Interculturality, Identity, and Decoloniality

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses initially on the findings of research undertaken by colleagues-researchers from different countries. Then, the authors explore the postcolonial intercultural challenges from the Abya Yala point of view. The relationship with aboriginal and ancestral peoples is very relevant for understanding power and knowledge in historical processes. The contemporary globalizing world faces new challenges intensified by international connections, by sociocultural movements, and now, by pandemic context. These circumstances of greater interconnectivity and interdependence require each group to reflect and consider their own limits and thresholds in intercultural relationship with others and ecological priorities. The concept of "thought bordering" is discussed outlining its ability to interrogate the modern idea of culture as unique and universal. While greater interconnectivity offers the opportunity for multiple paradigms to emerge, it can also close off chances for mutual recognition and for solidarity if approached without thoughtful engagement. Thought bordering offers us the opportunity to facilitate different ways of being–feeling–thinking–acting, thus promoting an ontological shift that will enable respectful engagements with communities, societies, and ecologies. In this perspective, one is learning from the ancestral peoples about "well-living," cultivating reciprocity, integrality, complementarity, and relationality in social and ecological relations.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION: INTERCULTURALISM – A CONCEPT UNDER DISCUSSION

The concept of interculturalism or multiculturalism has been of great importance for the development and implementation of educational policies, guiding the development of curricular proposals and training of teachers. Thus, Muhammad Ayaz Naseem (2012) examines the conceptual perspectives in which teachers and professionals engaged in educational research seek to understand the dynamics of multiculturalism policies from a Canadian context. These perspectives include among others conceptions of conservative multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism and liberal leftist, critical multiculturalism, anti-racist and anti-oppression education. Ayaz Naseem (2012) believes that these views do not entirely represent the conceptual possibilities used by academics and professionals. Nor are they monolithic designs and/or consensual, since each of these trends constitutes a theoretical basis of intense debate.

A diversity of proposals and intercultural perspectives prevents us from producing effective simplified schemes. Even so, this makes the debate particularly open and creative. Beyond the theoretical and political terminological polysemy on multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturalism, this field constitutes an area of debate that becomes paradigmatic precisely because of its complexity: its richness consists of multiplicity of perspectives that interact and cannot be reduced by a single code and a single schema proposed as being universally transferable model.

However, the fundamental conceptual perspective in which the issues and considerations in this emerging field lie is the ability to respect differences and integrate them into a unit where they do not overrule each other. On the contrary, such a concept should activate the creative potential and the vital connections between different agents and between their respective contexts.

Marie McAndrew et al. (2012) examine interculturalism conceptions in the Canadian educational context that guide the training of educators, through diagnosis of the state of pre-service teachers' training in relation to the ethnocultural, religious and linguistic diversity in universities in Québec. The study shows that, despite the fact that this field has experienced a significant expansion in undergraduate education in the last twenty years, both in terms of course offering and pedagogical innovations, such a development happened in an unplanned manner. There is diversity and ambiguity of conceptual grounding requirements, and the absence of clear and ministerial guidelines in relation to legitimacy and objectives that should be pursued.

In a critical analysis of different conceptions, as well as the policies and the educational practices that constitute the complex field of inter-multiculturalism, Adeela Arshad-Ayaz (2012) points to the need to reconceptualise and redefine multicultural education according to the needs of the globalised and interconnected world of the 21st Century. Indeed, the current model of multicultural education prevalent in the Canadian context is inefficient and has had limited impact due to the fact that educators and teachers are caught up in a structure with major flaws in its construction, which is mainly focused on the national cultural context and obscures aspects of social justice worldwide.

In Brazil, the term "cultural diversity" has been used as multiculturalism, especially by the general public, revealing distinct propositions. Maria Conceição Coppete et al. (2012) highlight the concept of diversity in the legal field, through the social sciences and reaching its cultural dimension. She introduces the concept of intercultural education and its implications for pedagogical practice. Within this approach, different cultures are understood as complex contexts and the relationship between them produces clashes between different views of the world. This education favours the construction of a common project, in which it is possible to integrate dialectical differences. Its direction is focused on building a plural, democratic and eminently human society, capable of articulating equality with identity politics.

The fight for social justice, indicated by Arshad-Ayaz (2012), as well as the struggle for building a plural and democratic society, pointed by Coppete et al. (2012), requires the redefinition of the meanings of interculturalism, commented by Ayaz Naseem (2012) and McAndrew et al. (2012), in order to understand the epistemological foundations of the modern-colonial society that characterises our history of subordinate people. From this perspective, Catherine Walsh (2012), emphasises that the multiplicity of meanings in the current environment of intercultural within the inter-transnational context results from the struggles of social-political-ancestral movements and their demands for recognition, their rights and social transformation. On the other hand, the importance of interculturalism in the contemporary world is linked to the global configurations of power, capital and market. Walsh (2012) argues that the interculturalism perspective is configured as a political project of social, ethical and epistemic transformation and decoloniality. This design differs from the senses and uses of interculturalism in a functional perspective to the dominant system. She argues using the example of Ecuador, in which interculturalism will only have meaning, impact and value if taken critically; with action, project and process that seek to intervene in the restructuring and reorganisation of the social foundations of racism, which diminishes and dehumanises people, that is, in the very coloniality matrix of power, currently present in the world.

Critical interculturality points out to a decolonial project. It aims to understand and confront the colonial matrix of power, which historically articulated the idea of "race" as a tool for classification and social control with the development of capitalism (modern, colonial and Eurocentric), which began as part of the historical constitution of America.

Interculturalism: The Challenge of Coloniality

Unlike colonialism – with regard to political and economic domination of one people over another anywhere in the world – coloniality indicates the pattern of relationships that emerge in the context of European colonisation in the Americas. It is a model of modern and permanent power. Coloniality goes through every aspect of life, and according to Walsh (2012) is configured from four interwoven strands.

The first axis – the coloniality of power – refers to the establishment of a social classification system based on the "race" category as fundamental criteria for the distribution, domination and exploitation of the world population in the context of the global capitalist-work. Coloniality of knowledge is the second axis – the assumption that Europe is the centre of knowledge production. It dismisses the possibility of other epistemic rationality and knowledge generated in different places than European or by Europeanised white men, diminishing the logics developed historically by ancestral communities. The third axis – the coloniality of being – is what is practiced by subordination and dehumanisation of the colonised subjects, to the extent that the human value and cognitive abilities of these people are scrutinised by their colour and their ancestral roots. Coloniality of nature and life itself is the fourth axis. Based on the binary division of nature/society, it denies any relationship with ancient biophysical, human and spiritual worlds, discarding magical-spiritual-social belief that supports the whole of life system and the knowledge of the ancient people. By discrediting this holistic relationship with nature, woven by ancient civilisations, it is possible to disregard these people's ways of being, knowing and organising their lives; and thus subordinate them and sustain the racist matrix which is the colonial difference of modernity.

From a colonial perspective, the relations between different people in the West happened historically with large movements of economic-political domination and sociocultural subordination. In the last millennium, European companies led broad distribution, domination and exploitation processes of the world's population. The contradiction is configured by colonial imperialist processes with the overdevelopment of the countries in the "North" impacting the economy, politics, culture and the natural environment which exacerbate the vulnerabilities of the people in the "South". This paradox is analysed by Paul Carr and Gina Thésée (2012), in the discussion of the concept of "sustainable development", which avoids questioning the hegemonic model of development. The authors consider that the purposes of this imperialist model are to subordinate cultures that they dominate and invalidate their previous knowledge. In this context, as indicated above by Arshad-Ayaz (2012), the authors propose a counter-hegemonic encounter between cultures that combines social justice and environmental justice, in a broader perspective of democracy that is participatory and functional for the whole of humanity.

In this direction, as Catherine Walsh (2012) emphasizes, building critically interculturalism requires transgressing and dismantling the colonial matrix present in capitalism and creating conditions of power, knowledge, being and existing that point to the possibility of living in a new order and logic starting from complementarity and social biases. Interculturalism should be taken as a deliberate, constant, continuous and even insurgent action, intertwined and forwarded to decolonialisation.

Interculturalism and Justice: The Nation-State in Check

Struggles for reconfiguring sociocultural relations and environmental justice are sustained by processes of resistance of colonised people and sociocultural groups. These struggles bring into question the status of the currently hegemonic form of political organisation of the nation-state.

In this line of thought and sociopolitical action, José Marín (2010) seeks to understand historically and culturally the political model of the nation-state and its application in Latin America. Considering its impact, he primarily focuses on Peru: How to take the multicultural reality of our societies to different fields, such as education as well as the management of rich biodiversity and complex cultural diversity? This is the question the author seeks to answer from an intercultural perspective. By discussing the monocultural policies of the nation-state, he argues for the need to promote the

rebuilding of another model of state, able to take the ecological, social, political and cultural life reality of the contemporary world.

This perspective discusses the concepts of interculturalism and policies that have been formulated and implemented by different nation-states, to the extent that represent worldviews and interests of ethnic and sociocultural groups, identified as one nation, subordinating groups of cultures animated by different socio-political projects. They question whether intercultural policies that seek inclusive cultural diversity would subdue historically colonised ethnic groups.

To discuss the meanings of intercultural policies of the nation-state, the studies of Boris Ramírez Guzmán (2012) show that during the past decades the concept of interculturalism gained prominence in the public policy in Chile. On the one hand, the indigenous people who lived in this nation have sought to obtain legal recognition and to preserve their autonomy. The Government, on the other hand, has invested in policies for the inclusion of this population in the Chilean society. In this context, the author makes a critical understanding of the term intercultural supported by the Chilean state. In this way, the state seeks to assess the epistemological and discursive shifts that it performs engendering Intercultural Education for Indians, framing it in the context of contemporary social Chile. This paper also makes a contribution to the critical discussion of the theoretical and legal bases that are established and official projects of Intercultural Education in Chile.

The conflict between the State and the ancestral people from the colonial perspective is also studied in the context of South America by the anthropologists Raúl Díaz and Jorgelina Villarreal (2010). The authors consider that the links between indigenous people and national states follow opposite paths within an imposed judiciary system that is strange and complicated. Indigenous people are displaced for having illegal appropriation of land and their fundamental rights are denied. Nevertheless, indigenous people seek to enter positively in the State's political, judicial, legislative, cultural and social system, trying to live and maintain their identities as indigenous people. For this, they seek to strengthen their identities and their properties by self-managing as well as practices of intercultural relations. For example, they assume the environmental management of national parks, promote intercultural neighbourhood facilities for indigenous and urban popular sectors, develop their own educational policies and intercultural activities in the city and the countryside, as well as collaborate with other social movements. The authors indicate the need to rethink the intercultural concept from the point of view of its "originality" and "community", in order to dismiss the manipulated belief that does not modify their subordination. They also revise concepts (and practices), such as heritage, culture and identity, seen as part of an intercultural and democratic society.

In this line of studies, Jorge Gasché Suess (2010) analyses the contradictions between the social values of the forest (the indigenous and mestizo rural Amazon) and the neoliberal economic and social values inspiring and mobilising the Peruvian state policy. In particular, he focuses on the root of the violent conflict that pitted indigenous Peruvians Awajún y Huampis from Alto Maranhão against police forces during a crackdown joined protest action in the region of Bagua in July 2009. This indigenous population denounced the permanence of a latent climate of violence and reacted to Amazon's Government policy extraction (oil and mining). The author points out the implicit social values of the forest from the Amazonian communities' everyday behaviour. Neoliberal social values are evident as manifested in the writings of the President of the Republic of Peru in its policy decisions taken by Supreme Decrees, as in a video produced by an economist who criticises the socioeconomic bases of the forest, particularly the collective ownership of land. The author thus relativised and denounces fanatical optimism and narrow positivism from the defenders of the dominant neoliberal ideology. He lists a number of social problems caused by the unrestricted application of the neoliberal doctrine of the North and believes that an effort is needed to understand the otherness and specificity of forest culture, namely the construction of a society model based on social values different from those of the dominant system.

The contradiction between the processes of subordination of the ancestral people of Latin America and their historic emancipatory struggle is studied by Edgar Esquit (2010). The author

discusses the construction of concepts by the indigenous Kaqchikel in their everyday life and the political struggle in the field of power in Guatemala in the 20th century. He argues that the history of the country's national training Mayans, in general, and in particular Kaqchikel, had positioned them politically to consolidate concepts and practices that helped define the subordination and struggles for emancipation. These concepts were built in the complex relationships that Kaqchikel or the Mayas had with the authoritarian state, the economic elites, peasants and other ethnic groups. At the same time, the concepts were modelled when the indigenous people had contact with liberalism, the national and global economy as well as political and religious organisations. Finally, the author explains the relation to the historical formation of colonial and neocolonial in which the formation of the Guatemalan state and the nation was based, highlighting the ways in which the Mayas have defined their place and their struggle in the context of national and state training Guatemalan.

These studies, carried out in different national contexts in Latin America, show a critical conception of intercultural emerging from ethnic uprising of people's ancestors, who were historically colonised and subordinated in the process of constitution of the nation-states. On the one hand, this historical process configured the independence of the American territories in relation to their colonial powers. It maintained the subordination and the political and cultural invisibility of indigenous people. States were formed based on cultural racism which recognises only one national identity, that incorporates the interests of the colonial elites to maintain control and the concentration of economic power and political capitalist.

Indigenous and Intercultural Educational Policies

Intercultural policies of the nation-state are presenting provocative issues also from an educational standpoint. The new challenges that interculturallity brings to the teachers are analysed by Nicanor Rebolledo (2012). The author discusses some angles of the debate in Mexico over the definition of the concept of intercultural education and the implementation of some innovative education programs based on this approach. His analysis of intercultural teaching experiences and practices of teachers is based on field data collected in public schools located in poor neighbourhoods of Mexico City, where there is a mix between poverty and ethnicity. Those schools are trying to accomplish affirmative action, incorporating indigenous students to teach new values of coexistence in the school. However, teachers are struggling to achieve educational goals. From an ethnicity standpoint, these studies indicate that when aboriginal students are included in schools (such as in Mexico), this challenges educators to teach new values of coexistence. It also problematises understandings about the coexistence between different cultures in social and educational contexts.

In the case of Brazil, Telmo Marcon (2010) discusses the prospects of indigenous education in the context of affirmative action policies and the Brazilian legislation concerning indigenous education. He notes that the changes in the educational policy formally recognise the diversity and ethnic and cultural plurality of the Brazilian society. Regarding indigenous people, the 1988 Constitution and the 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education in Brazil give important steps in formulating general principles aiming at a differentiated education, bilingual and intercultural. However, the author questions to what extent and in what way the legislation on indigenous intercultural education was constructed in dialogue with different sociocultural groups.

The challenges of establishing a critical dialogue between the different socio-cultural subjects in defining educational policies result from the lack of recognition of indigenous identity, with these people regarded as foreigners in the land of their own ancestors. A reflection of this issue is presented by Valdo Barcelos and Sandra Maders (2012). The authors analyse the cultural processes that led to the natives of Pindorama (Brazilian aboriginals) to feel strangers on their own land. They show that the question of being "foreign" is not merely a geographical dimension, as was thought until recently. In today's society, with the facilities to access to information, whether over the Internet, mobile phones or by means of transportation, geographic boundaries can be easily overcome. This has changed the

meaning of the term "foreigner". It appears that "being a foreigner" has more to do with the way of being and feeling, rather than with territorial aspects and a certain place.

The structures of subordination and marginalisation of indigenous cultures result in processes of colonisation, whose sociocultural effects need to be recognised and addressed critically. Zayda Sierra et al. (2010) consider the history of schooling which snatched the children from the families of poor sectors and subaltern ethnic groups under the guise of preparing them to improve their living conditions. It has produced more obstacles than opportunities for the most vulnerable communities in society. In fact, the schooling of poor socio-cultural groups contributed to social discrimination by prioritising only the formation of the skills needed for underpaid employment. The schools attended by low-income students are also the most disadvantaged in terms of social, physical and personnel resources.

This outcome has been even more dramatic in indigenous contexts in which schools were established with a colonized and doctrinal perspective, in clear opposition to the ancestors' culture, contributing to the destruction of social cohesion in the family and community. Today, the management of indigenous communities' schools is handed to authorities and indigenous teachers. However, these communities face the historical and social consequences of colonisation. Zayda Sierra et al. (2010) study the potential of the school to contribute to the organisational processes of an indigenous community. They identify the enormous difficulties to reconstruct processes of active participation and autonomy, resulting from both external pressures (e.g. the majority of society and formal education) and internal conflicts. It is painful to recognise critically these internal problems that indigenous people face today, but it is a necessary step to strengthen the field and to deal with the various pressures that affect the lives of indigenous people.

Interculturalism: Reconsidering "Indigenous" Identities

Recognising and interacting with indigenous people as subjects of their story imply that there is a critical review of the imagery produced in the process of colonisation and sustained by the hegemonic culture. The literature has been a powerful device for the construction of social image of the colonised people as "Indians". In this sense, the article by Leandro Belinaso Guimarães and Maria Lucia Wortmann (2010) discusses the ways in which the Amazon rainforest was described in the early 20th Century travel literature by Euclides da Cunha. The article focuses mainly on the motivations of trip to the forest. They argue that it was at the time that there was a need to incorporate the Amazon rainforest in the world as a disenchanted, chaotic, barbaric and savage environment. It was necessary to delete or rewrite a travel literature of the 19th Century that marked the forest as idyllic, peaceful and charming. Thus, a discontinuity between the travel literature of the 19th Century (especially one that suffered heavy contamination with the romantic "aesthetic of the sublime") and the literature Euclides da Cunha pointed about the Amazon, inaugurates the different ways of seeing the forest and the people who live in it, indicating that they were made and positioned relative to their race.

This perspective applies in deconstructing the logic of coloniality, which has set up relations with the ancestral peoples in Latin America. Assuming this intent, Valeria Aparecida Calderoni and Adir Casaro Nascimento (2012) developed a reflection on the relationship of the logic of coloniality to the legitimacy of traditional knowledge in indigenous schools in the villages. They address the challenges posed to indigenous education as the negotiation and translation between traditional and western knowledge. They point to the importance of a revision of colonial thought, in particular the need for an epistemological redefinition of legitimated knowledge and question beliefs that simply formalise indigenous education. Within a critical intercultural perspective, they advocate the importance of considering the complexities and ambivalences produced in the encounter with different intrinsic knowledge to the educational process.

In particular, Jacques Gauthier shares the understanding that the oppressed have knowledge that is unknown to other cultural groups, but that can be made explicit through intercultural dialogue. Each group (academic or popular) shows the other what it does not see and cannot see. The "concept

of dialogicity expresses this double need for a mutual sensitive listening and a mutual criticism of the illusions and blindness that existed before epistemological ruptures" (Gauthier, 2011, p. 49).

In the critical intercultural interactions "decolonization and Indigeneity are not merely reactionary nor in a binary relationship with colonial power. Decolonization is indeed oppositional to colonial ways of thinking and acting but demands an Indigenous starting point and an articulation of what decolonization means for Indigenous peoples around the globe" (Sium et al., 2012, p. 1). In addition to the awareness of the state of coloniality and its total critical rejection, decoloniality implies the affirmation of the "non-colonial" (Valencia, 2015, p. 12, footnote 2), understood as creative and critical self-determination of conscience and collective constitution of social, cultural and political contexts, affirming singular sensibilities, and not only as dialectical refutation of dominant patterns. From a non-colonial perspective, indigenous methods, peoples and lands play a leading role in promoting decolonization processes. Thus, the epistemic listening of non-colonial ancestral worldviews, through dialogical interaction with the ancestral peoples, is the condition for us to deconstruct coloniality and learn from the ancestral peoples to empower non-colonial forms of knowledge and power, of being and living.

LEARNING FROM THE ABYA YALA[1] PEOPLES

The interaction of native peoples with the national states is extremely complex and presents profound intercultural challenges. Ancestral peoples on the American continent were subjected to genocides which constitute a paradoxical dimension of the globalization process in the modern colonial world system. By implementing and expanding the capitalist mode of production through the exploitation of natural resources and the submission of workers, the modern colonial world system has been promoting the systematic destruction of ecosystems, as well as of their ancestral guardians, the aboriginal peoples and cultures.

Thus, in this tragic context, the original peoples develop different processes of resistance, resilience and re-existence. Their ancestral ways of production and lifestyle teach us to take care of "Mother Earth", so that she can continue to nourish all beings in nature. This way of life sustains planetary coexistence, present and future, between human and different living and natural beings. Critical intercultural dialogue with indigenous peoples implies deconstructing colonial processes and principles and promoting the re-existence of non-colonial ways of being and living, as well as of power and knowledge. Decolonializing implies an intentional project and a continuous and insurgent process of intercultural dialogue and cooperation, which reinvents non-colonial ways of life.

However, today indigenous peoples are more vulnerable than ever, facing the offensive – strategically driven in the Covid-19 pandemic context – from economic and political large projects that hinder the processes of demarcation and autonomy of indigenous territories. Heck et al. (2012, p. 25) explain:

Initiatives aimed at the international market meet the expectations of powerful economic corporations, especially transnational ones, in the areas of mining, oil and gas, the monocultures of soy, sugar cane, livestock, cellulose, agrofuel production, logging and other natural resources. Also, big construction companies that benefit, donate generous amounts of money to support the electoral campaign of political parties, with the certainty that they will get everything back, in double. The project portfolio of IIRSA (Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America) is part of the PAC (Growth Acceleration Program) in Brazil – the construction of hydroelectric plants, transmission lines, roads, railways, waterways, ports and airports, communication systems. IIRSA brings with it a conception of development, understood as economic growth, from the over-exploitation of natural resources and feeding unsustainable consumption patterns, to ensure capitalist accumulation.

Indigenous peoples who, based on their ancient experience, have established a harmonious relationship with the land, question such a predatory logic (Indigenous Peoples' Resolution in Heck et al., 2012, p. 25):

We are children of "Pachamama", not its owners, nor dominators, sellers or destroyers. Our life depends on it and this is why for millennia we have built our own forms of the so-called "development" – Sumaq Kawsay/Sumaq Qa-maña. Our Well-Living as a legitimate alternative to well-being in balance with nature and spirituality is far from IIRSA, which wants to convert us into "transit" territories for goods, mining holes and polluted rivers of oil.

This worldview underlies the concept of "Well-Living" – "Buen Vivir" (or "Vivir en Plenitud") in Spanish, "Sumak Kawsai" in Quechua, "Suma Qa-maña" in Aymara, "Kvme Felen" in Mapuche, "Tekó Porã" in Guarani. In general, the term means "the good way of being and living", that is, living and learning in harmony with nature. This wisdom is present in all Amerindian cultures and is adopted in the Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia (Gudynas, 2011). It is an alternative to conventional ideas about development (Gudynas, 2015) that leads us to understand that the relationship between all beings on the planet has to be seen as a social relationship between subjects, in which culture and nature merge into humanity.

Most cultures originating in Brazil also understand the Earth as a Mother. The Mother protects and promotes life through gift and reciprocity. Nature makes human life possible. By reciprocity, human beings are invited to care for and protect nature. There is no duality between society and nature and no commodification of social life and nature (Gudynas, 2016). Melià (2013, p. 194) clarifies:

Good life is when there is harmony with nature and with community members, when there is enough food, health and tranquility, when the "divine abundance" allows the economy of reciprocity, the "jopói", that is, "open hands" from one to the other.

The principles of "Well-Living" are expressed synoptically in the concepts of *relationality, integrality, complementarity* and *reciprocity*. *Relationality* refers to the interdependence between all elements of social, natural and supernatural reality, interconnected in order to complement and self-regulate. The second concept refers to *correspondence* or *integrality*: the harmonious relationship between the components of reality corresponds to a matrix inherent in the set of all existing beings. *Complementarity* indicates that dualities (in which Western logic emphasizes the opposition and mutual exclusion) are understood as relations between elements that, when differentiating, are mutually complementary and essential for living. Thus, each element or dimension of the cosmos-system, as well as the others from which they are differentiated and excluded, represents necessary forces that coexist, relate and must remain balanced. The continuity of life depends on the opposite energies which complement each other. *Reciprocity* establishes that each action corresponds to a reaction, both in the relationships between human beings and in their relationships with the universe. The practice of reciprocity is essential to maintain the balance and fluidity of community interactions (Macas, 2014; Walsh, 2013).

This way of well-living in harmony in society and with nature is found in different ways in various ancestral peoples and cultures. The Mapuche people in Patagonia define their life system, emphasizing the connection between the sovereignty of the territory and the balance of the relationship between human beings (CMN, 2010, p. 12):

KVME FELEN is the way of life of the Mapuche People, which means being in balance with oneself and with others NEWEN, as part of the WAJ MAPU. The KVME FELEN is to live in harmony from the IXOFIJ MOGEN, taking up the AZ MAPU, the ancestral Mapuche principles of circular, holistic

and natural ordering; resuming the awareness that the person is one more NEWEN in the IXOFIJ MOGEN, never superior to anyone, only with a different role. Hence the importance and centrality of the territory for our identity and worldview; our origin, our being, and it is from here that we exercise our government through AZ MAPU, as an ordered whole. We want to Live Well, from what we were ancestrally and from what today we consider necessary for our people. This means that the KVME FELEN implies both recovering and strengthening our KIMVN, RAKIZUAM, PIAM, WEWPIN, VLKANTUN, MAPUZUGUN and IXOFIJ MOGEN.

In this holistic perspective, the original Andean peoples recognize the fundamental importance of the Earth, of nature, with a living being and person, generator of life and human cultures. As the indigenous leaders in the National Congress of the Association of Peasant-Farmers (Asociación de Usuarios Campesinos, ANUC), Colombia said in 1971: "The earth is a person, it is our Mom who protects us and gives us the joys in art, in music, in rituals and in the sadness that life causes us" (Green, 2006, p. 131-141).

These traces of ancestral worldviews of the ancestral peoples of Amerindia show evidence of similar epistemological principles as aboriginal peoples from other continents, including among Australian aboriginal peoples, who have also historically been subjected to different colonization processes. Indeed, Irene Watson, an author belonging to the Tanganekald and Meintangk peoples, Aboriginal people from southern Australia, explains how the search to write about her history and context allowed her to escape the colonial mold that had completely transformed the life of her people: "We live and have a voice, which is working to decolonize the colonial project" (Watson, 2015, p. 23). Indigenous peoples see and live the land as a relational being, sustained in relationships of reciprocity and responsibility: "We live as a part of the natural world; we are in the natural world. The natural world is us. We take no more from the environment than is necessary to sustain life; we nurture ruwe as we do ourself" (Watson, 2015, p.15).

This view of the land, the notion of an existential unity that people share with all natural elements is a relational philosophy that we find among many indigenous peoples in the world, such as the worldviews of "Well-Living" of the peoples of Abya Yala. Watson indicates some fundamentals of indigenous knowledge: "obligations to renew land, balance and renewal, lateral thinking, consensus, reciprocity, justice, harmony, relationships, eternal time" (Watson, 2015, p.14). They are very different from the European worldview founded on "land ownership, progress, accumulation, control, linear thinking, hierarchical patriarchy, one-way exchange , adversarial punishment, binaries, linear or machine time" (Watson, 2015, p.1). Indigenous worldviews imply a sustainable way of life: "Indigenous knowledges, unlike those of Europe, carry obligations and responsibilities, such as custodial obligations to ruwe that bind future generations" (Watson, 2015, p.1). This view of life and nature contrasts with the conceptions in Western Eurocentric cultures where nature is conceived as an object to be dominated, appropriated and commercialized. The modern-European way of looking at the world justifies a process of predatory exploitation of the environment, as well as of the workforce to carry out private capital accumulation. Such a system is now in a deep crisis, as is the worldview and the ideologies that justify it.

The ancestral worldviews of the original peoples integrate the biophysical, human and spiritual dimensions. They offer a perspective that can contribute to overcome the impasse in which Western cultures and the capitalist system find themselves today with regard to sustainability of life and the ecosystem on the planet.

CONCLUSION: INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN NON-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

Deconstructing the colonial matrix of power implies to disarm the device "race", which has been historically triggered for distribution, domination and exploitation of the world's population in the

context of the global capitalist-work. Different social movements that exist rhizomatically, that is in multiple and non-hierarchical ways, in today's world are developing decolonial strategies. The rebellion of the colonised peoples' ancestors, particularly in Latin America, question the racist assumption and the monocultural character of national states. It denounces the latent violence and the dominant neoliberal ideology that favour the maintenance of control and concentration of economic and political power in the hands of hegemonic capitalist sectors. Indigenous peoples critically recognize the processes of subordination to which they were historically subjected and fight to strengthen their identities and self-manage their territories. Subordinate ethnic groups are mobilised in the quest to rebuild relationships of justice and equity among different socio-cultural groups in the management of life and the environment, discussing the theoretical and legal bases of the national state intercultural projects. This highlights the need to develop new perspectives of power, which deconstruct the market logic and capitalist hegemony and aim to build participative democratic relationships, based on social justice and consistent with the interests of the whole of humanity and autonomy of each sociocultural group.

Recent educational policies, in fact, formally recognize cultural diversity and promote policies and intercultural bilingual education. However, these policies have been built without a dialogue with interested minority sociocultural groups. The citizenship of indigenous peoples is still not properly recognized. "Indigenous" peoples identified as "savages" (being peaceful or barbarians) are still perceived as "foreigners" in their own country. The colonial educational and sociocultural processes invalidate their ancestral cultures undermining social cohesion and generating internal conflicts that weaken their ability to withstand the pressures of a hegemonic society.

From the point of view of knowledge, it turns out that the racist meanings attributed to the native people bring an intercultural interaction between traditional and western knowledge. It is therefore necessary to reframe epistemological knowledge that deconstructs the modern colonial assumption of the "universality" of "science" and consider the complexities and ambivalences produced in the encounter between different cultures and knowledge.

Educational practices, not only within the school context, are challenged in a decolonial perspective of knowledge to contribute in the process of revitalization of cultures and identities of indigenous people. Research shows that in seeking to recover traditional culture and critically appropriating Western cultural practices, indigenous people are trying, in interaction with other socio-cultural groups, to understand the multiple meanings, sometimes paradoxical, of the intercultural mediations with societies in which they live and draw their intercultural strategies.

The intercultural strife, which is stoked in the context of economic, communicational globalization and intensified in the pandemic context, challenges each group to reflect and take its own limits and thresholds in intercultural relationship with others. This implies decolonializing paradigms of knowledge constituted by modernity. The border thought, in effect, puts into question the modern ideas of a universal and unique culture. This emergence of multiple paradigms challenges different socio-cultural subjects to reciprocal recognition and solidarity between different ways of being–feeling–thinking–acting with their relationship with society and the environment. Through a critical intercultural dialogue with indigenous peoples, we can learn from their cosmologies to promote decolonial and non-colonial projects in the educational field and to strengthen social political movements in their struggles to build sustainable ways of life in the contemporary world.

In addition to the modern Euro-descending conception of binary opposition between nature and society, "Well-Living" – cultivated by people from the Abya Yala, as well as by people from other continents – promotes the ancestral relationship between biophysical worlds, human and spiritual that supports the integral life systems of ancestral peoples. Revaluing this holistic relationship, woven through dialogical community practices integrated with the natural world, is the condition that makes it possible to deconstruct the racist and speciesism matrix which constitutes colonial power relations. In particular, it implies reconfiguring the State's legal-political relations, in addition to the imposition of monocultural nationalism. It implies making intercultural coexistence feasible, valuing differences

as potentiators of critical and creative social relations between different social subjects and between their respective cultural contexts. In this sense, countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador, driven by the struggles of ancestral peoples, have been incorporating the principles of "Well-Living" of the rights of "Mother-Earth" into their political organization of the State.

This political transformation requires changes in the modern-colonial matrix of knowledge-power itself. Recognizing the uniqueness and relativity of occidental cultures and sciences, deconstructing the myth of their universality, is the condition for recognizing the epistemic rationalities historically developed by ancestral communities and popular movements, in order to establish critical dialogues and mutually enriching interactions with them.

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ENDNOTE

[1] The expression Abya Yala (which means in the language of the Kuna people "land in its full maturity") has been increasingly used by the peoples of the Amerindian continent with the aim to build a feeling of unity and belonging to the ancestral peoples who were historically submitted to Iberian colonization. In the same way, the Guarani, together with the different Brazilian indigenous peoples, conserve the Pindorama nation and its Tekó Porã culture in opposition to the stereotype of "Indian", attributed to them by the Portuguese colonizers. Pindorama (etymologically in Guarani meaning "palm region") is a designation of the mythical place of the Tupi-Guarani peoples, which would be a land free from evils (Clastres, 1978).

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