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The indigenous "*Bolsa Família*" (Family Allowance): monetarization, income redistribution, and the social life of the Rikbaktsa, Brazilian Amazon

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Abstract *Primarily since the early 2000s, Indigenous peoples in Brazil have become beneficiaries of social security and income transfer policies, such as the program known as Bolsa Família (Family Allowance). Few field studies have evaluated the magnitude and significance of monetarization in Indigenous social lives and economies. To this end, between 2019 and 2020, the present work conducted an ethnographic study and survey in two villages of the Rikbaktsa people in the Brazilian Amazon. The quantitative results showed the social dissemination of money from governmental Programs and other activities, producing marked income classes. Important transactions were not captured, considered as "helps" that could not be denied by those with a given amount of money. Like an Indigenous "Bolsa Família", hybrid resources were redistributed in a heated-up village market, counteracting socioeconomic differences and unequal conditions. The discussion takes place in a globally unfavorable sociopolitical context that exacerbates historical inequalities expressed in the living and health conditions of Indigenous peoples. This research contributes to the production of data and the proposal of culturally sensitive methodologies to estimate and enable the governance of public policies for/by Indigenous people, which are recommended to reverse these inequities.*
Key words *Indigenous People, Public Policy, Evaluation methodologies, Health Inequity*

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Introduction

The trajectories of Indigenous peoples facing nation-states intertwine their resistance with violent and unfinished colonial histories, cyclical epidemics, and marginalization, with serious and lasting effects on their lives[1,2]. Recognizing this complexity, recent studies have deepened ideas that are key to the COVID-19 pandemic: to understand and transform the health situation of Indigenous peoples, it is necessary to articulate their participation, different dimensions, disciplines, and sociopolitical aspects in the critical review of a body of policies that affect their lives, with racism consolidated as a structural determinant of their health conditions in Brazil[2-4].

As a subsidy to this effort, this article is part of a broad project on the protagonism of Brazilian Indigenous peoples in the achievement of specific health policies and public information systems[5], resulting from a national ethnographic study on Indigenous perspectives concerning government policies with income support. Another five studies involved peoples in different regions and researchers with long-term experience with them[6-8].

Especially at the turn of the century, Indigenous people became beneficiaries of social and welfare policies and Programs, originally designed for poor non-Indigenous people, due to the serious disparities in morbidity and mortality[2,4] and, above all, low income. Culturally undifferentiated, there has been no review of their objectives, criteria, and means of access by Indigenous people[6,9].

Like the Programs, their evaluation and renewal methodologies are disparate and rather insensitive to capturing the specificities of the plural ways of life of Indigenous people in the country and in Latin America[10-13]. Distanced from field studies, impersonal databases, surveys, and other quantification instruments inform decision-making and governance[11,12].

My ethnography begins in the year 2000. It was the beginning of a life and work relationship with the Rikbaktsa, around 1,800 people living in 39 villages in the Juruena River basin, in the Brazilian Amazon region[14]. Newly achieved specific health and education policies were also beginning to employ Indigenous people[5]. Retirement pensions and maternity financial assistance (*salário maternidade*) ~~pay~~ were subtly reaching their villages and, a little later, the income transfer program nationally known as "Bolsa Família"[6].

After two decades and considering the 1,693,535 Indigenous people living in and/or in transit between Brazilian villages, communities, and cities, it is estimated that there is a greater circulation of money from programs, salaries, and other sources[15]. Little is known about these profiles to date.

The 2010 National Census recorded that half of all Indigenous people aged 10 or over received no income[16]. When in Indigenous Lands, the majority had no income. The participation of informal sources, such as collective work or community redistribution circuits, continues to challenge the task of improving their recognition, welcomed by the long-awaited 2022 Census[15,16].

Income is an important indicator for assessing and/or improving the health conditions of Indigenous people in Indigenous Lands and, above all, in cities[17,18]. However, the parameter disregards at least the weight of the little-known "native economic modalities"[18] (p.40), as well as other dimensions involved in their notions of well-being[11-13].

There are few studies on the effects of money and the market among Indigenous people, nor on their community relations, food economies, and ways of exploring and preserving their territories[6,13]. If we consider field studies and a methodological reflection on how to shed light on the phenomenon, even from their perspective, they are practically nonexistent[11,12].

Through a diachronic ethnography, I explored how money from income transfer policies and other sources behaves in the social life of the Rikbaktsa peoples. The ethnographic methodology is combined with the application of a survey to, in addition to estimating amounts, assess their accuracy in capturing and expressing other aspects relevant to their community relations, which are key to this article.

Native concepts addressed in other works[19,20], such as notions of *beauty, help, exchange, buying,* and *selling* (in italics because of approximate translations), are subjected to new scrutiny in this ethnography as regards the interfaces between money and the desirable way of life of the Rikbaktsa. Amid adverse sociopolitical conditions and the distortion of Indigenous rights in the country[2,3], the analysis reinforces the importance of data production and specific and participatory methodologies for the governance of public policies and the reduction of global inequities in their living and health conditions[1-3,11,21,22].

Methodology

This study involved two fieldwork stages between April 2019 and March 2020, totaling 70 days. The first stage involved two villages, combining classic ethnographic strategies, such as sharing daily activities and rituals, conversations, and semi-structured interviews, with the application of a digital survey, consisting of five blocks of questions that had been previously developed and discussed among the researchers of the national study.

The second stage, mainly ethnographic, took place in the village where I spent the most time with the Rikbaktsa over the last 20 years. The intention was to provide a diachronic view of the productive activities and forms of their daily sociability, as well as to identify possible contrasts in the ethnographic and numerical results between the villages studied.

As a general guideline for the study, a survey was applied to all households and individuals, aged 16 or over, in the two villages, located in different Indigenous Lands. The selection criteria were qualitative, such as their different sociodemographic profiles, access to regional markets, and even my differential relationship of proximity to them.

With Indigenous assistants also acting as translators, if necessary, I completed a total of 34 household questionnaires and 95 individual questionnaires, always informing that everyone was free to opt out or stop participating at any time if they wished, without prejudice. Three other households were absent and one refused to respond; thirteen people were out of the house or declined.

The ethnographic emphasis and respect for the pace of the interviewees allowed the survey to last from a few hours to two periods of the day, depending on the number of residents, our degree of proximity or their willingness, which was always welcome, to talk about the topics raised. The questions aimed to characterize the socioeconomic characteristics of the households, estimates on the presence of social policies, and the composition of the money in circulation, but also to capture perceptions about their sociability and food economies[6]. One block was inspired by the discussion on the applicability of the concept of food security[6,11], targeting access, sufficiency, and satisfaction with the food in the households, in given periods of time.

The study was previously discussed with leaders and was authorized by the Rikbaktsa Indigenous Association (ASSIRIK), the Rikbaktsa Indigenous Women's Association (AIMURIK), and the Tsirik Association of the Japuíra Indigenous Land. The research was authorized by the National Ethics and Research Committee (CAAE 61230416.6.0000.5249), as well as by the then National Indian Foundation (No. 11/AAEP/PRES/2018).

In accordance with Resolutions 196/1996 and 304/2000 of the National Health Council and the determinations of the National Research Ethics Committee, community informations were provided and work was authorized in the two villages, through a Collective Free and Informed Consent Form, signed by their respective chiefs.

Leaves: of distributive concentration

In the northwest of Mato Grosso, the three Rikbaktsa Indigenous Lands are wedged by the growing urbanization of settlements, livestock farming, and mechanized monocultures. More than a hundred hydroelectric plants and large infrastructure projects are underway or planned for the region[14]. Suffering from their effects, the Indigenous people have not yet exploited timber, minerals, and other strategic commodities from the Amazon.

The participation of money – *okyry saro*, a type of vegetable leaf – in the Rikbaktsa life was striking. The total amounts declared in the survey were significant, given what we know about income among Indigenous people. Few interviewees said they had no monthly income (7%).

The distribution of income was unequal, suggesting the formation of two large and distant classes of monthly income, one of which earned 1,000 reais or more (34%) and the other, up to 599 reais (around 38%). A minority had intermediate incomes, between 600 and 999 reais (around 7%).

The coincidence between the survey and the Brazil nut harvest may have increased the volume and spread of money among interviewees of different ages. The only extractive product sold, it accounted for about 1/3 of the money in circulation, and could be sold even by young, single, and recently married women and men.

More than half of the Indigenous people sold handicrafts or their components, some of them very young and theoretically without access to wages or programs. There was an intense amount of trading in pieces with industrial beads, but mainly in vegetable beads and artisanal sculptural miniatures made from coconuts from various

palm trees, tortoise and armadillo shells, chestnut hedgehogs, and other materials.

Wages or social policies accounted for a little over half of the money collected. No beneficiaries of any type of donation or from the Food Acquisition Program, Permanence and support Grant (*Programa Bolsa Permanência*), for students in higher education (despite their high level of education), among other government subsidies, were identified. Around 26% of those interviewed received social benefits, the majority earning up to 298 reais per month (88%). Of these, almost half received no more than 182 reais.

If monetization was advancing, and the survey suggested the existence of two very unequal income classes, its quantitative concentration did not mean major material and asset differences between households. There were few cell phones, generally owned by young people. Televisions and stoves, and more recently, blenders, used for *chichas* (a drink made from wild berries and tubers), were the most common household appliances. Few homes had freezers and refrigerators.

Outboard motors were communal. Some young people might have motorcycles. One or two teachers or salaried workers might have cars, in the village with land access.

Firearms were one per household or not even that. They were lent, sometimes in exchange for bullets or for part of the game captured, and they also hunted with arrows.

The situation, as we will see here, contrasted with cases such as that of the A'uwẽ Xavante, where households have socioeconomic differences expressed in unequal access to food from the indigenous gardens and goods[6]. Or, for the Kayapó A'ukre, where household income defines their access to private health services[23].

Detecting more than just income from programs, the hybrid composition of circulating money called for an understanding of monetization that was not only quantitative, but also ethnographic.

Indigenous Peoples and the Market Dilemma

There are few studies on monetization among Brazilian Indigenous peoples[6]. Going beyond positive native management, research generally describes inadequate conceptual, bureaucratic, and logistic conditions for Indigenous people to access and maintain social programs[6,9,24].

Bureaucratic requirements force Indigenous people to make long, costly, and arbitrarily frequent trips to cities and to come into contact with non-Indigenous people. Unfavorable sanitary conditions from their villages are aggravated along the pilgrimages, hunger and unhealthy accommodation conditions, commercial exploitation, and the discrimination experienced in Amazonian cities, markets or public offices[9,24].

With the strong involvement of Rikbaktsa organizations and communities in the logistics of these trips, these situations rarely appeared in the field. The relative magnitude of the amounts and the money routes brought my study closer to ethnographies on how monetization has or has not impacted Indigenous people's modes of production, food systems, and community and kinship relations[6-8,25-28].

Ethnographic studies, in general, expect that access to money and the market will have harmful effects on the lives of Indigenous people living on Indigenous Lands[23]. Their potentially deleterious effects haunted contemporary ethnographies on monetization, without, however, deserving descriptive emphasis.

Below, I will provide an instrumental characterization of some of these works, aimed at highlighting ethnographic specificities of monetization among the Rikbaktsa.

In Gordon's pioneering analysis of the Xikrin-Mebêngôkre, the large sums of compensation for undertakings in their territories were completely absorbed by the logic of kinship[28]. An expected corruption of community relations did not occur there, as the expected losses were modulated by the harmonious imperative of relations between relatives, a domain described by the author as that of "identity" and "sharing"[28] (p.293).

A more recent study on the Kalapalo people of the upper Xingu treats goods as a novelty[27]. Money, however, had little expression in the values transacted between relatives. These operations, despite this fact, (still) contrasted with the "impersonality" of the capitalist market, being more "qualitative" and "personalized", in the author's terms[27] (p.184).

On the one hand, there were harmonious and sensitive exchanges, based on interpersonal relationships and kinship. On the other, there were those derived from calculation, understood as impersonal and egoistic, typical of the market. The emergence of rational calculation in relations between relatives, fracturing their presumed harmony, is taken as the potential measure of the effects of money, something not detected by studies.

One study among the Kĩsêdjê, north of the Xingu National Park, proposes an innovative way

to specifically capture the impacts of *Bolsa Família* on their consumption and subsistence practices[25]. The criteria used by Indigenous people to decide what to consume and how much to invest or not in productive activities, in terms of allocation of time and pleasure and/or prestige associated with them, were contrasted with the efforts required to receive the money, such as monitoring the health of women and children, which was conditional to the Program. Its effects, which the author admits are potentially null, positive or negative, were considered insignificant, reducing investment in less pleasurable or prestigious activities[25].

The Rikbaktsa ethnography challenged the univocal nature of the phenomenon, as has already been recorded for other Latin American Indigenous contexts[13,26]. The money was absorbed into a network of generalized generosity but, as we will see, not spontaneously altruistic or naturally harmonious. Diplomatic and calculating skills were used in large-scale transactions between relatives, in an intense "native market", with increasing effects on their lives.

The "native market"

Basics: *Beauty, Discounts,* and *Payments*

Among more than a dozen clans, the Rikbaktsa are divided into two major sociological groups or moieties, named according to their clans, which are considered central to the generation of the beings of the world and to the complex organization of the annual ritual cycle of festivities[19,20]. Marriages should ideally take place between people from different moieties, but without predetermined people.

Patrilineal affiliation, patricentric knowledge about the conception of babies, multiple paternity and its discussions, coexist with matrilocality[19,20]. In other words, when a man marries, he must move to his father-in-law's house or village, while his children will belong to his own clan and moiety, in theory, different from those of his wife and father-in-law.

The praxis of Kinship and daily life require the coexistence of a notable sociological diversity of people with different and sometimes uncertain degrees of proximity. Discussions about paternity(ies) and, with it, about someone's belonging to one or the other moiety, can last a lifetime, contributing to structural and potentially conflictual sociological diversity within and between different villages[19,20].

This way of living kinship is also completely related to the paths and effects of money in their society. But there is a difference between my study and the others.

The Rikbaktsa Kinship is not merely something about completely identified people and naturally harmonious relationships. It requires permanent investment, in different senses. Everyday situations and rituals have always occurred in the tenuous interval between generosity as a rule and conflict as a risk, arbitrated by the native's parameter of *beauty* (tsapyīna)[19].

Beauty could be translated like a full and desirable state of something or of life, with broad applicability. People, food, artifacts, situations – and also transactions – can and should be *beautiful*.

To do this, it is necessary to identify omens and avoid ugly situations or *batsisapy* (something like the denial of that desirable state). They favor encounters with beings from the domain of the dead, the Myrikoso, which can be vengeful or longing relatives, among other kind of beings. If they can be avoided due to someone's expertise in recognizing them, when this situations happen, they will inevitably cause illness and other misfortunes, perhaps even fatal.

Among anomalous signs at rituals and in other everyday occasions, it is considered *ugly* or *batsisapy* when someone does not share resources, especially food (*nahorōīna*) or disrespects other ideal norms of coexistence (*bato spirikpo*), such as denying requests from elders or doing things alone (*zyba*).

Beauty also regulates the smooth running of what the indigenous understand as a kind of *exchange/discount/payment/taking* and/or *help* between relatives by affinity and/or blood. Most of these operations, which seem different to us, are described by the verbal root -akse. A possible translation is "to keep someone or something [from someone]".

The verb can express long-lasting transactions between people, groups, or villages, which must be exchanged/discounted/paid over time: from daily visits to food, feathers, shells, twisted cotton, headdresses, arrows, marriages between groups, rituals, crying (lamentation) at funeral rites, and even enmities. All of this can or should be exchanged/paid/discounted.

These transactions have always acted as mechanisms of redistribution. With the money from the first retirements pensions, in the early 2000s, they mainly bought collective goods and food, which were redistributed communally through *helps* in response to *requests*, as I will explain later. This is what the elderly did by selling

their beautiful featherwork, which was only possible because of their artistic and social skills to mobilize dense exchange networks[14].

In different ways, all those who participated with resources and/or services in the long term of their production were *paid*[14]. These transactions began to associate most of what they consider *purchases* and *sales* between themselves.

What and how *to buy/sell/share: offering* and *inviting*

Some of the resources that were intensely exchanged and shared could be *sold* in the bustling native market. Handicrafts are ordered and offered, especially to relatives who are salaried or receive retirement pensions. The social attitude signals the desire or need for something that the requester believes or knows the requested person has.

The embarrassment drives the acceptance of the transaction – and the *payment*-– of the thing offered, even if unwanted. The person with the money evaluates the transaction: refusing the offer and buying could be *batsisapy* and dangerous.

It is rare for a visit to another house or village to be devoid of purposes related to resources. *Visiting* (*bo nakozoi* - to go and/or see or spy), *inviting*, and *offering* are aspects of a single etiquette. These expressions summarize exchanges and sharing between relatives and households, collective gathering, and harvests. The person who invites also expects to be invited at another time, to exchange, discount, or pay for the invitation.

Inviting people to activities is the beautiful or *tsapyīna* social mode, without using resources alone or walking alone in the forest, risking encounters with the *Myrikoso*. The incidence of these invitations is a socio-indicator of the optimal living and feeding conditions of the Rikbaktsa, with the survey indicating that almost everyone gathered, hunted, or fished collectively.

Involving especially the food and resources produced by them, the situation is of interest for characterizing the indigenous market. Since almost everything was exchanged or shared, not everything could be sold or in any way.

What is not for *sale*: game, country foods, and perspectives of food security

Rikbaktsa game and food – *mydisahawy babata* ("our real food") – are not traded. This would be improper or *batsisapy*. Selling these items was the usual category of accusation in the *ranking* between houses or villages, to say that everything had changed and that no one *gave* anything to each other or *invited* anyone (to go to the gardens), a *batsisapy* situation.

Neither the *survey* or the ethnography did not accuse this transformation. According to the *survey*, game was not sold. Ethnography accused the sharing between houses that traditionally cultivated reciprocity, although with less circulation than 20 years ago. With energy, they speculated, jokingly, about the macaws that someone could have in the refrigerator.

The sale of agricultural products was incipient. Mostly shared, ethnography showed that bananas began to be occasionally grown for sale, which deserves follow-up.

Real foods were evoked by questions inspired by the concept of food security, based on direct access to food, gradations of satisfaction with food, and the intensity and frequency of someone's hunger in the interviewed homes. The situation seemed to provoke estrangement, their answers being accompanied by qualifications not captured by the digital instrument[11].

Despite its strategic importance in contexts of absence and degradation of territories and other situations experienced by Indigenous people in the country[2], asking whether anyone in the household had felt hungry could cause embarrassment. Between silences and reflections, the answers were not unequivocal, "yes" or "no", and were beyond quantitative precision[11]. Over the course of more than 30 questionnaires, I began to record in my field diary the imprecision of the yes or no answers marked in the survey.

I will illustrate this with two situations. Since the Rikbaktsa's hunger generally relates to some food, about 1/3 of the interviewees said they had felt hungry for something they did not have, at some point during the month. The others admitted to being concerned about the end of the food they had bought, almost always adding that they could even worry about running out of goods or even running out of food from the farm, but they "*borrowed*" it from relatives, which is of particular interest to us.

Two interviewees, in unique situations, readily said they had felt "*hungry for food from the farm*". Only one man had gone a day without eating. A salaried teacher and skilled artisan of pieces for sale, his monthly income was substantially higher than that of the others.

Having recently separated and teaching in the village of his ex-wife's relatives, without his own farm, the story recalled a complaint about his young children, ex-brothers-in-law and grandchildren, who did not have farms and with whom he "*had*" to share goods.

People of different ages said that if and when the food they bought runs out, the redistribu-

tion strategies and farm food are activated even more. On the other hand, for those with income, the food they bought runs out, precisely because of the redistributive imperative, as one retiree claimed:

[is there a time when the food runs out in the house?] Oh, there is... a month goes by, we have a lot, the grandchildren who come here... every day, a grandchild comes from here, a child from here... a relative comes, oh my... people come to eat, so we spend a little over a month... from there it starts... then we go to the gardens, see if the corn is still good, see if the potatoes are ready. If they are ready, we start pulling them out and with that we make chicha, we make baked potatoes, like baked potatoes with meat... and so on, until we get another meal...

The different generations valued their *real food* when they spoke of their satisfaction with eating, expressed as a full and unquantifiable state of being content (*kakuīta* [man] or *kakuītatsa* [woman]). On the other hand, if the socio-indicator of invitation was in full flow, the survey and ethnography showed the critical dependency ratio on gardens in the two villages.

In contrast to the approximately 90% of the interviewees who fished, hunted, and gathered in the previous year, just over half worked on farms, of which not all had their own farms. The ethnography showed that some of these people had worked by *invitation*, on other people's farms.

Help to *sell* the fish

If the sale of handicrafts was quantifiable, the contemporary phenomenon of selling fish was not captured by the survey. It was relatively common for retired relatives to be offered fish when they needed money. This meant that they knew that they might have money and thus felt compelled to accept the offer.

Refusing it, especially when it involves food, is *batsisapy* and not recommended. Fish is the only food item traded, but, as we will see, as a form of *help* placed at the service of redistribution, management of surplus money, and correction of inequities between households.

When asked about the purchase/sale of fish to/from someone, it was difficult for them to answer unequivocally yes. They were, rather, *helping* the relative *to sell*. The idea appears in the explanation of a retired woman:

[yes] Fish, if our children have some. We talk to decide. We organize. Chicken or fish from so-and-so, let's... buy a necklace from so-and-so, let's go!?! (...) When we get the money, we spend it on this... helping... there are some people who need it, right... they sell it to us (...) we buy things from some people, crafts, just like she wants, drawings of little fish, it helps, right... I give her some change... or things from the factory [merchandise], then we help her. And I help other people who need it, right!

The only food *sold*, fish is also one of the most shared. Selling it there was not so far removed from exchanging it for something needed, such as things that require money, which is not accessible to everyone, in all age groups and in different amounts, an inequality that can be harmonized through the indigenous market.

When put into circulation in this way, money had a collective impact, diluting the distance and redefining the income classes quantified by the survey.

The indigenous *Bolsa Família* and the paradoxes of redistribution

The *Bolsa Família* "*only helps a little bit*", says a young woman. Another woman with many children, some still children, received little. She worked by invitation on her father's and other relatives' farms. She sold handicrafts and collected chestnuts to buy some "*white food*". When her food ran out, her sister "*fixed it up*": "*She always helps. Then, when she doesn't have anything, she comes. I get more for her, and I ask for more for her*", she tells me.

It was as if a kind of native or indigenous *Bolsa Família*, with careful shared management, redistributed various resources between those with higher incomes and/or farm products and those who needed food, money, and goods. With effects that required different interpretations of the survey numbers, especially regarding the interpretation that implies the existence of different and unequal income classes, it also corrected possible unequal conditions and happiness with real/traditional food, where almost everyone hunts, fishes, and gathers, but some do not work or have farms, despite valuing and eating their products.

This massive redistributive circulation has, however, exacted its price or condition. From a diachronic perspective, Rikbaktsa cosmosociology has preserved or even intensified the vitality of exchanges/help, as well as of the residues of this social etiquette.

If they exchange or receive coconuts, feathers, game, or parts of game from someone, everything will generally be (dis)qualified, in the absence of the donor. They may say that they *only received a little* (*tsikani zyba*) when the donor had a lot,

or only donated coconuts of poor quality. During the act, the donor may (uselessly) protect himself from future tacit accusation, stating in turn that he *only has a little* of what he was almost always forced *to offer*.

If sharing is the good etiquette, it also inevitably provokes those insidious dissatisfactions, which can culminate in undesirable and violent outcomes between them. These are the *batsisapy* or ugly situations.

The paradox also affects the robust financial community aid efforts (mutirões) involving several or all of the villages, depending on the appeal, the survey accusing monthly contributions from almost everyone. These initiatives could generate social discontent due to the low or no contribution of someone, or the ineffective use of money by applicants, potentially fueling conflicts.

This was the case of health campaigns *to help* relatives with medication, consultations, exams and even surgeries, outside of public Indigenous Health Care Subsystem linked to the Brazilian Unified Health System (SasiSUS). The ethnography found sums that could reach 10,000 reais (around USD 1.800), in the case of gallbladder surgeries.

I cannot discuss here what could be an unofficial process of monetization and privatization of indigenous health care in Brazil, since the survey indicates some monthly expenditure in it (around 66% of those interviewed; in one of the villages, the number reached 89%). In addition to being a potential source of conflict, the impropriety did not fail to represent the hyperbole of the productive and redistributive capacity of the Rikbaktsa.

For the older people, the young were the ones most affected by the adverse effects of the money obtained by selling chestnuts or fish. "*They don't go to the "roça" [indigenous gardens]. They don't like it. They didn't learn/obey/respect! [...] batsisapy*", says a retired man and the main provider of farm food in his village.

With an unprecedented influx of money, *help*, gifts, and *sales* have intensified the circulation and redistribution of resources. This dynamic, as we have seen, is closely accompanied by the risk of conflicts. *Batsisapy* situations are multiplying, with misfortunes, temporary or permanent disappearances of people: and homicide among young people.

After searches financed by collective efforts, a child reappeared near the village, dead and with signs of *Myrikoso* action. The extreme case was the abandonment of community life by one of the last recognized shamans, who went into the forest. Large collective efforts hired Nhambikwara shamans for the vain searches. The reports about his tracks and those of the *Myrikoso* were mixed with speculation about the use of his retirement pension by his relatives, without the due return of the food he wanted.

Final considerations

Survey and ethnography agree on the advance of monetization in Rikbaktsa life. Money is added to a previous way of redistributing resources, skillfully managed and mediated by the parameter of the beauty of relationships.

In this way, social life is put at the service of an incessant redistribution and densification of *exchanges/sales/helps*. The ethnographic metric of the numbers is precise. The simple existence of undifferentiated social policies, if isolated from the indigenous management, would tend to aggravate the distributive inequities they aim to combat.

Among a people where a *beautiful* existence depends on mastering the coexistence of different sociological groups, types of beings and uncertain paternities, efficient redistributive social technology has also had worrisome effects. Diachronic ethnography shows, alongside an increase in the dependency ratio of the gardens, social tensions and misfortunes, some fatal, which, if not caused by monetization, have been inflated by it.

Methodologically, the magnitude of the money in circulation and the content of its effects could not be understood through the isolated use of surveys or ethnography. Apart from longitudinal and participatory ethnographic studies, numbers can authorize interpretations and distort ways of life, views on food security, labor, and income profiles among Indigenous peoples or say little about them[29].

Incomparably more robust among non-Indigenous people, data on Indigenous people need to provide public information policies and systems[1,2,18,21]. But distorted images of their problems and perspectives[29] can be just as damaging as their historical and lethal invisibility.

Century-old ideas in the racist national social imaginary have an impact on indigenist policy[21], aggravating violence and making their living and health conditions more vulnerable in Brazil, as elsewhere[1-4]. The large-scale health campaigns, such as the "native market", made possible by the vitality of Rikbaktsa sociocosmology, confront persistent notions that Indigenous people do not

"produce" on their lands, "depend" on the government, and are devoid of specificity.

Mistaken and convenient, such notions have reinforced serious threats to their lives, cultures and especially to the constitutional rights of Indigenous people to the recognition, demarcation, and exclusive use of their original territories[2,3]. There is no well-being or beautiful existence without them.

Contributing to the reversal of this complex and multidimensional weaving was the objective of this transdisciplinary and participatory study, based on a long-term ethnography, in the wake of contemporary recommendations on the social determinants of health inequities among Indigenous people[1-3,11,12]. Their own worldviews, health and well-being notions must be transversal from the design of studies and their methodology to the construction of socio-indicators in the composition of databases in which they can recognize themselves and over which they are sovereign in the governance of public policies[22].

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