course (three months) to attempt to assimilate Indigenous children to the national culture. Afterwards the teachers continued to study at the university level in other institutions as they continued working in their schools (Keyser, 2009).

The program of study and the teachers' own mostly non-Indigenous instructors led to loss of the Indigenous culture and language among the teachers, or at least to alienation from it, and as a result led to an ambivalent position towards the Indigenous culture and language (Keyser 2009). Since 1999 "Indigenous Education" received a new name: "Intercultural and Bilingual Education." This change reflected a new re-education of the teachers, who are now expected to revalue their own culture and language. This was not easily done after having been educated to distance themselves from it. Nevertheless, during the past years and currently, in many communities Indigenous teachers have tried to continue to be a part of their communities by participating in festivities and taking responsibilities in community social life. This way many teachers attempt to strike a balance between working in the interest of the community that gives them a sense of membership and community life and the institution that employs them (Gasché, 2008; Keyser, 2009).

Although currently the policies of schools in Mexico no longer seek to eradicate Indigenous languages and cultures there are still unexamined assumptions about children's lives and how children learn that are inherent to the institution of school and are not always congruent with traditional ways of organizing child life and learning in Indigenous communities of Mesoamerica (Correa-Chavez, Roberts, & Martinez, 2012; Gaskins & Paradise, 2009; Rogoff, Paradise, Mejía Arauz, Correa-Chávez, & Angelillo, 2003; Rogoff et al., 2007). In the next sections we examine how children's lives and learning are organized in schools and also how they have traditionally been organized in Indigenous communities through *Learning by Observing and Pitching In* to ongoing activity (Rogoff, Moore, Correa-Chávez & Dexter, 2014).

### LESSONS OUT OF CONTEXT OF PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY: CULTURAL PATTERNS IN THE INSTITUTION OF SCHOOL

One of the assumptions inherent in the institution of school is that there are particular ages and progressions in learning that require children to be segregated and sorted from other members of their community (Angus, Mirel, & Vinovskis, 1988; Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Rogoff et al., 2005). This assumption has been so taken for granted that in many areas of the world terms like "kindergartener" and "sixth grader," have become synonymous with particular ages. This practice of placing all of the 5-year-olds, 8-year-olds, and 12-year-olds (for example) with only people their own age for up to 6 hours at a time serves to segregate children into very narrowly defined age groups (LeVine & White, 1992; Morelli, et. al., 2003; Rogoff et al., 2005). Thus the opportunities for middle-class children to observe and pitch-in to ongoing community and family activity are limited. Additionally adult-child interactions even outside of school often involve child-centered lessons directed at children utilizing formats common in Western schooling (Harkness, 1977; Heath, 1983; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, & Mosier, 1993). In two middle-class European American communities, 3-year-old children often participated in cultural routines and practices where adults engaged with them in mini lessons and child-focused activities removed from productive community activity. In contrast, toddlers in a Guatemalan Maya town and an Efe hunter-gatherer community (Democratic Republic of Congo) were continually exposed to adult activities and often emulated adult work in their play (Morelli et al., 2003). This was rare in the middle-class communities.

Highly schooled parents may engage with young children in specialized child-focused activities to help prepare them for school lessons. For example, when showing toddlers how to handle novel toys, middle-class caregivers in the U.S. and Turkey often provided their children with mini language lessons and used mock excitement, praise, and known answer questions as a way of orienting the child's attention to what was important (Rogoff et al., 1993). Similarly, in a teaching task, European American middle-class mothers took responsibility for making their toddlers learn by trying to arouse interest and refocusing the children using exaggerated speech and action. This was in contrast to Gusii (Kenyan) mothers with little schooling who seemed to expect the toddlers to be able to take responsibility for completing the task as shown (Dixon, Levine, Richman, & Brazelton, 1984).

Children who are used to engaging in community activity and not disrupting adult work may observe more as a matter of course, whereas children who are used to being the focus of adult attention and interaction may be uncomfortable in situations where they are not the focus of activity. European American 5 to 10 year old children tried to disrupt the ongoing activity in a loud and insistent way when they were not the focus of adult activity more often than did Mayan children who rarely called attention to themselves (Correa-Chávez & Rogoff, 2009). The cultural patterns in how children react when they are not the focus of adult atten-

tion reflect behaviors learned and reinforced in child-focused interaction. They also reflect the cultural familiarity or unfamiliarity children may have with being included in activity without having to be the focus of it. If a child insists on being the focus of others' attention it seems less likely that they would keenly observe and participate in what others are doing.

### LEARNING BY OBSERVING AND PITCHING IN: PATTERNS IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Rogoff and her colleagues (Correa-Chávez, et al. 2011; Paradise & Rogoff, 2009; Rogoff et al., 2003; Rogoff et al., 2005; Rogoff et al., 2014) have suggested that *Learning by Observing and Pitching In* (previously learning through *intent community participation*) is a cultural pattern of organizing learning that is common in many Indigenous communities of the Americas where infants and children are not routinely segregated from adult activities. Studies have shown that children of Indigenous heritage are particularly skilled at attending to the activities taking place around them and that they use that information in their learning (Cancian, 1964; Chamoux, 1992; de Haan, 1999; Gaskins, 2000; Rogoff, 2003).

Being present, or at least not being limited or separated from adult activities provides children access to many learning situations. They can learn by themselves (by observing others) and can also be guided by others, receiving advice and warnings as they participate (Rogoff et al., 2002). For example in the community of Tepoztlán in the central Mexican state of Morelos children are considered full actors in community activities with specific roles and responsibilities. During the town's feast of "the Tepozteco" children fulfill certain important ceremonial roles such as decorating the neighborhoods and engaging in ceremonial dancing (Corona, 2001). Similarly in a Yucatecan Mayan community child life is primarily organized around adult work. It is expected that children will not disrupt adult activity, ideally participating in the work and contributing to the household. The children in this Mayan community were rarely engaged in specialized child focused activities (Gaskins, 2000). This kind of full participation in community activities appears to be common among immigrant Mexican and Central American communities as well. Faulstich Orellana (2001) writes of one particular immigrant community in Los Angeles:

In my movements in and around the community, I recorded many other examples of children's active participation in the work of daily life: running errands; caring for siblings; cleaning; doing the laundry; taking siblings to school, the library, and other appointments; helping siblings with homework; mediating with public institutions; answering and making phone calls; ordering food in restaurants; and translating between English and Spanish for monolingual speakers. (p. 372)

More recent work also suggests that children who observe, and pitch-in to ongoing interaction may be more likely to spontaneously help out in the home and in others contexts (López, Rogoff, Najafi, & Mejía-Arauz, 2012; López & Rog-

off, 2014). Children from an Indigenous heritage community in Western Mexico whose mothers had fewer years of schooling were more likely to participate in household work that benefited the entire family compared to those whose mothers had 12 or more years of schooling (Alcalá, Rogoff, Mejía-Arauz, Coppens, & Dexter, 2014; Coppens, Alcalá, Mejía-Arauz, & Rogoff, 2014).

Related to the idea that children should participate and "pitch-in" to family and community activity, the social organization of group activity in communities with Indigenous histories has been characterized as collaborative and horizontal, emphasizing multiparty interactions, and fluid in organization (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Erikson, & Mohatt, 1982; Paradise & de Haan, 2009; Rogoff, et al., 1993). When working with a group of three children on a three dimensional puzzle, Mayan mothers with 0–2 years of schooling were more likely to engage in a horizontal way involving multiparty coordination compared to Mayan mothers with 12 or more years of schooling who were more likely to subdivide tasks for the children. In similar studies, when working in pairs or small groups US Mexican heritage children whose families were more familiar with the ways of rural Mexico and had fewer years of schooling were more likely to engage as a coordinated unit on their ongoing activity compared to US European heritage children and Mexican heritage children whose mothers had 12 or more years of schooling (Correa-Chávez, 2013; Mejía-Arauz, Rogoff, Dexter, & Najafi, 2007). Preliminary results also point to more collaboration among P'urhépecha children of Cherán whose mothers averaged 7 years of schooling when they were working on a joint activity although they tended to not rely exclusively on talk when they were organizing their collaboration (Mangione, Correa-Chávez, Mejía-Arauz, & Keyser, in prep).

Some of the changes associated with increased schooling in Indigenous communities are readily visible within the community such as the increased age segregation among children and the increased community expectation and aspiration for even more participation in school (Rogoff et al., 2005). Other changes are more subtle such as the worldwide finding that as women participate in school, fertility decreases thereby limiting the number of siblings and multiage child interactions children have in future generations (Rogoff et al., 2005; LeVine, LeVine & Schnell, 2001). Other subtle changes come in how children in the next generations approach learning situations, for example how they use their attention in learning, how they structure participation in groups, and how likely they are to spontaneously pitch in to ongoing activity. It is these changes that we turn to next.

#### SCHOOL'S RELATION TO CULTURAL PATTERNS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Numerous studies have found that maternal participation in the cultural institution of school is related to the ways some mothers of Indigenous background interact with their children (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Crago, Annahatak, & Ningiurvik, 1993; Laosa, 1980, 1981). For example, Mayan mothers with 6 to 9 years of

schooling more often treated their children as conversational peers and engaged their children in language lessons, whereas mothers with 0 to 3 years of schooling were unlikely to do either (Rogoff et al., 1993). When working with 3 children on a three dimensional puzzle, Mayan mothers with more than 12 years of schooling were more likely to attempt to manage the children's efforts, to propose division of labor strategies and to direct the children. Mayan mothers with less than 3 years of schooling were more likely to work fluidly with the children as an entire group (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002). Similarly, Chicana mothers with extensive experience in school resembled European American mothers in their use of questions and praise as a teaching strategy, whereas Chicana mothers who had less experience with school more commonly relied on modeling as a teaching strategy (Laosa, 1980, 1982).

In immigrant Mexican communities in the United States, as well as in a Mayan community in Guatemala maternal schooling was related to how children used observation and managed their attention in learning. When being shown how to fold origami figures with an adult, U.S. Mexican heritage children whose mothers had 12 or more years of experience with school relied less exclusively on observation as a source of information compared to U.S. Mexican heritage children whose mothers averaged 6 years of school (Mejía-Arauz, Rogoff & Paradise, 2005). Another study with the same participants found the Mexican heritage children whose mothers had more than 12 years of schooling were less likely to simultaneously attend to events than were the Mexican heritage children whose mothers had an average of 6 years of schooling (Correa-Chávez, Rogoff, & Mejía-Arauz, 2005). Additionally in both a Mayan town in Guatemala as well as a Mexican immigrant community in the United States children whose mothers had fewer than 12 years of schooling (averaging 7 in the immigrant community, and 3 in Guatemala) were more likely to pay attention to events that were addressed to others and to remember that information and use it a week later (Correa-Chávez & Rogoff, 2009; López, Correa-Chávez, Rogoff, & Gutierrez, 2010; Silva, Correa-Chávez & Rogoff, 2010). These findings are consistent with the idea that when children are present and included in family and community activity they will observe what is taking place around them even if they are not addressed, and that this skill is used in learning.

Maternal experience with schooling often relates to mothers' use of teaching approaches that correspond with teaching models often used in Western schooling (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Laosa, 1980, 1982; Moreno, 2000; Rogoff et al., 1993). Although we argue that experiences with school practices provide familiarity with particular ways of teaching and learning, we do not contend that it is the solitary 'active ingredient' in community differences (see also LeVine, et al., 2001). Rather we regard extent of experience with Western schooling in Indigenous heritage communities of Mesoamerica as being part of a constellation of associated practices such as migration patterns, urban experience, occupations requiring school credentials, fewer children in a family, and more limited involve-

ment with extended family (Rogoff, Najafi & Mejía-Arauz, 2012). All of these may also relate to the teaching and learning approaches used at home (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Rogoff, et al., 2005; Rogoff & Angelillo, 2002; Rogoff et al., 2007). Thus, family experience with Western schooling may contribute, along with many associated practices, to the family and community practices surrounding learning and child life.

We examine these ideas further in the remainder of the paper by focusing on an example from some of our current work. In the rest of the paper we present central findings from a study that focused on examining cultural patterns in how parents from a P'urhépecha community in Michoacán conceived of child development and learning, and the role that children play in family and community life (Mejía Arauz, Keyser, & Correa-Chávez, 2013). Findings focused on how participation in the institution of school might be related to different ideas of childhood in the current generation as well as in the previous generation of parents. The work was based on the concepts of development and *Learning by Observing and Pitching In* (Rogoff et al., 2014), contrasting practices involved in learning through "assembly line" instruction, with those that characterize life and learning of families and communities in Indigenous contexts. We used this contrast to illustrate the changes in the community regarding development concepts and practices, both inside and outside of school.

### INCREASED SCHOOLING AND CHILD LIFE IN CHERÁN, MICHOACÁN

This research was conducted in Cherán, Michoacán, which is considered the largest P'urhépecha community with a population of about 15,000 people. The town was founded over 600 years ago, and 90% of its inhabitants consider themselves indigenous even though only a small minority still speak P'urhépecha. However the social organization, customs, rituals, and history of the town still identify it as Indigenous community (INEGI, 2011). The economically active population is distributed with 27.4% in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry), 31.5% in the secondary sector (sawmills, carpentry, crafts, construction) and 35.5% in the tertiary sector (trade, professionals). Cherán is also a center of commerce for smaller communities and caters to various markets in the region. Due to current economic policies, the region suffers from unemployment and low prices for goods. Consequently, a large number of people migrate to the U.S. to reside there, or come and go as job opportunities arise. The combination of Indigenous and urban influences showcase the rich set of cultural diversity of Cherán.

#### *Schooling and Teachers in Cherán*

Schooling in Cherán began in the 1920s. Currently, there is full public education through high school, a technological institute, a teacher training institute, and a campus of the National Pedagogical University specializing in preparing teach-

ers for work in Indigenous communities. Eighty-five percent of the population is literate and average schooling is 7.5 years (SEP, 2011). Thirty-two percent of the population has post-primary education (INEGI, 2011). Since the late 1960s, the majority of the Indigenous regions have been served by the education system through "Indigenous Education," later renamed "Bilingual and Bicultural" education. Teachers were mostly from the Indigenous system, but trained with curricula implemented by teachers who were not Indigenous. This has contributed to some loss of Indigenous language and culture. Many P'urhépecha refused to speak their language with their children because of the discrimination inflicted on the P'urhépecha by Spanish speakers.

#### *Education in Indigenous Communities and Families, Particularly for Work*

"Cherán is characterized by teaching children to work," was how one teacher characterized the community's traditional educational goals for their children. In the past an important element of belonging to the community and P'urhépecha culture implied some resistance to school (Keyser, 2009). This may have stemmed from school's inherent segregation of children which in many cases prevented active participation in family and community activity which was important to community life. Rather than participating in ongoing activity, school tended (and tends) to value an education that certifies compliance with certain grades and requirements of the institution to become a professional in the future. Currently in various Indigenous communities of Mexico, the concept of education includes both what happens in school settings and situations outside of school to allow children to participate in activities with those who have more knowledge than them, and in doing so contribute to learning and development. This way family and communities aim to create members of the community as opposed to only creating successful individuals, and formal and informal learning are equally valued (Lenkersdoft, 2002).

In Indigenous cultures such as the Maya, for example, to be educated and socialized means "the gradual emergence of the 'person' in its expression situated in both 'participant' and in 'self'" (de León, 2005, p. 31), or "to bring the soul to the body, bringing it to its temporary abode; [...] self-awareness" (Arias, 1975, p. 55). Awareness, presumably of the self, the environment, and one's role in it, is also a concept used by the Mixe who talk about children "springing into awareness" (Cardoso 2009). Among the P'urhépecha the term used is *kashumbikua* and is generally translated as "courtesy, good manners, politeness... one who knows how to behave in P'urhépecha society according to the teachings of the elders" (Zavala, 1988 p. 106). *Kashumbikua* includes knowledge and practice, and above all being respectful of others, especially the elderly. During the educational process, children must learn customs, traditions, rules of conduct, and specific knowledge depending on the activity.

Outside of school, children are present in almost all daily activities and at fiestas where they intermingle with people of all ages. The festivals in the community and in the family are particularly important for the education of children because in these situations, children learn their responsibilities by gender, age, and relationship with others. They learn social norms (such as respect and reciprocity), they gain expertise (for example in roof building, furniture making, or cooking), and learn about the use of spaces (where they live with their families in relation to others). For parents, their children are gradually introduced and become full members of the community, with the primary goal being to learn to work (Keyser, 2009).

This tension between learning to work in the community and learning for certification in school contributed for many years to the idea that work for family and community and schoolwork were incompatible. Elders who valued the learning that happens while children participated in community and family activity complained that school educated children to be lazy (Keyser, personal communication, 2012). These complaints are congruent with the idea that in Indigenous communities, children's learning was organized through observation and gradual participation with guidance from others (Gaskins, 2010; Rogoff et al., 2003). Previously, many thought that children should learn either how to work or how to study, and that the two activities could not be combined. However this has changed recently and with growing school experience parents tend to insist that their children comply with school requirements, while many have come to view physical work negatively.

## PARTICIPANTS AND METHOD

As part of a larger study examining how 8 to 10 year old children coordinated interaction in activity with others, we interviewed 34 mothers of the participating children in their homes. The families were recruited from one of two schools. The first school also happened to be the first Indigenous Education School in the community and is highly regarded in town for its teachers and facilities. The school is located in an area of town that is home to many families that work in the secondary and tertiary sector (professionals or skilled laborers) and the neighborhood is characterized as being less traditional in terms of customs and ritual life; however the school attempts to teach some of these to the children. The second participating school does not belong to the program of Indigenous Education, but rather to the general federal schools program. It is one of the oldest schools in town and its physical plant reflects this. Families that attend this school tend to do so because they live in the neighborhood which is characterized as more traditional as families in the neighborhood tend to work in the fields and in the forest. The families are also more active in their participation in festivals and community work, therefore the children in the second school learn about Indigenous traditions from their families, as opposed to the school.

The interview was conducted using semi-structured open-ended questions and was focused on the practices of the present and the two previous generations including schooling, occupations, immigration, participation in community and cultural activities, education concepts, and participation and collaboration of children in their families. The interviews were conducted by the author (UKO) who lives in this community.

Of the 34 mothers, 6 had some primary school, 6 completed primary school, 14 had some degree of secondary school, 3 completed high school, and 5 had a post high school degree, of which 4 had training as teachers as shown in Table 6.1.

Many mothers with less than a high school education described their occupation as "home-makers," though it is noteworthy that at the insistence of the interviewer most of these mothers report that they engaged in a very specialized sewing and/or have family businesses. In this way they contribute to the family financially, or in some cases are the primary earners.

In several cases, both the mother and father participated in the interviews. This was particularly true of families in which both were teachers. In some cases, the children and grandmothers or grandfathers were also present and participated occasionally during the interview.

The interviews were transcribed and coded by trained coders using categories of analysis developed in previous studies with other populations (Mejía-Arauz et al., 2012), with some adjustments. Here we report on qualitative findings that focus on children's participation in family and community activity, and parents' conceptions about education. We were able to obtain parental descriptions of the types of activities their children participated in, and if these activities were carried out voluntarily or compulsorily. Through these interviews, we can examine the perspective of parents on ways of participation and collaboration of their children, and we can identify similarities and variations between families with different educational experiences, in reporting their children's activities.

Among the 34 respondents there was variability in their school experience, however the patterns of responses placed parents into two distinct groups. In the first group, mothers had 0–9 years of schooling and occupations related to agri-

TABLE 6.1. Grades in school of Mothers and Fathers

Grades in School	Mothers interviewed	Fathers <sup>1</sup>
0–3	6	7
6	6	2
7–9 (secondary school)	14	12
12–13 (high school)	3	4
16 (post high school)	5	7
Total	34	32

<sup>1</sup> Data is missing for 2 fathers



culture or basic trade (26 families). In the second group mothers (and often both parents) had gone through at least 10 grades of school, including some professionals with over 16 years. Eight of these families worked in the education sector, and in 3 families both parents were teachers.

### PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND THE INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL

One of the main findings, evident in both groups of parents regardless of their own school experience, was that participation in school was highly valued for their children. Among families with less school experience (mothers with 0–9 years), school was especially valued as a means to improve living conditions and also as a way to combat discrimination or abuse experiences with the knowledge gained through participation in the institution of school. One mother commented:

M: Yes, we got all of them [her children] in school so they at least have something with which to defend themselves, right? Because it feels real bad not to know, [...] and I tell my children to take advantage of this [school] because it feels very bad not to know things. It's like someone goes somewhere and imagine like one is blind because you don't know. (Mother with 0 years of schooling)

Other mothers with fewer than 6 years of schooling echoed the idea of school being an important tool because of the ability to defend oneself with knowledge. One mother emphasized that when you know how to read and how to do math people won't be able to cheat you of your earnings, and this is the sort of thing she tells her children. Other mothers appeal to emotion with one mother with 3 years of schooling indicating that she tells her children that *"it was my greatest wish that all of you learn."*

The value given to school is especially true in cases of parents who are teachers, and families who have a history of teaching. One mother reported:

M: Me, for my dad or for us, I tell you, I don't know how he did it to put it in our head that school came first, then school, and last was school. He would say it was another, well another door, a really, really big door for one as a person: that was school. And so as you say, well, I remember when I didn't want to go to school and study and he would say, "look you have to go to school," [...] it's the school that gives us the opportunity to learn, to learn and to know many things, of having another perspective on life, you know. And, you know, that's where he would come from, and his words stuck with me about school and being responsible. (Mother, now a teacher with 16 years of schooling)

However, in previous generations schooling was not as valued in some families, and was even considered an impediment to learning to work. This is evidenced by the limited support for children to study in the past and the negative perceptions parents attributed to their own parents which shows the past conflict between study and work:

M: It's because in the past our parents would work in the fields... and well they would enroll me in school for a week and then take me out to go to the fields in the hills because they would work in the hills. And well, maybe I also really liked to be there... (Mother with 0 years of schooling).

Another mother echoed this ambivalent position towards school from her parents:

M: Well they always sent us, or you see they sent us to learn, but if you ask me if I heard, if someone said "Finish school, it's important" well, no. [...] No one was telling us, "go to school." No, we just would wake up and go to school.

An interviewed father who is now a teacher also commented on this when he reported how when he was younger and would do homework outside his house neighbors would urge him to contribute to his family by saying, *"Hey Luis, you're a grown man now get to work. Can't you see your dad doesn't have much?"* (Interview with father and mother, both teachers).

### CONTRASTING IDEA ABOUT CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

As noted above, both groups of parents placed similarly high values on school education, especially as a means to a better life. However, one difference is that parents with greater school experience and who have had experience in urban contexts where they were educated, believe that the main task for development in childhood is to meet the obligations that school demands. The following vignettes of two different families demonstrate this:

F: When my older children were younger I would say to them, "your job now at your age is to go to school, and to do everything that they tell you to do in school" (Father with 16 years of schooling, teacher from a family of teachers).

F: Well, now at her age... it's essential that at her stage of growth... well we've always instilled in her... always [...] instilling that she has to go to school. That's primary. And we are always watching, she is as well... with her homework and things that they have to do in school that are related to learning (Father with more than 16 years of schooling).

However parents with fewer years of school experience and more hands-on occupations do not seem to agree that the primary obligation of children is to dedicate themselves exclusively to school. While this group of parents believes children should attend and participate in school, they do not demand that children dedicate themselves only to school to the exclusion of family and community. In fact many parents seemed to indicate that participating in family or home business instills in children a sense of responsibility and initiative as well as teaches children valuable skills that also serve a learning function. Examples of this are shown in the following vignettes of two families:



M: We know how to butcher and make "carnitas." So the boy, yes, he's learned to butcher them. Yes because since they were little they would watch us. My daughter's husband the other day had to slaughter a pig and he didn't know how. Then this one, Jesus [the son] said "look this is how we are going to do it" and he helped him. Yes, he already knew... yeah, when we started to make carnitas I would cut the pieces and he would help me throw them into the pot. Sometimes he would grab the knife and cut a piece of meat. And yes... I would let him. I would tell him, "watch, from there you are going to cut to here and not too small, like that," and he would do it. He would do it. To butcher them also, I would say to him, "look you are going to skin him, like this, not like that." And he would do it. To shave him you are going to do it this way, to cut him you are going to do it that way. "Look when you are going to split open its head, you cut here, here's where..." With Jesus I put him here and I tell him, "look take my hand here with me and with the other the knife and you are going to do this." And he does it. (Mother with 6 years of schooling)

In another example:

M: He helps him [his grandfather] clear weeds [in the field]. Sometimes his other brothers also go. To clear weeds and fertilize the field. And later when they finished with the weeds and he asked my mother yesterday, "Abuelita, is there anything to do?" He told her "we finished clearing the weeds."

The interviewer asks:

I: So, he decides what he does, more or less?

And the mother responds:

M: Yes, he says, "I'll wash the dishes or do the grocery shopping," or "I this..." He decides, and then I say, well good, it's good. What's important is that he does something. (Mother with 6 years of schooling)

Another mother with 2 years of schooling commented how her son sometimes goes to the mechanic's or with the iron workers to help with some of the work they do. The young boy earns thirty pesos (less than \$3 US) doing this, but more important for this mother is that the child is learning to work. She echoed the comments of the mother in the previous vignette by insisting that, "*what's important is that he does something*" and emphasized that it is important for children to learn many skills in order to be successful in life.

While many parents with less school experience reported seeing the value of involving their children in their own work or home activities this was not as common among families with extensive school experience, who more often reported that the role of children is to meet the demands of school and achieve appropriate learning. This sometimes meant placing children in specialized courses after school hours or in the case of one family taking a vacation to a larger metropolitan area so that the children could enroll in English courses during the summer vacation. These activities serve to further segregate children from multi-age peers

and from other community members involved in work that is not child directed. Possibly the educational experiences of parents with higher education or who are teachers, along with the experience of living in urban settings, led them to adopt other practices and conceptions, distancing of some values and practices of their communities of origin. As some participants point out, they have kept some of the traditions of their community while transforming others.

## PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION OF CHILDREN IN FAMILY WORK

Just as both sets of parents reported on the importance of school, both sets of parents equally reported that their children participated in household chores and work. Among the families with limited schooling all of the children participated in household activities and many of the children helped with family businesses. In contrast, in families with extensive schooling, parents reported more help and participation at home compared to family businesses, and in one case the parents reported that the children did not help at all. However according to the interviews there is much greater diversity and complexity in the types of activities that children from families whose mothers have less than 9 years of schooling perform. Furthermore, the number of activities carried out daily by any one child varied between the two groups. The first group of families reported 3 to 6 activities per child including things such as sweeping, washing dishes, collecting firewood, caring for a sibling, feeding animals, running errands, and washing clothes (on different days). This contrasts with some cases in the group of families with more schooling who more frequently reported that the child's contribution consisted of "picking out his own clothes, and helping to wash or sweep when he feels up to it."

Moreover, it is particularly noteworthy that according to the maternal reports, children from families with less school experience participate and collaborate continually of their own initiative in activities that are beneficial for the whole family: from washing dishes, sweeping, mopping, doing laundry, running errands like shopping for tortillas for the whole family, and cooking and caring for siblings with full responsibility for them. They also help out in various complex tasks related to the family business. In contrast, the children of families with more school experience did work that involved individual benefit, acting sometimes out of obligation, such as picking up toys and clothes, which, from our point of view, are less complex tasks and have less responsibility than tasks performed by children from families with fewer years of schooling.

Families with mothers that have less than 9 years of school spoke of multiple events in which children collaborated on their own initiative. Within these accounts, we see how children develop important life skills, abilities, and knowledge:

M: My twins, they only have to see me sweeping, and [they say] "Look mom, you- or are you going to wash? Do you give me permission to sweep?" "Yes daughter [I say] only throw a bit of water down and put a little rag over that hole so dust doesn't come inside. And sweep away daughter." And yeah, they sweep everything. "Mom, do you give me permission to wash?" "Wash I tell them it helps so it doesn't pile up." For my part that's what I see (Mother with 2 years of schooling)

Another mother with three years of schooling reports:

M: Sometimes they go with their grandfather [to the fields]. Yeah, that's where they go.

I: And then when they go there, what do they do? What does Ricardo [son] do there?

M: Well... what? Only watches sometimes, like when his grandfather is chopping wood. And he watches and says, "I'll help" And so he'll help or do something like help gather wood.

I: And what else does he do with his grandfather?

M: He helps him clear the weeds [...] They clear the weeds or help fertilize the fields. (Mother 3 years of schooling)

In one interview a mother reported on a particularly enterprising child who at age 4 asked to help out in her family's shop (which she was allowed to do by waiting on customers). However this little girl also occasionally would ask to accompany her aunt in her bakery and her father in his carpentry shop. Thus at the age of 4 she has also learned a little about baking bread and working with wood.

In another interview a child who was present piped up to report how he takes care of his little sister by teaching her to walk using a *reboso* and teaching her to talk by speaking to her. He also commented on how he helps take care of his father's horse so that his father, who comes home tired from work, does not have to worry about it. It is important to point out that when telling accounts such as these the children show pride and joy in their ability to participate and the skills they possess. Parents also appeared to be very proud of their children and their abilities, but did not seem to think it was particularly remarkable or noteworthy that children *wanted* to participate.

In the interviews, the children whose parents have extensive schooling also indicated enjoying their participation in the work of their parents and their home, but took the initiative less frequently, or had fewer opportunities to do so. We also note that more schooled parents assign their children tasks with less difficulty and responsibility because they think that's all the children are capable of doing. This contrasts with the level of responsibility and complexity of the tasks and jobs involving children of parents with little school experience. One mother who is a teacher reported:

M: I take him to school with me the days he doesn't have class. I take him with me to the kindergarten and ask him to help me with the kids... to hand out things, to watch them, to...

I: And does he take initiative, or does he only do what you ask?

M: What he likes to do is play, but I tell him what he has to do. I tell him, "you are going to help me with this"

Another mother with 16 years of schooling reported:

M: He likes to help with food a lot. So when I am going to cook something he says, "I'll help you! How can I help you?" And he says "I want to chop," or "I want..." Well, I tell him sometimes we need cheese so I tell him, "help me grate the cheese." So it's like looking for things I think he can do. (Mother with 16 years of schooling)

In some cases these highly schooled parents discourage or do not permit participation in activities that they consider to have "too much responsibility" for children, such as caring for younger siblings. These are activities that children in other families do easily.

Mothers with less schooling report guiding their children to work in jobs that benefit the entire family (e.g. housework or helping small family businesses) in a way that is still presented as optional for the children and based in affection. In comparison, professional parents, especially those who are teachers, assume a more vertical and hierarchical role for activities that they introduce to their children as mandatory. They report guiding their children toward work for the child's personal benefit (e.g. picking out their own clothes, washing their socks) and stress that they would not ask children to do work for other members of the family. The interviews thus pointed to the different socialization practices which are based on contrasting notions about children's abilities, about tasks that support development, and about the child's place in the family and community.

M: Well, with their clothes above all... I tell them "put your clothes away, I'm not telling you to put away your dad's clothes or pick up mine, but put your clothes away" (Mother with 16 years of schooling, also a teacher).

Another father said:

F: ... and here in the family also, at the age that they are at, now we are also telling them to at least put their clothes away. Right? It's important that they start learning this... (Father with 16 years of schooling, mother with more than 9).

It is also noteworthy that these professional parents report not being able to find opportunities to incorporate their children into collaborative participation. In one family where both parents are teachers, the mother indicated wanting to teach her children different activities, but not being able to because their work didn't allow for it. Instead they attempted to keep their son entertained after school by watching television, playing on the computer, and having the son join a basketball team.

In the case of one family in which both parents and grandparents are teachers, both mother and father reported that they had many siblings and helped to care for them when they were young. Interestingly, the father recalls caring for his own younger brother as a child, by creating a sling out of a *rebozo* and carrying him while he played marbles and with a spinning top. However, he does not believe that his own children should be given that responsibility, even if they seek it out. The mother in this family reports that the children ask to babysit or look after children, but that she would not ask it of them. Rather she asks them to engage in simpler tasks such as helping her carry the diaper bag.

In the families where the children participate it appears that by engaging and contributing in necessary and important family activity children both engage and integrate with others in activity, thus this "work" is not something they are sent to do alone. Rather the child collaborates and engages with the grandparent, the mother, or aunt, while performing necessary and productive activities together. At some point later the child takes initiative to do the work by themselves like the girl who takes on the responsibility of feeding the cows or the boy who takes care of the horse. In contrast, in families where children are assigned and obligated to look after their own things (for example in picking one's clothes off the floor) it is often a solitary activity. Children may find the activity unattractive and be more reluctant to do it.

### ... CHERÁN AND CHANGES IN CONCEPTIONS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO INCREASED SCHOOLING

These interviews shed light on how parents' conceptions about children's learning, development, and role in family and community life are related to their participation in the cultural institution of school. These changes are evident in the contrasting views of the current parents as well as in the contrasting views across generations. In the past, in many families school often was considered an impediment to learning to work, and learning to work was considered more beneficial than learning something in school. Today, we observe substantial differences, especially in families that have one or two generations of school experience or who are teachers regarding their children's participation in activities that support the family either at home or in paid work scenarios.

In the current generation, families with more highly schooled parents guide their children under the assumption that going to school is mandatory and an expected step based on Western ideas about the benefits of the school. In contrast, parents with little schooling, while recognizing that reaching higher levels of school can benefit their child in finding jobs that are safer and better paid, often incorporate collaborative activities that allow them to learn about the work and tasks of everyday life that are supportive for the whole family. In addition, children in these families show initiative and willingness to collaborate spontaneously. This was not the case among families with more schooled parents who think children should study and perform the tasks and activities required by the

school, and at home should work on personal activities like cleaning up their own belongings. However, it is interesting that these same parents recognize that when they were children they learned by participating in family work and the work of the community.

Similarly, the interviews showed that most mothers with less school experience involve their children in housework or paid work gradually, without forcing them, and in collaboration with other participants. Children are assumed to be part of the activity and the group while they learn more complex phases of the same task. This contrasts with the way in which parents with more school experience (who think that the child's primary task is school) assign mandatory jobs to children that require them to work individually, not in joint collaboration with other participants. It is possible that this difference between engaging collaboratively with others and performing an activity alone is what makes the difference between children who are shown to take initiative and have pride in their abilities, versus those who do not want to be assigned tasks with individual obligations.

### Need School Always Lead to the Same Changes?

The research seems to suggest that highly schooled parents in Indigenous communities have learned concepts of education and what is supposed to be best for the development of their children which are different from the values and practices of their communities. Over generations parenting practices are transformative, and children may thus lose potential opportunities to learn by collaborating and participating in accordance with their community values. The vignettes in this chapter serve to illustrate transformations in conceptions of child development, educational practices, and traditions in one direction with increased participation in school. However we believe it may be possible to call attention to the importance of *Learning by Observing and Pitching In*, and its importance as a learning tool and tradition in communities that have Indigenous history. We believe it is important to highlight the skills and knowledge gained through this participation in activity. The decreased participation in family and community is promoted by school in many ways, but it need not be the only way that school is organized (see Rogoff, Turkkanis, & Bartlett, 2002). Indeed, many alternative schools in the United States are trying to incorporate and encourage this sort of meaningful participation in community life in its students. It may be possible that by bringing attention to the skills and benefits of this form of learning, other ways of organizing child life and learning may be valued just as bilingualism was once seen negatively in the school context, but has since become valued in the educational systems of Mexico and across the world. This is particularly true in light of current research which points to the benefits of contributing to families. Latino adolescents in the United States for example, reported that providing their family with assistance was not seen as stressful but rather provided a sense of fulfillment, and was associated with higher levels of happiness (Telzer & Fuligni, 2009).

However, due to the conception of child participation in family work as harmful, children are increasingly segregated from the participation and learning of the activities organized by the community. Their daily lives are instead spent developing a repertoire of individual skills that is supposed to serve them many years later. The children are being prepared for adult life, but they are not integrated into the community with the skills and values that involve living with various age groups from infancy, in activities that are of value to the family or the community.

### *Developing a Repertoire of Cultural Practices*

Although much of the research presented in this chapter documents the tendency for traditional Indigenous ways of organizing child life to change after prolonged experience with school, we believe more research is necessary to find out if and how multiple cultural ways of organizing child life and learning can co-exist. Research on bilingualism provides some evidence that one cultural system need not always replace another (Zentella, 1997). There are also some cultural values such as the notion of *respeto* in Indigenous heritage communities that are culturally resilient. Regardless of family schooling history, Mexican heritage children in the United States whose families came from rural areas of Mexico showed *respeto* to an adult, and did not interrupt her ongoing activity, in contrast to European American children who interrupted and demanded her attention (Ruvalcaba, López, Rogoff, Correa-Chávez, & Gutierrez, 2015).

From what we were told, teachers in the community of Cherán noted that their learning experiences related to participation in cultural traditions. Therefore they are already familiar with this form of organizing child learning and have benefited from it as well. The tacit understanding of this cultural way of learning which comes up against their teacher training in the national project of cultural homogenization may also explain the ambivalence many Indigenous teachers reported having towards their profession (Bertely, 2011; Dietz, 2000; Keyser, 2009; Medina 2006b). This training may have created distance between language, culture and community practices on the one hand, and on the other, the values and practices of school. However Indigenous teachers, including their own families, are still part of the community and participate in its traditions. We see this integration as a potential for teachers and other professionals to be mediators of transformations that they consider relevant to their socio-cultural context.

We would end by noting that many of the skills that children learn in interactions with others; the ability to take initiative in learning, the skills at collaborating with others, and the ability to be aware of important information that will be useful in the future are the very skills that many employers are looking for, given the increasingly complex and changing nature of our world. These are skills that children in many Indigenous communities are already learning. If schools could learn to integrate and value these skills in a meaningful way it would benefit not just these children, but likely society as well.

### NOTE

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## CHAPTER 7

# PARADIGMS IN ARRANGING FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Andrew Dayton and Barbara Rogoff

## PARADIGMS IN ARRANGING FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

This article explores contrasts between two paradigms in the ways communities facilitate learning, in order to articulate how the organization of learning in many Indigenous communities of the Americas fits with broader worldviews. We argue that distinct ways of learning align with distinct epistemologies or worldviews, in deeply contrasting paradigms. Extensive research indicates that the ways of living and thinking of Indigenous people of the Americas tend to be *holistic* and *relational* (reviewed by Chandler, 2013, on the basis of contributions from Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders such as Battiste & Henderson, Ermine, Gegeo, Meyer, Quanchi, Smith, West, among others). This holistic, relational approach has often been contrasted with Western ways of living and thinking, which have been characterized as atomistic, dividing coherent processes into isolated skills and pieces of information.

In many Indigenous communities of the Americas, the organization of learning is based on inclusion. This approach has been called Learning by Observing and Pitching In ("LOPI," Rogoff, 2014; see [www.learningbyobservingandpitchingin.com](http://www.learningbyobservingandpitchingin.com); for-

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merly 'intent community participation,' Rogoff et al., 2003). In the LOPI approach, children are treated as part of the community, not separated into an isolated 'child world' apart from a bounded 'adult world.' Children's learning is encouraged and expected to occur through their active roles in the community, both observing and contributing to ongoing events of their families and communities as they collaborate with others, with initiative from the children as well as their social partners. The goal of learning is the *transformation of participation*, with children learning how to responsibly contribute to family and community endeavors, as well as gaining relevant skills and information.

In contrast with an inclusion paradigm, the mainstream Western learning paradigm divides social activity into separate units (adult world vs child world, isolated bits of knowledge and skill, teacher vs learner) and is based on learners progressively piecing together bits of information (Rogoff, 1998). We examine these two paradigms, considering how individual and sociocultural processes relate. We then argue that the two paradigms can be seen across very broad timescales, from cultural historical scales to fractions of seconds. We present evidence that community differences along the lines of these paradigms can be discerned in viewing a few seconds of engagement in family interactions.

#### LEARNING AS A RESULT OF TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION AND SKILLS

In a paradigm that separates the learner analytically from the world, the process of learning is treated unilaterally. Sometimes it is viewed as run by the learner, in a process of *acquisition*, as the learner discovers information or invents skills. But in schools it is often treated as a process of *transmission*, with the expectation that learning results from being taught, a process controlled by adults and broken into stepwise lessons controlled by experts who deliver information and skills (Rogoff, 1998).

Several explanations for children's learning emphasize the importance or even the necessity of teaching, with the goal of experts 'transmitting' bits of information and isolated skills to novices in specialized settings focused on instruction. Teaching interactions are considered critical to the development of competence and are characterized by a pedagogical interactional style common among middle-class caregivers (Csibra & Gergely, 2009; Gergely & Csibra, 2013; Schwier et al., 2006; Tomasello & Carpenter, 2007). For example, in the Natural Pedagogy approach and related accounts of child development, caregivers enact a deliberate pedagogical stance, using artificially animated facial expressions, an excited voice with special, animated pitch changes, and exaggerated gestures and narrative repetition (Csibra & Gergely, 2009; Paradise et al., 2014). To teach a child the word for a color, for example, a caregiver might open his eyes and mouth very wide, point to several red things and with mock enthusiasm say "Red!" in several different ways. This approach posits that 'naturally pedagogical' interaction is

accomplished by contingency in voice, gaze, and facial expression in direct, face-to-face interaction between caregiver and child.

These pedagogical forms are closely related to those that are often used in Western schooling. For example, language is often used not for communication in a shared endeavor, but to quiz learners with questions asking for answers that are already known to the questioner or to provide running commentary on events that everyone saw (Rogoff, 2014; Rogoff, Mistry, Göncü, & Mosier, 1993). These forms fit a paradigm that treats learning as a separate activity, isolated from productive activities and community life, in which adults create specialized child-focused or child-centered interactions and activities for the sake of instruction.

#### LEARNING AS INCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION THAT FOSTERS 'TRANSFORMATION OF PARTICIPATION'

In the paradigm based on inclusion, in Learning by Observing and Pitching In, primary theoretical emphasis is placed on shared processes within productive activities. Children's participation in actual ongoing family and community practice is enabled and encouraged, in order to support their ongoing enhanced performance—not focused on lessons with isolated steps to build skills (Morelli, Rogoff, & Angelillo, 2003; Rogoff, 2014). Children's inclusion as contributors to the community develops the skills valued by all involved, adults and children alike, with the contributions of each specifically suited to the tasks at hand, in accord with individual capability, interest, and local necessity.

This approach emphasizes the importance of access to ongoing family and community endeavors. By observing and contributing to ongoing activity, children develop skill and relevant knowledge, as they transform their participation in family and community activities over time and adapt intergenerational practices to the unique demands and opportunities that their individual life trajectories present (Rogoff, 2003, 2011).

From a transformation of participation perspective, learning results from engagement in shared endeavors, based on the organization of the endeavors in which children are incorporated as well as on the efforts of the children themselves. This requires embeddedness, not isolation, of skills in order to accomplish competent performance. For example, Mayan mothers have traditionally assisted their daughters' learning of complex weaving skills by preparing a loom to allow the daughter responsibility for simpler aspects of weaving, and then progressively reducing the simplification as the daughter becomes skilled with the simpler aspects of weaving (Rogoff, 2011; see also Lave, 2011, for analyses of the learning of tailors in Liberia). It is important to note that the steps of learning to weave are sequenced within the process of weaving itself. This approach contrasts with the idea that children learn by building isolated skills separate from the overall target activity and later combining these into complex productive performance.

In an inclusion approach, limited emphasis is placed on caregiver-child teaching interactions for the sake of the child's development. Instead, the focus is on



the child learning the necessary skills to play a contributing role in family and community everyday endeavors and these skills' relation to the roles into which the child is growing. Although adults sometimes explain things or provide advice to children in LOPI, this is in the context of the children's ongoing collaboration in everyday endeavors (Rogoff, 2014), rather than lengthy explanation or exercises to instruct children in 'building block skills.' Both the process and the goal are the transformation of participation itself.

For example, a Peruvian infant worn in a sling may not often be deliberately separated from her mother, sat immediately facing her and "taught" the word for 'stone' (Bolin, 2006; Callaghan et al., 2011). Instead, she will feel this utterance reverberate comfortably in her own chest and view the relevant events to which the word contributes, as her mother uses it in their shared everyday social life. The infant learns how to contribute to the particular rhythms and frequencies (words and pauses, songs and silence) of her immediately embodied environment. This kind of dynamic mutual constituency does more than teach the infant that some particular sound stands for some kind of object (Damasio, 1999). It also connects the developing infant directly to "how it feels" to be part of everyday life in her community (Gallagher, 2008; Trevarthen, 2011).

Given this conception of the facilitation of children's learning, cognition is not a walled-off individual process that results from lessons from other individuals; rather, children's everyday social engagement is the primary base of cognition. Learning is a 'non-reducible' socio-cognitive process—individual contributions cannot be regarded as separate from their social aspects (Rogoff, 1998).

The holistic integration inherent in the paradigm of *transformation of participation*, in Learning by Observing and Pitching In, contrasts with the separation inherent to the *transmission* paradigm. Transformation of individual children's participation in specific, novel circumstances, as well as transformation of the practices of entire communities over generations and centuries are seen as continuously and *mutually constituted* and simultaneously co-evolving (Rogoff, 2003).

This idea of mutually constituting relations of individual development and community cultural process is illustrated in a case study of a Mayan midwife and her town. It demonstrates how the life of this Indigenous woman is shaped by the historical cultural legacy of previous generations and at the same time contributes to the maintenance and transformation of cultural practices (Rogoff, 2011). The midwife makes use of sophisticated knowledge and skills that she inherited from practices more than 5 centuries old—such as how to adjust the position of a fetus into the normal birth position by external version. At the same time that she maintains ancient practices, she contributes to their adaptation and invents new approaches to improve the birth process and the role of women in her society. Likewise, the lives of children and families in this Mayan community—and in all communities—are built on inherited practices as well as on each generation's innovations and the choices (deliberate or not) that individuals make to maintain, adapt, or discard the practices of daily life and to adopt or invent new ones.

In an inclusion paradigm, children will (and are biologically well-suited to) learn what they desire or need to, at the pace set by the entire set of practices that surround them. "Kids pick it up when they want to...or have to. Then you don't really teach 'em, you just put 'em to work!" (Nathan Wolfe, Cherokee Traditionalist and Cherokee Nation Certified Cultural Outreach Instructor, personal communication). In this way children learn and evolve the locally important skills to facilitate the constitution and continuation of their own families and communities over generations, while there is ample "space" for individual creativity, innovation and adaptation of these practices.

In communities where Learning by Observing and Pitching In is prominent, opportunities to learn are inseparable from the constantly evolving web of community practices and values (Rogoff, 2014). Although children everywhere have some involvement in LOPI in some contexts, this organization of learning appears to be especially prevalent and valued in Indigenous communities of the Americas. It is also common in communities in which immigrants to the United States from Mexico and Central America retain some historically Indigenous values and practices and children often collaborate in ongoing family and community endeavors (Rogoff, 2014; Rogoff, Najafi, & Mejia-Arauz, 2014).

#### DEVELOPMENTAL TIMESCALES IN INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL APPROACHES TO LEARNING

In a holistic approach, historical processes of generational changes can reveal similar patterns to those that occur during individual learning and development across ontogeny. We suggest that similar patterns can be discerned and studied even at micro scales. Developmental timescales can be heuristically and analytically narrowed from ethnographic observations spanning entire cultural communities across several generations to informative comparisons of specific sociocultural activities at a microgenetic timescale.

To study and understand individual learning and cultural processes holistically, we offer the analogy of a fractal, which exhibits patterns at any scale: The patterns found in a smaller spatial/duration scale are also the patterns found in larger spatial/duration scales of the same phenomenon.

Systematic patterns of stability and variation in practices emerge at any developmental timescale. Our view is similar to Vygotsky's and Scribner's explication of developmental processes that occur simultaneously and continuously in microgenesis, ontogenesis, sociohistorical processes, and phylogenesis (Scribner, 1985). Note the contrast of this approach with the ubiquitous compartmentalization of 'biology' and 'culture' in the Nature/Nurture question that still organizes much mainstream research in developmental psychology, despite many demonstrations and arguments that these cannot be isolated from each other.

In what follows, we propose combining cultural/historical views of family interactions with microgenetic views, examining distinct cultural approaches to the organization of moment-by-moment, and even second-by-second, interaction. We

examine community differences in engaging as a fluid ensemble where all are mutually involved vs social organization involving division of roles. With this combination of tools, we demonstrate cultural differences in small fractions of a second that correspond with the paradigms of inclusion or separation that we are discussing here.

### ENGAGING AS A FLUID ENSEMBLE OR DIVIDING ROLES IN MOMENT-TO-MOMENT INTERACTION

The contrast in epistemologies that we are emphasizing is visible in cultural contrasts of children's and adults' ways of engaging that relate to Learning by Observing and Pitching In. The contrast is especially notable in regards to how people coordinate with each other—through prevalence of collaboration or of division of labor (Rogoff, 2014). For example, in some Indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas, children regularly pitch in to help with family household work with initiative, and they state that this is just a matter of being a responsible part of the group. In contrast, middle-class children whose families have extensive experience with Western schooling often show little initiative in helping out and when they do help with household work, it is often limited to taking care of their 'own' messes and belongings and is treated as an individual chore, assigned or contracted by an adult (Alcalá et al., 2014; Coppens et al., 2014). In experimental situations, also, greater collaboration has been found among Mexican and Guatemalan children and families with more involvement with Indigenous practices than among families with extensive experience in Western schooling (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Mejía-Arauz et al., 2007).

Such observations of emphasis on collaboration in families and among children have prompted the characterization of social relations in LOP as *fluid* collaboration (Rogoff, 2014). In fluid collaboration, dyads or groups of people engage with each other as a *collaborative ensemble*, coordinating and blending ideas with flexible leadership and with a mutually determined pace. Everyone is engaged, and anyone may take initiative.

In a contrasting pattern, people divide an activity into separate efforts that may not be coordinated or may be negotiated in order to reunite the divided roles. This may involve unilateral control by one party or use of the cultural practice of turn-taking to negotiate access to materials or to make decisions. If the divided roles are not coordinated, someone may be 'off task,' or the parties may conflict or work at cross-purposes. Several studies have documented cultural differences in the use of turn-taking or other divided roles. This appears to be common among European American middle-class children and families and rare among Navajo peers, Mayan families, and Mexican immigrant peer and sibling groups, who in turn show more collaboration (Chavajay & Rogoff, 2002; Ellis & Gauvain, 1992; López et al., 2012; Mejía-Arauz et al., 2007).

In closely examining fluid collaboration, Alcalá and Rogoff (2014) found that sibling pairs were more likely to blend their ideas as an ensemble (in a planning task) if they were from a US Mexican family background with likely experience

of Indigenous Mexican practices and limited experience of Western schooling. In contrast, sibling pairs from European American family backgrounds with extensive Western schooling were more likely to divide their roles in the task, often with one of the siblings telling the other what to do without the other having a role in decision making, or one or both siblings ignoring the other although they were asked to create a combined plan. Sibling pairs from Mexican immigrant backgrounds but from families with extensive Western schooling showed an intermediate pattern.

We are in the process of examining such cultural differences with the use of microanalyses of patterns of social engagement that can be distinguished in fractions of seconds. In this research, we use a combination of cultural comparison and microanalytic methods as tools to characterize the distinct paradigms of collaborative inclusion or division into separate units. Cultural differences in engagement as a fluid ensemble or division of roles are detectable even in these very brief observations of family groups.

We are analyzing videotapes of family triads (1-year-old, 3- to 5-year-old, and their mothers) in slow motion during the 5 seconds in which the family groups anticipated the offer of each of 6 novel objects from a research assistant and over the next 5 seconds as they began to explore the novel object. We characterize each 200-millisecond period in terms of the way that the family engages together. Our preliminary findings indicate that Guatemalan Mayan families, with mothers who averaged 3 years of Western schooling, more often engaged mutually and with fluidity, with all three coordinating their attention and movements. In contrast, European American family triads (with an average of 16 years of maternal schooling) seemed more often to attend to individual foci of attention, with some or all of the group engaged in different activities or with conflicting actions or awkward attempts to coordinate.

In addition to contributing to the understanding of cultural aspects of children's learning and the organization of communities' support for children's learning and development, our findings hold promise for theoretical approaches to understanding the relation of individual, interpersonal, and cultural/historical processes. Microanalysis of culturally embedded activity involving caregivers and children will allow us to identify learning processes 'in the wild' that are predicted by three separate but converging current theories: social cognition (Spivey, 2007, as features of 'phase space'), social neuroscience (Schilbach et al., 2013, as '2<sup>nd</sup>-person' or 'embedded, cross-person neural processes' or the so-called 'dark matter of neuroscience'), and dynamical systems (DeJaegher & DiPaulo, 2007, as 'coordinative structures'; 'autonomous, autopoietic non-linear dynamical systems').

The use of ethnographically rigorous cultural comparisons combined with microanalysis represents an important step in describing these inter- and intra-personal processes. From refined descriptions we learn something about the cultural nature of embodied socio-cognitive processes—such as joint attention, gaze following, and goal-sharing—and their role in learning and early social cognition.

Competence in interactional synchrony and fluid collaboration with culturally and historically embedded activities of other human beings appear to be valued forms of learning in communities with traditions in Indigenous American practices and processes of social and cognitive engagement (Rogoff et al., 2014; Urrieta, 2013). Indigenous practices and processes of social and societal adaptive co-regulation have only been upset on a global scale for a few generations, and this not without continual, vital and *vitality* various intergenerational Indigenous adaption, resistance, and survival (Chandler, 2013; Chandler & LaLonde, 2008; Dayton & Rogoff, 2013; Rogoff, 2003, 2011; Wilcox, 2009). A crucial empirical endeavor is examination across generations of the resilience or instability of practices that play a role in arrangements for learning.

Interactional synchrony and coordinative performance fit with a holistic, inclusive epistemology, which we believe corresponds with many descriptions of the practices and values embodied in Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Indigenous Pedagogies (e.g., the work of Basso, Brayboy, Cajete, Kawagley, Lomawaima, Philips, Suina, Swisher, Urrieta). It is likely learned by pitching in with experienced others who both share in and simultaneously locally adapt this value in their ongoing, moment-to-moment embodied socio-cognitive engagements (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). Thus, inclusive and holistic forms of engagement may be both the source and the goal of learning in the paradigm described as transformation of participation as well as in many Indigenous American communities and their moment-to-moment social interactions.

## NOTE

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## CHAPTER 8

## TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

### Interfaces of Mental Health Care in a Xukuru do Ororubá Community, Pernambuco

Edinaldo dos Santos Rodrigues and Luciana Nogueira Fioroni

In the scenery of historical problems and advances made concerning indigenous populations and Brazilian society, Health is one of the main issues. This issue concerns the point of view of services offered but also the different rationalities that integrate treatment, cure and divergent representations from health professionals, *pajés*, *curandeiros*<sup>1</sup>, and Indians that carry some sort of mental suffering.

Current perspectives involved in actions on indigenous health derive from the creation, in 1999, of the Indigenous Health Subsystem, at the federal administration. It belongs to the Unified Health System (SUS) of Brazilian State. The subsystem was established in order to promote basic health attention, until then absent in the great majority of indigenous communities (Langdon, 2007). It is articulated with the secondary level of health care (hospitals) and with the more

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: *Pajé*: spiritual leader of an indigenous village. *Curandeiro*: a healer.

complex care with the network of the Unified Health System administrated by states and cities.

For our purposes we will focus on actions on mental health. Although the policies of the subsystem indicate the need for articulation and mutual respect between different forms of care, the introduction of health services in indigenous communities remains highly oriented by the biomedical logic and recurrent use of medical prescriptions to treat complaints of organic and psychical suffering.

The present research aimed at highlighting the tension between traditional care practices and health programs derived from current indigenous health policies implemented in the Xukuru do Ororubá community, in the countryside of the state of Pernambuco, Brazil.

Before the implementation of the Indigenous Special Sanitary District of Pernambuco (DSEI-PE), a segment of the subsystem, the majority of Xukurus living in villages would seek traditional wisdom when ill. Frequently, elders had never had contact with western healthcare. When they became ill, they resorted to teas and infusions of medicinal plants, except in extreme cases.

#### ABOUT XUKURU PEOPLE

The Xukurus inhabit the Serra do Ororubá (Ororubá Mountain Range), in the city of Pesqueira, Agreste region of Pernambuco, 215km distant from the capital, Recife. There is record of their existence as far as 1651, since which time they seemed to have been completely wiped out. In the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Xukuru people regained visibility, identified by historians from cultural expressions and distinctive dialects (Silva, 2007). Their history, marked by significant movements of exclusion and social, economic, and cultural segregation, is also notable for its resistances, which led to current indigenous reaffirmation. In the 80s, during the redemocratization process in Brazil, a group of Xukurus joined the National Indigenous Movement, and began to fight for their rights, striving to face injustice and gain acknowledgement as a free, autonomous ethnic group.

The struggle for the recovery of their territory and for recognition of their identity gained strength since 1988, when the current Federal Constitution, which guarantees rights to indigenous peoples (Almeida, 2002), came into force. This process stimulated the formation of leaderships in the 23 villages that compose the Xukuru territory. A monthly forum was created, coordinated by the cacique, one of the leaders, to discuss development policies and strategies as well as territorial organization strategies (Lima, 2008). Xukuru organizations are composed of teachers, health professionals, and other members of the communities.

The demarcation of their lands by FUNAI (National Indigenous Foundation) happened in 1995, establishing a territory of 27,555 "hectares," in a perimeter of around 90 square kilometers. The homologation was only carried out in 2001 (Silva, 2008). Before that, in the 70s, FUNAI offered eventual medical assistance,

and the Xukuru Indians already accessed the city, therefore having contact with the culture and (health) practices of non-Indians.

In this process, the 1935 article by journalist Mário Melo (cited by Silva, 2008) is of special interest. The publication, "Pernambuco's Ethnography: the Xukuru do Ararubá<sup>2</sup>," comments on the strong influence of Catholicism and indigenous religiosity in rituals and practices of the Xukuru. The author considers it some type of idolatry. To this day, the Xukuru rituals have strong influence from *Candomblé*<sup>3</sup> and Catholic rites.

#### THE INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL CURE MODEL

Health issues faced by the indigenous population were traditionally dealt with by members of the community with healing powers, such as the *pajé* and other people with traditional knowledge. This was done through rituals, *pajelanças*<sup>4</sup>, prayers and the use of medicinal plants. The preservation of their culture, history, values and collective and individual identity is highly dependent on the oral transmission of these traditions from the elders to the younger generations.

New diseases were introduced in the natives' repertoire through contact with other societies, followed by new forms of conceiving sickness. This process also implied in the loss of mother languages, cultural identities and territories. As a result, the new forms of sickness were connected to the lack of territory, water, provisions and cultural life: verminosis, intestinal infections, and, afterwards, chronic-degenerative diseases and high consumption of psychotropic drugs (Souza, 2004). A 'medication culture' emerged among the Xukuru indigenous population, having women and children as central targets. As in non-indigenous communities, the male population resists going to the doctor and taking vaccines.

Parallel to the incorporation of the external culture, the Xukuru community maintains a strong traditional cure system, kept by people with indigenous knowledge: the *pajé*, the *benzedeiros*, the *curandeiros*, the *rezadores*, and the *raizeiros*<sup>5</sup>. These are the characters that construct an etiology model with its own logic of explaining phenomena of suffering and sickness. Traditional practices are kept by the elders and, since nothing is done to value these practices, they face the risk of extinction with the death of the elders (Souza, 2004). The elders have, in accordance to tradition, a particular way of signifying the health-sickness process.

To these Indians, the gift of wisdom is something the individual inherits. It is a pre-disposition to be a *pajé* that allows him to develop his mission, established by

<sup>2</sup> The denomination Xukuru do Ararubá, essa denominação apareceu em documentos antigos ao se referirem à etnia Xukuru do Ororubá. For more information, see: "Memories and history of the Serra do Ororubá Indians (Pesqueira/PE) 1950-1988 (Silva, 2008)

<sup>3</sup> T. N.: *Candomblé*: religion with African origins practiced in Brazil.

<sup>4</sup> T. N.: *Pajelanças*: generic term for indigenous rituals.

<sup>5</sup> T. N.: *Benzedeiros*, *curandeiros*, *rezadores*, and *raizeiros* are social categories that promote cure by means of prayers, rituals and the use of objects and natural resources. This is also true of the *pajé* and the *curandeiro*.

Sacred Nature. This wisdom, received as inheritance, does not have a set time to manifest itself. They do so when nature determines the person is ready to assume her mission.

The majority of diseases cured by the *rezadores* do not have an organic cause according to the Xukuru. They are related to what non-indigenous medicine calls psychical or mental diseases. They cause deep affliction and are what Souza (2004) calls "*Diseases that only rituals cure*." The rituals used to cure these problems go from initiation of mediums in *Toré*<sup>6</sup>, in which the afflicted person is informed about his mission, to rituals requested to obtain a certain cure. For example: mothers that search for people with traditional knowledge to cure their children when they are taken by a type of sickness called by the elders "*ramo*," "evil eye," "fallen wind."

The therapeutic action of prayer can cause sickness in the *rezador*, depending on the seriousness of the case. The patient's disease would affect the healer. For this reason, he must go through a preparation ritual so as to not contrive the illness (Souza, 2004). It is possible to trace a parallel between this phenomenon and the notions of transference and counter-transference in the psychological clinical procedure, which shows exactly the means by which speech can assume a therapeutic function. In this process, both therapist and patient are affected by the suffering. It is possible to observe that the actions of the *curandeiro* bring both physical and emotional consequences. When he finishes a procedure, he suffers similar symptoms and sensations to those seen in the patient.

The anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1993) explained cure symbology in traditional societies through the concept of "symbolic efficacy." Until this day, anthropology makes use of this concept to clarify the ritualistic cure method efficacy, mobilizing the mythic symbolism of traditional peoples, considering the opposition between the mythical and the scientific way of thinking (Renshaw, 2006). This concept contributes to the understanding of the 'therapeutic itinerary' of the Xukuru, represented in rituals of *pajelança*, prayers, and the use of medicinal plants, the mysteries involved in the healing process. It also highlights the threats to this system of signification and cure.

This 'therapeutic itinerary' among the Xukuru marks important moments in the indigenous person's process of becoming ill and defines the type of therapeutic choice. To Langdon (2007), the choice of the therapeutic model is determined by a sequence of decisions that results in the diagnosis and treatment leading to cure, or at least as a means of diminishing the affliction caused by the disease. This is only observed under the care of a carrier of traditional knowledge.

<sup>6</sup> *Toré* is an indigenous ritual involving dance. It is performed by the Xukuru and other ethnic groups of the Northeast and is passed on through generations by oral tradition. To Indians, the *toré* has different meanings in the constitution of people's and community's identity.

## BIOMEDICAL HEALTH MODEL AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH POLICIES

The governmental assistance to the Xukuru people's health is organized in accordance to the Indigenous Health Subsystem, formed by doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, social assistants, nursery technicians, plus indigenous health, basic sanitation, and environment agents (Langdon & Diehl, 2007). When FUNASA (National Health Foundation) assumed indigenous health in 1999, the Xukuru ethnic group did not have functioning Indigenous Health Units and the three existing precarious units in the villages depended on professionals hired by the Municipal Health Bureau (SMS).

For a long time FUNAI was responsible for assistance in indigenous health and education, besides landholding issues. The causes advocated by indigenous leaders, supported by NGO's, led indigenous populations to persist in search of more legitimate guarantees. The pressure on the National Constituent Assembly of 1988 resulted in new rights in the Federal Constitution, turning into an important instrument for the implementation of public policies for the protection of indigenous populations, respecting the integration of their culture (Confalonieri, 1989).

The Indigenous Health Subsystem (PNSI) was born from the Unified Health System (SUS) in the 90s, adopting the same principles of equity and integrality. The peculiarity of this health care system is the incorporation of traditional knowledge for healing, through valorization of such practices as acknowledgment of its therapeutic efficiency (Macedo, 2007).

In 1999, with the passing of the Arouca law, the Health Ministry assumed responsibility for indigenous peoples' health. Professionals and equipment were incorporated from FUNAI. The health care model was reorganized in an attempt to fit into SUS's structure. To organize health care services, 34 DSEI (Special Indigenous Sanitary District) were implemented, under the administration of FUNASA. This process resulted in the growing incorporation of health professionals, mainly multi-professional teams (EMSI), composed of indigenous health agents (AIS), indigenous sanitary and environment agents (AISAM), doctors, surgeon dentists (CD), assistants and technicians in dental hygiene (THD), nurses and nursery technicians. Moreover, it allowed the enlargement of the basic health units (UBS), the access to reference-units for medium and high complexity in the hierarchical system of SUS, and the restructuration of urban support units for patients referred by Indigenous Health Houses (CASAI) (Yamamoto, 2004).

This health system is still composed of Indigenous Family Health Programs (PSFIs), constituted by health vigilance, women's, children's, elder's and men's health, oral health, basic sanitation, environment, and specific areas that respond to inherent demands on health care offered by SUS, such as e.g., the incorporation of traditional cure and mental health. This last item received funding from the International Bank through VIGISUS/FUNASA, (Langdon & Diehl, 2007). Vigisus is an agreement reached between the Brazilian government and the International Bank. It is divided in three stages and three distinct components, namely: Com-



ponent I—to improve healthcare models, management, financial supervision and organization of Indigenous Health; Component II—to perform innovative healthcare actions with interventions structured in Traditional Indigenous Medicine, Mental Health, and Food and Nutritional Vigilance; Component III—to support community projects in health elaborated by Indians to solve local problems and incorporate valuable teachings from these projects in the Indigenous Health Subsystem. It is noted that Component II was operated by FUNASA until 2010, and was directed at reinforcing indigenous health and basic sanitation in indigenous and remnant *Quilombo* communities (Mendonça, 2004).

The publication of Ministerial Directive nº 2.759 (Portaria Ministerial nº 2.759), of October 25<sup>th</sup> 2007, aimed at the creation and support of strategies to confront psychosocial problems in indigenous communities. This takes into consideration the high incidence of alcohol and other psychoactive substances abuse. An aggravating factor for the creation of programs in indigenous mental health was the increase in the number of deaths by suicide. In this context, isolated actions in mental health were started in some DSEIs. During this period, indigenous health teams already pointed out the significant increase in demands for specialized services in mental health and also the increase in psychotropic medication consumption among these populations. This demand was noticed both by the teams that worked in the villages and by indigenous leaders (Fundação Nacional de Saúde, 2009).

The DSEI-PE was formed in 1999, in the capital of the state of Pernambuco, Recife. It covers a population of approximately 50 thousand Indians, of 12 different ethnic groups: Atikun, Funi-ô, Pankararu, Pankararu Entre Serras, Pankará, Pipipã, Kambiawá, Kapinawá, Truká, Tuxá, Xukuru do Ororubá and Xukuru de Cimbres. The structural pattern is the same as the one established for the rest of Brazilian districts. Actions in basic care are performed in partnership with city and state health bureaus through multi professional teams specialized in indigenous health (EMSIs). Healthcare needs of medium and high complexity are dealt with through an agreement with an ambulatory and hospital network of the Unified Health System (SUS), which includes medical services for patients with mental disorders. Besides medical services offered by the EMSIs and the mental health team of the DSEI, patients with mental disorders are referred to Centers of Psychosocial Attention (CAPS) when needed.

In indigenous communities, health policies should be constructed through social control, with participative management involving professionals and population. The aim would be to supervise, monitor, and plan health actions to be developed in communities. Brazilian indigenous peoples have different forms of organizing themselves, therefore, social control varies from village to village. In almost all cases, control is exerted through the community's collective experience and norms established by older leaders and adopted by the caciques (main village

leader) and pajés. It also regards the participation of local social organizations, such as educational and leadership counsels (Athias & Machado, 2001).

Studies about process conditions on illness and mental health of the indigenous population are fundamental to support and consistency for the construction and sustainability of public policies on health mental indigenous. There are few studies in Brazil related to the subject of mental health in indigenous communities. Most of them concern alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide. Most Brazilian indigenous societies have contact with non-Indians and suffer not only with changes in life style but also with threats and violence derived from territorial conflicts (Venere, 2005). In the study "Alcoholism among the Kaingang: from the sacred and playful to dependence," Oliveira (2001) presents the meaning of fermented beverages in the ritualistic context, utilized as a form of group reaffirmation in sacred and profane celebrations. The author suggests that the construction of distilleries in indigenous areas is a factor of social disaggregation inside communities.

Coloma (2001) emphasizes the importance of socio-cultural changes in the process of colonization, analyzing individual and social suffering and alcoholism as being in balance with other social problems. Venere (2005) points to the lack of adequate policies directed to Indians with special needs, among them those who suffer from more severe mental disorders and other deficiencies. Most are treated by health teams in the PSFIs and SUS network, without consideration for their specificities or their rights to specific policies in health and education. Venere also observes the lack of adequately trained professionals in the treatment of patients with special needs.

Cardoso (2002) criticizes the model of integral care to indigenous peoples' health, saying it is not adequately prepared for the specificities of Brazilian indigenous populations, nor does it include adequate policies for psychosocial care. He suggests the need for a proposal that regards such the specificities. Above all, it should attempt to comprehend mental health in this context.

To Tardivo (2008), identity loss has great meaning in the lives of young Indians in the Alto Rio Negro. Many deny their identities and live in dysfunctional conditions in the big cities, involved with alcoholism, drugs and above all vulnerable to depression and other psychical sufferings. "A denied past, a future with no perspectives, and a destroyed present" (Tardivo, 2008, p. 34).

The concepts are presented by the authors in different explanations for the causes of mental illness among indigenous peoples. It can be explained by the disharmony of the Indian person with the earth and his surroundings, since the earth is the main source of support for Indians. It provides individual, family, social and cultural ties. With these initial considerations, we highlight the importance of the type of investigation here proposed, for we consider that processes of cultural, economic, and social affirmation of a Brazilian indigenous ethnic group produce deep transformations in the forms of organization of the family, the community, and of subjectivity. This has a direct impact on the process of health and disease, our object of interest. We will emphasize the articulation or lack of it between

<sup>1</sup>*Quilombo*: communities of afro-descendants founded during the slavery period by escaped slaves.

traditional treatment models and the biomedical health model offered by the Indigenous Health Subsystem.

### THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This is a qualitative study involving ethnographical research, according to Social Psychology and Collective Health, with respect to representations, meanings, practices of self-care, and conceptions on mental health from health professionals and people with traditional indigenous knowledge. We adopted a participant observation approach to produce empirical material in situations of medical service (Reakwell et al., 2010).

We also conducted semi-structured interviews to investigate in depth subjects related to the processes of health and disease. The study with the Xukuru do Oorubá community had fifteen collaborators: ten health professionals, two managers, three people with traditional knowledge, among them the *pajé*.

The resulting material was organized and initially classified through a thematic analysis of its content. A set of core meanings was established and analyzed according to concepts from Social Psychology and Collective Health. These core meanings are: Process of health and illness; psychosocial determinants of health and sickness; mental health; Cultural determination; Work in health.

To classify discourses, the following description has been used: group 1—managers and health professionals (P1 to P12); group 2—people with traditional indigenous knowledge (D1 to D3). All subjects belong to DSEI-PE, except one manager that belongs to the technical team of the Health Bureau of the state of Pernambuco.

It is of special interest that one of the researchers belongs to the Xukuru ethnic group. The intimacy with the study's focal community was a favorable element in the construction of bonds to enable interviews and field observations.

We define as source of information: participant's discourses, observational data from the field diary, and data collected from sanitary and epidemiological records. In this last item, information was retrieved from the Information System for Indigenous Health (SIAI) with the intent to characterize social, demographic and sanitary aspects of the selected population.

### RESULTS

The core meanings identified were: 1. Care conceptions in the Indigenous Health System; 2. Services and practices in indigenous mental health; 3. Conceptions and practices in mental health—traditional indigenous knowledge; 4. Possible approaches to indigenous mental health policies; 5. Relations between traditional indigenous medicine and the scientific paradigm. Although data was discussed through these five core meanings, we will present the results in an articulated and non-segmented form in five topics.

Diverse conceptions on how actions on indigenous health care are or should be performed were identified, especially concerning primary attention. It was possible to observe significant differences in relation to non-indigenous health care. Most discourses converge around the perception of differences that favor the indigenous communities, in regard to resources, as pointed out by P1 and P2. They also pointed to specificities in culture and access to services. Some professionals, such as P7, recognize and value a care system conducted with equity and integrity, mentioning cultural specificity and traditional medicine. Considering clinical practice, some mentioned a non-differentiation between the indigenous and non-indigenous context.

"No. I don't think there's a difference. It's the same. They might have some privileges over others, who knows, maybe not. But, well, considering medical care, assistance, it's the same." (P1)

"I think so (there's a difference). I work in the non-indigenous area too. Even assistance is differentiated, because my care practices here are completely different from what I do in non-indigenous areas, concerning everything, materially, instrumentally, as to equipment, goals, programs, it's completely different." (P2)

"Because we do many things with traditional medicine, so there's a difference." (P7)

Some discourses emphasize that certain policies favor the indigenous population, such as the booking of medical appointments, transportation to reference hospitals, and the purchase of medicines, services that other SUS patients do not have access to. This reinforces a dichotomist and segmented view between indigenous and non-indigenous health.

There were discourses on the preservation and consideration of cultural specificity. These are guidelines established by the National Policy for Indigenous Health, defended since the Federal Constitution of 1988 as a conquest of indigenous peoples, after a long period of exclusion. However, these same specificities did not seem to materialize in care practices, as is also observed in health professionals' accounts. Although specificities are acknowledged, there seems to be a difficulty in understanding what they mean and how to handle them in everyday work. In other words, they do not know how to act from this perspective. Evidence shows that there is difficulty in appropriation and incorporation of these practices.

The indigenous health policy advocates specific and differentiated assistance, with respect to the ethnic, cultural, social, and historical diversity of each group. The great majority of interviewees of this research acknowledge the existence of indigenous communities' specific needs, that vary from one to another depending on the culture and the region inhabited. Discourses reinforce these guidelines, showing reasons for it, defending dialogue with multiple indigenous cultures and still existing traditional customs, such as the use of medicinal plants and practices and rituals performed by *pajés* and *rezadeiras*. In their discourse there is convergence that does not translate itself to care practices.



In order to meet the growing demand, services and practices in mental health began in 2005 in DSEI-PE, comprising the whole area of the Sanitary District. The program had a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a social assistant. Its purpose was to support the MESIs and provide mental healthcare to Pernambuco's eleven ethnic groups. Services should be offered in the villages at least every three months, but due to lack of resources, the desired chronogram was not carried out. The overload in demand was taken by doctors from the primary team, which resulted in much criticism towards the efficacy of the program.

Mental health is our biggest issue. We can't handle it. First of all, as a result of the lack of professionals. We have very few of them in psychiatry or other specialties with training or specialization in mental health. Because of this, nowadays we only see patients with chronic mental disorders and that need care and medication or treatment in the specialized network. Unfortunately, we don't have the means to provide prevention, as a form of basic attention. (G1)

The manager indicates the main challenges in developing mental health actions, highlighting the lack of specialized professionals. In the case of indigenous communities, the access to specialized services is more complex, since villages are situated far away from the capital, in cities with less than 100 thousand inhabitants. They are not understood as priority by the Health Ministry in regard to the implementation of mental health services. This distance and isolation might prudently be diminished with investment in traditional cure systems, giving autonomy to the community to decide strategies in healthcare. Another difficulty pointed out was the restriction of treatment to chronic cases and to crisis situations. This is usually done in hospitals outside the city where the patient resides. A third point is that in basic care there are no actions in prevention or support for differential diagnosis. These should be done by multi-professional teams together with people with traditional knowledge. The fourth problem seen is the difficulty found by managers to hire specialized professionals due to low salaries.

Despite policies concerning traditional knowledge, all efforts are in hiring more health professionals, guaranteeing medical appointments and ambulatory procedures. In this context, arguing in favor of traditional therapeutic practices is of extreme importance. An effort to obtain recognition in a similar level to the biomedical model would certainly have a positive impact on the community, strengthening self-care and self-preservation practices, and improving health indicators for this population group. If the community and its health representatives take effective ownership of these care strategies, contact between both health systems would be more legitimate. Treatment would be more humanized.

In accordance to the National Policy for Indigenous Health, the importance of a joint approach in mental health and basic care is highlighted. Care strategies are intended in a preventive and interdisciplinary direction:

"At least here in the Xukuru community, there are many cases, so many that when the psychiatrist comes I don't know how much these cases really do need treatment.

Nowadays people are like that, they see controlled medication and they want it. In some cases it is really like an addiction." (P2)

"It is necessary to create adequate policies for indigenous communities' needs, and action should be taken together with the multidisciplinary teams. Because of this it is important for mental health professionals to act on a daily basis in the communities." (P3)

"Social assistance, to make these patients feel more useful. A mental patient is usually discriminated. He is a person who stays at home, isolated, and is not productive in work and study. I believe that something like that, a work group with these people would help, because they need to feel they are part of the society." (P10)

Partnership between mental health practices and traditional knowledge are understood as priority by the health professionals. This is justified by an increase in controlled medication consumption and number of cases, of varying severity, of mental disorders and psychic suffering. They point the need of healthcare procedures other than medication, such as psychological attention and social assistance, to care for patient's working life.

Medication is still the central therapeutic tool. Abuse leading to collateral effects and addiction is one of its problems. Health professionals mentioned addicted patients "that seek healthcare in order to renew their prescriptions." They see the importance of a program to better evaluate patients and identify their real need for psychotropic treatment.

There is no place for dialogue in mental health, such as meetings or therapeutic sessions, where patients could be listened to in a broader way. Such places would allow the expression of the different forms of suffering, sharing of senses and meanings related to them, and an assessment of possible forms of handling these situations. Most participants understood that listening should be done by doctors or other health professionals. Some would state that people prefer and trust one professional over others, maintaining focus on professional care.

"I think patients only have the opportunity to talk about their suffering when they see the doctor or another health professional, but they are not always given the space they need." (P3)

"You see, I generally receive a lot of people who open themselves completely with me, and tell me things they have never told anyone. But I don't know if they have this trust with the team. I don't know if it's because the team shifts from area to area. They might think something will spread out, although this would never happen because it would be a great transgression in ethics." (P6)

The interviews show that, in relation to mental suffering, there is no approach or dialogue with traditional indigenous knowledge. Possibly this indicates a significant deficit in cultural preservation and preservation of the singular ways of signifying life experiences in this community. Another difficulty, that is not specific to this region, is in the lack of articulation between indigenous health managers and the other managers of the Unified Health System (SUS).

"If I told you we had some kind of inter-sectorial action, it wouldn't be true. The dialogue we have here is like this, for example: when we qualify professionals in cities where there is an established indigenous population we do a considerable articulation with everybody. It's important for you guys to go so we can include aspects that are specific to this population in our qualification process, and construct interventions." (G2)

As we can see, the implementation of the indigenous health subsystem seems to be against SUS' actions and approach. The subsystem was not created to function in parallel, but in complement to SUS, in order to guarantee access to universal health by indigenous people. It has been the sole means, during the last 12 years, for assistance to communities.

The above discourses show the lack of dialogue between the two systems. During the implementation of the subsystem, no partnership was established between communities and the state and cities. Even if the discourse shows concern for cultural and regional differences, there is still little understanding of the complexity of the state's indigenous populations that already sum up to 50 thousand Indians.

Pernambuco's different ethnic groups were invited to dialogue with Regional Representatives of the State Health Bureau (GERES) and with cities, but there is resistance in participating. This might be due to the state and city governments' absence in regard to these populations.

We are conducting a debate with the state, but we find it difficult because when we search for their partnership their immediate answer is that indigenous health was the responsibility of FUNASA and is now the responsibility of SESAI. And they don't understand that the Indians are city residents, that they have their rights as such, and put all the responsibility on FUNASA. (G1)

The participant's report expresses the challenges faced in the implementation of indigenous health policies due to lack of dialogue between managers of both health systems in cities and states. The majority of city and state managers do not understand the need for an indigenous health subsystem, making it difficult to establish a partnership. Even so, around 50% of medium and high complexity care is supplied by city and state hospitals. They receive resources from the Health Assistance Bureau (SAS/MS). Guaranteeing health assistance to Indians is seen as a privilege to a portion of the population.

Among the conceptual definitions found for mental health were physical, mental and social well-being, the importance of being well with oneself, with one's body and with the social group. These concepts are clearly influenced by the World Health Organization's concept on mental health. Life in society is fundamental to the human being. People that are deprived of social contact present some kind of psychic suffering as well as the need to relate to others.

"Mental health is an unbalance that can be momentary. You might have had a problem that weighed a lot on you and made you have certain reactions." (P1)

"In my perception, mental health is being well with life, family, work, friends, and with yourself." (P5)

"Mental health is a physical and social well-being in a person's life. It is having shelter, food and entertainment." (P1)

"I consider loneliness, for example, to be an incurable mental disease. I think it's lack of care. I think mental disease is a lot related to this, when it is not schizophrenia." (P5)

"A lot of people worry about conditions around here, including financial conditions, or worries at home that are not financial. There are other worries, with husbands, children, all sorts of things. When a person already has a weak organism, then it runs out of control." (P7)

Mental diseases in indigenous communities have a strong connection with the loss of affective, cultural, and social bonds. There are also elements in common with general society, where the individual is in conflict due to lack of working opportunities, of social conditions, and a violent environment.

"Here we see many family and marriage issues, relatives' inbreeding practices, which I do believe that can be quite important" (P2)

"I think the loss of family structure, family problems, alcoholism, drugs, all this contributes in here; we have a lot of it." (P4)

"Behavioral factors. They may involve social factors, lack of working opportunities." (P10)

The main causes of mental disease among Indians involve factors such as territorial conflicts, loss of family ties, cultural losses, and even the loss of income, according to the health professional. We suspect the influence of other factors, from direct observation of the community. Among them, restricted support to professional development and the lack of future perspectives.

Alcohol and drug consumption has become a matter of public health in all societies. Priority is given to detoxification in mental health care centers. This has also become a problem among indigenous populations, but still no strategies for control have been thought of, nor have studies been conducted concerning its consequences.

We highlight, from the discourse of the people with traditional indigenous knowledge, their conceptions on mental health and madness, based on their personal convictions and collective thinking.

"Madness, I'll tell you, it projects on a problem. Anything you put on your mind and insist on, what you're going to do about it, how you're going to solve it. That's suffering from the nerves." (D1)

"Mental suffering, madness, is when the person is aggressive to others, hearing voices, seeing animals that are really shadows. It can even lead to death." (D2)

Each culture defines madness based on their experiences, values and truth systems. Madness is associated with the nervous person and with the mind to the people with traditional indigenous knowledge. They consider it to be the greatest predisposition to become insane, in the sense of a person who has outbreaks and is classified as insane.

Other explanations for madness appear on the discourses of the people with traditional knowledge. They relate it to the individual's balance and nature. One of the participants compared the brain to a ball, to represent the universe through which the person is in tune with the cosmic world. This tuning determines the person's psychological state. There is no universal concept for madness. It changes throughout human history. One line in psychology, for example, defines madness as a condition of the mind that is characterized by abnormal thinking. It is necessary to understand that each society explains madness according to its own culture. Explanations can also vary in each individual.

"In certain conditions any person can be a little crazy, and have certain attitudes that are considered crazy." (P1)

"Madness is a state of mind. In my opinion, if you're euphoric, you are in a state of madness, not euphoria, madness, understand? If you're melancholic you are also in a state of madness. To me, madness is truly a state of mind, it depends a lot on the moment." (P5)

"I think it's when people are not in their senses, when they don't want to see anyone, that is, they change one thing for the other, they see things. They say things that didn't even happen." (P10)

The logic used by these Indians is very different from the one used by the health professionals. For the Amerindians, diseases have a strong connection with natural phenomena, divine punishment, sorcery, and, above all, the loss of ties with the land, which is considered essential for survival. The land is very respected by Indians.

"Spiritual disease is easy to identify to those who are used to it... Now, in common diseases you soon see a headache, a little pain here or there. A very common pain is in the lower back" (D1)

"Because of financial conditions, injustices done to people, many times perpetrated by white people, and land conflicts." (D2)

"Illness in the indigenous community, you get it from the wind, sometimes it is caused by the wind." (D3)

We can see that there is another logic in the discourses above, mixed to values absorbed in the contact with other cultures and other times. Disease gains new dimensions and becomes a phenomenon specific to a certain period. To the Xukuru, there are two types of disease: the type cured by doctors and the type cured by

people with traditional knowledge (Souza, 2004). In their report, disease is always connected to spiritual or organic causes.

Diseases that are connected to spiritual causes are treated by means of prayer, medicinal plants and rituals to remove evil spirits from the body and purify the soul. Among the Xukuru, spiritual disease is connected to evil winds and the development of spiritual entities ("*correntes*").

Evil winds may bring diseases like "*ramo*," which in medical science equals to strokes, or diseases of the vascular or cardiac system. Another explanation for disease associates it directly with stress and nervousness. Causes may include lack of land, clean water, and food supplies. Another cause may be the lack of family income, which can be a source of discord among members. This last cause is the most frequent among the Xukuru, according to the participants' reports. Other mentioned explanations include the loss of social structure, as can happen for example in alcoholism, producing suffering and organic diseases.

"The identification (of the disease) appears through a prayer." (D1)

"We know it by means of the pajé. Because sometimes, when people get ill, they look first for the indigenous religion, they go to the pajé for prayer and knowledge." (D2)

"Through prayer we know that certain diseases need to be treated by doctors." (D3)

To them, diseases that only doctors can cure must be taken to the doctor. The participants identified the most serious diseases and separated those of physical from those of spiritual origin. They show abroad notion concerning the meanings on health and disease.

"When a person is laying sick, in a bed, then she is not well. Health, to Indians, is having our land, respecting our mother nature above all, having good relations in the community, being well with oneself, and having peace of mind." (D2)

"We need to stay well, isn't it? Because we don't want to leave soon. Health is when we look better." (D3)

"It is very good when there is health inside the house. Then when we are all healthy there's union and understanding. When there's one healthy and one sick, that union doesn't exist anymore, because that one is waiting for his day." (D3)

The participants believe the diseases considered serious among Indians are the same considered serious among non-Indians. In their understanding, health means having strength, plans, land, respecting nature, having good relations with neighbors, union and understanding in the family. Disease affects not only the individual, but their social circle as well, both family and community.

Health is not only the lack of illness and the presence of fundamental elements of survival. To Indians health depends on a macro system that encompasses physical and mental well-being.

"First of all, it is necessary to discuss with the community. I think that everything must be discussed with the community to work well. There is no point in arriving in an indigenous area and directly imposing a program, you have to discuss it first with the indigenous leaders, and with the health leaders, because today we have the local health councils in the communities." (G1)

"There should be a team specialized in psychiatry, that would be here at least every two, three months. They would need to truly implement an evaluation of mental health, analyzing the necessity of change in medication, or if other therapies are possible, besides giving orientation on how to work with the patient." (P1)

"An indigenous CAPS that had preparation to understand cultural and religious aspects would be interesting." (P4)

"I think we need a program that values actions for improvement of their life quality. But it is necessary to associate it with other policies that can contribute in mental health." (P9)

"I think about conversation circles with the patients, and a traditional medication that we still have here today... The problem is, many of them don't believe it, they only believe in medicine from the pharmacy." (P10)

In accordance with SUS, Indigenous Mental Health Policy must be integral, beginning in the federal sphere all the way to the city sphere, including cultural specificities of each ethnic group. Such policies have gone through changes since the end of the 80s, when the psychiatric reform took place. It advocated the closing of mental health institutions and the adoption of a more humanized treatment in mental health. Cities were encouraged to create support networks formed by multi-professional teams. In the past, mental health was focused on hospitals, under the control of psychiatry. Today multi-professional teams working in CAPS (Psychosocial Attention Center) share the responsibility. Nevertheless the majority of services are still concentrated in the big cities.

"I usually say that mental health policies are in a transition process. Since the 80s and specifically with the psychiatric reform we have been trying to organize mental health services to substitute psychiatric hospitals. This is directly connected to cultures, histories, to the form each community deals with these problems, to their worldview." (G2)

"It still leaves much to be desired, it is still focused on curing. They (the members of the community) became so used to the contact with white people that they don't look for (traditional treatment) anymore. Some still do, but only a little. Most don't want to see it anymore, they don't believe in herbs and all. Because of the contact and mixture with white people they acquired their habits. The elders lived the traditions a little bit more, they are still connected to homemade medicine." (P2)

Treatment methods have changed due to efforts from the organized civil society, who understood that people with severe mental disorders must be seen as human beings, belonging to a society. Rehabilitation and social reintegration

through integral care must happen in the person's own community. The biggest challenge is still the lack professional training in the health teams.

Great advances have been observed during the last 13 years in indigenous communities of Pernambuco thanks to the DSEI-PE's achievements. However, it is necessary to recognize that the actions of FUNASA initiated the process of indigenous populations' inclusion. On the other hand, it is possible to consider that policies could have done more if investment had been made to create awareness concerning the role of health in these populations. Also, association with other policies against social exclusion could have been done, since health alone does not solve the problem.

"I think there has been much improvement. When I arrived here I worked in the city government. Assistance in dental health was null. I alone gave treatment once a week, only teeth extraction. Today we can't say we have everything, but it is much better..." (P2)

"I believe SESAI's actions were very positive on indigenous health. Accessibility became a reality and the indigenous population has gained a lot in sanitation and basic care networks, besides support to services of medium and high complexity. Focus is not only in services but in respecting the Indian person in their singularity." (P3)

"I think most things came out with good results. Since the Xukuru community is outside the city, it was difficult for the person alone to schedule an exam in the hospital, and to get medical care." (P6)

In spite of important advances that must be acknowledged, the mental health program in the Xukuru community is still centered on crisis control. Actions have not been taken in order to promote improvement in life quality. When referring to the program, professionals speak of the lack of articulation between mental health and other health services in the village. There has also been no initiative in consideration of the community's specificities, limiting practices to western healthcare.

"They come very seldom. Psychiatric care is only twice, three times a year. During the rest of the time the local doctor receives the patients. I don't know if it's the correct procedure, since patients need evaluation." (P2)

"The program's concern was not prevention, but cure. He came only to monitor patients with disorders and monitor medication." (P4)

"No. Almost no one uses this mental health thing in here." (D2)

"We have difficulty in hiring professionals such as social assistants, psychologists and therapists. Because of this, sadly, we only receive patients with mental disorders and those that use medication, only to control the crisis." (G1)

The reports above show how deficient the Mental Health Program implemented by DSEI-PE between 2005 and 2007 was, although it emerged from the grow-

ing demand for specialized service in indigenous mental health which could not be offered by local professionals.

Attention is given to the discourse of the *pajé* (D2), showing the gap between traditional indigenous medicine and the scientific paradigm. Throughout history, western medicine established itself as one of the most powerful and respected models. A culture in which the biomedical model prevails was also created among the Brazilian population. The power of cure was given only to doctors and to scientific knowledge. With the implementation of indigenous health initiatives, the dialogue with traditional practices was one of the guidelines. The reports recurrently show, however, that this dialogue is not happening, and that not even among the indigenous population the traditional cure is valued. Priority is given to medical treatment and allopathic medication.

The participants indicated the complete lack of dialogue between the scientific and the traditional Xukuru knowledge. On the other hand, professionals and managers pointed to the importance of this approximation.

"The DSEI—PE has developed the dialogue between traditional medicine and the multi-professional teams in indigenous health, but it is a difficult dialogue. Only two ethnic groups present initiatives to approximate these two models." (P3)

"No, but some professionals stimulate the population to value homemade medicine." (P10)

"It is another very polemic issue. Traditional medicine depends on each ethnic group. Some of them already developed projects and have been using traditional medicine as a form of cure through the use of teas, herbs and even in cultural rituals invoking the enchanted, the spirits. Some ethnic groups intensely use their traditions, others use it less." (G1)

Indigenous Health Policy did not have the success it hoped for due to the process of acculturation imposed on these populations, even though its aim was to complement healthcare.

In the following interviews, the lack of dialogue between scientific and traditional knowledge is evidenced.

"Funasa insisted and succeeded in removing much of the Indians' beliefs in medicinal herbs. That's why we only search for medicine in the health posts, if there's any medicine no one searches for plants." (D1)

"Some still have respect, others don't. They think it doesn't exist. Most don't believe in indigenous knowledge and religion. They don't believe the *pajé* can cure..." (D2)

"You have to respect it... you have to respect it, don't you? There are herbs we know of because of the Queen of the indigenous Forest, you have to pray an Our Father to find it and to take it. You have to ask permission. We can't come in without authorization, because the Forest has a master that is superior to us. Its master is our Father Tupã and our Mother Tamain." (D3)

In spite of its good intentions, Indigenous Health Policy caused changes in culture and habits. Even the simplest practices tend to change with its influence. Traditional cure is an example of this. The Indigenous Health Policy, created with the intention of promoting traditional knowledge, led to its fading out.

Although the therapeutic itinerary of the Xukuru still has important moments in Indian's process of becoming ill and on their therapeutic choice, the model of choice is determined by a series of decisions that lead to a diagnosis and treatment. This is done to at least diminish suffering, a result many times found only under the care of traditional knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

The main goal of this research was to evaluate the implementation of indigenous health policies and the mental health program in a Xukuru do Ororubá community. In this regard, gaps have been found, although mental health care is one of SUS's guiding principles to integral healthcare.

Lack of information is noted among professionals working directly with Indians. There is difficulty in understanding the central specificities in healthcare, which is seen when they are questioned about general health assistance. Some did not incorporate or comprehend the policy's guidelines. They did not notice specificities in healthcare and also produced negative and victimizing representations about the Indian condition.

Discourses showed there isn't an articulation between the biomedical model and traditional cure practices. They pointed to the absence of community participation in the definition of strategies in mental health. Conceptions on health, mental health and healthcare by members of the health team and people with traditional knowledge diverged at certain moments and at others converged. This also happened among members of the same (research) group. The causes of disease mentioned by both groups were connected to family, social, and economical issues.

The main results point to the need for comprehension of the fading process of cultural values and identities. This process encompasses devaluation of traditional cure models, the progressive medicalization of mental suffering, and the low quality of health services.

Strategies in mental healthcare should preserve the dialogue with the community and especially with people with traditional knowledge. Their contribution lies in their understanding of the mental universe, their connection to spirituality, and circulation between the two worlds: the natural and the spiritual. Initiatives with this perspective are central to the conception of a multi-ethnic system.

In regard to the indigenous mental health program of the DSEI-PE, we evaluated the main initiatives developed between 2000 and 2010. Mental health went through a series of modifications during this period. Initially care was provided by general practitioners and more severe cases were sent to reference services. With the increase in demand in 2005, DSEI hired, together with the City Hall of Recife, a mental health team. However, this team could not meet the considerable

demand of all twelve ethnic groups of the state of Pernambuco. The team's contingent, formed by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a social assistant, was not enough for the demands of a population of 50 thousand Indians. Another difficulty was related to the territorial dispersion of ethnic groups, some as distant as 800km from the others. The return of the health team to each village, ideally set for three months, could take as long as six to happen.

There is still few dialogue on mental health practices or on successful experiences in communities. Initiatives are restricted to crisis control. There is no movement to discuss mental health initiatives, nor published studies on the matter. There is still much to do in this field. This research is intended as a challenge and stimulus for a dignified, respectful, healthcare. And above all, one that strives to solve the problems presented by the Xukuru people in need of a mental healthcare network.

The need for initiatives of psychotropic medication control was noted. Documental analysis and the reports collected in interviews point to gaps in the monitoring of patients with mental disorders, especially those that are continuously medicated. Interviews indicate there is no monitoring of these patients and healthcare only occurs under a crisis situation. This information has been confirmed by DSEI.

The incidence of mental disorders is very high in indigenous communities. There are many life situations that lead to intense suffering in villages. In general this can refer to significant affective losses, family losses, alcoholism and other drug consumption, loss of cultural ties, land conflicts, violence, lack of activity, lack of resources, of life perspectives, and genetic factors. We have seen in the reports of participants that violence and lack of income were factors associated with mental problems, a result similar to the general population. In both cases the consequences of social inequality and lack of adequate public policies are observed.

We have also noted the absence of articulation between governmental agencies, whether federal, state, or municipal, such as SESAI, FUNAI, the Ministry of Agricultural Development (MDA), State and City Health Bureaus, universities, and other management institutions responsible for Indian policies. This lack of integration weakens public policies, leading to discontinuities in actions for dealing with social problems that possibly cause disease, including mental ones.

The effort to understand indigenous health from the point of view of mental health exposed the difficulty in articulation even among health professionals in the area.

Considering what has been exposed, it is necessary to discuss initiatives and guidelines of SUS's policies on humanization and integrality. They could help bringing back inter-subjective and relational aspects to the discussion, that appear as an issue in this study. Contributions in Social Psychology and Anthropology have also been brought as guiding tools for discussing how healthcare could become more consistent, respectful and effective.

We can consider, as another problematic factor for health promotion, the difficulty of developing community self-sustainability. Political positions of managers in different areas are incompatible with the preservation of natural resources. Commu-

nity awareness to sustainable food production is not stimulated. It seems that deep changes in political and social awareness are needed in order for this to happen.

Similarities have also been noted with problems faced by the general society. Discrimination and isolation of individuals who suffer from mental disorders is a pattern of both cities and villages, representing a challenge to mental healthcare.

The results point the need of effective measures in healthcare, through improvement of public policies. These must consider general life quality improvement, once mental health depends on health, education and work.

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## SECTION III

## IMPLICATIONS OF NON-DIALOGUING

Danilo Silva Guimarães

*Francisca Nunes Maciel, my grandmother, has died denying that she was indigenous, but this denying is not isolated, it is the result of a politics of deletion of indigenous identity implemented by the State during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The State project was to utilize the work force of the indigenous people, their wisdom, the traditional rivalry in the pacification of other ethnic groups, their geographical knowledge in the territorial occupation and, finally, their extermination when they did not accept the subordination to the pacification. Until reaching the final product, the generalization of the indigenous peoples and their introduction in the national society*

—Maciel, (2014)

The indigenous population in Latin America largely decreased since the 15th century, when the Europeans started to colonize their territories, to the end of the 20th century. Only in Brazil, a population estimated to be around 5 million people belonging to more than 1000 ethnic groups in the year of 1500, was reduced to 294.131 people, when the Brazilian Census started to collect the data about the Brazilian indigenous population. Among the many reasons responsible for the extermination of these peoples are armed conflicts, epidemic diseases, social,

*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 165–169.

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promoted cultural disorganization and assimilation policies (cf. IBGE, 2005). The process of colonization affected differently each society. Nowadays it is estimated that more than 80 indigenous groups remain isolated in Brazil.

Over the last two decades, demographic censuses show an important population growth in the national territory. The last census revealed that the Amerindian population in Brazil was about 900 thousand people belonging to 305 different ethnic groups, speaking 274 different languages (IBGE, 2012). The United Nations considers Brazil the Latin American country with the greatest diversity of Amerindian peoples, although it has one of the lowest proportions of Amerindians in relation to the total population (0.5%), from the 17 investigated countries (CEPAL, 2014). The censuses found that 44,791,456 Amerindians are living in Latin America, 8.3% of the population of the continent.

Latin America has one of the biggest cultural diversities on the planet, thanks in great measure to the hundreds of indigenous ethnic groups that still live here. These groups survived out of a secular history of sociopolitical subordination. The recurrent deprivation of traditional lands and the decimation of cultural subsistence conditions are sources of great suffering. The heritage of intense and continued threatening to Amerindian peoples is relevant to understand the little trust they demonstrate towards approaches from the State.

Suspiciousness is a strong feeling in relation to the scientific discourse and practices that involve the Amerindians, including the psychological discourses and practices. As Maciel remarked in the epithet of this introduction, this is because there is not only physical violence, but also symbolic violence guiding a process of exclusion and unrecognition of their identities.

The educational process has had an important role in this identity denying. In Brazil, the systematization of the pedagogical methods elaborated by the Society of Jesus in the 16<sup>th</sup> century materialized the missionary ideology of reprehending and telling the truth:

Reprehending the Amerindian traditions, considered as instances of the *bad habits*, signs of the *Bad*, and telling the truth about the malignity of the native's habits. These should be substituted by the *good habits*, which express knowledge of the *true Faith*. Of course, all this process was sustained in the teaching, the education. (Costa, 2007)

After the colonial period, public policies continued to work in favor of the elimination of the Amerindian cultures with discourses and practices that homogenize different peoples instead of valorizing their singularized expression:

After the independence, the new Brazilian Imperial State had the challenge of creating the Nation and the Brazilian people, inexistent until then. It was necessary to create a territorial, political and ideological unity in the country, generating a collective memory that would unify distinct populations around a unique identity. The ethnic and cultural plurality, valorized nowadays, did not have place at this time,

and the ideology of the new Brazilian State was based on the European values of modernization, progress and superiority of the white man. (Almeida, 2012)

In parallel to the construction of discourses and images of Amerindian peoples that contributed to deny their role as active subjects, Amerindian peoples resisted to their invisibility and played leading roles in political and intellectual movements. As a result, in 1988, Amerindian peoples in Brazil were formally recognized in the Federal Constitution as ethnic groups with proper social organization, habits, languages, beliefs and traditions, as well as their rights concerning the use of their traditional lands, which should be demarcated. Additionally, in 2008, a Federal law obliged all Brazilian schools to teach the Amerindian history as part of the pedagogic project. Nevertheless, the effectuation of Universalist public policies is challenged by the multiplicity of the Amerindians in their process of differentiation and dedifferentiation in relation to the efforts of fixing them into regular and clear characteristics.

In the axiological and praxiological plans, public policies are used to manage interethnic situations in two ways, both of which create difficulties for the dialogue to happen: on one hand multiculturalism promotes isolation between different groups, contributing to marginalization; on the other hand, assimilation does not allow cultural differentiation, aiming "to create a society based on similarity" (Moghaddam, 2012, p. 9). The assimilated similarity is usually claimed as an argument for the superiority of a supposedly more essential or more complex social bond from which all cultures should be inseparable. It is expressed with the idea that cultures are not equitable.

Diverse communities decided to resist to the social process of sterilizing homogenization, refusing to be assimilated in the involving socio-cultural field based on the accumulation of goods and the indiscriminate use of natural resources.

Usual policies for managing inter-group relationships can also be compared with the eclectic versus dogmatic approaches in the epistemological debate concerning psychological schools. Assimilation can be associated with the eclectic positioning, by stimulating the inseparability and fusion of cultures, while multiculturalism can be associated with the dogmatic positioning, which supports a supposedly unavoidable isolation among cultures:

At the metaphorical level, the isolation and inseparability of subject-other are analogous to dogmatic and eclectic epistemological and ethical positions, where differences are denied and become flattened. According to Figueiredo (1992), the difficulty for understanding a situation usually brings anxiety to the subject. Dogmatic and eclectic positions are both defense against such anxiety that block the subject's contact with the source of anxiety. The dogmatic attitude prevents the subject from the contact with the different by disqualifying it as not reasonable or admissible because it does not fit to his previous frame of knowledge, values, and beliefs. The eclectic attitude also prevents the subject from the contact with the different, now by disqualifying the difference itself: in the last resort, everything can be fitted (re-



duced) to his previous frame of knowledge, values and beliefs (pp. 17–18). (Simão & Valsiner, 2007, p. 396)

Dogmatic views to Amerindian peoples argue, for instance, that these peoples should live in isolation and that psychology is not general enough to approach their cultural specificities. Eclectic views argue the opposite: there are no relevant differences between Amerindian peoples and any other people psychologists are used to deal with. Theories built to understand the mind of some Western cultivated mans can be applied to any people around the world.

Nevertheless, classical conceptions of personal identity, in psychological studies, were historically constructed according to materialist and/or spiritualist presuppositions. The materialist philosophy grounded the personal identity in the physiological dimension of the human organism and the spiritualists argued in favor of a transcendent dimension for the psyche. All of them proposed the identity as that of an individual Ego.

The notion of the individual Ego was discussed by John Locke (1632–1704), concerning a philosophical explanation that could serve as a basis for the idea of private property. An impact of his philosophical construction is observed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1709), a milestone of the French Revolution, in which the 17<sup>th</sup> article asserts that property is “an inviolable and sacred right.” Until nowadays, article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights focuses the “right to own property.” Such forensic notion invaded the psychological speculations in the construction of an ideological discourse for the political, economic and psychological liberalism.

Contrastively, the anthropologist Carlos Fausto (2008) argues that the notions of identity and property discussed in the Lockean tradition do not match the notions of identities and ownership from the Brazilian Amerindian tradition. The naturalistic view from Western traditions is grounded in some cosmological presuppositions from the Judaic-Christian tradition that separate human beings from the utile things (animals, plants, the land etc.). Together with the fragmentation of the experience, the Eurocentric tradition hierarchizes the dominium of the individuals over the things and defines transcendental processes and institutions for the appreciation of individual responsibility.

Cultural psychology is challenged due to the ethnocentrism that pervades Eurocentric conceptions of personal identity. At the same time the dialogue with different cultures is argued as something valuable to strengthen the power of generalization of scientific knowledge in the field of Cultural psychology, the routes to the construction of mutual and collaborative understandings are not direct or transparent (Rasmussen, 2011). The dialogue with indigenous cultural elements, in the process of constructing a Latin-American Psychology, presupposes the revision of reductionist scientific and professional references, for instance, the fragmentation of knowledge that guides the mainstream of European and American Psychology. Probably, an epistemological pluralism is necessary, in order to take into account inalienable elements of indigenous cultures—as their conception of

spirituality—aiming to surmount the intolerance in intercultural relations and the construction of collaborative coexistence among peoples.

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## CHAPTER 9

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# CONSEQUENCES OF THE INVISIBILITY PERPETRATED BY THE ARGENTINIAN STATE AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Marcelo Valko

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*The memory of the victimizers and the victims should not be lost*

—Jon Sobrino, from the Liberation theology, condemned to complete  
silence by Pope Benedict VI (Vidal, n.d.)

## INCESSANT PAINS

There are two events from the recent past which can be used to explain what is actually happening with native people from the northwest of Argentina.<sup>1</sup> These events are said to be connected to each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina made a huge effort to show itself as a white and European country, different from the rest of Latin America. It is even said: "Argentines come from the ships." However, reality is quite different. The Genetic Digital Prints Service, from the *Universidad de Buenos Aires* (UBA), has re-

Firstly, in the year of 1946, the Kolla's land request, in the province of Jujuy and the west of the province of Salta, in the Puna region. This event, the so-called "Malón de la Paz" (Native People's Raid of Peace), is considered to be the first time indigenous people managed to stop the invisibility which they had been exposed to since the late XIX century. After constantly going to Court and losing in province's trials, the Kolla set on a journey of 81 days on foot to the City of Buenos Aires. The massive protest began in a promising way, with great media coverage and even with the support of Peron's brand new administration. Three weeks after their welcoming arrival at the city, the whole party of 174 Kollas ended up kidnapped and exiled by the same authorities who later on would deny their role in it. Quite soon, their memory was suppressed from the national living memory.

Secondly, another fact that can help us illustrate the reality of indigenous people nowadays is the massacre of the *Pilagá* and *Wichi* ethnic groups, perpetrated in 1947 at the hands of a gendarmerie, in *Rincón Bomba*—province of Formosa. It became the main indigenous people slaughter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Concise information was leaked to some newspapers talking about an "indigenous people rebellion" or a "confusing incident" without major consequences. That was it. The slaughter was instantly obliterated from official history. The more traditionalists disclose 400 deaths; others raise the number to 1200 people. Men, women and children had been assassinated by the hands of the *Escuadrón N° 18 de Las Lomitas de la Gendarmería Nacional* (Gendarmerie N° 18 Squad in Las Lomitas).

In both events (*Malón de la Paz*—1946 and *Rincón Bomba*—1947), the State did not pursue an investigation. What is more, there were no suspects at all. The victims were just indigenous people, invisible beings. Such impunity of the governmental organizations, which are supposed to watch over citizens' interests instead of kidnapping, exiling, assassinating, concealing evidence, and denying what had happened to them, brought about some truly traumatic psychosocial consequences that still afflict their descendants. The disastrous effects, caused by *Malón de la Paz* and *Rincón Bomba* are demonstrated not only by psychological traumas, but also by threats, outrages and the murder of indigenous people who try to defend their limited territory.

### EL MALÓN DE LA PAZ<sup>2</sup>

In 1946, representatives of the Kolla communities, which were set in Salta and Jujuy, decided to march massively. They had been suffering from extreme exploi-

cently made a discovery, after 12 years of studies; its conclusion prevents folklore to be a sort of lost annex in the middle of the dark historical American Barbary in Europe. Genetics specialists point out that in Argentina 56% of the population has indigenous roots (Clarín, 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2005). This means that native roots are greater than those who descended from the ships. There is still more data. According to the last census, Argentina has 5 times more indigenous people than Brazil, in quantity as well as in population percentage (Valko, 2012, p. 195).

<sup>2</sup> According to the definition given by dictionaries, *Malón* is "An unexpected raid or attack perpetrated by indigenous people"; they even add "unexpected felony." *Malón* is a pejorative term and derives

tation conditions: land usurpation, lash, punishment at the hands of the property-owners, arbitrary wage, and even unpunished sexual abuses, such as the medieval "*droit de seigneur*." Robustiano Patrón Costas, who was the owner of a sugar factory called *San Martín del Tabacal*,<sup>3</sup> was one of the land owners accused by the indigenous people. Not only had he been a politically-renowned character and a partner of the Standard Oil Company but also the "electoral fraud" winner, which led him to become a Congressman and a Governor in many opportunities. In 1943, unsurprisingly, he was just about to become Argentinean president by electoral fraud (Valko, 2012, p. 42).

The Kolla decided to reach the distant Plaza de Mayo, a symbolic spot for Argentina's political power. *El Malón de la Paz* (*por las rutas de la Patria*) (The Raid of Peace on the Roads of Homeland), which was the way they had called themselves, would become a landmark on native people's recognition annals. At the beginning, it was the main protest of native people that had ever taken place in Argentinean history. It would also be the first claim that Peron's government had to face, just a few days after the General had taken office. It was initially supported by Perón with the purpose of taking distance from his political adversary, Patrón Costas, in order to show the significance of the doctrine of Social Justice.

During the approximately four months the "*Malón*" was widespread in the media, the more unprecedented facts took place. Some of them are mentioned as follows. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, 1946, nearly 200 natives with their horses and mules marched along the infantry through the main avenues of the city of Rosario. The Army would put them up in its quarters. However, they had previously been there only as prisoners or war trophies. When the *Malón de la Paz* arrived in Buenos Aires, thousands of people came up to meet them at the same time they were acclaimed as "new heroes." In fact, "land reform" committees were being set up. Finally, on the date they arrived in Buenos Aires, the neighbors were throwing flowers as they were marching. But, should flowers be thrown to a crowd of indigenous people?

On arriving at Plaza the Mayo, members of the *Malón* joined General Perón in a brotherly hug at the mythic presidential balcony, while an excited crowd witnessed the scene. Never in our history had such a similar event taken place. Could indigenous people be at the very presidential balcony? Paradoxically, after such a great greeting, Perón ordered to put the native people up at the *Hotel de Inmigrantes* (Foreigners Hotel). This was the same hotel that had hosted foreign people coming from the seas, a nice symbol of what indigenous people represent to the State.

from the word bad. Being a crowd of indigenous people walking to the city, they reminded in a way the "wild raids" from the XIX century. Precisely because of that, they add the word *Paz*, in order to diminish the negative overtone added on *Malón*. (Valko, 2005, p. 42).

<sup>3</sup> The sugar Factory was full of slaves from different ethnic groups (The *Chirihuanos*, the *Qom*, the *Pilagá* and the *Charore*). During the period from 1930 to 1949, it got to possess 930,236 hectáreas (Brown, 2007), (Constant, 2014), (Armas & Constant, 2012).

It was too late when the government finally understood that support from non-indigenous people was driving his administration into dangerous ground. Were the land to be given to 174 Kollas, a heap of claims from natives and farmers would challenge presidential authority. President Perón had only two options: either give the Kolla their land while dealing with the following consequences or get them out of the national scene. In order to proceed according to this very last option, it was necessary to diminish the Kolla's hopes. Therefore, together with other absurd activities, they were forced to play a football match right before the traditional well-known River—Boca one. The 40,000 spectators who attended the match wondered: Were these the same Kollas who had come to recover their land and were now playing soccer?<sup>4</sup> Three weeks later, the indigenous people's hopes had vanished in the worst way amidst tear gases, beatings, insults, weeping, and tortures. At the beginning, they thought of giving them the requested lands in order to contrast the democratic figure of Perón with the image of the north feudal man. Later on, the President's advisors explained to him that doing so would only set a precedent which could be used in similar future land requests over all national territory. After a 23-day hesitation period, a force composed of hundreds of naval soldiers and a group of police officers, which were in charge of throwing teargases, got an epic victory against barbarians. The *maloneros* (marchers at the raid of Peace) were kidnapped, thrown on a train and exiled while being watched over by police officers so that they could not get off before their arrival in the Argentinean "Siberia," initially named *Abra Pampa*. Foremen were waiting for them, cracking their lashes and assuring "now you will have the lands you have requested, you crap."

### THE MALÓN ON THE DISPLAY WINDOW

*Maloneros*, who were aware of the heritage received from Argentinean collective folklore about indigenous people and the significance of nationality, on their final proximity to the capital city, decided to call on three different towns: Pergamino, San Antonio de Areco, and Luján. Each of these towns represented quite different aspirations or images that would be used by them to dress up with and show themselves to the community. Reaching Pergamino implied dealing with the Argentinean central barn, that is to say, the concept of land possession. Also, it would mean to show themselves as farmers.<sup>5</sup> Getting the chance to farm their own land was

<sup>4</sup>On August the 15<sup>th</sup>, 1946, more or less 40,000 spectators witnessed the unusual two-timed exhibition, of 20 minutes each, where according to official press "the Kolla stood out" (*La Época*, 16/08/1946, p. 7). According to the opposition parties, they "were the laughing stock" (*Argentina Libre*, 05/09/1946, p. 2). Other journals, forgetting their claim for land, depicted the episode as if *maloneros* were on a sports league tour: "For the very first time they are playing in the City of Buenos Aires" (*El Pueblo*, 16/08/1946, p. 15). Unusually, a native people protest ended up in the sports section.

<sup>5</sup>On 1946, echoes of "El Grito de Alcorta" were present. The strike of 1914, which was supported by more than 100,000 farmers, was a claim for improvements to stop a feudal exploitation. On that opportunity they received the *Mapuche's* support.

not a problem ascribed only to the *Puna*; actually, it was a wound which hurt all provinces the same. In turn, calling on San Antonio de Areco meant to be imbued with criollo and Argentinean tradition, which on every step they tried to assume as their own.<sup>6</sup> They had tried to reflect this during their march, arriving on special national dates: Jujuy (25<sup>th</sup> of May: First National Government), Córdoba (20<sup>th</sup> of June: Flag's day) and Rosario (9<sup>th</sup> of July: Independence Day). The third city they intentionally called on before their arrival was Luján. There was located the shrine of an Argentinean Virgin. Going on a pilgrimage to Luján meant to show religious faith. This agrarian, nationalist, and catholic trilogy was, in the end, the implementation of their intention to act upon the folklore over indigenous people.

Meanwhile, the media coverage would increase proportionally to their proximity to the City of Buenos Aires. This unusual interest on a protest by natives is related to the initial purpose of the government of turning the *maloneros* and their claim into an example of the significance of the doctrine of Social Justice. The solution to the Kolla's claim would be immediate. Radios, newspapers and news bulletins such as "*Sucesos Argentinos*" were talking about the Kolla, giving them a remarkable place in headlines, interviews and front pages. Because of the fame the *Malón* had gained, many firms such as the cigarette factory "43/70," "Alpargatas" or the analgesic "Genio!" used the Kolla to sell their products.

Since the Kolla's kidnapping and exile, the media had no mercy and crudely defamed them or, at best, remained in conspiratorial and scandalous silence. All the racism which had been hidden behind the news and political greetings became incessant. From one day to the next, it was "discovered" that the Kolla were not native people. To illustrate this, it can be said that the fact many of the members of the *Malón* were literate was one of the "convincing evidences" of it. There was nothing more "suspicious" for folklore than a literate native. Other members of the media began "internationalization." It cannot be forgotten that they had been previously hosted in the Foreigners Hotel and, taking advantage of their origin, they were labeled as "Bolivians." It was said that the *Malón* was made up by fake indigenous people and criollos; what is more, that it was full of criminals (*Clarín*, 30/08/1946, p. 8; *La Argentina* 30/08/1946, p. 4, *La Vanguardia*, 03/09/1946, p. 8). One of the most pathetic examples was stated by Teodoro Saravia, a Congressman from Jujuy, when he jumped out of his seat shouting: "In Jujuy there are no indigenous people." If they were not indigenous but simply foreign people the problems would disappear. For the Argentinean folklore, and the aforementioned congressman in particular, our country was white and European, which is why the absence of the Kolla and any other indigenous people was natural. In conclusion, if they were foreign people, the problem would vanish again. In general, a visceral racism appeared, like in the newspaper *La voz de Luján*, where it was implied that the Kolla went back to their ancestral lands "with their brains spoiled by the diz-

<sup>6</sup>Areco was the homeland of Ricardo Güiraldes, author of *Don Segundo Sombra* [*Mr. Segundo Sombra*]. It is the place where the Traditional National Party has been celebrated every year since 1940.

ziness of civilization"; or like *Criterio*, the main catholic weekly newspaper, who gladly affirmed that indigenous people had no intention of going back to Jujuy to continue enjoying "the delight of mayonnaise" from the Federal Capital.

For historians, the *Malón de la Paz* is in a no man's land and is considered one of the problems that block out our memory of it. This event, which was developed during one of the most important historic periods of Argentina, is excessively embarrassing to be dealt with. The Peronism's silence is understandable. The occurrences which took place against indigenous people left the administration in an awkward situation. Criticizing Perón by taking advantage of the erratic and scandalous treatment given to *Maloneros* was very easy, but totally counter-productive. What do I mean? By using the *Malón*, the incipient Peronist image would become particularly vulnerable. Nevertheless, it implied dealing with a chain of dangerous topics such as land possession, latifundium, indigenous peoples' misery and lack of education and health services, and also the religious and political abuse which they were victims of. This was something that the opposition, who was mostly related to oligarchical parties, was never interested in solving.

### RINCÓN BOMBA: AN UNREGISTERED SLAUGHTER

The second point to consider is the main indigenous people's massacre ever perpetrated by the Argentinean State during the 20th century. It took place in the province of Formosa, a year after the "*Malón de la Paz*." The estimates go from 600 bodies to 800. On the crimes against humanity's claim, which was filed by the Pilagá Federation against the Argentinean State, the number is raised to more than a million victims (including children). All of them were killed at the hands of the Gendarmerie N° 18 Squad in Las Lomitas. Unlike other specific massacres which took place in the Argentinean Gran Chaco region, such as Napalpí<sup>7</sup> or El Zapallar<sup>8</sup>, what happened at Rincón Bomba has unusual features. The slaughter begins on October the 10th of 1947 in Las Lomitas and lasts for two weeks, spreading out up to 70 kilometers from its starting place, with the evident purpose of getting rid of any potential witness.

In the middle of the spring of 1947, hundreds of indigenous people began to assemble nearby Las Lomitas (located 300 kilometers of Formosa's west side).

<sup>7</sup> On July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1924, during the Unión Radical party administration, the Napalpí massacre is perpetrated. On that very moment, local police officers and landowner's private guards killed 400 natives. An airplane was even used to machine-gun them. "There are no casualties among the attackers, not even an injured horse." (Solans, 2008, p. 146.) They tried to excuse themselves as usual and in some cases the natives were to blame. A local journal mentioned the absurdity of an internal dispute among the native people. The journal claimed that it was a "tough fight between Tobas and Mocovíes, resulting in hundreds of deaths and who knows how many wounded." (*La Voz del Chaco*, 21/07/1924.)

<sup>8</sup> On September the 6<sup>th</sup>, 1933, El Zapallar slaughter occurs. Aside from these massive assassinations there are others, namely "Hunting" or directly "target practices," a sort of dripping death. It was a cruel, silenced and incessant bloodbath. In 2012 at Pampa del Indio, an old man told me that when he was a kid his father banned him from walking around some wilderness since, from time to time, a foreman would practice aim against natives who were passing by.

They were mainly Pilagás, but Quom and Wichis ethnic groups could also be found there. This unusual congregation responds to a number of reasons. Firstly, according to the lawsuit filed by the Pilagá, news of the time, and research (based on oral memory or recent documentaries<sup>9</sup> rescued by the native historian Juan Chicho), thousands of native farm laborers had been deceived by San Martín del Tabacal's sugar factory contractors. The owner of this sugar factory was Patrón Costas, the same politician and business man who was mentioned in the "*Malón de la Paz*" case. Pilagá men, women, and children had marched to work at the sugar harvest. Once there, instead of "taking the word of paying six pesos per day," they were told that they would receive a 2.5 pesos wage.<sup>10</sup> When claiming for the original payment, they were thrown out "inhumanely" (Norte 13/05/1947, p. 3). As they could not afford the train ticket, they came back 400 kilometers on foot. That miserable and outcast caravan stopped in Las Lomitas (a town located in the center of Formosa). There was one powerful reason to stay there. Huge crowds of natives were there to listen to the preaching of the shaman Luciano—as will be explained later on. Being reinforced by the media, the concentration of indigenous people heard a rumor: land would be distributed to them (this was an eternally postponed matter)<sup>11</sup>. There is no doubt these three aspects (dismissal of farm laborers, preaching of the shaman and land claim) were not exclusive, on the contrary, they all converged and reinforced each other.

Beyond the scandalous breach of the sugar factory on paying what was agreed, most natives had arrived to Las Lomitas lured by the preaching of shaman Luciano, who had mixed hereditary beliefs with Christianity learned on evangelic sects. Everyday huge crowds met around his syncretic appeal, where spirits were called and healings were offered. By using a ritual called "corona" [crown], which was a ground-made circular-form embankment surrounded by palm leaves, devotees climbed to receive the spirits or heal themselves. Bear in mind that the natives who participated in Luciano's "coronas" had nothing to eat after the ritual.

In that village, the native's situation was frankly calamitous: adults who had been betrayed on their good faith were upset and a good part of the children were undernourished. After a popular meeting, Cacique Nofa Lagadick (well known as Chieftain Pablito) and shaman Luciano<sup>12</sup> asked authorities for urgent help, especially to the major of Gendarmerie N° 18 Squad in Las Lomitas and the Municipality. They also asked for clothing to be used by six Pilagás who were planning

<sup>9</sup> Documentary *Ocubre Pilagá, Stories About the Silence*, by Valeria Mapelman.

<sup>10</sup> "Pilagás have been victims of agitators who wanted to incite disorder by making them believe that some authorities would not raise their journals and lands—to work there, in the past these lands were inhabited by natives." (*Noticias Gráficas*, 12/10/1947, p. 3). The rumor was senseless. Then it will be said that the ones who "agitated" natives belonged to *Unión Cívica Radical*, a feverous enemy of Peron's Administration.

<sup>11</sup> Vuoto and Wright (1991) explains that "Luciano had a painted face with an ear piercing. He was a fifty year-old man dressed in white. Some considered him a God while he called o. s. a God messenger who delivered protective spirits and offered power and healings. His Pilagá name was *Pjagalate* (p. 161).

to travel to Buenos Aires to meet with President Perón so they could personally explain to him how delicate the situation was.

At the beginning Las Lomitas' authorities seemed to accept the requests. A deliver of staple food was organized. It rapidly ran out, as the natives were starving. Under those circumstances, the natives decided to reconsider their very first position. Instead of walking towards Buenos Aires, they were now planning to receive President Perón in Las Lomitas, so he could witness the indignity to which they were submitted. The Pilagá had a fresh memory of the *Malón* (as they were in touch with the Kolla at the San Martín del Tabacal sugar factory.) They had travelled to the City of Buenos Aires, getting no answer whatsoever. Not so long ago, the year before that, a Pilagá from Las Lomitas, Virgilio Castillo, had gone by mule to Buenos Aires to inform president Perón about the "peoples' problems" (*El Líder*, 23/07/1946, p. 13). Castillo was hosted at the Regiment, hopping for an answer that he would never get. When time went by, he received clothing and he was told that it would be better to "wait in Formosa for the rest of the help," which he would also never receive. So many deceptions convinced natives that it would be more productive if Perón watched in situ their condition. Misery would speak for them.

There is a battery of figures about such a crowd of natives in Las Lomitas: "1,500 natives might have stirred up" (*La Nación*, 12/10/1947, p. 5); "around 1,800" (*El Intransigente*, 13/10/1947, p. 6), "about 2,000" (*Clarín*, 12/10/1947, p. 8), "more than 2,000" (*El Intransigente*, 12/10/1947, p. 6.) Even certain official documents such as *Gendarmería Nacional*, a magazine of the Argentine Gendarmerie informed about "the presence of 7,000 or 8,000 natives" with the clear intention of increasing their potential danger (Cruz 1991). People from Formosa still remembered the assault to Fortín Yunka, which happened in 1919, when a group of natives "taking revenge" had killed a dozen of people. This "last *Malón*"—as it was described by some sensationalist press and historians (Lapridó, 1985)—was continuously set on and contributed to maintaining the image of the "dangerous natives" and the sensation of inhabiting a sort of "wild west" (Cruz 1991). In fact, in 1936 a punitive expedition, which was organized by the Army, imprisoned many Indian chiefs as a lesson.

Regarding the crowd of Pilagás and Wichis in Las Lomitas, Perón's administration was updated through the Ministry of the Interior about their situation. Its sole reaction consisted in implementing Government's handouts of contingency. The government tried to slow them down by sending three train cars with food. Paradoxically, as we will see, this freight contributed to raise tension.

Once in Formosa, the train did not move because of Miguel Ortiz's—Provincial Director of Natives Protection Office—inactivity. The train cars were kept parked out in the open for 10 days. Rolando Hertelendy, Governor of Formosa, ordered the train's immediate departure after being notified about the inexplicable delay. Meanwhile, a selfish interest for supplies was the reason why two train cars were vacated at the hand of anonymous people. Only one, which was car-

rying perishable food, reached its destination. Obviously, owing to the delay, the freight was rotten. Besides the implied danger of carrying those supplies, these were distributed among the natives. The next day hundreds of natives suffered from a massive food poisoning resulting in an indeterminate number of deaths, as no assistance was provided. "There were many natives suffering from indigestion and three deaths, one of the latter was the mother of Cacique Pablito." (Cruz, 1991). Gendarmerie adduced the same as always and blamed natives for an excessive intake of food while playing down the victims: "It's easy to deduce the way natives ate that night (...) from that excessive over-eating, many suffered from indigestion and two natives died." (Cruz, 1991). The bodies caused one additional problem. Settlers did not want the cemetery to become "saturated" with natives; therefore burying native people in graveyards was forbidden. On October 9th, the situation worsened.

Meanwhile, in Buenos Aires President Juan Perón was getting to the nitty gritty of his speech, which would be pronounced on October the 12th, on Columbus Day, attended by a Francoist delegation—the relation between Argentinean Government and this delegation was close. In the long speech, he exalted the heroism of the conquest and Spanish courage, while putting down the Black Legend. He mentioned only once the word native to say that conquerors "did not wish to destroy natives but to convert and dignify them as human beings." (*La Nación*, 13/10/1947, p. 5) While Perón was pronouncing his speech, which exalted an internationally isolated Spain owing to its approval of Mussolini and Hitler, the slaughter was well on its way and Perón was already aware of it.

In the outskirts of Las Lomitas, in the region of Rincón Bomba or La Bomba, on Friday 10th of October, the Pilagá were enclosed by machine-gun nests, which had been strategically located there by sub-commander Alia Pueyrredón. According to the last official version of it, the troops' shifting was done without telling the major of Gendarmerie N° 18 Squad. Something totally inexplicable, taking into consideration that the troops met inside the regiment and, except that the major had suffered from a sudden autism, not noticing such a displacement of a village was impossible. After that, natives—who were carrying Perón and Evita's portraits (Cruz, 1991)—were enclosed, and the fire arms report began. Even though they were not too many at the beginning, it was not too long until the shots became a slaughter, then the slaughter became a massacre. Rationality was over and no police officer understood or even cared about who had shot the first bullet. After this, survivors were chased towards Pozo del Tigre, Campo del Cielo, Pozo Molina, and other places to avoid the presence of witnesses. For almost two weeks "they were chased" across 70 kilometers from the initial spot, as can be read in *El Intransigente* de Salta (22/10/1947, p. 4). This method made this slaughter very different from others, which had been punctual and fenced in, ascribed to a particular moment and place. In this case, the massive assassination took up more time and territory when perpetrated. Besides the fact that nothing

was reflected by the national press and gendarmerie, it is possible to read between the lines:

As far as the natives' uprising was concerned, the Governor of Formosa said that he was in touch with gendarmerie and municipality authorities and that they had taken joint measures. He added that he accounted for the details sent Peron's Administration and that after travelling around Las Lomitas and its surroundings, there was no reason to be alarmed. It was known that the head of state would set out on a journey headed for the City of Buenos Aires (*La Nación*, 14/10/1947, p. 9).

Formosa. A Pilagá native uprising took place in Las Lomitas. The same news ensured that gendarmerie troops acted immediately to restore the order. It was known that, if necessary, they were ready to go to Las Lomitas (*La Prensa*, 12/10/1947, p. 10).

Meanwhile, Major Julio Cruz Villafañe was flying from Buenos Aires. His purposes were: to get into the conflict over ground, try to detect from the air any track of natives that had escaped and evaluate the necessity of reinforcements (Cruz, 1991).

At the beginning, it was evident that provincial and national authorities, gendarmerie, and army forces were informed. Although "there is no reason to be alarmed" and "the order is restored," it was interesting that the Governor of Formosa felt obliged to travel to the City of Buenos Aires. What was more, major Cruz Villafañe had to fly to Las Lomitas to get familiarized with the conflict in situ.

The scrap, which resulted in a few natives' deaths, actually covered up an ethnocide only comparable with the "Final Solution." The number of bodies totaled more than a million men, women, and children. Hundreds of bodies ended up burnt in huge bonfires, buried in mass graves, thrown out into the rivers or decomposed in the rainforest. Despite the fact that gendarmerie was boasting of having restored the order after the *Malón* without "hurting anyone," Rincón Bomba had the sad score of being the major natives' slaughter of the 20th century in Argentina.

In the midst of a number of difficulties and given the high decomposition of the bodies in such hot weather, the Forensic Anthropologist Team discovered many mass graves and unearthed 27 bodies (*Página 12*, 28/12/2005, p. 14, & 18/03/2006, p. 16.) Despite the fact that Peronism, the official party by then, had not caused the massive assassination—that is, until now we do not have any documentary proof—it can be affirmed that it was not up to the task of a Government that used to apply the doctrine of Social Justice. No one was found guilty, punished or arrested; they simply relocated majors of the Squad. That was it. The bodies were only natives.

## SPEECH AND SILENCE

Unlike the great visibility of the *Malón de la Páz*, what happened in Rincón Bomba was disguised. It was affirmed that the Pilagá "came by train from the *Malón*. Harassed by starvation, 2000 natives rebelled in Formosa" (*Clarín*, 12/10/1947, p. 8). However, soon the situation "normalized" given the fact that natives had scattered after they met with gendarmerie" (*Democracia*, 13/10/1947, p. 17). Data indicated that these natives, who had come from the sugar factories in the province of Salta and Jujuy "tried to raid Las Lomitas in order to claim for social justice" (*Noticias Gráficas*, 12/10/1947, p. 8). As far as loss of lives was concerned, some rumors pointing out new victims were spread out. This information was squeezed, minimized and corrected. The figures given were "calming" and appeared to be the usual rate for those matters: "more or less 4 wounded people" (*Noticias Gráficas*, 12/10/1947, p. 8); "An Attack Leaves Various Natives Dead" (*La Razón*, 12/10/1947, p. 11); "Resulting in some dead people and injured ones" (*La Nación*, 12/10/1947, p. 5); "There were no victims but there were arrests" (*Jefatura del Escuadrón 18 Lomitas*, 1985, N° 101, p. 17).

It was even said that tranquility reigned in Las Lomitas after the "monetary arrangement" set by the Governor "who presented 20 pesos to each of the natives" (*El Intransigente*, 13/10/1946, p. 6.) At any rate, certain extremely significant data got leaked. It was related to the presence of a plane. As was mentioned in the survivor's statements, they were machine-gunned by the aircraft<sup>12</sup>. The press supported this version, but implied that it was an exploration-flight: "Gendarmerie troops flew to Las Lomitas to inspect the places where the rebellious natives are" (*La Nación*, 12/10/1947, p. 5.) However, save one case, what they had asked for is mentioned in a line: "two bombers, that is the reason why the reparation of the runway is done in a rush" (*El Intransigente*, 22/10/1947, p. 4).

Almost four decades after the slaughter, during Alfonsín's Administration, Gendarmerie made a journalist report about the performance of Gendarmerie N° 18 Squad. It pointed out that the detachment—as ancient as the Institution itself—"was loved by all GN officers" (*Jefatura del Escuadrón 18 Lomitas*, 1985, N° 101, p. 15) and that it was created to "take civilization and culture" to those territories which had been destroyed by both war and indigenous people" (*Jefatura del Escuadrón 18 Lomitas*, 1985, N° 101, p. 16)) In a little title called "Squad's intervention during the last natives' rebellion," for the very first time, it is said—publically and officially—that the Pilagá "decided to stir up against authorities." Natives' populations in the area were the problem." (*Jefatura del Escuadrón 18 Lomitas*, 1985, N° 101, p. 17).

By 1991, Gendarmerie decides to amplify the information given about Las Lomitas, so it published a 6-page report where it took care of those "hazardous working days" (Cruz, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> In 1924, at Napalpi's slaughter, an "Aerochaco" plane machine-gunned natives. There is even one picture of such episode.



Although in the beginning it coincides with the text which was published years before, some interesting data appears between lines. Firstly, the title intended to free Gendarmerie from its responsibilities: "Last natives' rebellion." The slaughter was obviously hidden and all the responsibility was attributed to the Pilagá. It was explained that "actually these natives were almost like savages, animals," even though they clarify "Not even animals are to be mistreated" (Cruz, 1991). This article shows the official version in which, to "certify" what had happened, the testimony of three officers who participated in the massive assassination is used. Those testimonies do not coincide in the number of "rebellious"<sup>13</sup> natives and in the used "armament"<sup>14</sup>, nor even in the number of "victims"<sup>15</sup>.

Like the year before, at the Kolla's kidnapping case, the same procedure of misleading information through different given versions was used: "It was a *Malón*," "tranquility reigns," "there were bodies," "there was not any victim," etc. The publication pointed out something which seemed like a confession: "they were not chased, nor even mistreated." Unscrupulously they ensured that Gendarmerie ended "buying their handicrafts" (Cruz, 1991), a totally ridiculous thing. Why did Major Julio Cruz Villafañe have to fly there in a rush, considering that it was such a "normal situation"? Clearly, he needed to familiarize with the situation "in situ." His presence was owned to the fact that "the Major was in charge of informing Gendarmerie General Direction about every detail" (Cruz, 1991). Precisely, given the seriousness of the matters, the highest authorities appeared in person in Las Lomitas—they were not there only to buy handicrafts but to suppress any remaining evidence.

Pictures illustrating the article are there, on one side, to praise Squad N°18 in 1947 and, on the other, to highlight the natives' exoticism. Officers can be seen distributing supplies, disinfecting aborigines' villages and friendly meeting with natives. Besides the writers' effort to highlight Gendarmerie's performance, their way of thinking came out clearly when they pointed out that "actually these natives were almost like savages, animals" and that Squad N°18 seemed to be in some kind of "wild west." Later on, they signaled that because of the "rebellion," "natives, soldiers, an Indian village, a small fort, and squad figures were highlighted" (Cruz, 1991). That is to say, the mental stereotypes remained unchanged.

Regarding other kinds of illustrations, a picture shown with this epigraph: "Pilagá indigenous people's native dancing," where naked native women were dancing, was taken in 1941 near Pilcomayo's river. The obvious intention was to introduce them as exotic and primitive natives. The same biased attitude came out

<sup>13</sup> "More than one thousand", "more or less two thousand," "it would reach 7000 or 8000" (Cruz, 1991) "1500 natives might have risen up." (*La Nación*, 12/10/1947, p. 5).

<sup>14</sup> Natives were using: "Old rifles, shotguns and machetes," "shotguns, hand guns, axes, and machetes in considerable numbers" (Cruz, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> Only "traces of blood, signal of wounded or perhaps dead" were found (Cruz, 1991).

when they said that the Pilagá had been seen "with body paintings and dancing the way they are used to, minutes before the fight" (Cruz, 1991).

In order to influence their readers' opinion about the prehistoric and blood-thirsty natives, the article shows the Pilagá's "attack modality" of "taking them from behind by their heads, telling that they had taken away women and children before the attack" (Cruz, 1991).

### UGLY, SLOVENLY AND BAD

Many decades later, as a demonstration of an absent-minded Argentina, *La Mañana*—a journal from Formosa—published on April the 30th of 2009 a letter was sent by one of the readers about a road-blockage carried out by a group of Wichis who were claiming for their violated rights.

The Letter was signed by school supervisors from Las Lomitas who were in charge of teaching at a Spanish—Wichi bilingual school. In the Letter, not only did they criticize severely the protest but also branded them as solitary, sloven, ignorant, selfish, speculators, and opportunists. To get an image of the educators' perception about their neighboring ethnic groups, here is a transcript of the complete Letter: Only rights and claims?

We are wondering and, actually all inhabitants of the province are wondering as well: Do natives only have rights and claims? Do they not have any obligations? Is everything free for them? How much longer will they be used by unscrupulous people who stain social peace in the dark? When will they face up to their organizations and/or individuals who make profits from their native brothers? Why don't they work hard to pursue natives' dignity? Why for the sake of saving "culture" are they urged not to promote habits of cleanliness and community, being more caring and less discriminatory among them, and least of all, let us not even mention their behavior toward white people? Why are they brain-washed and motivated to live miserably, instead of stimulated to be humble but dignified? Why are they motivated to be speculators and opportunists? Why getting them used to live from hand-outs? They are trained and politically manipulated to destabilize and look down on those who are actually taking responsibility for them. They are protected by the "Indigenous People Law" and by active action from the Government they are granted equal opportunities, sometimes more than to white people. They are housing beneficiaries, scholarship recipients, program and work beneficiaries, etc. They have all they need to take care of themselves.

As regards education, they are taken care in all communities and/or departments which are created on the behalf of certain persons only for the benefit of those who, or to put in another way, on the behalf of those who watch over their rights and get profits from it. They keep questioning, claiming and forcing the normal development of institutional and educational activities. However, they do not send their children to school or care about schedules. They are not prone to receiving values and habits which are necessary for social life.

The text, which reveals an incredible discrimination, is signed by local authorities in charge of bilingual schools who were pretending to ignore the horrific history of Las Lomitas in 1947. Las Lomitas did credit for being the place where the biggest natives' slaughter of the 20th century took place. It is inadmissible, as it was in 2009, that by such a "contribution" to community, we are still going through situations which can lead to new horrors.

From the Letter... it can be also inferred that the natives' situation was practically unbeatable as they already had the "Indigenous People Law"—a law which was not actually carried out. Another thing shown by the text is the certainty that if the natives were not fine, it was because they brought it upon themselves, because they did not want to change, they did not take their children to school, did not wash them, neither work, and live from hand-outs. They are an emblematic human group for society, just like many scholar books keep titling: "The natives' problem." (Cosmelli Ibañez, 1982) In conclusion, they are still the ugly slovenly people, the villains of history. Their bodies from Napalpi as well as Zapallar and Rincón Bomba are invisible. The pain and frustration from kidnapped Maloneros, who were harassed by the State, is not on record. On the contrary, a reversal of proof was made above both, victims and victimizers, being the native always the lazy one, the one who does not want to study or work, not even wash himself.

### THREE SAD NATIVES

It is evident that regarding the "ethnic other," to Argentinean society there are three different kinds of natives, by the way, pretty different from each other. The most appealing is the first one: the dead native. It is par excellence the special conserved specimen of the museums. The favorite native to academics is a "topic" that gives prestige and through which it is relatively possible to get subsidies for researching. The exhibit-native, who is unmoving and still, is nicely labeled. It is kept in a shelf, marked as: they inhabited, they believed, they hunted, they ate. They make up a glass cabinet dweller, a presence's authentication.

The second specimen, which still has nice features, is the phenomenon-native. A native who is situated somewhere between the circus' staff and a topic of a book. He is another interesting man somewhere between the exotic and folk. The phenomenon native is an anthropological topic, interesting to be observed in an objective way, without the avatars of a real subject. It is a real case to become paper for a speech. Seen as a being of weird attire and habits, the native becomes more attractive the farther away from the academic center he is. Obviously, any nearly located native can be an attractive phenomenon; the prestige of their study grows considerably according to his distance and the difficulty to observe him in his "habitat." He is attractive, as long as he keeps those exotic parameters; that is to say, dancing and pronouncing guttural spells. That way, he does not disturb and he can even be convinced of how convenient ethno-tourism or archeological tourism is—which can lead to ayahuasca-tours or peyote-tours, something I found

in México and Ecuador. He can even become a flying television artist, recording a CD or using one of his primitive musical instruments.<sup>16</sup>

However, when a native notices that their woods are being flattened by soya, when people extract natural resources like oil and destroy his environment, when he leaves his land after being expelled by business men or even by the absolute power of the State<sup>17</sup> and desperately looks for help, all the liking thing is diluted and annoyance begins. This real native, who sweats and dreams and who has nothing and needs a job, food and health insurance, undoubtedly disturbs others. His strong and affectionate adherence to earth, that "earth which walks" as Atahualpa Yupanqui once said, bothers. A native who is alive is not needed. It was like that for Presidents such as Roca, Sarmiento, Mitre and others too. Natives bothered Rivadavia, which is why he hired Friedrich Rauch "to exterminate that carnivorous race: the Ranqueles." Natives also annoyed salty meat producers during the presidency of Roca. That is why the campaign in Patagonia was so cruel with the prisoners. This was proved in the letters sent by Juan Manuel de Rosas to Facundo Quiroga, where he explained that he only captured Indian chiefs: "Put everyone else aside the path and shoot them or cut their throats so you do not waste firearm in chimangos [chimangos are little birds from Patagonia]" (Yunque 2008, p. 250). Natives bothered Sociedad Rural Argentina and that is why they formed the lead squad in Zanja de Alsina and then behind Roca's Remington. The native who lives, eats, and needs his space in the world has always been an annoyance. He has never been able to be included in the programs of a class that hates the geographical fate that situates Argentina in South America bordering on Bolivia and Paraguay, instead of France and England. After all, that ethnic other, object of slaughters, usurpations, and disastrous educational plans, refractory survived complete assimilation to "national being."

### IMPUNITY AND MEMORY

As Jürgen Habermas (1999) said in *Goldhagen y el Uso Público de la Historia*, history as a story tale makes a public use and memory is obliged to remember. Up to that point, I agree with him. However, if we are talking about a traumatic episode for society, there will be many difficulties to elaborate and evoke the memory. Individual and familiar pain is multiplied creating a feeling of vulnerability which blocks memory marks. These memory marks come to a standstill under horror and burning anguish (of suffering from a dark sense of guilt that leads in an

<sup>16</sup> In 1998, PETROECUADOR published *Setapikhoró*—a CD with songs and instrumental version of the Secoya—comes with a 105–page illustration. This oil company damaged the environment where Ecuadorian indigenous people inhabit. The cultural business venture is only business make-up.

<sup>17</sup> During the first semester of 2010, a *Quom* ethnic group from La Primavera region settled in the center of Buenos Aires, asking the National Government for protection against the state of Formosa's administration—the local government of Formosa was trying to steal their lands. As a result, there were dead bodies, injured people, and arbitrary acts which still exist nowadays. (Valko, 2013, p. 45).

absence of one's own presence). This denied, usurped and insane presence—by a reality that puts us in a lower biological category, as Gendarmerie points out: “In reality, these natives were almost like savages, animals” (Cruz, 1991). It is known that witnesses of painful events need time to elaborate such a traumatic episode. At the same time, individual memory requires a considerable time to become collective memory. Some communities especially vulnerable because of their history, like the Pilagá's, needed many generations to allow themselves to visualize their memories. It is happening nowadays, after almost 70 years of the massacre, with their history related orally by survivors and relatives of assassinated people. There is no discussion about the repressive situation; on the contrary, it turns out to be a huge internal problem that requires a set of variables to light up the facts, so sinister things come out (Kordon et al., 2005).

If we think about the Second World War Jew Holocaust and the later persecution and judgment of criminals, we notice that, in reality, the trial contributes to elaborate a mental health imaginary. Racist criminals, who considered the other as an inferior being or a sub-human, were punished and severely censured by the international community. On the contrary, in the natives' case this did not happen. The crimes do not exist, those guilty are innocent and their names and memories are clean. This is the point. We should not forget the State, through their Army forces, paradoxically has the duty of watching over citizens' integrity— who caused the kidnapping and exile of the Kolla as well as the genocide of the Pilagá. Such an authority remains unpunished and emphasizes the psychosocial effects of those events. Bear in mind that the speech emerging in both the *Malón de la Paz* and Rincón Bomba, was based in negation, distortion and silence. Those effects have a profound incidence in the construction of “ourselves,” “us inclusive” and the “other.” Culpability remains unseen, suspended and coming back in some way over the victims, the natives (natural recipients of structural guilt created by the vision of the “occidental other” like having no soul, being ignorant, bestial, thief, even lazy to the point of considering its replacement for African workforce). Merleau-Ponty remarks that the eye always reaches the image late. That novel native, who was “discovered” by old European eyes, was immediately tainted with prejudices and faults of innumerable kind and for the occidental man was not the same any more. In countless occasions he began to consider himself as part of that view (Merleau-Ponty, 1994).

The terrorist speech generates terror. It is mandatory to leave behind that desperate passivity to gain access to the word that helps to repair such trauma.

Ascribing names constitutes not only the beginning of the elaboration of the loss but also of the subject's position in a community that, like the Pilagá, was destroyed by massive assassination.

“There is room to wonder if, besides the fact that every loss introduces a margin of “*inelaborabilidad*” (a non-formulatable condition)” (Kordon et al., 2005, p. 165). Up to what point can that margin be extended when, besides its unfairness, the event's existence is denied and hidden? What is the limit of perception in

the constant impunity of killers and the permanent vulnerability of victims under those circumstances?

After the ending of the *Malón de la Paz*, the Government pretended not to have ordered the violent kidnapping and exile of the Kolla up to the point of creating three investigative commissions to determinate what had happened. Obviously, these pretended commissions did not investigate anything at all. About Rincón Bomba the media says: “There is not any official information about this event” (*La Nación*, 12/10/1947, p. 5); “We have not received information about this event.” (*Noticias Gráficas*, 12/10/1947, p. 8). It was only after four decades that the State decided to comment about the matters pointing out that “there were no victims” (*Jefatura del Escuadrón 18 Lomitas*, N° 101 1985, p. 17).

“It is not hard to imagine what the consequences of impunity, denial and silence are. In almost all interviews to Kollas' relatives and authorities President Perón was excused and all responsibility was attributed to his surrounding figures. Such a defense is nothing else but the assumption of the dominant speech which intended to twist everything that had happened. Therefore culpability befalls the victims.” (Valko, 2012, pp. 158–159).

We know that we deal with what is prohibited and also with its punishment. But, what are the effects within a population as vulnerable as the indigenous people, one of the poorest provinces in the country—if (killing) is not punished and if impunity is rewarded? The disappearance of a protecting image of the rule of law is replaced by impunity—which nowadays keeps producing the death of many natives in Formosa<sup>18</sup> and Chaco. No-law is what prevails. Impunity without punishment, death without bodies, primitive owners turned into usurpers. How much longer is it possible to elaborate a perception of impunity of killers and a defenselessness of the victims in these circumstances, when the executive arm is the very State itself, denying having committed those crimes and hiding them and the bodies? The plot, which was set out around those two episodes used in this article, tried to confuse, silence and distort facts. Perón's Administration chose to kill memory. In one case they got to the point of denying their identity as natives and on the other, the number of dead bodies was diminished until the massacre was virtually non-existent. The massive graves, the rainforest, and the fear in the survivors' memories contributed to erase all track of it. In one case there were only kidnapped natives whereas, in the other one, dead natives were mentioned and given their condition of invisible people still cannot get in the pages of our official history. Nowadays, it is the State who keeps disregarding community land

<sup>18</sup> In Argentina, at least 20 indigenous peoples are recognized: Chané, Chorote, Chulupi, Diaguita-Calchaquí, Huarpe, Kolla, Mapuche, Mbyá Guaraní, Mocoví, Pilagá, Rankulche, Tapiete, Tehuelche, Tobá, Tupí Guaraní and Wichí. Atacama, Awa Guaraní, Charrúa, Comechingón, Lule, Tonocoté, Vilela and Omahuac can also be found. From the aforementioned, the Kolla and the Mapuche are the main ones. The native population phenomena is so important that in the last national census (2001–2011) it could not be put sideways and the State had to include questions regarding the native characteristics of each living unity (Valko, 2013).

usurpation complaints at the same time that it keeps minimizing violations and ignoring the ongoing deaths.

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## CHAPTER 10

# THE MOCOVÍ-QOM<sup>1</sup> COMMUNITIES

## History, Knowledge, Sufferings, and Subjectivity(ties)

María Zulma Pirini

## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

This report tries to convey knowledge about history, language, culture, sufferings, and knowledge of the Mocoví-Qom communities. In addition, it aims at the analysis of signs of cultural memory after a long period of invisibility in the Argentinean Official History.

Fragments of open interviews with qualified leaders of both communities were analyzed and articulated with various sociological, anthropological, linguistic, and legal studies, and from the standpoint of psychoanalysis as regards relational perspectives, raising a series of questions to reveal facts about cultural and relational history of community members up to the present.

Data obtained allowed us to reflect upon how the implications of invisibility, discrimination, and dispossession of rights, which spanned history, culture,

<sup>1</sup> The terms Toba and Qom are interchangeable. Qom is the name of the language.

language of origin, and ancestral knowledge, were processed; how generational processes are redefined; how these processes affect the construction of subjectivity or subjectivities both in individual and community histories; also, how these processes are handled today in their link with interculturalism.

Open interviews were conducted with qualified leaders (men and women) of the Mocoví-Qom communities. Interviewees were aged between 45 and 60, and all of them spoke their native language. They live in small urban areas and on the periphery of cities in Santa Fe Province.

## INTRODUCTION

We maintain that, in recent decades, research carried out by different social sciences on Indigenous Peoples has contributed to and expanded our understanding of the enduring and conflicting inter-ethnic relations in most regions of Latin America, including Argentina.

The first traumatic social event had its origin in the arrival of Spanish conquerors in an unknown geography, constituting the foundation of a series of atrocities against all communities: lands were usurped and women were separated from their spouses and their children. The entire lives of native populations were comprehensively traumatized, not only for the appropriation of their territory, but also for the imposition of the European religion, Catholicism, which was assumed as a cultural universal. Members of the indigenous communities were forced to abandon the ancestral culture they were part of to embrace a Eurocentric culture which was part of the condition of "Civilization" in the point of view of the conquerors.

The arrival of the colonizers marks the prelude to a constant: the suffering of community members, imposed throughout the centuries, and counting nowadays with different instruments to intimidate and assail the life and culture of the indigenous peoples, in our country and in other Latin American countries as well.

Under the imposition of colonizers, the intention to abolish all rights continued throughout the following centuries with innumerable conflicts in different historical moments. Actors who held and still hold the power to wrack and loot ancestral customs have changed, but they have constantly conjugated all types of cruelty against the Mocoví-Qom people that persist to this day in various territories.

Since 1810, and later with the advent of the Nation States, the fratricidal struggles and civil wars continued as genuine battles against the culture of many communities. The Mocoví-Qom did not escape the "genocide" carried out by the policies implemented at the time.

The Official History in Argentina fits within the perspective that we are descendants of "those who came by ship," in reference to European immigration in the late nineteenth century. From that historical reading, we might point out that, for centuries, a Eurocentric colonialist logic has supported and justified concealment of the fact that our country was inhabited by the first and true owners of the land. As the indigenous communities themselves declare, *"We belong to the*

*earth."* Consequently, Argentinean History is established under two opposites: "Civilization and Barbarism."

Under that conception, "Civilization" implies the nomination of those who are part and those who are excluded from Argentina. From that logic, the term "civilization" institutes from the very beginning a situation of domination closely linked to the interplays of power that strengthen disputes against indigenous populations; a system of power that still today tries to veil the cultural diversity inherent to the Argentinean identity. In this antinomial concept, the indigenous communities corresponded to the side of "Barbarism" to the Official History.

From this point of view and according to each period, residents of the Mocoví-Qom communities were subalternized by the rest of the Argentine population, who used them as reservoir for slave labor in different ventures.

The arrival of capitalism brought new and different battles with fratricide conflicts, setting another significant moment for the concealment of communities, appropriation of their lands, and subjugation of their ancestral culture.

Many members of the Mocoví-Qom peoples were captured by their enemy invader with the aim of annihilating and fragmenting their communities to seize their land, to raze their culture and entirely eliminated their rights as their cultural identity and their sense of belonging, which correspond to the human rights of all members of the community and their families. Other community groups could escape by migrating to different locations in Santa Fe Province, under the imposition of abandoning their homeland and losing the ancestral culture built by their progenitors throughout centuries.

Today, it is the national and multinational companies who are expropriating and appropriating their land, forcing them to live realities other than their community history. This is the case of the Qom community who had to migrate from Chaco Province to Santa Fe Province when forced to leave the rural areas. Many of them moved to big cities like Rosario; they were not only deprived of their land, but also their life experience as collective farm workers and craftsmen was ruthlessly disbanded in urbanized centers.

In a different approach from those of other social sciences referred to in this study, we analyze community difficulties through psychoanalysis, from a binding perspective. The difference is given by the fact that the history narrated in interviews is not read as the cause of current suffering. It is rather the cause a subject lives in a certain network of relations that associates individual and community experiences, with bonds that entwine with interculturality. Like a never ending knot in a plot, these bonds permanently create new marks which in turn modify subjectivities, constituting new ones in every encounter with the other, in a constant construction involving those actors linked to each situation of otherness.

Recent health policies implemented in 2010 and destined to Indigenous Peoples account for apparent solutions but involve errors and omissions caused by a diagnosis of programs that still does not understand the complexity of diversity; for this reason, all that is established in national programs becomes fragmented

and diluted when it reaches the different provinces, resulting in new frustrations for community members.

In this regard, Convention 169, ILO, Part V, Article 25 (1989) states:

Governments shall ensure that adequate health services are made available to the peoples concerned, or shall provide them with resources to allow them to design and deliver such services under their own responsibility and control, so that they may enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

In the data obtained, we observe the absence of certain tools for diagnosis and clinical intervention based on a new epistemological dimension, that is, situation-based tools capable of interpreting knowledge to enable proper practice, giving way to diversity.

If government programs follow the guidelines of the Proposal, we might ask what "adequate health care" would mean. The stated Proposal is a product of the Western health system spirit, thus, it would be facing other charges, in this case, a universal aspect of the concepts of health and health care.

Accounts of interviewees illustrate a multiplicity of suffering derived from systematic and continuous violations of human rights, reaching true levels of discrimination, mainly among the young who are recurrent depositaries of police violence solely for their skin color and for belonging to these communities.

Today, members of indigenous communities are protected by laws and agreements oriented to the defense of human rights. This fact was reflected in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). It states, "Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such." However, in everyday practice, the rights that assist them as members of indigenous communities are frequently not taken into account.

By effect of the migrations imposed, many residents of the Mocoví-Qom communities inhabit other provinces and remain invisible, they suffer persecutions, physical and psychological violence, and they undergo the violent expulsion from their ancestral lands, facts that undermine the life of the people, as it has recently occurred in the Qom community in Formosa Province, when children and youths were killed. The communities suffer arbitrary arrest and imprisonment for opposition to authority when they attempt to defend their homeland; some scholars identify this situation as "genocide."

Eugenio Zaffaroni<sup>2</sup> states,

If someone pretends to delete a nation, a culture, it is genocide. The Roquismo<sup>3</sup>, with the figure of Julio Argentino Roca, represents the disciplinary process, three decades of military regulation and education breaking native bonds, the flag, the anthem, compulsory military service; an entire desktop citizenship, totally defined

<sup>2</sup> Former member of the Supreme Court of Justice.

<sup>3</sup> Related to policies led by J. A. Roca.

from top down. In this context, some 'savages in the south bothered' in a country which needed to be inhabited, where workforce was scarce. All these facts generate discipline, an oppressive policy with real laws and actions committed to the extermination of a people. No one can doubt that the indigenous communities suffered genocide. (Zaffaroni interviewed by Aranda, 2008)

We agree with the statements of Judge Zaffaroni and, to the same effect, we could say that for centuries, the Indigenous Communities endured the same aberrant actions from those who took over the power at different times. In the interview, the author compares genocide to the events undergone in 1976 during the military dictatorship. In this case, not only the vulnerable population was affected, but also a significant segment in the middle class and university population were impacted. This situation could be denounced in international forums due to the social composition of those who were affected: "It all depends on the status of the affected sector and its ability to listen, speak, and publish about the repression they are suffering" (Zaffaroni, 2008, p. 12).

The permanent and multiple avatars that life and culture of the Mocoví-Qom indigenous communities went through is progressively becoming more visible due to the emergence of different political contexts whose common denominator, among further progress, is the expansion of human rights to those in Argentina who "had no voice." Unfortunately, many provinces still do not respect the rights that Indigenous Peoples are entitled to.

Our purpose:

- To follow a path not yet traveled through by our discipline in order to prompt reflection between theory and practice, and to focus on various forms of intervention to compare results with national and Latin American studies in relation to Prevention and Mental Health Care, as a whole and among communities.
- To organize and share the results of practice with communities in regions across the country and in Latin America, not only for academic purposes, but also for potential intervention in Mental Health Care issues of young and adult people in the Indigenous Communities, with the possibility of inclusion within State Health Plans but respecting their knowledge from ancestral culture and context.

#### A BRIEF TOUR ON HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES OF THE MOCOVÍ-TOBA PEOPLES

For the last three decades, democratic governments have ruled our country bringing a time of openness and dissemination as regards studies of indigenous issues.

Jorge L. Ubertalli is one of the authors particularly committed to the description of the cultural history and sufferings of the stated communities. He writes, "The ancestors of the Mocoví peoples were forced by colonists, with the consequence of land appropriation, in an attempt to wipe out their culture, becoming manpower that could be exploited, and ultimately, if any members of the commu-



nity sought rebellion, extermination was the result." After colonial times, "their descendants could recompose again from those years of genocide, even though the lives of community members were exposed to constant struggle for the land and natural resources of those who held power. They were always ready with their spears to resist the attack of invaders who sought exploitation and destruction of their ancestral culture" (1986, pp. 31, 35).

In 1879, under the presidency of Avellaneda, when the Desert Campaign, led by Julio A. Roca, was carried out, the lives of the Indigenous Communities were shaken again.

Ubertalli states, "With the discovery of steam as tannin remover from the 'quebracho' tree, factories were set up. It was the beginning of The Forestal Land, Timber, and Railways Company Ltd. having at their disposal two million hectares in the north of Santa Fe Province and the south of the present Chaco Province" (1986, p. 38). Known until today by the name of "La Forestal," the factory has an association with the significance of violation of rights and one of the most serious attacks on the natural resources of the time.

The process of "La Forestal" carried out by the British Government in complicity with the Argentine Government, marks the beginning of a new colonization and cultural appropriation: capitalism, referring to the most brutal subjugation to savage individualism as opposed to the life of the Mocoví-Qom communities, who had experience in social work and community life based on the communal ownership of land and solidarity. Ailment for the denaturalization which occurred to the Indigenous Peoples and a new devastation of their culture comes from "exploitation and marginalization exercised by someone who was not even there, and who acted through front men, foremen, and paid gendarmes" (Ubertalli, 1987, p. 38). Likewise, Valko (2009, p. 149) states, "The most severe clashes which took place in the 'Ingenio' La Forestal ended with dozens of people killed by the Gendarmería Volante<sup>3</sup>."

Many communities in the region (Qom, Mocovíes, Matacos, Chiriguano, Chulupí, Guaraníes, and Chanés) were razed by the new Master: foreign capitalism and its representatives, the Argentine ombudsmen. With impunity, the new owners of the land devastated the communities who were twinned with hunger, their dreams threatened as well as hope and life itself. Some, to their safeguard and to save their lives, fled to the woods with their families.

Governor Obeid, enacted Law 2377—Art. 57. For the Protection of Mountains and Forests of Santa Fe Province. This Statute was passed by Legislature on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2004. It proclaims 17<sup>th</sup> November of each year as the Day for the Protection of Woodlands and Forests of Santa Fe Province.

Research carried out by Zaffaroni and Choque claims that, "Mocoví communities belong to the Guaycurú group, together with Toba and Pilagá peoples" (2009,

<sup>3</sup> "Ingenio": a sugar factory

<sup>4</sup> The "Gendarmería Volante" (1904–1924) was a military organized force remembered by its brutality in dealing with labor conflicts.

p. 90). They do not currently own lands, they work the field as laborers, loggers, lumber mill workers, and many inhabit the periphery of cities.

An episode of Mocoví insurrection took place following the setting up of "La Forestal" when the communities decided to oppose "exploitation and oppression." This was another cruel battle which took place in the area of San Javier (Santa Fe Province).

Ubertalli indicates that by 1905, more than 900 Mocoví countrymen embarked on the recapture of the town of San Javier, located in the working area of Florence (Chaco area of Santa Fe Province). The author states, "San Javier is the Patron Saint of the poor, whom was invoked when the idea of insurrection was being considered. There was no other way but to fight against 'civilization,' which had taken over the millenary jungles and the ancient Guaycurú forests" (1987, pp. 53–55). In the confrontation, the Indigenous Communities suffered numerous casualties in an unequal battle against colonists, police, and military force. Their huts and belongings were burnt. Those who survived were obliged to forced labor.

The event of the native rebellion had an enormous impact at the time, both in Santa Fe Province and in its surrounding areas. The survivors of the massacre, together with some criollos<sup>6</sup>, found refuge in the forests, some escaped to Chaco Province and others to Formosa Province where they could live a collective life of dignity, in contact with nature that was favorable to them. They hunted, fished, manufactured crafts, and labored the land in community.

Another cruel confrontation, which integrated Toba and Mocoví peoples against colonists supported by the police intervention, was the Napalpí campaign (1924) in which the most brutal repression against indigenous peoples took place. Most casualties corresponded to the Mocoví community. Valko (2009, p. 58) affirms, "There were no casualties among the police. Later, some community members returned as 'settlers' to harvest the land, but were constantly watched and stalked by the police, who responded to Centeno, Governor of the Province."

For the Guaycurú peoples, Napalpí was synonymous of death. Their huts were razed by fire, death found them defenseless. Those who could escape hid in the forest trying to save their lives.

Valko (2009, p. 59) states, "At least two hundred Mocovíes and Tobas who felt invested by invincible powers to evict whites were killed in an ambush while in a state of complete helplessness." Valko's writings turn dreadful when he describes, "Their bodies were object of tremendous mutilation by the soldiery: testicles, penises, and ears were torn as trophies."

The contributions of Zaffaroni and Choque (2009) on the same line of investigation note,

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specifically in the 20s, they suffered the military defeat in Napalpí, Chaco." At present, the authors point out, "Tobas live in political and economic dependence of the dominant society. In recent years, and in spite of the events,

<sup>6</sup> Natives or inhabitants of Latin America of European descent, especially of Spanish descent.



they have been able to recover the sense of being indigenous and hence, the strength to fight for their rights. (p. 90)

Sociolinguistic studies share the same diagnosis. They sustain that both in Argentina and in other countries, linguistic contact among different communities is inserted in a situation of "conflictive diglossia."

Gualdieri's contributions point out, "The Mocoví people (Guaycurú linguistic family) have suffered confrontations and violence until the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a process of ethnic invisibility." He states, "From the socio-economic characteristics and the processes of political organization in Santa Fe Province, the situation of the Mocoví community is being reversed in the last decades" (2004, p. 6).

With the return to democracy in the mid 80s and the enactment of legal norms such as National Law 23302 on Indigenous Policies, when movements for indigenous claims became stronger, Mocovíes from Santa Fe Province initiated a process of self-affirmation which led to their "identification as indigenous peoples" and the "recovery of their Mocoví identity" (Gualdieri, 2004, p. 11).

Towards the end of the decade, the Organization of Indigenous Communities of Santa Fe (OCASTAFE, for its name in Spanish) was formed bringing together Mocovíes and Qom who had migrated from Chaco Province.

The author describes that, within this context, transmission and use of the native language have been significantly affected. Nowadays, Mocoví-Spanish bilingualism is being undermined to the detriment of the native language, replaced by the dominant language, despite revitalization efforts carried out by the school system.

Since pre-Hispanic times, one of the most important events of the Mocoví peoples has been the socio-cultural annual celebration named *La Fiesta del 30 de Agosto* (Feast of August 30<sup>th</sup>). Citro (2004) affirms that it constitutes an essential space for the continuity and recreation of the group social ties, and for the construction of a shared identity. In her study, Citro investigates the socio-cultural ways and significance of annual rituals in the community history by referring to the influence of missionary strategies in the transformation of these rituals.

The celebration is a way of enhancing intergenerational transmission of beliefs, a way of strengthening family gatherings; it is the renewal of both family ties and economic dimensions. Lastly, it is the renewal of the leadership of the chiefs and of their role as articulators of ties with different segments of the "larger society," that is, inter- and intra- ethnic relations of the Mocoví groups.

#### PROBLEMS, DILEMMAS, AND ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The interviewed leaders report that many animals in the region are currently at risk of extinction as a result of landlord actions repeating the model of appropriation of the scarce rural areas that communities hold today.

The abuse of a voracious capitalism rooted in the logics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century neoliberal capitalist market, and extending to recent years, continues to deprive and displace the indigenous peoples. If there is any resistance, capitalism will not stop until the limit of execution of survivors of the native communities, putting also at risk the existence of many animals by destroying favorable environmental conditions, imposing its dominance in search of free spaces for the "new gold," that is, soybean.

The "invasion" of soybean crops wiped out small farmers, some of them descendants of the original natives who still retained small plots of land.

As a consequence of pesticides, mainly glyphosate, which attack the population of areas dedicated to soybean production, crops also brought new diseases mainly associated with cancer and other malformations that largely affect children.

In 2010, the Court in Santa Fe Province enforced a resolution which completely banned the use of such pesticides in the crops around San Jorge, constituting the first Court case in which appeals presented by officials and agribusinessmen were not validated.

As regards comprehensive health care, it is noteworthy that there are no consistent studies which may take into account the diversity of native peoples. On the other hand, members of the Indigenous Communities lack a broad health system based on the distinctive character of each community until today; a system which could include their ancestral knowledge to implement in conjunction with other treatments related to intercultural health workers. We believe that this fact would imply an approach to the prevention of diverse conditions, and also, it would limit extreme cases of infant mortality which have occurred during the last years, namely, those related to preventable pathologies and/or access to treatment.

Studies by different authors argue, "There can be no mental health which can preserve the psychic subject from permanent, severe, and irreversible damage, if any of the fundamental laws that govern the coexistence of human beings are violated or perverted" (Bonano 2008, p. 63).

The authors have worked with psychological and social effects of the last military dictatorship through different devices: with family and friends of the "disappeared," and with the most ruthless, savage and ignominious case, as was the appropriation of minors.

It was a unique professional collective experience, and interventions were a space for reflection trying to process what was not possible to grieve because the bodies were not found. My colleagues' experience and theories allowed me to think and connect with the analysis of Indigenous Peoples issue, from the ailments they have received as intergenerational legacy and to address these current collective controversial situations.

From the story of one of the interviewed leaders, we found out that during his early years, family life was spent in lands that belonged to them. Suffering began when they had to leave their natural spaces where three generations had lived

harmoniously. From that time, it is interesting to highlight an anecdote that happened to the interviewee's grandfather, when a friend who visited him suggested, "Don José, the family with so many kids is becoming big, you should enlarge the ranch." The response was immediate, the grandfather replied with a cultural definition, "What for?, if everything is outside?" The Mocoví grandfather's expression denotes the trace of cultural diversity. Life was outside the house, in its own context, with the animals that were part of the natural environment. Later, when being young, the leader decided to formalize his relationship by getting married in an important city of the province, he built his own home with the support of his family and the members of both indigenous communities, Mocoví and Qom. In this situation, his father advised him remembering his grandfather, and said, "The house must be large, because here, life happens inside." We could say that intergenerational transmission is resignified in another space (Rosario) and historical modes and discontinuity of subjectivity are transformed, where ancient customs are losing something that was typical of previous community life. New subjectivity constructions related to the new time and socio-cultural space, which currently include them, appear along with this.

In that respect, in agreement with Bózzolo, we could say, "There is no outside or inside. Subjectivity is constructed in the subjects of the community in continuity with the social bond they are threading. Generators of new traces in the context they are embedded appear while living together in the same space—in the community, in the neighborhood, in institutions—and in that 'among' the subjects of the linkage" (2000, p. 11).

Following the analysis from the contributions of the theories of Psychoanalysis from the binding perspective, we could state that the social will be constitutive of subjectivity and will be the occasion of the psyche, not as a linear or fixed structural bond, but in constant transformation. From that position, "Subjectivity is construed from its being in society that establishes it. There is not a subjectivity construed once and for ever, therefore, there is also no psychological identity once and for all. Processes of subjectivation operate in areas of inconsistency of subjectivities transforming them" (Bózzolo, 2000, p. 11).

Through the description of the leader, we learned about the serious ailments he had suffered when entering school and other interviewees told the same traumatic situation. The case of the leader was different from that of other indigenous members. During his years at school and due to imposed migration, the family had to establish in a field that did not belong to them in the south of the province. They worked together, including children, in agricultural and livestock activities, while women were engaged in domestic work in the house of the owner of the field.

The problems, as mentioned above, arose when entering school. Children talked Mocoví language and very little Spanish. For that reason, they could not learn and the overall outcome of children was giving up school. The leader's experi-

ence was extraordinary, different, thanks to the intervention of the owner of the land of Belgian origin, engaged in the school parents' fundraising association, to support and defend the child studies. Consequently, he was a bridge between the two cultures, which allowed the member of the Mocoví community to stay until leaving primary school.

In the exchange of that relationship, the child had a very important mission: he became the translator of his godfather. That task had a high level of responsibility because the child himself did not speak Spanish fluently. Besides, they had to add the man's physical condition, a vocal cords operation, which prevented him from speaking clearly. From this definition, we have a new hypothesis. Which psychic traces and how were they influencing the child subjectivity when fulfilling the function of his godfather's companion and interacting with adults?

In this case there was an asymmetrical bond between "two immigrants," although it is a term that could be read from the antinomy of meaning for the Argentinean society. On the one hand, a European descendant who, as such, implies lineage, ancestry and "superiority," according to the version of our Official History based on the universal of Eurocentrism. On the other hand, an indigenous, with reminiscent of stranger and with immigrant status, of social "extimacy," since for Argentinean ideology, his indigenous being was and is invisible, and denied as a constituent part of the Nation, that is to say, he is a "foreigner" in his own land.

We infer that both actors were changing the subjectivation processes as a consequence of that meeting, building different traces. The godfather became interested in a "strange" culture while the indigenous child transformed his subjectivity(ies) in that intersecting of diverse cultures.

To confirm the previous analysis I return to the interview with the leader. He reports that in the 70s, when he was young, his Belgian godfather suggested and paid for his traveling expenses to the UN meeting in Switzerland, when the International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was not yet enacted.

Listening to the interviewee's story conveys two ideas. On the one hand, a pleasure for traveling to an unknown land with a different language, a whole adventure for a young man. On the other, the suffering of the indigenous man when he heard the name in English (later translated into Spanish) given to the Indigenous Peoples, naming them as Tribal Peoples. At that point of the story, the leader changed his attitude, he expressed astonishment, sadness, helplessness, waiting for some response from the Coordinator who was silent. Meanwhile, the leader repeated the same terms, as he thought she had not taken notes properly. Once the misunderstanding between interviewer and interviewee was explained, he continued thinking aloud and said, "If it were not for that trip, perhaps, I would not be alive due to my condition of Mocoví community member and political activist," two characteristics that were potentiated to become persecuted by the nefarious ideology of the seventies.

The actions of different international organizations that fought in defense of indigenous communities were very little known, precisely because at that time,

<sup>2</sup> ¿Pa' qué? Colloquial expression, informal register.

those who dared to go beyond "this border" were persecuted and many of them disappeared or were killed.

The age of the interviewees and being the bearers of indigenous language were grounds for terror policies implemented during the military dictatorship in 1976, as an interviewee, who will be analyzed in following pages, suffered.

The diverse and extraordinary life experience of the leader, as a result of that hazardous encounter with his Belgian godfather, including the fact that one of his family ancestors signed a treaty with the Spanish Crown at colonial times (continuing to these days), were sufficient background to grant him the title of Traditional Authority. This role includes the two communities since historically this was a single region until the advent of the National State.

The leader participates as a reference in one of the Mocoví community celebrations that takes place on April 19<sup>th</sup> every year, in conjunction with the Indigenous People's Day, called the Feast of the Sacred Fire (Figure 10.1). He states, "It's a permanent reminder of the strength of community life. The ceremony represents home warmth, private life, and sexuality. Fire is the architect where all foods are cooked among other things; it is a symbol of Mocoví worldview." He brings a picture of one of the ceremonials developed in a small community called Kombaiá, where we can see him leading the ceremony. It is interesting to observe how they identify themselves with the ancient traditions handed down transgenerationally, and how they recover them year after year despite the concealment and extermination that the community ancestors were exposed in different battles. These are memory traits, strengthened and visible through their cultural practices and rituals, leaving a legacy for future generations.



FIGURE 10.1. Mocoví leader in the Feast of the Sacred Fire.

In 2009, I was invited to participate in the Indigenous Women Conference in the town of Cayastá for the first time. Observation and listening to the situation where the organizers persuaded older women (grandmothers) to tell the experiences of family and community life, confirmed the studies and descriptions of the different authors, and enlarge the interviews of the leaders.

One of the old participants indicated, "We didn't speak to our children in Mocoví language so they could learn Spanish." That was a constant in the communities, to provide young people with the opportunity to get minimally paid jobs, and thus, she added, "They would not be persecuted as indigenous."

Another elderly woman said, "To celebrate traditional festivities of the community we had to do it secretly because if they knew about it, they came and burned our huts, clothes, and if there were "gurises"<sup>8</sup> inside, they were burned."

On the one hand, we learn about the imposition executed through terror constituted from Eurocentric colonialist thought, which undermined their culture from different flanks, attacking something as significant as their ancestral language. Thus, they demolished subjectivity which had been built up from being part of a different community, forcing them to become invisible. They could only speak indigenous language within the family context. In the "extramural," the experiences happened within "a borderline" without any possibility to cross it because their lives were threatened. On the other hand, the imposition of a foreign culture on the communities was exterminating the life of the Indigenous Peoples from different areas, restraining part of the activities of a cultural identity, making it impossible to hold ancestral ceremonies, which have currently been recovered by the great effort of different representative organizations in defense of their rights.

In agreement with the analysis of Bózzolo and other psychoanalysts derived from their practices with relatives and friends of the disappeared during the last military dictatorship who make reference to that

the prohibition of conceiving dissident thoughts, is internalized by the psychic subject not only by the vital threat, but also because thinking of this situation of dispossession is unbearable suffering, and the subject (in this case, Mocoví-Qom) ends up legitimizing himself in the adoption that the settlers or capitalist or genocide were building in a particular historical moment. (Bózzolo, Bonano, & L. Hoste, 2008, p. 95)

In "that context of terror," one of the proposals of intervention suggested by psychoanalysts is "It is important to provide opportunities that allow threading those traces that arise as enigmatic signifiers." It is heard in the indigenous people's speech, "Traces are disjointed, disaggregated, and speechless in the intergenerational transmission chain" (Bózzolo et al., 2008, p. 95). Therefore, each clinical action for the group should be oriented in that line of therapeutic performance.

<sup>8</sup> Little indigenous children.

Going back to the descriptive aspect of the Indigenous Women Conference, it is essential to indicate that Cayastá is a historic and symbolic place for the Mocoví community life. Cayastá is located in approximately the same place where Juan de Garay founded the city of Santa Fe for the first time in 1573. Scarcely thousand meters separate Cayastá from this site which is commonly called the Old Santa Fe and holds one of the most important archaeological ruins in Latin America; it preserves traces of the indigenous Argentinean population since colonial time (Figure 10.2).

The woman leader, organizer of the conference mentioned above, is currently the Vice-President of OCASTAFE. This research was possible thanks to this organization.

Data obtained during the interviews with the leader raises a number of questions that highlight the topic. She describes different ailments suffered as a consequence of being a member of the Mocoví community. She points out, "When I was a child and a young girl, my life was very hard." Her relatives transmitted prohibitions she should obey to be in contact with the 'others'; she said, "We could not talk with white people, blonde, with blue eyes, and if we had to say something connected with the job, we did not look into their eyes." The text of the interview with the leader discovers family commands transmitted transgenerationally, which have left psychic traces that have not yet been processed further among other residents of the community. She concludes, "They show fear, embarrassment to talk to white people, and thus, they do not know how to defend the rights they have achieved now." The concealment suffered and the prohibition of the language they were victims of during their youth left them out of consider-

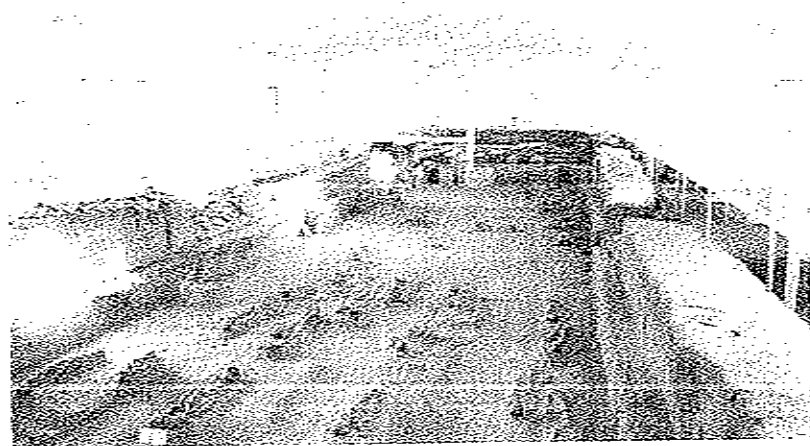


FIGURE 10.2. Archaeological ruins of Cayastá.

ation in terms of rights. The situation of helplessness suffered due to extreme persecution, with high degrees of discrimination, exclusion, and abandonment do not allow them to link confidently with multiculturalism at this moment. The community members took the place of vassals and slaves established by landowners and feudal lords. Still today, vestiges of authoritarianism, racism, and genocide due to the greed of the designs of a neo-liberal model based on the logic of the Market God are observed in other provinces.

Entering primary school was another traumatic moment that the leader describes, same suffering undergone by all indigenous children, "We did not understand education, it was addressed for another culture and we spoke a different language," she said. Another frustration was added to these problems that were a constant among the children of the time. They were forced to give up school because as teachers said, "They do not understand," a situation that placed them outside the system because they were illiterate. Some leaders resumed their studies when they were adults. The institutional discourse denotes the asymmetry in the bonds of the twentieth century.

Currently, the leader travels through different towns and cities where both communities are settled in order to transmit all the programs implemented by various government agencies for the organization of the community members and for the actions aimed at defending all the rights as members of an indigenous group, as part of the Argentinean cultural identity, though the "white" population wants to deny it. The leader is advised by a few lawyers who work in support of both communities.

An urgent concern of the adults is to solve the issue of children and young indigenous people because past experiences of adults when they were at school are repeated in some educational institutions. At meetings of the leader with directors and teachers, when she asks why some indigenous children give up school, teachers answer, "Children are slow, other teachers ask how to teach them because they do not understand." The leader adds, "This is serious, the cultural clash our children suffer is death, it breaks identity and spoils the soul, principles are lost, pride is lost, and children are domesticated like animals, and that is hard for us, the indigenous, and when they come to recreation places young people are persecuted, discriminated, beaten because they belong to the communities. They are prohibited from entering where 'whites' have fun." Very distressed she murmurs, "It's so hard wanting to learn what we have never been; to begin with, we speak a different language." She raises the complaint with the coordinator. We agreed to work on one side with the families and on the other with young children through different tools for group practice, in order to listen to the indigenous inhabitants through various interventions that allow them to express their suffering as a way to process all that is untied and intergenerationally transferred.

Through the demand of the leader it is exposed that there are no reliable studies in Argentina as regards mental health for the different indigenous populations. In recent years, progress has been made in the creation and implementation of

health programs, without achieving the objectives in everyday practice where old patterns, which do not take into account the dimensions raised with "the different being," are repeated. Interventions from a paradigm shift are fundamental, that is to say, to intervene and interpolate practices in situation, without trying to generalize. This is a different what-to-do question that results in diversity, in which ancestral knowledge, articulated to Western medicine or psychology are included in the approaches for the prevention and treatment of diseases that would avoid infant and child mortality.

To end with the dilemmas and problems, we will analyze the experiences of a Qom leader who lives with part of her family on the periphery of a major city in Santa Fe Province. She spent her childhood and youth with the community in the *Impenetrable*<sup>9</sup>. The woodland with that name has been considered one of the greatest lungs to safeguard the environmental health of the world. It was composed of a variety of trees. Its name indicates that it is very difficult to access for non indigenous population, there the native lived in contact with the animals of the region. For many years, due to the invasion and intimidation of the large landowners, the woodland has been brutally cut down; the animals are endangered and the indigenous villagers have been forced to migrate to other areas that have nothing in common with their own culture. The leader states, "It was very difficult to get used to living in the city, we worked the land, made crafts and leather work, collected honey, men hunted and fished. The small field of my family is very fertile because it is on the banks of the river. We did not have what you can find in the cities but no one in the community was hungry."

In the city they were losing all their experience of collective farm workers until they could be located in a neighborhood constituted by Qom migrants, commonly called Tobas by the inhabitants of the city to discriminate against the community. The neighborhood was built and inhabited by families of migrants without proper sanitation. Some families came to the city because they had lost their fields as a result of the land theft. The indigenous people worked the land collectively without legalizing the property. That is the main reason why they were, and sometimes are, expelled, being the subject of theft by lords, who come with false documents claiming they are the owners, intimidating the communities, and if necessary, killing them to occupy their territory.

In the interviews the leader says, "In the 70s, a group of men was seeking for people to harvest in the province, many of us who were youngsters enrolled. My parents hid because they knew it was a lie to make the indigenous people abandon the fields and therefore they become owners of the land." The young people left for the adventure, worked in a harvest, were not paid, and were abandoned in the middle of a field far away from their family. She adds, "With the help of my community partners, I walked three days and reached a little field in Formosa, where my relatives lived. They took me to the woodland, I do not know how I am alive.

<sup>9</sup> Name of the rainforest in Chaco Province.

The older people, who went with employers, lost their plots. Strangers occupied the fields and when the indigenous returned, they were left out."

The leader says, "In the city, life is different, here we had to learn to ask for food on the street. It was hard, it was not life, we just survived."

In the same line of description made by the leader, we could reflect upon the theoretical contributions of Cantarelli and Lewkowicz (2001) who argue, "It is not possible to think of the current changes in the social bond and subjectivity without appealing to national logic and to the emergence of market dynamics" (p. 11). The mercantile state is imposed with great force and the victims are the vulnerable communities. This causes in these migrations helplessness and fragmentation in the construction of subjectivity(ies), by which in some cases they can rebuild their supports to avoid undermining, fighting for their rights, and in other cases, they get sick and die. In that dramatic scene the young indigenous life is built, they are exposed to racism and social violence of the large cities.

South of the city, in a new neighborhood composed by members of the Qom community, currently the leader has the function of transmitting the language to children and young people. They have classes twice a week in order to preserve their cultural identity. Women attend workshops where they learn traditional crafts. For this reason, the leader travels to bring palm leaves or they are sent from Chaco Province so the courses are not interrupted. Crafts are sold in a central square. She is much concerned because the "*guasuncho*" (gray brocket) is becoming extinct. The leather of this animal is used to manufacture ranch work boots, and one of its bones, to make a needle that serves to knit native bags.

The Qom and Mocoví leaders are in constant struggle to recover lost lands. At present, complying with the enforced laws, the Mocoví are taking possession again of part of the land that has been usurped. The Qom communities are in the same condition, fighting continuously. "We want to go back to our land, because in the city we are losing many of the rites of each community; at the birth of our children, we, the Qom women, buried our placenta in the field," ends the leader. It represents one of the symbols by which land belongs to the community, and therefore, is handed down transgenerationally.

In that sense, from the perspective of relational configurations, one might think that there is an unconscious network in the order of the relational and the transgenerational, in constant and incessant recreation of subjectivity(ties), which allow to build new re-compositions and intersubjective modalities, enlightening some lives relationship.

Representing their people, the leaders remain struggling. In line with the concepts of Friedler (2005) we would be in front of the emergence of new subjectivities carried out jointly through shared vital projects, becoming agents of their own binding transformations in constant interaction with the interculturality, without lacking otherness.

Transformation of the community members' subjectivities, the resolution of their what-to-do in the present and how they relate to multiculturalism allows

the peoples to recover, revalue, and transfer fragments of the community cultural history of which they are part and transmit them with new re-significations to the following generations.

Current social experiences and the political dimension of the actors in the communities are building a binding network with multiculturalism. In the process of inclusion-exclusion, they are creating new traces in subjectivity. This travel allows them to rebuild their support, their ties of contiguity, underpinned by both fellow brothers of the indigenous peoples, and the different organizations and government bodies, who have upheld constant struggle and support over the years, with successful result in favor of the rights of the Mocoví-Qom peoples.

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## CHAPTER 11

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# THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF GUARANI- KAIOWÁ WHO COMMIT SUICIDE IN THE CITY OF DOURADOS, MATO GROSSO DO SUL, BRAZIL

Fabiane Vick and Sonia Grubits

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Suicide is currently considered one of the major public health problems in the world. It is the second or third cause of deaths among teenagers and young adults, depending on age groups. Some minority ethnic groups such as native populations, among whom are the Guarani-Kaiowá of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil, have alarmingly high suicide rates. The object of this study is an indigenous family in which 7 suicides occurred. Information was obtained from psychological autopsy interviews conducted both as a means of research and a therapeutic approach. The investigation was carried out in the Bororó village, in the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, within the boundaries of the city of Dourados, MS, Brazil, where most of the 171 family members live. The analysis of the data and accounts obtained

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 209–223.

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demonstrate that the causes of native suicides are a combination of psychological, social, cultural, and environmental aspects.

Presently, around 800,000 natives from various ethnic groups, each with their sociocultural, political, and economic peculiarities and specificities, live in the different regions of Brazil. The state of Mato Grosso do Sul shelters the second largest indigenous population, with 73,000 individuals divided in eight ethnic groups: Guarani-Kaiowá, Terena, Kadwéu, Atikum, Ofaíé, Kinikinaw and Guató. They dwell in 75 villages located in 29 town boundaries (Brasil, 2010a). The Guarani-Kaiowá, who are concentrated in the southern region of the state, are the most numerous (64%). They are closely bound and live in the same villages and/or territories (Mura, 2007).

In this state, the city of Dourados shelters most natives: 12,716 individuals from three ethnic groups, two of which are prominent (Guarani and Kaiowá)<sup>1</sup>. They live almost solely in the Jaguapirú and Bororó villages, two of the 4 hamlets that, together with Panambizinho and Porto Cambira, are situated within the city boundaries. They have their own specificities and present many threats to mental health. The 3,539 ha Indigenous Reserve of Dourados includes the Bororó (6,077 people) and Jaguapirú (6,219 people) villages, i.e. 12,296 people. Both explicitly lack land, which is the reason why the reserve is considered the most populous of Brazil (Vick, 2010). Such high demographic density implies a considerable worsening of the psychosocial and ethnocultural tensions within the villages, with direct impacts on mental health, more particularly if we take the mythological and traditional particularities of these natives into account. The main problems include high rates of violence, homicides, suicides, and alcohol and/or drug abuse.

Vick (2010) reports that the suicide mortality rates in the *Distrito Sanitário Especial Indígena* (DSEI—Special Indigenous Health District) of Mato Grosso do Sul, in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, and in Brazil are 59.4/100,000 (2010); 8.1/100,000 (2007) and 4.7/100,000 (2007), respectively. These data reveal appalling disparities between native and non-native suicides.

The Guarani ethnic group is subdivided into Guarani-Nandeva, Guarani-Kaiowá and Guarani-Mbya, who have different languages, customs, ritual practices, political and social organization, religious guidance, as well as specific ways of interpreting the reality they experience and of interacting according to situations in their history and topicality (Almeida & Mura, 2003).

Before Europeans conquered their lands, the Guarani occupied huge territories, including Southern and part of Southeastern and Western Central Brazil, Eastern Paraguay, and Northeastern Argentina. It is estimated that their population was over 2,000,000 people (Meliá & Noelli, quoted by Mura, 2007). The only wide lands of the Guarani Territory that were not directly reached by colonizers were those of the southern part of the current state of Mato Grosso do Sul and of a significant

part of Western Paraguay, which is contiguous, where “free” Indians and those who fled from captivity lived their life until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the Paraguayan war (1864–1870), the border between Brazil and Paraguay was redefined, which led to the progressive colonization of the territories where the Kaiowá and Nhandéva dwelt.

Between 1915 and 1928, through its *Serviço de Proteção aos Índios* (Indian Protection Department), the Federal government created eight reserves for the Guarani. Its intention was to both avoid their exploitation by settlers and *mate* planters and create free spaces for colonization (Lima, as quoted in Mura, 2007). This initiative, which extended itself over decades, was but an incomplete attempt to fix all the Indians in reserves. Nonetheless, most groups of the local Guarani macro-family remained isolated in the woodlands growing on their territory. In the 1960s, and more intensely in the 1970s, *fazendas* were implemented, which evicted the indigenous population from their traditional places, increasing the population density in the reserves of the *Serviço de Proteção aos Índios*. Families pertaining to different or even enemy political units had to coexist in reduced spaces. The 3.5 million hectares of their traditional territory has now been reduced to 42,462 hectares. The Guarani still maintain their social life within their extended family, which can be considered the basis of their social, political, material, and religious organization (Mura, 2007).

Southern Mato Grosso do Sul shelters 99.5% of the Guarani-Kaiowá, who live in 33 villages. The others (0.5%) dwell in more than 12 villages in the northern region of the state. Almeida and Mura (2003) assert that the Guarani [...] call the places they occupy *tekoha*, so that this term designates a physical place—land, woods, fields, waters, animals, plants, remedies, etc.—where the *teko*, the Guarani “way of being” (way of life), takes place. Each *tekoha* is led by a chief, “captain” or “cacique” who is responsible for the village. In each village, a *Conselho Local de Saúde Indígena* (Local Council for Indigenous Health), formed by indigenous counselors, gathers internally to discuss issues directly or indirectly linked to health. Its resolutions are later presented to the *Conselho Distrital de Saúde Indígena* (Regional Indigenous Health Council).

The Guarani engage in assiduous and frequent religious activities. These include canticles, prayers, and dances that, depending on the place, situation or circumstances, may occur daily. They begin at nightfall and last many hours. Rituals are conducted by a *ñanderu*, who is a preacher, a *pajé*, and a spiritual leader. They may address either daily life needs, as harvesting, the absence or excess of rainfall, etc., or physical and spiritual diseases.

## SUICIDE

According to World Health Organization (2013), every year, almost one million people die from suicide. These figures roughly correspond to a “global” mortality rate of 16 per 100,000, or one death every 40 seconds. In the last 45 years suicide rates have increased by 60% in the world. Suicide is one of the three

<sup>1</sup> Despite some controversy, the denomination Guarani-Kaiowá was chosen in this work because it is the way the local indigenous people call themselves, mainly because they are children of a Kaiowá father and a Guarani mother, or vice versa.

leading causes of death among those aged 15–44 years in some countries, and the second leading cause of death in the 10–24 years group; these figures do not include suicide attempts which can be up to 20 times more frequent than suicide. Mental disorders (particularly depression and alcohol use disorders) are a major risk factor for suicide in Europe and North America; however, in Asian countries impulsiveness plays an important role. Suicide is complex, since it involves psychological, social, biological, cultural, and environmental factors.

As stated by a report published by Waits (2013), the Guarani-Kaiowá are plagued by one of the highest suicide rates in the world, since they are 34 times more likely to kill themselves than “Brazil’s national average.” Indigenous peoples worldwide often suffer far higher rates of suicide than the majority population. Many other indigenous communities in the world, including the Tiwi Islanders in Australia, Khanty herders in Siberia, and Inuits in Greenland, have unusually high suicide rates.

Studying “suicide” considering population distribution dates back to before 1897, when Durkheim (1973) published his classic study *Le suicide*. It is worth stressing that this phenomenon of suicide is observed among the Guarani-Kaiowá, but not among the Guarani-Mbya or Guarani-Nhandéva, who also live in this Brazilian region and in Eastern Paraguay. The high rates of suicide registered these last decades seem to have been provoked by changes in their social life. Meliá (as quoted in Almeida & Mura, 2003) observed that, since this phenomenon was reported back in the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is no novelty. Yet, its recent recrudescence may lead to think that a set of new factors are present in their current life situation.

Levcovitz (as quoted in Darrault-Harris & Grubits, 2000) adds that suicide is only common in given ethnic groups who contacted the colonizing culture and that peaks are usually followed by declines. In fact, the Terena, a large tribe living in the same Reserve of Dourados as the Guarani-Kaiowá, present insignificant suicide rates. Even among the Guarani, no suicides have been reported in the Mbya group.

The indigenous population of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, especially the Guarani-Kaiowá, presents high rates of suicide, homicides, (physical and sexual) violence, use and abuse of alcohol and other drugs (pot, cocaine base paste, shoe-maker’s glue, cocaine, and crack), in addition to problems related to mental health (Vick, 2008).

According to Vick (2010), in the past eleven years (since 2000), deaths by suicide (mostly hanging) and homicides (especially white arms) have represented a mean of 20.12% of general mortality. Within yearly variations, in 2008, “mortality from external causes” was responsible for close to 29% of the total mortality in the DSEI-MS. As for the suicide cases that occurred within the DSEI-MS, whose territory shelters eight ethnic groups, it is worth stressing that, except for two, all the other suicides, i.e. 506 cases, were committed by Guarani-Kaiowá.

Brand (1997) considers that the main problem is the progressive destructure of the extended families, due to what he calls “confinement,” which prevents the Guarani from moving throughout their wide historical territory, since the State obliges them to remain in small reserves.

In the eleven years analyzed, suicides are more frequent among males than females (68% vs 32%). As for age, one observes that youth presents the highest rates. In fact, the population most at risk is aged 10–29 (83%), followed by people over 30 years (17%) (Brasil, 2010b). Curiously, the youngest people to commit suicide are females. Deeper studies are thus needed to understand why female suicides concern younger people than male suicides.

As for the methods used to commit suicide, 96.6% of the cases between 2000 and 2010 recurred to mechanical constriction, hanging or similar methods, and 3.37% ingested toxic substances (Vick, 2010).

## METHODOLOGY

We initially visited the archive of the *Distrito Sanitário Especial Indígena* (Special Indigenous Health District) of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul to collect data from the death certificates concerning seven victims from the same family.

The data from the *Sistema de Informação da Atenção da Saúde Indígena* (SI-ASI—Information System of the Indigenous Health Care), a computerized databank of the *Fundação Nacional de Saúde* (National Health Foundation) of the Brazilian Ministry of Health, were used to map the extended family to which these seven people belonged. The composition and extension of their family, their kinship, age, sex, affiliation, ethnic group, cases of morbimortality, and geographical localization of their nuclear families helped us draw a Family Genogram (Figure 11.1). This graphic representation of the information on a family, showing its dynamics and the relationships between its members, is quite a valuable tool to understand family structures and links.

Before we administered the sociodemographic questionnaire, we had identified seven lines of descent, which were considered as the principle to characterize the sociodemographic profile of this extended family. We then distinguished some members according to their link and proximity to those who committed suicide. We invited them to participate in the second step of this study, that is, the interviews. We thus performed seven psychological autopsy interviews, each aimed at obtaining information on one of these cases.

Psychological autopsy is a kind of retrospective assessment intended to investigate the intentions and the psychological context of a person who committed suicide. It helps understand the suicide cases and their determinants. The psychological autopsy interview used in this study was conceived and structured to suit the reality of the local native population. It is grounded in four research topics (pillars), according to Werlang (2001): a) speeding and/or stressing agents, b) Motivation, c) Lethality, and d) Intentionality.

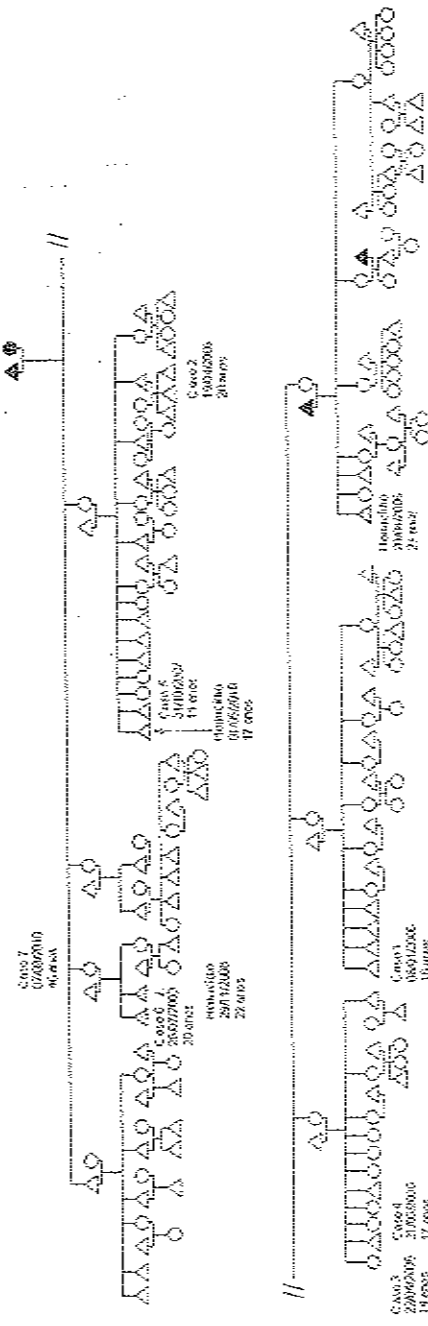


FIGURE 11.1. Family genogram. Legend: Red—suicide; Blue—homicide; Black—other deaths. Source: Fabiane de Oliveira Vick (2010).

TABLE 11.1. Case Characterization.

Variables	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3	Case 4	Case 5	Case 6	Case 7
Sex	M	M	F	M	M	M	F
Age	16	23	14	17	11	20	46
Date of death	8/1/2006	19/04/2006	22/04/2006	21/03/2006	31/10/2007	26/07/2008	7/9/2010
N. of the case	365-B	333-A	364	364	333	361	363
Marital status	Single	Married	Single	Single	Single	Single	Married
Children	No	Yes (3)	No	No	No	No	3, 2 of which died
Religion	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Schooling	I.B.E.	I.B.E.	I.B.E.	I.B.E.	I.B.E.	I.B.E.	None
Kind of house	House made of tarp	Brick house	House made of tarp	House made of tarp	House made of tarp	House made of tarp	House made of tarp
Work situation	Helped his father in the fields and studied	Worked in a plant	Helped her father in the fields and studied	Helped his father in the fields and studied	Helped his father in the fields and studied	Rural worker	Housewife
Period of the day when suicide occurred	Night	Early hours	Morning	Early hours	Early hours	Morning	Night
Local of suicide	In the woods close to his residence	Tree close to his residence	In the woods close to her residence	In the woods close to his residence	In his own house	Tree close to his residence	In the woods close to her residence
Method	Hanging (rope)	Hanging (string of his trousers)	Hanging (belt)	Hanging (rope)	Hanging (rope)	Hanging (rope)	Hanging (rope)
Alcohol abuse	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relatives with alcohol problems	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Legend: I.B.E. = Incomplete Basic Education. Source: Fabiane de Oliveira Vick, 2010.

Initially, information coming from scientific sources helped us characterize the life context of the Guarani-Kaiowá population. We then referred to the analyses of the epidemiological dimension of suicide in the DSEI-MS, specifically among the Guarani-Kaiowá population. Finally we dealt with the information on the Bororó community, as a framework for case studies. Later, we drew up a characterization of each case (Table 11.1) according to the variables selected in the sociodemographic questionnaire and the semi-structured Psychological Autopsy interviews.

Table 11.1 synthesizes the information on these cases according to the pre-established variables. It can be used as a quick reference guide.

As for the causes and/or antecedents, witnesses mention intoxication, depressive conditions, often with psychiatric treatments, as summed up below.

### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The information obtained during the psychological autopsy interviews are presented through individual reports of the cases. They are described in detail from the oldest to the newest case. Information ranges from identification to subjective elements.

#### Case 1 (RV)

According to his parents, their son had no reason to commit suicide. They think he was clubbed to death by youngsters who did not like him, since he had just moved into the village. They add that their son's body was found badly injured, lying on the floor, with a rope around the neck to forge a suicide. His mother said "he was a good boy, had no enemy, somebody killed him."

The victim used to drink, mainly with some relatives (at his aunt LV's). No relative of the victim had committed suicide before. RV lived with his parents, got along well with everybody and was not aggressive.

Before we began our psychological autopsy, that is, during the socio-demographic data survey, the couple was asked whether some member of their family had died before and they answered no. When asked again, they answered no again, until we mentioned they had lost a son in 2006. They then admitted this fact, adding that it was so long ago that they had forgotten.

#### Case 2 (EV)

According to his father, sister, and aunt, the victim used to argue and struggle with his wife, who was extremely jealous and aggressive. His sister affirmed "my brother was not happy with his wife, she hurt him." The victim somewhat kept his feelings to himself and drank frequently. The day he committed suicide, he was drunk and had spent the night at a party at his aunt's (LV). He committed suicide in the early hours of morning. He was peaceful and, although he drank, he was not aggressive. He got along well with all his family and the community.

EV had already had suicidal thoughts. His parents and two of his brothers frequently abused alcohol and all of them (except his mother) attempted suicide after he died. His aunt declared "the family has depression mainly his father has serious emotional problem and tried to kill himself twice, but relatives rescued him before he died." One of these brothers (a 17-year-old boy) was spanked and suffocated to death in 2010. When asked about this murdered brother, neighbors, who were preachers, said that he was *different, would never get married, was half man half woman*, which we understood to be the way they call homosexuals. According to his father, EV hung himself on a tree close to their house, and, 4 years later, their murdered son's body was found below this very tree. The father thus decided to cut it down so as to stop deaths in his family and he said "that tree brought curse, I had to cut it for evil go away." This reveals the presence of a cultural/cosmological component, since the father links the tree to the death of his children, which sends us back to the consideration of the traditional explanatory models (life/death, health/disease, and others) that the natives use to understand some situations they experience.

#### Case 3 (RVS)

According to her mother, the victim was very sad. She drank sporadically, mainly in parties and family meetings. The day she committed suicide, she had just come back from the wake of a cousin of hers who lived close to her house. He had been murdered by his wife at her aunt's (LV).

The victim was a peaceful girl who drank once in a while, but was not aggressive. She had no female friends, was very quiet and kept her feelings and emotions to herself. Her mother said "my daughter did not want to talk to anyone, she was always alone." She got along well with her whole family and the community. According to her mother, someone cast a spell on her to make her hang herself, maybe someone who liked her, but whom her daughter did not like.

The victim's mother, who gave us this information, had already been treated and monitored for depression. She still presented depressive symptoms and reported she had already thought about committing suicide in times of deep sorrow and disillusion, after she had lost her children (who committed suicide). Her mother declared "after the death of my children I thought of killing myself, I was very sad, then ask for help to the preacher of my village and she helped me."

#### Case 4 (DSS)

According to his mother, the victim was very sad, drank frequently, mainly with some relatives. The day he committed suicide, he was drunk and had spent the night at a party at his aunt's (LV).

The victim was a peaceful young man who drank, but was not aggressive. He kept his feelings and emotions to himself. He got along well with his whole family

and the community. His mother said "my son was very sad, his sister died a month ago, in the same way. He began drinking heavily and he was not well."

According to his mother, DSS was so sorrowful and isolated before he died, that she took one of his shirts to an indigenous female preacher of her village so that she could pray for the young boy. The preacher told her that a woman had cast a spell to make her son hang himself. She added that, although this woman liked him, her feelings were not reciprocated. And, in fact, her son committed suicide a few days later.

The victim's mother, who gave us this information, had already been treated and monitored for depression. She still presented depressive symptoms and reported she had already thought about committing suicide in times of deep sorrow and disillusion, after she had lost her children (who committed suicide).

#### Case 5 (VVG)

According to his father, sister, and aunt, the victim was very sad because he had broken his arms and, since he could not work anymore, he felt worthless. His father affirmed "he was very disappointed because he did not be able to help me in our little farming." He drank frequently, mainly with some relatives. The day he committed suicide, he was drunk and had spent the night at a party at his aunt's (LV). He committed suicide in the early hours of morning, at home, while his parents were sleeping. His father also said "he killed himself at home but nobody heard anything, when woke up he was hanging from a wooden beam."

The victim was peaceful. He drank, but was not aggressive. He loved listening to music, but kept his feelings and emotions to himself. He got along well with his family and the community. According to relatives, VVG looked more sorrowful the days before he committed suicide.

All his clothes were buried with his body. His parents and two of his brothers frequently abused alcohol and, after he committed suicide, all of them (except his mother) attempted suicide. One of these brothers (a 17-year-old boy) was spanked and suffocated to death in 2010.

#### Case 6 (JVC)

According to his sister, the victim used to argue with their mother. Some days before he committed suicide, his mother had contended with him because of food. He drank wine and *cachaça* daily and smoked pot. His sister said "he had many problems with alcohol and drugs and argued with our mother every day." This is the only mention of drug use in these seven cases.

The victim was very sorrowful and had been let down by his girlfriend. He had already tried to commit suicide at least twice, close to his house, using ropes. His relationship with his mother and his brothers was quite conflictual, mainly when he was drunk. On the other hand, he never had a dispute with his friends or the rest of the community.

When intoxicated, he used to say he would commit suicide, since he wanted to die. Days before he committed suicide, he gave his bicycle to his sister and told her he was going to die. Our informant added that her brother killed himself because he was disgusted with life and used to argue with his mother.

#### Case 7 (AVC)

According to his nephew and daughter, the victim used to argue with her husband. They physically attacked each other, mainly when they were intoxicated. She also argued a lot with her children before they died. She said she was devastated by the loss of her two children, in 2008 (one committed suicide, the other was murdered). She said she was very sad, that she missed her children, and that she was tired of living in suffering. Her daughter affirmed "she was discriminated and ignored for some relatives, because she drank too much. After my brothers died my parents began to fight much more." The day she committed suicide, she was drunk and had seriously injured her husband close to the head with a machete. AVC had already told a relative that she wanted to kill her husband and then commit suicide.

The victim used to drink (*cachaça*) daily. After her two children died, she and her husband began to fight quite often. Since AVC was always drunk, she was not welcome at some of her relatives' home (who did not drink). In fact, she embarrassed them, argued with them, and kept asking for liquor or money to buy some, not to mention her constant marital disputes. However, she was welcome at the house of her relatives who used alcohol, since they drank together unrestrictedly.

The day she committed suicide, she told one of her sisters-in-law that that was her last day, that life had no more meaning, and that she wanted to die. AVC had already attempted suicide twice and she kept saying she would try again. According to her daughter, she probably committed suicide because she felt guilty for the death of her children.

The community criticized her and condemned her attitude and behavior, since she was always drunk. This bothered her a lot and made her feel discriminated by the community. According to her nephew, since some people did not like her, she might have been murdered.

The son of AVC who was killed in 2008 was slain at his aunt's (LV). The cause of death was hemorrhagic shock and an incisive wound in the abdomen, that is, he was attacked with an edged weapon.

### CONCLUSIONS

The data yielded by our tools allowed us to analyze and discuss the social, psychological, and cultural aspects emphasized in this study.

Our sociodemographic survey highlighted precarious life conditions due to the lack of some basic needs as food, housing, employment, and income generation.

These social and economic conditions affect the perspectives and quality of life of a poorly educated population that usually survives on social benefits.

The psychological autopsy interviews revealed the psychological context of the victims and allowed us to determine and investigate the risk factors and the determinants of suicide. Psychological aspects include emotional frailty, deep sorrow, broken hearts, family conflicts, low self-esteem, isolation, frustrations, feelings of guilt, difficulties to express feelings and emotions, previous suicide attempts, alcohol abuse and use of drugs. The most common factor is alcohol, which is mentioned in 70% of the cases.

Natives are faced with situations they hardly know how to solve: joblessness, financial problems, family conflicts, and others, which cause much sorrow and discouragement. When they persist, such feelings make them weak and vulnerable to suicide. Their difficulty to deal with sorrow, disappointment, and affliction provokes a significant emotional imbalance. Taking their own life thus seems to be the only way out of their suffering.

The explanatory models on indigenous suicide show a set of factors associated to the fact that their culture is immersed in social conditions intimately linked to their quality of life, which depends on land ownership and their capacity to sustain their society. Two are undoubtedly stressed: emotion management and the limited perspectives of models of life allowing full realization (well-being) (Coloma, 2010).

The cultural aspects involve mainly their belief in magic spells, i.e., rituals performed to harm somebody or even lead them to death. The victim of a spell gets spiritually weakened and vulnerable to suicide. In addition to witchcraft, their accounts state two syndromes linked to culture already mentioned in this work, which cause great sorrow to their spiritual soul: deep grief and burning passion.

The natives also give some explanations about suicide and identify a few risk factors as: behavior changes characterized by sorrow, crestfallenness, shame, aggressiveness, isolation, rebellion, school dropout; external interferences as alcohol and drug abuse, domestic (sexual, physical and psychological) violence; spiritual aspects (spells and rituals); death of loved ones and discrimination (Brasil, 2011).

To better understand the phenomenon of suicide among Guarani-Kaiowá, a study carried out by Coloma (2009) helps us reflect on a cultural explanatory model according to the Guarani cosmology. For them, people are born with a provisory spiritual soul, which is gradually incorporated as definitive. If this incorporation process goes without problems and if, during the first 10–13 years of life, parents take good care of their children and support them under any circumstances, the spiritual soul will occupy a privileged place to control the body. Otherwise, a spiritual imbalance takes place, which spiritually weakens these individuals. In fact, the spiritual soul needs to maintain a balance with an animal spirit, which may dominate the temperament of the individual if it prevails, which is seen as negative. Around 10–13 years of age, when the boys' voice changes and girls have their first menstruation, the individual receives another spirit, the carnal

one, which becomes stronger according to body age. Thus, when a person is in one of these two states, if their spiritual soul is weakened, (malevolent) spirits may dominate their body. Two emotional conditions are identified: *nhemo'y'rõ* (deep grief or intense, painful suffering) and *taraju* or *araguajú* (unhealthy passion or broken heart pain). Both trigger a state of sorrow and a very high level of disorder in the spiritual soul, which may lead to ideating, attempting and/or acting out "suicide." Suicide means that the spiritual and carnal souls did not reach the places intended for them. In addition, since, most of the times this act closes the airways through asphyxia (hanging or poisoning), the spiritual soul would be prevented from getting out through the mouth and would have to leave the body through the anus. Thus, the spiritual soul would be highly contaminated, which would prevent it from reaching the right path. Incorporating malevolent objects and spirits can also be due to witchcraft, usually aimed at killing its target. It is often the result of a game of vengeance and counter-vengeance.

This field research allowed *in loco* observations and the application of tools to obtain information, making it possible to investigate psychosociocultural aspects related to the suicides of Guarani-Kaiowás.

Analyzing the environmental, family, psychological, social, and cultural contexts in which the participants in this study are inserted revealed the existence of risk factors similar to those mentioned in the Suicide Prevention Manual (for the general population), published by Brasil (2006), as isolation, family conflicts, alcoholism, depression (or deep sorrow as the Guarani-Kaiowá call it), previous suicide attempts, low self-esteem, family history of suicide, recent, important losses and, to a lesser extent, feelings of guilt.

Such studies on suicide are always difficult to handle, in cultural terms, because of communication limitations (language spoken) and of different cultural meanings. On the other hand, due to cosmogonic reasons, the population avoids to comment such events, especially when they took place in their family. The phenomenon of suicide among natives studied here is perceived as complex and multicausal. Our analyses were intended not only to describe the problem by deepening the dimension and interpretation of its characteristics, but also to identify aspects that help discuss and design a model of prevention, intervention and postvention for societies "outside" the modern Western world.

However, we may conclude that the contents observed, reported and later analyzed in this research help us better comprehend the phenomenon of suicide among Guarani-Kaiowá. Contributions range from the knowledge on the environmental, social, family, psychological, and cultural contexts to the identification of risk factors and possible causes. These will lead indigenous health professionals to adopt new action strategies when faced with suicides. They can, for instance, try to collaborate with young natives to discover their potentials, values, gifts, and vocations, so that they feel able to handle their own emotions and lives in their personal, family, and social spheres. They can assist them on their way to autonomy and protagonism by stimulating them, valuing their culture, awaking

their self-esteem, and contributing to their quest for alternative paths leading to better, more dignified and less dependent lives, where alcohol, drugs, and suicide are not the only options.

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## SECTION IV

# POSSIBILITIES OF DIALOGUE

Danilo Silva Guimarães

*We observe that most of the psychosocial vulnerabilities that affect Amerindian peoples is a consequence of the marginalization and conflict involved in the struggle for land, in the invisibility these peoples are subject to, the prejudices and the distrust of the Amerindian identities in the contemporaneous world. No perspective for the future of the Amerindian existence is possible when we cannot guarantee our habits and sustainable practices in our territories. These habits and practices are the references for the plain exercise of the peoples' capacity to manage educational processes, promote health, economy, alimentation, appropriate knowledge and their own choices in relation to what we intend to build for the future generations. Consulting the Amerindian peoples that attended the present Congress, we emphasize the necessity of effectuation and fulfilment of the laws that determine the respect to the Amerindian cultural diversity, because the reality is far away from it.*

—Excerpt of Carta de Manaus, por uma saúde integral aos povos indígenas<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manaus Letter, for an integral health to the Amerindian peoples. Produced in the Fourth Brazilian Congress of Mental Health, Manaus, September 4-7, 2014. The Congress was organized by the Associação Brasileira de Saúde Mental (ABRASME – Brazilian Association of Mental Health). The letter, unanimously approved in the final assembly of the Congress was signed by more than a 100 professionals and institutions that work in this field. Available in <[http://www.congresso2014.abrasme.org.br/informativo/view?ID\\_INFORMATIVO=127](http://www.congresso2014.abrasme.org.br/informativo/view?ID_INFORMATIVO=127)>

he Manaus Letter was elaborated during the Fourth Brazilian Congress of Mental Health. It was approved by indigenous associations, professionals and representative institutions of mental health services in Brazil in the deliberative body of the Brazilian Association for Mental Health. The main issue of the letter was the effectuation of a collaborative construction of solutions to the Amerindians' psychosocial vulnerabilities between professionals and the peoples attended by the Public Health System. The Brazilian Ministry of Health orients the professionals to take into account the capacity of the communities to identify problems, mobilize resources and create alternatives for the construction of solutions for the problems they face through their own values, economy, technologies, ways of organizing themselves, of expressing and producing knowledge<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the Manaus Letter stresses the collaborative task is not easy to put into practice.

Although more than 5 hundred years have passed, the dialogue between Amerindian peoples and the Brazilian National society is not an easy task. Of course, we can notice the presence of the Amerindian culture in the Brazilian cities, language, habits and more subtle and deep aspects of subjectivation processes. At the same time, in the Amerindian villages it is possible to find many elements of the interethnic interchange, such as in the products of the technological and cultural industry, State apparatuses as school and health centers, and the circulation of people from different regions of the globe. Therefore, the challenges that are inherent to the construction of dialogical settings with Amerindian peoples are imposed by the inevitability of the co-presence in the interior of the communities and are remarkable in the urban contexts.

Co-presence and the sharing of aspects of the culture of the other does not imply, necessarily, a dialogical interethnic experience. Discourses and interpersonal practices are different in their degree of dialogicality. The monologue, as opposed to the dialogue, happens when the relation between different people is based on fixed meanings that cannot be modified in the contact with other voices and practices, evincing an authoritative, unidirectional approach (Bakhtin, 2004; Linell, 1995). In these situations, the relationship addresses the increasing coincidence between the participants of the dialogue, getting rid of the difference. Usually, in the interethnic situation, when the difference is evaluated as inferior, missing, crazy, sick or wrong, we are facing preconceptions that denote the limitation of a dialogue in course with the perspective of the other. In this sense, Amerindian peoples are recurrently confronted because of the way they conceive nature, their personal and collective practices, the marginalization of the shamanic procedures etc. In the last centuries, this sort of confrontation emerges from those who claim the superiority of religious and scientific discourses, therefore, arguing in favor of selected cosmological principles as if they were unquestionable.

This book follows a different path:

While I was trained in a psychology disregarding subjectivity, subjective motivations changed our world—the Nazi and Communist utopias, later religious conflicts, Pol Pot, the present hatred between Muslims, Jews and Christians; think too of the economic crisis caused by selfish speculation, of the past and ongoing elimination of indigenous cultures, destruction of nature, and a thousand other examples. Psychology has nothing to say to all this; it has disconnected itself from real life, pretending to be scientific by limiting itself to easily operationalizable problems. Of course, it can offer no readymade solutions, but it should start to be concerned and aim at significant studies—which, no doubt, would have to be cultural. Thus, cultural psychology would and should play a significant role in our world. In this vein, I believe, your reflection about subjectivity touches upon one of our most urgent problems. (Boesch, 2008, pp. 512–513)

Cultural psychology has emerged in the last decades as a possibility of integrating psychological and cultural studies from different disciplines, focusing the creative process observed in the interpersonal, intercultural and interethnic relationships. In cultural processes some transitory stabilizations of meanings emerge that can be negotiated, then transformed, in the dialogical trajectory.

The strong emphasis on the ethical dimension of human relationships is emphasized in dialogical approaches of cultural psychology. Dialogical relationship avoids both, fusion and isolation, arguing in favor of the maintenance of Ego and Alter interdependence. The notion of inclusive separation is an alternative to foundational epistemologies in developmental and social psychology:

[...] to be separated from the other does not mean to become isolated from that other, but merely to set up conditions for their relationships to develop. It is an advantageous developmental life situation where it is allowed to the I to be touched by the strangeness of the Other; where it is allowed to the I to transform himself in struggle for overcoming the Other's strangeness, while both are trying themselves as discrete agents, although dependent on the relationship. (Simão & Valsiner, 2007, p. 397)

Therefore, what makes a conversation a dialogical situation is the availability of the interlocutors to produce new meanings, not previously predictable in the involvement with otherness. In the dialogical situations, the semantic structure of the communication is open to the other voices in the polyphonic social environment: the dialogical fabric is built through partnership and co-authorship.

Participating in the collaborative work and at the same time assuming a reflexive attitude in relation to the particularities of the interethnic collaboration that crosses over experiences of cultural shock allows us to better understand the other and ourselves. Working collaboratively with the Amerindian peoples implies, necessarily, an inversion from the historical colonialist position, because it is the Amerindian path that guides the dialogue with psychology, teaching us about the cultural practices and their meanings, the terms, the situation and the

<sup>2</sup> See ordinance 2.759, October 25, 2007, from the Brazilian Ministry of Health, which defined the general guidelines to the Policy for Integral Attention to the Indigenous Mental Health and created the Management Committee. Retrieved from <[http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/saudelegis/gm/2007/prt2759\\_25\\_10\\_2007.html](http://bvsms.saude.gov.br/bvs/saudelegis/gm/2007/prt2759_25_10_2007.html)>

limits of the dialogue due to the inherent distance between our discipline and the culture's internal notions.

Taking seriously some of the Amerindian notions used to understand dimensions of the human existence approached by psychologists demands some alterations of classical psychological comprehensions. Psychology began as a discipline in a Eurocentric soil, after centuries of cultural shock between the Europeans' traditions and the diversity of cultures around the world. I believe that the continuity of the development of the area depends on deepening our dialogue with these diverse traditions, in order to improve our theoretical comprehensions and methodological approaches in science and professional exercise:

Freud was also a voracious reader of anthropology, and always tried to link his works to the discoveries of that discipline. It was, once more, the anthropology of his time and place. One of the biggest problems of Freud's anthropology was his "social evolutionism" and the consequent assimilation of the savages from distant lands to the remote ancestors of the Europeans; as an effort to remediate with what he already knew about one his ignorance about the others and reciprocally. It made Freud (and many others from his time) reduce both to a simple and common mass, authorizing him to treat all myths of the savages as variations of a single myth, the Greek myth of Oedipus, which became the myth of the origins of Humanity. But, once more, the contemporaneous psychoanalysis that is worth reading is the one committed with the dynamics of anthropology. (Gow, 1997, p. 58)

The anthropology at the time of Freud was concerned in classifying the peoples in order to improve the strategies to colonize them, a mistake that the contemporary psychology cannot reproduce.

Learning about the other is a relevant task for self-comprehension as much as learning a different language improves our understanding about the functioning of our native language; the same is true about cultures (cf. Vygotsky, 1930/2001; Wagner, 1981/2010). The contemporaneous globalized world could offer good opportunities to intercultural and interethnic exchanges if instead of hierarchizing and silencing the cultural heterogeneity we were able to propitiate the realization of equitable dialogues. Cultural psychologists have a central role in the development of theoretical and methodological devices for the intervention in the conflictive mediation of dialogues, contributing to overcome historical asymmetries and privileges of one cultural perspective over the others. Such mediation aims at breaking through the rigidity of multiculturalist and eclectic strategies, valuing at the same time the processes of cultural differentiation and dedifferentiation.

It is not necessary to be enclosed in a sterile alternative: either justifying the colonial wars (in the name of the superiority of the Western civilization), or refusing any interaction with the foreigner, in the name of a proper identity. Nonviolent communication exists, and we can defend it as a value. It could make the triad slavery / colonialism / communication not only an instrument for the conceptual analysis, but also correspond to a succession in time. (Todorov, 1983/2011, p. 265)

The nonviolent communication, from a psychological perspective, needs to take into account the person in its integrality, which involves the personal meanings of an experience and the objective situation that concerns the condition of production of these meanings. Efforts addressing the collaborative construction of communicative channels between cultures and disciplines, that is, the development of means and methods for the construction of interethnic and interdisciplinary dialogues are necessary.

Psychology has much to contribute in this constructive process because our area of knowledge belongs to a tradition that values the listening attitude and the intervention through conversation, producing settings for meaningful interaction between persons in conflictive situations. Working on the mediation of conflicts between Amerindians and the institutional world of the national societies is, therefore, an opportunity to learn and improve our psychological knowledge through the active participation and collaboration in the process of overcoming psychosocial vulnerabilities of these peoples. The dialogue of cultural psychology, in its semiotic-constructivist framework, could contribute with public policies addressing the construction of participative forums focusing the challenges in the conviviality with otherness.

The area already has good devices to identify psychosocial processes involved in the restriction of the exercise of the social, cultural and personal creativity. A lively and equitable dialogue is the psychological way of observing and overcoming the challenges we face in the Amerindian paths through the evolving societies.

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## CHAPTER 12

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# ANTHROPOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGY AND MANY OTHERS

## Reflections on Experiences of Interdisciplinarity in Health Assistance for Indigenous People<sup>1</sup>

Vanessa Caldeira

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This paper comprises an account of experiences outlined by an analysis carried out after I took part in a multidisciplinary project, through which I had the oppor-

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<sup>1</sup> The present essay is based on a lecture during the conference: "Psicologia e povos indígenas: saberes e práticas em diálogo" [Psychology and indigenous peoples: knowledge and practice through dialogue], which was held in November 22nd, 2012 in the Institute of Psychology of the University of São Paulo (IP/USP). The Project "Rede de Atenção à Pessoa Indígena" (Network for Assistance to Indigenous Person) - IP/USP was responsible for its organization, together with the Local Psychology Council of São Paulo (CRP/SP) and coordinated by the professor Danilo Silva Guimarães (IP/USP and CRP/SP). The reading and discussions that were conducted in the course of the post graduation subject "Diálogo e Perspectiva em Psicologia Cultural" (Dialogue and perspective in Cultural Psychology), given by professor Danilo during the first semester of 2013, contributed to the reflections presented here.

tunity to dialogue with psychology professionals, and after my first contact with the field of Cultural Psychology.

Between 2006 and 2011, I coordinated a multidisciplinary program in a health support house aimed specifically at Brazilian indigenous people which offers high-complexity treatments in the capital of São Paulo.

The team I worked with had different configurations at different moments; however, it was composed most of the time by a psychologist, an educator who had native origins, and a visual artist. The work to be conducted was guided by a specific program previously elaborated by another team of professionals. Considering this framework, we constituted a field team.

It was a real challenge to introduce a pilot project in a reference health support house aimed at gravely ill natives from all over the country, a project that would gather professionals from different fields of knowledge—I was the only anthropologist on the staff—so the endeavor was carried out with caution.

As reported by the 2010 census performed by the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2012), there are 305 indigenous peoples in Brazil, which speak 274 different languages. Yet according to IBGE, indigenous population amounts to 800,000 people throughout Brazilian territory, in rural and urban areas.

We realized that the possibility of serving such a varied group of natives in adverse conditions such as being sick requires constant and intense learning.

In addition to that challenge, working with a team in which each professional had a particular background—there were no pairs in the group—and conducting a project in a health institution which historically focused exclusively on the work of nurses, demanded efforts to enable interdisciplinary work.

The general aim of the project was to enhance the institution's reception structure, and assist in the treatment of indigenous patients and in the recovery of their quality of life. Bearing that in mind, some activities had been previously defined in the program which guided team recruitment. Since the program was in its early beginnings and since the team was encouraged to constantly make suggestions, experiment, evaluate and re-evaluate the taking of actions in a collective and active way, other activities were developed as the project was carried out.

The activities were organized in five different fronts: assistance, promotion of mental health, development, articulation, and advising.

As a result of the team's profile, most of the activities were conducted in the assistance front. In this field, the activities which were carried out during those five years were: a) psychological care, which was not part of the program at first, saw its inclusion at the request of nurses and managers of the project; b) monitoring each case; c) conversations with natives; d) conferences with managers and co-workers for pondering about behavior; e) offering health assistance by a multidisciplinary team of doctors on call, as proposed by the nursing coordination; f) visits to patients; g) holding broad meetings; h) participation in meetings with

a team of doctors that are reference for providing exemplary medical care in the São Paulo Hospital<sup>2</sup>; i) management of the donations to the indigenous people.

Despite the importance of the other fronts, I will focus on the assistance front and some of its activities, mostly because in this specific front the interdisciplinary cooperation and the encounter with psychology enabled reflections on inter-ethnic contact.

All members of the group had some things in common such as a permanent questioning on what would be our role and contribution to a health support house aimed at indigenous peoples, and the confidence that living with them, talking to co-workers, and pondering about "doing something" would give us all the answers. We also knew that these answers would be gradually built instead of promptly built as we would normally expect. For this purpose, the team was aware that the work to be carried out should be mainly characterized by a *listening attitude*.

During the project I constantly asked myself what contributions anthropology could give. Many people might be surprised with the question, after all anthropology is traditionally the field committed to the understanding of autochthon peoples and the different cultures. Nevertheless, in its origins there were many cases in which anthropology contributed to colonial projects of subjection of indigenous peoples by making available information on the way these people lived.

According to the anthropologist Esther Jean Langdon, more recently, in the postwar era, when "applied medical anthropology" was created, anthropologists were considered translators of health care programs whose function was to guarantee a better response from the targeted community to the proposed biomedical care (Langdon, 2004, p. 44). In these cases, by meeting the expectations the anthropologist would perform a subordinated task and would put himself/herself at the service of hegemonic conceptions of biomedicine (Langdon, 2004, p. 45).

To this effect, being mindful that what is done with knowledge is more important than its production in itself, for only then it is possible to accurately contextualize a professional's activity—in other words, to deliver a responsible professional performance that is coherent with one's professional purposes, it is essential to be able to read the situation and to politically position oneself in relation to the making of things; a reflection and understanding (constantly elaborated) about where we are and about our connections. After all, all of us occupy a spot in the field of social relations.

Out of this perspective, I have found a common link with Joana Garfunkel, the team psychologist, and with Elisabeth Pastore, technician psychologist head of the natives' mental health department of the state of São Paulo.

The activity Joana was responsible for looked quite strange to the natives at first—she attended patients sent by nursing colleagues and managers of the ser-

<sup>2</sup> São Paulo Hospital is a university hospital attached to the Federal Government for the assistance of indigenous people through the official health system.

vice. This led her to ask herself, and later the team: is talking, for these peoples, a valid way of helping? What does suffering mean to them? Does talking about this suffering make any sense?

These fundamental questions were the driving force behind the realization of the planned activities, and it was this particular way of listening, looking and observing that allowed us to get to know a little bit every patient we had there, changing and adapting ourselves during the course of this work.

Social work activities—most of them individual in nature—were strongly subsidized by activities that were directed to promoting overall mental health, like daily workshops to indigenous patients and their partners.

These workshops were activities that were offered since the very beginning and to the very end of the project, through a myriad of languages (artistic, corporal, playful, visual and vocal), always promoting more intimacy, exchanges, creativity, the identification of common links beyond the diseases, exchanging roles (during those workshops everybody would teach and learn) and freedom (participation in those workshops was not mandatory and anyone could say “no” to them at any time—something rare in a treatment environment based on a biomedical knowledge where patients are usually given no choice; providing the indigenous patient the right to say “no” was a crucial aspect of the research)<sup>3</sup>.

Through these workshops the team managed to establish different forms of communication with the natives. That was how psychology started to make sense to them, for in each workshop, in every informal chat, be it in bed or in the dining hall, they could gradually elaborate on what could possibly be the role of the psychologist in their lives.

The questions that would often trigger an informal conversation where quite common to all of us that composed the team: “how are you today?”, “how was your day?”, “how was your evening?” These questions may look simple at first, but they sometimes allow and even stimulate more profound, hard, long conversations about a multitude of topics: linguistics, culture, emotions, and politics. These questions were often uttered with the deep desire that it would develop into a deeper, meaningful dialogue—that could be about any topic the patient or his companion wished for.

In spite of the good intentions and the overall goodwill that would permeate these conversations, many times an actual dialogue did not occur. Taking into consideration the many nuances of any dialogue (political, social, cultural, psychological, among others), these occasional conversations that would always take place in a specific and limited time of the day were indicating a constant level of *interethnic miscommunication* (Guimarães, 2010). The estrangement was intense and constant.

The awareness of this miscommunication would make everyone feel uneasy at times. There was an all present hope that the intention to meet the other would

be enough, that the meeting would be fulfilling and the demand for adjustments in the interethnic meeting process would finally come to an end. However, the interethnic miscommunication is an inherent, unavoidable part of this process since there are no shared realities between the groups in question.

According to the psychologist Danilo Guimarães (2010, p. 42), efforts need to be made during an interethnic dialogue until finally some sharing happens. For it to take place, perspectives must always be adjusted.

In this context of efforts and adjustments, it is of utmost importance the understanding that despite all efforts different realities are never completely accessible to the other—some nebulous, incomprehensible, inaccessible space to all other participants will always be present in this interethnic meeting scenario.

The conversations with natives that took place in the health support house were part of this scenario of efforts, arrangements, misunderstandings, adjustments and constructions.

We were aware of the complexity of the job and the need to be cautious to perform what we intended to, so the team decided to ensure that collective ongoing thinking and planning exercise would take place. Thus, the team would gather weekly to evaluate the bygone working week and to organize the present week. In these gatherings, the team would discuss cases and collectively define who would try to talk to whom, always taking into consideration the situation each patient was going through and the degree of affinity already established between a patient and a particular researcher. This means that the fact that a psychologist was part of the team not always meant that he/she would be the one to make contact with the indigenous patient, because sometimes a patient would form bonds with another member of the team, trust him/her and even be more open to talk about his/her discontents in life. That is a reason why all cases were discussed by the workgroup, where, above all, they would be analyzed under an interdisciplinary perspective, and the professional psychologists would give the guidelines.

Through the workshops, the informal chats, and the weekly group gatherings, new activities were suggested and carried out throughout the project.

The attendance of each case would come as a consequence of the informal conversations. It was composed by regular conversations of the native with a professional appointed according to his/her perceived affinity with that native. Whenever necessary, this professional would also have the function of discussing the case with other teams of the institution, with the medical team, and possibly with the patient's family. In addition to that, he would be responsible for visiting the patients and monitoring the case.

This last aspect of the activity was deployed mainly in cases in which the patient demanded answers regarding his treatment—so the team would ask the nursing team to come forward and explain the situation to him—the same would happen in cases in which a specific technical report was required or in cases in which the recommendation was that the patient should be taken care of in his or her place of origin.

<sup>3</sup> On workshops' means of intervention, see Galletti, 2001.

One example of those activities was the case of a Xavante man with a severe right shoulder injury. I had the opportunity to assist in that case for I was, then, in charge of workshops dealing with ethnographic videos and indigenous people themed newspapers. This patient showed a genuine interest for political discussions, so I was able to establish a bond with him.

He was able to relate to most of the members of the team, and so he elected different themes he was interested in to talk to each one of the professionals.

He was diagnosed as having a malignant tumor in the shoulder. Radio and Chemotherapy were recommended to him and the prognosis was for a probable amputation of his arm. The patient rejected the surgery that would remove his arm. The reaction of the team was, as usually happens, to question the institution on the patient's full comprehension of his diagnosis and prognosis along with the inexistence of other available biomedical treatments. Thus, the team visited the patient and established conversations with him and his companion about the difficult matter. The educator in our team, also a native, was acquainted to some of the patient's relatives, knew the Xavante's world view and was in contact with one of the doctors in charge of the case, so for all these reasons she was the one to visit the Xavante man.

Once the doctors were convinced that patient and companion understood the prognosis, but still kept the decision of not going through amputation surgery, they started radio and chemotherapy. When the treatment was over, the patient was discharged from the hospital.

The next step was to arrange palliative care and assistance for a patient with a so-called "closed" diagnosis.

Although death is a difficult subject, the psychologist in our team pointed out to us the importance of giving the patient the means to talk about that matter, even if it was difficult for most of the professionals.

Contrary to the expectations of most of us, the patient openly talked about his prognosis. Consequently, conversations about the "good death" and the patient's life and beliefs took place.

Because of his physical pain and desire to be more isolate, I carried out individual workshops that involved reading newspapers and watching videos at the team's private room. We performed a survey on the internet about the Xavante community of the Indigenous Land of Marawatséde, which was going through a major land conflict with squatters and farmers in the State of Mato Grosso. Through the news, he would remember and share with us old and mythical stories; he would say: "I am not dead yet. I will go back to my people and tell them about all of that." We organized a file with all the articles we found and we talked about what he would like to do next. His answer was: "I will help my people until the very end. I want to die in my land, with my relatives and with my body intact."

By the moment of his return to his land, it was clear that the patient had the right to choose how his death would be, even if it caused us to feel distressed and

to have doubts. From the point of view of biomedical knowledge (culture), we would like to stop his pain and prolong his life.

This case is just one among many others we had the opportunity to assist in. They have instigated us, challenged us to think about the different forms of living, dealing with sickness and dying.

Another important activity was proposed based on the monitoring of two other patients, both of Guarani-Mbyá origin.

The first one was a child diagnosed as having severe malnutrition, whose parents were very young in our point of view. Those parents and other people in charge of the case were facing difficulties to proceed with the medical care, both in the indigenous village and in the health support house. In addition, the child's recurrent hospitalization and the fact that in the last one his life had been seriously threatened led the medical team responsible for the case to request a conference with the medical reference team of the São Paulo Hospital to talk about the possibility of notifying the Federal Government and other agencies responsible for guaranteeing that the child would be well cared-for. By that time, the child was two years old.

This case is a good example of interdisciplinary professional performance, since it mobilized all sort of workers that were part of the institution: nursing teams, drivers, security staff, cooks, managers, other natives, and us. The shallow analysis that one would hear through the corridors of the institution was that the parents did not care much for their child and, for that reason, he was sick and uncared-for.

The fact that the child attended the support house since his first year of life and that he showed physical fragility touched the employees, who hoped he would recover. They did not want to feel neglectful or effortless in the face of the situation, so with the intention of helping, many of them would reproachfully question the parents. Some of the natives isolated them with the aim of reproaching the parents' behavior, which was considered to be "negligent."

Thus, the team that was already assisting in the case decided to schedule systematic conversations with the parents, especially with the father, who had become the main companion to the child because the mother had recently given birth to the couple's second child.

They also arranged conversations to evaluate the procedures from and towards the other teams that worked in the institution. During those conversations with colleagues not only ethnographic information was shared—information that certainly must be valued—but we also discussed issues that promoted the substitution of affirmations for interrogations, something that would allow the denaturalization of phenomena related to culture and would invite people to think about the different realities—the personal reality as a part of a set of realities (Lima, 1996).

The Guarani's perspective on the situation of the child's sickness does not necessarily need to be accessible to or understood by all of the professionals who



took part in the case. However, its existence must be identified, so as to enable the recognition of this other as such.

During the monitoring of that case, the child's father was not willing to talk and his behavior was often aggressive. However, his suffering was evident. He would sometimes accept to talk with the psychologist, but during those meetings he would not say much—the conversations were outlined by the difficulty of grasping the meaning of this father's attitude.

On the verge of notifying the Federal Government about the case and the difficulty of establishing an effective dialogue with the father, we proposed a comprehensive conversation which would include the parents, relatives, indigenous community leaders, a reference team for exemplary hospital health care, a multidisciplinary team of the institution, and managers, so they could talk about the drawbacks they were facing during the child's treatment from different perspectives. The aim was to allow a shared reflection on the assistance provided to the child. The proposition mobilized the father, who accepted to individually talk to the psychologist in our team.

In the face of the possibility of losing their child's custody and considering the risk of having him under the custody of institutions outside the indigenous community, the comprehensive meeting was held. Many were present: the parents, the maternal grandmother, two different chiefs from the indigenous community (the chief of the community and the spiritual leader), one doctor from the health care reference team of the hospital, the multidisciplinary team, and the head of the institution.

During the meeting, each one expressed his/her understanding concerning the child treatment. The parents barely spoke. The meeting enabled the collective construction of the intervention, but it also overexposed the parents.

The maternal grandmother and the tribal leaders presented to us aspects of the Guarani way of life and their understanding on what was happening. They also put forward solutions to the problems faced by the health care teams.

The Guarani solution consisted of the child living with the maternal grandmother and so the parents would take part in the upbringing. The Local Health Counselor would present the case to the community in an effort to convince them to authorize the work of the local health care team inside the indigenous village and with that specific family. The chief of the community was willing to talk to the father and help him with whatever was necessary. Considering this scenario, the idea of notifying the Federal Government was dropped and the Guarani proposition was successfully introduced.

Based on how touching and involving the case had been to the entire institution, the team focused on conversations with nursing colleagues on what the previous assistance meant and on how the professionals saw themselves and their work in an institution which targeted such a specific public.

The work with the nursing team faced some resistance, from intrinsic difficulties of introducing any new work approach to issues involving interdisciplinary work.

The obligation of filling protocols often turned nursing into a bureaucratic and mechanical job. Since they had well determined routines and tasks, a nurse's value lied in his/her experience and the ability to achieving results such as the actual amount of patients that adhere to their treatment. There was actually very little space for pondering about the job and to exercise knowledge more flexibly.

The third emblematic case for the project we carried out was the assistance provided to another Guarani patient. He was from Rio de Janeiro, young, single, barely spoke Portuguese, and had medical indication for kidney transplantation. Due to the seriousness of his case, the outlook was for him to stay a long time in the institution; he would have to wait until the transplantation was possible.

He was very unsociable and his behavior was often aggressive. He had no companion and it was difficult for him to establish visual or verbal contact. He was, for the nursing team, a typical candidate for institutionalization.

Psychological assistance was immediately requested from us and during the meetings for assessing the case it was discussed whether or not he should be referred to a psychiatrist.

Nevertheless, in the case of an indigenous individual, getting to a diagnosis and psychiatric treatment require extreme caution. After all, what would be the base for his referral to psychiatry? Under which standards should we evaluate the patient?

Thus, the team pointed out the necessity of focusing our efforts into establishing contact with the patient, into locating his relatives and into searching for more information about his life. Aiming at that, we divided ourselves, each professional of the team would be responsible for different actions: contacting the manager for indigenous peoples mental health of the State of São Paulo, contacting local health care teams for more information on the patient and the location of his relatives, trying to reach the patient through different workshops and with the collaboration of other Guarani, and discussing the case with the nursing referral team in hospital assistance.

Through those actions, it was possible to locate some of the patient's brothers in indigenous villages in the State of São Paulo. We were also able to gather information on his clinical presentation.

One of his brothers was an important Guarani chief in the State of São Paulo and he did not know that the patient had already been transferred to the state's capital. He promptly accepted the invitation to visit the institution and to talk to the team. Through his brother, we could learn more about the patient's history. We were then able to talk a little about the impressions and concerns we had on the case and could also establish a deeper dialogue with the patient.

Locating his brother, interacting through craftwork workshops, and the support from other Guarani were primordial for a high qualified intervention.

Contrary to what we had expected, the patient did not have to wait a long time for the transplantation. However, discharging the patient from the hospital was also challenging. Where would he go? Who would look after him?

By the time we had to deal with those questions, Elisabeth Pastor was already the manager for the indigenous peoples' mental health care of the State of São Paulo. She made it possible to expand the dialogue about the case.

For that purpose, the team suggested a comprehensive meeting. Many attended the meeting: the patient's brothers, other indigenous leaders, the reference team for indigenous health care of the State of São Paulo, the head of the institution, the technical manager responsible for mental health care in the State of São Paulo, the nursing team, and our team. We discussed the patient's longings, the biomedical care patients that underwent transplantation need, and our doubts concerning a new psychiatric evaluation. Moreover, occidental apprehension of mental health was stated.

The Guarani talked about their very nature, their beliefs, and their understanding of what happened to the patient at the level of the behavior. For the Guarani, the patient was different and the reasons [for the sickness] were spiritual. They stated that they had trouble to interact with and understand the patient, so maybe this new area of knowledge and health care which was provided by the "not-native" ones could help them to take care of their relative.

As reported by them, there are only a few Guarani spiritual leaders and the challenges of the modern world require dialogue between different world views. According to the leaders who were present, if biomedicine is able to help in health care and if it also deals with the behavior, then the Guarani consider to be valid to get to know it. After that, we scheduled a psychiatric evaluation of the patient, with the consent of his family.

Aiming at that, Elisabeth Pastore enabled a previous discussion of the case with the psychiatrist. The physician, on the other hand, allowed the family of the patient and the multidisciplinary team from the health support house to attend the medical consultation. Such decision assured an interdisciplinary assistance in which medical, native traditional, anthropological and psychological knowledge formed a horizontal plan of dialogue and conduction of the case.

When asked about where he would like to live, the patient said he would like to go back to Rio de Janeiro. However, he did not have relatives in that city, neither did he have a place to live there; and there was also no local health care team yet assigned to him. For those reasons, we had to figure out a different solution.

One of his brothers invited him to live in his indigenous community. The patient at first declined the invitation, stating he did not know the community. Thus, periodical visits to the indigenous village were suggested, monitored by the multidisciplinary team from the health support house.

The aim of the visiting was to establish an adaptation process both on behalf of the patient and of the community. Three visits were made before the patient definitively moved to the indigenous village.

During the visits, the community and its chief were constantly engaged in welcoming the patient and the team.

When the first meeting took place, a great meeting was held to introduce the patient and his medical history. A major craftwork workshop also took place. The

patient, with institutional support, distributed material and taught the new techniques he had learned with other indigenous patients during the course of his treatment.

The main intention was to prepare the patient to be able to offer something instead of simply demanding things, it was to conceive his own creativity and thus use art as an interactive and communicative device that could connect him to that community. It was also the aim to provide a space where the community could recognize that indigenous patient as a fellow—an individual capable of creating, producing, elaborating, claiming something as his own and constructing identifications.

By conducting the craftwork workshop, the patient assumed a different role than that of a patient in medical treatment. Instead, he presented himself as the keeper of that knowledge and of a particular world view.

The second visit made by the team and the patient aimed at a meeting with some natives that had been chosen by the chief of the community to elaborate a new routine for him and to define who would help him to develop a health care schedule for himself.

The third visit was an attempt to introduce the patient into the routine of the community, allowing him to live in the indigenous village for a few days without the need of the multidisciplinary team.

In all of the three mentioned cases, I evaluate that the dialogue with psychology helped spectacularly in my performance as an anthropologist, notably in relation to the health of indigenous people. If, on the one hand, psychology focuses in the subjective diversity in different cultural fields and is dedicated to the universe of the individual, on the other hand, anthropology focuses in general social aspects (parental system, world view, among others) and its specificities in different communities (Guimarães, 2010, p. 18). That is, while the first area of knowledge is dedicated to the individual and to the peculiarities of his/her own universe, anthropology is dedicated to what is universal to each particular community, what is common in them. Anthropology aims to know how each community understands itself and relates to all others.

Acting in a health support house where each patient was a unit far from any geographical and cultural references, far from the original collectivity, living in an environment of illness (and thus potentially in a context of suffering), issues regarding the individual presented themselves on a daily basis.

How does each person face pain and suffering? How does each individual live and feel culture itself? What is the sense each person makes about being in the world (in a culture)? These are all questions inherent to psychology, a science that has produced and keeps producing reflections about every category of the diverse.

Taking that into consideration, the dialogue with psychology provided me the opportunity to see things differently, to get in touch with new perspectives to comprehend the collective character, which is cultural in its singularity and oneness.

In a health support house to which natives from different ethnicities and geographic areas of the country resort for having their illnesses treated, talking with

each one of them and asking them how they feel and how they are living that moment is always pressing, even if this conversation is guided by cultural references.

In this proficuous meeting with psychology there is also the discovery of some important points of convergence: the attitude of listening, the purpose of knowing, and the prerogative that we know nothing of the other with whom we begin a dialogue.

Through these points of convergence and divergence, it was possible to perform a careful plan to attend the natives' health. Adding to the points of convergence described above (the attitude of listening, the purpose of knowing, and the prerogative that we know nothing of the other with whom we begin a dialogue) and taking into consideration the focused observation of distinctive dimensions of the diverse, I understood the intensity and amplitude of the capacity to intervene that an interdisciplinary team has.

The meeting of different areas of knowledge made it possible to cautiously venture into experimentation, inaugurating an interdisciplinary service in a health institution centered in the biomedical knowledge and directed to such a broad universe of different peoples.

This experience made it possible for me to identify several guidelines to the present work. The first of them is listening, of course. Without it, any work with indigenous people can be considered to be jeopardized from the very beginning.

A second guideline is the fundamental indigenous participation (patients, companions, relatives, leaderships, among others) in the process of constructing the intervention and in the planning and management of the many services.

This guideline implies that the professionals involved in the project must have a critic, reflexive stand on both political and historical constructions that may lead to a denial of the plurality of actors, voices, and knowledge in the intercultural context. The guideline makes it mandatory to understand that a biomedical intervention usually happens in a context outlined by relations of power (Langdon, 2005, p. 129).

A third guideline, that relates directly with the one just mentioned, would be the relativization of knowledge, especially the hospitalocentric and biomedical ones (Langdon, 1999, p. 12). Biomedicine must be understood as a cultural system, the result of a Western historical process, and a discipline based on a type of knowledge (the scientific) among many others (mythic, theological, popular, and philosophical knowledge are some of them). This particular relativization of knowledge is only possible if we undo some hierarchies: biomedicine and traditional knowledge, doctor and patient, white person and indigenous person.

The relativization of the biomedical knowledge can be a hard exercise, since it relies on the sharing of powers. If we are able to develop the ability to recognize and accept the possibility of *intermediality* (Langdon, 2004) as a common ground to all knowledge instead of insisting on a competition or simple opposition between indigenous systems and the biomedical one, we will progress significantly in the construction of actions and different kinds of knowledge that may complement each other.

Traditional indigenous medicine and biomedicine are not the only medical traditions in the social field. It's necessary to recognize that the social field of health is permeated by a variety of traditions and innovations in its practices of self-assistance. Just as it was discussed by Maj-Lis Foeller in this book, the social field of health is quite dignified in relation to 'intermediality' (Greene, 1998). It's dangerous to oppose the traditional indigenous medicine and the biomedical system or make them compete with each other. The result of the interethnic contact has shown exactly the opposite, that is, the indigenous people reinterpret and get closer to aspects of Western medicine (Langdon, 1998, 1991, 1994; Langdon and MacLennan, 1979; Gamelo and Wright, 2001; Greene, 1998; Morgado, 1994). The boundaries between the biomedicine and the traditional ones are permeable to quite some extent, making the therapeutic itinerary more complex consisting of the result of many factors instead of being the result of the simple perception of efficiency. (Langdon, 2004, p. 45)

A fourth and final guideline is the necessity of a *flexibilization of actions*, the need to adapt to new situations, to new interethnic contexts (Silveira, 2004). The standardization of actions regarding the treatment of indigenous people jeopardizes enormously the goal of a specific and differentiated approach.

Given the cultural and social differences, it is essential for the work planning not to be standardized according to bureaucratic-administrative necessities of the institutions that are often requesting the standardization of actions. Taking into account cultural, epidemiologic, and geographical diversities, we must ensure a healthy environment for proposing adjustments to the service in order to attend the inherent specificities of the work and its context.

The implementation of these guidelines demand great effort to every professional involved—a disposition to know different world views. It is no coincidence that there is a high turnover of human resources in projects regarding the indigenous health care.

But not only a disposition to know the perspective of the other is needed, for this work requires great efforts towards relations of trust between the natives and the professionals involved. After all, it is necessary for one to trust the other and his knowledge in order to follow the prescriptions. If there is not an established relation of trust among them, the risks that the doctor-patient relationship will end up being based on imposition are huge.

Consequently, the efforts to reverse this historically established relation must be made, and the sooner the better. The natives must believe in the intervention attempts made by the biomedical establishment, and the health care teams must believe in the indigenous traditional knowledge. This requires efforts towards the construction of *trust*<sup>4</sup> among the individuals involved.

Adding to these efforts towards relations of trust and the disposition to detect and learn about other world views, it is also imperative to aim at a *cultural competence* as part of the clinical competence, allowing both an intercultural communication and an articulation between the many types of knowledge to take place.

<sup>4</sup> On the concept of "trust", see Antony Giddens, 1991.

For it to actually happen, all professionals involved must have the ability to know the ways of living of the people they are attending (Langdon, 2005, p. 129).

According to Langdon,

"The professional needs to listen to his patient, allowing the patient to talk about his/her own experience, expressing with his own words what is happening and how he perceives all this. Patients usually explain through narratives what the disease means to them, but only if they are allowed to do so. Frequently the physician, or another professional, filters this narrative to listen to just what is recognized as being important in the biomedical view, blocking every social and cultural aspect that is part of the understanding of the patient. The anthropological method applied in clinical treatment implies in a disposition to listen, to learn with every narrative told by the patient." (2005, p. 129)

This articulation does not imply inserting aspects of the indigenous knowledge to the biomedical knowledge or to the health care public service, but does imply the interaction of distinctive forms of care, mainly recognizing that this interaction happens to indigenous peoples independently of the will of the biomedical knowledge (Langdon, 2004, pp. 34–43). The natives do this exercise—they select and create solutions so as to use the expertise and resources of the health care public service without having to authorize the substitution of any of their traditional practices by the biomedical one.

Elements of biomedicine are used to strengthen ethnomedicines, so there is a distinction between biomedical *medicine* and biomedical *power* (Maj-Lis Follér, 2004, p. 144).

According to Langdon, the indigenous peoples see the biomedical therapies as one option among many others to treat their diseases, so they preserve their own explanations and perceptions of what the disease is and what its cure means (2005, p. 123).

The interdisciplinary work experience in the health support house, the readings and theoretical reflections in the fields of anthropology and psychology, the continuity to act with indigenous people, and the constant dialogue with my colleagues gave me the opportunity to systematize and analyze the questions presented in this paper.

I usually say that the meetings between us and them, I and the other, are disturbing. They instigate us to (re)think our certainties, or conceptions, our truths. The rupture with the idea of unity of the "being" puts into perspective not only who the others are, but also who we are.

Considering this framework, as I mentioned in the beginning, it is fundamental that we know what we are doing with our knowledge and which place we occupy in the pluriethnic scenario.

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## CHAPTER 13

# MADRE ÑAME AND THE NONAM

## One and Another

Hernán Sánchez<sup>1</sup> and Livia Simão<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will cover modes of articulation in *I-other-world* relations that emerge in dialogues within the mythical imagination of the *Nonam*, an indigenous community that lives on the banks of the San Juan River, in Puerto Pizarro, located in the tropical forest region of Colombia's pacific coast.

With this, we seek to continue research in the field of semiotic-cultural constructivism in psychology (Simão, 2010), which looks to explore the possibilities opened up by the analysis and reflection on intersubjective processes in different cultural contexts for the understanding of human development.

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From this perspective, human psychological development is characterized as a process of continual structural transformation of the person in their I-Other-World interactions, requiring and allowing the emergence of new forms of self-organization and of its relations as well (Simão, 2013).

In this sense, research and reflection on the intersubjective processes involved in human development focus on the role played by individual subjective processes involving symbolic social mediation, hence the importance of intersubjective relations. Underlying this focus, there is a strong emphasis on the impossibility of dissociation and, at the same time, the differentiation between the I and the Other, thanks to pre-reflexive and reflexive affective-cognitive processes that sustain these relations. These processes allow the I and the other to build and develop as selves. These are intersubjective processes that emerge in the sociocultural space—while also shaping this space—allowing for the continuous reconstruction of the subject in dialogue with others, including the polyphonic dialogue between the many selves that exist (Simão, 2005, 2006, 2013).

*I-other-world* relations therefore lead to a process of meaning in which the messages sent are reconstructed multiple times. In this process, each person actively transforms the others' expressions, in an effort to integrate them into their own personal affective-cognitive base, which is also transformed in this process. This process touches on the symbolic play that occurs not only, but also, in the preservation and transformation of cultures, in which the other is an opportunity for the I to question and be questioned by traditional culture (Simão, 2010, 2012).

The dynamics at play here is that of the relation between *personal culture* and *collective culture*, as proposed by Valsiner (2013):

The two notions—personal and collective culture—are “twin” notions—they represent processes between the person and the social world that are mutually linked through the internalization/externalization process. Yet both of these cultures have their specificity—both are unique, as they are constructive transformations of one into the other. (p. 223)

The construction of *personal culture*—the basis for all human conduct—is a unique process for every person, which actively creates relations of meaning between aspects of the semiosphere, which is a system of myths that works to bring the dynamics of opposition and breakthrough to a close, generating new myths, and so forth (Valsiner, 2013, pp. 65 and 111).

Valsiner (1989), when proposing the notions of collective and personal culture already emphasized the active role of the child in the process of co-construction of collective culture among several adults and other children, through attempts to share idiosyncratic meanings in personal cultures (Valsiner, 2013, p. 223).

Currently, Valsiner (2013) proposes yet another third layer regarding *personal* and *collective cultures*: *social representation*:

Social representations are encoding the environment in ways that specify directions for expected conduct—and feelings about such expected contact, by oneself and by any other. They are also maintained in the internalization system of the person—at different layers of internalization. (p. 223)

Boesch (1991) also noted the role that the directions of symbolic actions played in channelizing the *cultural field of action*, in his classical definition of culture:

Culture is a field of action, whose contents range from objects made and used by human beings to institutions, ideas, and myths. Being an action field, culture offers possibilities of, but by the same token stipulates conditions for, action; it circumscribes goals which can be reached by certain means, but establishes limits, too, for correct, possible, and also deviant action. The relationship between the different material as well as ideational contents of the cultural field of action is a systemic one; i.e. transformations in one part of the system can have an impact in any other part. As an action field, culture not only induces and controls action, but is also continuously transformed by it; therefore, culture is as much a process as a structure. (p. 29)

In this definition, Boesch highlights myths as integrated into the procedural structure that is culture. In his view, much like laws, scientific theories, moral beliefs, and aesthetic judgments, myths are ideational content that make up the cultural field. Even so, myths are judgmental frames of reference much more incapable of being reflected on than other ideational content of culture, much closer to “common sense” (Boesch, 1991, p. 255).

In addition to their tacit character, Boesch (1991) also points out that myths are, in a sense, paradigms of social influences on individual development. They are, however, the type of influence that is exercised through the personal process of creation, which, in turn, transforms the myth itself:

Even the legends and fairy tales, the stories and sagas told to a child are not freely chosen by him; they are inescapable elements of his experience, linked to the commentaries, lessons or reminders of the adult narrator, whose significance as a person mingles with the connotations the child associates with the myth. (p. 260)

Even while agreeing with Lévi-Strauss with regards to the fact that myths have a basic, latent structure that underlies their differing versions, Boesch (1991) argues that what really guides the attitudes and legitimization of a person brought up in a given culture are not myths as abstract logical structures, but rather *myth-stories*, which specify the pattern of the myth into central themes and attitudes in personal and daily life<sup>3</sup>.

*Story-myths* can be expressed in a number of different fashions, by different people and in different moments of their life. *Myths* and *story-myths* follow spe-

<sup>3</sup> In this respect, Boesch (1991) proceeds to a complex and acute critical analysis of the concept of a myth and its function and Freud and Lévi-Strauss that, however, goes far beyond the scope of this chapter.



cific themes, which Boesch calls *mythemes*. These *mythemes* come from a collective origin, but become subjective components of individual stories through oral storytelling or behavior models transmitted between generations (Boesch, 1991).

Myth-stories and mythemes are the product of assimilation—in the Piagetian sense—of I-world relations anticipated by the person, and are generally expressed in expectations, fears, hopes, and life aspirations, which Boesch (1991) calls fantasms.

Nonetheless, as has already been noted, not all *myths* can be assimilated, and sometimes are assimilated by certain people but not by others. Furthermore, these myths are assimilated differently by different people or by the same person under different circumstances (Simão, 2004). This holds true because, according to Boesch (1991), to be assimilated, a *myth* must correspond in some way to a fantasmic structure already existing within the individual, in order to become concrete and justify its tendencies for action. This, then, is a bi-directional assimilation, as part of the socialization process: if the *myth* that is assimilated into the subject's fantasmic system structures their experience, the myth will also be restructured by the fantasms constructed by the subjects over time (Simão, 2010).

It is within this articulation of I-other-world relations that we will now analyze the Madre Ñame Myth, originating from the *Nonam* people.

### THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY OF THE NONAM

The *Nonam* community is located in Puerto Pizarro, on the banks of the San Juan River, which is replant with a variety of fish, serving as the main source of food for the community. This territory is covered by a dense forest, which thins out in areas near the villages and serves as an important reserve of animals, vegetation, and minerals, particularly gold and silver. Figure 13.1 shows a schematic representation of the location of Puerto Pizarro on Colombia's Pacific coast.

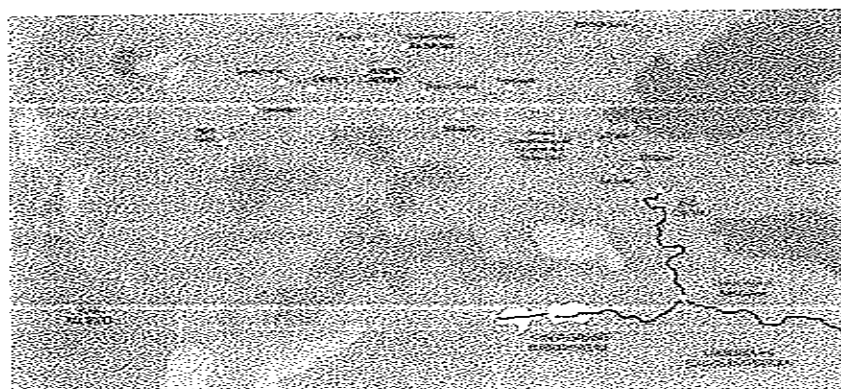


FIGURE 13.1—Location of Puerto Pizarro on Colombia's Pacific coast.

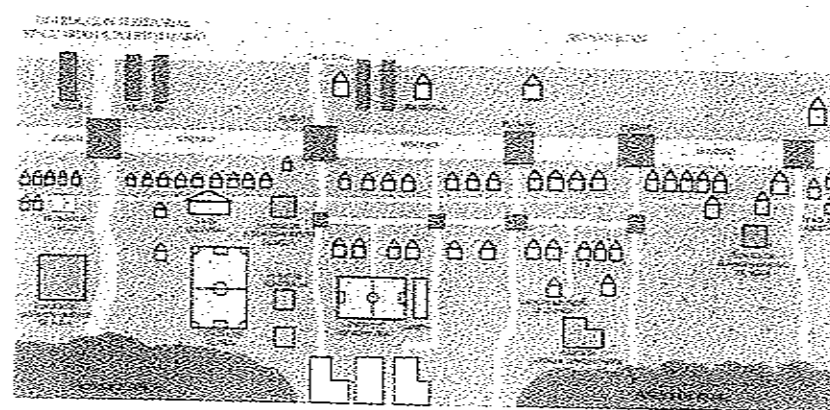


FIGURE 13.2—Schematic representation of the territorial distribution of the indigenous *Nonam* reserve in Puerto Pizarro, Colombia.

Economic activity in the *Nonam* community is based on hunting, fishing, farming, community-regulated subsistence tree harvesting, and extraction of *werregue* palm fibers, which are used to make hand-made goods that are commercially sought after. These handmade goods—for the *Nonam*—are the main source of income used to obtain products they do not have and that are necessary to daily life, including salt, candles, gasoline, and tools.

*Nonam* villages typically have a school and a commercial warehouse for basic consumable goods. The village may also include a health post and *Dichaardi House*—a community center for meetings and *Nonam* celebrations. In Puerto Pizarro, this house also serves as a center for activities led by *Programa Hogares Comunitarios del Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (HC ICBF<sup>4</sup>).

Figure 13.2 presents a schematic representation of the territorial distribution of the indigenous *Nonam* reserve in Puerto Pizarro.

Figure 13.3 is a meeting of mothers at the ICBF community home.

The *Nonam* speak the *Wounaam* language, part of the Choco language group, one of the identifying characteristics of the community. The addition of schools to some villages allows children to learn Spanish, thereby continuing schooling and enabling participation in other activities, both academic and economic, in several parts of Colombia. Until the 1980s, however, only a few men spoke Spanish well enough to conduct commercial relations with other communities and procure ba-

<sup>4</sup> Communitarian Houses of the Colombian Institute for the Familiar Welfare. The HC-ICBF is a program from the Colombian State coordinated by women from communities that assume educative and protective practices with 15 children between 0 to 6 years. In Puerto Pizarro, the activities of HC-ICBF start at 8 a.m. and finishes at 4 p.m. In this period, the communitarian mother dialogues, prepares food, plays, narrates stories, accompanies the sleep and is attentive to the forest dangers.





FIGURE 13.3—Mothers from the community in the ICBF home, Colombia.

sic products that were not available or difficult to manufacture via forest extraction, hunting and fishing.

#### THE MADRE ÑAME MYTH IN THE CULTURAL FIELD OF THE NONAM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

According to Orozco, Perinat and Sánchez (2009), childhood *development* is tied to changes emerging in the child's daily participation in community activities, allowing for the progressive construction of different skills—structures with functional affective, cognitive, and social modes—to respond in a self-regulated fashion to the demands in their context.

In the *Nonam* community, the mythical narrative gains special importance in this developmental process, as it allows for relations between the subject and the self and with *others* to be experienced in the form of a narrative. For the *Nonam*, it is tacitly understood that remembering, expecting, hoping, despairing, believing, doubting, planning, building, learning, hating, loving, and dreaming take place through narratives activated by interpersonal relations, forming the basis for their daily lives.

All learning in the *Nonam* culture occurs through the transmission of oral language or through the active participation of members of the community in entertaining educational activities, in songs, dance, meetings, gatherings, and *ningas* (community work), or rather, in generational dialogue that provides for interactions between children, youth, and adults and is inherent to community practices. These include systematic meetings between adults (spiritual leaders and council-

ors) and children, in the *Dichaardi House*, to pass along experiences and share the ancestral knowledge of the *Nonam* culture.

During the process of recovery of cultural practices in the *Nonam* indigenous village in Puerto Pizarro (Málaga, 2013; Málaga & Sánchez, 2005), a series of meetings were organized to narrate myths and legends from the Colombian Pacific, with the participation of community mothers<sup>5</sup> and the children participating in the HC ICBF Program. At these meetings, a version of the Madre Ñame myth was recorded, in order to create educational instruments that would be of interest to the community, together with interviews with a community mother and *Nonam* children about the Madre Ñame myth. We took advantage of this body of information in the following analysis and illustrations.

#### A NARRATIVE OF THE MADRE ÑAME MYTH

A long time ago, there were no yams. Parents used to leave their children home alone. While the parents were gone, an old woman would come by with a cart full of large yams. When she reached the house, she would tell the children to get some water and cook the yams in a large clay pot. After cooking the yams, the old woman would peel them and call the children in to eat. Once the kids were full, they would stop eating; the old woman would then start shoving yams in their mouths, making them eat more; and then she would step on their neck, killing them. She would then return home. When the parents got home, they would find their dead children. The old woman had already killed many children when a young boy told everyone what had happened. It was an old woman that came to the house, bringing yams, and when she left, she would take all of her yams with her.

So, a young man waited at home with a spear, hidden. And so it happened. The old woman came out of the woods like she always did, bringing a cart full of yams and telling the children to "get some water to cook the yams." She boiled the yams, and then peeled them to see if they were cooked, and placed the peeled yams in the room. She peeled all the yams and put them in a pile. She had peeled a great deal of yams and, even if the children didn't want to eat more, she shoved them into their mouths. From his hiding place, the young man watched everything that happened. When the old woman, furious, grabbed a young boy by the neck, the young man threw the spear into the old woman's back and heard a noise that sounded like the spear had pierced a yam: "zau...!" And so the young man killed her and she didn't feel any pain. When the parents got back, they buried her downriver.

After a few months, they found a sprouting vine, the leaves of which then died. The women said, "it would be nice if we knew what seed this vine came from." They dug around the vine and found yams, all white and red and quite large. Each

<sup>5</sup> A community mother, in Colombia, is a woman that works in the community with approximately 15 children between the ages of 0 and 7, providing basic care and school instruction, from 7 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday. These activities are conducted as a part of the Hogares Comunitarios do Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar Program.

family started to take yam roots, and the plant spread throughout the country. When Ewandam created us, there were no yams. They only came to exist after this event.<sup>6</sup>

### MADRE ÑAME IN MYTHEMES IN THE NONAM IDENTITY

Symbolically, the Madre Ñame myth operates on the level of social representation (Valsiner, 2013) of the *Nonam* in the cultural field of their symbolic actions (Boesch, 1991), thereby ensuring that the identity of the *Nonam* as a people remains alive and updated, by articulating aspects of daily life (present) with their origins (past) and social prescriptions (future).

Identity is understood herein as a process of a continuous quest, effort, by one person in relation to others—or by a group in relation to others—to distinguish oneself from other people, based on unique characteristics or events, seen or selected as relevant for use in representation of the self and, eventually, in belonging to a group. These characteristics and events, which refer to relations with others, may be expressed, communicated and eventually shared with others. The relations between sharing and difference in *I-other-world* relations are at play here.

In the Madre Ñame myth, considering the version presented herein, these symbolic articulations, which ensure that the identity of the *Nonam* lives on and is updated (as proposed above), appear in five mythemes in this *story-myth* (Boesch, 1991).

First, the origin myth, relating the *Nonam* to an event and its results, characterizing their coming into existence with and in nature, through their relation with others: “A long time ago, there were no yams (...) an old woman would come with a cart full of large yams (...) When Ewandam created us, there were no yams. They only came to exist after this event.” This expresses not only the fundamental character of this agricultural product in the diet of the *Nonam*, but also its symbolic character, generating an entire network of *I-other-world* relations, leading to a new state of things for the community, that now identifies itself as a group, given the specifics of their creation.

Secondly, the mytheme of *relations with the transcendent, involved in the origin of the Nonam*: “When the parents got back, they buried her downriver. After a few months, they found a sprouting vine, the leaves of which then die.” To the *Nonam*, this tuber is the result of the link between life and death, present in the very power of subsistence in and from the forest. The assimilation of this *mytheme* into the *fantasmic* system (Boesch, 1991) is expressed as a paradigm in the words of one of the *Nonam* children that was interviewed; she said, with regards to Madre Ñame: “she died to live among us.”<sup>7</sup>

The third mytheme is the *triumph of the Nonam over the dangers brought by the other, in its unknown character*. Here, both the forest and Madre Ñame, appear explicitly as the unknown, as a foil to their roles in the two previous mythemes. At one point in the story, Madre Ñame harms the children. But a heroic act by one of the *Nonam* prevents the tragedy of a generational extermination: “When the old woman, furious, grabbed a young boy by the neck, the young man threw the spear into the old woman’s back and heard a noise that sounded like the spear had pierced a yam: “zau...!” And so the young man killed her.”<sup>8</sup> All other peoples have great heroes in their myths or story-myths and, on certain occasions, these heroes receive specific names. Among the *Nonam*, the young man that killed Madre Ñame was not given a specific name; however, this is not just any person, but one of their own, who looked out for their well-being and risked his life for the group.

The fourth mytheme is that of *generational protection*, a role that the older members—youth and adults—must play in relation to the children. The myth is a warning and speaks about the importance of the survival of the new generation: “While the parents were gone, an old woman would come (...) and then she would step on their neck, killing them.” This myth, then, states that youth and adults should take on the responsibility to care for the children and asks that a specific set of actions be taken: “a young man waited at home with a spear, hidden (observe) (...) When the old woman, furious, grabbed a young boy by the neck, the young man threw the spear into the old woman’s back (defend); When the parents got back, they buried her downriver (protect).” Here also, when interviewed about the myth, one of the children expressed her assimilation of this *mytheme* and its *fantasmic* system (Boesch, 1991), saying, “she was mean to the children and the parents killed her.”

The fifth mytheme implicitly underlies this entire story-myth, with respect to the tensions in the *I-other-world* relation, brought by the other, the outsider (Simão, 2008; Wagoner et al., 2011), typically involving morality (good-evil) and time (new-old): Madre Ñame is an old woman that comes from the forest, feeds the children and kills them, and is killed by one of the group to become the main source of food for the *Nonam*. In this sense, the Madre Ñame myth as a whole ends the tension inherent to the dialogue, in the sense proposed by Marková (2003), as the capacity of the human mind to conceive, create, and communicate social realities in terms of the *Alter*.

### THE MADRE ÑAME OF A NONAM CHILD

In a previous study (Malaga & Sánchez, 2005; Málaga, 2013) *Nonam* children between the ages of 4 and 6 were interviewed, in an attempt to identify how they elaborated the mythical narrative of Madre Ñame, which they had heard at the *Dechaardi House*. For the purposes of this chapter, we will look at excerpts from an interview of a 4 year old girl, in order to illustrate how—in the child’s answers

<sup>6</sup> The original version was narrated in Wounaam by community leader Juan Perdiz, after which it was translated into Spanish, Portuguese and English.

<sup>7</sup> It is possible that syncretic aspects are also at play, particularly those from Catholicism, in the assimilation of this *mytheme* into the child’s *fantasms*. Nonetheless, we do not have sufficient information (data) to make this statement and discuss its implications within the question being proposed and discussed herein. The possibility, however, does exist.

<sup>8</sup> This also indicates an important mytheme, the dignified death of the enemy.

to questions from the community mother—the *mytheme*—*fantasm* articulations appear in the descriptions that the child provides of the Madre Ñame character. In these articulations, three inter-related dimensions emerge in a symbolic I-other action: *the mythical nature of the Madre Ñame character; attribution of psychological states to the mythical character; and the character of otherness that makes the I-other relation more complex in the story-myth*. These dimensions are represented in Figure 13.4.

In the *first interview*, upon being asked by the community mother who Mother Yam was, the child's response defined three characteristics of the character. The first of the characteristics (*young*) is related to a moment in the vital cycle that does not correspond to the character in the myth, but rather, is closer to the characteristics of the community mothers in Puerto Pizarro, who are young women without children. The second characteristic refers to where the character lives (*up-river*), an *other* place, where the community does not live, placing the character in the position of someone who does not belong to the community, and is therefore foreign to the *Nonam*. It is through the third characteristic that moral values emerge (*good woman*), defining a positive I-other relationship that coincides with the moral value that the narrators and community mothers give the character of Madre Ñame in the *Nonam* culture. In this interview, the mythical character is presented with exclusively positive aspects.

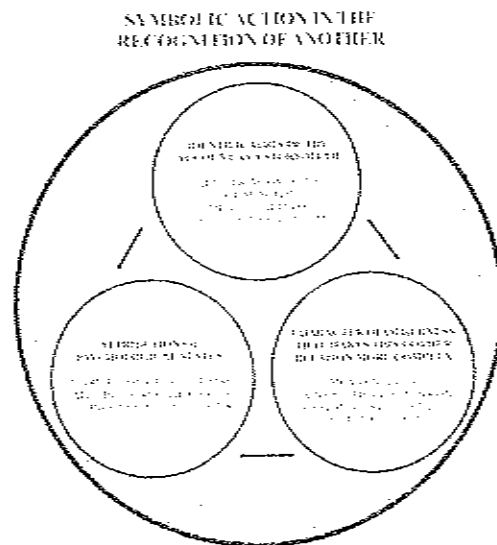


FIGURE 13.4—Dimensions of the mytheme—fantasm relation according to three dimensions of symbolic I-other action.

In the *second interview*, upon being asked by the community mother about who brought the yam, the young girl answered that it was an *old woman*. The community mother then asked her where the old woman came from, and the girl answered that she came from *upriver*. When the community mother asked what people from that place are like, the girl said *they are very bad*. Next, the community mother asked what the old woman was like, to which the girl did not answer. Finally, the community mother asked, “what is Madre Ñame like?” The girl answered that she was an “*evil person*.” In this interview the child presented the mythical character in its aspects as an antagonist to the version of the first interview, by and large negative, excluding all of the jovial characteristics of the community mother. Madre Ñame is now old, evil and—furthermore—appears to be living in another part of the river where people like her live.

In the third interview, the girl once again changed the characteristics of the character, now described as “an animal that comes from the hill to leave yams.” Finally, in the fourth interview, the child comments, “she is an old woman that comes from the mountain to bring yams to the community.”

While the versions have been modified, all of the child's answers point out that Madre Ñame is a stranger, someone who is different from the *Nonam*, with good and/or bad characteristics in I-other relations. Nonetheless, these characteristics change in accordance with different nuances in the mytheme-fantasm relationship, which emerge in ontogenetic development, channeling affective-cognitive possibilities for the articulation of the tension between good and evil, while also channeling the child's development.

The origin myths expound on the vicissitudes of the community, narrating the story of the people over time. Thereby, they transmit experiences and facts that are significant to that culture, for example, in visions of the shaman in healing rituals. They also present standards for possible behavior and expectations (fantasms) in the I-other relation.

Myths are therefore inherent to the subject, both allowing and requiring that each subject organize and express their personal story to *others*, in a constant attempt to construct and reconstruct relations between *mythemes* and *fantasms* that can be understood by the other, even though they will never be completely understood (Boesch, 1991; Simão, 2010).

### INTENTIONS, EMOTIONS AND THOUGHTS OF MADRE ÑAME

In the plan of the myth being focused on herein, the narrative of the child interviewed by the community mothers, who are one of the child's others, includes the dimension of attributing subjective states to the character of Madre Ñame, another of the child's others, according to three types of attributes: intentions, emotions, and thoughts.

In the attribution of intentions, the child's symbolic action can be seen in the handling of the articulation between action and reason in I-other relations (Madre

Ñame) that, in itself, would not be founded in reason from the point of view of an outside observer to this story-myth.

In the first interview, in referring to the actions of Madre Ñame with others, the child being interviewed clearly indicates the good actions and intentions of Madre Ñame: "she gave the cooked yam to the children because she wanted them to eat it all." In the second interview, however, the possible intentions of Madre Ñame's actions in relation to the Nonam children were not explicitly indicated; they were merely suggested, in a sequential combination of actions, in which one is potentially positive, while the other potentially negative: "she gave the children yams, and then killed them." In later interviews, a connection between actions and reason is reestablished, explaining the intentions of Madre Ñame: "she is an old woman that comes from the hill with yams for the community."

Furthermore, during the third interview, the child states that "yams only grew in the forest and the old woman brought them to the community." She is thereby affirming the mythical character (Boesch, 1991) of the story: yam grew by itself. There was no need, neither for the child nor the community mother, for the child to explain why the yam had sprung up where it did. From a mythical perspective (Boesch, 1991), in that they share I and other—the child and the community mother—it is perfectly plausible that the yam had appeared without a natural cause to explain its origin, as the myth is based on events and the intentional actions of the characters that symbolize and safeguard the community's values. It is thus that the child states that Madre Ñame "delivered the yam to the Nonam, so that the children would have something to eat."

In a general sense, the symbolic movement of the child attributing intentions to the mythical character seems to be related to the good-evil dichotomy: it seems to be easier for the child to explain the mytheme-fantasy articulation to the community mother when the character's mythical actions have converging positive attributes when they involve a tension between good and evil.

In the attribution of emotions, the child's symbolic action emerges to resolve, as it were, the good-evil tension emerging in Madre Ñame's actions in the myth. This aspect appears in the second interview, when the child affirms: "it is a story of an old woman that was happy because she brought yams to the Nonam." Then, in the same interview, the child states: "she felt bad because she was doing bad things." Thus, the emotions of being happy and uncomfortable are attributed to the character together with the value of her actions: when she does something good, she feels good; when she does something evil, she feels bad. In both cases, the child actively attributes emotional states to the mythical character, indicating subjective processes that maintain the coherence of the character's actions in the context of the mythical events, given that the question of why a character that did good deeds would go on to perpetrate evil never arises.

In the attribution of thoughts, the child's symbolic action is focused on the character's rational actions, such as organizing, interfering in and preventing social relations in the context of the culture to which the child, the community

mother, and Madre Ñame belong. In the first interview, the child does not answer the community mother's question of "what was Madre Ñame thinking when she offered the children yams?" In the second interview, the child says that Madre Ñame "was thinking that the Nonam would eat the yams." Similarly, in the third interview, the child did not answer the same question. The child's arguments then emerge once again in the fourth interview: "she only thought about her cart, and also about the children." This response-silence-response cycle demonstrates the child's renewed attempts at elaboration to attribute thoughts to the character. The silence when faced with a question is not representative of inaction, but rather the self's involvement in another subjective dimension that does not imply, require or even intentionally desire to provide a verbal expression in the relation with the other.

In attributing subjective states to the character in the myth, the child is acting symbolically, establishing relations of meaning with the actions of Madre Ñame, through the intentions, emotions, and thoughts of the character. This is a recognition of the other as such by the child, demanding a personal effort to articulate the meaning of the story-myth as a whole, through the set of actions between the characters of the myth.

The child's responses reveal that she was aware that others experience psychological states, and that, based on these states, people act. It is important to note that the development of symbolic action implies the extension of specific actions of the same class (Boesch, 1984), or the attribution of beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and intentions essential to the understanding of others' psychological states—the basis for human relations. Furthermore, they are important in allowing the I to perceive the impossibility of full, unequivocal understanding of the psychological states of others, making I-other relations even more complex.

As the child, within the phenomenon being dealt with herein, faces this type of demand for an I-other relation, in which the other is the community mother asking questions about the myth—about the central character of the myth—the relation between human development, culture and relations is actualized.

### MADRE ÑAME IS AND IS NOT A NONAM

In the three types of attributes given to the character of Madre Ñame here focused, the child's symbolic action emerges to perceive the other as potentially similar, while also very different: Madre Ñame seems to be like the Nonam people, but is a foreigner in their midst.

The dimension of a *characteristic of otherness of the Madre Ñame character*, which makes the I-other relation more complex, allows us to understand this complexity in the context of the Nonam culture, according to moral values and the identification of the tension that arises from contact with the other.

As moral values, the child's symbolic action arises as an affective synthesis of the process of meaning, which is constructed in the I-other relation in the cultural field (Simão, 2002a). Thus, in the third interview, the child says that Madre Ñame

"was very mean to the children and the parents killed her." The parents' action is reciprocated in the system of values in the *Nonam* myth, which does not accept conflicts in which someone's life is taken—an *other's* life—that does not respect the basic conditions and rules of community life among the *Nonam*. In this same dialogue, the child states, "she was an evil woman that came from upriver. Those people are evil." This response ties the person's place of origin to the community's system of values, which channels the possibility of acceptance or rejection as one of the *Nonam*. This response assumes fatal determinism that apparently prevents contact with *outside others*.

In the tension that arises from contact with the *other*, the symbolic action of the child arises to offer alternatives for the dialogue in the context of empathy, with the certainty of an uncomfortable encounter. In the third interview, the child is faced with a conflict: "*Madre Name* was a stranger that gave yams to the community." In contrast, this answer allows for the identification of an active subject that assumes its reality, given socially acceptable parameters, but attributes personal meaning that was not foreseen in the relation with the *other*. From this perspective, symbolic action is an affective synthesis of the process of meaning that is constructed in the tension of contact between subjective points.

In this sense, one can infer that the character of otherness that makes the *I-other* relation more complex within the context of the *Nonam* culture is a space of tension and imbalance in development, searching for more complex social regularities. The character of otherness in the *I-other* relation emerges in the five interviews because the child sees "*Madre Name*" as a stranger that brings discomfort to the families at one point, then as a someone that brings wellbeing; or, going even further, as someone that protects, while also destroying. In this sense, the immeasurable sense of the *other* in the dialogue translates the opaque nature in the *I-other* relation (Simão, 2007).

### THE SECRETS OF MADRE NAME

The notion of otherness makes the *I-other* relation in the cultural field even more complex. In the understanding laid out by Boesch (1984; 1991), Simão (2010) posits that the notion of otherness requires that the subject attempt to overcome themselves, in the tension of what is, what is not, and what could or could not be within the relation with the *other*. But this closeness with the *other* will always be merely an attempt because the *I* is never completely together with the *other*, in their otherness, and their meeting will never be reciprocal (Simão, 2010).

Something in the *other* will always escape the *I* because the dialogic relationship, even with the *other*, is based on what is hidden, in its clouded nature. It is in the effort to clarify this, in the context of our concerns, that new meaning may arise. Thus, the mystery in coming together with the *other* is not an inability to learn about the *other* (Defamarre, 1996), but rather the fact that "the *other's* thoughts and desires are not immediately presented to the *I*, nor can they be deduced by simply reducing them to similarities between the *I* and the *other*. In the

*other*, there exists an infinite power to escape from the *I*, to be a secret from the *I*, to be unpredictable to the *I* (Simão, 2010, p. 246)."

From the feeling of estrangement in the simultaneousness of the meeting between the knowable and the unknowable, otherness creates the dimension of the *other* as a foreigner, stranger; different from me. In this sense, the aspects that imply in the recognition of the *other* stand out, based on their acceptance or rejection, inclusion or expulsion, when the *I* seeks to decipher the mystery of the *other* in objectifying the unknown. In other words, "the notion of otherness, in itself, can be an otherness in our quest to understand our nature as human beings (Simão, 2010, p. 241)."

The myth is the perfect scenario to touch on the dynamic *I-other* relationship in the cultural field. As Gadamer (1997) noted, the myth has its own wealth and credibility because it carries its own truth that is not understood within the rational explanation of the world. In harmony with this role, Semiotic-Cultural Constructivism in Psychology argues that human beings, through the use of signs, create fields of meaning that extend out into space and time to present explanations of the world in telling and retelling story-myths.

To Simão (2002b), culture, as a field of action, not only induces and channels the subject's action, but is also constantly transformed by that action. In this sense, culture reveals the emergence of symbolic action, with its many functions of potential action in the human process of subjectification, and structures complexes of meanings (fantasms) that guide the individual's experience within the community.

According to Boesch (1991), symbolic action and fantasms are social contrasts to the myth, which can be seen as one amongst the collectively acceptable forms of explanation, justification, and extortion, expressed as story-myths or mythemes. Thus, myths are part of the domain of collective culture.

Gadamer (1997) reveals the tension that, since the time of the Greeks, stems from the domination of the *logos* over the myth. To this author, the Western world imposes reason as the only form of thought that organizes the regularities of the physical and social world, in contrast with other forms of thought which are seemingly discredited by the lack of cause-and-effect relations that serve as the basis for scientific rationality. According to Gadamer, to return to the myth would require that a culture rethink all of its relations. Assuming this posture would require the elimination of other alternative outlooks that seek to resolve the tension in the constant passage of the myth to *logos* or in the dualistic differentiation of modes of thought that would allow the two to meet (Bruner, 1988). According to Gadamer's point of view, both perspectives deny conflict, as the new meaning implies in the revision of scientific rationality in the mythical horizon.

To use the terms of the question posed by Gadamer (1997) in his essay *Myth and Reason*, we will now proffer a provocation: What is the role of the myth in the indigenous *Nonam* community? The answer is striking: the myth, in this community, may have a central role, because the community lacks scientific reason as a form of explanation; or, at the very least, this is not the dominant mode of ex-

planation. Myths, stories, and legends are a narrative structure that characterizes the identity of the *Nonam* in a particular manner; they allow for reconstructive articulation in people's development throughout their lives.

Valsiner (2007), based on Bartlett (1932), suggests that as people become involved in the retelling of story-myths, they contribute to variations in the story itself, from one version to another. In retelling a story-myth, the person exposes their internal understanding of the story; adding new information for others to hear. Story-myths retold based on individual fantasies become new stories, leading to greater variation in different versions (Valsiner, 2007).

In telling and retelling stories, one might suggest that the *self* can be understood as a cultural phenomenon that contributes to the construction and reconstruction of culture. In this sense, Simão (2000), in line with Boesch (1991), refers to culture as a process and a structure that offers possibilities (transformation), but, to the same extent, lays out conditions for action (stability) that contribute to the construction of identity.

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## CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS IN BRAZILIAN AND MEXICAN CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS<sup>1</sup>

Sonia Grubits, Heloisa Bruna Grubits, and José Angel Vera Noriega

The present document reports two decades of lived experiences with groups of Brazilian and Mexican native children. The ethnic groups in focus are: Bororo, Guarani-Kaiowá, and Kadiweu from Central Western Brazil and Mayos, Nahuatl and Tzeltal from Mexico. We gathered important materials during activities of artistic expression, observed the children's movements and verbalizations, and maintained contact with their parents, relatives and their community, generally speaking. Bibliographic reviews, mainly in the area of anthropology and sociology were crucial to understand the meanings of their drawings.

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## BRAZILIAN BORORO

The Bororo Indians are located on the lands of the Salesian Mission of Meruri, which is at about kilometer 12 of the Federal Highway that connects Barra das Garças with Cuiabá, capital of the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil. Their culture, dances, and chants are particularly significant linked to the manufacture of ornaments and the ceremonial distribution of food. Such rites expose the importance of the "*Baadojebage*," who coordinate different ceremonial activities, and of their maximum leader and the "*Bakurukudu*," who intonates the hunting and fishing chants connected to funerals. In addition to presiding the ceremonies of initiation and perforations, particularly those of the inferior lip, when the Bororo are aged between 12 and 14, and of ear lobes and nasal septum when they have children.

The social organization of the *GeBororo* reveals the maximum development of the principles of complementary opposition of social categories and cosmologic values. To understand this system, we will examine further the organization of their society in villages formed by a set of *ocas* (their typical huts), traditionally arranged in circle around a great central *oca*, the men's house (*baimanagejewu*). (Viertler, 1976)

Vierler (1976) informs that they are given names according to the circular arrangement of the village, during a ceremony, and that there is a hierarchy among them. Names are associated with raw materials that have more or less quality.

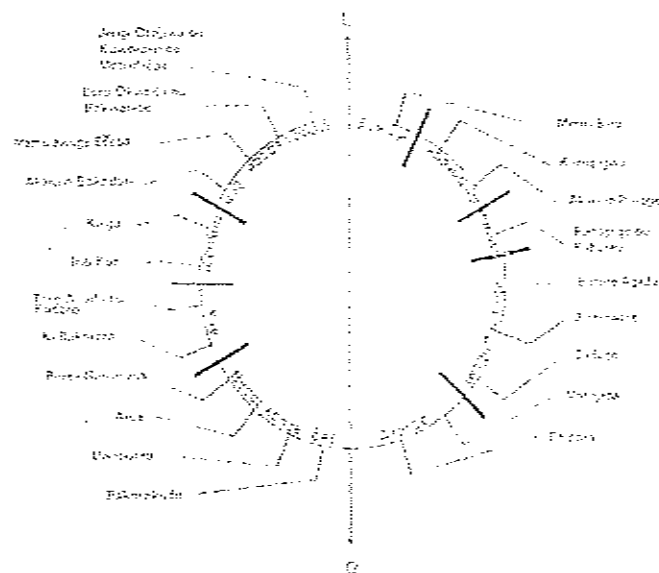


FIGURE 14.1. Bororo Village (Vientner, 1976).

FIGURE 14.2. Drawing of a Bororo child. Village With Houses Arranged in Circles.

weight, age, and beauty, or with the family position within the group. They specifically integrate the individuals into a network that distributes inequitable social rights and duties, which evidence differences between old and young, male and female, mature and immature ones.

From an economic standpoint, their conception of richness is not compatible with that of non-Indian people. Lévi-Strauss (1955) tells us that some of their best hunters and fishermen are luckier than others and more skilled in exchanging food for manufactured objects. Clan wealth is more related to a capital of myths, religious dances and functions, objects, and whatever helps identify them. They are distinguished by rustic and refined or creative and original rather than rich or poor. That is, for the Bororo, class differences do not encompass wealth simulation.

## BRAZILIAN GUARANI

The current number of Guarani in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul is circa 60,000. They essentially live in reserves located within the boundaries of the town of Dourados. Since this number has increased quickly, their survival conditions have recently become more precarious. This situation is mainly linked to the shrinking of their lands due to the crowdedness of most reserves and to the continuous depletion and degradation of natural resources. Thus, the domestic production of each family declines year after year. Currently, most crops are intended for self-consumption and men work in alcohol distilleries or sugar refineries under 40-50 days contracts, from May to November, when summer plantings are prepared. As for women and children, they stay within the reserves and take over subsistence farming.

Viveiros de Castro (1986) reports that the Guarani's villages present extremely variable forms of residence, ceremonial structures, systems of kinship, and attitudes towards war and shamanism. According to the social organization of the Tupi-Guarani, a branch of the great Guarani family, the group villages look like sets of hamlets, i.e. clusters of houses facing each other.

The drawing of a girl below represents the Guarani cosmology with three well-defined levels: superior/sky; medium/earth, village; and inferior/underworld (Grubits & Darrault-Harris, 2001). The wide house is a typical building of many tribes from the Guarani family. They have a quadrangular base and a covering that may reach the ground. The current living conditions of the Guarani provoke a loss of the extended families and some cabins more or less close to one another are substituted for these huge houses.



FIGURE 14.3. Drawings of a Guarani Girl.

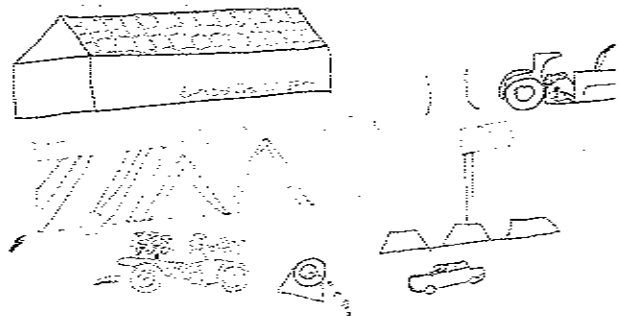


FIGURE 14.4. Drawings of a Guarani Boy.

The drawing of a presents the same element and also reveals the conflict between life in the Guarani community and his desire to become a city-dweller.

### BRAZILIAN KADIWEU

The Kadiweu are a smaller group that, for over two centuries, has been occupying an area difficult to reach in the Bodoquena Mountains, south and southwest of the Brazilian Pantanal, in the western part of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul.

Their language is the only representative of the Guaicuru family east of the Paraguay River. The languages of this family are typically spoken by Pantanal peoples dwelling in the Paraguayan and Argentinean Chaco. Their various dialects are very close, which had already been observed by the Jesuits in the XVII Century (Boggiani, 1975).

The literature on this group stresses its social structure, based on a stratified organization in castes: nobles or lords, warriors, and captives. The latter were caught during intertribal wars and integrated into the Guaicuru society, where they received given assignments. Nowadays, intertribal wars and prisoners no longer exist, but the specific terms are still used to indicate consanguinity and kinship relationships or socially determined relationships, as those between descendants of lords and captives or godparents and godchildren, adopted from the local population.

Shamanistic activities have long lost most of their importance in the life of this group. Nevertheless, the few *nidjienigi* (shamans), also called fathers, currently living in the Kadiweu Indigenous Reserve have conserved their prestige. In addition, one of their main activities, that of healer, faces the direct competition of the medical assistance provided by evangelical missionaries or the *Fundação*

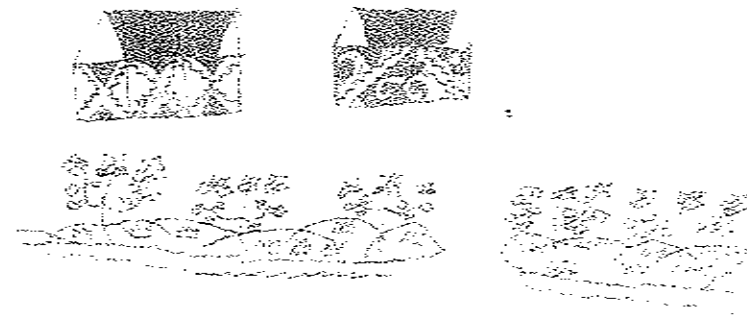


FIGURE 14.5. Drawings of a Kadiweu Girl.



FIGURE 14.6. Drawings of a Kadiweu Boy.

*Nacional da Saúde* (FUNASA—National Health Foundation), since the Kadiweu frequently use one or the other.

Their children reproduce the division of labor by gender in their drawings. A girl uses a decoration similar to that of the Kadiweu ceramics in her drawings. Since their young age, boys learn how to break horses for riding without mistreating them, using techniques quite different from those of the local, non-Indian communities.

### THE MAYOS FROM SONORA, MEXICO

The Mayos live in the coastal valleys located between the Mayo and Forte Rivers, in southern Sonora and northern Sinaloa, Mexico. The last census reported a population of circa 28,000 (CDI & PNUD, 2006).

Mayo families live off agriculture and usually have (four) hectares, irrigated plots where they plant different crops (wheat, chickpeas, corn, and sesame). Their domestic industries include weaving carpets and blankets, and making furniture, bedrolls, and baskets, all three made from poplar sticks.

In addition to recognizing Mexican authorities, the Mayos have their own ones. Every year, they elect indigenous governors or *covanagua-cobanaro*. These are assisted by *chicoteros*, who apply punishments and help with administrative tasks. The old are deeply respected. The “*povomaior*” is a lifelong position assigned to a respected old man who represents everybody before the government.

Although they are Catholic or sometimes Protestant, the Mayos have maintained some vestiges of their ancestors' beliefs. They respect their sorcerers or *tamatianes*, who can cause or heal diseases, forecast harvests or the weather, and perform ancient rites. Their religious festivals are quite significant. They particularly celebrate the feast day of Saint John the Baptist, Easter and Holy Trinity

Sunday, and, in Sinaloa, Saint John and Saint Jerome's days. Although they follow the religious organization of the Catholic Church, they have other, parallel religious authorities as the *maestro rezandero*, who often replaces the priest. Their most important ceremonial dances, *pascola*, *venado*, and *coyote*, are performed by men. (See <http://www.sonoraturismo.gob.mx/Mayos-desonora.htm>, last access on January 20, 2008.)

An example of the presence of their religion together with Catholicism is the drawing of a child representing a cross and butterflies, since the *tenábaris* (butterfly cocoons) are parts of the traditional outfits of the *venado* and *pascola* dancers (Crumrine, 1974).

FIGURE 14.7. Drawings of a Mayo boy, Representing His Immediate Context and a Butterfly.

FIGURE 14.8. Drawing with a Butterfly and a Cross.



FIGURE 14.9. Another Drawing of the Same Boy.

The cross drawn by some children represents the close link between their customs/traditions and Catholicism. Their rites are a syncretism of the latter and worship of nature. Both parts are reunited during the prayers, chants, dances, etc. (Crumrine, 1974) The drawings of Mayo children almost always present elements of the symbology and culture of Catholicism and of the immediate context of the community that surround them.

#### THE TZOTZIL FROM CHAMULA, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

The village named Chamula was founded in 1524. In 2005, its total population was 2,959 (INEGI, 2005). This ethnic group, which belongs to the Maya nation, dwells in the plateau area of Altos de Chiapas, 80% of which is rough terrain, at 2,260 meters above sea level.

Socially, parent behaviors are rigid and strict, independent, cold and exclusive. Even when the relationships between clans and families do not determine the couples, there are no marriages to have children and protect the family assets. Mothers do not play along with the boys or girls; they just observe their games while weaving or embroidering. They do not participate in the development processes that the boys carry out in their games or attempt to fit into their world, but try to discipline their use of time, ordinate them, and systematize their use of space.

The participation of children in religious life is very important and, from early childhood, they are taught to abide by and follow the tradition left by their grand-parents and practiced by their parents. They are educated to respect their elderly, their brothers and sisters, their parents, their grand-parents, godparents, and the traditions and functions they may or must serve in their community. Some boys have been seen participating in important festivals as hand drum players.

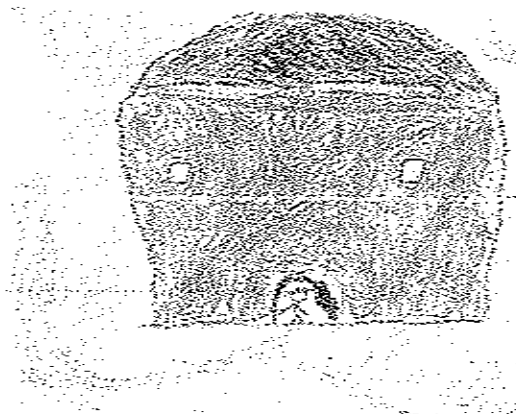


FIGURE 14.10. Drawing of a Migrant Tzeltal Boy Who Commented That the Sad Faces at the Windows Were His Younger Brothers', Who Would Go Work in Farms.

Education and apprenticeship depend on gender: Girls are taught household chores under adult supervision, so as not to shame their family when they get married. Thus, they learn how to cook *tortillas* and beans, among other things, and are asked to feed hens, turkeys, and pigs, and to look after the sheep. Boys learn to work outside, use a hoe, identify pests and animals that can cause diseases, recognize sowing and harvesting times, bring wood to prepare food, know the ceremonies and religious functions, and respect their wife and children (Cervantes, 2007; Pérez, 1999).

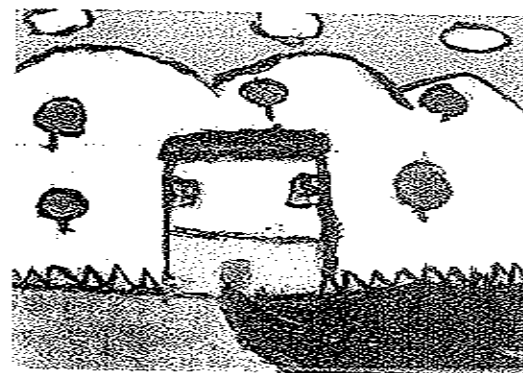


FIGURE 14.11. Drawings of a Non-Migrant Girl Showing a Landscape and the Local Style of houses. The Path Leads to a Relative's House. It is Worth Noting the Grazing Lands, the Mountains With Trees, and the Land Parcel in the Bottom left corner.

The mother, grandmother, older children, and, in some cases, the brothers and sisters or brothers and sisters-in-law take care of the children. The clan mostly participates by feeding and taking care of the babies, who do not use disposable diapers or pacifiers.

### NAHUATL OF GUERRERO, MEXICO

The Nahuatl are mainly concentrated in the center-north regions and in Montaña, with two main settlements: one in Montaña Baja, the other in the Montaña Alta, and two smaller ones in the Depresión del Balsas and Costa Chica.

The state of Guerrero shelters 212,000 Nahuatl, 40% of whom dwell in a mountainous region between Chilpancingo and Tlapa, to the west, the region of Iguala to the North, and the Sierra Madre Occidental, to the South; the towns with most Nahuatl speakers are Ahuacotzingo, Cualác, Chilapa, Olinalá and Zitlala (CDI & PNUD, 2006).

The Nahuatl culture is defined by shared elements: the ceremonial life, the system of civil and religious functions, the patterns of kinship and residence, economic activities, and their ethno-linguistic affiliation. Oral tradition, myths, and rites are mechanisms to preserve and update collective memory, since it is in them that changes and continuity, i.e. the group's survival, occur; teachings are informally transmitted from father to son or uncle to nephew (Quezada, 1997).

Family life follows two modalities called nuclear and extended phases, where children receive the first norms that allow them to exist within the group and at home, and get to know the nature, the systems of communal or religious functions, and their constitution as human beings linked to natural elements.

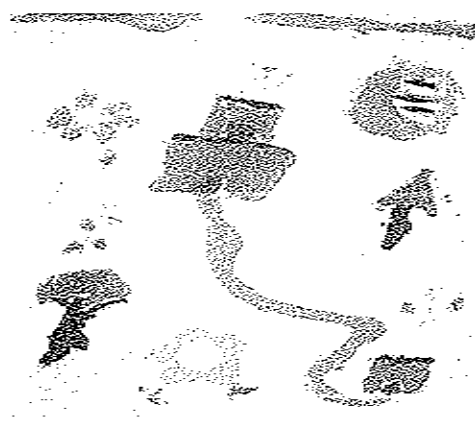


FIGURE 14.12. Drawings of a Migrant Nahuatl Girl: In Her Representation, She Does Not Perceive Herself Only Within Her Original Community, but Surrounded by Relatives and Elements of Nature in Her Hometown.

In the Nahuatl culture, children are compared to precious stones or rich feathers (divinity). They are not their parents' but gods' children. Birth is a gift from the gods that could be taken back from them; it is compared with objects, with something that embellishes and is vested with value, but the meaning of tribute, of offering, is also implicit (Quezada, 1997). In some regions, food (named *navel*) is offered to the members of the community. According to Mircea (1967), the navel is a symbol that unites children to their community, since it represents belonging and union.

Boys' teaching involves religious, artisanal, and agricultural practices; since their young age, children are integrated into activities of ceramics, wool and cotton weaving, wood carving, saddle-making and metallurgy in the Costa Grande.

Since birth, child education revolves around the idea of strength and self-control (autonomy), transmitted through advices. The *código Mendocino* shows that child education begins with nutrition, appetite control, and the first household chores consist in carrying wood and water (Mircea, 1967).

Education is under the parents' responsibility and is initially carried out in the family environment. Later, as a complement, comes public and religious education, that finally leads them to be good-hearted adults (*in qualliyollo*), which allows them to coexist with their surroundings.

These nurturing practices have been transmitted from father to son, but cultural elements suffer changes: New ones are integrated, while others are abandoned. Finally, family education is what gathers cultural elements and is transmitted through daily activities as religious chants, tales, divinations, and dances. An example is the dance of *Tecuanes* (dance of the tigers or *tlacololeros*) that

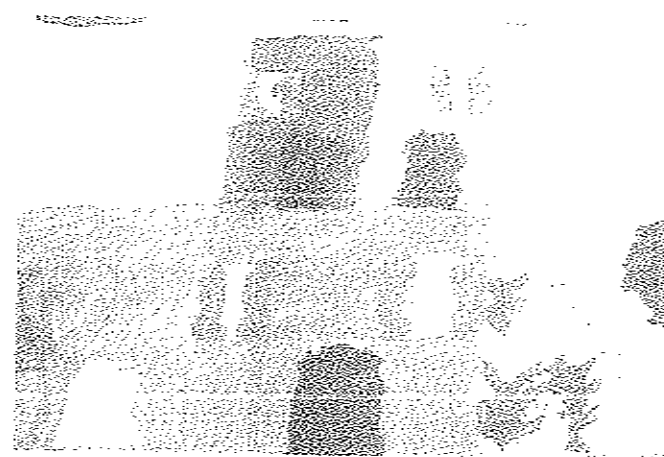


FIGURE 14.13. Drawings of a Girl Who Does Not Speak Nahuatl: A Representation of Divided and Very Well-Marked Lands, With Poor Vegetation.

the Nahuatl perform in Guerrero. It is a representation of the efforts of hunters to capture these animals. In it, the magical/religious elements and the ancestral rites of fertility are bound together.

### CONCLUSION

Despite the physical distance between them, the Mexican and Brazilian ethnic groups studied here present similarities in their informal educational process. All preserve and transmit elements inherited from their ancestors as community practices concerning survival, agriculture, husbandry, beliefs, values, and artisanal creativity, among others.

Kadiyew and Tzeltals currently maintain their territory and hardly mix themselves with non-Indians or mestizos. Children draw in bold colors and their motifs resemble those of adult ceramics. These are difficult to access communities.

Guaraní and Mayos maintain more frequent contact with non-Indians, since their communities are close to cities or in their suburban, peripheral and marginal areas. They wish to look like urban children, which they perceive as more privileged.

Bororo and Nahuatl communities differ from the previous ones by the relationship they maintain with their spaces, culture, and tradition. As a survival strategy, these groups mimic themselves to adjust to those who have the power, either preserving or modifying their cultural and religious processes.

We conclude too that the cross-cultural analysis of drawings of indigenous children, accompanied by ethnographic study, in addition to personal observations, is very important and effectively contributes to an understanding of the relationship of culture and the environment in human development.

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## CHAPTER 15

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# CONTRIBUTIONS OF A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH (TD) TO THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE (TK) OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Luiz Eduardo V. Berni<sup>1</sup>

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### THE GAME OF FORCES OF BRAZILIAN PSYCHOLOGY

According to Kuhn (1970), “a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm” (p. 176).

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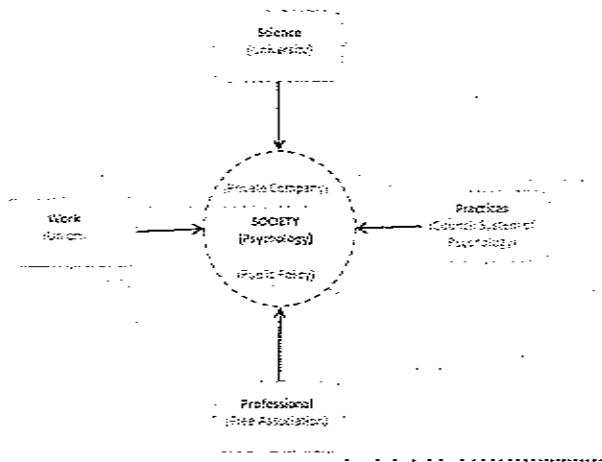


FIGURE 15.1. The Forces of Brazilian Psychology.

This important axiom can be understood as follows; despite science having a world frame that establishes its international criteria to a global network, each society has its schedule, or local rules, that establish "its own hue for science." In Brazil, Psychology (science and profession) is built considering four forces (Fig. 15.1).

The first force is the scientific community, housed mainly in the federal universities, who builds knowledge following the international frame of science. The universities, in turn, are regulated by the Ministry of Education, that establishes quality standards for education such as the new "Curriculum Guideline" (Brazil, Ministério da Educação, 2011). Research is funded by some governmental agencies like the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) in the state of São Paulo.

This frame is probably similar to the other countries. However, the public universities, responsible for 90% of the research in the country, are only 30% of the total of universities in Brazil. The other 70% are private, focus mainly on education, and have low research productivity.

The second force is the regulation of professional practice by the System Councils of Psychology. Its mission is to provide guidelines and supervision for practices. Thus, to begin working after obtaining a Bachelor's degree in psychology one must first inscribe in a Regional Council of Psychology.

Brazil has 20 Regional Councils of Psychology, almost one per state. The Regional Councils are coordinated by the Federal Council in an integrated system. This coordination is based in democratic principles that also involve the professional himself. The guidelines for the operation of the system are agreed each three years by the professional category in The National Congress of Psychology (CNP).

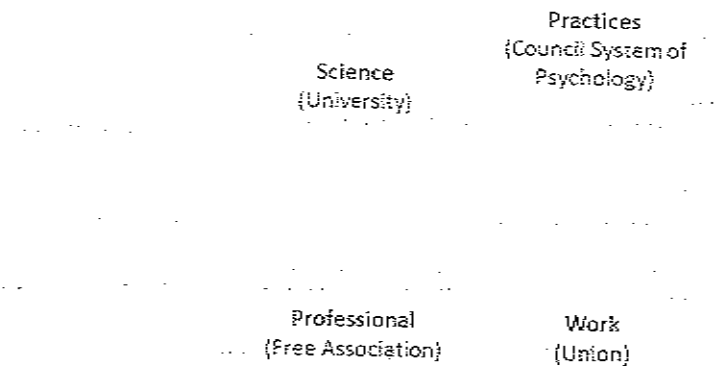


FIGURE 15.2. Hue of the Paradigm of Brazilian Psychology.

The Union, or syndicate, is the third force of Brazilian Psychology. It is quite independent by law, and responsible for warranty of the work rights of the worker in the company. Its main function is to negotiate the annual work agreement.

The fourth force is the free professional association. It is still incipient in Brazil, but starting to grow.

The dynamics between these four forces has built the hue of the paradigm of the Brazilian psychology (Figure 15.2). In this scenario, the System Council of Psychology has had an important contribution to foster many improvements to psychology. The Council has encouraged free professional association; debate between different types of epistemology, even non-hegemonic ones; work in defense of human rights; and dialog with fields of capital importance for the Brazilian cultural diversity, such as the issue of the vulnerability of the indigenous people and their own epistemology or rationality.

#### THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF BRAZIL AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE (TK)

Brazil has one of the largest indigenous populations in the world. At the time of the European invasion, back in the XVI century, they used to be around 1000 tribes, with approximately 5 to 10 million people. The issue of the land has always been important and remains a great area of conflict in the Brazilian society.

The indigenous people have only had their rights fully warranted after the Federal Constitution of 1988. Since then, the country has undergone one of the most important phenomena for these cultures: ethnic genesis. According to 2010 cen-

sus, the indigenous population is now around 850 thousand people, subdivided in 308 different tribes which speak around 240 languages, almost half of them living in cities across the country, and the other half in their original lands.

Although the term "tradition" includes historical (temporal placement), cultural (knowledge, customs, perceptions), and political (right to land) dimensions, it often masks the dynamic process of cultural change and connectivity to other spheres of social relations, because often times "tradition" is used as something static, just to contrast to "modern."

Traditional knowledge refers to the knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities around the world. Developed from experience gained over the centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment, traditional knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. It tends to be collectively owned and takes the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practices, including the development of plant species and animal breeds. Traditional knowledge is mainly of a practical nature, particularly in such fields as agriculture, fishery, health, horticulture, and forestry (UN-IAS, 2008).

Traditional knowledge is also the essence of the identities and world views of Indigenous peoples. It constitutes the collective heritage and patrimony of Indigenous peoples. Therefore it is priceless, its value cannot be calculated for economic exploitation (UNESCO, 2003).

Thus, Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous People is holistic, and cannot be understood from the point of view of only one science. It requests different areas, and at least an interdisciplinary approach to try to understand its rationality. Despite Psychology's different inner disciplines, which are very good for dialogue, a Transdisciplinary approach is probably requested to improve its performance in a transcultural field, to enable relationships with equity.

#### THE CALL FOR HELP OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO BRAZILIAN PSYCHOLOGY

The Brazilian universities have always researched indigenous people, mainly through anthropology, but also through psychology. However, in the field of psychology, despite the huge diversity of the indigenous ethnic groups in the country, researchers are quite few. But their number is starting to grow.

Since the beginning of the Brazilian history as a western country, the government's project has been, throughout the different moments in history, the "integration of the indigenous people to national society." In this case, the word integration means extermination of the culture, of the way of life, and, of course, of the people themselves. From the XVI century until the XX century the extermination of the indigenous culture was incalculable. But the Indians still resist.

In 2004, after the IV National Congress of Psychology<sup>2</sup> (IV CNP), the Brazilian Council of Psychology (CFP) and the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI) gathered with fifty indigenous leaders of thirty seven ethnic groups, from eleven states of the Brazilian Federation, to debate indigenous subjectivity in the social context. Subjectivity and the relationship with the national society was the focus of the meeting. The report produced was disturbing. The indigenous leaders agreed about different levels of interference in their societies, such as: the assassination of leaders; expulsion from the traditional land; invasion of Christian missionaries and the white educational system imposed over Traditional Knowledge. The consequences of this included different levels of disruption of indigenous identity, prostitution, drug addiction, and so on.

In this scenario, the State Council of Psychology of São Paulo (CRPSP) promoted a Workgroup (GT-PSIND), to approach these questions. At first, this dialogue had been restricted to the psychosocial dimension of human rights, which is still important. When we started this process we hoped to exchange with the indigenous people on the knowledge level, but we realized that they wouldn't. They didn't trust us. It was only after a long journey together, past nine years of contact, that they shyly began to ask for this exchange<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, I believe we are ready to further this exchange. In Brazil some public policies such as the Complementary Medicine (PNPIC<sup>4</sup>) have space for indigenous Traditional Knowledge. Therefore, if we aim to promote a real equality as advocates of the intercultural approach, we must forward this dialogue between the scientific knowledge of psychology and the Traditional Knowledge of indigenous people. Transdisciplinarity is one of the approaches that could help.

#### THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH (TD)

The concept of Transdisciplinarity (TD) originally meant a stage above interdisciplinarity, where there are no stable boundaries between the disciplines. This definition is important, however it can also be dangerous, for it can lead to a mistaken view that might consider Transdisciplinarity as a kind of hyperdiscipline, or a Science of Sciences, thus masking its true and most important meaning.

Indeed, the transdisciplinary scientific approach is founded on the freedom of thinking beyond disciplinary boundaries. This does not mean that transdisciplinarity denies disciplinarity or interdisciplinarity. The aim of transdisciplinarity is the comprehension of the present world, with one of its imperatives being the unity of knowledge in its diversity.

<sup>2</sup> The CNP is a democratic process where the category chooses the thematic axes that will be the focus of the professional debate in the triennium.

<sup>3</sup> When I was writing this paper, I received an email of a Native asking my opinion about a meeting he would like to organize between the local shamans over the Traditional knowledge and Transdisciplinary Approach.

<sup>4</sup> Política Nacional de Práticas Integrativas e Complementares (PNPIC).

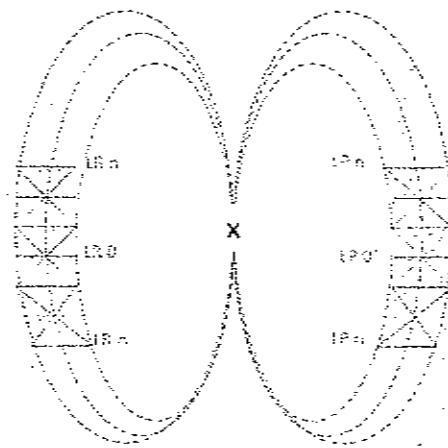


FIGURE 15.3. Structure of Reality with Levels of Reality (LR) and Levels of Perception (LP). Simplified by the author.

According to Nicolescu (2002), as its prefix “trans” indicates, transdisciplinarity concerns that which is at the same time beyond, between (interdisciplinarity), and across different disciplines.

Thus the Transdisciplinary approach does not oppose the disciplinary specialization of science simply because it departs from this specialization. But it remains committed to the unity of knowledge. It recognizes three axioms that guide its methodology:

1. **The Ontological Axiom:** There are, in Nature and in our knowledge of Nature, different levels of reality and correspondingly different levels of perception.
2. **The Complexity Axiom<sup>5</sup>:** The total structure of levels of reality—or perception—is a complex structure: every level is what it is because all the levels exist at the same time. In western society this axiom generates the specialization or disciplines.
3. **The Logical Axiom:** The passage from one level of reality to another can be apprehended by the logic of the included middle. (Nicolescu, 2002, p. 2)

The concept of levels of reality is crucial in the Transdisciplinary approach, and gives us an important key in the ontological level. However, the three axioms are closely linked. This axiomatic set could constitute a new paradigm for science: the Complexity Paradigm, as Edgar Morin proposes (Morin, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Could also be understood as Epistemological Axiom.

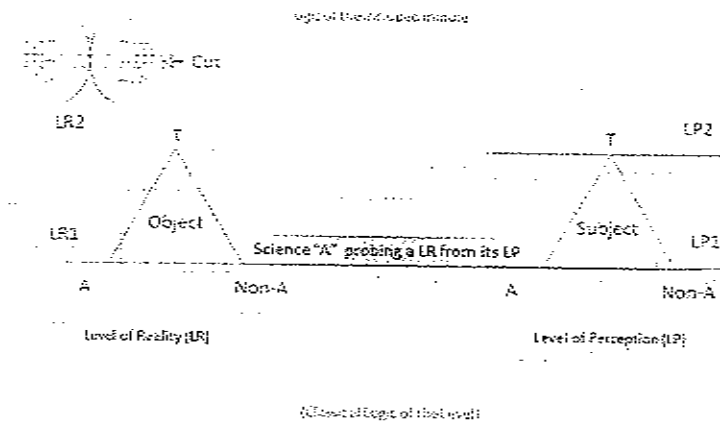


FIGURE 15.4. The Science Probing One Level of Reality Through its Level of Perception.

Reality is an open and complex structure of levels of reality (Figure 15.3). These are governed by their own laws which confer consistency to the set. Such laws are structured from an adequate logic, accessible to levels of perception that form the whole or, in Arthur Koestler's words (as cited in Wilber, 2000) “holons,” wholes that are simultaneously parts, since they are also considered part of a larger whole.

A new Principle of Relativity emerges from the coexistence of complex plurality and open unity. In this approach: no level of reality constitutes a privileged place from which one is able to understand all other levels of reality. A level of reality<sup>6</sup> exists or is established because all the other levels exist at the same time.

The levels of reality are the object of TD, starting from the levels of perception associated to them and identified as their subject. Each level of reality has an apprehensible consistency through its own logic. However, the levels are incomplete *per se*. This means that their limitations can be found in their own laws or, in other words, in their own logic.

The disciplinary sciences have deeply explored the complexity of one level of reality (Figure 15.4).

The axioms are complementary by The Charter of Transdisciplinarity (UNESCO, 1994) adopted at the First World Congress of Transdisciplinarity, *Convento*

<sup>6</sup> The diagram (in torus form) is presented in a simplified version (Fig. 3), in which it is possible to observe the open structure of reality in infinite levels of reality (LR)—to the left—and also the infinite levels of perception (LP)—to the right—which correspond to the logic from which the levels can be understood.

da Arrábida, Portugal, November 2–6, 1994. In its fifteen articles, the Charter contains principles to promote the dialogue in equality, for example:

**Article 5:** The Transdisciplinary vision is resolutely open insofar as it goes beyond the field of the exact sciences and demands their dialogue and their reconciliation with the humanities and the social sciences, as well as with art, literature, poetry and spiritual experience.

**Article 9:** Transdisciplinarity leads to an open attitude towards myths and religions, and also towards those who respect them in a Transdisciplinary spirit.

**Article 10:** No single culture is privileged over any other culture. The Transdisciplinary approach is inherently transcultural.

Thus, to relate the holistic indigenous traditional knowledge with the conventional western disciplinary knowledge through Transdisciplinarity, it is necessary to use the notion of level of reality.

At first it is important to remember that these knowledges belong to different cultures and so to different epistemologies, with different conceptions on what knowledge is.

In western societies it is quite common to consider the notion of culture in different dimensions, such as customs or values, alongside economy, politics, religion, science, the legal system, etc.... But in Transdisciplinarity this dimensions reflects only different levels of perception probing a level of reality (Figure 15.5).

When considering the Transdisciplinary approach to improve the dialogue between science and the traditional knowledge of indigenous people, the prospect of Augustín Coll (2001) could help a lot.

Based on Raimon Panikkar, Coll proposed a frame to understanding culture. Cultures over the planet could be considered, each one of them, as levels of real-

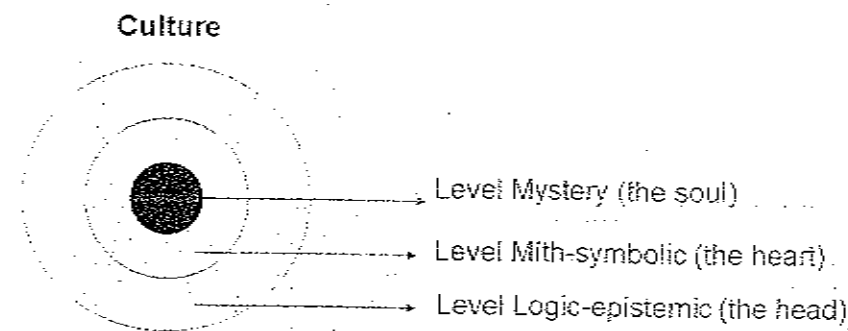


FIGURE 15.6. The Ontomic Order of Culture.

ity. Each culture is an irreducible whole, with its own logic frontiers (laws). This logic allows one interpretation of the whole of reality. In western culture the sciences probe reality through their own levels of perception of reality (Figure 15.4). Despite cultures being understood as levels of reality, Coll proposes that crossing the cultures there are, at least, three other levels, (Figure 15.6), what Panikkar calls the ontomic dimension of culture. The logic-epistemic level gathers everything that can be thought. It's the head of the culture. The mythic-symbolic level gathers everything that can be felt.

It's the heart of the culture. And last, the mystery level is the unknown. The sacred (secret). The "x" point in the diagram (Figure 15.4). To science, the mystery of nature must be discovered; to religion, the mystery of God must be understood. It is the soul of culture.

With this frame, western science, for example psychology, could improve its dialogue with the traditional knowledge of indigenous people, using the Transdisciplinary approach as a map to, on one hand, understand in depth some aspects of the complexity of the level and, on the other, be aware of the limits of science.

### THE TD QUEST: CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIALOGUE

Since 2005, when the State Council of Psychology of Sao Paulo (CRPSP) started the approximation with Indigenous people through the Workgroup PSIND, several meetings occurred gathering Indians, psychologists, anthropologists, and other professionals to debate the indigenous situation in Brazil. The meetings were all recorded, and with the audio material, we produced a book, *Psychology and Indigenous People* (CRPSP, 2010). It begins with the transcription of the speeches from the Indian participants, followed by the non-Indians.<sup>7</sup>

This book presents some contributions from Transdisciplinarity, in the effort to improve dialogue with indigenous cultures. The main issue that is discussed concerns the secularization of the world that took place with the advent of Modernity

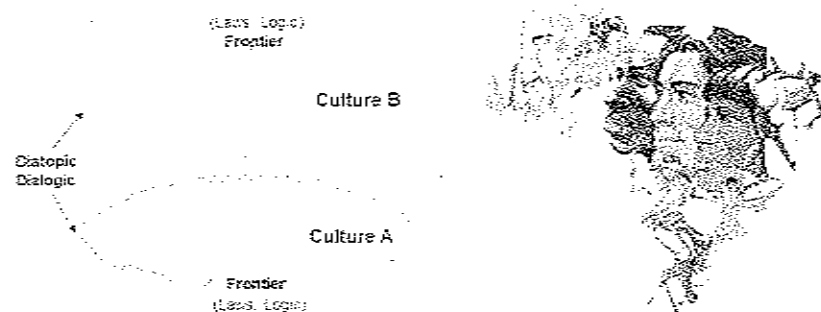


FIGURE 15.5. Culture as a Level of Reality.

science. Despite this fact, it is very important to point out that with the freedom of knowledge from the dogma of the Church, materialistic science rapidly became a new kind of religion. Based on scientificism, it banished the Sacred as a legitimate source of knowledge production. Contemporarily, transdisciplinarity is a possibility to rehabilitate the sacred instance of knowledge production that is central to the Traditional Knowledge of Indigenous Peoples. The metatheoretical frame of TD enables the construction of a new epistemology, in which it is possible, through the axioms above discussed, to put cultures in dialogue.

The TD quest is for the unit of knowledge. This won't be accomplished only in an intellectual way. If we want to dialogue with the Indians, the heart must be taken into consideration, because the *ontonomic* dimension of culture is very important.

### CONCLUSION

This theoretical essay proposed to explore at the metatheoretical level Transdisciplinary (TD) as an approach that can be useful to connect the Scientific Knowledge, belonging to Western Societies, to Traditional Knowledge (TK), belonging to the Indigenous People. These considerations emerged from the composition of forces of Brazilian psychology with the workgroup PS/IND, enabling the construction of a new epistemological field, which could have many positive implications on Psychology and other Humanities. The ontological axiom, with the concept of levels of reality, and its application over the notion of culture open an important frame for intercultural dialogue, i.e., for respecting each culture in its singularities.

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## FROM THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE *OTHER* TO A CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Diatopic Hermeneutics as a Reference in an  
Intercultural Dialogue About *Madness*

Ermelinda Salem

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Psychology shares with other sciences and professions the compromise of establishing a posture in favor of the needs of social segments that are not dominant in the society/nation and suffer aggression on their basic human rights. Many are aware of the Brazilian Indians' situation. Consciousness about the enormous number of people killed in the colonial period of Brazil is almost common knowledge. It is also a fact that nowadays, in a socioeconomical system without ethic values, several arrangements are facilitated by massification, to find those who, despite being Indian, reproduce errors beyond target races, and also beliefs, ethnicities and cultures, contributing to worsen the difficulties experienced by the peoples of the world.

It is necessary to keep fighting. A part of this battle is related to particularities. Here lies one of the greatest values of Psychology: its flexibility to act both in

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 291–310.

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larger dimensions and in the closer encounter between two or more subjectivities in the context of everyday clinical practice. Also from this encounter, comes the change. Taking into account each singular human being, we can make a long discussed ideal come into existence: to make the essence of the human being manifest itself, concretely, to give value to lives. In this context, we insert this work.

Our greatest interest consists in finding a way to guide ourselves, that gives us tools and instruments, references for an intercultural dialogue in everyday clinical practice. It is necessary because in the Public Health Service we are constantly dealing not only with Indians but also with the *Others* that notice their suffering and propose solutions in a singular cultural way. What could guide us, give us possibilities to respect and consider cultural peculiarities and also provide ways to know that do not require anthropological formation and/or ethnographic methods—which demand a long time to build reliable information on people's cultural peculiarities?

So, we searched diatopic hermeneutics for a proposal by Santos (2003, 2008), a way to comprehend the dialogues about *madness* that emerged in our encounters with the Sateré-Mawé in the Marau<sup>1</sup> area.

The meaning of *madness* we consider is based on a point of view built along clinical practice in the context of western medical-psychological cultural tradition: a manifestation of named experiences in this point of view, such as hallucinations, deliria, a portrait of psychomotor agitation (that sometimes brings along aggressive attitudes without apparent reason), and/or others, when the person looks like having lost contact with consensual reality—as if his mind was suffering a massive malfunction.

However, the definition we propose does not depend on the notion of illness or abnormality, but is limited to a general notion of suffering, despair and discomfort—even when it coincides with the idea of illness as something that is a “menace and sometimes modifies life radically” (Adam & Herzlich, 2001, p. 76, our translation).

### AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE SATERÉ-MAWÉ AND THE URGENT THEME OF MADNESS

The Sateré-Mawé of the Brazilian Amazon have a history of more than three hundred years of contact with the surrounding society. According to Lorenz (1992), “the first contact with a group of white men was in 1669, with Portuguese Jesuits” (p. 16, our translation).

Nowadays they live in the indigenous land Andirá-Marau, with an extension of 788.528 ha and a perimeter of 477.7 km. This area is located in the Medium Amazon river, in the border of the Brazilian states of Amazonas (Parintins city: 30.994 ha; Barreirinha city: 143.044 ha; Maués city: 148.622 ha) and Pará (in the

cities of Itaituba: 350.615 ha; Aveiro: 15.253 ha). A reduced parcel of the Sateré-Mawé occupies, with the Mundurucu, a small area in this people's land, called Koatá-Laranjal (in the city of Amazonas called Borba) (Teixeira, 2005).

From June to October of 2003, the participative socio-demographic diagnoses, organized and coordinated by Teixeira (2005), registered, in the indigenous land Andirá-Marau, from the state of Amazonas and Koatá-Laranjal, 7502 inhabitants—who called themselves Sateré-Mawé or were named so by their parents or guardians—living in 92 villages (only one in the Mundurucu area). From this target population 3.288 were distributed in 37 communities in an area called Marau (in the city of Maués), recognized as the one bathed by the rivers Marau (reason of its denomination), Miriti, Urupadi, and Manjuru.

Our encounter with inhabitants of the area of Marau started in 2005, due to an experience of teaching/learning of Psychology of Education with Sateré-Mawé teachers that were obtaining a specific university degree for their profession. Related to the demographic question today, they state that there are more than forty villages, the great majority with a population of up to 100 inhabitants; although we found locations with over 500 inhabitants where indigenous schools cover higher levels of teaching, or with strategic health service circuits.

The arrival of some Sateré-Mawé teachers to the city of Manaus, in the Amazonas state, motivated their visit to patients that live in the hospital “Centro Psiquiátrico Eduardo Ribeiro.” Facing their sorrow in the moment of the visitation, we asked them how they understood *madness* in their villages. In that occasion, and along various dialogues on the subject, they stated that there were no *mad* people where the Indians lived.

We could see that the register of our dialogues and its extension to other Sateré-Mawé with different social roles, who also live in the Marau area, could help us in the deconstruction of concepts and meanings that in western society stigmatize and exclude those who experience *madness*. When we invested in this perspective, we became aware of an indigenous problem that we were not aware of before.

The attention to indigenous health, in Brazil, is provided by a subsystem linked to the “Sistema Único de Saúde” (SUS)—the Unified Health System. Though a model is pre-established to assure the respect to ethnic differences of the indigenous population, its implantation has faced a series of difficulties and complexities, arriving at concrete problems in various situations differing from the original project. This way, it is frequent to see cases where the Indians, finding no solution for their needs in the village, come to Manaus to stay at the Casas de Apoio à Saúde do Indígena (CASAs)—Indigenous Health Support Houses—, from where they are guided by non-indigenous professionals to the SUS service, where specialists ignore indigenous knowledge/culture and work only in accordance with their own tradition of biomedical culture.

The same situation occurs in the attention to mental health: when guided to specialized health centers, they can be identified as mentally *mad* and return to

<sup>1</sup> This dialogue resulted in the author's Doctoral Thesis, defended in December 2010 at the University of São Paulo (USP) (see in the References).



their villages with controlled medication on their luggage. So, they are inserted in the medicated circuit of society without any critical awareness of this situation or its possible implications in their practices of self-attention<sup>2</sup>.

### THE CHOICE OF DIATOPIC HERMENEUTICS AS A FORM OF COMPREHENSION AND A WAY TO THE INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE ON MADNESS

"Encounter" means more than a vague interpersonal relation . . . Two or more people meet not only to face each other, but also to live and experience mutually . . . the two persons are there with all their strength and weakness. Two human actors, sizzling with spontaneity, only partly conscious of their mutual purposes . . . People that meet mutually are the responsible and genuine starters of a social existence. (Moreno, 1997, p. 307–8, our translation)

One of the aspects related to the cultural field of *madness* is more expressive in the studies that search for forms of knowledge about this experience of non-western societies. These studies put themselves in "crossroads of complex questions that are not only clinical but also ideological epistemologies" (Beneduce, 2009, p. 36–37, our translation). In the approach of transcultural psychiatry, for example, the interpretation of *madness* in other societies is often marked by misunderstandings, which result from a study perspective that tries to surpass conceptions and classifications that have been built in contexts that are distant from theirs. The reasons for these attempts are based on the idea that madness is a biological universal event, while culture is local. About that, Kirmayer (2009) informs:

To the old "transcultural psychiatry" culture was seen as influencing a pathoplasticity, while symptoms considered nuclear reflected a pathogenesis based on universal biological processes (Yap, 1974)<sup>3</sup>. The emphasis of the new cultural psychiatry has been placed in culture as a creator of alternative placements or meaning systems. (p. 66, our translation)

Kirmayer (2009) draws our attention to the fact that although this posture is, at times, understood as a radical relativist position, he is grounded in the studies that have stimulated searchers to review the references used in the cultural approach to *madness*. The assumption "that categories and psychiatric diagnoses have the same meaning when transported to new cultural contexts . . ." (Kirmayer, 2009, p. 66, our translation) was demonstrated to be a fallacy. This way, Pussetti (2009)

<sup>2</sup> "Self-attention refers to the representations and practices that subjects and groups develop with respect to their sorrows [suffering], including those induced, prescribed or proposed by healers through different forms of attention [biomedical, 'traditional' medicine etc.]. But depending on each specific case, the social [and cultural] conditions or situations involving the subject lead to a part of that process prescription and use it to ring at least in terms of relative autonomy" (McNéandez, 2003, p. 198, our translation).

<sup>3</sup> Yap, P. M. (1974). *Comparative psychiatry: A theoretical framework*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto.

criticizes the attitude of western professionals that translate through nosographic codes from psychiatry of behavior words and symptoms of people that live in non-western societies.

These considerations were decisive to outline a proposal for an intercultural dialogue on the experience of *madness*. With this proposal, we are assuming an existential/epistemological perspective that comes from our experiences and reflections: a perspective that considers the possibility of producing knowledge from the *Other* with the *Other*, I mean, through donation and effectiveness of a relational posture, where we can share our experiences and, more, assume the implications between them.

That's why, during the developed work along almost ten years with inpatients in the hospital "Centro Psiquiátrico Eduardo Ribeiro"—which gave us the opportunity to become familiar with them—, we were overwhelmed with a restless feeling. This feeling, that we purposely avoided, was facilitated by references from Moreno (1997) and his proposal of the Encounter: "An encounter of two: eyes-to-eyes, face to face . . . And I will see you with your eyes and you will see me with mine" (p. 9, our translation).

Trying to achieve a relational posture by adopting an attitude where experiences from the inpatients of the institution were not dissociated from the experiences from members of the work team, we could be sure that the acts and speeches from those people, in various occasions, were only apparently incoherent; and when they revealed their behavior, in the light of the relationship that was established with us and with the other actors from the institution, these behaviors looked more than *normal*. In the encounter with the *Other*, in *madness*, a great part of the difference that we considered between us consisted in ignorance as to how much our experiences are implicated and built on stereotypes that put us in antagonistic positions.

The work experience with the Sateré-Mawé, no doubt, differs from the one with the inpatients of the "Centro Psiquiátrico Eduardo Ribeiro." Only a subtle connection links them: since they live in a symbolic universe different from the western one, the experience with the Mawé also passed in the ground of alterity. So, there is something that invites us to consider that one experience may contribute to understanding the other.

In the case of the Mawé, we were faced with more than three hundred years of contact with *Others*, whose symbolic universe only seems to have a uniform appearance. So, it is impossible to ignore the testimony of a teacher, shared by others from his ethnicity, on how hard it is to be an Indian. In trying to comprehend and translate what they live, we summarized their experience as a succession of contacts with those *Others*.

The Sateré-Mawé's experiences, like those of the other Brazilian indigenous groups, constitute part of a circuit of conflicts and contradictory aspects that are present in the history of contact with the non-indigenous: this history has created and transformed many other conflicts and inner contradictory peculiarities from

the indigenous society. Their fights with other indigenous cultural traditions and the risks of religious conversion imposed to them, added to economic dependence to the *whites*; many are the challenges they have been going through along the establishment of their identity, and many are the cultural transformations that have been happening.

This way, we observe various changes in relation to the context of the origin of the Sateré-Mawé. Today—since when?—they wear clothes, though we can see women without blouses, with their breasts covered only by a brassiere, or entirely naked while they bathe in the river or igarapé<sup>4</sup>; they use watches; some have cell phones to communicate while they are in the city; they watch television (we found satellite plates in their villages) and appreciate films (through the usage of DVD sets) that have nothing to do with them directly; they have various churches in the communities where they live and choose (do they really choose?) the church they want to attend; they are starting to use computers; men, women and children are great fans of soccer. But, we can't say that they are not Indians.

According to Sahlin (1997b), "the continuity of the indigenous culture consists in a specific way in which it transforms itself" (p. 126, author's emphases, our translation). This author further considers that:

A culture took on a variety of new configurations and . . . now holds an amount of things that escape from our very limited comprehension. Instead of speeding up (or being sorry for) the death of "culture." Therefore anthropology should take advantage of the opportunity to renew itself, discovering never seen patterns of human culture. The history of the last four centuries, when other ways to live were formed—an entirely new and diverse culture —, opens a new perspective almost equivalent to the discovery of life in another planet. (Sahlin, 1997a, p. 41, our translation)

To approach the experience of madness with the Sateré-Mawé, we took the option for the intercultural dialogue—understood as the exchange of knowledge, diverse cultural traditions, and collective building of proposals to face evident problems. We consider that, with this procedure, we can face the challenge of answering our everyday questions as mental health professionals, in relation to the plural reality of the attended population and the lack of certainty of the psychiatric nosographic categories with which we deal.

To proceed, we searched for a grounded dialogue in a cosmopolitan reason: a model of rationality proposed by Santos (2008), founded in three metasociological procedures: sociology of absences, sociology of emergencies, and the work of translation done through diatopic hermeneutics.

The proposal made by this author testifies the theoretical reflection and epistemological result of an investigative project driven by him—"The reinvention of social emancipation"—, that leads to three conclusions toward a radical review

<sup>4</sup> Brooks or streams that exist in great number in the Amazonian basin, characterized by little depth, for being inside the forest.

of an epistemological paradigm of modern science: (1) social experiences within different cultures are a lot wider and go beyond what the scientific or philosophic western tradition knows and considers important; (2) this social wealth is wasted, which contributes to the idea that there is no alternative and this is the end; (3) to fight this wasting of experiences, by turning them visible and reliable, it is of little help to count on social science as it is known.

Guided by an ecological landscape<sup>5</sup> through a society of absences we seek to know and give value to an endless social experience that is in course today, as we turn absence into presence. Sociology of emergencies, which complements that of absence allow us to expand the domains of available social experiences, revealing future possibilities. The translation between different forms of knowledge/practices and its agents, complementary exercises from the Sociology of absences and emergencies, takes on the form of diatopic hermeneutics: "The work of interpretation between two or more cultures in order to identify isomorphic preoccupations between them and the different answers they supply" (Santos, 2008, p. 124, our translation).

According to this author,

Diatopic hermeneutics comes from the idea that cultures are incomplete and therefore can be enriched by dialogue and confrontation with other cultures. Admitting the relativity of the cultures doesn't mean adopting relativism as a philosophical attitude. It implies, indeed, conceiving universalism as a western particularity whose supremacy is an idea that does not abide in itself, but in the supremacy of interests that support it. The criticism of universalism comes from the criticism of possibility of a general theory. Diatopic hermeneutics supposes, on the contrary, what I appoint as negative universalism, the idea of the impossibility of cultural completeness. (Santos, 2008, p. 126, our translation)

Reassuming an existential perspective that we take on and that is stimulated by the conception of *Encounter* brought forward by Moreno (1997), in another quotation by Santos (2003) say that we also find support to proceed the way that it proposes:

Diatopic hermeneutics requires not only a different type of knowledge, but also a different process of knowledge creation. [...] requires a collective production of interactive, intersubjective and reticular knowledge, a production based in *affective and cognitive changes* [emphasis added] that take place through a deepening and reciprocity between them. To summarize, diatopic hermeneutics gives privilege to emancipation/knowledge against regular knowledge . . . (p. 451, our translation)

<sup>5</sup> Capra (2006) recognizes a common ground of various schools of social ecology: the recognition that the fundamentally anti-ecological nature of many of our social and economic structures are rooted in what Riane Eisler called the "domineering system" of social organization. Examples of domination and exploitative anti-ecological are: Patriarchy, Imperialism, Capitalism and Racism.

In this proposal we can guess an alternative way to the forms of knowledge that have been practiced and recognized in the field of Cultural Psychology. Meaning to practice it in the dialogues with the Sateré-Mawé concerning *madness*, we focused on two concepts that we considered fundamental to enable these dialogues: contact zone and *topoi*.

Contact zones "are social fields where different normative words-of-life and knowledge practices meet, shock, and integrate" (Santos, 2008, p. 130, our translation). They are "border zones, 'nobody lands' where the limits of knowledge and practice are in general the first to emerge" (Santos, 2008, p. 130, our translation). As the translation work deepens, the aspects that all forms of knowledge and practice consider more central or relevant to be brought are contact zone:

In intercultural contact zones, it's up to each cultural practice to decide the aspects that should be selected for multicultural confrontation. In each culture there are aspects considered too central to be exposed to the risks of confrontation that the contact zone brings, or aspects considered untranslatable to other cultures. These decisions are part of the dynamics of the translation and can suffer reviews when the work proceeds. If it advances, we can expect more and more aspects to be brought to the surface of the contact zone, which will contribute to new progress in translation. (Santos, 2008, p. 130, our translation)

Being diatopic hermeneutics a work of interpretation between two or more cultures, the question about who translates refers to the representatives of the cultural traditions in dialogue. In this context, the problem of how to translate can be equalized from the concept of *topoi*.

In the intercultural dialogue, the exchanging act is not only between different forms of knowledge but also between different cultures, between universes with different senses [...] and in measures, non measurable. Those universes of sense consist in constellations of strong *topoi*. *Topoi* are rhetorical common places that cover a determined culture. They work as premises of argumentation that are not discussed, for being so evident, they make the production possible for an exchange of arguments. (Santos, 2003, p. 443, our translation)

*Topoi* are therefore postulates, axioms, rules, ideas that are not object of argumentation; they are common places, basic common sense. "The work of translation does not display in its beginning any *topoi*, because the *topoi* that are available are the ones peculiar to a determined knowledge or culture" (Santos, 2008, p. 133, our translation). So, the comprehension of a culture taking as reference the *topoi* is hard to undertake. For this comprehension to happen, the *topoi* from each form of knowledge or practice that are brought to the contact zone must stop being premises of argumentation and must transform into arguments. This way, "as the work of translation advances, it builds the *topoi* that are appropriate to the contact zone and to a translation situation. It is a demanding work without

prevention against risks, and is always on the verge of collapsing" (Santos, 2008, p. 133, our translation).

Ribeiro (2005), reflecting on the use of translation in all the epistemological amplitude it can give us, evidences its development beyond the textual paradigm and its axis displacement from linguistics to the cultural studies axis, in Sociology, Anthropology, Political Sciences, and Social Sciences in general.

However, facing tensions and limitations in the process of translating, how to justify its epistemological pretension? According to Ribeiro (2005), the answer to this is in the Ethics field and in the politics of translation:

Potentially, every situation where you aim to make sense in a relation with a different can be described as one of translation. In this broad sense, the concept of translation points to the ways different languages, cultures, contexts and politics and social practices can contact each other in a way to become mutually intelligible, *without having to sacrifice difference to save the principle of assimilation* [emphasis added]. (p. 2, our translation)

For it to be possible, the author points to the following basic propositions: (1) a translation cannot be based in a logic of mutual exclusion, but in an encounter, articulation and permanent negotiation of the conditions of articulation; (2) the dialogue offer needs to be followed by availability to place in a dominant picture of reference; (3) it is necessary to recognize and value the fact that everything in the *Other* is heterogenic or different in relation to our own references, refusing to place the dialogue in a gadamerian hermeneutic position of "fusion horizon"; (4) the attitude of non-identical stress will give the possibility to maintain the mutual oddness between departure and arrival contexts alive; (5) it is necessary to admit the supposition that the translator is a traitor, before the adoption of the substantial intrusion attitude to its function.

If we proceed like this, "the stream vision in the translating process inevitably gets lost and is placed in a second stage, to benefit perception too, eventually, we can win a lot" (Ribeiro, 2005, p. 6, our translation).

We can find in diatopic hermeneutics a way to make this intension real; it has been thought by Lechner (2009) as "a relation of co-construction of senses, negotiation of meanings, inter-permeability of experiences, preventing, as much as possible, judgments and preconceived ideas that in the beginning neutralize the *Other* [emphasis added] experience" (p. 13, our translation).

#### NOTES ON MADNESS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF DIATOPIC HERMENEUTICS

In general, the dialogues on *madness* we had with the Sateré-Mawé can be synthesized through the answers to five questions:

1. Which cultural traditions were in dialogue?

The Sateré-Mawé and the western medical-psychological cultural traditions.

2. Which cultural tradition does the dialogue come from?  
Western medical-psychological tradition and clinical practice in this context.
3. Who had the dialogue?  
A psychologist, while a translator/interlocutor from the knowledge/practices of western medical-psychological tradition; and Sateré-Mawé Indians with different social needs in their villages, while interlocutors/translators of the knowledge/practices of their people.
4. Who translated the Mawé and Portuguese languages?  
Mawé-teachers that participated in the dialogues, and had already studied Psychology in their teacher education.
5. What were the intents of the dialogues?  
A close comprehension of the Sateré-Mawé's experiences on *madness*<sup>6</sup>; a situated version/translation, in the dialogic relation between Mawés and the psychologist, and a way to see—the way Psychology sees it.

To demonstrate how to effectively search for a diatopic hermeneutics of *madness*, we ran over in detail the first stage of the work and the beginning of the second one, showing examples through excerpts of the dialogues developed<sup>7</sup>. Afterwards, we entered what we called the third stage, in order to give a new direction to the undertaken dialogue.

### Initial Stage in the Construction of the Contact Zone

Santos (2008) calls attention to the fact that "a cosmopolite contact zone has to be the result of a conjugation of times, rhythms and opportunities. Without this conjugation, the contact zone becomes imperial and the translation turns into cannibalization" (p. 132, our translation).

Conscious that, even after about three hundred years of contact between the Mawé and western society, we would be entering a universe rich in symbols and singularities; and trying to avoid a non reflexive introduction, in this context, of western conceptions about madness, we looked for the orientation of a linguistics teacher that has for many years developed a research on this ethnic group. Informing her about our meetings and the perspective of an intercultural dialogue, we received the suggestion to make a first incursion in the field to identify their own categories that sent them to the theme of *madness*.

<sup>6</sup> We refer to Sateré-Mawé experiences about madness, protecting, however, the differences that those experiences are meant and related to specific events in the cultural context of its occurrence.

<sup>7</sup> The participants' names will be revealed by their own will—a singularity we respect though it doesn't aim to attend criteria of publication in scientific works.

Following the strategy that the teacher suggested, the *topoi* from the western medical-psychological cultural tradition that was taken to the contact zone was the argument *people that behave in a different way*.

This argument was seen in the first dialogue we had with a group in a Sateré-Mawé village through the speech of Professor Euzébio, who had already been to Manaus and met the inpatients of the "Centro Psiquiátrico Eduardo Ribeiro." When we asked him about how he translated this subject to the other Mawés, he answered:

What they would feel if a Sateré had a different behavior from another Sateré. I gave an example: he can be sad, very agitated, scream alone, walk and talk alone. I asked if there were people in our communities with this behavior. I added: for the non-indigenous society, people with this behavior are considered crazy, mad, and for that they are many times excluded from society. (Personal communication)

The continuity of the dialogue results from the negation of the existence of Mawés that behave in a different way from other Mawés. Related to the use of drugs like alcohol, they used the expression *to vary* to describe the behavior of some of them (C—teacher Cristina; E—teacher Edvaldo; P—psychologist):

- C: The "tuxaua"<sup>8</sup> said that in his community, there were no mad people like that, who scream around, and start to vary [emphasis added]. But there are people who need to drink alcohol.
- E: It only happens when they over drink. There are people that start to vary [emphasis added].
- P: Cristina talked about varying [emphasis added] . . . you think people vary in your communities, when they ingest or inhale any drug or in any other circumstance?
- C: There is an alcohol effect to make people vary [emphasis added], because I have seen this in a community. There are many people like that, when they drink they start to run after other people, they want to beat, to pick a knife and a revolver.

After the group meeting, we had two dialogues with only some participants: a "pajé"<sup>9</sup>, aided by the translation of teacher Euzébio; and two midwives, aided by the translation of teacher Cristina. During the dialogue with the "pajé," negatives were repeated. This also happened during the dialogue with the midwives. How-

<sup>8</sup> "Word that means political leader" (Lorenz, 1992, p. 11, our translation); village chief.

<sup>9</sup> Name given to the "xamã" by the Sateré-Mawé. The "pajé" has the power to interpret and act over phenomena related with death and evil, with fertility or lack of it, and also related to the earth, the droughts or floods, among others, being a mediator between the "natural" world and the "spiritual" one. The "pajelança" "is the art that the "pajé" interprets ritual facts, dreams, natural and supernatural phenomena, protects people and places, finds causes of illness, spells and their cure and communicates with the spirits" (Uggé, n. d., p. 13, our translation).

ever, at the end of the former dialogue and when we were about to turn off the recorder, teacher Cristina raised a question (P—psychologist; C—teacher Cristina):

P: Do you want to say anything else or can I turn off the recorder?

C: No, I want to ask a question. I have a daughter ... she married a non-Indian ... this month she suffered an **attack** [emphasis added] ... what happened to her was very serious, you could feel sad, pity her... in this **attack** [emphasis added]... he got unconscious... she started to want to run around, scream, do lots of things... people stopped her, she got revolted, pushed people away strongly. I want you to tell me why it happens.

The attitude of the Mawé interlocutor/translator did not seem to show only a vague interest for the explanation that the tradition I represent gives to such a situation. She expressed her mourning for her daughter's suffering and the hope that this interlocutor, her Psychologist teacher and contributor before her People, could offer other meanings and new possibilities in relation to the experience she had faced. Her attitude expressed our identification in search and availability to practice an intercultural dialogue:

P: I would talk to her, get to know her. Where is she living?

C: In a non-indigenous village, in the Urupadi river, with a non-indigenous family.

P: Then I ask: among those who live in the Sateré-Mawé villages, is there anybody with her behavior?

C: Yes. It is a Sateré costume to take a person to the "pajé," to make a ritual for them and sometimes accuse someone else of threatening them, not physically, but in the form of a spell.

The attacks, mentioned by teacher Cristina, are distinguished, along the conversation, from other experiences that also express certain types of discomfort in this context:

P: This person is like that, the way we call it: It is a person under a spell, isn't she/he?

C: Mi'akurek, the one under a spell. Now mi'akurek iwo hap is a person who has been "**judiada**"<sup>10</sup> [emphasis added] by another one, by another spirit.

<sup>10</sup> "Judiada," in Brazilian Portuguese, sends us to Judas Iscariot, one of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ that, according to the Bible, was the traitor who handed him to his capturers. So, it has the sense of physical and/or moral suffering, of being tormented, threatened. The depreciatory usage of this word results from European ancient anti-Semitic tradition.

P: What is the difference between a person under a spell and a "**judiada**" [emphasis added]?

C: ... a person in her period of menstruation bathes in the water, in our culture; the water represents a live being originated by men. Then the spirit of that water, that was a person, gets revolted with the one who bathed during her menstruation period; and any other person who bathes or does anything else in the water, the spirit of the water puts the spell on the person. An illness also appears on her, like a toothache, a headache that does not stop, not even with medicines... The "pajé" accuses many other things, many spirits, and sometimes, if we do not believe, and we do not, he accuses fish, animals or trees. This is a spell. But when it is done by other people, a spirit to make this person suffer with the attack, it is "**judiação**" [emphasis added].

We can observe that this fragment from the speech of a Mawé teacher reveals traits of Amerindian Perspectivism<sup>11</sup>, at the same time it denotes the acquisition of western conceptions to make possible dialogues between cultural traditions we represent.

What interpretation/translation do we make from exchanged information in this period of the work? In relation to the approached phenomenon, the perspective of the difference does not look appropriate to compare behavior among Mawés in their own context or between us and them in our different contexts. Only when one of them is in a non-indigenous context, will his acts be considered different from his peers and passive to be identified with people of the target context—sited, explained and comprehended according this other cultural logic.

Besides, to get closer to the immanent logic of the Mawé cultural formation, it was necessary to try to get involved in a revealing way, to realize that in every participant of the relation, the presence of the *Other*. So, via dialogue, the interpretation of the cultural logic was possible before an attitude of cognitive and affective complicity in an attempt to share our imaginative universes: to compose analogies between the behavior seen in *Our* society and in *Theirs* is only possible if we do not reduce either to equals or different, but relate as singular equals.

Scrutinizing diatopic hermeneutics, we can summarize this first moment in the following translation: (1) the *topoi* of western medical psychological tradition, taken to the contact area by the psychologist: the argument *people that behave in a different way*; (2) the *topoi* from the Mawé cultural tradition, taken to the contact zone by teacher Cristina: the arguments *mi'akurek* (person under spell, with the possibility to have pain in her stomach or such a thing like toothache, headache

<sup>11</sup> In the Amerindian conception, "animals are people, or see themselves as such. ... the form each species shows is a wrap (like 'clothes') to hide an inner human form, normally visible only to their own eyes or certain trans specific beings like the *xamãs*" (Viveiros de Castro, 2002, p. 351, our translation).

that does not stop); and *mikyry'íwo hap* (the person is being "judiada" by someone else, and can suffer attacks, be unconscious, run around, scream, become very strong and require a person to hold her).

### *Phase of Widening of Topoi/Arguments of Cultural Tradition in Dialogues*

The following procedure was outlined from the necessity to extend to other participants of the encounters the dialogue brought by teacher Cristina about categories *mi'akurek/spell* and *mikyry'íwo hap*/"judiação".

We used Giordano's considerations as a reference and guidance. This author shows that interlocutors/translators in an intercultural dialogue need to be "more than interpreters expert in finding equivalences between languages; . . . [it is necessary] for them to play the juggler with words and concepts, being sufficiently flexible to make echoes in the *Other* [emphasis added] language . . ." (Giordano, 2009, p. 161).

The *mikyry'íwo hap*/"judiação" category, identified preliminarily with the sense of *madness* assumed in this work, sent us to what is seen delimited in Psychology as the psychic dimension of the experience. The meanings of psychic, in turn, report us to dimensions like the spirit, the soul. So, in order to offer a connotative indication nearer to the Mawé world vision, one must be aware of the comment of a certain professor during the Psychology of Education classes that we shared<sup>12</sup>:

Psychology deals a lot with people's minds, with human beings; . . . what we discussed was beyond what we imagined; . . . Psychology touches people's souls, from soul to soul... we also have our Psychology, our behavior... comparing with our culture, we have our histories, myths and everything related to it... (Personal communication)

This way, we consider a *soul suffering* as a flexible expression to sound in the Mawé language. Besides the perspective of bringing this argument to the contact zone, we consider the importance of presenting the expression *mental suffering*, for being a representative of the context of the current proposals for the development of mental health care in Brazil.

Related to an argument like mental suffering, however, how to deal with a body and mind dichotomy that is sent to and that has been considered absent in the indigenous cultural traditions? We understand that the juggling with words and concepts pointed by Giordano (2009) already started during the encounter with the Mawé teachers in the Psychology of Education classes. In this occasion, we considered the fact that, though the object of Psychology is centered in a mental/psychic dimension, it cannot be dissociated from other dimensions of human experience. So, we consider that the teachers that took part in the dialogue, transla-

tors of both language and knowledge, have enough information to question and reinterpret, to the other Mawés, the *mental suffering* argument.

To continue the dialogue, limiting the psychic field of madness, we proceeded to one more encounter with the group. The *topoi* we presented were *soul suffering* and *mental suffering*, considered as what is *not from the body* (a person with a *stomachache, headache...*) but *from the soul, the mind of the person*. It is especially referred to the sense of the *topoi* *mikyry'íwo hap*/"judiação," informed by teacher Cristina (P—psychologist):

P: There, in my society, there are people that start to behave in a way we can see the suffering. . . . suffering from her soul, her mind [emphasis added]. . . . that suffering of being in a torment [emphasis added]. . . . we knew that, among you, sometimes people suffer from a thing you call "judiação" [emphasis added]. So, we like to talk to you about this. Because this "judiação" [emphasis added], is the condition of a person, it is very similar to the suffering of people there . . .

The Sateré-Mawé started their speech like this (EV—teacher Edvaldo; SM—talks in Sateré-Mawé; P—psychologist; C—teacher Cristina; D—"tuxaua" Deusdete; EZ—teacher Euzébio):

EV: SM...

P: I wish you to explain that it is a suffering that is not a stomachache, a toothache, it is a suffering in which people leave reality, the person is "variando" (out of her mind) [emphasis added].

C: SM...

D: SM...

EZ: Teacher, he started, that "judiação" [emphasis added], that we talk about, happens sometimes even among the Sateré-Mawé. [...] not always [...] sometimes it happens. So, when the person suffers this process, [...] they are sent to the "pajé," and he does his job, so the person gets cured. Then he says that the society there people that have this different behavior [emphasis added] because... many of them because of drugs [...]. While in this region or other indigenous areas, it happens because of the suffering of the "judiação" [emphasis added].

To clarify the arguments of the Sateré-Mawé, we selected parts of the following dialogue:

. . . people with "judiação" [emphasis added] feel dizzy, with a headache, they see things. . . . see things normal people don't see (teacher Cristina, translating the speech of "tuxaua" Deusdete);

. . . people feel dizzy, with a pain in the heart... this pain goes to the head and the person feels that pain... with this consequently they get out of their mind... (teacher Cristina, translating the speech of "pajé" Caetano);

<sup>12</sup> The detailed study of this experience can be found in the author's Master's Dissertation (see in the References).

During a trip, my brother-in-law's wife got so crazy that I held her fiercely, she became slippery. . . . She said she was going to die and hurt herself, she said a lot of things like she was going to run, drown herself in the water... and we didn't let her run. . . . Men are quite different! They're stronger! . . . If a man has a headache, he would shake strongly, he would go to the river... but we wouldn't let him drown ("tuxaua" Deusdêre expressing herself in Portuguese in different moments);

. . . Her head starts to ache. Then, she starts to shake, she didn't know anything anymore, she got crazy. She was going to run... to the river... when one gets sick, one doesn't feel anything, forgets everything! Looks like a dead person. Doesn't recognize anybody... Only wants to do what she wants. To be angry like that is not well! When she has an attack, she stands up and... runs! (teacher Emílio, talking about Maria, the only Sateré-Mawé in the Marau area, till 2009, who made use of antipsychotic medicines).

Various categories still emerged; and as an example of that the Sateré-Mawé used to name experiences as "*mal-estar*" (feeling bad) in their context. What people feel and how they behave was explained as a consequence of: a *spell*, "*judiação*," "*dismintidura*," a *sickness that rests in the mind, sun warm, eating certain types of food from the forest* ("*comidaria*"), *not studying all the books that the "pajé" studies* (*chasing of spirits that own the prayers that abide the book*), "*judiação*" from "*boto*"<sup>13</sup>, *alcohol use and other drugs, punishment*.

So, we had the opportunity to experience, once more, what has been designated like the circularity of traditional knowledge:

The "*pajé*" used to find it very complicated to explain obvious things, but he understood the non-indigenous difficulty to understand that traditional knowledge is cyclic, as he patiently explained once: "Their world is square, they live in houses that look like boxes, they work in other boxes and, to go from one box to another, they enter boxes that move. They see things separately because they are box people." This indigenous wise man ignored that the main instrument of the "Box People" is a Box divided in many little boxes, in which knowledge is divided, but believed that traditional knowledge can't be separate because they are holistic and don't have ruptures between Sacred and Profane (Kaingang, 2004, our translation)<sup>14</sup>.

#### *Classification Stage and Definition of Sateré-Mawé Topoi/Arguments*

After the second stage, we identified a new movement that we characterized as a third stage of work. In one more dialogue with a group, in which we intended to give continuity to the previous one, it called our attention the great number of professors taking part in our encounter. On the other hand, the variety of social categories present there was reduced. This was because it happened during an event directed to teachers, where there were little food resources and expenses

with transportation from other villages. We considered it a decisive fact in relation to the version/translation that emerged.

To start the dialogue with the group, we registered on a board the two Mawé arguments initially informed by teacher Cristina: *mi'akurek/spell e mikyry'íwo hapí/judiação*. Present teachers asked us to take note of others, till they started to do it themselves. The dialogue was a discussion about the Mawé arguments in the sequence of the list.

We observed, then, the exercise of a logic similar to the analytical thought that characterizes western knowledge and we understood it as an expression of the process teachers had been through. This way, the dialogue acquired the character of theoretical elaborations and classified from Sateré-Mawé *topoi*, to relate themselves to *madness* experiences as a mental dimension: new arguments emerged, phenomenonic distinctions between *wekuap hat/concrete* and *wekuap hat i/abstract*, between *mā'i/physical body* and *ma'āu/spirit/soul*. A psychic field delimitation of madness, in the Sateré-Mawé context, a pair of the second category was founded.

Recapitulating, we saw *mikyry'íwo hapí/judiação* and *mimoko'i* as the Sateré-Mawé *madness* experience.

On the first we could find manifestations named, in the medical-psychological cultural tradition, as *hallucination*, *delirium* and *psychomotor agitation*. We could also find the explicit sense of *loss of control*, strongly present in the western concept of *madness*.

The distinction between *mikyry'íwo hapí/judiação* and *mimoko'i* could not be established clearly, for their proximity. However, in *mimoko'i* (no translation for Portuguese was suggested), a motto word seemed to be transformation: the person is transformed, this transformation can be understood in a broad sense: the young one who rebels; the adult who does things that are not accepted by society; the person spirit becomes an animal spirit.

#### CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE SATERÉ-MAWÉ MADNESS EXPERIENCES FROM AN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE INSTRUMENTALIZED BY DIATOPIC HERMENEUTICS

Is it possible for us, through dialogues instrumentalized by diatopic hermeneutics, to be closer to the comprehension of Madness experiences in different western cultural contexts? The affirmative answer to this question points out a possibility to consolidate a new way of building knowledge in the field of Cultural Psychology.

The appreciation of the intercultural dialogue we have developed with the Sateré-Mawé, guided this way, can be subsidized taking as references parts of the following speech presented by (P—psychologist; E—teacher Euzébio; EV—teacher Euzébio translating the speech of "tuxaua" Vitor):

P: When we talked for the first time, about the varying judgment, about being crazy, when I used other terms... madness... you did not identify

<sup>13</sup> Fresh water dolphin, with strong symbolic elements to native people from the Amazonian region.

<sup>14</sup> Excerpt taken from L. Kaingang notes in 2004 (manuscript).



people like that in Sateré-Mawé communities. Why are you doing it now?

E: Because we thought that...to the mad people, the ones they call crazy, there was no way out! He would be in that situation forever; there was no cure for him, no way out for him.

EV: "Tuxaua" Vitor said that, in the moment we were...talking in group about this theme, we still did not know the subject we were working with well, so he thinks it was one of the factors that helped us not identify people with this behavior in our communities. Today we are over discussing it, the same subject, and we can notice more, talk more. It made us more comfortable to talk more. He also said that we are here, looking for a solution to this problem, you ma'am came with your team in order to help our people, and we are here also because we want to help you.

As we can observe, the boundaries used in this dialogue allowed us to certify that the health practice borders are zones where values about life are built. So, it is necessary to reflect about values built there.

The Madness known by the Sateré-Mawé at the "Centro Psiquiátrico Eduardo Ribeiro"—this cureless, chronic madness, that excludes and through exile produces almost malformed bodies—does not exist in their villages. *Madness* in their case is episodic. It refers to conflicts that can emerge on their everyday lives and that can happen to anyone. So, no labels.

Through the path chosen for dialogue, we had the revelation of the implication and overlapping of our experiences. *Mikyry'wo hap*, translated by them as "judiação," for example, sends us a long way back in *Our* history and *Our* contact, including the present world configuration. In the Mythology of many of *Us*, the story of humanity tells that the people elected by God betrayed and threatened His son—that is the origin of the expression "judiou."

Roudinesco (2010) considers that Palestine/Israel conflicts have been lived not only as a structural rupture between the Jewish and Islam-Arabic world, but also as a cleavage that is supposed to be a part of "Jewishness"; or also as a rupture between the western world and the ex-colonized one. So, through the familiarization of the experience of *mikyry'wo hap* as "judiação," part of the weaved symbology that constitutes madness, in the context of the Sateré-Mawé, also reveals itself as a master piece from *Us* all.

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## SECTION V

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## PSYCHOLOGY IN THE PATHS OF AMERINDIAN PEOPLES

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### Final Considerations

Danilo Silva Guimarães

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*Psychology becomes a science through the inclusion of the know-how of people from all over the World—by abstracting and generalizing from the complex phenomena in war and peace*

—Valsiner (2012, p. 280).

In this book we have covered an array of possible paths psychologists can take together with Amerindian peoples. Hiking through these paths in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is relevant to consider that psychology carries in its history the fact of having been born as a science in a European and North American context. Inevitably that context already included the Amerindians as part of the modern and globalized world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet that inclusion there and then was different from today. The modern and globalized world was made possible due to the effort of controlling differentiated forms of life for the purpose of colonial projects of the so-called Western countries.

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*Amerindian Paths: Guiding Dialogues with Psychology*, pages 311–331.

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Knowledge is ambiguous. We usually see it as positive in value. Yet in the course of historical processes, knowledge construction can also be a form of violence and an instrument for the exercise of violent practices. History of colonization provides much evidence of such kind. Nevertheless, human creativity can find infinite ways of becoming autonomous, and of escaping from the intentions of imprisonment by the semiotic valuations by external and internal observers. Such observers may have looked down (or up) at the “primitive people” of the jungles of the world, or the members of many tribespeople who were brought to missionary boarding school for education may have looked down (or up) to their own cultural roots. Both were examples of the violence of knowledge—in contrast to knowledge as personal and cultural empowerment.

The chapters presented in this book show ethnic and cultural differentiation processes in relation to theoretical and methodological future possibilities to develop a culture-inclusive psychology. Rendering problematic the terms and the situated themes in the dialogue with some psychological approaches, the autochthon peoples of the Americas guide psychologists in a process of self-criticism, transforming theoretical and methodological issues and professional practices grounded in scientific notions and common sense. Discussing the work of psychologists, from North to South America, many chapters of this book reveal the necessity of rethinking usual conceptions and categories used to understand personal behavior and thoughts and to distinguish and discriminate others. The diversity of psychological experiences presented here points to the relevance of interdisciplinary strategies to cross over some uneven areas in an interethnic terrain of mutual curiosity.

In this path, psychologists are sometimes invited—and other times demanded—to contribute with the Amerindian peoples in the process of constructing strategies to overcome redundant social systems that maintain a condition of invisibility and prejudice. Although diverse American societies received the influence of Amerindian cultures in its social development, many chapters of this book show the difficulty of these societies recognize this influence and include them in the active guidance on how the appropriation of their knowledge and tradition take place. Persons learn in very explicit or subtle ways that they need to avoid their Amerindian past or that they are not Amerindians anymore, that is, they learn to hidden their origins in order to be included in a world in which there is not a space to such difference. The National Societies of the Americas have been built in a great extent by importing models of State societies from abroad.

The process of dedifferentiation focused in this book concerns interethnic approximation between the Eurocentric and Amerindian traditions that evinces an affective exchange in the dialogical process of personal and social positions. It includes the tensions inherent to the ethnic-cultural confrontation in a contemporary social frame that cannot avoid the contact with the other. While differentiation processes address the path of an increasing cultural singularity, emphasizing the removal of a particular tradition in relation to the tradition of the other, dedifferentiation

processes concern the implication of each cultural tradition in the construction of a world in which the other need to be an included part.

### THE TERMS OF THE DIALOGUE IN QUESTION: DIALOGICAL MULTIPLICATION

Sometimes the person gives a very weird name, like the name *apartment*. If you understand well, this name says everything: to part people from their natural conviviality. So, *apartment*: to move people apart. Hence, how do those living in *apartments* will know, will dialogue and live together with other people? They will not live together, because they are kept apart in the *apartment*. So, we do not teach our children that way, the children need to live together. (Excerpt from a speech from Pedro Macena, Mbya Guaraní, at Butantã Unified Educational Centre, São Paulo, Brazil, in August 27, 2014).

The dialogues between psychologists and Amerindian peoples presuppose an indefinite dynamics of approximation and distancing which is primarily affective, motivated by the availability to recognize an uneasy feeling in relation to otherness (Simão, 2004). Uneasiness, as the motor of epistemological curiosity and ethical approaches of the Self to the Other, emerges not only when psychologists become witnesses of psychosocial vulnerabilities, but also positively, when they face one of the largest cultural diversities still alive in the World, including languages, myths, rituals and memories, constitutive of strong and peculiar perspectives that construct realities and worldviews.

Cornejo (2008) discussed the minimal communicative situation as a triangular condition in which someone negotiates the meaning of something with someone else. Triadic pictures or metaphors are often used to present dialogical processes (Marková, 2006; Moscovici, 2003; Simão, 2012; Simão & Valsiner, 2007), allow-

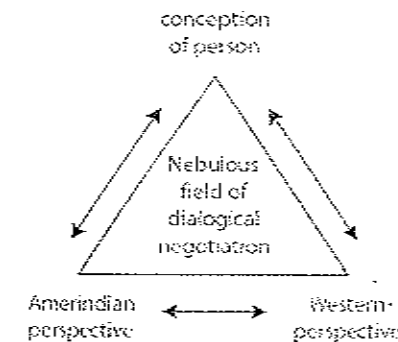


FIGURE 17.1. Dialogical Triad Presenting the Tension Between the Amerindian's and Western's Conceptions of Person.

ing the comprehension of differences and tensions around a specific topic or social representation (object).

Therefore, adopting the dialogical triangle to understand the contrast between the Amerindian's and the Western's person model (cf. Barrera, in this book), we could build the following picture, considering that these models are based on different cultural conceptions of person:

The dialogical triadic scheme could be enough to understand the interethnic dialogue if we presuppose an open dialogue, in which both sides are engaged in the production of convergences. Nevertheless, when considering some of the Amerindian's conceptions of person, and specifically the Tzotzil's, it is possible to observe that the distance between each notion is enlarged: each culture works under the basis of different semiotic oppositions and evokes different dimensions of the objective world when a term is used in the dialogue.

Additionally, some of these oppositions and dimensions are not evident in the communicative path: they are untranslatable. The impossibility of translation and/or the restriction in the communication of certain aspects of the ethnic-cultural knowledge establish an irreducible distance between the Self and the Other, a nebulous region of indefinite meaning from the external point of view, which can however be managed by the interlocutors. That is, someone familiarized with the Maya world view would apprehend the meaning of person through the tacit knowledge bases of Ch'ulel, Chanul and Takopal, which are of total strangeness to current habitual views of psychology. Where psychology accepts person as separate from others, the Amerindian perspective considers person as individual *through* cultural embeddedness.

Consequently, a singular term such as "person" leads to the emergence of distinct forums of polyphonic discussion. There are variations in the approaches of

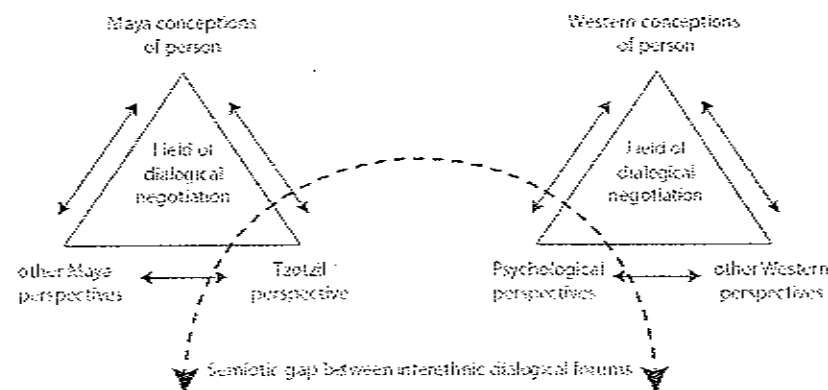


FIGURE 17.2. Multiplication of Dialogical Ethnic-Cultural Forums Guiding Distinct Trajectories of Semiotic Elaborations.

different Maya communities and languages to the dimensions that constitute the Tzotzil person model, perhaps comparable to the variety of person models in the heterogeneous universe of Western psychologies and cultures. A dialogical multiplication becomes evident when the terms of the dialogue activate distinct forums of dialogue, because the objects socially represented through the use of the term are not the same.

This gap in understanding between different interethnic dialogical polyphonic forums is a zone of unknown: what is the original link between the Amerindian conceptions of person and the Western conceptions of person? Could we hermeneutically interpret it in the history of these traditions? From Cristopher Columbus to Rousseau, literary and philosophical efforts guided the meaning construction of the Europeans about the Amerindians and prepared the cultural field for the further development of the scientific ethnographic and anthropological frameworks. In these literary, philosophical and scientific investments in the zone of the unknown, the gap between different interethnic dialogical forums guided the construction of creative ideas and hypothesis about other peoples through the superficial contact and conviviality with them.

The necessity and desire for semiotic organization of disquieting experiences emerges in the relation with the other (Simão, 2003, 2004), due to the fact that the other affects the Self, producing ruptures and tension (Zittoun, 2006) in relation to previously familiarized experiences. Such processes can be evaluated as violence when they do not respect the free determination of the other, that is, when we use semiotic traps (Carriere, 2013) to imprison the other in previously constructed conceptions.

Gonçalves, in this book, explores how the emergent State societies in the Americas promoted a transformed version of the Colonial ideology after the formal political independence. This process tried to imprison the autonomous determination of these peoples in the conceptions expressed in the terms Tupi and

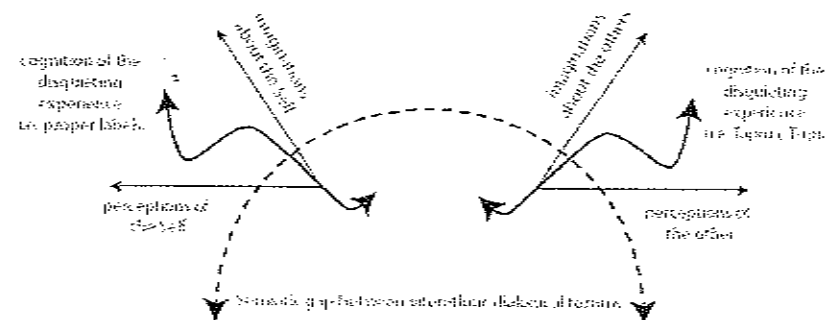


FIGURE 17.3. The Use of Semiotic Resources in Distinct Forums, Where the Cognition of the Interethnic Reality Occurs.

Tapuia. These terms established an opposition between two Renaissances' idealized conceptions of the Amerindian peoples, as ignoble, evil, on one hand, and as noble savages, on the other hand. They were used in the construction of the social identity of these peoples, articulating many ingredients of creative imagination with small pinches of concrete perception in the conviviality with these peoples, leading to an inconsistent cognition of their reality.

The negotiation of the Self-identity with the heteronomous classification of the Self by the other encompasses an articulation between perceptions of the disquieting experiences and imaginations about what they could be. The process of imagining possible meanings for the disquieting experiences, integrating them in a broader semiotic system is a path to the cognition of the reality (Vygotski, 1934/2001), which take semiotic resources from diverse interethnic-cultural forums. The trajectories of semiotic elaborations addressing distinct objects in the polyphonic dialogical forums happens inside an extra-verbal situation (Voloshinov, 1976) that is also politically guided. For instance, the construction of inconsistent versions about the identity of Amerindian peoples, together with their current invisibility in some National Societies, controls the possibility of these peoples to affect others, to sensitize the society about their vulnerabilities and core values.

The almost complete absence of the Amerindian peoples in Psychology courses, as students or as the subject matter of research, is an instance of a successful position in the political guidance of students' and researchers' personal availabilities to get involved with selected situated topics of dialogue. Constructing a different path, Amerindian peoples have been resisting and constructing counter-discourses and pervasive practices that act on the public opinion, aiming to reverse misconceptions and, consequently, develop more consistent ideas and social practices in relation to them: the researches presented in this book could be considered as outcomes in the wave of the Amerindians' *affectivation*.

The pervasiveness of the Amerindian's positions about the consequences of the invasion of their lands in the last five hundred years is slowly reaching the academic disciplines, including psychology. The work of Aldana (2015) in our book makes explicit the relevance of the dialogue between psychology and other areas of knowledge that focus essential topics concerning interethnic conflicts, such as the issue of ethnocide. As stressed in the chapter, the importation of concepts between different areas of knowledge need to be guided with care. Although necessary several times, it constitutes one of the sources of error in the theoretical and methodological development of a science, especially in psychology, a science that has few proper terms (James, 1890; Vigotsky, 1927/1991).

Therefore, it is relevant to notice that notions such as race and ethnicity, from the standpoint of anthropology, psychology, and the legal perspective addresses interrelated, but different trajectories of knowledge construction. As in the inter-ethnic boundaries, there is a gap between the disciplinary forums of conceptual discussion and practices. However, in these cases the original link between the

disciplines in the history of human sciences is more easily identifiable, because they can be found in the tradition of a common belonging: the routes to transdisciplinarity were given in the origins of the sciences as a principle.

## THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CULTURE IN THE SITUATED DIALOGUES

The drawing of Vanderson [a student of the Kuaz Mbo'e Program for the formation of Guaraní teachers of the South Region, Brazil] is a masterpiece. It is a comics with much movement that takes place in his school. He drew a huge building with a chimney that occupied all the sheet. He wrote in the front, with capital letters: FACTORY FOR MAKING WHITE PEOPLE. At the bottom of the left side, in front of the entrance door, there is a line of indigenous children with traditional headdresses and thongs. An agent with a megaphone shouts: come on in, come on in children! (Freire, 2014, n. p.).

Dialogues happen in concrete situations that encompass extra-verbal processes in the course of temporality. The notion of temporality used here is based on the perception that time is irreversible (Valsiner, 1994, 2001, 2002), therefore an experience can never be repeated in the stream of the Self-other relationships. However, some rhythms of life, both culturally and personally constructed and experienced, emerge in the reciprocal attunement of the self with the attunement of the other (Rommetveit, 1992). The rhythm of experience is, then, the result of a sort of redundancy (Valsiner, 2007) between reciprocal actions (Ingold, 2000) of the being in the world with the other, at the same time it involves transformations in the participants. The entrance of new characters in a responsive disposition of a social and psychological system can produce noise or tension, which are interpreted as ruptures (Zittoun, 2006), to be harmonized through incorporation or avoidance in specific situations of the dialogical stages, reducing the dialogical tension to a desired level.

Each culture organizes the rhythms of life in ritualized procedures that are familiar to its members. Cultural practices are attuned in different levels with the social world (i.e. the cycles of coordinated work, religious practices etc.), which includes the relation with other plants and animals (the cycles of the seasons and their relation with other species), and the relation with the astronomical cycles (cycles of the sun and the moon, day and night etc.). Within the person, there is the necessary coordination of the cycles of satiation of hunger, thirst etc., ritualized periods culturally defined for the personal sleeping and awaking, and the coordinated processes of perception and elaboration of experiences. When two people decide to live together, they need to perform their tasks also attending to one another, at least in some agreed dimensions the couple considers relevant.

Such challenging coordination usually becomes a more or less identifiable pattern, that is, a rhythm, a regular dynamics of presence and absence, approximation and distancing in the interpersonal relation. However, what to say about conflict-

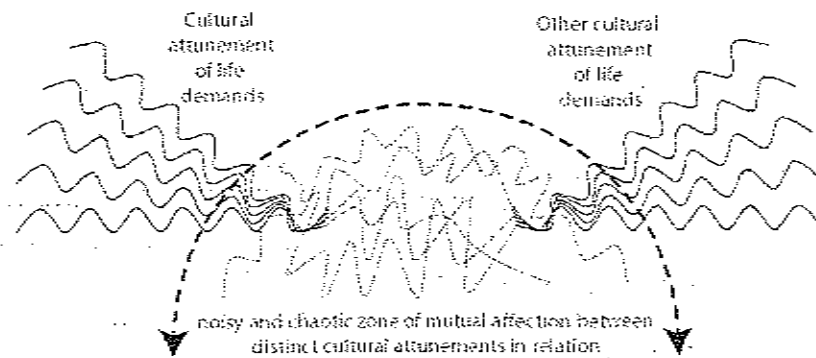


FIGURE 17.4. The incompatible Rhythms of the Cultures and Efforts for Possible Synchronizations.

tual interethnic marriages? And what about these if they can be considered to be cases of “forced marriage”? Figure 4 shows how the pervasiveness of different ethnic-cultural rhythms produces noise, a chaotic zone of mutual affection that is part of sensible aspects belonging to the gaps between distinct dialogical forums.

The enurance of Amerindian peoples in the institutionalized world of the national societies evinces how dramatic the efforts of interethnic tuning are. The chapter by Suárez, Sabogal, and de la Hoz (2015) in this book, explores the migration of indigenous people toward Latin American cities, focusing the case of the Embera people in Colombia. Their contribution evinces a twofold process in which the cities are transformed at the same time as the communities, but not with the same intensity, due to the power asymmetries. The complex social organization of the communities is pressured to enter in the State’s ritualized forms, which are not able to interact with the Embera’s way of life that is ritualized in a different manner. As a result, chaotic zones between the political organization of the Embera and the institutional State agencies emerge in the cities, in which some hybridisms coexist with anomie in relation to the refusal of both ways of regulating life.

In situations such as these, participation in the political system of the State societies appears as an alternative to Amerindian peoples to achieve social control over the institutionalized spheres of supposedly democratic societies. The chapter by Romero shows that the malfunction of the political and institutional elements of representative democracy is not the only reason that produces the crisis of political representation in interethnic stages. There is an inherent divergence between basic democratic principles and the reality of Amerindian peoples, in part because the liberal representative democracy presupposes citizenship as a property of the individual. Another point is the assimilation of the differences by

some homogenizing legal references, which usually are not sensible to the political organization of local Amerindian communities.

Therefore, on one hand, the democratic State stimulates the participation of the minorities in its constitution, creating mechanisms for social control. On the other hand, the participation, as it turns out, becomes a strategy to legitimate prefigured decisions that are now discussed and accepted by the majority of the participants of a forum in which Amerindian voices are also represented, but are usually expected to be inconsequential. Democracy and social control becomes, then, a fallacy of the inclusion of divergences in the core of the structure of National Societies. However, the State was not constituted, in principle, to take into consideration the Amerindian paths of social organization. New movements claiming the differentiation or independence from Latin American State societies emerge when the ethnic groups perceive themselves as sufficiently empowered.

The State educational systems become, in these contexts, a topic of polemics between Amerindian peoples, with their orally transmitted traditional knowledge, and the Eurocentric ideologies, transmitted in schools as the correct and universal knowledge. The chapter by Correa-Chávez, Mejía-Arauz, Ohrt, and Black (2015) addresses the changes in the family organization, contrasting parents and children and the reconfigurations of the tasks in the school and job market. There is an ambivalence in the minds and practices of teachers belonging to Amerindian communities, who have to cope with both worlds in their ethical approach to the children. On one hand, it is relevant to teach the skills of the homogenized society in order to guarantee the future adults a possibility of subsistence and quality of life in the globalized world. On the other hand, some families and teachers that belong to the communities also consider relevant some traditional values, which are contrastive with the life style professed in schools.

The chapter by Dayton and Rogoff (2015) makes explicit the contrast between the holistic ways of living and thinking and the atomistic ways, which, in mainstream educational systems belonging to the State societies, divides coherent processes into isolated skills and pieces of information. Dayton and Rogoff show that the comprehension of learning as inclusion and contribution that fosters ‘Transformation of Participation’ involves interactive synchrony and coordinate performance, a paradigm of interaction anciently adopted by Amerindian societies. From this perspective, much could be learned if psychologists were available to approach the Amerindian’s sophisticated understandings and practices concerning social interactions in the educational sphere and other spheres of life.

Finally, another institution that contributes to the conformation of the Amerindian minds and bodies belongs to the State Health Systems. The chapter by Rodrigues and Fioroni (2015) shows the struggle of Amerindian patients and the Health professionals in the implementation of health policies and concretely a mental health program in an Amerindian community of the State of Pernambuco, Brazil. Good intentions come up against the lack of information and lack of dialogue between scientific and traditional knowledge, that is, between the tradition-

indigenous medicine and the scientific paradigm. Consequently, the construction of a therapeutic itinerary hardly integrates the Amerindians' personal and cultural-communitarian choices. Due to its efficacy over symptoms, biomedicine has carried out projects of medicalization of life in its different spheres, weakening the voices that argue in favor of health care practices that are more demanding in terms of discipline concerning alimentary and behavioral habits, and rituals and practices of spiritual cure.

The urban life in the cities, politics in the representative democracy, and the State education and health systems together create a conflictive stage to concrete interethnic dialogues between Amerindian peoples and the evolving societies. These stages retrace the asymmetric situation in which psychologists are invited to collaborate: the dialogues are usually mediated by the well demarcated terrain of the State institutions. Psychologists are rarely able to sink in the footpaths of the Amerindian traditions beyond what is visible in their institutional position. Nevertheless, in these stages, psychologists can be sensible to the deep roots of the dissonant experiences perceived in the dialogical forums. Such sensibility can guide our attention to voices that would appear to be almost silenced if they were not so strong.

### SEMIOTIC RIGID WALLS: ETHICAL CHALLENGES TO INTERETHNIC DIALOGUES

This eternal crimson rain that eternally falls over the city of São Paulo is its tears. São Paulo the great city cries, but does not recognize its own tears. It cries for the Indians that were massacred, but does not recognize its own tears because she herself committed the massacre.

One eye cries tears of blood in compassion for the massacred Indians, the other is a sadist eye that looks, orders and butchers. This is how the two eyes and the eternal crimson rain of São Paulo are. (Excerpt from the theater play *Cyber Jaguar*, by Francisco Carlos, 2012)

Engagement in a potent relationship with otherness is a catalyst of self-knowledge: another language, other practices, other worldviews etc. Psychology emerged as a science (Figueiredo, 1992) late in the historical process of the constitution of the modern sciences (Stengers, 2000). One of the most important happenings in this historical process was the surprising and accidental meeting of the Europeans with Amerindian peoples (Todorov, 1993) in the period called the Age of Discoveries. The psychosocial impacts of the meeting with the diversity of things, peoples, ways of life, languages and religiosities amplified the horizons of knowledge in Europe at the same time it brought disquieting feelings; confusion, dispersion and fear in relation to possibly undesirable combinations in the borders of the relationship with alterity (Figueiredo, 1992). One strategy to reduce the tension generated by the relation with the others is eliminating the other, a different strategy is controlling otherness using the semiotics of knowledge construction.

The psychosocial situation of the European peoples in the 16<sup>th</sup> century potentialized the fear and the aggressiveness towards peoples from cultures considered as menacing. It is possible to notice that the fear and the aggressiveness against the Amerindian peoples live on, noticeable every day in the newspapers of countries from the three Americas. The relation continues to be permeated by the imaginary fears experienced by the diverse ethnic groups and the effective threats they suffer. It is curious to observe that for the Yudjá, an indigenous people from Xingu, Brazil, the loss of humanity is remarked when someone is acting aggressively and with fear, that is, when someone is not able of being sociable (Lima, 1996). Nevertheless, it is not easy to recognize such feelings and attitudes from a self-centered perspective.

Valko (2015) reports the magnitude of the violence perpetrated by State societies against Amerindian peoples. It is part of a process of making the peoples, as well as the violence invested against them, invisible. The semiotic elaborations of the natives as peoples who do not exist in the present, unless as exotic and distant from the concrete life of the rest of the populations in the world, contribute to increase the distance between the self and the other. The construction of semiotic walls between the self and the other happens in a process of conceptual crystallization in which the other is not allowed to negotiate the meanings involved in the relationship. Projected in the past or in an inaccessible land, the other does not offer any menace, but the meeting with the alterity of the other is exigent: it demands efforts to articulate past experiences in order to dislocate the self from the stability of the present. The articulation of experiences is also challenging when the past is distant from what it is expected to be in ethical terms.

These considerations stress a twofold challenge to the dialogue with the real native that has complex needs in the contemporary world. First, the vulnerability of the aggressor, which is usually not psychosocially prepared to receive the other as he/she is; and second, the difficulty of elaborating ethically conflicting aspects of

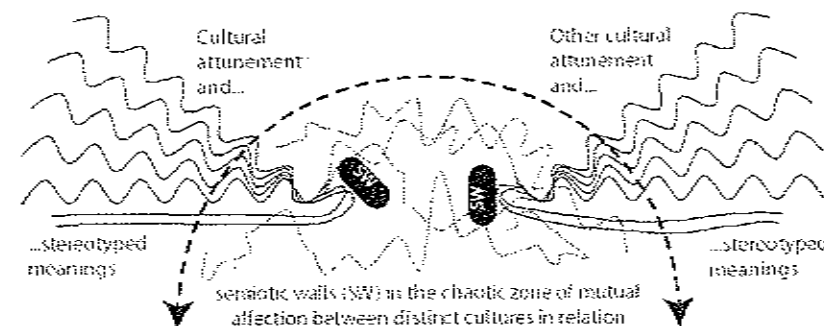


FIGURE 17.5. Semiotic Walls Guiding the Elaboration of Authoritative Stereotyped Meanings About The self and the Other.



past choices, including the trans-generational ones. These choices, however, constitute the tradition of a people and are strong cultural references to decisions in the present. The open-ended system that emerges from such relational configuration guides the development of stereotyped and authoritative discourses and practices, hardly negotiable using logical argumentation.

When the semiotic walls remain rigid, they become a sedimented reference of the limits of the intercultural and interethnic self-other tuning. The stereotyped meanings close the availability to the mutual affection, therefore limiting the possibilities of transformations with emergence of novelties.

Other kinds of meanings are not easily negotiable in interethnic dialogues. For instance, the meanings attached to the core conditions that organize the basic dynamics of social life, affective integrity and ways of thinking of people belonging to a culture, its open-ended systemic consistency. The core conditions that give consistency to a culture can be noticed in the nostalgic feelings recurrent in the Amerindian discourse regarding the future through the means of recovering the past style of life. Therefore, some rhythms of life, both culturally and personally constructed and experienced, can be rescued from a reference in the past and integrated to the present through the ritual repetition of practices, such as dancing, singing, and transmission of the collective memory.

Pirini (2015) stresses that the contemporary quest for land is intimately related to the possibility of Amerindian peoples to keep engaged in their traditional practices and rites. The geographic boundaries would serve as a mediator in a process of dedifferentiation after the usurpation of the possibility of the indigenous peoples to live their nomadism. The lands are not open to the traditional communities' displacements anymore; on the contrary, they are fenced in farms, in impoverished rural environments when compared with the diversity of life Amerindian peoples actively preserved in the natural environment. The struggle to demarcate the Amerindian territories is therefore, in most cases, an adaptive strategy to assure the basic conditions of cultural, familiar and personal integrity for these peoples. When the core conditions that give consistency to a culture are ruptured, people are immersed in a noisy and chaotic zone of mutual affection, they become vulnerable and demand support.

Public policies become relevant in this context, as an effort to help these peoples find their own paths again, connecting the dialogical chain of the dramatic present situation as an outcome and repairing the damaged dimensions of cultural integrity. For some Amerindians, the future becomes an image that addresses the past, in a sort of inverted temporality. When no alternatives to reconstitute the basic rhythms of life are available in culture, collectively or personally, different manifestations of self-destruction appear. Suicide is one of the most drastic manifestations in these contexts. Vick and Grubits (2015) stress that the Amerindian peoples suffer far higher rates of suicide than the majority of the population, probably due to the loss of future perspective in the increasing globalized world.

Suicide attempts are accompanied by other self-destructive attitudes, as the abusive use of substances and risk behavior.

Therefore, public policies that are only concerned with the superficial aspects of the problem are of a very limited efficacy in order to advance in the construction of more equitable interethnic dialogues. The superficial aspects need to be taken into account, as the contemporary manifestations in the pictures of suicide, abusive use of substance and risk behavior, for instance. Nevertheless, it is not enough if psychologists ignore other relevant dimensions in the complexity of interethnic dialogues. Raising a wall that obstructs the possibility of recognizing the vulnerability of the aggressor and the inclusion of the memories of the threatening background as dimensions that cannot be erased is treacherous. Psychologists run the risk of reproducing the same problems that their politically correct discourse intends to avoid. The best solution, in these cases, is to listen, a condition to the construction of equitable forums in which the peoples are able to express themselves, their evaluation about the limits of the dialogue, experiment and propose temporary stages to the interethnic negotiation.

The globalized world inherits the history of multiple conflicts that are actualized in the trans-generational memory of cultures. The question of heritage is probably in the core of the continuous use of threatening defense mechanisms among cultural identities. Cultural psychologists have a prime role developing theoretical-methodological strategies for intervention and knowledge construction addressing the mediation of hard and conflictive intergroup and multicultural meetings, looking to break down the walls of a rigid multiculturalism at the same time as respecting the point of view of each culture in relation (Guimarães, 2012).

Knowledge construction depends on a comparison of differences (Valsiner, 2001). Much of the psychological knowledge depends on an engagement of the Self with the other. The psychological questioning emerged from the contact with alterity, and the peoples of the Americas contributed with their diversity to enlarge the capacity of psychology to house in its intention of scientific generality a multiplicity of psychosocial phenomena. Therefore, it is paradoxical that psychologists in their formation learn little about the ethnic-cultural specificities of different peoples around the world.

#### INFINITE PATHS FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIALOGUES WITH AMERINDIAN PEOPLES

[...] In each point of a dialogue that unfolds, there is an innumerable, unlimited multiplicity of forgotten meanings; but at a certain point, in the dialogue's unfurl, in the flavor of its evolution, they will be remembered and will be reborn in a renewed way (a new context). Nothing is definitely dead. All meaning will celebrate one day its new birth. The issue of the great temporality. (Bakhtin, 1979/1992, pp. 413–414, translation from Portuguese)

Cultural psychology emerged in the last decades as a possibility of interdisciplinary integration between cultural studies, taking into account the tensions in the dialogue of multiple trajectories of semiotic construction out of the self-other-word concrete living. In the American continent (North, Central and South Americas), the participation of psychologists in governmental and non-governmental institutions that work with Amerindian populations is increasing. The paths explored in this book demonstrate the relevance of developing and appropriating theoretical and methodological references for an adequate practice in the interethnic zone of dialogue. These theoretical and methodological approaches need to be co-developed as an outcome of the concrete affective-reflexive experiences in the conviviality with the Amerindians peoples, in order to overcome the reproduction of the invisibility and stereotyped meanings about them.

Therefore, the paths in which Amerindian peoples guide psychology are constrained by a twofold border. On one side, the border of a theoretical transformation of psychology, making it different from the supposed general approaches already constructed, due to its inconsistency facing the peoples' ethnic-cultural specificities. On the other side, the border of a methodological transformation of psychology, due to the necessity of adaptations in order to offer a good quality service when it is demanded, or to get relevant data for scientific reflection and generalization. Interdisciplinary contributions are of great value.

The work of Caldeira (2015) in this book, is a contribution from an anthropologist who has coordinated a multidisciplinary program of health support. It concerns the implications of the interaction of distinctive forms of care, addressing the challenges to the self-other relationships when we cannot assume, preliminarily, an existential unity. If we are not just juxtaposing the biomedical and the Amerindian traditional knowledge, then it is necessary to develop a cultural competence to promote the capacity to listen and learn from narrative discourses, including the mythological speech. Therefore, the intervention in the interethnic scenario adds another extra level of exigencies to the professional: the behavioral and conceptual internalization of the cosmological principles that belong to the supported culture.

Concerning the role of the mythological speech in the development of the basic symbolism that guides the affectivity and the cognitive elaborations of the Amerindian thinking/feeling, the work of Sánchez and Simão (2015) explores how children from an indigenous community construct their identity, moral values and attribute intention, emotion and thoughts to the other, focusing the process of internalization of a myth. Considering that the path from the myth to the logos culminated in the development of science in Western societies, psychologists know little about the outcomes of the mythological elaboration in the Amerindian societies. Until nowadays, the path to science is avoided by many traditional cultures (Guimarães, 2012), due to the comprehension that the scientific is not the unique nor the most evolved form of knowledge construction: i.e. scientific methods offer very limited conditions to address the object of knowledge as a subject. On the

contrary, the Amerindian epistemology is mainly concerned with the subjective intentionality of any event of the world (Viveiros de Castro, 2006). Therefore, in the Amerindian paths the subjective determination of the phenomena in its complexity can be considered as criteria for the validation of knowledge: a good issue to be further investigated.

A path to the elaboration of the mythological discourse in the Amerindian traditions (although not the exclusive one) is the aesthetic development in all kinds of symbolic expression. A paper by Gomes (2012) discusses the existence of a precolonial aesthetics in the American territory, exploring archeological objects involved in ritualized practices. She observed the recurrence of images related to the notion of transformation, including the theme of the interspecific metamorphosis, in the objects from peoples who live in different parts of the territory, from South to North America. For some cultures, human existence depends on the control of the boundaries in order to produce equilibrium between fixture and fluidity, stability and transformation (Lagrou, 2007).

Therefore, another strategy to dialogue with Amerindian children, in addition to the comprehension of the mythological narrative, is the plastic expressions in the drawings. Grubits, Grubits and Noriega (2015) compared the drawings of indigenous children from three ethnic communities in Brazil and three other in Mexico, and found in their realist approach proposed to drawings an articulation between traditional elements and others related to the close conviviality with dimensions of the evolving society. Then, the interpenetration of the cultures becomes clear.

From the conception that everything in the world has intentionality, then much effort is necessary to constrain possible disruptive guidance in the flux of the relation with the others and the world: personal development happens from the articulation of images that can be "embodied" or "disembodied," producing novel outcomes. The Amerindian understanding focuses the control of boundaries and shapes of the human body. This is emphasized in order to reach stability in an intensely changeable environment; through conviviality, people construct the possibility of sharing similar objective correlatives in the environment. The alterity of the other is also built in this process.

Transformations suffered by the shapes acquire inestimable ontological importance. The shape of a being gives access to their intentions. The intense meaningful use of the body by Amerindian peoples is part of their personal identity construction and social values circulation, "bodies are created by the relation, and not the relations by the body, in other words, bodies are vestiges in the world when relations are consumed, actualized" (Viveiros de Castro, 2006, p. 447). The Amerindian way of dealing with the body is oriented to specific investments in the personal formation, emphasizing continuous methods of body fabrication. The meaningful use of the body takes part in a process of objectivation that the person conducts upon him or herself through the inscription of culture into the body, singularizing it (Viveiros de Castro, 2006).

Embodied actions and self-positioning are intricate once the action organizes the same world that structures it recursively. Belonging in a determined society is not linked to the sharing of abstract representations, but agreements can be constructed from intersubjective experiences, through dealing with new situations and the mutual effort for coordination, turning strangeness into comfortable, familiarized experiences. Memory and knowledge are inscribed in the body through graphic signs, shared food, smells and mutual touching, important devices for affectivation in close connection with mythical-ritualistic-aesthetic values. All these processes that depend on conviviality to happen, guide the possibilities for sharing similar objective correlatives in the environment. Berni (2015) focuses on a dimension of communicability between all kinds of knowledge that coexist in different levels of reality. Thence, the transdisciplinary approach presents an alternative to overcome the limits imposed by the semiotic gaps between interethnic dialogical forums, as diagrammed in the previous topics of this paper. According to Berni, the meta-theoretical frame of transdisciplinarity emerged as a criticism to the materialistic science, due to the fact that such science was converted into a mythological discourse that banned the legitimacy of the sacred in the construction of a valid knowledge.

Reflecting about the effort to systematize the unity of knowledge in its diversity, is relevant to understand, in a meta-cultural level that there is not a necessary hierarchy between the distinct ontological and epistemological trajectories of the peoples around the world. Nevertheless, cultures are always ethnocentric (Viveiros de Castro, 2006), and constitute the world they see from a perspective that enables and restrains the possibilities of building bridges between them.

Finally, the chapter by Salem emphasizes the limits of a general theory that could transcend the limits of culturally partial positions. Diatopic hermeneutics emerges as a theoretical and methodological strategy to knowledge construction, based on the reciprocal creativity of the cultures engaged in an affective and cognitive process. It contemplates the cultural shock as a fundamental dimension of the intercultural experience and the starting point to the temporary emergence of zones of co-constructed senses as a consequence of the cultural availability for interacting. Therefore, in the face of a similar preoccupation, each culture develops different answers that can be enriched in the dialogue with the answers from the others.

Diatopic hermeneutics also proposes an alternative to overcome some of the core issues of this book, that is, the limits imposed by the semiotic gaps in interethnic dialogical forums. The complexity of each of the presented and discussed approaches to the construction of respectful dialogues with cultural diversity beyond science, as the cultural product of a specific culture, reveals that psychology is flourishing in the elaboration of novel instigating ideas guided by the paths of Amerindian peoples. Deepening each of these approaches on the elaboration of the terms, the situated topics could lead to the emergence of sophisticated theo-

retical and methodological devices, as references for an ethically guided cultural psychology to intervene in the globalized world.

### WHY DIALOGICAL MULTIPLICATION?

Imagine the following scene: you are trying to build a bridge over a rather tumultuous river. Let's say that one bank of this river is the "social" and the other, far away, inaccessible, separated by a violent current, by many eddies and dangerous rapids, is the "natural." Now suppose that, instead of trying to cross this river and build this bridge, you decide instead to go with the flow, that is, to get involved in a bit of canoeing, kayaking or rafting. Then the absence of a bridge is not such a problem. What counts is your ability to equip yourself with the right paraphernalia so that you can go down the river without drowning yourself. You might be scared to get into the turbulent river, you might regret the task of bridge building, but you will probably agree that the two riverbanks are bound to look rather different once you apprehend both of them from the point of view of such a kayaking movement forward. This flowing lateral direction, turned at 90° from the obsessive question of bridge building, is, if I am not mistaken, what William James has called "pure experience." (Latour, 2008, pp. 13–14)

Concerning the aspects of the language of the psychologists, Vygotski (1927/1991) noticed that many times, the theories make use of words from the everyday life, vague polysemic terms, more adapted to the practical life than to a conceptual scientific reference. Psychological theories are also used to import terms from philosophy, which are referred to abstract notions, distant from the concreteness of psychological concerns. The philosophical terms are also polysemous due to the divergences between philosophical schools, and their importation to the psychological context usually decontextualizes the term in relation to the system of thinking that gives consistency to it. Finally, Vygotski stresses that psychologists commonly borrow terms from other scientific disciplines, especially from the natural sciences, which assume a figurative sense when entering the psychological frameworks, hiding with a scientific term the absence of a scientific concept.

Before Vygotski (1927/1991), William James (1890) had already emphasized three of the main sources of error in psychology. First, the absence of proper terms to the investigation and comprehension of thinking and feelings that are part of the psychical life; second, the confusion that the psychologist can make between the thinking and the object of thinking; and third, the possible mess between the perspective of the psychologist and the psychical fact he/she investigates. More recently, Hermans, Kempen, and van Loon (1992) cited Jaynes' (1976) observation that the language people typically use to describe psychical phenomena is derived from the visual and active experience of the being in space, as a metaphor for the mental processes, i.e. slow thinking, agitated mind, brilliant ideas, open mindedness etc. These terms are all metaphors that belongs to a certain cultural field; they are not completely invented in the scientific framework.

Altogether, these considerations call the attention to a sort of promiscuity between the scientific and the cultural knowledge in psychology: psychology has no proper terms. The terms adopted in the construction of the psychological science depend on the articulation of words and meanings belonging to a cultural conception of human being. Additionally, each person culturally situated takes as object of his feeling/thinking specific elements derived from the experience in social life: i.e. the object of concern and the solutions given by an Amerindian shaman finding the cure to an illness are radically different from the object of concern and the solutions given by biomedicine. Therefore, the cultural situation of psychology imposes limits to its aims of generalization if psychologists are focused on the regularity of behavior and in the contents of mental life. An exploration of indigenous psychologies around the world would bring a myriad of novel terms and meanings to the same terms that enormously amplify the dispersion of the already fragmented psychological schools.

The meanings of the cultural production of objectivity, through semiotic and other material elaboration, emerge from a social situation in which an already elaborated meaning becomes open to the singularity of the other. In its singularity, the other ruptures the identity or unity of knowledge, establishing a field of unknown as an ethical condition that instructs the processes of cultural differentiation and dedifferentiation. From this, we would argue that susceptibility to the unknown precedes knowledge, demanding an answer as an affective and cognitive semiotic elaboration and action in relation to which the person is responsible. Psychologists are, then, ethically responsible for their elaborations while moving across the Amerindian paths, to the same extent that each culture is responsible for its indigenous psychology. It is necessary to think carefully about the consequences of building approximations and distancing, especially in the interethnic situations that involve psychosocial vulnerabilities, which are consequence of historical threatening interethnic practices.

If the psychologies have no proper words to express the universal contents of human minds, they can observe, reflect and intervene in the heterogenetic process of meaning construction, as it appears as a general aspect in the diversification of cultures. Instead of producing transcultural correlations between psychological contents, cultural psychology could develop the sensibility to apprehend and the capacity to host the process of semiotic multiplication that takes place in concrete situations in which peoples have the right to manifest their singularities. Cultural creativity transforms the social incompleteness with autonomy and responsibility to a greater or lesser extent under specific conditions. Therefore, psychologists should not feel insecure because they do not have all the script prefigured to their practices in the interethnic zones: they should start by participating in the social life of the selected community, then reflecting upon the feelings that emerged in the experience.

Amerindian peoples offer great examples of human dignity, in the Boeschian sense "transforming misery into fulfillment, drabness into light, cold into warmth"

(Boesch, 1997, p. 429). They constructed coexistence in the American continent with one of the greatest cultural diversities and the biggest variety of fauna and flora of the planet, which live on until nowadays. Those who are not yet able to deal with all this existential complexity are menacing this diversity. On the contrary, these pages address the possibility of learning with the insightful clues from the Amerindian paths.

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## CHAPTER 5

# INSTITUTIONS, SUBJECTIVITY AND CULTURE IN MEXICAN INDIGENOUS MINORITIES' POLITICAL REPRESENTATION<sup>1</sup>

Raul Rocha Romero

The present essay showcases an interdisciplinary vision in which Social Psychology and Political Sciences meet. In addition I depict an analytical approach on the way indigenous minorities are represented by legislators in Mexico.

In order to present an integral outlook on the issue, different perspectives are presented, since everything that has been written about political representation until now has institutional and in some cases cultural circumstances as a framework.

I affirm the idea that examining the individual's subjectivity, their cognitive and emotional processes, can elucidate the way in which political representatives behave toward the people they represent. This can enable the making of public policies more democratic. For this reason the inclusion of subjective issues is an original situation in this analysis.

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