

# Emancipatory promotion of health: contributions from Brazil in the context of the Global South

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## Summary

The article, a critical essay, presents the notion of an emancipatory promotion of health (EPH), which seeks to relate the field of public health in theoretical and practical terms with the reinvention of utopias and relevant social struggles of our time principally in the Global South, a metaphor designating the peripheral or semiperipheral regions of the modern world-system. This is a relevant topic in the face of the planetary socio-ecological crisis and the debate on economic development, democracy and sustainability at a moment especially critical for the Brazilian reality and other countries. In particular, the contributions of peoples and social movements from rural, forests and water-dominated regions in Brazil to the emancipatory practices of health are discussed. The article is mainly based on two theoretical and methodological references, the Political Ecology and post-colonial approaches. The first focuses its analysis on the intensification of the social metabolism and environmental conflicts in the global capitalist economy, based on an unfair and unsustainable international trade that generates numerous socio-environmental conflicts, mainly in the Global South, that is, the peripheral countries that export agricultural and mineral commodities to richer ones. The second reference broadens and integrates the critique of capitalism with colonialism and patriarchy, understood as the three axes of oppression resulting from the Eurocentric modernity project. The challenge here is to deconstruct and reconstruct through an intercultural dialogue new conceptions of society, economy, nature, development, work and health. Such references help us to understand the importance of indigenous, peasant and Afro-descendant struggles for an emancipatory health promotion.

**Key words:** emancipatory health promotion, peoples from rural, forests and waters, political ecology, postcolonial approach

## INTRODUCTION

The idea of an Emancipatory Promotion of Health (EPH) is not new, although few articles have been published in English. For instance, VanderPlaats (1998) discusses an emancipatory approach to intervention based on Habermas' work of democratic communicative processes and the idea of collective understanding emerging from everyday experience. Marent *et al.* (2012), based

on three articles published in 2000, pointed out the importance of lay actors to becoming 'empowered' contributors in health based on Habermas' concept of 'emancipatory interest' and/or the Brazilian Paulo Freire's notion of 'critical consciousness'. However the environmental justice (EJ) and the community based participatory research (CBPR) literature are possibly the richest source of emancipatory approaches in English to

address health disparities and participation through knowledges and practices emerging from local communities struggling for health, and against injustices, discriminations and racism (Brown 1987; Leung *et al.* 2004; Wallerstein and Duran, 2006; Wallerstein *et al.*, 2018). Based on a broader view of health, EJ and CBPR criticize the limits of scientific approaches by acknowledging the importance of local knowledges not only for better health outcomes, but connecting with more democratic and fair societies, although not necessarily mentioning or defining the idea of emancipation.

The academic development of the Social Medicine and Collective Health movements in Latin America and in Brazil is an important source of publications and debates about the idea of an emancipatory health promotion, but most of them have been published in Spanish or Portuguese. Since the 1980s the debates about the so called 'social determination of the health-disease processes' approach were central to understand health inequalities related to economic and labor exploitation in the region under the peripheral capitalist development (Arouca, 1975; García, 1989; Breilh, 2003). Especially after the 2000s, an alternative and critical approach emerged in the field of health promotion in Latin America that has been associated with emancipatory perspectives. Some authors use European social scientists and philosophers such as Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault, as well as critical geographers. But the most original literature also uses Latin-American authors such as Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda to deepen the notion of an emancipatory promotion of health, including issues on differences between empowerment and emancipation (Chapela, 2007), urban vulnerable groups and slums (Porto and Pivetta, 2009), and a critical socio-environmental approach (Porto *et al.*, 2014).

For Chapela (2007), the promotion of emancipatory health differs from the empowerment perspective in the sense that the former considers as a primary condition for health the emancipation of the subjects and that the relief of the poverty and disease are results of emancipation, while the promotion of empowering health considers relief of disease a priority, where empowerment is used as a practical tool to prevent health problems. Citing Coveney (apud Chapela, 2007), other difference mentioned is that the empowerment approach defines and inculcates a form of ethics 'by providing means for subjects to value their own desires, attitudes and behaviors in relation to those offered by experts in health promotion'. On the other hand, the emancipatory approach considers human beings as ethical individual and collective subjects capable of building knowledges

independently of experts or institutions. However, this difference is not assumed by other authors: for Wallerstein *et al.*, (2018) sovereignty and autonomy are considered core values also within an empowering frame. For me, the most important definition for an emancipatory perspective is related to two dimensions. First, to consider that health promotion must include anti-capitalist and anti-colonial struggles as central to reducing inequalities between and within countries in a global unfair trade. Secondly, to question scientific knowledge as universal and superior by means of new, more horizontal and collaborative dialogues with non-scientific knowledges, as proposed by Santos (2007) with an ecology of knowledges that we work later on in the article.

My methodological and theoretical development on EPH started from the experiences in Brazilian urban realities from an extension program in Rio de Janeiro which works since 2002, the Territorial Laboratory of Manguinhos. We have brought together a group of researchers of Oswaldo Cruz Foundation and residents from Rio de Janeiro slums for producing shared knowledge in what we call extended action-research communities (Porto and Pivetta, 2009; Porto *et al.*, 2016). Our emphasis was on urban, environmental and health problems connected with Public Health policy concerns of living conditions and human rights. Slums are considered as sacrifice zones, a term coined by Bullard (1994) to understand racism and environmental injustices in a comprehensive way to connect socioenvironmental and health problems, such as sanitation, dwelling, transport and healthcare, with social inequalities, politics, culture, and power. Accordingly, EPH highlights the dialogic approach based on Paulo Freire, who in Brazil has influenced the popular education on health. In our perspective, an emancipatory approach is strongly related with democracy and the asymmetries of power that stresses such territories, and communities' mobilizations and the acknowledgment of their knowledges as crucial paths for social change.

Other inspiration comes from the contributions of Political Ecology (PE), a field that re-updates the political economy from the current relevance of the ecological crisis and the socioenvironmental conflicts provoked by the increase of social metabolism, a core concept to realize how an emancipatory promotion of health has to challenge economic development (Porto and Martinez-Alier, 2007; D'Alisa *et al.*, 2014). These environmental or ecological distribution conflicts are outcomes of the international and unfair trade. In this sense, the international division of labor unfolds the different impacts of ecologically unequal exchanges in the world-system,

especially in the Global South (da Rocha *et al.*, 2017). Some authors have discussed the environmental conflicts in Latin America as consequences of intensification of social metabolism (De Molina and Toledo, 2014; Martinez-Alier, 2002).

## PEOPLES' OF THE COUNTRYSIDE, FORESTS AND WATER IN BRAZIL: ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS AS A CORE STRATEGY FOR DEMOCRACY AND AN EMANCIPATORY PROMOTION OF HEALTH

In 2008, the Brazilian Ministry of Health published the National Policy of Integral Health of the Populations living in the Countryside, the Forest and the Waters (Souto *et al.*, 2016). It was only one between many other equitable policies developed by Government of Workers Party (PT) and president Luis Inacio Lula da Silva after 2003 with the intensive participation of social movements (Siqueira *et al.*, 2017). The concept of human rights oriented several public policies in different fields such as Education and Public Health, and involved issues related to lifestyle, gender, generation, race/color, ethnicity and sexual orientation with specific vulnerable and discriminated populations. The main groups and issues were indigenous, peasants, quilombolas (African slave descendants established in rural areas), transvestites and transsexuals, the combating of institutional racism, the recognition of the nomadic nature of gypsies, among others.

According to Siqueira *et al.* (2017), the federal health policy related to the populations living in countryside, forests and regions dominated by water was an acceptance of particular circumstances and needs in terms of living styles, human rights and healthcare. It includes peasants, small familiar farmers, rural workers, landless, quilombolas, artisanal and shell fishermen, riverside dwellers, among others. That is, a recognition of the different ways in which these populations live and work, as well as the need to reduce risks and hazards to health resulting especially, but not only, from modern industrial agriculture. For instance, in recent years Brazil has emerged as the world's biggest consumer of pesticides, with over 673 million tons applied in 2008 (Jardim and Caldas, 2012), and institutions and social movements developed different forums and campaigns to face the problem and develop proposals for alternatives to produce healthy food—like agroecology—and to promote democracy and economic redistribution with a more effective agrarian reform (Carneiro *et al.*, 2015).

In the rural census conducted in Brazil in 2006, more than 12 million peasants and family farmers were

registered, working in 4 367 902 family and collective farms representing 80.25 million hectares, equivalent to 24.3% of the total cultivated area in a country with one of the world's highest concentrations of land ownership. According to the Brazilian government, about 214 thousand families and 1.2 million people live in quilombolas communities, with almost 3000 officially certified in a total of 5000 estimated. The indigenous population is almost 900 000 with 305 different ethnic groups and 274 languages. The peoples living in rural, forest, and water-dominated regions represent a small percentage in a country that had an extremely high rate of urbanization mainly from the 1950s, representing nowadays approximately only 15% of the total. However, the influence of these peoples remains striking in the country, either by the strength of the social movements that represent them or by the influence on urban populations, since the rural exodus is relatively recent and there is a complex overlap between urban and rural areas (Jardim and Caldas, 2012; Teló and De David, 2012).

Peoples of countryside and forests are deeply connected with nature: they live and work with and from ecosystems, so their communitarian, collective and individual health depends directly on ecosystems vitality. It means that to understand health promotion in an emancipatory way means to see economic development from a very different perspective, not necessarily as a positive indicator but a contradictory and even negative determinant. Environment protection, ecosystems and human health are strongly connected for these peoples.

Taking up the contributions of Political Ecology, PE can help us in understanding the socioenvironmental determination of health linking economy, democracy and health promotion in different perspectives. In this way, health is also conditioned by environmental conflicts, and health promotion depends on communitarian and environmental justice mobilizations, which have to challenge the intensification of social metabolism, i.e. the increasing use of energy, materials and production of waste. The unequal exchanges of benefits and socioenvironmental impacts in the latest decades of economic globalization is done at the expense of peripheral countries. As producers of commodities in the global market, the countries in the Global South receive the main local and regional impacts of environmental degradation and labor exploitation. The neoclassical economics that marks the current globalized market cannot evaluate the international trade as unequal or unfair, considering environmental and health problems as 'externalities' to be 'internalized' by market or eventually by regulatory measures, which is problematic to be applied in countries from Latin America, Africa and Asia (Hornborg *et al.*, 2007; Martinez-Alier, 2002). In Brazil,

major conflicts are related to different economic activities; agribusiness, mining, oil and gas production and infrastructure such as dams for hydroelectric plants, and roads to produce and transport rural and metallic commodities for export. Therefore to face ecological conflicts is strategic for linking the notion of an emancipatory promotion of health with democracy, human rights, social movements, activism and the international environmental justice movement (Porto, 2012; Martinez-Alier *et al.*, 2016). It is important to say that environmental conflicts should be understood also as key point for environmental protection and health promotion. These produces new articulations, imaginaries, campaigns, social movements and networks wider than isolated stakeholders, which are strategic to democracy and social changes (da Rocha *et al.* 2017; Porto *et al.* 2017).

The cases from the Brazilian Map of Conflicts involving Environmental Injustices and Health in Brazil (Porto *et al.*, 2013) indicates some relevant groups related to countryside, forests and water-related populations in areas where the economic and associated infrastructures are linked with the production of agriculture or mineral commodities for export. One important group of environmental conflicts is associated with extractivism, i.e. with high concentrated land occupation for agribusiness for export with monocultures like soybean, trees to produce charcoal or celluloses, sugar cane to produce biofuel, all with technologies dependent of pesticides and transgenics (Porto *et al.*, 2017). Extractivism is also related to gold, iron and bauxite mining, as well as oil extraction and related pollution caused by all these activities. There are several examples of social networks that have been resulted from and are monitoring these environmental conflicts; the international Oil Watch, the Brazilian Campaign against Agrotoxics and for Life, as well as rural social movements in Brazil such as MST (Landless Workers' Movement) and MPA (Small Farmers Movement). The intensification of economic activities to produce agricultural and metallic commodities for export have been influencing a phenomena that some authors call neoextractivism or reprimarization of the Brazilian economy (Carvalho and Carvalho, 2011). Production of energy and major infrastructure works in Brazil is associated also with water-related conflicts, which have created important movements in various countries due to the construction of large dams and hydroelectric power plants. Although considered sustainable, hydroelectric plants have innumerable socio-environmental impacts that generated resistances and social movements such as the MAB (Movement of People Affected by Dams, in English).

Environmental conflicts in Brazil are a crucial aspect to link economic development and health promotion with democracy and human rights in different ways. For instance, the State and its regulatory and administrative procedures, the legislation, the decision making processes and the participation (or no participation) of different stakeholders, all play a fundamental role to understand how protected or vulnerable may be populations living in territories where there are mining, agribusiness or infrastructure projects. The State and governmental institutions, both regulatory or judicial, have often an ambiguous and contradictory role between supporting economic development and the commodification of nature and public goods, or defending the environment, the human rights and the health of all citizens, especially the most vulnerable ones (da Rocha *et al.*, 2017). These contradictions are currently increasing in a time where the Brazilian judiciary assumes a political and activist place, which ends up superseding legislative and executive powers.

## POST-COLONIAL APPROACHES: THE ONTOLOGICAL-EPISTEMOLOGICAL DISPUTES AND THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

More recently, the so-called post-colonial studies have been incorporated in our references as an important support to discuss our proposal for an emancipatory promotion of health, particularly the work of the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos. They are influencing our discussions about the meaning of emancipation, not only in urban peripheries, but in the so-called peoples living in the countryside, forests and water-related regions. The post-colonial approach has been developed in the last decades by intellectuals mostly from Asia, Africa and Latin America, the latter including authors who developed the modernity/coloniality program.

For the Colombian-American anthropologist Arturo Escobar (2007), modernity represents a project built from a particular historical Eurocentric perspective that assumes to be universal and superior from other existent civilizations, the 'pre-modern' societies. In this way, modernity invisibilizes, despises or annihilates other ontological, epistemological and cultural possibilities from other civilizations that come to be seen as 'backward' and 'primitive'. The meaning of other possibilities beyond the modern Eurocentric project possibilities has to do with the recognition that both the political and the epistemological are inherent dimensions of all societies. They determine what is human, that is, our very

ontological condition, including the pretension of superiority that eliminates or invisibilizes other 'inferior' alternatives of ways of being in the world. This is the case of countless indigenous experiences from all continents of the world with their cultures and knowledges.

This idea served and continues to support as justification for the processes of colonial and imperial domination of the Global South, a metaphor designating the peripheral or semiperipheral regions of the modern world-system (Wallerstein, 2000) formerly termed the Third World, all with a colonial history in the last five centuries. The central task of modernity would be to dominate and subalternize not only territories and their resources, but other worldviews, cultures and populations considered as 'backward', 'irrational' and 'primitive', incorporating them into the modern, universal, rational and capitalist project.

Therefore the post-colonial approach seeks to deconstruct this pretension up from the analysis of the different crises of modernity (ecological, social, political), and the construction of new paths to a civilizatory transition, which is simultaneously ontological and epistemological, social and cultural, political and ethical. For the sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos 2007; Santos and Meneses 2014), main author of the epistemologies of the South, the central emancipatory task of our era is to integrate the understanding and the struggles against capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy as the three main forms of oppression. For Santos, there would be a South in the geographic North (or, rather, many *Souths*), and in the central countries, a fact intensified with the growth of globalized capitalism, the financial system and transnational corporations under the neoliberal aegis.

Just as slavery was justified by the destitution of the sense of humanity to blacks and other ontologically 'inferior' groups, currently the idea of humanity, including the access to human and social rights theoretically guaranteed in 'developed', metropolitan societies in the Global North, different populations of the Global South continues to be denied and discriminated due to racism, xenophobia and chauvinism. This idea is central in Santos' concept of abyssal thinking to explain why radical exclusion of so many people and communities seems contradictory and remains invisible to the democratic state under the rule of law in the modern Global North. Here the social inclusion, different from what happens in the Global South reality, is foreseen in the constitution and can happen to all citizens and workers, both through regulatory institutions and social struggles of workers and social movements. The subtlety and complexity of the concept of abyssal thinking resides in how

to understand the contradictory coexistence between the two realities on both sides of the abyssal line that metaphorically divides humans with rights from those ontologically 'subhumans', as well as the conditions that allow the crossing of lines. For example, for an Indigenous person to have rights, one must stop being indigenous through becoming a modern citizen, or be isolated and protected by some tutelary organization; for a Negro, to 'whiten' or deny his blackness; for a woman, even if benefited by feminist struggles, it is sometimes necessary to deny the social struggles of other groups radically excluded, including poor and black women, to stay on the protected side of the line they crossed.

Overcoming such dichotomies is to point toward a post-abyssal thought and reality, a utopian horizon and an ethical principle of liberation for all the oppressed whose emancipatory struggles remain fragmented by theoretical, political and cultural differences. For challenging the hegemonic globalization that integrates capitalist (neo-liberal), colonial, and patriarchal bases, it is necessary to move towards a counter-hegemonic globalization. The post-abyssal perspective of Boaventura Santos tells us about a transition that points utopically toward the end of the Global North and the Global South from the solidarity of the struggles of all subalternized groups, whose existence and identity were denied ontologically. Hence, the importance of fronts of emancipatory social struggles, such as anti-racists and feminists, recognizing new protagonism and agency power of some social groups devalued by critical theory until recently. Some examples are peasants, indigenous people, blacks, women, urban dwellers, LGBT groups, among others.

The postcolonial perspective assumes the centrality of epistemological disputes in articulation with emancipatory social struggles. It is not a question of denying the legitimacy and advances that come from modern science and its technologies. The problem lies in two central aspects of modern science: first, the fact that science assumes a status considered superior to other knowledges, which are regarded as subjective and inferior, although more or less accepted in society. They can be named as religion, philosophy, art or even craftworks of practices, an idea used by Boaventura Santos stemming from the notion of craftsmanship proposed by Charles Wright Mills. The second problem is that scientific and rational thinking separates reason and feelings, putting enormous barriers to ethical practices and generating a huge depoliticization of confined workers and citizens to be only consumers and voters, who delegate to policymakers and specialists the great decisions about our life



in society. Hence, the central task of decolonizing the relations of power and knowledge, through the processes of (in)visibilization, which function in an interconnected way both for hegemonic domination and for counter-hegemonic alternatives. For Santos, visualizing what remains hidden by radical exclusions and understanding how excluded groups assume more agency is the task of a sociology of absences. On the other side, the task of the sociology of emergences discovering, analyzing and giving support to what is emerging as emancipatory alternatives for both ontological and epistemological transitions. For all these tasks is necessary to integrate the political and ethical dimensions through new designs of affections and reasons working together. a 'warm reason' or 'corazonar' as proposes Guerrero-Arias (2010). Corazonar is a word-play in Spanish between the words 'Heart' (Corazón) and 'Reasoning' (Razonar), and the idea is to show that the constitution of humanity lies between affectivity and reason.

A postcolonial approach can help us rethink the role of health promotion beyond the 'new' public health, which remains tied to a regulatory state that promotes economic growth and seeks to address certain prevention and healthcare policies mainly through biomedical technologies or individual behaviors. The health sciences are an ideal place for us to rethink the challenges for what Santos called an ecology of knowledges and the intercultural dimension. When we consider the possible meanings of disease and death, it is inevitable to recognize the relevance, but also the limits of health sciences and the biomedical approach. At present, they produce the dominant form for classification, definition, etiology, prevention, sometimes the cure or reduction of the sequelae of diseases, or even the postponement of death, and also to reduce physical and psychological suffering in these situations. There is an important dimension of dignity in facing illness and death, including in the dialogue with biomedical knowledge. The challenge is how to develop real dialogues between public health scientists with other knowledge's coming from different cultures and worldviews such as indigenous and quilombolas, without the paralyzing blockades imposed by a vision of exclusive superiority of modern science. In our experience, without the authoritarian nature of imposed methods, there are very important strategies for genuine dialogues, and action-research and CBPR are good references.

With the expansion of neoliberal globalization and the shrinking of the state, more and more social policies pass into the hands of the market and are restricted to those who can pay for them. There is no doubt that it is

increasingly necessary to fight against the perverse effects of neoliberal capitalism and prevent the state from serving primarily the market's economic interests. However, a postcolonial approach would imply going much further. For example, what conceptions of health, ecology and quality of life are at stake? How can the conceptions and knowledges of radically excluded populations be recognized and strengthened, including other solidarity, care and sharing economies? How to think and follow up new interactions of knowledges and practices in articulation with emancipatory social struggles? How to think and articulate different scales, be spatial (local, national and global) or temporal, i.e. the short time of urgencies against violence and for survival with the long time necessary for the cultural, civilizational transition, which implies new mentalities and imaginaries? It is not possible to give robust answers to these questions in this article, but to provide what the Epistemologies of the South propose to be, an alternative thinking of alternatives.

As discussed before, the relationship between environmental conflicts and an emancipatory promotion of health is fundamental for the peoples and social movements from rural, forests and water-dominated regions. Here the work of the academy and research groups involves also symbolic and argumentative disputes to face the legitimation of knowledge and information. Under these conditions, the proposal of a ecology of knowledges, the use of action-research and CBPR methods, as well as popular education networks are important to face the exclusivity of specialists to deal with technical-scientific languages, which are oft used in favor of hegemonic groups against the interests and knowledges of the most vulnerable and excluded communities affected by economic development and investments and their impacts on the environment and health (da Rocha *et al.*, 2017). The problem here is not only a communicational or translational gap between different publics and languages, but the pretension of superiority of science as the sole holder of universal knowledge, and therefore disregards other non-scientific knowledges. In turn, the criminalization of researchers from different academic sectors has become more frequent as a way to inhibit the participation of activist and contra hegemonic research groups that work together with the most vulnerable populations.

Many traditional peoples from rural and forests live in, with and of nature, and possess strategic knowledges and values to overcome the socioecological crisis. Recognizing and working together with such communities in their emancipatory struggles and in building an ecology of knowledges are strategic conditions for the

construction of an emancipatory promotion of health that advances in principles such as *Buen Vivir* (Acosta, 2010).

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: DECOLONIZING HEALTH PROMOTION THROUGH NEW NARRATIVES

Health is a privileged locus of social experimentation for decolonizing institutions and renewing theoretical and methodological possibilities. An emancipatory promotion of health can be applied both in urban and rural regions where radical exclusions blockade expressions of ontologies and epistemologies that are central to overcome the current socioenvironmental crisis of modern, Eurocentric civilization. The rural, forest and water-dominated regions and their populations from the Global South play a fundamental role since they manifest possibilities to rescue and renew ways of living in, with and from nature in harmony and solidarity. Of course, this not means that these peoples live without mediations and internal struggles, but the intercultural dialogue with them can inspire us new possibilities of reconstructing values and knowledges with more respect and tolerance.

Building a democratic and sustainable society can be supported by the various social, environmental and public health movements and organizations. The CBPR approach on a local level, or working with partners or social movements on a local level to support activist agendas, can recognize the importance of interacting with national context, national policy, and trying to make a larger difference for health promotion.

Although more concerned with the Brazilian reality that may be difficult to be understood by an international reader and transposed to other contexts, public policies written about earlier from Lula's presidency related to indigenous, quilombolas, peasants and familiar agriculture can inspire windows or, as Paulo Freire states, 'open spaces' for local EPH linked to social movements as a key contribution. It would also be re-highlighted that the Brazilian context, similar to other Latin American countries, was an example of what public policies, social movements and health promotion activists should be fighting for. However, the picture has changed a lot in the last three years with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff and the condemnation of former President Lula. In practical terms, it prevents him as the most popular candidate from running for the next presidential election, in parallel with the frightening growth of extreme right oriented positions and fascist movements that threaten the young Brazilian democracy.

What is at stake is a radical conflict between a project of society guided by economic interests and worldviews that not only neglects other possibilities of life, but end up annihilating them, as well as the very material basis of nature's functioning. The idea of epistemicide represents this annihilation of other possibilities of being and living from ancestral or traditional peoples in the Global South, whose knowledge is destroyed in the name of progress and the alleged superiority of modern civilization (Santos and Meneses, 2014). A decolonial view of health comprehends it inseparably from culture, spirituality and nature, a fundamental right that concerns the dignity of the human being and peoples throughout the world, particularly in the Global South, where many communities depend on the vitality of ecosystems. That is why we propose the ideas of health as dignity and ecology as life as possibilities of an intercultural dialogue of different peoples and regions.

Here lies a triple challenge: to prevent the existing wisdom of such peoples from being destroyed with their knowledges about how living harmoniously with nature; try to reverse the ongoing ecological tragedy stemming from the intensification of social metabolism through neo-extractive economies that continue to destroy still relatively preserved ecosystems; and finally to create the conditions for the emergence of new knowledges, technologies and economies that reflect new ecologies of knowledges articulated to social struggles for health and ecology, which in our proposal means the same as fighting for life and for dignity.

Different Brazilian peoples living in rural and forests regions reveal important contributions in building up new narratives for an emancipatory promotion of health. First, peasants, family small farmers and rural social movements, together with certain academic groups and institutions, propose the production of healthy foods from agroecology, a way to study and integrate ecological and social principles applied to agricultural production systems with more harmonic, democratic relationships between nature and society. This proposal is confronted with agribusiness, the commodification of nature and the intensive use of agrochemicals linked to transgenic seeds. It is not casual that the economic and political groups defending agribusiness are oft engaged with environmental conflicts, against the agrarian reform, and the disrespect of human rights related to indigenous, quilombolas and peasants, considered as non-modern, unproductive and 'primitive' groups to be incorporated in the market economy. Here it is also important to emphasize the organization of women and the feminist economy in the agroecological movements in Brazil, whose anti-patriarchal struggle is

against gender-based violence and for the autonomy of women in the political and productive organization.

Second, the movements of remaining indigenous and quilombolas peoples in Brazil represent simultaneously struggles for historical, cognitive and environmental justices, and in this sense, they are anti-colonial movements. It is not only a matter of being recognized, since their acknowledgment can support the maintenance of radical forms of exclusion and discrimination. For instance, for an indigenous to have rights, it is necessary to stop being indigenous, or to be protected and isolated from society without the right to participate or express their voices in public decisions. Hence, the importance for EPH of intercultural dialogues and the construction of new narratives in relation to issues such as health, ecology, territorial rights, and the coexistence between different knowledges, economies and technologies. This is a very complex and necessary task to build up the conditions for an emancipatory promotion of health.

A final comment: in July 2017, I was in a fieldwork with the Munduruku people, an indigenous group living on the banks of the Tapajós River in the state of Pará, in the Amazon. They are facing threats to their territory from the dams of the Tapajós hydroelectric complex, a typical environmental conflict in this region. I asked once Cacique (the tribe's chief) Juarez Saw Munduruku about the difference between the canoe and the motor boat. His response is an excellent example of a narrative for intercultural dialogue that stimulate us thinking in new perspectives related to issues such as technology, time, transport and our relationship with nature.

'When we used only the canoe, we took much longer, but the time along the way was enjoyed, because with canoe it is always possible to know and appreciate every part of the path. I can observe the landscapes, the fishes, the trees, the animals that drink water by the river, I can see every place, every being, every relative... With a faster motor boat, the objective is changed. The route is no longer relevant, it becomes a fast passage, without experience or observation. But it is important when shipping is for an emergency, a situation that you have to reach your destination as soon as possible. Otherwise, what is the point of traveling so fast if we fail to see and live together with our nature and ourselves?'

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