

Sensible Co-Labor-Active Methodologies: Producing knowledges ‘together with’ social movements and territories for the paradigmatic transition

Metodologias sensíveis co-labor-ativas: produzir conhecimentos ‘junto com’ movimentos sociais e territórios para a transição paradigmática

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ABSTRACT This essay discusses the methodological dimension in qualitative research in supporting movements of paradigmatic transition in public health. It reflects on the limits, needs, challenges and advances that the authors have been building to ‘work together’ with territories, community organizations and social movements that act within them, based on sensible collaborative methodologies. One of the main objectives of these methodologies involves the power of agency in instituting processes of the subjects who live, work and mobilize within the territories, in particular in recognizing, validating and supporting the production of knowledges aimed at social transformation, the struggle for rights, the search for dignity and well living. From the construction of Sustainable and Healthy Territories in the context of an agenda marked by socio-environmental crises, we propose a retrieval of epistemology with wisdom that combines ontological, methodological, pedagogical, artistic and affective dimensions. In this sense, social transformation also implies changing a hegemonic model of science that, in the name of objectivity, excludes knowledge systems and experiences born in other spheres of community life, including traditional ones. We end with a brief presentation of recent experiences of knowledges encounters and research projects that illustrate the proposed sensible methodologies.

KEYWORDS Epistemology. Sustainable and Healthy Territories. Sociocultural territory. Participatory methodology. Art.

RESUMO Este ensaio discute a dimensão metodológica na pesquisa qualitativa para apoiar movimentos de transição paradigmática da saúde coletiva. Busca refletir sobre limites, necessidades, desafios e avanços que os autores têm construído para trabalhar ‘junto com’ os territórios, as organizações comunitárias e os movimentos sociais que neles atuam a partir de metodologias sensíveis co-labor-ativas. Um dos objetivos principais dessas metodologias envolve o poder de agência em processos instituintes dos sujeitos que vivem, trabalham e se mobilizam nos territórios, em particular, no reconhecer, validar e apoiar a produção de conhecimentos voltados à transformação social, à luta por direitos, à busca por dignidade e do bem viver. A partir da construção de Territórios Sustentáveis e Saudáveis no contexto de uma agenda marcada por crises socioambientais, propõe-se um resgate da epistemologia com sabedoria que alie dimensões ontológicas, metodológicas, pedagógicas, artísticas e afetivas. Nesse sentido, a transformação social também implica a mudança de um modelo hegemônico de ciência que, em nome da objetividade, exclui sistemas de conhecimentos e experiências nascidas em outras esferas da vida em comunidade, inclusive as tradicionais. Encerra-se com uma breve apresentação de experiências recentes de encontros de saberes e projetos de pesquisa que ilustram as metodologias sensíveis propostas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Epistemologia. Territórios Sustentáveis e Saudáveis. Território sociocultural. Metodologia participativa. Arte.

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Introduction: The challenge of learning, producing knowledge and transforming ‘together with’ the territorial subjects

This essay expresses the authors' academic and existential encounter in the construction of what we have recently called sensible collaborative methodologies¹, which seek to integrate epistemological, ethical, ontological and affective dimensions in the production of emancipatory knowledges in the face of the present social-environmental-sanitary crisis. The construction of criteria of scientific quality and objectivity in knowledge production achieved by the epistemological project of the past centuries has contradictorily engendered trenches that separate science from the social transformation objectives precisely at a time when these are most needed. Such trenches are usually expressed through paradoxes wrongly understood and confronted by intellectual models and binary logics of science that prioritize one perspective in detriment of another, for example: thinking-feeling, exterior-interior, scientific analysis-consciousness, distance-proximity, development-involvement, transformation of the other-transformation of the self, specialized reasoning-common sense, scholarly language-languages of life, science-art, among others.

The essay form adopted here, an important modality for social and human sciences, enables a freer and more flexible way of constructing critically-based texts, which bring reflections that can call us for a paradigmatic transition. Our idea of producing an essay incorporates the idea of a narrative review to systematize, in an original and creative way, the authors' academic and activist experience, especially in the past ten years, in the development of sensible and collaborative methodologies.

The term sensible is assumed to characterize methodologies that establish bridges,

necessarily flexible and subtle, between the poles that mark the presented paradoxes. The co-labor-active, purposely with hyphens (hereafter it will be written collaborative), transcends the idea of participation by emphasizing fundamental and complementary collaboration characteristics in the production of knowledges: the copresence or being present in the making, working and acting together, integrating the production of knowledges with social transformation¹. In other words, an exercise of unity in the diversity and of diversity in the unity.

The article presents epistemological and methodological reflections that seek, further than responding in a precise way, to provide tracks to a strategic question for the paradigmatic transition of collective health, especially in the context of this thematic issue on the construction of Sustainable and Healthy Territories (TSS): how can we understand the role of science and the methodological dimension in terms of limits, needs, challenges and advances that have been made to work ‘together with’² the territories, community organizations and social movements directed to social transformation?

According to Machado et al.³, the construction of TSS seeks to contribute to the analysis and operationalization of a wide range of local and global actions conducted by different subjects, such as governmental, science and technology, research and education institutions, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and social movements. Therefore, there is a centrality of the territorial subjects in the construction of the TSS and this implies producing knowledges ‘together with’ these subjects.

Our approach in this article is not specifically directed to the important role of methodology in the construction or evaluation of public policies for the decrease of social inequalities, such as those of health and the performance of the Unified Health System (SUS), in the ambit of territories so that they become sustainable and healthy. Our main contribution, we believe, lies in reflecting on the role of the

academy in working together with the subjects, organizations and movements that live, work, and mobilize in struggles for health, justice, dignity and well-being in territories often vulnerable. It is about movements that act for the recognition of other ways of being, living, producing and relating with nature and the others in community, such as those linked to territories of indigenous peoples, *quilombolas* [descendants of fugitive African slaves, living in isolated rural communities called *quilombo*], peasants or urban peripheries.

The limitations of modern science are becoming increasingly glaring in a world in crisis due to the extremes in which we are living: richness/poverty, abundance/scarcity, offer of new consumption technologies versus degradation of natural resources, authoritarianisms and fundamentalisms in the name of freedom of expression and religion. There are so many contradictions that any scientific innovation seems senseless when not considering deeper and more sensible strategies to face them with wisdom. More than a science of complexity distant from people, we think of a sensible science⁴ that reconnects complexity, simplicity, comprehension to act in reality without being distant from people (individuals and collectives), from life and nature, with their beauties and tragedies, channeling knowledge and action for transformation.

The idea of paradigmatic transition depends on the strengthening of anti-hegemonic instituting processes, which we understand as alternative knowledges and practices that not necessarily seek, as the counter-hegemonic do, to seize power within a socio-political dominant and oppressive system¹. Its objective is to broaden, rather than define or control, emancipatory processes of freedom, self-organization, autonomy and self-determination, involving distinct subjects for knowledge production with consciousness. We consider this perspective as strategic because it facilitates more convergences, rather than destructive disputes, between different movements and social subjects that struggle for dignity.

The article is organized as follows: after this presentation, we discuss the challenge of knowledge drawing on the retrieval of the epistemology and some authors and schools that have been inspiring us in our trajectory in the construction of a proposal to produce 'together with'. In the sequence, we present the urgency of the socio-environmental issue as an important reason for the paradigmatic transition in several fields of knowledge, allying the search of cognitive justice in recognizing other knowledges with social transformations. The proposal of collaborative sensible methodologies is further systematize next, seeking to retrieve the wisdom lost by modern science in objectivity and quality criteria, which became disconnected from nature and community life. Finally, we provide some examples of actions achieved in the past years, as the Encounters of Knowledges and research experiences, which go in the direction of constructing the methodologies that we propose. They highlight challenges and advances in the production of knowledges 'together with', and not only for or on, the territories, their populations, community movements and organizations dedicated to social transformation. 'Producing with' represents the alliance of the academy with the struggles for health and dignity for a more harmonious and healthier life with nature and the human beings among themselves, and for this reason it is so strategic for the paradigmatic and civilizational transition that humanity needs in the context of crisis in which we live.

New knowledge challenge, methodological issue, epistemology retrieval and some inspirations

In order to strengthen working together and the agency power of the territorial subjects, their organizations and movements in instituent processes of social transformation,

we assume that the academy and researchers also need transformation. We have been naming this transformation as decolonize and *coracionar* [a Brazilianization of the concept *corazonar*, of the Andean peoples] the academy¹, especially in the interdisciplinary field of collective health in which we work. This implies advancing in other epistemologies that recognize, validated and support the production of knowledges arising from the struggles originating in the territories and their movements.

As we will see along this article, it is not only a social and political challenge, but fundamentally epistemological, methodological and pedagogical, to surpass the idea of scientific exclusivism as the only space of production and validation of knowledges considered objective and true. The modern scientific spirit and its canons consider as strategic the separation between researcher subjects, elevated to the role of principal cognoscente subjects, and researched subjects who, although bearers of rights and experiences, are considered holders of an inferior statute in their 'lay' capacity to theorize, systematize and analyze reality. The non-specialist subject would tend to mix, dangerously and subjectively from the viewpoint of knowledge, his/her interests and emotions with the actual reality. Due to this, one of the objectives of the methodological design, even when qualitative, would be to prevent this excessive closeness with reality, the subjects, their territories and the senses of their existences and struggles.

Although distanced from the empirical and logical positivism, typical of the quantitative methods of the sciences curiously named 'natural', this assumption remains in the classical methods of social and human sciences, such as the semi-structured interview, the participatory observation and even the action-research. The latter radicalizes cooperative, participatory and dialogical processes involving listening and reception of demands, which aim at resulting in actions for the resolution of collective problems. However, the relationship

between researchers and the participants who represent the problem produces knowledge for, but not necessarily with, maintaining the criteria of definition of the quality of knowledge, ultimately, under the responsibility of the academic researchers.

Although these struggles for transformation are ethically and politically defensible, the activist involvement or frank support of the researcher subject would engender, in the view of the hegemonic scientific canon, a factor of confusion that would affect the quality and objectivity of the scientific study. The proposed academic bifurcation is the impossibility of being at the same place with two different hats, the researcher's and the activist's, and the solution for the dilemma would be to make an option for one of the roles, or strictly separate the places where knowledge is produced and where activism takes place. In order to deal with this, the dominant qualitative methodologies list a set of measures that concretize this separation, in the empirical obtainment of the collected data (such as discourses and narratives of social groups) and, especially, during their analyses.

The distance of the researcher, in different degrees, from the social reality, values and interests at stake of the researched subjects is considered a condition for the quality and autonomy of the scientific work. This article does not aim to explore the numerous sociological currents besides functionalism that produced important advances in the interaction, mediation and interpretation of social and symbolic structures and processes with the empirical field practices in territorial, community and personal levels. What is noteworthy here is the permanence of the separation between researcher and researched subjects-objects in the defense of the researcher's quality and autonomy, which is related to the dominant scientific canon and that limits the possibilities of expanding the epistemic diversity of the world⁵. This implies that theoretical frameworks, objectives, questions and methods of the study should be sovereignly chosen,

ultimately, by the researcher or research team, assuming a certain degree of objective and subjective liberty of these options. This condition, in our evaluation, lies behind several situations of discomfort in the relations between researchers and territories with their movements in struggle for health, dignity and territorial rights and go beyond ethical commitments regarding the return of the research outcomes. It is related to what the epistemologies of the South have called extractivist practices of research², when the objectives, questions, references, methods and applications are not dialogued with and verified by the researched communities and territories.

We understand that the new challenge of knowledge must be updated in relation to Cecília Minayo's proposal, more than 30 years ago, to think the research on health⁶, for it implies how to advance and oppose the scientific canon of good science with objectivity without losing its virtues regarding the urgencies of social transformation of our era. In other words, how to transcend the rigid frontiers of science seeking to overcome the exclusivism of the academic space as unique and legitimate knowledge production system, as well as the trenches existing between the academy, life and social transformation. This is not a new discussion, for it has been occurring in the past decades by several thinkers on philosophy of science, which Nunes⁷ names the retrieval of epistemology. For this author, the epistemological discussion has been going through a process of criticism and transformation that relativizes the exclusivity of science and transfers the epistemic sovereignty to the 'social', reconnecting the policies of knowledge with the rediscovery of ontology to think the social transformation. We consider that the present urgency of the socio-environmental crisis or collapse makes propitious and strengthens Nunes' proposal of epistemology retrieval⁷.

In our understanding, a science at the service of social emancipation means that academic research institutions, either on

collective health or on other interdisciplinary fields of knowledge, must advance in the construction of theoretical frameworks and methodological designs that are able to comprehend and support collaborative and synergic relations with the territorial subjects of social transformation. Respectively 26 and 15 years after the deaths of the Brazilian Paulo Freire and the Colombian Orlando Fals Borda, who left highly significant seminal works on critical pedagogy and participatory action-research, and in the face of several current crises, we believe it is important to update some ongoing contributions of thinkers and research groups in various interdisciplinary fields.

In our case, we privilege articulating collective health with two other fields, political ecology and, especially important for this article, the post-colonial schools, and among them, the epistemologies of the South, whose contributions will be further detailed later on. Besides these fields, we have also been inspired by schools and thinkers who navigate between disciplinary fields drawing on other disciplines and fields. We cite a few notable examples: education through art reflecting together with Paulo Freire on the role of art in the processes of education and training of the human being, such as Ana Mae Barbosa (Movimento Escolas de Arte do Brasil [Movement of Art Schools of Brazil] and the triangulation through reading, making and contextualizing the work) and Herbert Read (art and creativity as discovery of the world and the individual); the anthropology that goes in the direction of interdisciplinarity and interculturality with Roy Wagner (fractal thinking and person, and reverse anthropology), Tim Ingold (creativity, imagination and experience in learning and projecting), Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (Amerindian perspectivism as Amazonian philosophical matrix to think the relational nature of beings); the sciences of life with reflections of biology and ecology with Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (the biology of cognition, life as a process of knowledge drawing on

how living beings apprehend the world) and, more recently, the most important indigenous thinker of today in Brazil, Ailton Krenak.

All these schools and authors have been treading paths to overcome the limits of the specialized science of the past centuries through sensible languages that, without abandoning the intellectual rigor, use philosophy, imagination, experience and art to propose new epistemologies. According to these thinkers, the establishment of theoretical frameworks and standardized methods as an attempt to ensure objectivity, produce replicable universal knowledge and control reality, has distanced the science of life and of consciousness necessary to the needed transformation. In a perspective that we call decolonial, we seek to diversify the interlocution with other theoretical frameworks and organic intellectuals who grew up in cultures and systems of knowledge that differ from the academia, but dialogue with it. This is the case of Ailton Krenak and Nego Bispo, recently studied in a doctorate thesis on collective health supervised by the authors⁸, as well as indigenous intellectuals involved in researches with whom we sought interaction that provides a space for the exercise of perceptive and intuitive internal elements, such as Marcelo Tingui, Iran Xukuru and João Paulo Tukano.

The urgency of the socio-environmental issue and the paradigmatic transition in search of cognitive justice and social transformation

The centrality of the environmental issue and sustainability has been one of the driving elements of the present paradigmatic transition in several fields of knowledge, including collective health. The conception of TSS is one of the expressions of this movement to deal with the urgency of the

environmental⁹ crisis (or collapse) that threatens the continuity of life on the planet. The ecological issue and the criticism of economic growth/development are linked to the idea that we must create alternatives to the two great utopias construed by eastern and Eurocentric modernity, the liberal and the socialist, which guided the dreams and actions of social transformation in the past two centuries¹⁰.

There is a growing global perception, in different regions and societies, that we live a planetary and civilizational crisis that connects distinct crises: social (failure to overcome or worsening of poverty and hunger coexisting with concentration of wealth), democratic (instability of the democratic rule of law and its institutions, driven by the growth of the extreme right and social fascism), environmental (climate changes, destruction and contamination of ecosystems), and sanitary (whose most important expression was the recent COVID-19 pandemic)^{10,11}.

The perception that the planet's survival is more threatened is also aggravated by the dispute between an empire on decline (United States of America) and another one on the rise (China). Fears are strongly resurfacing of a possible world military conflict and a nuclear war, having as a recent and dangerous geopolitical milestone the war between Russia and Ukraine. Besides the military dimension, the planetary character of the crisis results from both the political-economical connections of a globalized world and the increasing local-global escalations of problems, such as the climate changes and the irreversibility of the so-called planetary boundaries.

This is a concept proposed by Rockström et al. since 2009¹², which seeks the global indicators of a safe operating space for humanity and life on the planet. According to those authors, at least three thresholds would have already been crossed in the new geological era named Anthropocene, marked

by the high patterns of production and consumption, industrial agriculture and burning of fossil fuels: i) the climate changes, through the unbalance between the cycles of oxygen and carbon gas; ii) the integrity of the biosphere with the degradation of ecosystems and consequent loss of biodiversity due to species extinction; iii) the biogeochemical cycles of phosphorus and nitrogen, both crucial for the quality of soils and oceans, and growth and survival of living beings. Therefore, abrupt and irreversible changes are already occurring in several parts of the planet. In the abovementioned cases, the levels of changes reached are such that there will be no recovery, as in the case of species that have ceased or will cease to exist.

The environmental crisis or collapse strengthens a convergence of various fields of knowledge, with the environmental sciences (with the support of the health sciences) as an important driving force in the current paradigmatic transition. Social and human sciences fulfil a strategic role in thinking the social transformation, making inevitable the interdisciplinary dialogue between disciplines and fields as a notable feature of the ongoing paradigmatic transition. In Kuhn's¹³ perspective, the idea of paradigm refers to a set of theories, methods and worldviews that during a given period is presented as an hegemonic model of definition of problems and solutions that provide the guidelines for a community of practitioners of a discipline or scientific field. The paradigmatic transition that we observe since the emergence of theories such as that of complexity, articulated to the social transformation and the ecological crisis, has been preparing the ground for the increasing interdisciplinarity and dilution of boundaries between social and human sciences and other fields and disciplines of scientific knowledge, such as that of nature, technologies and life.

In our trajectory, we have found in the work of Boaventura de Sousa Santos¹⁴ an

important reference to think the paradigmatic transition in our era of urgencies. A starting point is the book 'Um discurso sobre as ciências' [A discourse on sciences] of 1988¹⁴, and the notion of paradigmatic transition marks all of his work, later named Epistemologies of the South, whose book with the same title was published in 2008¹⁵. One can consider this notion as one of the strands of the post-colonial schools construed by activist intellectuals working in or originating from colonized regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which became known also as Global South¹⁶. They are intellectuals and strands linked to the criticism of colonial-racist processes and their continuity in the present, and in this way they update the criticism of capitalism drawing on the legacy of colonialism, also named coloniality by the Latin American school, which has been influenced, among others, by the liberation theology. In the twentieth century, several proposals emerged and flourished in the African and Asian contexts drawing on the anti-colonial independence movements, blackness (as Frantz Fanon's singular work), or those called subaltern studies.

For the epistemologies of the South, the main objective of the paradigmatic transition is not to achieve a new general theory, but rather to produce possible convergences between the isolated and singular theoretical objects treated by different disciplines and fields of knowledge that face the dehumanizing and fragmenting reductionism of all forms of logic or empirical positivism, or even materialistic or idealistic mechanistic. A strategy for this is to reduce the hierarchical separation between scientific knowledge and the knowledge pejoratively called vulgar or lay, as popular, situated, traditional or religious.

Several conceptual and methodological proposals of the epistemologies of the South go in this direction, as the cognitive justice, the ecology of knowledges, the intercultural dialogues, the artisanship of practices, and

more recently the non-extractivist collaborative methodologies². All of these proposals support the paradigmatic transition through bringing closer knowledges that explore the plurality and possibilities of new coexistences between knowledge systems within and outside science⁵. In this sense, as the name 'epistemologies of the South' provocatively suggests, the new challenge of knowledge is no longer just an internal task of modern science, with its canons and quality criteria, and became a call to new possibilities of coexistence and renewal drawing on respectful and pragmatic interactions with other knowledge systems originating from social struggles, including those linked to social movements such as indigenous peoples, *quilombolas*, peasants, women or urban peripheries. It is noteworthy that the valorization of the knowledges of the South does not deny the thinking produced in and from Europe in the past centuries of the construction of western modernity. It is about permanently remembering that the Eurocentric perspective and the epistemologies of the North cannot be considered the only foundations of a pretense universality imposing rationalities and worldviews that exclude knowledges and experiences born in the contexts of the Global South⁵.

The conception of cognitive justice is one of the structuring elements of the epistemologies of the South, based on the inseparability of three intertwined dimensions: ontological (meaning and possibilities of being human), epistemological (criteria of construction, validation and legitimation of knowledges), and of power, through either domination or emancipation. The struggles for cognitive justice, a term originally coined by the Indian sociologist Shiv Visvanathan present in the book 'Epistemologies of the South'¹⁴, are about making visible and recognizing subjects, knowledges, experiences, histories and cultures of peoples and populations of the Global South, such as indigenous, Black, *quilombolas* and African descendants, peasant women, women with their different feminisms,

residents of urban peripheries, among others. Making cognitive justice implies necessarily the search for historical justice, i.e., the recognition of other histories made invisible and excluded for having been born and still survive in the Global South. Sometimes, such stories of the territory remain dormant in the form of seed-ruins¹⁷ that await the moment for germinating and updating in the present for a new flourishing drawing on ongoing social struggles, which the epistemologies of the South name sociology of the emergences, expressing experiments that potentiate the transition, both paradigmatic and civilizational.

In order to move paradigmatic transitions occurring in the present time, we have the challenge to construct other quality and legitimation criteria simultaneously epistemic, methodological, ethical and pragmatic that enable the desired connections between different knowledge systems. It is a mission both relevant and complex in a time of denialisms and fake news that spread as a strategy of political manipulation with the support of social networks. To face the proposed challenge, the sense of open science or popularization of science becomes no longer centered and being defined only by the scientific world, but rather drawing on the opening of other knowledge systems seeking transformation, both epistemological and social.

According to the epistemologies of the South, every knowledge system needs to combine two other modalities of knowledge, usually disregarded by science, to foster a high level of dialogue and consciousness: inter-knowledge and self-awareness. Here reside two of the main tasks of the sensible collaborative methodologies: how can knowledge objectivity wish for the comprehension of different conceptions and worldviews – the objective of cognitive justice, inter-knowledge and alterity – and how does the science with consciousness¹⁸ incorporate the body and the affections as constituents of the way of knowing the world in a living and transforming manner. Therefore, the incorporation of the

thinking-feeling, *coracionar*¹⁹ and self-awareness as constituent elements of the sensible methodologies.

Sensible collaborative methodologies: Some references and approaches to retrieve senses and wisdom in knowledge production

With the intention of recognizing the sensible knowledge as epistemic to fundament the sensible collaborative methodologies, in recent years the authors of this article have been intensely involved in various actions in the ambit of researches, publications, encounters and disciplines in the fields of social sciences and collective health, more specifically regarding the emancipatory promotion of health. As part of the sensible methodologies, the actions express encounters and confluences between different subjects, territories, knowledges and experiences.

The authors' work in the ambit of an interdisciplinary research group created in 2018 proposes an intersection between an engaged art and a sensible science, in an exercise of alterity in which both art and science are connected to the transformation and emancipation in a time of crisis and transition. The proposal emerges in the trajectory of the research and activist experience of the second author in the fields of collective health and political ecology, who at a certain moment encounters, academically and existentially, the reflections of the first author and her experiences with education through art. Originally, these experiences come from a center of studies, research and publication of stories of Oral Tradition, the Escola de Arte Granada (EAG) [Granada Art School], a school for storytellers and education through art. It was created under the inspiration of and articulated with the Movimento das Escolas de Arte [Art Schools Movement]. In

1953, a group of educators, among whom Paulo Freire, created the Escola de Artes do Recife [Arts School of Recife]; in 1997, precisely the year of Paulo Freire's death, the first author was among the cofounders of EAG. Both functioned in parallel and complementary to the official education system and in the art-education training of teachers and artists²⁰.

One of the main references in Art Education in Brazil, perhaps the greatest, is Ana Mae Barbosa, Freire's former student; later, Barbosa worked with Freire. In 2021, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) published 'Arte-educación: textos seleccionados'²¹ ['Art Education: selected texts', in free translation] by Ana Mae Barbosa, a work that aims to give voice through art to those excluded from the system and its cultural codes. As time passed, Freire started to spread these methodologies among social groups with vulnerabilities, seeking to fill gaps of the Brazilian educational system, by thinking art, aesthetics, social transformation and consciousness as strategic human dimensions. Freire assumed perception, imagination and creative ability as fundamental elements for his proposal of emancipatory education. Deep changes in reality would simultaneously imply personal, existential and collective changes made pedagogically possible through the oppressor-oppressed dialectics²². Besides the Liberation Theology and Marxism, Freire's ideas are also based also on the North American philosopher John Dewey's²³ perspective of Art as Experience, as one of the inspirations for the paradigmatic transition of Popular Education that Freire himself fostered.

In 2016, the two authors of this article started an immersion into the epistemologies of the South's thinking in a season of almost two years at the Social Studies Centre of the University of Coimbra. Further than a period of in-depth studies, this encounter enabled the integration of three fields of knowledge (collective health, political ecology and epistemologies of the South), providing the

epistemological, theoretical, methodological and pedagogical fundamentals of our subsequent academic work. Furthermore, in the case of the first author, this experience inspired a poetic-theoretical approach of investigation²⁴ that was reflected on the doctoral thesis on documentary cinema as a metaphor of collaborative research in the relationship with collective health.

The work in Coimbra enabled the rediscovery of references within Brazilian social sciences that are important for the methodologies of research on popular education, with emphasis to Carlos Brandão (recently deceased), author of an article on the convergence in social research of the works of Paulo Freire and Boaventura Santos for the construction of a science that does not ‘waste experiences’.

Another approach of this article’s authors has been on diversifying the interlocution with other theoretical frameworks and organic intellectuals emerged and linked through cosmos-visions and social struggles of traditional peoples and communities, especially the original peoples. One example that we are currently studying is the book by João Paulo Tukano, of the ethnic group Yebamasã²⁵, whose original work was selected as the best thesis on Anthropology and Archaeology by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Capes in 2022. Tukano is an indigenous person and PhD in Anthropology; he is a member of an indigenous collective Indigenous Amazon Study Nucleus (Neai), which seeks to create their own concepts based on the teachings of their peoples’ ancestors and their life stories, in dialogue with the academic life’s learnings being achieved by several indigenous persons.

For João Paulo and his relatives, decolonize means first deconstruct the words, and for this there is an effort being constructed to think the indigenous thinking beyond a mere translation, towards what we could call inter-culturalism and ecology of knowledges, building bridges of intelligibility that enable new bases for the intercultural dialogue. For example, by bringing

the meaning of indigenous concepts in the ambit of health regarding the knowledges and practices of the *Kumuã*, whom we call shamans and healers, they became known as indigenous specialists who perform in indigenous medicine. They seek to detach themselves from a certain modern view, anthropological or not, of being indigenous holders of a traditional knowledge from cultural and situated origin, though incapable of comprehending or dialoguing with the scientific knowledges.

In his book, Tukano defends that the medicaments produced by the laboratories referred in the western science and biomedicine express a chemical manipulation of vegetables and minerals. As much as scientists and pharmaceutical technologists, also the indigenous specialists – the *Kumuã* – must know the vegetables and minerals taxonomy; not to indistinctly manipulate and use them, but rather to evoke those elements as substances that cure, within the contexts and situations in which they will be used, either personally, in a group, or environmentally, including a network of beings intertwined by the indigenous cosmos-visions.

In the new intercultural perspective that enables the creation of other grammars as a possibility of comprehension and communication, the indigenous would not be praying, but rather conducting a meta-chemical manipulation of those substances. It is a strategy by which the Tukano people expect to correct the misinterpretation of the indigenous rituals and biases associated by western and academic groups about what are negatively considered as indigenous myths.

This path followed by João Paulo Tukano opens new possibilities to understand the function of the traditional stories and their tellers in the production of knowledges, a theme previously brought by masters of African oral tradition, as the Malian writer Hampaté Bâ. At the same time, it establishes a dialogue with modern thinkers, such as the German philosopher Walter Benjamin, associated with the Frankfurt School. For Benjamin, the

storyteller has its origin in the human need of sharing experiences, not only individual but also collective ones. With his gift and wisdom, the storyteller promotes a listening that enables his listeners to incorporate the narratives to their experiences and, in this way, to continue to share them directly, without intermediaries, with other people in their communities.

In Benjamin's perspective, the art of narrating expresses an important form of wisdom transmission, understood as the knowledge woven in the experience. In the vision that we read in Benjamin, modernity, bourgeois media, scholarly language distant from people's needs, and science with its canons that produce objective knowledge without soul and wisdom, would represent an era that, from its beginning, presented the limits that would decree its own end. The ongoing environmental collapse and books such as Ailton Krenak's 'Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo' ['Ideas to postpone the end of the world', in free translation], represent announcements that characterize a transition era that seeks to retrieve the sense of wisdom and dignity in the production of knowledges.

For the sensible collaborative methodologies, the arts represent much more than the expressive and performative possibilities of communication and interaction. Poetry, music, painting, dance, and of special interest in the research work that based this article's reflections, the audio-visual, oral literature and storytelling associated to it, mean possibilities to relate reason and heart, thinking and feeling, in the production and transmission of knowledge. Many of the cultural and ritual practices of the peoples of the Global South include such devices in their daily life, and the intercultural dialogue that we propose assumes the task of incorporating different languages as to create a common environment of unity in the diversity and diversity in the unity.

This opening, however, should not impose dogmatic or rigid forms of accepting scientific, cultural and spiritual references of any kind that stop interactions and dialogues around the

emancipatory processes. The objective is always to broaden the collective ability of dialogue and listening, never to reduce or produce impassés. The existence of incommensurabilities or radical impassés resulting from worldviews and practices by certain groups considered unacceptable by others imply a moment of pause and renegotiation regarding the conditions and possibilities of continuity of ongoing dialogues. This is an absolutely central strategy for what we can name 'inter-struggles' within inter-culturalism, i.e., the ability to advance in the understanding and possibilities of mutual support between different groups, territories and movements that are in processes of inter-knowledge in the inter-cultural dialogue. The incapacity to deal with tolerance, respect and lovingkindness in the face of these situations and the resulting conflicts represent one of the main barriers for the construction of a culture of peace, important as a basis for the desired paradigmatic and civilizational transition.

Sensible and collaborative methodologies: Encounters of Knowledges and recent research experiences to support the paradigmatic transition in doing 'together with'

The authors of this article have dedicated the past five years to advancing in the construction of the bases for an emancipatory promotion of health by proposing four justices (social, sanitary, environmental/territorial and cognitive/historical) and the construction of sensible collaborative methodologies that put into practice the possibilities of producing knowledge 'together with' the territories, their movements and struggles for health, dignity and territorial rights.

One first step of this path of the research 'together with' is what we have been naming

'Encounters of Knowledges'. The objective has been to promote interdisciplinary knowledges and intercultural dialogues for the shared construction of agendas and research issues, shared experiences and conceptual frameworks that support emancipatory processes for health, dignity and territorial rights. Hence, representing a proposal of construction of knowledges and practices in a cyclic spiral drawing on the proposed methodology, which culminate in specific research projects.

The spaces, activities and languages privileged in these Encounters seek to potentiate the intercultural and interdisciplinary interactions between agents in the academia, social movements and different territories with knowledges and concrete experiences, whether they are leaders, activists, researchers, technical advisors, among others. The movements initially invited to participate were those with whom the authors and their research group already had some relationship or were involved with the agendas under discussion, which we were construing.

Between 2018 and 2019, the authors were involved, together with other partners, in the coordination of two Encounters of Knowledge, whose themes and issues follow a stream of accumulated and updated experiences, which later emerged in issues and proposals of research projects drawing on affinities, convergences and, even, synchronicities. In this methodological proposal, the general and specific issues of each Encounter are called, until now, guides, sowers and pollinators, as metaphors for the construction and organization of living trees of knowledge, inspired, among others, in the Tree of Knowledge by Maturana and Varela²⁶. The sower issue brings an idea or set of actions and experiences that involve necessities whose solutions and alternatives need to, are able to, or are about to sprout in that context. The pollinator issue goes in the direction of improving and expanding the scale of these actions and experiences, which implies the inter-knowledge involving different movements and territories. The

Encounters and the woven trees eventually germinate and influence the definition of future questions for research projects to be construed, as well as the search of references and collaborative research networks that will seek answers to questions originating also from the involved territories.

The first Encounter paved the theoretical-methodological foundations of the research nucleus drawing on one guiding question: What unites the social struggles for health, dignity and territorial rights in the rural areas and in the cities? The second Encounter of Knowledges advanced on the debates of the previous year around two sower questions. The first was a methodological one: How to strengthen the co-presence of social subjects originating from social struggles often made invisible, with their knowledges, practices and languages, aiming at more effective dialogical processes? The second question deepened a more specific object of work, the country side-city relationship involving the interactions of urban knowledges, experiences, resistances and transformations, especially in the peripheries, in the relationship with traditional peoples and communities such as indigenous, African-descents, women peasants and small-farmers, fishing-women, among others.

In order to make this intercultural dialogue possible, both in the encounters and in the researches, the challenge is to achieve a more fluid connection between people, communities and movements, which requires creative and affective processes that propitiate 'the *coracionar*', drawing on sensible forms of articulation between thinking, making and feeling in the production of knowledges. This is the sense of artisanship of practices that resembles conducting a research as a work of art.

Thus, we use the languages of life, artistic and popular in different forms of expression involving activist artists who work for the production of significant accounts²⁷, adding to the written accounts characteristic of the academic environment, though of interdisciplinary and creative nature. The artistic

accounts are expressed in graphic-imaging, audio-visual and poetic-musical formats, including rap, *repente* [music with improvised rhymed lyrics], *cordel* [popular illustrated literature], poetry slam, indigenous plastic artists and graffiti artists, among others. The subsequent audio-visual production in video format incorporates, in the form of synthesis and communication, all these accounts with images and testimonials, presenting a short but potent sample of knowledges and tastes produced in the Encounters.

As from 2019, five research projects were and continue to be developed involving territories, populations and struggles for health, dignity and territorial rights that express the interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective construed in the Encounters. They include indigenous peoples from three ethnicities and territories in the North and Northeast regions, one intercultural project about food with traditional African-descent peoples, and finally one project in urban peripheries of the cities of Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, involving the social movement of Homeless Workers in occupations of Salvador and one community organization in a favela territory of Rio de Janeiro. These projects discuss racism, biomedical and capitalist conceptions of health, development models, neo-extractivism, up to tensions between rural and urban, and between science and traditional knowledges. In all the projects, the themes of environmental conflicts, food, and care emerge as transversals.

These researches are inspired on the theoretical-conceptual reflections on the emancipatory promotion of health and the sensible collaborative methodologies. Based on the Encounters of Knowledges, the researches implemented important methodological strategies for the construction of intercultural dialogues between the researchers and the territories' subjects. For example, the researches that involved simultaneously more than one territory as a strategy of inter-knowledge in the recognition and learning of the struggles conducted in each of them. This process was named by us as

inter-struggles, i.e., the capacity to advance in the understanding and possibilities of mutual support among different groups, territories and movements that, though with their own singularities and contexts, are able to recognize and turn into something common certain knowledges, struggles and strategies of action.

Among the outcomes produced with the participation of the territories' researchers, besides the academic articles, we highlight the intercultural notebooks and the audio-visuals, which are thought as instruments of training and dissemination of outcomes and knowledges, to be used by the territories, their movements and organizations, as well as by academic partners and even the whole society, especially the high-quality audio-visual documentaries made together with a partner producer awarded nationally and internationally.

Another important example occurred in some of these researches as part of the 'making together': the subjects of the territories became research coordinators together with the academic researchers. This facilitated the creation of a more horizontal, expanded research community in which other researchers of the territories engaged more fully, bringing together the production of knowledges with concrete needs and contexts of peoples, places and movements. The territorial subjects, with their situated knowledges and practices, have a crucial role in the project development and implementation, in the organization of seminars and workshops (in-person or hybrid), as well as in the discussion and development of the outcomes – and we recognize this as a way of potentiating ongoing emancipatory processes.

Drawing on the achievement of spaces with creative and respectful interactions, which not only reproduce existing methods but are also open to innovation, there can occur dialogues construed by movements and organizations together with the academic researchers, e.g., in the format of assemblies that emerge spontaneously in certain contexts. Sometimes we stimulate the creation of spaces of sensitization and interaction for intercultural

dialogue, by holding workshops of drawing and storytelling, producing significant accounts, often gathering adults and children from the communities, which happens more naturally among the indigenous peoples.

Due to the limited space here, we have selected some learnings from one of the research projects with indigenous groups achieved until now. The sensible methodologies provide conditions for the emergence of expanded views about the space-time of the research with prolonged experiences in the daily life of the territories, enabling the trust and knowledge exchanges. One example was the incorporation of the ‘Guyança’ proposed by Iran Xukuru, experienced in the fieldwork with walks in the territories Tingui-Botó and Xukuru. In an interview conducted in the fieldwork in his territory, Iran Xukuru explains the Guyança:

It is also understood as going on with weightlessness and subtlety, with a gentle and slow step, a learning-teaching walk as being the light of thinking, meaning searching for ecological adjustments in the ecology of the enchanted as a way of (re)connection. The Guyança Dultrapyáh can present itself as a methodological proposal that leads to a community involvement for the regeneration of the degraded environment rendering healthy landscapes for Boas Vistas [Good Views]. And, in these processes are understood, especially, the individual and social regeneration, the reforestation of the mind, to be again and remain Human-nature.

To conclude, we bring the talk in one of our Encounters of Knowledges by Raquel Rolnik, architect and urbanist, former national secretary of Urban Programmes of the Ministry of Cities in the first administration of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. Rolnik brought the understanding that all these contemporary struggles converge to one common aspect: the recognition that the territory, the *terreiro* [the place where Afro-Brazilian religious rituals are celebrated], or still the territory body – as brought by reflections of Latin American

women – can be appropriated and lived by multiple and different community logics of respect and conviviality, not subordinated to the capitalist and colonial rationality. All these struggles express experimentations of future in the present that go from retaking ancestral knowledges massacred by epistemicides in the face of the hegemony of colonial and Eurocentric modernity. These are experimentations that contribute to re-elaborating and updating in the present conceptions and values that can guide us in the defense of life in the face of the crises that we live. The interaction of these cultures, knowledges and practices, inevitably incorporating various contemporary technologies, can serve as inspiration for new forms of social organization and re-orientation of public policies, especially those of health promotion and sustainability, which are the focus of this article.

In the face of so many uncertainties and dangers due to crises that aggravate socio-environmental situations and point to new tragedies, the proposed methodologies represent a message of realistic optimism and hope. The realism is anchored on the scientific commitment of understanding, and not denying, phenomena and events of reality. The hopeful optimism has an ethical-political fundament: being by the side of the territories and populations most needed brings us the certainty of justice. At the same time, the retrieval of wisdom by the epistemology is about being by the side of knowledge systems with cosmos-visions and wise persons that bring together – instead of separating – worlds in multiverses. The sensible side of a science and its methodologies expresses this opening to intuitive and perceptive processes that – who knows – may guide the paradigmatic and civilizational transition that we wish.

Collaborators

Fasanello MT (0000-0003-4759-5075)* and Porto MF (0000-0002-9007-0584)* contributed equally to the elaboration of the manuscript. ■

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