

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF KA UBANOKO AGAINST THE RELOCATION IN THE SHELTERS OF OPERATION WELCOME, BOA VISTA – RORAIMA



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ABSTRACT

In 2020, Operation Shelter implemented an Emergency Plan for Spontaneous Occupations in Boa Vista, Roraima, aimed at allocating migrants in vulnerable situations in shelters or other facilities. The last occupation to be evicted, Ka Ubanoko, was made up of Venezuelan indigenous people from the Warao, E'ñepá, Kariña and Pemón peoples, as well as non-indigenous people from different regions of Venezuela. The study covers research and extension activities developed by the Federal University of Roraima, between September 2019 and January 2021. The objective is to analyze the social mobilization based on indigenous collective identity during the eviction of Ka Ubanoko by the Task Force Unit of Operation Welcome. We use the methodological proposal of Marisa Revilla Blanco to examine the social mobilization based on the constitution of this identity and the principles of Vygotsky's Historical-Cultural Psychology to understand the way they reorder their indigenous identity and articulate actions of media mobilization to negotiate solutions more in tune with their ways of life.

Keywords: Venezuelan Migrant Indigenous. Social Mobilization. Ethnic Identity.

INTRODUCTION

In the text, we analyze the eviction of the Venezuelan indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko and their relocation in official shelters of Operation Shelter carried out by the unit of the Brazilian Army Task Force according to the *Emergency Plan for Spontaneous Occupations* carried out in 2020 (BRASIL, 2020). The measure was carried out without jurisdictional support and in contravention of the right to Prior, Free and Informed Consultation (CPLI), recognized by Convention No. 169 of the International Labor Organization on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which is law in the country (BRASIL, 2004).

Ka Ubanoko, which in the Warao language means 'place to sleep', emerged as a spontaneous occupation¹ in an abandoned public building, located on the outskirts, in the Jockey Club neighborhood, in the city of Boa Vista, state of Roraima/Brazil. This building quickly became a multicultural space due to the diversity of indigenous languages and cultures (Warao, E'ñepá, Kariña, and Pemón) and non-indigenous people² who arrived from different regions of Venezuela in search of life alternatives in the face of the complex economic, political, and social situation of that country (Castro, 2021 Briceño, 2022).

The arrival of Venezuelans in Brazil initially had a strong indigenous component. Between 2016 and 2017, the migration of more than 3,000 Warao and E'ñepá indigenous people motivated the creation of Provisional Measure No. 820/2018, later transformed into Law No. 13,684/18 (BRASIL, 2018). Thus, the government's actions, which initially focused on the regulation of migration (Moreira, 2018), were replaced by the institutionalization of Operation Welcome, whose actions are based on three pillars: border management, provision of temporary shelters, and the process of relocation.

As of 2018, Venezuelan migration has been managed by the Operation Welcome program, which is managed by the Brazilian Army linked to the Ministry of Defense. During this period, the refugee policy was intensified, which had begun in 2017 under the administration of the state with the participation of civil society (Moreira, 2018; Castilho, 2022). The objectives of the operation would be:

¹ Spontaneous occupation is a term used in Brazil to refer to occupations not covered by Brazilian legislation.

² The Ka Ubanoko Occupation includes non-indigenous and indigenous communities, but the fieldwork focused mainly on indigenous people due to the specialty of the right to Prior, Free and Informed Consultation that we analyzed. The term "non-indigenous" refers to the self-styled population as "criollo" in Venezuela, a term used to refer to non-indigenous mestizos. In this article, we will use the non-indigenous denomination to refer to the Ka Ubanoko population self-declared as criolla or parda in that building.

[...] (i) border organization, (ii) refuge, (iii) relocation of the Venezuelan population. The Workforce functioned as a catalyst for non-governmental organizations and UN agencies, coordinating and directing actions and resources in response to Venezuelan displacements in Roraima (Castilho, 2022, p. 212).

Operation Shelter has been and still is in Roraima the main migratory policy for the reception of Venezuelans fleeing the complex and prolonged crisis in their country.

The studies on Ka Ubanoko stand out in relation to the shelters of Operation Welcome, which are perceived as closed, controlled, and coercive spaces (Briceño, 2022), places of confinement, where strategies to control bodies and movements are implemented (Castro, 2021).

We highlight the importance and current relevance of this topic, especially considering the recent debates around shelters regarding the securitization of shelter (Zanforlin, 2023), mistreatment (Lima, 2024) and irregularities in bidding procedures (Luckezie, 2024). But also because of the tendency of some studies to uncritically praise Operation Shelter as a migratory policy in Brazil.

The objective of this article is to analyze the social mobilization based on the collective identity of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko and the articulation of media mobilization actions to negotiate solutions more in tune with their ways of life.

We highlight the strategy of the leaders to use an instrument of international law as a flag to postpone the deadline for eviction, in order to gain time and negotiate solutions that are more appropriate to their ways of life.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted was the qualitative analysis, carried out through documentary interpretation and reflective notes prepared during the study, research and extension actions of the Federal University of Roraima (UFRR). This methodology was developed through the Interdisciplinary Study Group on Borders: Social and Symbolic Processes (GEIFRON) and the Research Group Living Socionatural Laboratories and Intercultural Education³.

³ The Federal University of Roraima carried out study, research and extension activities in Ka Ubanoko between September 2019 and January 2021 through the Interdisciplinary Study Group on Borders: Social and Symbolic Processes (GEIFRON), between September 2019 and November 2020; and the Living Socionatural Laboratories and Intercultural Education research group, between August 2020 and January 2021.

The extension actions consisted of periodic meetings, in which it was possible to record notes in a reflective notebook that today serves as a support for the present study. The notes were elaborated during unstructured interviews, debates in course classes, cultural meetings, group meetings, assemblies or informal conversations based on the bonds of friendship and trust built in Ka Ubanoko.

The documentary analyses are based on the Consultation Protocol prepared by the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko between October and December 2020. We also considered information obtained from publications on the eviction process of Ka Ubanoko, between September 2020 and January 2021. In total, 10 publications in newspapers, seven on religious websites, four on activist websites, one review on Wikipedia and one publication in the public news agency were reviewed. As well as three magazine articles and a documentary prepared by Resist Productions, the independent Amazonian agency for popular communication and cultural production. For this survey, we used the Google search engine.

It is noteworthy that this research is an excerpt from the results of the Master's Thesis of the Graduate Program in Societies and Borders at the Federal University of Roraima (Briceño, 2022).

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

To analyze social mobilization and its meaning for the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko, between the day of notification and the day of eviction, we used the methodological framework of Marisa Blanco (2005). The author offers an innovative approach to investigating indigenous social mobilization, focusing on the constitution of the group's collective identity and how these identities are resignified in conflicts with the State and other social actors⁴.

Blanco considers ethnicity a strategic element for social mobilization. Citing Castells (1997), he considers it as a reference of identity and Bello (2004) as a central axis in the political action of indigenous subjects to negotiate with the State and obtain public visibility. Based on Fredrik Barth (1976), he sees ethnicity as a social organization

⁴ Marisa Revilla Blanco's framework was innovative in the sense that it does not focus the analysis on the structure of political opportunities for the emergence and consolidation of social movements, as it focused on the political and sociological methodologies of analysis of social movements in the region. For the author, this type of analysis does not allow explaining the construction of collective identities in the processes of social mobilization of these groups.

delimited by ethnic boundaries and not only by observable attributes, but by the demarcation of ethnic boundaries established from differences in the processes of social interaction.

In addition, with the contribution of Oliveira (1990), the author approaches ethnicity as an important reference of unity to resist ideologies of fragmentation and individualism. From this perspective, it is possible to mobilize socially through the resignification of diverse indigenous identities in the formation of a common collective identity, which Oliveira calls "pan-indigenous identity" (Oliveira, 1990, p. 146).

It coincides with Gohn (2008), when he considers identity as an analytical category for studies on social mobilization in Latin America. Contesting with Toro and Werneck (2007), it affirms and maintains that identity can be expressed in a diversity of collective actions. Actions that, although not always configured as social movements, are analyzed by contemporary theories. It reflects the changes in reality and the emergence of new forms of social action and categories of analysis.

Based on these authors, Blanco (1994; 2005) understands and argues that social mobilization is the result of political-cultural rearrangements that range from large movements to strategies of negotiation, representation and pressure with national or international impact.

In this study, we used the methodological framework of Blanco (2005) to analyze the social mobilization of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko based on collective identity and based our analyses on the Historical-Cultural Psychological Theory of Lev Vygotsky (1991),⁵ unfolded in the General Theory of Activity of Aleksei Leontiev (1983).

According to Vygotsky (2004), culture and history are central to development processes. The culture expressed in social activities are in themselves cultural practices mediating the development of Higher Psychological Functions such as thought, language, memory, capacity for abstraction and consciousness (Vigotski, 1991).

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF KA UBANOKO: FROM INDIGENOUS SUBJECTS TO POLITICAL HISTORICAL SUBJECTS

The migration of Venezuelans along the southern route is part of the broad dynamics of human mobility that characterizes the Continental Amazon, as described by

⁵ Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky, the surname also being transliterated as Vygotsky or Vygotsky; In this study he is cited as Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky and referenced as he appears in the texts consulted.

Oliveira (2014) and, later, by Oliveira, Sarmiento, and Valério (2020). Initially, these migrants went to Boa Vista, in the state of Roraima, a privileged locus of interethnic and cultural interactions (Oliveira, 2000). This connection point is fundamental between the Amazon regions of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, and the Federative Republic of Brazil, which are experiencing an increase in mobility due to the growing crisis in the country.

This crisis has affected the Venezuelan population, including the indigenous peoples of the communities of the Northeast, in the state of Delta Amacuro, and of the South and Southwest, in the state of Bolívar. The E'ñepá, Kariña, Warao, and Pemón peoples, who occupied Ka Ubanoko between 2019 and 2020, reported having chosen Brazil for its accessibility and the search for better life and employment opportunities, as well as the need for family reunification and access to medical services, among others, according to sources from Brasil (2021), Castro (2021), and Briceño (2022).

Since the beginning of the occupation, these peoples have persisted in maintaining their ethnic identity (Yamada et al., 2018) and do not see themselves as migrants, but as circulators in territories that they consider an extension of their original territories (Oliveira, Sarmiento and Valério, 2020). It is verified that in the internal or international migratory context, these peoples maintain and exercise their indigenous identities, as described by (Yamada, et al 2018).

Regarding ethnic identity, Barth (1976) describes two simultaneous processes: self-definition and reflexive differentiation. In self-definition, the processes of internal organization are considered, which, according to Leontiev's Activity Theory (1983), mediates the performance of social activities, involving the social formation of the subjects.

This self-identification is especially relevant in our analyses of social mobilization based on identity, as it stems from cognitive development, linking higher psychological functions such as memory, capacity for abstraction and consciousness, temporally and spatially situated in the categories "tutelage subjects" and "political subjects". These functions are associated with the need to find solutions that align with their ways of living in the face of the conflict generated by the action of eviction and relocation in the shelters of Operation Welcome.

Next, we will identify the factors that influenced the changes in the constitution of the collective identity for the social mobilization of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko.

INTERNAL FACTORS: INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND EXPERIENCES IN THE EXERCISE OF LEADERSHIP

We highlight some aspects of the internal organization in Ka Ubanoko and the conceptions of free determination of peoples, both topics of interest to achieve the objective of the research.

Nancy Martínez (2020), ⁶a resident of Ka Ubanoko, reported how the building was occupied by indigenous and non-indigenous migrants. According to Martínez, this occurred between February and March 2019. She found the diversity of languages, dialects and cultures present in this short period fascinating, in addition to the way the space was organized, with a focus on self-management, even in the face of divergent opinions that, from the first months, already threatened to expel them from the building.

Faced with the possibility of being evicted, the initial organization was structured with indigenous and non-indigenous leaders. The indigenous leadership renewed the traditional forms of organization by relatives, under the guidance of a chief named Aidamo⁷ and a Council of Elders⁸, responsible for the care of all peoples. Decisions were made after consultations between the Aidamos and their respective families. Subsequently, these decisions were presented to the Council of Elders and, depending on the topic, taken to the general assemblies, together with the non-indigenous coordination. In this way, decisions of common interest were made to reduce tensions between the various cultures present in the occupation.

An interesting aspect to highlight is that, in the internal organization of the space, indigenous and non-indigenous people transposed the forms of community organization provided for in the *Ley de Consejos Comunales* de Venezuela⁹. This law, in force from the government of President Chávez, establishes the bases for the intended Communal

⁶ Interview given to Marielys Briceño by Mrs. Nancy Martínez (real name), resident of Ka Ubanoko, belonging to the group of non-indigenous people of the occupation, Boa Vista, Oct. 3, 2015. of 2020.

⁷ Aidamo is the term used by the Warao indigenous people to refer to the leaders of their people

⁸ The Council of Elders was formed in Ka Ubanoko by a group of elders from the different ethnic groups who lived there (Warao, E'ñepá, Kariña and Pemón). They deliberated on the important decisions of the community.

⁹ The Organic Law of the Communal Councils provides for the constitution of Communal Councils as institutions

of direct participation in the exercise of popular sovereignty and its relationship with the organs and entities of public power for the formulation, execution, control and evaluation of public policies, as well as plans and projects associated with community development (VENEZUELA, 2009).

State¹⁰, which has not yet been configured in the country. The law provides for the creation of *the Consejos Comunales* and the *Comites de Trabajo*¹¹ associated with them throughout the territorial extension of Venezuela, adapted to the realities of each community.

At the time, we realized that the residents of Ka Ubanoko, aware of the threat of eviction since the first months of the occupation, considered the organization as a strategy to avoid being removed from the building. In informal conversations, they commented on the hope of remaining in the occupation, as they ensured order and internal organization.

Each group was organized into committees focused on different areas, such as health, sports, cleanliness, food, security, education, and culture, among others. This form of internal organization expressed the political capacity of the indigenous people to organize themselves, incorporating favorable learning from non-indigenous people and defining strategies in the face of possible conflicts with the State.

Figure 1 Photograph Emergency Education Project for Indigenous Children



Font: Militza Pérez, 2020.

According to Oliveira, Sarmiento and Valério (2020), from the beginning, the occupation was assumed with a perspective of self-management and self-organization, evidencing the desire to be active participants in the solutions, and not mere beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance. The group created rules of coexistence, schedules, collective use of space, distribution of tasks related to the inhabited place, in addition to promoting cultural and religious manifestations.

¹⁰ According to the general provisions of the Ley Organica de las Communas, the Communal State is a form of political and social organization, founded on the democratic state established under the terms of the constitution.

¹¹ According to Article 4, number 6, of the Ley de Consejos Communlaes, the Labor Committees are units of the Communal Councils. They are made up of representatives elected from among the members of the respective Communal Council to deal with specific matters according to each Committee.

In the building, it was common to prepare food, make handicrafts, cure diseases, dance, sing, tell stories and meet, among other social activities. These meetings were attended by different peoples of the occupation, as well as non-indigenous peoples and guests from religious organizations, civil society in general, international agencies, and government representatives (Castro, 2021; Castilho, 2022).

In Ka Ubanoko, the leaders made an effort to demonstrate their capacity for organization and self-management. We realized that this was a strategy to obtain support from organizations and public entities and, thus, continue occupying the building, receive humanitarian aid and respond to their demands for work and education.

Gradually, we realized that, in meetings with civil society organizations, international agencies, and representatives of the State, especially the Public Prosecutor's Office, the leaders of the different peoples began to identify themselves as "Venezuelan migrant indigenous peoples" and, eventually, in a more discreet way, as "indigenous people from all over America."

As for the right to free determination, from the perspective of the indigenous people, this is an intrinsic right that expresses their identity in relation to others. As stated before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2021), the source of this right is not to be found in non-indigenous norms and mandates, but in nature, spiritual beings, and territories that precede national states. This right encompasses the capacity for self-government, both in social organization and in the management of territories and their resources. It also includes the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consultation on matters that may affect their interests.

As can be inferred from the Commission's text, this right has a strong identity component and claims full legal capacity as political subjects to organize and decide according to their ways of conceiving the world.

EXTERNAL FACTORS

One of the aspects highlighted by Ka Ubanoko's leaders from the beginning was their demands for the formation of the group. In a focus group meeting, held on June 10, 2019 by the Faith and Joy Foundation, in partnership with GEIFRON, the participants expressed the need for training in different topics for the exercise of leadership in the new contexts of displacement. This meeting took place in the courses Migratory Networks and

Leadership Training with GEIFRON and Training for the Strengthening of Community Organization (FOCO-Program).

From the beginning, we realized that the group of indigenous people, composed of young people and elders, already had a political trajectory from Venezuela. The elders had experience in the indigenous movement through the Indian Council of Venezuela (CONIVE). These paths are categorized in the framework of Blanco (2005), as structures of political opportunities created in the case analyzed, by ILO Convention 169/1989 and by the refoundation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a democratic, participatory, multiethnic and multicultural society (Venezuela, 1999).

Other civil society organizations also participated in the occupation. With funds from national and international funding agencies, these organizations operating in the state of Roraima allocated resources to intervene in the building with different social intervention actions.

In Ka Ubanoko, organizational capacities and the groups' own ways of thinking and acting were gathered, along with the work of professionals from different areas, such as anthropology, sociology, migration, law, social work, psychology, education and health sciences from the different organizations and agencies that operate. As exposed by Blanco (2005), in this type of social mobilization, external actors are also a factor that influences social action in circumstances of time and space. Most of the unemployed residents of the occupation depended mainly on the interventions of civil society organizations. These provided prepared food, food to be prepared and basic food baskets, hygiene kits and guidance to access social assistance and health services, training and technical training, among other various forms of aid, goods and services.

The internal organization was responsible for the distribution of aid according to its decision-making mechanisms.

FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY AS A MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

As we will see, the officialization of the eviction of Ka Ubanoko, in September 2020, triggered situations of tension between indigenous leaders and government authorities. The confrontation reflected the struggle for recognition as political subjects and for the rights of indigenous peoples and updated the memory of the peoples on the historical

dynamics of the exercise of power by the State. This action was interpreted as an assault on dignity and a direct threat to their ways of life.

STOPPING THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF KA UBANOKO AND THE ARMY TASK FORCE UNIT OF OPERATION SHELTER

The conflict between the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko and the Task Force Unit of Operation Shelter reached its apex on September 17, 2020, when the notification of eviction of the territory was made official. From that moment on, the indigenous community faced a process marked by internal and external tensions, evidenced by the division between indigenous and non-indigenous people, as a result of the differentiated solutions offered to each group.

The representatives of Operation Shelter summoned the leaders separately. Initially, only non-indigenous people attended the meeting, which started the division between the groups. From the beginning, the solutions offered were different for each of them.

In the respective meetings, General Antônio Manoel de Barros verbally communicated the decision to vacate the space by October 28, 2020. Without providing further explanation, he informed the indigenous people that they would have the opportunity to be relocated to the Jardim Floresta Shelter, prepared for this purpose. Non-indigenous people were offered support for the payment of rent for three months or the possibility of relocation through Operation Welcome. These meetings were attended by international organizations and agencies that, until then, had acted as allies in the occupation, generating confusion in both indigenous and non-indigenous groups.

The immediate reaction was one of rejection of the measure. The non-indigenous people argued that they had nowhere else to go and highlighted the actions of the internal organization, which allowed the maintenance of the families and the safety of all residents. The indigenous people also used these arguments, but directed their actions to the formulation of a complaint for the violation of the right to Prior, Free and Informed Consultation (CPLI), recognized in ILO Convention 169/1989¹².

¹²The right to Prior, Live and Informed Consultation is recognized in Article 6 of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. It establishes the obligation of governments to carry out prior, free and informed consultation with the peoples concerned "through appropriate procedures and, in particular, through their representative institutions, whenever legislative or administrative measures are foreseen that may affect them directly" (ILO, 2011).

Part of the population of Ka Ubanoko, both indigenous and non-indigenous, had already experienced shelter in the shelters of Pintolândia and Pacaraima and did not wish to return to them. However, the differential treatment given to the indigenous people generated discomfort and weakened the general coordination of the occupation.

In the following months, the organization of non-indigenous people suffered new divisions. This was partly because the army settled in the occupation to persuade them to choose between the options offered: rent assistance for three months or relocation, under the threat of being homeless.

In addition, some indigenous leaders benefited from help to buy land on the outskirts of the city. The indigenous people were also pressured to accept relocation in the shelter, under the same threat. Despite the psychological impact of this possibility on both groups, the indigenous people remained united, both in the Jardim Floresta Shelter and in the Pintolândia Shelter.

One of the first actions implemented jointly by the two groups was the delivery of a letter of proposal requesting the granting of legal permanence on the property, assuming self-management. However, this request received no response. As a mobilization strategy to resist the eviction, the indigenous people began a media mobilization. They broadcast audios in which they expressed their indignation at the decision taken without prior consultation. They highlighted that, on several occasions, they had asked the representatives of the State and the international organizations and agencies that supported the *Emergency Plan* to be kept informed and that no decision be taken without their participation (Leany Torres, audio released on September 20, 2020).¹³

Faced with the lack of response and feeling their dignity affected, the indigenous people mobilized to press for the CPLI, with the aim of being heard about their opinions regarding eviction and relocation in spaces perceived as controlled, which restricted their freedoms.

¹³ Leany Torres, Deputy General Aidama of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko, was at the head of the indigenous organization. The General Aidamo was a young E'ñepá man named Alveiri Martínez, one of the few who spoke Spanish and understood Portuguese averagely. Leany Torres, also young, together with her family group, went to the Jardim Floresta Shelter and, together with other indigenous people, E'ñepá and Kariña, bought a plot of land in the municipality of Cantá, Roraima. For this, they held a fundraiser and received support from some religious organizations. Currently, Leany works for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), based in Brasília, and maintains ties with her relatives in Cantá and Venezuela.

AFFECTATION OF DIGNITY, APPEAL TO THE COMMON INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND ITS CAPACITIES AND POTENTIALITIES

Once the decision to evict Ka Ubanoko was notified, Leany Torres expressed the indigenous people's awareness of their rights as indigenous peoples. She demanded the recognition of their capacities to build their own stories, respect for their rights and the possibility of negotiating solutions more aligned with their ways of life. In an interview, Leany said:

No one can make decisions for us, we are indigenous and we know our right, we know our value and we have been fighting for our survival for a long time. No one can come and decide what has to be done without knowing what we think, we ourselves get together, all together, to create our proposals and conditions¹⁴.

This attitude reflects the group's awareness of the exercise of power over them, exacerbated by the way in which the decision was taken, without due consultation, as required by ILO Convention 169 and repeatedly requested by the indigenous people themselves in the Working Groups of Operation Welcome. In addition, the situation was aggravated by the intention to carry out the measure in the midst of the pandemic.

Deirys Ramos, in an audio released in Boa Vista, September 2020, emphasized the importance of the autonomy of the residents of Ka Ubanoko by declaring: "We are not animals, we are human beings" (our translation). According to Ramos, in conventional shelters, "we will not have the freedom to express our ideas, nor to act according to our customs."

Their statements indicate that the shelters restricted free expression, the ability to act according to their customs and the practice of their social activities, such as dancing, singing, preparing food and healing the sick. She pointed out that the indigenous people did not want "crumbs", referring to the offer of shelter and food in lunch boxes, which represented, in her view, an update of the old forms of colonization (Ramos, in an audio released in Boa Vista, September 2020).

Cultural practices such as dancing, singing and food preparation, which were still possible in Ka Ubanoko, would be unfeasible in the shelters. For Ramos, the imposition of these conditions, under the threat of being left on the street, evidenced the attempt to

¹⁴ Interview by Leany Torres (real name) granted to Montel and published in Boa Vista, Dec. 2020). Available at: <https://amazoniareal.com.br/em-assembleia-indigenas-venezuelanos-defendem-permanence-in-kaubanoko/>. Accessed on: 10 sep. 2024.

control and violate the autonomy and self-management achieved by the residents of the occupation.

Deirys Ramos' speech updated the collective memory of indigenous peoples. This process, according to Halbwachs (1990), shows that collective memories preserve and feed individual memories, remembering the historical losses of lives, territories and natural wealth.

José Ramón Rodríguez, Aidamo Warao, worried about the possibility of being on the street, said:

Several residents have experience of shelters, we are the ones who know our needs, so we also have to be part of the coordination of the shelters, we only ask that these places be culturally adapted to our way of living", (Paredes, 2020)¹⁵.

Baudilio Centeno highlighted the autonomy of the group in Ka Ubanoko to move in search of work and to prepare their food:

In Ka'Ubanoko I am free to go out and look for work, we share food, we live in an organized community, they say that the place does not have conditions for us to live here, but I say that today there is, there was not when we arrived here, everything was abandoned, dirty, the place was used by criminal factions, but we arrived and turned this place into our home (Centeno, 2020)¹⁶.

In an interview given by Leany Torres to Raquel e Carvalho (2020, n.p.), she highlighted that "the life of the Warao is linked to the land and to have land is to have life (...) Staying inside a shelter would limit us a lot, it would be like being in a concentration camp"

In another excerpt from the same audio, released in Boa Vista, September 2020, Leany Torres made an appeal for a common collective identity. With the expression "we are indigenous people from all over America", the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko expressed their sense of belonging to an identity that has been resignified on the continent since the struggle of indigenous social movements in the 1960s.

Based on these debates, we can affirm that, by calling themselves "peoples of all America", Torres, representing the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko, brought evidence of

¹⁵ Statements from Ramón Walls (name real) the Montel (2020). Available in: <https://amazoniareal.com.br/em-assembleia-indigenas-venezuelanos-defendem-permanencia-em-kaubanoko/>. Accessed on: 10 sep. 2024.

¹⁶ Statements from Baudilio Centeno (name real) the Montel (2020). Available in: <https://amazoniareal.com.br/em-assembleia-indigenas-venezuelanos-defendem-permanencia-em-kaubanoko/>. Accessed on: 10 sep. 2024.

the ordering of the ethnic identities of the Venezuelan indigenous peoples of the Warao, E'ñepá, Kariña and Pemón ethnic groups into a broader collective identity: "indigenous people of all America."

In this way, we understand that, in the self-identification of leaders in public spaces, before the conflict with the Army, indigenous people seemed to attribute greater value to the condition of "Venezuelan indigenous migrants" than to that of generic "migrants". Thus, they demarcated borders in relation to non-indigenous people and sought recognition as political subjects to act and obtain answers from state entities, international agencies and civil society organizations.

In the conflict with the Army, during the process of eviction, the indigenous people seemed to find in the identity of "Indians of all America" a mechanism of differentiation that transcended the local context of Venezuelan migration in Roraima. Based on this identity, the media action implemented sought the support of different actors on a national and international scale.

In agreement, Velasco explains that in cases like these, what happens is "that being indigenous becomes a pride and a resource for mobilization against harm to culture, ethnicity, language and customs" (Velasco, 2003, p. 55). He adds that the common indigenous identity is the element that awakens awareness for social action in defense of their rights.

In subsequent meetings, the speeches were repeated, and the situation was widely publicized by reporters, contributing to social mobilization. Videos and a documentary were prepared with the participation of other leaders and residents to show the recovery of the building and the efforts to maintain internal security, as an argument to request the continuation of the occupation of the site¹⁷.

ABILITY TO ORGANIZE AND ARTICULATE WITH EXTERNAL ACTORS IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Based on the *Organizational and Indigenous Leadership Profiles* prepared by Blanco (2005), it can be affirmed that, in the formation of the collective identity of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko, they claimed to be *political subjects with specific and local interests*. In the course of the actions of resistance to eviction, the group was

¹⁷ Documentary "Ka'Ubanoko "A Place to Sleep". Resist Productions, 2020. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--DYZtN8iZc>. Accessed on: 29 set. 2024.

configured as an *emerging organization, mediated by the work of the leaders in the relations between the indigenous people and external actors.*

Taking into account this result, it is important to highlight that, although they did not manage to transition from *local passive agents to actors with their own agenda and self-representation at the national or supranational levels*, as happens in the configuration of social movements, the leaders, through their media actions, impacted civil society organizations, receiving support for action, especially those linked to the Catholic Church of Roraima, in the group calling itself the Group for the Articulation of Migrant Services of Roraima (ASEMIR).

The audios circulated among local international organizations and agencies, as well as among representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Public Defender's Office of the state and the Union, crossing international borders and mobilizing local organizations, which began to have a more active participation in the process.

In Boa Vista, prolonged meetings began in the occupation, with the participation of the leaders, the Council of Elders and all the heads of the family. The organizations mediated communication with state entities, such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Public Defender's Office and even Operation Welcome.¹⁸element.

At the national level, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and the Federal Public Defender's Office were called in. At the international level, religious organizations from different countries in the region have also spoken out. One of the most influential actors was the *Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas en la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA)*, which made it possible for Leany Torres to participate in a hearing of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. At the hearing, the leadership drew attention to the way in which it was intended to vacate the space of the community, violating the right to Prior, Free and Informed Consultation¹⁹.

¹⁸ In a few days, the audios crossed the borders of the state and the Pan-Amazon region. The Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI), Radio Faith and Joy Venezuela, the Gumilla Venezuela Center Foundation, the Consolata Missionaries, the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations in the Amazon Basin, and all the support groups of the diocese of Roraima, among others, appeared in different media, calling attention to ensure respect for the right to Consultation.

¹⁹ The Coordinadora de Organizaciones Indígenas en la Cuenca Amazónica (COICA) welcomed the situation of Ka Ubanoko within the cases prioritized in the Program for the Defense of Indigenous Defenders of COICA Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica. As part of the actions, this program coordinated the presentation of the case before the International Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). The text presented at the hearing is part of the documentary collection of this research. Part of this text is available at: < <https://defensores.coicamazonia.org/2020/09/30/defensores-y-defensoras-indigenas-exigen-llamada-de-atencion-internacional-a-gobiernos-de-la-cuenca-amazonica/>>. Accessed on: 30 set. 2024.

On September 30, 2020, there was a meeting between the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and the Federal Public Defender's Office, with the aim of ensuring access to jurisdictional mechanisms. They listened to the residents' demands and recognized the violation of rights in the way the decision was notified, without respecting the right to Prior, Free and Informed Consultation (CPLI), without considering other alternatives, with a short deadline and in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic (Attorney General's Office in Roraima, 2020).

The agreement resulted in the scheduling of a meeting with the Task Force unit for October 13, with the aim of requesting, out of court, the suspension of the operation and the initiation of a process of dialogue and consultation, in accordance with legal provisions, with the possibility of introducing a judicial appeal in case of refusal.

On October 1, the community's resistance had its first victory. General Antônio Manoel de Barros informed the community that the new deadline for voluntary eviction would be in December. A decision that, according to Leany Torres, was arbitrary, as the deadline was short and required more time to organize ideas with community members²⁰.

With this notification, the deadline for a procedure without judicial protection was postponed and, in a period of a month and a half, a CPLI process was carried out, transcribed in a document entitled *Free, Prior and Informed Consultation, Ka Ubanoko 2020*. 20 *Aidamos participated*, including heads of extended families and the Council of Elders, as well as children, adolescents, women and men of all ages. The process lasted approximately two months.

The consultation procedure was conducted by each head of household, who consulted with their relatives. The results of these consultations were taken to the plenary with the Council of Elders, and the process continued until the final text was completed and delivered to representatives of Operation Shelter and the Public Prosecutor's Office, responsible for Operation Welcome, in a public act held on December 15 (Montiel, 2020).

²⁰ Interview given by Leany Torres to Jaime Patias in Boa Vista, 2020. Available at: <https://www.revistamissoes.org.br/2020/10/ka-ubanoko-migrantes-ganham-novo-prazo-para-desocupar-area/>. Accessed on: 30 set. 2024.

Figure 2 Photograph Delivery of the Free, Prior and Informed Consultation Protocol Ka Ubanoko 2020



Fonte, SimoneMene, 2020.

The Protocol, entitled Libre, Prior and Informed Consultation Ka Ubanoko 2020 of the Indigenous People of Ka Ubanoko (2020) contextualizes the conditions under which they decided to move to other countries. In it, they refer to the various rights violations they suffered as indigenous peoples, of which they were historical victims in Venezuela, differentiating the current forced migratory process. It includes a list of the challenges faced in the new territories (language barriers, prejudice and xenophobia that limit access to fundamental rights). In addition, it expresses its thoughts on its struggles and achievements, highlighting that, on the cultural level, the victories were more limited.

In the text, the indigenous people denounced what they considered an arbitrary action: the eviction and forced relocation in the shelter, violating the right to consult children, adolescents, adults and the elderly about these measures. For them, this prerogative was not an option, but an established imperative for the states.

They emphasized the importance of respecting the times and processes of consultation and deliberation of their institutions. They claimed their rights to transit through the territories of America, considering themselves predecessors to the colonization processes. They were aware of the logics of colonial domination and demanded that their ways of seeing the world and its institutions be respected.

They requested inclusion in the relocation program of Operation Welcome, which until then was exclusive to non-indigenous people. They argued that participating in this process does not entail the loss of culture. They criticized the vision of guardianship and defended equal conditions for indigenous people.

If it was necessary to go to the shelter, they proposed a shared administration (co-management) of the shelters, with access to general budget information, respect for their forms of socio-political organization.

Figure 3 Photograph of the leader Leany Torres at the delivery of the Protocol



Fonte, SimoneMene, 2020.

In the year following the eviction and relocation at the Jardim Floresta Shelter, a new consultation process was carried out. This document is significant, first, because it is an achievement of the group in the midst of a conflict with the State, represented by the Army; second, because its content results from a consultation process organized and articulated by them. The text included the reflections resulting from the consultation, which, according to our perceptions as researchers involved in the process, were rigorously carried out by each of the Aidamos with their relatives, in the spaces delimited for each group within Ka Ubanoko.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By analyzing the PCPLI, the audios and the interviews, we realize that, in the words of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko, it permeates the group's awareness of the forms of colonial domination updated in the transgression of the right to be consulted, as well as in the threats, confinement and control associated with the Shelters of Operation Welcome.

With an awareness of themselves, their social value and their rights as indigenous peoples, predecessors of national states, in addition to their capacities and potentialities, they reaffirmed themselves as political subjects, builders of their own history, and

demanded such recognition. In their speeches, the indigenous people demanded an act confirming this recognition, through respect for their forms of social organization and participation in the opportunities open to national society, without, therefore, ceasing to be Indians.

The studies of Oliveira (2000; 2005) influenced by Barth (1969; 1970) on the transition of Brazilian indigenous people from passive recipients of policies of domination to politically active actors in self-management, conclude that this transition was driven by the conscious valorization of "being Indian" and by the management of the indigenous movement from the 1970s onwards in the political struggle for the exercise of citizenship.

Based on these studies, we interpreted that, in the transition process, the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko differed, in a reflected way, from the non-indigenous "others" and configured a common identity more favorable to their interests. At the same time, they sought to maintain the autonomy for self-management that they had achieved in the occupation, even if conditioned by the logic of dependence on the migratory policy generated by Operation Welcome. We also understand that this process was influenced both by the pride of "being indigenous" and by the experiences of organization and action prior to the displacement, in addition to those updated along this path.

In the case of the indigenous people of Ka Ubanoko, it is clear that the acquisition of organizational resources and the renewal of leadership were directly related to the development of indigenous leaders on a local scale, although relevant in the context of the displacement of these peoples. Identities were shaped based on intraethnic, interethnic and intercultural social interaction with non-indigenous people, external actors and the State, represented by different entities, some more sensitized than others.

These interactions did not imply "ceasing to be", but rather "being", according to the local and temporally situated context of Boa Vista as the city with the greatest impact of the reception policy. Locus of action of international organizations and agencies strongly marked by the discourses of International Human Rights Law, International Refugee Law and International and National Law of Indigenous Peoples.

We thus understand that social mobilization is not only the result of the ethnic condition, as exposed by Blanco (2005), and is also not only the result of the emergence of the political structure of opportunities. Rather, it is the result of the unity between activity and consciousness in the active process of organization, planning and articulation,

sustained by an important base of "Indian pride", which guides and gives meaning to the mobilization of historically situated individuals.

The activity-consciousness unity was expressed in the indigenous peoples' statements associated with the resignification of "being an Indian" and the constitution of the collective identity "Indians of all America", as well as in the organization, planning and articulation of media actions endowed with meaning to resist the eviction and create the conditions for negotiation.

Based on Marisa Revilla Blanco's reference in the light of the foundations of the Theory of Historical Cultural Theory and its unfolding in the Theory of Activity, it can be said that collective identity, in the case analyzed, constituted the motivation to satisfy the need for recognition as political subjects and achieve their objectives, such as demanding compliance with the protocol, resist eviction and gain time to negotiate proposals appropriate to their forms of organization and customs.

At the end of the eviction process, it is a fact that the force of the State imposed itself. The dependence on organizations, agencies and Operation Shelter itself, added to the situation of precariousness and vulnerability, led most of the indigenous people to relocate to the Jardim Floresta Shelter. A few went to the Pintelândia Shelter. This process, officially closed, continues to be remembered as an action opposed to the current migratory shelter policy.

Four years after the beginning of the eviction, the migratory policy of Operation Shelter remains based on its emergency nature, with high budgets, as demonstrated by Albuquerque (2022). This distorts one of the arguments used to justify the eviction and, currently, raises questions about the true beneficiaries of budgetary resources, evidencing the interests associated with emergency policies within the capitalist system (Tissato, 2021). In contrast, migrants remain without lasting solutions to their needs, especially with regard to social and economic integration.

The tensions surrounding Operation Welcome, discussed in these studies, reflect the debates on Brazilian migration policy, which oscillates between humanitarianism and securitization. This calls for critical reflection on how these policies can be improved to better and sustainably meet the needs of migrants.

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