The failure of indigenous settlements in the Captaincy of Goiás

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Abstract: In this article, we address an unprecedented discussion about the indigenous settlements in the Captaincy of Goiás, a Midwestern state of Brazil. It is an analysis of the failure of these colonial spaces, analyzed from a decolonial perspective which draws attention to indigenous strategies and actions as a relevant factor for such an unfolding. As the many years of coloniality have promoted a silencing of indigenous decolonial actions, there is a need to rewrite the history of contact relations in order to repair invisibilities and highlight the various forms of indigenous actions taken. The methodological-theoretical framework used here is based on the Latin American school of thought Modernity/Coloniality.

Keywords: Indigenous resistance strategies, indigenous protagonism, indigenous settlements, Captaincy of Goiás

Resumen: En este artículo, abordamos una discusión inédita sobre los asentamientos indígenas en la Capitanía de Goiás, estado del Medio Oeste de Brasil. Se trata de un análisis del fracaso de estos espacios coloniales, analizado desde una perspectiva decolonial que llama la atención sobre las estrategias y acciones indígenas como factor relevante para tal desenvolvimiento. Como los muchos años de colonialidad han promovido un silenciamiento de las acciones indígenas decoloniales, surge la necesidad de reescribir la historia de las relaciones de contacto para reparar invisibilidades y resaltar las diversas formas de acciones indígenas realizadas. sobre la escuela de pensamiento latinoamericana Modernidad/Colonialidad.

Palabras clave: estrategias de resistencia indígena, protagonismo, asentamientos indígenas, capitanía de Goiás

Introduction

We argue that, by assuming a position of reaction and a pioneering role, Indigenous strategies frustrated the colonial project of settlement in the Captaincy of Goiás. In the second half of the 18th century, the Pombaline policy began to centralize the

management, occupation, and defense of the territory. This policy shaped a strategy of land tenure based on *utipossidetis, itapossideatis* (principle of Roman law that the land would belong to the one who occupied it). With the Pombaline reforms, the process of reducing Indigenous peoples -i.e., their settlements- brought about new types of interethnic relations[1]. This gave rise to a model intended to promote vassalage and the 'civilization' of those Indigenous peoples.

From the theoretical framework of Modernity/Coloniality, we review the traditional historiographical version of the decline of such spatialities. The traditional interpretation attributes the failure of indigenous settlements to two factors: the mismanagement of colonial agents and the mistreatment suffered by Indigenous peoples in the settlements. As a result of this colonial account of history, indigenous resistance strategies and their stories of struggle ended up being erased. In response to that, in this article, we stress the importance of looking at the interethnic contact relations in the Goyazes hinterland from a narrative that shows how the Indigenous populations negotiated, established alliances, and attributed their own meanings to such relations, offering diverse forms of resistance.

The Pombaline settlements that were established from the 1770s on, in Goiás, coincided with the deepening of the gold crisis and problems with the remittance of taxes collected by the Portuguese Crown. During the Pombaline administrations, some existing settlements were retaken over[2], others were relocated, and others were created. The Governor-general José de Almeida Vasconcelos Soveral e Carvalho -Baron of Mossâmedes- created the village of São José de Mossâmedes, which was a model village in 1774. He also took back the village of Rio das Velhas to lead the Xacriabá there (this territory is currently known as Bananal Island, in Tocantins) and established the village of Nova Beira for the Karajá and the Javaé. Luís da Cunha Meneses created the Maria I village for the southern Kayapó in 1781. In 1788, Tristão da Cunha Meneses founded the Pedro III (or Carretão village) for the Xavante.

The Pombaline settlements were established in different parts of the Captaincy of Goiás. They formed a small support network, which promoted the internal communication of the Captaincy of Goiás and its communication with other captaincies.

The settlement project and indigenous actions

The failure of the settlements policy under the Indigenous Directory Law of 1757 was not exclusive to the Captaincy of Goiás. Even though we aim to discuss the specificities that the legislation assumed in this particular space, it is important to mention similar cases of indigenous actions that were responsible for the failure of the colonial settlement policies in other captaincies, such as in the regions of Grão-Pará and Rio Branco.

In a study of the settlements in Rio Branco at the end of the 18th century, Farage (1986) draws attention to the fact that, as a policy of assimilation, they also failed in that region. Among the occupation strategies of the Portuguese Crown, the Rio Branco region figured effective importance, given that one of its main functions was to serve as a barrier to the hinterland. The barriers were intended to restrain or

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[1] Indigenous settlements were artificial villages designed by the colonial administration with the objective of removing Indigenous peoples from their territories of origin so that the settlers could occupy their lands and erase their cultures. This was an epistemicidal strategy of assimilation of these peoples into the Western Christian culture.

[2] The settlement of Rio das Velhas, in the southern part of the Captaincy of Goiás, was reactivated to house the Xacriabá.

expel the Spanish and the Dutch from the Rio Branco region. In 1777, there were five settlements in this region. Between 1780 and 1781, there was a huge indigenous rebellion that 'shook the Portuguese plans for the colonization of [Rio] Branco'[3] (Farage, 1986: 259). The uprising led to the total emptying of four out of the five settlements.

Moreover, documentation analyzed by Farage (1986) indicates that, days after the abandonment of the settlements, the Indigenous peoples returned to set them on fire. The author emphasizes that the indigenous uprising marked a turning point in the Rio Branco settlements. After the uprising, there was a gap of almost three years in local indigenous policies. In Goiás, there was also a gap in the application of indigenous legislation after the uprising in the northern region known as the São Francisco Xavier Mission, led by the Akroá and Xacriabá peoples. Therefore, concerning policies of settlement, the indigenous uprisings comprise resistance practices that occurred in different captaincies.

In order to comprise the actions of indigenous resistance, it is necessary to reexamine the meaning of these settlements. It is vital to see these spatialities as part of the epistemic violence of colonial domination, in which Indigenous peoples were denied and forbidden to express their traditional ways of being and existing in the world.

The success of the settlements depended on turning the natives into vassals and, therefore, on their subjection. This objective was intended for the younger generations of Indigenous peoples. One document of the 1786[4] asserts that the adults should be pacified, but that it was the youngsters who could offer better results for the civilizing process. The understanding was that after the adults were dead, the younger ones, once compliant with the colonizer's logic, would lose the memories of their land and be fit for work and acclimated to the customs of Europeans. There was an expectation that they would live in conformity with the laws of sworn vassalage and under the dogmas of the holy faith through catechism.

For this purpose, some actions were taken by the Portuguese Crown: prohibition of indigenous languages inside the settlements; change of names in the act of baptism; imposition on them to wear clothes; and mandatory work in agriculture and occupations related to trade and territorial communication. For the Portuguese Crown, the indigenous settlements were seen as the future heart of the settlement. The purpose was to favor trade and agriculture and protect the territory under Portuguese rule. Faced with the burden of this project, the Indigenous peoples maintained decolonial attitudes that ranged from the maintenance of aspects of their cosmologies within these spaces to the emptying of these places, including uprisings.

The mitigation of the colonial project involved the Indigenous people's use of Lusitanian codes to acquire what they needed. We emphasize, for instance, the participation of Indigenous peoples in religious festivals. What was interpreted by the colonizers as success in the colonial project, in making the natives learn Portuguese, was in fact a way to survive the colonial context and even take certain advantages of it.

The Indigenous peoples 'chose not to accept their assimilation into the Portuguese colonial project' (Apolinário, 2006: 147). This in turn undermined three pillars of the Pombaline indigenist policy: 1) the self-maintenance of the settlements; 2) the population increase with a view to future towns and settlements;

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[3] All quotes translated from Portuguese into English were made by the authors.
[4] Resolution of the Governing Assembly for the creation of a cattle farm in Salinas for the subsistence of the Cayapó Indians Located in Aldea de Maria 02.04.013 -Board Sessions- Minutes, vol. I, 1786, p. 64v-65, box. 194Fundo Real Fazenda -Museu das Bandeiras.

and 3) the transformation of the natives into vassals of El Rei by making them adopt a Portuguese lifestyle.

Indigenous resistance and depopulation of thesettlements: strategies against the epistemicidal rules of the settlements policy in Goiás in the 18th century

The settlements were designed to be long-lived and become future towns and cities. The expenses of the Royal Treasury with them were meant for only six months and, from then on, by providing their services and taking various jobs, the Indigenous population would have to sustain and boost the economic growth of the region. However, this did not occur because 'the natives did not submit to the call of religion, nor to the requests for collaboration with certain domestic activities' (Apolinário, 2006: 127).

As Apolinário (2006) states, according to reports of missionaries, when asked to perform an activity, Indigenous people claimed that they were not black, indicating that they knew well the social hierarchy of the colonial world. The natives appropriated elements of the surrounding society to benefit themselves and to enhance their power in confrontations. For example, when they had to fight, they used not only their traditional instruments of war, but also learned how to handle firearms -this was the case of the uprising in the São Francisco Xavier do Duro Mission, in 1753, which comprised the Duro and the Formiga settlements in the north of the Captaincy of Goiás. Here the depopulation took place through the insurrection of the Akroá and Xacriabá. However, in some cases depopulation as a subversion of colonial logic took place through the practice of Indigenous transit between the colonial settlements and their villages of origin. The Indigenous inhabitants would visit their relatives, which could last for months, and many individuals did not even return to the settlement. This tells us that they maintained their cultural prerogatives despite the project of Portuguesification that tried to do away with their ways of life. The escapes were ways they could find to resist the colonial imposition of practices aimed at distancing their sense-making from their lands.

The natives undertook attacks on the outskirts of the villages. According to the Governor-general, Tristão da Cunha Meneses, the southern Kayapo would leave the Maria I settlement to attack the neighboring villages and farms. In the Maria I settlement there would be more than 600 men ready to fight, in the early 1780s. According to Tristão da Cunha Meneses, the southern Kayapodid not become true vassals of the King, given everything they had done as movements of resistance. This was later reinforced by themselves when the southern Kayapo were questioned about the attacks in the region. It is worth adding that their intention was not to make the Maria I settlement their fixed residence, since in a short period of time the village emptied.

On July 16, 1781, Luís da Cunha Meneses started the Maria I village, in honor of the Queen. Then, 243 Kayapó were sent there. The layout of the village was made by Luís da Cunha Meneses himself, and the site for the village was chosen by the Indigenous people. It was located 14 leagues from the capital to the south of the captaincy, on the banks of the Fartura River.

Nevertheless, in 1813, the General Regent, Jozé Amado Grehon, talked to the Governor of the captaincy of Goiás, Fernando Delgado Freyre de Castilho, and stressed the need to transfer the natives from the settlement Maria I to São José de Mossâmedes due to the small number of Indigenous people in that village. The general also informed the governor that the settlement of São José de Mossâmedes

was already in 'great decay as a result of the ruin of its buildings, the lack of plantations and, consequently, of food, and the small number of Indigenous people, who would be 138'[5]. Soon, with the transfer of the Indigenous people to the village of São José, this number would rise to 267. According to the general, this transfer would be easy because in both settlements many of the natives were related and they would often go from one settlement to another.

Regarding the so-called 'nature of the Indigenous people', Tristão da Cunha Meneses mentions a letter from Governor João Manoel de Melo, from 1770, and conveys the idea that the Indigenous peoples in Goiás were more 'ferocious and indomitable' than those in other captaincies. This letter was intended to let the Crown know about the 'ferocity, ingratitude and rebellion'[6] of the Indigenous peoples in the Captaincy of Goiás.

In the letter João Manoel de Melo emphasizes that the natives in the village refused to learn trades. He states that they were permanently supported by the Royal Treasury and that they only remained in the village as long as they were being supported. According to him, as soon as the support ceased, they went back to 'the bush' and attacked the captaincy with more 'ferocity'. He mentions the Akroá and the Xacriabá as rebellious and ungrateful Indigenous.

Luís da Cunha Meneses complained about the low number of natives in São José de Mossâmedes. In 1774, when it was set up, it sheltered more than 8,000 natives, but in 1780, there were only 814 of them, according to a list made by Lieutenant Regent Izidoro Rodrigues da Silva. In order to increase the number of its inhabitants, he transferred the 718 Indigenous people from the village of Nova Beira to São José de Mossâmedes, Moreover, he considered that Nova Beira was a distant village and that it had not been helpful to the navigation of the Araguaia River.

The emptying of the settlements was, to a large extent, related to the process of sociocultural disorientation that these spatialities represented in the face of different indigenous cosmologies. For them, place is one of the elements that constitute their identity and cultural orientation (Escobar, 2005). Indigenous decolonial actions confront precisely the coloniality that fosters the process of sociocultural disorientation. We thereby perceive the settlements as a disorienting spatiality.

The coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005) is part of modernity, and it has been imposed as an instrument of domination, oppression, and subalternization of Indigenous peoples. However, decoloniality occurs simultaneously as their resistance strategies. Decoloniality is also part of modernity and an alternative and process of resistance to the oppressive logic of coloniality (Mignolo, 2008; Nazareno, 2017). The narratives of Indigenous peoples about the contact with European settlers portray such a decolonial movement. Rodrigues (2008) carried out an important study with the Javaé that revealed the prodigious memory of this people. Among many stories told by the Javaé, the author points out the presence of reports about the settlements:

> *Javaé and Kyrysatyhy (the Xavante) would have been taken to a place called 'Janirataba', near the town of Goiás Velho, where they organized themselves and even performed the*

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[5] Letter written and sent by José Rodrigues Freireto Martinho de Melo e Castro, Secretary of State for the Navy and Foreign Affairs, about the lack of food in Vila Boa and the arrival of large numbers of Caiapó [12.02.1784]. AHU-Goiás AHU_ACL_CU_008, Cx. 35, D. 2136.

[6] Letter from the Governor and Captain Generalof Goiás, Tristão da Cunha Meneses, to Queen D. Maria I, about the decadent state in which the Fazenda Real de Goiás was, the scarcity of gold, the reduction of wages, and the expenses of flags and indigenous settlements [28.12.1784]. AHU_ACL_CU_008, Cx. 35, D. 2169.

> *Iweruhuky ritual. In Janirataba, they were enslaved, the women were raped, and then the place became extinct. It is quite likely that Janirataba is another name for the village of São José de Mossâmedes.* (Rodrigues, 2008: 121)

The project of the settlements determined that the acts of locating and situating in the territory would follow the orientation references of space according to the colonizer's markers. The indigenous location references, cosmologies, and cosmogonies associated with territory were eliminated by the colonial project. However, the Javaé, like many other indigenous peoples, subverted this colonial logic: 'they organized themselves and even performed the Iweruhuky ritual' (Rodrigues, 2008: 121).

The decolonial actions of Indigenous peoples took place inside the settlements and, above all, negated them as colonial spaces. As they see it, above all, the place/the territory is an existential category. This means, as Mignolo (2005) explains, that we exist in a certain place -a place that constitutes identity, memory, and the perception of what is lived. Accordingly, one of the violences of the settlements was their attempt to impose Western markers on the natives' relationship with the territory.

By researching the Berò Biawa Mahãdu's (Javae's) understandings of history, time, and place, Nazareno (2017) discusses that, for this people, narratives are structured by the place and not time, as understood in the Western world. It is the place and the body that configure and organize the societal narratives of various Indigenous societies. Escobar (2005: 69) stresses place has a direct relation to daily life, identity, and the feeling of belonging. For the author, 'place and its configuration are important for culture, nature, and the economy. Place accompanies cultural, ecological, and economic practices and rationalities'.

Following Escobar (2005: 70), there is a 'marginalization of place in Western theory'. Western colonialism has produced the invisibilization and subalternization of 'local and regional ways of configuring the world'. In this sense, reasserting place means considering 'alternative ecological rationalities'. In many 'non-Western contexts', 'the biophysical world, the human, and the supernatural' are not separate but interconnected (2005: 72). In the author's words, 'thus, living, non-living, and often supernatural beings are not seen as separate and distinct domains -definitely not seen as opposing nature and culture- and social relations are seen as encompassing more than humans' (2005: 72).

In a conversation with Wahuka Karajá, a student from the Undergraduate Program in Indigenous Intercultural Education at the Federal University of Goiás, we observed that in his culture, for example, there is no division between the biophysical, human, and supernatural worlds. These worlds are interconnected, and the territory is connected to the cultural conception of life cycles and, consequently, to the upbringing of young people:

> *The territory is a way for our people to stay alive, our culture, because that is where we keep our culture alive. It is in the upbringing of the Jyré. Trees, birds, all animals in the territory will tell the youth not to kill, not to hurt. For example, the fox is not Inỹ's food, so you can't kill it, the pirarara is a fish from the Araguaia [River], right? But you can't fish it because it is not Inỹ's food. So, the spirits of these animals are speaking to the young people who are being educated there, you know? They paint themselves and characterize themselves. They present themselves as the spirit of these animals and then they tell the youth what they have to listen to and obey, you know? If they don't listen and obey, then the evil spirit coexists with this youth, and then this youth do evil things to animals and even to themselves, you know? So, our coexistence with nature is very important. Nature keeps our spirits strong and alive. So, this life with nature and with the time we spend there*

is very important. This is very good, you know? (Wahuka Karajá, as cited in Nascimento, 2019: 205)

In order to understand the failure of the settlements in the 18th century in Goiás, the discussion about the role that place plays in the production of meaning, for the organization of life, and the orientation of individuals is fundamental. From this perspective, we can say that 'minds awaken in a world, but also in concrete places, and local knowledge refer to a place-based mode of consciousness, a place-specific way of making sense of the world' (Escobar, 2005: 75).

Most of these settlements were located outside indigenous territories. As indigenous cosmology and worldview are connected to a territory where biophysical, human, and supernatural elements and entities are aligned, the settlements conversely entailed a space of non-identification, or rather disorientation. The settlement thereby violated their forms of orientation, perception, construction of knowledge, and practices, as they were connected with place.

Campos (2015: 433) addresses these differences in 'ideological representations that show a predominance of the north over the south', and he states that different representations are observed in indigenous peoples who adopt 'local modes of construction of knowledge and spatial practices'. He points out that place and orientation practices are convergent: 'some indigenous societies devise their orientation systems in quite particular ways, taking as a fundamental reference the environment where they live' (2015: 434). According to the author, there is a tendency in Western thought, from an 'ideological and political point of view' (2015: 436), to place the north above and the south below. When commenting on the forms of orientation of his people, Wahuka Karajá explains that the guiding reference is the Araguaia River axis and that, from this viewpoint, the north is below and the south is above.

Campos (2015) did research with a Kayapó Gorotire group (a subgroup of the Mebêngôkre) -people who occupy the north-central region of Brazil in southern Pará. In order to show different perspectives of orientation, he explains that at the beginning of the 20th century, this group was more numerous and arranged their dwellings in a circular way. Far from the center, there is a building called a *nabi*. A *nabi* is 'a place where men meet, make decisions, and produce art and crafts, as well as weapons and instruments for their survival' (2015: 450). Campos highlights that nowadays some settlements no longer have the circular shape, though they still have the *nabis*. He adds that '[i]n Gorotire, the Sun rises behind the *nabi* and moves along the horizon during the year, being more northerly in June and more southerly in December' (2015: 451). The author reports that, for this people, time markers are linked to places and their celestial and terrestrial phenomena.

In the Kayapo orientation north and south are addressed with a single word: tikiai-ngikié. On the other hand, the west and the east have specific words: *KàikwanhÔt* (west) and *Kàikwakrax* (east). The Inỹ also configure their orientation in a different way than the one imposed by the colonizers. The map below, while it is still an adaptation of the map created by Rodrigues (2008: 67), resulted from the collaboration of data offered and drawings made by four students from the Undergraduate Program in Indigenous Intercultural Education at the Federal University of Goiás:
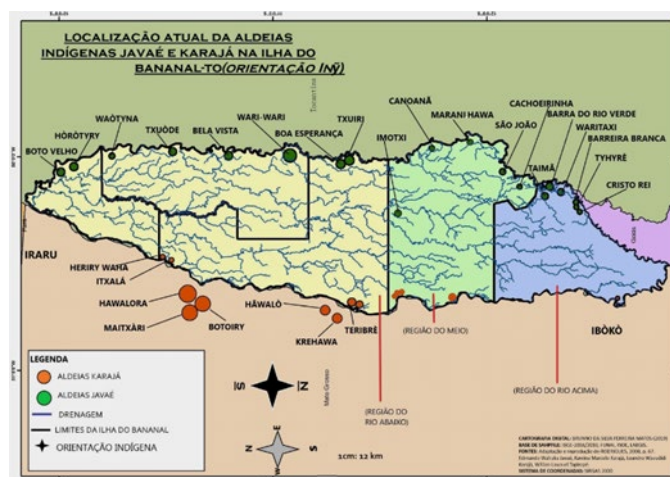
Image 1: Current location of the Javaé and Karajá indigenous villages on Bananal Island
Source: Adapted from Rodrigues (2008, p. 67).
Current location of Javae and Karaja villages on Bananal Island - To - (Iny Orientation)
Legend:
- Karaja villages
- Javae villages
- Drainage
- Boundaries of Bananal Island
- Indigenous Orientation

On the map, there is information about the current location of the Javaé and Karajá villages and how they look according to the Inỹ orientation mode. The part of the map in blue, near Goiás -which for conventional westernized orientation would be south and below- represents the upstream region (Ibòkò). The part in yellow, which covers the extension from Tocantins to Pará, appears in the indigenous representation as the region of the river below (Iraru).

Contrary to conventional representation (see the wind rose in gray), for the Inỹ, Iraru is to the south and Ibòkò is to the north (see the wind rose in black). On the map, Goiás (in lila color) is represented above, in the northern region, and Pará (in light brown) below, in the southern region. In relation to the disorientation caused by the settlements, the following quote refers to the Kayapo and demonstrates how such spaces altered their social order:

> *By settling in the 'artificial villages' and being baptized, the Indigenous people had their social organization intensely transformed. The Kayapo were people who practiced agriculture alongside hunting and fruit gathering and during dry seasons went on great hunting and war expeditions. In these 'runs', only young people and adults participated in the form of formal groups of relatives and friends. Marcel Mano, in line with Turner's studies, points out that more than the search for food, such Kayapo expeditions were important for the 'production of the Kayapo social order', functioning as a precious element for the group's political balance. The settlement implied drastic changes in their standard of living, especially since one of the functions of it, at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the following century, was precisely to make areas available for cattle ranching, freeing them from the presence of the Indigenous peoples. Another change was their subjection to the end of polygamy, adoption of the practice of marriages and the formation of a nuclear family model, which reflected in the reduction of indigenous kinship ties. In addition, they were pressured to integrate the prevailing productive logic, and their labor*

was used in agricultural practices, collection of drugs of the hinterlands, defense of outposts and, above all, incursions through the backlands. (Oliveira, 2016: 198-199)

In regard to the Kayapo (Mebêngôkre), Posey et. al (1987) emphasize the relation between beliefs and ecology, highlighting two Mebêngôkre entities that have ecological functions: Bepkororoti and Mri-Kaàk. When asked about these relations between cultural conceptions and territory, Takape Tapayuna Mentuktíre[7] reported that, in the past, the Kayapo leaders used a plant (he did not inform which one) for combat in wars with the purpose of weakening the enemy's strength. He explains that the plant is blown in the direction of the opponent and that its effect is quickly perceived. He informed that this resource is still used nowadays, but to fight for their rights in confrontation with the police, for example.

These accounts undoubtedly reflect the importance that space occupies in the indigenous Jê cosmology, as the quote below demonstrates:

*In the Mebengokré conception, it [space] is composed of several overlapping circular layers (*pyka*), like a hornet's nest (*amjy*). The* pyka*, where the Mebengokré now live, was discovered by a hunter from a higher layer, when he dug a hole following an armadillo. The ancestors then descended to this* pyka *through the hole using a cotton cord. Not all had the courage to descend: the fires of those who did are visible today as stars in the sky. Having descended to the center of the lower layer, they built the first circular village in the image of the hole and the layers of the* amjy *nest.* (Posey et al., 1987: 42)

The Mebêngokré do not divide time, place, nature, and culture as different categories. Pequeno (2004) observes this in the Kayapo calendar:

The Mebengokré begin their year in the ngôngrà *(ebb tide) with agricultural activities that extend through almost the entire ecological calendar, until the corn matures. The harvest period follows, and with the fall of the wild fruits, animals are attracted, leading to the hunting season, which coincides with the* ngôtàm *(flood). Following this, there is a short period of increased leisure activity and family convenience, at the end of which, with the fall of the water level of the river (ebb tide), fishing activity intensifies. And, with the ebb tide, a new year begins.* (2004: 270)

Therefore, 'artificial villages' (settlements) of colonial policy implied 'the violation of the entire indigenous social order (agriculture, hunting, war expeditions, the way they organized themselves politically, and their family model). The implications are countless. More than resignifying their existence in these spaces, we observed that, in Goiás, the settlements were emptied very quickly' (Nascimento, 2019: 211).

The escapes, uprisings, and attitudes seen as misdemeanors are, in fact, ways to maintain their indigenous cosmogonies, and they indicate ways of resisting impositions on their social organization of life, which had been set by a colonial policy in the settlements. As a form of resistance, the Indigenous peoples violated the epistemicidal rules of the colonial villages, planned escapes, returned to their homelands, forged temporary alliances, carried out raids, and led uprisings.

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[7] Student of the Indigenous Intercultural Education Course (CEII/UFG) interviewed by Patrícia Emanuelle Nascimento, 13 Feb. of 2019.

Conclusions

For the settlements in Goiás to be successful, two aspects would be essential: first, the longevity of these colonial spatialities and, second, the epistemicide of the natives. The settlements failed because the indigenous people made temporary use of them according to their own interests. The emptying of the settlements occurred due to factors such as epidemics, which constantly ravaged the indigenous, but mainly as a result of the refusal of indigenous peoples to accept this colonial project of disarticulation of their practices of signification related to their territories.

For a long time, chroniclers and historians explained the decline of the settlements in Goiás from a colonial administrative perspective. However, the question of territory as an existential and guiding category and indigenous resistance strategies are elements that have been historically disregarded.

In Goiás, Indigenous peoples sought to forge their own spaces within the colonial society as a form of resistance and struggle for survival. They also hindered the longevity of the settlements by the insurgent actions they took. They survived the organization imposed by the colonial society: indigenous school education, sponsorship, settlements, catechism and baptism, work organization, enslavement, housing, the loss of their lands due to the occupation process, and the expropriation of indigenous areas for the creation of districts.

The colonial project of the settlements was part of the assimilationist policy of the Portuguese Crown. Against the epistemicide, according to Dias (2017) the Indigenous peoples in the artificial villages maintained mechanisms of reproduction of their practices and their indigenous institutions. The author states that this relates to managing one's life agency, which involves making choices from personal experiences that leave traces that can be analyzed and interpreted. Thus, although policies established in the settlements sought to eliminate indigenous practices, especially the Pombaline ones guided by the Law of the Indian Directory of 1757, the natives found ways to keep their cosmologies and cultures alive within these settlements. Dias (2017: 30) asserts that

> *the presence of indigenous institutions in the settlements are found in colonial records, as indicated by the presence of funeral rituals, traditional marriages, games and rites of passage, shamanism, singing, log-racing, storytelling, collective hunting and fishing, body painting, and the presence of chiefs, healers, warriors, and elders.*

For Dias (2017: 31), it seems 'the Indigenous people managed to keep their institutions in the settlements and along with the appropriation of Western institutions'. This shows that the Indigenous peoples, contrary to what has been propagated, continued acting, even though partially, according to their own ways of being in the world and living with it.

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