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Keywords

Brazil; Indigenous People; Sustainable Development Goals; Education; Identity; Human Security.

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Abstract

Indigenous Peoples continue to face substantial challenges. This article focuses on the Kaingang People in southern Brazil, and is contextualized with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by all the United Nations member states in 2015. The authors adopted an Indigenist research methodology to obtain oral evidence, and provided an education-focused case-study. The research findings reveal that, despite Brazilian Constitutional recognition and SDG provisions, in practice the Indigenous People in Brazil are experiencing renewed threats to their indigeneity. The SDGs need to be implemented more robustly at local level to overcome these emancipatory barriers. The article reveals the key role of empowerment that can be played by carefully articulated indigenous education programs.

Introduction

"We don't just fight for constitutional rights, we fight for the right to exist."

Brazilian indigenous leader Sonia Guajajar, April 2019

This article examines and evaluates the lived experience of indigenous peoples, excavating their developmental. It does so through a case study of the Kaingang People in southern Brazil based on original oral testimonies from members of the community. The Kaingang

are living at the physical and existential margins of Brazilian society. The analysis is contextualized by global compacts, the United Nations 2015 Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs (UN, 2015), the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DESA, 2019a), and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (ILO, 1989). There are two central questions addressed: (i) what are the personal experiences of the Kaingang people in terms of their human security needs and aspirations and particularly their self-identity? (ii) In what ways do these experiences in the local community help us to better understand the global SDG project and the challenges with which it is engaging?

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA) is, in its own words, “a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets”. The Agenda established 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets and the 193 states signing-up to the agreement made the pledge “that no one will be left behind” (UN, 2015). There is current UN concern that progress made is “not at a sufficient speed to realize the SDGs” (UN, 2018).

In September 2014, the UN General Assembly held the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, a high-level plenary meeting focused on implementation of the 2007 Declaration (UN, 2019). Following this, the SDGs call for empowerment of Indigenous Peoples; Inclusive and equitable quality education for all, and engagement of Indigenous Peoples in implementing the Agenda. Specific SDG targets include doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular, ... indigenous peoples (Target 2.3); Ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training ... for indigenous peoples (Target 4.5). Critically, this global compact sets key indicators to assess progress by 2030, the most salient for Indigenous Peoples being to secure tenure rights to land (1.4.2;

5.a.1); small-scale farmers' income (2.3.2); parity in access to education (4.5.1); experiences of discrimination as prohibited in international human rights law (10.3.1); 16.b.1).

The consultation and formulation of the Agenda and SDGs involved Indigenous Peoples, raised "hopes for the SDGs" (UN DESA, 2016) and specified the need to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are able to contribute to country level progress reviews. Underlining this, the May 2015 15th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues focused on the SDGs and Indigenous Peoples. However, the current UN assessment is that, despite progress on some SDGs, the program is at risk of failing to meet the goals (UN DESA, 2019; UN, 2019).

It is against this background that the present article provides oral histories and empirical evidence about the lived experience of one community of Indigenous People, the Kaingang people. The Kaingang are an Indigenous People with historic roots in the south of Brazil and north of Argentina (Tommasino and Fernandes, 2018). There are approximately 100,000 Kaingang living in designated territories or in the margins of Brazil's cities. Struggles to overcome oppression and brutality, social, economic and political subordination and exclusion as well as cultural marginalization are interwoven inextricably with their struggle for recognition and acceptance, to find their voice, to speak and to be listened to on the basis of respect. In the cultures of Indigenous Peoples, modes of representation and identity formation and their imagined communities are inseparable from the natural and spiritual realms, custodianship rather than ownership of the land, which are evident in their forms of oral and visual representation. Storytelling is inherent in the imagining of all societies, and in most indigenous communities, the power of the voice, of oral tradition, indigenous literature, art, music and dance play a central role in their self-awareness and sense of shared belonging (Reid,

2009; Cornassel Chaw-win-is T'lakwadzi, 2009; Fernández-Llamazares & Cabeza, 2017; Rosa, 2017, 2019; Datta, 2017).

For the Kaingang, of primary importance is their recognition and acceptance—to have the means to have their voice heard and listened to by the wider world. The Kaingang wish to share their stories locally, nationally and internationally. They believe that their culture possesses an inherent value and that by sharing it, they will be able to overcome ignorance, marginalization, and the prejudice they face (Author interviews, 2018-2019). Exemplifying this belief and their determination to act pro-actively is a 2017 proposal for intercultural dialogue between the Kaingang and the Maori of Aotearoa (New Zealand) (Nascimento, Chang & Maia, 2017). This is associated with an initiative to create a Kaingang language and culture “nest”, inspired by the Māori language and culture revitalization program, called the Kohanga Reo (“language nest”) (Berardi-Wiltshire, et.al., 2019).

This article contribute to the literature on Indigenous People in Brazil and internationally¹. Despite the scale and diversity of the existing literature, some enduring core themes remain evident in the continuing struggles against inequalities, social exclusion, marginalization and exploitation; evolving forms of resistance, self-determination and politics, the impact of globalization, and civil and human rights.. Recent conceptual innovations with concepts such as “cultural forests”, historical ecology”, “native space” and “geographies of power” are illuminating the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples in a fresh light.

The SDGs identify education as a key driver for global sustainable development and greater human security. The commitment to inclusive education as the means to both empowerment and emancipation builds on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 14 of the Declaration sets out three educational rights: (1) Indigenous peoples have the right

to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning; (2) Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination; (3) States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language. This article foregrounds the importance of education as a key element of Indigenous identity, expression, belonging, acceptance, and resistance in Brazil. The authors detail and explain the significance of the educational experiences of Brazil's Indigenous peoples and provide evidence of the experiences of indigenous intercultural degrees of Unochapecó with Kaingang people.

Analytical approach

Hammond *et.al.* argue that “new ‘indigenizing’ methodologies centre on the production of knowledge around the processes and knowledges of indigenous communities” (2018). The present article takes account of key aspects of significant work on methodology and method with Indigenous Peoples². In so doing, the authors accept research as essentially “relational” (Wilson, 2001; 2009), questioning and challenging of Western positivist conceptual underpinnings and for their “decolonisation” (Smith, 2012).

Smith (Smith, 2012: 15) argues that “Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviors as an integral part of methodology”). Peters (2013) has usefully synthesized and summarized key features common to an Indigenous/Indigenist Research Methodological framework. These include: (i) Recognition “that our worldviews, our knowledges and our realities [are] distinctive and vital to our existence and survival”; (ii) “Honors our social mores as essential processes through which we live, learn and situate ourselves as Indigenous people in our own lands and when in the lands of other Indigenous

people”; (iii) “Privileges the voices, experiences and lives of Indigenous people and their homelands”; “Places emphasis on the social, historical and political contexts which have shaped our experiences, lives, positions and futures”; “Supports the complexity that is associated with explicating ontological, epistemological, and axiological concepts that may be foreign to Western scholarly convention”. The methodology used in the research undertaken for this article embraced these principles. It also prioritized the ethical considerations inherent in such research. As such, it complied with the ethical standards and requirements of the Brazilian and United Kingdom universities with which the research team are associated. However, the researchers also sought to ensure that the research methodology was cogniscent, sensitive and responsive to what Peters terms the “Four R’s—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility: Respect and honoring are core beliefs/ value of indigenous relationships. Relevance – relates to [the] issues we face. Reciprocity – a priceless gift of themselves. Responsibility – because trust is crucial and must be upheld” (2013).

In total, there were eight interview sessions, encompassing thirteen individuals with an age range from the oldest in the mid-50s to the youngest in their early 20s. Sessions took place in the Kaingang community. Consistent with this methodological approach, interview recruitment was by self-selection, the voluntary participation of members of the community rather than selection by Elders or the researchers. Moreover, for the August 2018 sessions, an especially important feature of the evolving relationship was the presenting of a Kaingang name, “Katãj” (lit. meaning “warwood”) to the British researcher by the younger volunteer participants, who explained that “You cannot be an Elder, but we can still name you”. This was not only an act of friendship, respect and particularly trust, it represented a means by which the participants could frame this external figure and give meaning to the researcher in Kaingang cultural terms. The choice of name too, is of analytical significance, conveying symbolism of a war-like instrument, by implication a weapon that could be used to convey

the message of the Kaingang youth to the outside world. Integral to this methodology is a case-study of indigenous intercultural degrees at Unochapecó. The article builds upon a trajectory of established research and publication (da Costa et.al, 2014).

The Kaingang people and Brazilian society

The Kaingang are the main Jê people of southern Brazil. Their traditional territory included what is today the current states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul and the Argentine province of Missions (Fernandes & de Góes, 2018; Survival International, 2019). Currently, the population is approximately 50,000 people living in 25 reserve areas in the states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. An additional 50,000 live in the outskirts of Brazil's cities.

In the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina, the majority of the demarcated lands are in the western region, among them is the Toldo Chibangue Village, where the Indigenous Intercultural Bachelor's Degree program of the University of Chapecó (Unochapecó) is given, attended by students from all the nearby villages. The area is located within one of the largest agroindustrial zones in Brazil, and many indigenous workers are hired for minimum wages in the meat industries in this zone. In addition to their work in the meat industries there are two other main economic activities by which the communities obtain income: small subsistence agriculture and the manufacture and sale of handicrafts. The main activity in each community depends on the location of industries and cities, and the traditions of each community because traditional crafts do not exist in all of them.

The Fundação Nacional do Índio (National Indian Foundation, FUNAI) granted the Kaingang in Chapecó (the Kondá band) land outside of the city (Fernandes and Piovezana,

2015). The land, whilst granted for their physical and cultural subsistence, remains the property of the Brazilian State, not the Kaingang, leaving their situation precarious and contingent. (Platts, 2006).

Brazil's Indigenous Peoples such as the Kaingang face important challenges today (Klein, 2019; Simões, 2019). These include 'assimilationist pressure to "integrate" indigenous people into the wider Brazilian population (BBC News, 2019; Lum, 2019; Phillips, 2019) and the continuing struggle over their territory evident in the 2019 Brazilian fires crisis (Klein, 2019; Inquirer, 2019; Williams, 2019). These two challenges are intimately linked. Indigenous identity and spiritual well-being are inextricably bound to their physical space, custodianship of natural environment and sympathetic, sustainable utilisation of the land for their material needs.(Fernandes & Piovezana, 2015). The nexus of identity, land and culture is embedded in the Kaingang's cosmology. The moieties Kaimer and Kairu, a pair of mythical brothers, founded the world, shaping different aspects of it so that one type of animal or plant belongs to one half of the duology, whilst another type belongs to the other half. This socio-eco structure is one of the central organizing principles of the Kaingang and one's identity, through Kaimer or Kairu, is inherited a patrilineal fashion. The land is, therefore, bound up in this foundational system as the space on which Kaimer, Kairu, and their descendants, have made manifest their agency. Layered on top of this founding mythology is a complex relationship between the living and the dead (ancestors) around which important customs and rituals are built. The name given to the interviewer of this present project (Katãj) and, in particular, the motivation for choosing it, reflects the interconnected and overlapping ways in which these different aspects of Kaingang culture reinforce each other: '[w]e used this name because it used to represent the warriors that used to live here [Chapecó], our ancestors, and our seniors'.

This interconnectedness has been examined in a survey of higher education students enrolled in the Intercultural Indigenous Bachelor's degrees offered at Unochapecó. This survey investigated racism and prejudice against the indigenous population. For example, one of the student participants in this survey said the following:

“We hear a lot that the Indians are lazy, that we do not like to work, that we let the jungle come and we do not work the land, it is very common and some people say it loud even in public transport for us to listen [...] But if the indigenous work the land, do a good business, progress economically, buy a car, or good clothes, then they say that we are no longer indigenous and that we do not deserve the rights to our territory” (Santos, Pivezana, & Marchiori, 2018: 71-72).

The surrounding non-indigenist society and its constructed discourse about indigenous persons pose a dialectical trap. The power of the discourse lies in its creation of an apparently self-evident “truth”. The narrative presents a false or inauthentic choice between maintaining a traditional way of life or working in a Western way and ‘assimilated’ into the surrounding, non-indigenous society . The threat of assimilation lies in the loss of distinctive identity, thereby ceasing to be ‘indigenous’. This, in turn, a loss of the constitutional right to territory). What is at play here is a powerful process aimed to manipulate and weaken the identity of the indigenous population, awareness of their individual and collective rights, and their ability to defend and claim or reclaim them.

The oral history evidence collected for this article is that, in the particular case of the Kaingang population, they are in a classic ‘catch-22’ situation (i.e., damned if they do, and damned if they do not). If they continue with the traditional way of life without exploiting the land in the Western way, then this must mean the Indians are indolent and, therefore, do

not deserve the land. But, if they adopt the mores and behavioural practices and thereby work the land in the way of a non-indigenous farmer using machinery, having a car or a cell phone, then they stop being 'indigenous' and thus they lose their rights to the land. That is, they do not deserve to hold land accorded on grounds of indigenous identity or civil rights.

The Kaingang suffer as a result of their exclusion from wider Brazilian society, a situation which limits their access to education and the tools through which they can effectively empower themselves. Their culture is frequently mocked by outsiders, with verbal attacks impacting the mental health of the community (Borghi and Carreira, 2015; Diehl, 2001). As is the case across all of Brazil's Indigenous Peoples, mistreatment has become a routine part of life for the Kaingang – for those who enter urban environments to sell their handcrafts, it is experienced in a visceral way. For those who remain within their communities, it is internalised. Verbal attacks frequently make reference to the poverty which exists within some Kaingang communities, mocking the difficult economic situation which many members of the community endure (CIMI, 2015; 2014). Dignity and equality, central to the pre- and post-2015 SDGs, are routinely denied to the Kaingang. An essential step in fulfilling the SDGs in communities at the local level such as that of the Kaingang is the erosion of the prejudices at the root of this issue. There is a strong belief among many of the Kaingang that the sharing of their culture with outsiders will greatly alleviate their current situation (Author interviews, 2018-2019).

Kaingang Oral Histories

The collection and dissemination of oral histories presents a long term opportunity to facilitate an intercultural dialogue which can, potentially, raise awareness and lower society marginalization. For this article, four individual interviews were carried out with persons who nominated themselves to speak about their peoples' culture and recent history. All of these

self-nominating persons were men, aged from their mid-20s to their mid-50s. In addition, a further three interviews were carried out with non-Indigenous interlocutors who have extensive experience working with the Kaingang. A group interview was then carried out which included the participation of six individuals with an equal gender divide. The individual Kaingang participants are as follows: Subject #1 (male, mid-50s), Subject #2 (male, late-20s), Subject #3 (male, late-20s), Subject #4 (male, early-30s). Subjects #1 and #2 were interviewed on the Kondá Reservation. Subjects #3 and #4 were interviewed on the campus of Unochapecó. The non-Indigenous participants were selected based upon their close proximity to both indigenous and non-indigenous Brazilian culture, allowing their testimony to inform our understanding of the trans-cultural environment. They were Subject #5 (male, early-40s), Subject #6 (male, mid-50s), Subject #7 (female, early-50s) and they were interviewed on the Unochapecó campus. All three non-Indigenous subjects are educators with extensive firsthand experience working directly with Kaingang communities in a pedagogical setting. Subjects #1-7 were all interviewed in September 2018. The group discussion was comprised of three men and three women, all in their mid-late 20s. It was carried out in April of 2019 on the Unochapecó campus.

Consistent with our methodology and method, listening and understanding were two of the core themes which emerged in the oral histories carried out for the purposes of this . Based in the Kondá community near Chapecó, Subject #1 concluded his interview with a clear message: 'Thank you for coming, I'm honored to have you here from another country [UK]. I'm thankful for you guys, [that] you're happy to spread the word [about the Kaingang], to lower the prejudice'. Subject #4 built upon that theme, particularly emphasizing the importance of encouraging people to develop an organic interest in Kaingang culture: 'I want the people to really be interested in the culture [of the Kaingang], and that it is not something that is being forced upon them by someone else'. Beyond a desire to communicate and

open a dialogue with non-Indigenous persons, our subjects discussed several key themes with us. These included a) the impact of prejudice b) the importance of their handcrafts and other cultural practices, c) their relationship with the local environment and d) their activism on the part of their community.

The impact of prejudice was a common point which underpinned many of the broader discussions which were carried out. In one discussion, the subject summarized how the Kaingang appear to be viewed by those outside of the community, noting that '[f]or the most part, people who are non-Indigenous will see us and our tribe somewhat like a wild being, due to stereotypes, from classic literature. Mostly [we are seen as] being a wild being'. Another, when asked why the community faced challenges trying to sell their handcrafts in Chapecó replied pointedly: 'Because they don't like the Indians'. In two of the four individual interviews, the prejudice experienced by the community was specifically linked to the sale of handcrafts in the city. According to one subject '[o]ur problem and our suffering comes from our handcraft. Even from the government, which needs to allow us to bring our craft to the city to sell...we have some issues with that.' Another subject expanded upon this, saying 'I have suffered a lot from [prejudice], especially in the city where I go to see our handcraft, mostly coming from young kids because they don't understand proper social rules, or don't understand the cultural differences.' The disparity in cultural practices is particularly acute because the sale of handcrafts is an intergenerational, familial activity which outsiders fail to understand: 'A lot of the prejudice is about the young kids that are working, but the non-Indigenous people don't understand that it's now a slave job for the kids, its mostly about their culture...it's a process they need to go through.'

This is an important point because the sale of handcrafts represents a key intersectional experience for the Kaingang – is not merely an economic activity. The production of handcrafts are central to Kaingang culture, a wide ranging activity which is shared across the community. A part of the process's importance is linked to the materiality of the construction process, 'seeds and wood' from the forest. As one member of the community put it, 'every single piece is just as important as the other, because they use the same materials mostly'. Going on, the community member underlined the link between those materials and the environment with which the community possess such an affinity: 'we see worth in nature itself, not as much in the final product, the handcraft, but that's something that non-Indigenous people mostly don't understand'. The production and sale of handcrafts, finds its value in the link which it provides the community to the forest, the source of these materials. Handcrafts are a representation of individual labour and skill ('we do everything by hand'), but also of space and, therefore, community and purpose. When two of the participants in this project offered to give their interviewer a Kaingang name, they chose one which, like the community's handcrafts, recognised the importance of the forest as provider: Katāj (pronounced Kat-oi), the wood from which the weapons of war are made. The sale of handcrafts in the Chapecó takes on a deeper symbolic value when the action is placed into the appropriate context; products of the forest are literally being re-introduced to an urbanised area with which the community still identifies. The link between the community's handcrafts and the natural world reflects a vitally important link between the Kaingang and their environment. As one subject put it, 'we live from the nature and we are in communion with the nature' (Subject #3, 2018).

The SDGs embody the principles of respect, equity, and inclusivity and a foundational commitment to 'ensure no-one is left behind' (UN, 2015). Cultural continuity informs the commu-

nity's approach to dealing with these structural imbalances. As previously noted, a relationship with their ancestors is important to the community, but connected to that is the concept being fighting for the community in a post-militarized context. One member of the community referred to themselves as a 'militant activist', a label meaning that he intends to 'go after the practice of our resolutions and rights guaranteed by law...the right to land, the right to a different health[care], the right to a different education' because these 'are rights which are being taken away from us'. Non-violent resistance of various kinds allows the community to protest inequality whilst reinforcing their sense of identity, community, and a distinct culture. Collective dances which, in prior centuries, have been used for '[p]hysical, mental preparation' for war have now been repurposed for 'resistance movements –protests– fighting for our land, or for the right health[care]'. Such rituals and ceremonies have been transmitted orally for generations, surviving nearly a century in the city, where they were still practiced regularly, and relocation to the new Reservation. This transmission of culture is one which, through radically shifting changes in their circumstance, has necessitated adaptation. Rituals formerly associated with war are now associated with protest whilst a perceived continuity of purpose among the Kaingang helps to blur the line between the two concepts. That these dances are learned from a young age, and performed as a part of the community's annual cultural celebrations (April 19th), further helps to reinforce the link between the community and the warrior element of their past. To understand Kaingang resistance requires not just an understanding of the inequalities against which they are protesting, but a cultural context in which resistance is a core part of the group's identity.

Even in the field of education, resistance is an important idea. Subject #4, then studying at Chapecó University, noted that his studies 'will really help me as an activist for the Indigenous cause, to get enough knowledge and experience that I can go back to my community

and bring some sort of relevance to it...[w]e come from a very close group within the indigenous community and when we joining the university, we have a very positive impact [upon our] society' (Subject #4, 2018). Education, particularly where it has been shaped to meet the needs of Indigenous communities, has the potential to reinforce, rather than erode, cultural distinctiveness – education does not need to encourage, as the boarding school system in the United States did, assimilation. Prior to the creation of the Kondá Reservation, the community in Chapecó 'wouldn't go to school' as a matter of course whilst some parents 'would not teach' their children Portuguese (Subject #6, 2018). As of 2019, however, a remarkable change had occurred. Not only were children attending school, they were now attending university, studying courses which had been adapted to suit the needs and desires of the community (Subject #7, 2018). Rather than studying courses focused upon agriculture, as had originally been attempted ('[i]t did not work because they were more of a hand-craft people, not so much of cultivating and agriculture' (Subject #6, 2018), new educational projects were adapted to better suit the needs of the community. This was a challenging process, not least because 'there weren't many teachers that were willing to teach them within their own communities' (Subject #7, 2018) despite Brazilian law prescribing the right to a distinct, tailored education for Indigenous Peoples.

Engaged and flexible educators have responded to the community's needs, not only by altering their curriculum but by altering the educational environment itself. At high school level, students take classes which specialize in the creation of handcrafts. At both high school level and at university, students also bring their babies to class where the burden of care is shared between the parent and their fellow students. This inclusive approach within the classroom respects a tradition of parental responsibility being shared across the community which dates back to the historic period. In ways such as this, educational spaces have been made accessible and supportive; spaces in which members of the community

can pursue personal and group improvement in a manner which respects, rather than diminishes, their identity. Such an approach has also had an impact upon the educators who work with Kaingang students: 'I still remember to this day...the energy I felt when I first had contact with them' (Subject #7, 2018). By framing education as a process which requires educators to adapt to the needs of Indigenous students, significant potential to foster sustainable, highly constructive intercultural relationships have been created: 'they taught me a lot about being more human, about being more accepting, and to better acknowledge the existence and life of the other' (Subject #7, 2018).

The education process has the potential to create important vectors of communication and dialogue. All of the interviews carried out for this article reflect a keen desire on the part of the Kaingang to be heard and for their culture to be better understood by non-Indigenous peoples. A flexible education system which recognizes and celebrates Kaingang culture, placing it at the heart of the pedagogical process, has benefitted not only the students, but the educators who have had an opportunity to learn about a culture which was largely unknown to them prior to starting that process. Dignity and equality are routinely denied to the Kaingang at present but, along with their educators, they have demonstrated that it is possible to create constructive intercultural spaces which will challenge old prejudices. Building upon these successes will be vitally important to helping these communities (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) to achieve the aims articulated in the UN's 2030 agenda and develop a sustainable, constructive society for all.

According to Piovezana (2007), several stages can be distinguished in the history of indigenous education in Brazil, from colonial era religious assimilation to incremental recognition of Indigenous Peoples' differences and educational needs, to the current stage that includes traditional teaching (Governo do Brasil, 1991). The laws of the State of Santa Catarina also

assures indigenous communities the use and teaching of their mother languages, as well as their own learning processes.

Implementing these principles, however is still a great challenge. At the beginning of 1990 there were no schools in the indigenous communities of western Catarinense except for a few offering initial primary education. The process began with the installation of more basic education schools and some high schools. However, the majority of the professors were not indigenous, as the legislation provided, basically because there were almost no indigenous professors. A few indigenous teachers received very basic training. Since the beginning of this century, different universities in Brazil and the State of Santa Catarina have begun offering courses for the specific training of indigenous teachers. However, even today, there is not a substantive number of indigenous teachers with adequate training to fully meet the needs of the communities. Similarly, a specific methodology for indigenous education is still under-development, and differentiated pedagogical and didactic material is scarce and not always adequate. (de Paula, 2017).

Here a new problem arises, since rates of non-completion and low attendance of indigenous students in the universities of the southern region of Brazil reaches 90% (Unochapecó, 2012). The same phenomenon can be observed in pre-higher education: if the child or the indigenous youth has to leave his community to receive education, the social and cultural leap is so strong that the majority give up and only about 10% achieve acceptable results . To tackle the problem, specific policies were implemented, including the dictation of indigenous intercultural degrees by the Unochapecó, which proposed an alternative curriculum according to the training needs of an indigenous school and is also dictated within the indigenous territory. That is to say, the University goes to the territory instead of the student having to leave it to go to the University. This movement implies an interculturalisation of

university education and has proved to be effective in reducing the high level of non-attendance of indigenous students. Unochapecó introduced an indigenous intercultural degree program in 2009, the aim being to adapt them incrementally, through trial and error, to the cultural, social, economic and geographical contexts where these future teachers would be working. In 2014, there were 96 applications, 60 accepted, 34 gained a degree and 24 completed the program, but left pending students that were returning to study. That is, the percentage of evasion was reversed, with 90 percent regularly attending classes and just 10 percent abandoning the course. By the second half of 2019 five indigenous intercultural university courses were running: Physical Education, Science and Biology, Writing and Kaingang (language), and two Pedagogy courses (at Terra Xapecó and at the Kondá Reservation). With State and Unochapecó resources for support, as of December 2019, 186 Kaingang were enrolled in higher education courses. The main obstacle faced in previous years, a substantial student dropout, has been substantially reduced. It is essential to think in terms of indigenous pedagogy as a collaboration, a process which is generated with indigenous peoples, rather than for them. This collaborative mode of thinking allowed Unochapecó to adapt its approach in a way which engaged its Kaingang students far more effectively.

The cultural frontier is not always visible and therefore can be difficult to traverse. The evasion of classes by indigenous students is due not only to economic problems or transportation, it is fundamentally about moving from an indigenous cultural environment to a non-indigenous one such as the university. Non-Indigenous spaces are frequently hostile to Indigenous peoples. The dilemma, then, is to help reshape those spaces (and their inhabitants) to be more understanding and welcoming to Indigenous participants. Creating vectors of discourse and opportunities for non-Indigenous peoples to learn from their Indigenous peers is an important step. Universities institutional pillars of Western culture. Given this,

implicitly colonialist policies which sought to train indigenous teachers in the same institutions as non-indigenous teachers are potentially problematic. For this reason, accommodation has been fundamental to the success of the program: the university is the one that goes to the village. This is only one part of a more complex process. Universities are adaptable places where advocates for Indigenous rights might be expected to concentrate. The question then remains, what else can educational institutions do to further decolonize the learning environments which aim to facilitate the development of economic capital among Indigenous peoples?

From this case study, the most notable success of intercultural degrees at Unochapecó is the ability to sustain engagement with students. Non-attendance of indigenous students fell markedly; 90 percent attended regularly and 56 percent received a bachelor's degree in regulation time. But the strategy of going to teach in indigenous territories generated a new achievement: the professors of the university received an intercultural education. When they go to the territory they experience the economic, social and cultural reality of the population. They perceive the difficulties that the indigenous teachers will face, and for which they will need to be equipped.

Conclusions

This article has addressed two central research questions: (i) what are the personal experiences of the Kaingang people in terms of their human security needs and aspirations and particularly their self-identity? (ii) In what ways do these experiences in the local community help us to better understand the global SDG project and the challenges with which it is engaging? We found that: (i) identity, indigeneity and 'voice' are paramount for the Kaingang; (ii) the community sees itself under renewed identificatory threat from the current

President's assimilationist stance and and physically threatened by powerful economic interests, reviving long-held traits of community resistance; (iii) there is a growing gap between the formal constitutional, policy, legislative and declaratory commitments in Brazil to its Indigenous Peoples and their daily lived experience of continued exclusion; (iv) despite these barriers, the education case-study discussed above confirmed a priori arguments in favor of the emancipatory power of education where its delivery is adapted and sympathetically designed from an empathetic Indigenous perspective.

There is a broad-based, interested and committed public and governmental infrastructure aimed at meeting Brazil's SDG obligations (Global Compact Network Brazil, 2018; 2019, CEBDS, 2019; UN, 2017). Nonetheless, the system is failing the country's Indigenous Peoples on SDG commitments of recognition, inclusivity and 'leaving no-one behind'. Brazil's budgetary retrenchment since 2016 has severely disabled effective delivery of the SDGs social provisions for Indigenous Peoples (Cardoso, 2017).

Yet, reflecting the outlook of the Kaingang people, this article concludes on a positive note. As Kaingang educational experience demonstrated, micrologies of power marginalising Indigenous Peoples can be challenged effectively. Local agency and cooperation and construction of modalities of empowerment strengthen the identity and self-esteem of new generations, creating new opportunities for Indigenous voices to be heard. Here, support can come from the global level through collaborative initiatives by Indigenous Peoples including establishing a 'Gold Standard' on Indigenous rights' (GLF, 2019) through the annual World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPCE, 2020).

Endnotes

1. This literature includes: Coates (2004), *A Global History of Indigenous Peoples: Struggle and Survival*; Hall & Fenelon (2009), *Indigenous Peoples and Globalization*; Guzmán (2013), *Native and National in Brazil: Indigeneity after Independence*; Ballée (2013), *Cultural Forests of the Amazon: A Historical Ecology of People and their Landscape*; Natchee Blu Barnd (2017), *Native Space*; Matute (2018), *Indigenous Peoples and the Geographies of Power: Mezcala's Narratives of Neoliberal Governance*; Lightfoot (2018), *Global Indigenous Politics*; Polanco (2019), *Indigenous Peoples In Latin America: The Quest For Self-determination*; and Breidlid & Krøvel (2020), *Indigenous Knowledges and the Sustainable Development Agenda*. A selection of the literature on the Kaingang includes: Mota (2000), *Uri e Wãxi: Estudos Interdisciplinares dos Kaingang*; D'Angelis (2002), *Kaingáng: Questões de Língua e Identidade*; Wiik & Mota (2014), *Apresentando o Dossiê: Estudos Sobre as Sociedades Jê (Kaingang e Xokleng) no Sul do Brasil*; Silva (2001), *Etnoarqueologia dos Grafismos Kaingang: um Modelo para a Compreensão das Sociedades Proto-Jê Meridionais*; Silva (2002), *Dualismo e Cosmologia Kaingang: o Xamã e o Domínio da Floresta*; Marrero et.al (2007), *Demographic and Evolutionary Trajectories of the Guarani and Kaingang Natives of Brazil*; Crépeau (2010), *Exchange, reciprocity and social dualism according to the Kaingang of Southern Brazil*; Santos, Piovezana & Marchiori (2018), *Colonialidad y descolonización en la educación latinoamericana: el caso de las licenciaturas interculturales indígenas con el pueblo kaingang*; Berardi-Wiltshire et.al (2019), *The Challenge of New Intercultural Maps: Indigenous Language Revitalization Between Brazil and Aotearoa/New Zealand*.

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