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Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology in Brazil: ethical and epistemological challenges

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Contributions of Indigenous Knowledge to the Reterritorialization of Social Psychology

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Abstract

Objective

This article proposes to rethink social psychology based on indigenous knowledge, considering that it interrogates the policies of subjectivation derived from the binary conception of nature and culture that underpins modernity.

Method

This is a theoretical article that analyzes indigenous contributions to the decolonization of psychological thought, considering the context of climate change. The scope of what is understood as social is problematized, as well as to whom subjectivity is attributed or not in psychology.

Results

Psychology reproduces Western dichotomies by being based on a fixed nature, external to itself, whose social nature is conceived based on human exceptionalism. For people who understand life as the effect of relationalities between human and non-human beings, these categories do not make any sense.

Conclusion

The complexity of knowledge and indigenous protagonism in the fight for land and territory in a context of climate change point to the urgency of reterritorializing social psychology.

Keywords: Climate change; Environmental psychology; Indigenous peoples; Social psychology.

The separation between nature and culture is one of the main notions underpinning modern science and the Western way of life. Alongside nature lie the non-humans: animals, plants, minerals, rivers, forests. Everything that is treated as a resource for the well-being of humans. This category can also extend to certain groups considered less human than others, historically subjected to exploitation, enslavement, and genocide. Culture, on the other hand, would exclusively belong to so-called humans who meet Western standards, supposedly the only ones endowed with rationality, and who, by these attributes deemed superior, can dominate everything

belonging to the category of nature. When nature is separated from culture, when it loses its soul, according to anthropologist Philippe Descola, nothing prevents us from exploiting it, and thus, it loses its material value, acquiring an abstract value, that is, only valuable when exploited (Descola, 2016).

Only recently have we begun to comprehend the repercussions of this exploitation on various species, soil, water, air, as well as on ourselves (Descola, 2016). Climate change is now an undeniable scientific consensus, involving not only the temperature as we perceive it but also ocean acidification, soil alterations, chemical pollution, loss of biodiversity, freshwater scarcity, increased CO₂ levels in the atmosphere, among other planetary boundaries, which are the indicators in the field of climatology. None of this occurs in isolation but rather in interconnected feedback loops, which adds a great deal of unpredictability to the magnitude of the consequences of climate change, not preventing us from knowing that the ongoing threat is greater than any crisis in human history. All these transformations make the earth an increasingly unbearable environment for more and more species, while intensifying known inequalities and proliferating social problems of all kinds (Danowski & Castro, 2014).

Another scientific consensus is the anthropogenic nature of current climate change, and the concept of the Anthropocene has been widely discussed and used to designate this geological epoch, in which the human species has become a geological force capable of altering the biothermodynamic conditions of the planet (Fleury et al., 2019). What strikes us as fundamental here is that, in this context, the binary notion of nature and culture has its boundaries questioned. We humans are seen as a geological force capable of modifying the functioning of the earth, which indicates that we are not separate from nature as we once thought. The earth, in turn, demonstrates its power, no longer able to be considered passive, immutable, or external. The earth no longer fits into the Western thought's notion of nature. According to Débora Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, we encounter nature after having believed ourselves separated from it (Danowski & Castro, 2014).

Indigenous peoples have been speaking to us about this for a long time. Similarly, they try to show us how harmful these conceptions have been, where nature is seen from a disenchanting perspective, and where culture is regarded as an exclusively human attribute. There is no distinction between beings of nature and beings of culture for these peoples. Plants and animals are also considered people. Non-humans have spirit and particular interests, so we cannot do with them as we please. The human being is part of nature and depends on diverse networks of reciprocity, without which their life would not be possible. For indigenous peoples, everything is natural and cultural at the same time (Descola, 2016).

Due to this profound relational understanding, climate change is not new to indigenous peoples. On the contrary, this has always been a concern. It is to take care of what remains of standing forest that indigenous peoples fight so much for the demarcation and protection of their territories. It is also one of the reasons why they intentionally address warnings to white people. In *A Queda do Céu* (The Falling Sky), Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa brings a great warning about the ongoing environmental catastrophe, denouncing it as a consequence of the predatory obsession of those he calls "the people of merchandise", who endanger the lives of humans and non-humans due to their greed (Kopenawa & Albert, 2015). In this work, Davi speaks of xawara, the malevolent spirit of metals, which when extracted from under the earth and burned, spreads diseases and death. According to Alyne Costa, Davi Kopenawa's description has such abundant analogies with scientific diagnoses that it is defined as a shamanic translation of greenhouse gases by anthropologist Bruce Albert (Costa, 2021).

Ailton Krenak points out that, despite the colonial force unleashed on indigenous peoples, they have not engaged with this “civilized” way of consuming the planet and do not depend on this predatory system to exist. This is because they have a profound relationship with non-human beings, and destruction is related to this logic of separation, domination, and “dis” involvement. “When we depersonalize the river, the mountain, when we strip them of their senses, considering this a trait exclusive to humans, we allow these places to become remnants of industrial and extractive activities” (Krenak, 2019, p. 50, our translation).

Faced with climate change and the Anthropocene, we can perceive how necessary and urgent it is to take seriously what indigenous peoples say (Danowski & Castro, 2014). These peoples are essential to this debate precisely because they offer us new ways of perceiving and relating to the world around us, allowing us to understand the reasons why industrialized societies have produced and continue to produce these devastations. This is because they have knowledge of the ecosystems in which they live; by the ways in which they relate to other living beings in their ways of life; because they are among those peoples most affected by the environmental changes caused by climate change. It is also worth noting that all this does not mean that indigenous peoples are only in a position of victims of climate consequences. They are at the forefront of climate change, greatly affected by deforestation, mining, agribusiness, and the impacts of these changes, but they are also resistance to all this and have been intentionally sustaining the sky, postponing the end of the world, challenging the advance of the Anthropocene (Taddei et al., 2021).

This article echoes the importance and urgency of learning from indigenous peoples, as affirmed by the authors cited here. Next, we will seek to articulate the theme of climate change with the field of psychology, looking at the contribution of indigenous peoples to rethink social psychology in this context.

The Nature of Social Psychology

Climate change has complex implications which cannot be seen as a topic restricted to the natural sciences. On the one hand, because it affects all aspects of life, including increasingly shaping/impacting the subjectivities of our time. On the other, as we have seen above, the boundaries between what belongs to the natural and the cultural require a frank revision, as they fail to comprehend existence in a world that is profoundly relational. Thus, the issue raises questions for all disciplines and the fragmentation between them, as well as the need to recognize the legitimacy of knowledge that goes beyond all of them.

It is a topic that the natural sciences have been tackling for a longer time, and there is much for us to learn from them, knowing that no area of knowledge is unlimited and sufficient to address the complexity involved in the issue. This debate, as well as the dialogue among some different fields of knowledge, has been proliferating in the social and human sciences. It is a theme that forces us towards interdisciplinarity and the formation of alliances. However, we face considerable difficulty in building these compositions. In this sense, Taddei and Haines (2019) propose a speculative exercise based on indigenous ethnology to approach a type of possible collaboration between different academic disciplines, and more specifically between climate sciences and the social sciences. The authors argue that the desired interdisciplinarity, often viewed from a Platonic perspective, is frequently frustrated by the inability to achieve a “perfect tuning”. By exploring the space in the boundary between disciplines, drawing inspiration from the ideas of “conflict” and “enemy” in the worlds of Amazonian peoples, they argue that this space would not be, and need not be, inhabited by the “fullness and happiness” of all involved. Instead, it could be treated through a relational

approach capable of understanding the productive dimension of conflict. Thus, the authors advocate for an approach to interdisciplinarity as an alliance between “enemies” from a perspective where differences are deeply valued, considered constitutive and productive of reality. Drawing from the example of shamans who navigate between worlds, they also address the need for agents capable of navigating between distinct areas of knowledge, which would require bridges connecting different people acting together, without needing to think in the same way (Taddei & Haines, 2019).

In this section, we are interested in considering the approach of psychology to the theme of climate change, and more broadly to topics regarded as “of nature”. Why does psychology remain so distant from these themes?

Psychology is a product of colonial expansion as much as other modern disciplines, and reproduces the dichotomous notion between nature and culture coined by the West. Human exceptionalism encompasses these notions, understanding, on one hand, a social, qualified, political, cultural human life, and on the other, an unqualified, biological, inarticulate life (Süssekind, 2018). As subsidiary to the same model of rationality as the natural sciences, psychology shares the same idea of mechanical nature. Even when psychology positions itself critically towards certain aspects of Western thought, such as biological determinism that underpins some conceptions of mental health, advocating for a more integrative perspective that considers political, social, economic aspects, etc., it still operates from this binarism. This is because psychology does not question the separation between these categories and the conceptions of one and the other, it only takes a position on one side. Nature, and everything seen as belonging to it, is treated as a fixed and passive thing. In psychology, the social is approached as an exclusively human attribute, “overly human”.

Nature, therefore, will not be the object of social psychology, except as part of social and cultural experiences of exclusively human groups that share an objective external nature (Süssekind, 2018), meaning the focus is always on humans in interaction with nature, with animals, with plants. This demonstrates the anthropocentrism reproduced by the field of social psychology. Given this, what escapes the understanding of social psychology is that it is not nature that is given, fixed, immutable, and opposed to the social, but “one” specific and situated conception of nature, the one conceived by the West. This also demonstrates how much these and other categories are taken as universal in the field of psychology. If we consider indigenous epistemologies as a reference and take them here as privileged alterity, these separations make no sense. These beings considered “of nature” are endowed with culture, sociality, subjectivity, interest, and political agency (Descola, 2016).

The topic of climate change is complex and interdisciplinary. It affects and will increasingly affect our lives in the broadest aspects, including in the field of subjectivity production. Psychology for sure will not escape this issue in its practices in the most different fields of action. To establish specific subareas within the field of psychology to discuss this issue, or taking it as yet another professional specialty, also does not seem sufficient given the magnitude of the problem. The issue affects and will increasingly affect all those who live on earth. This is especially true for those who already suffer from extreme inequalities, upon whom climate injustices and environmental racism fall.

In this study, we do not inquire about in what way psychology can contribute to this debate. While this question is undoubtedly important, we choose to reframe it, posing instead the following inquiry: How do the conditions of climate change and the Anthropocene challenge psychology? We also refer to indigenous perspectives, as they have long been alerting us to the problem.

Indigenous peoples have been contributing to fighting environmental destruction from their own existences. Attentive to their political surroundings, their struggle takes place through song, dance, prayer, and the sharing of their worldview. In various ways, they have been halting large real

estate speculation projects, mining, deforestation. Defending their territories, they protect areas that benefit all biodiversity around the lands they occupy and far beyond them (Goulart & Farias, 2023). In this way, they have been holding up the sky in place, while, conversely, the capitalist colonial world system continues to systematically promote the causes of its downfall.

Thus, this is not just an interdisciplinary debate or restricted to academic spaces. It is a political issue, which does not mean it is only a governmental one. Above all, it is an ethical issue, and indigenous peoples, as well as other traditional peoples and communities, are the great experts (Taddei et al., 2021). In what ways does indigenous knowledge contribute to interrogating social psychology, considering the challenges of our contemporary times, involving primarily the climate emergency?

Psychology Painted with Jenipapo and Urucum

There is significant visibility for “indigenous psychologies” in this historical moment, prompting reflections for the field of psychology in general. Their task is to engage in dialogue with indigenous peoples to recognize contemporary social demands that are still veiled dimensions of their experience (Guimarães, 2022). Psychology’s approach with indigenous peoples until now is very recent and occurred in part due to the insertion of psychologists in public policies for the attention of the indigenous population and the complex intercultural challenges that arise from it (Silva & Macedo, 2021).

We also consider the importance of the protagonism of indigenous psychology professionals for broadening this debate in recent years, exemplified by the *Articulação Brasileira dos(as) Indígenas Psicólogos(as)* (ABIPSI, Brazilian Association of Indigenous Psychologists), organizers of the collection “Painting psychology with jenipapo and urucum”, which is referenced here, including in the title of this section (ABIPSI, 2022). Furthermore, the entry of indigenous peoples into universities has been fundamental for very important changes to occur.

When the first indigenous students entered psychology courses in Brazil, they encountered many difficulties, including a eurocentric training model and curriculum structure that do not recognize the knowledge of their peoples as a way of knowing. Additionally, the indigenous theme usually does not appear during the training of psychology professionals, contributing to the historical erasure affecting these peoples. The presence of indigenous students promotes different ways of thinking among professors and students, challenging academic functioning in various aspects, including the logic of formative processes and the hegemony of knowledge production (Carvalho, 2023).

Knowledge is not a one-way street, and indigenous peoples have their own ways of knowing. Integrated into every aspect of life, the ways of knowing of the Kaingang people, for example, starts from the mother’s womb when one experiences the world of their parents. It is within the collective that subject development occurs. Today, the *vême* (Kaingang stories) is not only told around the *pin ró nî* (fire) by the *kanhgág kófa* (wise elders) or *kujá* (spiritual healer), as by appropriating writing, taking it as a tool of struggle to record their stories, this people seek to multiply the means of preserving and valuing ancestral methodologies of teaching and learning.

In psychology, the insufficiency of the Western perspective that underpins training and the colonial violence that reproduces assumptions of a white, ethnocentric, and racist science in psychological practices are noticeable. It is worth noting that the knowledge constructed on indigenous peoples was historically guided by the pursuit of what was deemed lacking in

comparison to other societies (Lopes & Sathler, 2022). Deprived of what was deemed relevant – culture – constantly compared against a specific society, a particular organization, and specific customs. Compared to these, indigenous peoples were considered backward, primitive, and inferior. Therefore, they should be supported, instructed, and ultimately integrated. This is the logic of colonial psychology that to a greater or lesser extent has been and may still be present in psychological practices and requires attention (Lopes & Sathler, 2022).

The cited authors remind us that Brazil was the birthplace of eugenic theses, of ethnic and racial cleansing as a condition for racial progress. That these conceptions were disseminated by psychology seeking to promote the psychic evolution of the human species. All of this marks a colonialist psychology, which “wastes the experience of others” as it disregards their worlds and their “meanings of the cosmos” (Lopes & Sathler, 2022).

In this way, there is no chance for psychology to operate from those fundamental aspects that should constitute its practice, such as listening, welcoming, understanding reality from a perspective of territory and its complexity. This is what happens when psychology, for instance, assumes a certain mental health perspective, disregarding the very system of conception and care practices that these peoples have at their disposal to deal with their psychosocial fragilities, or even when it disregards the coloniality that, in different ways, is responsible for the processes of suffering. The term “mental health” itself carries the perspective of the dominant society and is not a recognized and used expression by indigenous peoples (ABIPSI, 2022).

Considering this, we can see that there is much to unlearn in psychology, which involves questioning the universalism and ethnocentrism that it still carries (Martins, 2021). Indigenous psychology professionals have been questioning the theoretical references that occupy centrality in the construction of psychological knowledge, as if there were not many other legitimate references. Faced with the hegemonic theoretical framework, psychology understands the processes of subjectivation of certain places and not others. The problem lies in treating these places, which are always determined, situated in a specific place, as if they were universal, as if they were nowhere or everywhere at the same time. This leads to silencing, invisibility, and violence against the constitutive diversity of human subjectivity, which results in the ineffectiveness of psychology practices in the territories where it operates, as well as profound epistemic violence (ABIPSI, 2022).

Among the contributions of indigenous psychologists is the problematization that Western sciences are structured in a logic that turns everything that is alive into an object, and psychology is no exception to this. One does not usually think of the land, animals, plants, rivers, and mountains as beings with whom we share our existences and compose our subjectivities, much less as beings that have their own subjectivity. In our disciplines, each thing is seen from a separate place. Edilaise (Nita Tuxá), an indigenous psychologist from the Tuxá people, recounts the testimony of a Kaingang shaman who said that the world of the white man is square because they live in boxes, work in other boxes, and go from one box to another in boxes that move. Therefore, they see everything separately: because they are the people of the boxes (Vieira, 2022).

Indigenous peoples show us other relationships with their territories. Other territorialities, which are fundamentally relational and not characterized by domination. On the contrary, they are characterized by respect and involve awareness of the interdependence between different beings, human and non-human. Considering this, we realize that their worlds do not occur in boxes. Instead, because they are connected, they constitute other forms. As previously highlighted, with no separations between nature and culture, it is impossible to understand psychosocial issues without considering territorialities.

How can I live well when my river is being contaminated by mercury and lead due to the exploitation of gold miners? How can I live well if I have no land to express my sociocultural wealth? Or how can I live well if my land is being threatened by agribusiness, loggers, etc.? The land for us, Indigenous peoples, is a source of good living. Thus, we have a territory that is unprotected and threatened, as such, we can consider how many vulnerabilities exist in these contexts. (Vieira, 2022, p. 131, our translation)

For Indigenous peoples, ways of life, thought processes, identity formation, and subjective experiences are intertwined with their territories, shaped by relationships with specific ecosystems, or even influenced by the types of violence and exploitation directed specifically at these territories. Likewise, within the worlds to which each people belongs in its specificity, there are ancient self-care and psychosocial care systems sustained by a collective and reciprocal relationship with all that is alive, human or non-human. This is a key point: the relationships established by these peoples are not restricted to human ones. By embracing their territories, they also embrace the countless beings, visible and invisible, with whom they share existence, define their identity, compose their subjectivity, and build worlds together. In this sense, Indigenous psychologists will contribute to thinking about a more comprehensive, more complex psychology, considering that there is no health detached from an understanding of territory, spirituality, and ancestry (ABIPSI, 2022).

When thinking about Kaingang psychology, we can see that it resides in everyday rituals, in blessings, in medicinal herbs. We notice that this psychology resides in forests, in rivers. That every health problem, as well as any other phenomenon, is seen by this people in a broad and collective way. In the explanation of everything, they encompass the body, mind, territory, and spirituality, considering the dimensions of the natural and supernatural environment. Healing processes involve the use of plants, chants, dances, prayers. There is a whole complexity of understandings linked to the spirits that are present in their daily lives (Carvalho, 2021).

Listening to voices, conversing with rivers, seeking permission from the land are all practices that are part of the connection the Kaingang people maintain with other worlds and beings. How then to speak of a Western European psychology, based on disease diagnoses that have such a distinct logic from all this, to a people who have their own conceptions of these processes and their own healing rituals? When we speak of subject formation, we can see that for the Kaingang people, this happens differently. Suffering is spiritual, and spirituality is present in nature. Illness is collective, because when one person falls ill, it reveals and affects issues of the whole, as it is closely related to the territory. Similarly, the territory is linked to a colonial history that must be taken into account to understand today's spiritual illnesses. For the Kaingang people, illness occurs because their territories are not demarcated, because rivers are polluted, because medicinal herbs, traditional foods, and hunting have become scarce. If the territory is sacred, when it falls ill, so does its people. Because we are nature (Carvalho, 2021).

Kanhgág êg my há means "what is good for the Kaingang people" and what a Kaingang psychology needs to consider (Carvalho, 2021). Their way of life, their ancestral care practices. This perspective has also been conceptualized as a "forest psychology" by Rejane *Paféj Kanhgág*. The awareness of the power of this knowledge by its own people is one way to break free from centuries-old inferiority complexes that have been producing today's illnesses. Indigenous psychologists of different ethnicities point out that overcoming this inferiority is a mental health issue, as is the affirmation of the identity, culture, and knowledge of the peoples. An indigenous psychology must be able to confront the problems of colonization that persist today by strengthening the wisdom present in each people (Carvalho, 2021).

Thus, the bonfire stands out as a therapeutic space for the Kaingang people. The territory as a living space and the conscious way of using the land, preventing the results of actions from

being harmful. Management techniques that date back centuries, with protection and care as key elements. Around the fire, each person develops as a subject, learning graphics, whether for combat or celebrating. They learn to dance, to prepare traditional foods, rituals, traditional medicine, and to take care of the collective. After undergoing a ritual with the *kujà* (shaman), they adhere to a diet in which *fóg* (non-indigenous) foods are entirely discarded, allowing only typical foods, with fire, smoke, ash, and water as indispensable ingredients. Fish roasted on bamboo (*krêkufâr kénpu*), cake baked on bamboo (*êmi kénpu*), *kumî* (cassava leaf) (Carvalho, 2021). In the kanhgág view, there is no individual, as life is lived collectively, whether for health, education, or even to be silent and appreciate life. The bond with the territory is umbilical. This is how psychology can be understood.

It is important to emphasize that we must be very careful not to stigmatize indigenous practices and rituals, much less generalize them, as there remains a controversial imagery that refers indigenous existences to the past, to distant or remote places, and to stereotypes typical of colonial thought: the “Indian” as a primitive, childlike, and backward being, the naked “Indian”, with straight hair and a headdress, without differentiation between the cultural specificities of each ethnicity and forever frozen in time. Let us remember that “Indian” is a pejorative term, while indigenous means originating from the land. As a consequence of this impoverishing imagery that reproduces the idea that indigenous peoples are all the same, their identities have been constantly erased and denied. Times change and indigenous peoples do too, as their traditions are alive. If the *fóg* (non-indigenous) are not the same as their great-grandfather, indigenous peoples are also not the same as theirs. Adopting new habits, clothing, technologies, does not make an indigenous person less indigenous. Likewise, the experience in the concrete jungle (city), whether for housing, for selling handicrafts, or for attending university, has been one of the ways in which indigenous people have reclaimed their body-territory because these spaces are also indigenous territory. These reclaimings are important because they have enabled new directions in relation to their communities, contributing to the strengthening of identity and the struggle for indigenous rights (Carvalho, 2023).

Still on the subject of the indigenous contribution to rethink the field of social psychology, Geni Núñez, a psychologist, and activist Mbyá-Guarani, propose to consider the subjective dimension of colonization. Recognizing that colonization impacted not only the geographical territory but also the body-territory. Thus, if we care about listening to the processes involving psychic suffering, it is impossible to understand them without taking a deep look at the historical processes that built the territory we live in. Geni refers us to the colonial wounds manifested in the pains of these body-territories, for which we need to create conditions to name such violence as the first step toward repairing them, and also as a process of decolonizing psychology itself, meaning, among other things, to go beyond the binary separation of mind and body (Núñez, 2017).

Geni reminds us that historically the mind, the place of reason, was reserved for white people, cisgender men, with formal education, while racialized people, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, or non-schooled individuals, were reduced to mere bodies by colonial violence that for over 500 years has defined the lives that matter and the lives that do not matter. It is in these body-territories that the processes of subjectivation operate, forming who we are, how we feel, and how we relate (Núñez, 2017).

This mind-body separation that Geni speaks of is compatible with the separation between culture and nature that we have already addressed, as they are the same binary structures that serve as pillars of modernity and coloniality. Within this thought, the lives that matter least are the body-territories of those subjects who have not sufficiently separated from nature as

did the white-hetero-cisgender-European man, taken as a model of rationality. Therefore, the decolonization of psychology is necessarily related to the problematization and rupture of these dichotomies.

Reterritorializing Psychology

So far, we have seen that social psychology is tributary to a colonial and modern notion of nature and culture, body and mind. Within it, there is a reproduction of a mechanical and external notion of nature, while the social is seen as a “uniquely human” condition. As social psychology adopts this perspective, it also creates it. We then have a psychology separated from nature. An abstract psychology. Out of the earth. Without ground. In the air. Deterritorialized.

In contrast, we might ask: what sort of nature is fixed? Is nature not a place of constant and complex transformations? Were not precisely these variations that allowed human life to emerge as a result of exchanges between diverse species? Are we not facing more transformations with climate change? The field of multispecies studies shows us that the social and the biological are not separate instances (Süssekind, 2018). If we are produced in intricate relationships, living beings of any species are social, with or without humans being part of the relationship. “How could it have occurred to anyone that other living things besides humans are not social? What isn’t sociability? And the more we think about it, the more ridiculous the opposition between human/non-human becomes” (Tsing, 2019, p. 119).

Indigenous knowledge encompasses profound understandings of humans, animals, plants, nature cycles, reciprocities, and is therefore privileged references for this discussion (Süssekind, 2018). Ailton Krenak tells us that it is necessary to abandon anthropocentrism and realize that there is much more life beyond us. That when his people say that the earth is our mother, it is not because they are trying to be poetic, it is because it is the concrete experience of their lives. They are clinging to the body of the earth and depend on it, and when it is hurt, their whole world becomes disorganized (Krenak, 2019).

Such an account should not be heard or read trivially, even less so in a context like this where we are feeling the effects of global climate change in an increasingly accelerated way. These words are repeated in indigenous voices all the time: forest, land, river, mountain, sky, whites, destruction. No matter which box they are interrogated about: health, environment, education. There is a very obvious relationality and interdependence, and above all, there is life, spirit, culture, subjectivity, in every body-territory-being.

What implications does this bring for social psychology and the field of subjectivation processes? We consider it essential to raise this question, even though we do not claim to answer it. We believe these aspects are fundamental for the decolonization of psychological thought (Núñez, 2017) and for what we understand as the need for the “reterritorialization of social psychology”.

Today, thousands of species are endangered, not only animals but also plants, and it is important to remember them as well because they play a fundamental role in maintaining the delicacy that is the habitability of human life on this planet. Many lives have already been lost in the wake of the Anthropocene without most of us even being aware of their existence. In general, we are not so attentive to other forms of life, but our indispensable companions are dying (Tsing, 2019).

Indigenous peoples invite us to look at other forms of life. It is essential to recognize their existences in a lively way, to admit their importance, their agencies, their subjectivity. Coloniality, which denied indigenous peoples had souls, and then tried to assimilate them into the modern

project, was the same one that took the soul out of their “companion species”. The logic of monoculture extends to all kinds of people, humans and non-humans. Plants, animals, rivers, and mountains, all considered devoid of qualified life (Süssekind, 2018). Separated, isolated, classified, intoxicated, many refugees, others missing.

Now let’s imagine this in terms of becoming. The countless becomings already extinct, those points of view with which we will never be able to share. Those that remain inactive in a colonial world based on monoculture, where only one world is legitimate and all other lives do not matter. Where the perspective of bees is not relevant, even though without them, we have no food. Where do becomings go when only one perspective matters? The plantation system seized the land while the natives were killed. The newly enslaved were isolated from their land just like the sugarcane. In the face of this system, landscapes were remade from simplified ecologies, in which living beings were turned into resources, removed from their worlds of life (Tsing, 2019). However, as Tsing points out, our survival depends on whether we can maintain complex ecologies, because they are what sustain life (Tsing, 2019).

We have already seen that indigenous peoples have not embraced the Western project and resist by clinging to the land as best they can. In contact with them, psychology has been questioned, especially with regard to ethnocentrism and universalism, and this is crucial. We cannot take the white world as the standard, as a world model. It is necessary to accept other worlds, and it is necessary to do this beyond cultural relativism. Indigenous peoples are not just saying, “we are different, and you need to respect us”, they are questioning our own assumptions of equality. However, it seems to us that the issue of anthropocentrism needs more attention from psychology. This is because indigenous peoples insistently tell us as well: “this world of yours is a problem, it is devouring our world and yours too”. “Your idea of nature is problematic for us and even for yourselves”. Which brings us back to the question of non-humans once again. When we hear indigenous people talking about the mountain, it is necessary to legitimize not only who is speaking but also the mountain. There is a great interest and concern among indigenous peoples for these other beings to be recognized and respected. A cosmoecological concern that is evident in the words of shaman Davi Kopenawa Yanomami (Kopenawa & Albert, 2015).

Climate change and the Anthropocene point us to some emergencies. It is vital to burst the bubble of the fields of knowledge production, and therefore it is necessary for social psychology to be able to dialogue with ecology, climatology, anthropology, etc. According to anthropologist Anna Tsing, if the doors were closed between researchers in the natural sciences and humanities, that moment has been or needs to be interrupted due to concerns about the Anthropocene, because a common interest in habitability requires a new mutuality (Tsing, 2019).

Indigenous peoples are those who have been talking about climate change for a long time. They also talk about the Anthropocene, as for a long time they have been pointing out the anthropogenic causes of these changes when they assertively accuse the people of merchandise, white people’s way of life, the *fóg*, the *juará-rekó*, for the destruction of the land. They call on us to see that the forest is alive, that animals and plants have spirits, that we cannot simply do whatever we want with the river, with the trees, without facing the consequences. They invite us to perceive the politics and subjectivity that permeate the land.

Thus, we realize that indigenous peoples bring important contributions to the reterritorialization of psychology. It is necessary to ground psychology. To make it return to where it was or recognize where it is: in the land. To “incorporate nature”. We must move away from the abstraction of an “external nature” that only exists in the Western imagination, whose ultimate

purpose would be to “serve man”. Because there is no psychology outside of nature, there are only, indeed, psychologies that deny nature and therefore seek to distance themselves from it. Indigenous peoples show us that nothing is more mutable than nature. That nature is social as much as the social is nature.

We are being called upon to form alliances, not only among different areas of knowledge, some of which we have never interacted with and know little or nothing about, but also with different peoples and more. We are being called to form alliances with deities, rivers, forests, animals, rocks, plants, fungi. However, once again, as Tsing (2019) reminds us, we are not very good at forming alliances. Therefore, it would be important to start by admitting that we humans are unable to survive without other species. That we are part of ecological webs (Tsing, 2019). Indigenous peoples carry much of this awareness, which has implications for their ways of life and reflects very profound cosmoecologies, from which we have much to learn in such difficult and urgent times.

In light of the above and in thinking about the reterritorialization of social psychology, or of building a foundation for the continuity of these reflections, we continue to experiment with the question: who is included in the social of social psychology?

Conclusion

How do climate change and the Anthropocene challenge psychology? In what way does indigenous knowledge contribute to rethinking social psychology, considering these as the main challenges of our contemporaneity?

To move forward with these questions, we problematize “the nature of social psychology”, reflecting on the reproduction of Western notions of nature and culture, which imply, on the one hand, a distancing of psychology from that which is held as “of nature” and, on the other, the human exceptionalism of its conception of the social.

We have explored several indigenous contributions to rethinking psychology, which necessarily involve breaking with universality and ethnocentrism. We have emphasized the problem of anthropocentrism due to the importance of human and non-human relationships present in indigenous cosmoecologies, fundamental in the face of climate change and the Anthropocene, and elucidated by multispecies studies.

This study does not put an end to the issues raised. However, even though we do not have conclusive points here, we understand that sharing such questions is necessary and urgent.

We propose the reterritorialization of psychology in the sense of a “turning to the land”, of establishing a ground, of knowing where one is standing. By this, we mean that there are things to acknowledge, and indigenous peoples have much to teach about them. Among these considerations is the recognition that inhabiting the land is a composition and that our lives depend on other non-human entities. Acknowledging alternative social structures and subjectivities is crucial. Additionally, we should understand that climate change concerns social psychology and that we need to engage in dialogue with many areas of knowledge and various types of knowledge. We are being called upon to form alliances with deities, with the forest, with the rivers, and to learn from indigenous cosmoecologies.

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