PSICOLOGIA EM ESTUDO

ARTICLE 10.4025/psicolestud.v26i0.45454

PLANTS THAT CURE AND DECOLONIALITY: PRACTICES OF EVERYDAY LIFE COMMUNITARY OF WOMEN, IN MONTES DE MARIA[1]

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ABSTRACT. This article originates from the PhD research *Groupality curator: Decoloniality of peasant and afro-indigenous knowledge/practices in Montes de Maria (Colombian Caribbean);* from a decolonial perspective, it is interested on the knowledge of cure that were excluded by modern/colonial science. Ando as a consequence, it has silenced the potential of the community. The central point of our study are the practices of everyday life related to cure with medicinal plants that are employed by peasant women in the communities of San Francisco, Medellin and Villa Colombia (Ovejas-Sucre). The tools and techniques we used were mapping community knowledge and practices, collective interviews, observations, trips along the countryside roads and vegetable gardens, and, finally, a field diary—as support tool for registration and description. The method of qualitative analysis of information privileges the point of view and experience of woman. The decolonial contributions enabled us to direct our reflections and analyses of the field material toward knowledge and practices of cura. In the silenced knowledge that resides in the practices of everyday life of peasant women would be the keys to heal the pains of war in the Colombian territories; which justifies a reflection and learning for the academy, in particular, for Community Psychology.

Keywords: Practices; communities; coloniality/decoloniality.

PLANTAS QUE CURAM E DECOLONIALIDADE. PRÁTICAS COTIDIANAS COMUNITÁRIAS DAS MULHERES, EM MONTES DE MARIA

RESUMO. O artigo parte das reflexões de pesquisa de Doutorado *Grupalidade Curadora. Descolonialidade dos saberes-práticas camponesas e afroindígenas em Montes de Maria (Caribe colombiano)*, de uma perspectiva descolonial ela está interessada nesses saberes de cura que foram excluídos pela ciência moderna e colonial. E, como consequência, silenciou o potencial envolvido na comunidade. Focalizamos práticas cotidianas como curar com plantas, usadas pelas mulheres camponesas nas comunidades San Francisco, Medellín y Villa Colombia (Ovejas-Sucre). As ferramentas e técnicas eram mapeamento de saberes e práticas comunitárias, entrevistas coletivas, observações e passeios pelas trilhas

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e hortas; também o diário de campo, como instrumento de apoio ao registro e descrição. O método de análise qualitativa da informação privilegiou o ponto de vista e a experiência das mulheres. Aportes descoloniais orientaram nossas reflexões e a análise do material de campo sobre os saberes e práticas de cura. No conhecimento silenciado que reside nas práticas cotidianas, haveria as chaves para curar as dores da guerra nos territórios colombianos; o que justifica uma reflexão e um aprendizado para a academia, em especial, para a Psicologia Comunitária.

Palavras-chave: Práticas; comunidades; colonialidade/descolonialidade.

PLANTAS QUE CURAN Y DESCOLONIALIDAD. PRÁTICAS COTIDIANAS COMUNITARIAS DE LAS MUJERES, EN MONTES DE MARIA

RESUMEN. El artículo parte de las reflexiones de la investigación de Doctorado *Grupalidad curadora. Descolonialidad de saberes-prácticas campesinas y afroindígenas en Montes de María (Caribe colombiano)*; desde una perspectiva descolonial se interesa en aquellos saberes de cura que fueron excluidos por la ciencia moderna/colonial. Y como consecuencia ha silenciado el potencial que entraña la comunidad. Nos centramos en prácticas cotidianas como curar con plantas, utilizadas por las mujeres campesinas en las comunidades San Francisco, Medellín y Villa Colombia (Ovejas-Sucre). Las herramientas y técnicas empleadas fueron el mapeo de saberes y prácticas comunitarias, entrevistas colectivas, observaciones y recorridos por las veredas y las huertas; también el diario de campo, como instrumento de apoyo para el registro y la descripción. El método de análisis cualitativo de la información, privilegió el punto de vista de la experiencia de las mujeres. Los aportes descoloniales orientaron nuestras reflexiones y el análisis del material de campo sobre los saberes y prácticas de cura. En el conocimiento silenciado que reside en las prácticas cotidianas de las mujeres campesinas estarían las claves para curar los dolores de la guerra en los territorios colombianos; lo que justifica una reflexión y un aprendizaje para la academia, en particular, para la Psicología Comunitaria.

Palabras clave: Prácticas; comunidades; colonialidad/descolonialidad.

Introduction

We are interested in acquiring more knowledge about practices that were excluded from the epistemic and racial division (Castro-Gómez, 2010) as a consequence of the discursive hegemony imposed by modern/colonial science. The one that privileges the eurocentric espisteme in the production of knowledge. The discursive hegemony of enlightened science, from which Psychology cannot escape, affected colonization and the historical exclusion of these practices. Therefore, a considerable number of contributions and perspectives were left out, including knowledge of cure.

In light of the modern disengagement of these practices, we are interested in some of the concepts that aim to decolonize knowledge, particularly Community Psychology. Our view is based on those of several authors who have dealt with these practices, such as Silvia Rivera-Cusicanqui (2010), Michel De Certeau (1999), and Luz Cristina Barajas Sandoval (2016). We offer a decolonial view from the practice of everyday life communitary as a means of reconfiguration and transformation rather than merely repetition or reproduction of

an action. We believe that in the silenced knowledge of practices of everyday life lies the key to recover from the suffering caused by war, which is why our topic is useful for the academic study of Psychology. Aiton Krenak (2018) affirms that there is a difficulty on the part of the State, to consider the native peoples, and by extension the peasant communities, as survivors of colonial war, characterized by the usurpation of their territories and forced displacements.

We are building upon the Ph.D. research project that began in 2014 and is still ongoing: *Grupalidad curadora. Descolonialidad de saberes-prácticas campesinas y afroindígenas, en Montes de María (Caribe colombiano) (2015–2019)* [Groupality Curator. Decoloniality of peasant and afroindigenous knowledge-practices, in Montes de María (colombian Caribbean) (2015-2019)]. From a decolonial perspective, this research focuses on the knowledge of cure that were excluded by modern/colonial science, thus causing the community's potential to be silenced. In this article, our central point is the practice of caring and healing with medicinal plants employed by women in San Francisco, Medellin and Villa Colombia, three rural communities in Ovejas-Sucre, Colombia.

In terms of methodology, we visited the territories and the communities every 6 months between 2014 and 2019. Every meeting lasted a full day, and we sometimes spent the night with one of the families and took part in their everyday routine. The tools and techniques we used were the community mapping healing knowledge and practices, observations, and community trips along the countryside lanes, vegetable gardens, and crops. We also worked with a field diary as a back-up tool for our registration, description, and analysis of the data (Parra-Valencia, 2019). We analyzed the information qualitatively. The method of qualitative analysis of information, it privileged the point of view and the experience of women, as a contribution to *black feminism* inspired by The Combahee River Collective Statement of 1977, whit cultural and political resonance (Barriteau, 2011). From the perspective of social sciences, our reflections were based by hermeneutics (Ángel 2011) as well as by the design of study categories regarding knowledge and practices for cure.

The purpose of our article is to ponder, from the communities' knowledge, on the *hidden logos* of doing practices (De Certeau, 1999) and on the production of further knowledge related to how the communities of San Francisco, Medellin, and Villa Colombia treat and heal using medicinal plants. We aim to contribute to research related to Community Psychology, which contemplates both the human and non-human lives that appear in afro-indigenous cosmology and have the potential to decolonize knowledge in the psychosocial field.

We are responding to the argument proposed by the Gulbenkian Commission[8] (Wallerstein, 2007) that revolves around the idea of *opening up, restructuring, and decolonizing* social sciences. This signifies that the universal truth depends on the order of power, seeing as we cannot ignore the fact that "the very scientific truth is historical". It also entails that we need to accept the *coexistence* of multiple interpretations of the plural and complex social reality as well as question "[…] the monopoly of wisdom and knowledge areas limited to persons who hold a certain university degree" (Wallerstein, 2007, p. 106). Knowledge is not an exclusive property of modern science. This call is directed toward certain Community Psychology practices that do not prioritize what Maritza Montero (2005)

[8] The Gulbenkian Commission was created at the beginning of the 1990s by intellectuals in social sciences, natural sciences and humanities, such as Immanuel Wallerstein, Calestous Juma, Evelyn Fox Keller, Jürgen Kocka, Dominique Lecourt, Valentin Y. Mudimbe, Kinhide Mushakoji, Ilya Prigogine, Peter J. Taylor, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, and Richard Lee. It aimed to reassess the link between disciplines and sciences, life studies, complexity, as well as the need to contextualize universalisms according to the dialogue between cultures and university education (Wallerstein, 2007).

believes to be the objective of this field: to facilitate the capacities and resources in orden to achieve the change that the community wants within its own environment. The call to open up, restructure, and decolonize the psychosocial knowledge begins by switching the focus toward other areas of knowledge—in this case, the practices of everyday life of caring and healing with medicinal plants in Montes de Maria.

Therefore, we divided the text into four sections. The first section deals with the exclusion of these practices from the knowledge repertoire. The second section revolves around the *hidden logos* in practices of everyday life communitary as a source of knowledge that is still there to foretell a future for science itself. Later on, in this same section, we delve deeper into certain controversial conditions experienced by the Montes de Maria communities. In the third section, we switch our focus to the cure with medicinal plants employed by women in their communities as a daily 'decolonizing practice'. Finally, the fourth section presents our reflections for community-psychology on epistemic fertility that inspired our encounters with the peasant women.

Historical exclusion of speechless practices

The arts of practices were separated from the sciences (De Certeau, 1999). According to Castro-Gómez (2010) on account of the epistemic and racial border established by the modern/colonial reason since the 15th century. In the 18th century, this division was reinforced by the favorable position adopted by scientific writing toward a positive description of the world. At that time, the controversial regime of objectivity (Daston, 2017) was swinging between its more ontological sense - the objects of thought, which were a fruit of the medieval scholasticism that linked together faith and reason - and the objectivity related to physical objects belonging to the external world.

We understand the modern colonial reason as a type of rationalization that arose in 15th century modern Europe. According to Alain Touraine (1993), this reason was characterized by the destruction of ancient orders and the triumph of "objective and instrumental rationality", but also by the rupture within the sacred world, which binds the natural to the divine. The separation and opposition between the objective and the subjective worlds highlighted a divergence, distancing objects and subject.

De Certeau (1999) points out two operations brought about by modern science, adiscursive one and non-discursive one, which lead to a division between arts and sciences. Within this modern rationality, discourse sets the tone for practical ability, and thus, according to the author, "[…] the speechless procedure of practices is historically closing" (De Certeau 1999, p. 77). By underestimating the practical art, they were set as opposite those valued as 'epistemologically superior' sciences that used scientific language. From an epistemological colonial reference, the knowledge related to these practices has been considered 'remained uncultured', as these practices do not undergo reflection, which is an organic characteristic of scientific discourse. This uncultured nature of the practices, analogous to that of fables and myths, is likely to be overcome if and only if modern science put its wisdom legible. Modern reason is also colonial as a simultaneous process. The 'colonial attitude' toward knowledge dates back to the exclusion of African, African diaspora, and indigenous knowledge from European colonization and civilization projects. Particularly, from the triumphant and expansive conquest of the Al-Andalus region by the Spanish Crown. According to Ramón Grosfoguel (2014), the european colonial expansion began in the 15th century, on January 2, 1492 with the conquest of Al-Andalus, which had been under muslim control for 800 years. That same year, the Catholic Monarchs of Spain authorized and

financed Christopher Columbus's expedition in the colonial name to where he then thought to be India but ended up being America. According to Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel (2007), coloniality, understood as a historic process, includes the colonization of the Americas as well as the economy of the capitalist world. In other words, the global racial/ethnical hierarchy was contemporary with the international division of labor regarding the center-periphery relation. In the 16t and 17th centuries, both Europe and the so-called New World witnessed the persecution of women who made use of plants, during what we now know as 'witch hunts'. The use of medicinal plants for cure had been the pillar of healthcare for centuries, long before western medicine was established, from de West, as a legitimate method to safeguarding it. Acocording to Silvia Federici (2004) the beginning of professional medicine based on modern scientific knowledge did away with folk healers' knowledge of cure, remedies and plants. It is the author's view that the violent replacement of witches and folk healers with doctors outlines the link between witch hunts in the 16 and 17th centuries and the rise of modern science. This persecution followed by land expropriation and colonization was vital for the consolidation of European capitalism (Federici, 2004). According to Castro-Gómez (2010), in the case of the land that is present-day Colombia, the knowledge of plants served financial purposes that benefited the Spanish Crown, such as the Royal Botanical Expedition to New Granada at the end of the 18th century. Science shifted in favor of financial growth, at the cost of 'expropriating' the capital that included 'knowledge'. The State invested in scientific expeditions, botanical gardens, and trade in vegetable products trade to favor the pharmaceutical industry. Furthermore, the Spanish Crown established botany and other sciences in the colonies for its own financial benefit and with the aim of acknowledging and exporting natural resources. This logic facilitated the 'expropriation' of the medicinal knowledge of plants in the hands of traditional folk healers, whose abilities were considered conveniently 'archaic' (Castro-Gómez, 2010).

According to Grosfoguel (2013), witch hunts were an 'epistemicide', a pillar of 'modern epistemology'. Female and male folk healers were classified as charlatans incapable of producing knowledge or universal categories, with their ancestral knowledge and practices being considered witchcraft, and they presumably having signed deals with the devil (Castro-Gómez, 2010). It was due to witchcraft and sorcery that the witches in the colombian Caribbean territory, were persecuted, punished and condemned by the Court of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in the Province or Cartagena (Medina, 1899).

From this colonial perspective, knowledge was in pursuit of rational control of the world, which entailed, among others, an 'epistemic distancing' as Castro-Gómez (2010) called it, from what is known. This mechanism of modern/colonial knowledge distanced scientific knowledge from other knowledge coming from african, african-descendant, and indigenous communities. These communities´ human status was questioned and they, together with their means of interpreting reality and behaving in the world, were considered inferior. The discursive dominance in the modern/colonial knowledge fostered the epistemic distancing from the practices mentioned. Referring back to Castro-Gómez (2010), an example of this distancing was the use of scientific language in Latin, which was regarded as cultivated and enhanced and used from the 18th century in botany but also in biology and medicine over the following century. This exclusion-based language operated as an instrument of colonial reproduction in the field of knowledge, because it invalidated other types of knowledge and renamed natural entities and their attributes, such as those in the daily languages of afro-indigenous communities.

Decolonial studies in Latin America are now rebuilding the genealogies of knowledge and attempting to bring back the long-forgotten practices of the modern colonial reason.

Thanks to authors such as Rivera-Cusicanqui (2010), practical arts are becoming vital concepts. The views in question are not naïve and do not attribute value without questioning the foundations of traditional knowledge. Julieta Paredes (2014) warns us that, from a community-feminism perspective, women were already involved in dynamics of knowledge exclusion even before colonization, in what are dynamics related to certain patterns of patriarchal legacy. Colonization brought many instances of oppression of women's knowledge and a heavy load of patriarchal oppression of gender, race, and class (Combahee River Collective, 1982), which is still constantly updated.

The oversight and the 'epistemic silencing' (Parra-Valencia, 2019) that strengthened the european coloniality imposed in the Americas is reproduced in contemporary coloniality. We must remember that from the decolonial turn perspective, the political and administrative decolonization of colonies did not bring about a disappearance of colonial logic, as has been suggested by some interpretation of Postcolonial Studies anglo-saxon or postmoderns. The first decolonization was incomplete, from a decolonial perspective, because it 'left intact' racial, ethnical, sexual, epistemic, financial. and gender relationships. "At the beginning of the 21st century, the world needs a decoloniality that complements the decolonization carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries" (Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel 2007, p. 17); hence, the separation outlined by the so-called decolonial turn (Maldonado-Torres, 2006, cited in Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel, 2007) between notions of political decolonization, related to the independence process of colonized countries (in America, Africa, and Asia). And decoloniality, as necessary process for the racial, ethnic, sexual, epistemic, economic and gender decolonization; in the face of the constant recolonization (Rivera-Cusicanqui, 2010) of imaginaries and minds, and the renewal of colonization practices as means of cultural dominance.

Rivera-Cusicanqui (2010) highlights the importance of disclosure from a decolonial point of view, given that words and language conventions harbor misunderstandings, direct certain actions, and tear apart actions from words. This distance renews colonization practices. This is what occurs with discourses, including those in the psychological field, which impede and neutralize the decolonization practices—to such an extent that "[…] they do not pay any attention to the internal dynamics of the subordinates" (Rivera-Cusicanqui 2010, p. 69), as well as to their worries and needs—of those who, on the contrary, capture its energy and reenact the historical exclusion of the practices mentioned by extracting us from our roots and from the dialogue with those who are mobilized in the territories.

Montes de Maria, a disputed territory

The communities of San Francisco, Medellin, and Villa Colombia are located in Montes de Maria[9], within the municipality of Ovejas (Sucre), inside Colombia's Caribbean coast. According to the Colombian National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH, 2010), this territory is recognized for solid peasant organization and for the land dispute wars through which its people have had to live since the 1960s and 1970s. The antecedent of the peasant struggle, which were not only regional but also national, revolved around the land itself and the idea of transformation the quality of life of the communities that came from an agricultural background. The fact that these people came together to fight for this land enabled them to obtain land titles as well as a sense of belonging connected to the territory and to the Montes-de-Maria identity (CNMH, 2010).

[9] Comprising 15 municipalities, of which eight were located in the department of Sucre (Ovejas, Chalan, Colosó, Morroa, Toluviejo, Los Palmitos, San Onofre, and Palmito) and seven in the department of Bolívar (Córdoba, El Carmen de Bolívar, El Guamo, María La Baja, San Jacinto, San Juan Nepomuceno, and Zambrano) (Aguilera, 2013).

As a result of the people coming together to fight, in 1989, the Colombian Institute for Agrarian Reform (Incora) allotted the San Francisco ranch (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica [CNMH], 2016) to 35 families in the rural community, inside the territory where the National Association of Rural-Community Users (Anuc)—a renowned popular land initiative from the 1960s and 70s—was born. The Medellin community received the same ranch in 1975, with 30 families settling there (Parra-Valencia, 2019). The highest number of forced displacements within that land occurred between 1997 and 2010, a time when the communities of Montes de Maria were forced to abandon their homes because of the unbearable climate of violence and repression caused by armed conflict. According to the Peacebuilding, Development, and Reconciliation division of the United Nations Development Program in Colombia (Área de Paz, Desarrollo y Reconciliación, 2010), in 2010, the community of Montes de Maria comprised 215,505 people who were in a situation of forced displacement. Furthermore, the total number of people living in the region at the time was 438,119.

Because of the geostrategic location that connects Montes de Maria with the Caribbean coast, the local communities became the target of various types of violence (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica [CNMH], 2013), such as kidnapping, forced displacement, forced disappearance, forced recruitment, torture, sexual abuse, and murder. These were a result of the socio-political armed conflict, as well as the insurgent forces, the paramilitary, the National Army, drug trafficking, and, finally, the interests of the national and international agroindustry.

> According to the Presidential Observatory of Human Rights, between 1996 and 2004, 633 kidnappings were recorded in Sucre, with the highest numbers occurring in 1999, 2001, and 2002. Sincelejo and Viejas were the most affected municipalities, each surpassing 100 kidnappings (CNRR- CNMH, 2010, p. 100).

Between 1999 and 2002, there were 18 massacres (El Salado, Chengue and Macayepo, etc.) that led to massive forced displacement and land abandonment. The paramilitary was responsible for half of the 16 massacres and 116 victims in Sucre between 2000 and 2004 (CNRR-CNMH, 2010). The forced and violent displacement to which the population was subjected worsened, particularly because of the incursion of the paramilitary within these lands (CNMH, 2016) and of the establishment of the so-called ‘death route’, which gave way to 56 massacres between 1997 and 2004 and to more than 80,000 hectares of land being dispossessed (Ojeda, Petzl, Quiroga, Rodríguez, & Rojas 2015).

The Colombian socio-political armed conflict that began in the 1960s only started to affect the lands of Montes de Maria in the 1980s. According to Maritza Montero (2005), the war saw armed groups from all fronts face each other; in addition, there were attempts to alter the people’s ideology, which led to a weakening of the sense of community. In the 1980s, the guerrilla began an incursion, aiming to take possession of the rural organizations. Examples of these guerrillas include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP), and the National Liberation Army (ELN). At the end of the 1990s, the paramilitary, alongside its so-called Heroes’ Block of Montes de Maria, caused the most significant forced displacements (Ojeda et al., 2015). For more than 25 years, this organization dispossessed and appropriated land (Ojeda, 2014) and committed bloody and violent actions against the rural communities.

Montes de Maria was recognized as a *Rehabilitation and Consolidation Area* of public order, in accordance with Article 11 of Decree 2002 of 2002, which refers to a “[…] geographical area that has been affected by actions performed by criminal organizations, with the final purpose being to guarantee institutional stability, reestablish constitutional

order, as well as integrity of the national land and protection of the civil population" (Colombia, 2002a). In addition, the *State of Internal Shock* was also decreed (Decree 1837 of 11 August 2002), which established the need to "[…] immediately provide resources to the military forces, the police, as well as other state bodies that must intervene to avert the acts that have disturbed the public order, and prevent their effects from spreading" (Colombia, 2002b). Both decrees justified the militarization of the region, limiting and restricting freedoms and rights, and causing the violence to worsen (Plataforma de Organizaciones de Desarrollo Europeas en Colombia [PODEC], 2011).

Presently, the violence in the Montes de Maria region, as well as in the rest of Colombia, follows the pattern of threats and homicides aimed at peoples and communities that demand reparation and restitution. The land that was the target of these wars was acquired in unusual circumstances by foreigner. This land is now used in the massive agroindustry of teak and palm oil, both of which are traded on a large scale (Ojeda, 2014). Local communities thus became victims again, adding to the more than 8,970,712 other victims in Colombia, according to the Singular Registry of Victims[10] and to the Unit for Integral Attention and Reparation for Victims (Uariv), which was responsible for the individual and collective reparation of victims, in virtue of Law 1448 of 2011 (Law regarding victims and land restitution). The communities of San Francisco, Medellin and Villa Colombia were acknowledged by the Uariv as "[…] subjects of collective reparation" (Colombia, 2011, art. 152), along with three other communities in the region of Ovejas-Sucre[11]. While collective reparation takes place in that land, the women's practice of using medicinal plants to heal continues to be paramount in helping families and communities to survive and reunite with each other. Vegetable gardens and backyards are not included in the reparation plan, although the women ensure the use of non-discursive practices that never reach the institutions of the state to heal their families. Plants heal the pain caused by colonialist and colonial wars, they heal the women who use them, and they heal the community. Plants are a way of expressing local afro-indigenous roots in the territory.

Cure with plants: a practice of everyday life of women in Montes de Maria

For the purpose of our research, we built a strategic methodology called 'community mapping of knowledge and practices to heal', whose nature was participative and which focused on diagnoses, thus privileging the communities' virtues and potential. By talking and spending time with peasant women in rural communities, we aimed to build their repertoire of knowledge of cure, enabling them to identify the various practices employed by them within their families and communities on a day-to-day basis. One of these practices was caring and healing with medicinal plants.

> For the flu, oregano and a brown sugar loaf or eucalyptus. It soothes earaches. […] Chamomile is a medicinal product; it's little, but very good, both for the stomach and for the hair or nails […] Wormwood sprigs help relieve discomfort (Peasant women. Community Medellin. Group interview. January 25, 2017).

The testimony above was given to us by peasant women in the rural communities of San Francisco, Medellin, and Villa Colombia, who cures those within their communities using medicinal plants to treat various discomforts and diseases, such as the flu, diabetes, or hypertension. The plants used in service of the community are considered 'community

[10] Available at: https://www.unidadvictimas.gov.co/ Visited on 19 March 2020
[11] Borrachera, La Coquera and El Palmar.

first aid', in the words of the women in those communities. By employing this practice daily, women take up the task of healing and supporting their families and communities.

> Plants get us out of tight spots much quicker than going to a health center. They take very long there to give someone an injection, while here, just with one drink, you're back on your feet in no time. Here, we go see the doctor when we're feeling very bad. We seldom go to the health center (Peasant woman. Community San Francisco. Group interview. January 25, 2017).

These are communities with an agricultural background. The indigenous Zenú people that inhabited this geographical space long before the spanish colonization also had an agricultural background. By belonging to the rural community, the ontology is connected to nature (Ospina, 2014; Rojas, 2015), alongside which they live on a day-to-day basis. Their vegetable gardens are located besides or behind their homes, and there they sow medicinal plants, as well as vegetables and fruits.

> I have remedies, all kinds of remedies around here, like for stomach aches. Wormwood is also good for any pain someone may have. Oregano's for the flu, I just boil it with a loaf of brown bread. Then I grab aloe vera, cut it, and mix it with honey (Peasant woman. Community of Medellin. Ovejas. Mapping of knowledges and practices. Group interview. September 16, 2016).

In these rural communities, plants are women's allies, both when it comes to care and health their relatives, as well as when it comes to nourishing them on a daily basis. These women are the pillars of their loved ones' health. They ensure their families' well-being on a day-to-day basis by means of their plant-healing practice, thus building a close relationship with their loved ones and keeping alive the knowledge of their ancestors.

We came across situations wherein the condition of certain peasant women or men, particularly that of the elderly, was worsening, while 'the soles of their shoes got ripped from going to the Mayor´s office so much', according to one peasan leader who was referring to the slow and bureaucratic process of Sate, integral reparation. We are not only referring to individual physical and psychological conditions but also to psychosocial ailments related to the relationship between families and communities, which cause the trust of the families and the social link to wane. We find ourselves facing a paradox due to the connection between disease and the colonial nature of the state reparation plan that aims to "[…] contribute to social inclusion and peace" according to the institutional mission of the Uariv (2018).

> We hardly ever went to see the doctor before, nor did we take our kids to the doctor, we healed them with plants. I had many plants before, now I don't (Peasant woman. Community San Francisco. Group interview. November 30, 2016).

The ideas of peasant women of San Francisco, Medellin, and Villa Colombia enabled us to recognize the 'practices of everyday life' that allow them to deal with their families' and communities' daily needs. The women have taken up the task of treating and healing with medicinal plants inside their families and communities, a practice that entails a political dimension in a context of post-conflict and reparation.

Underlying the definition of subjects of reparation that impose criteria to certify knowledges and practices, the knowledge of doing, of maneuvering, from the field exists and overtakes the theoretical and academic discourse, which ends up conceptualizing the said knowledge of practices of everyday life. According to De Certeau (1999), within these *practices* 'of everyday life' lies 'hidden logos' lie as a reservoir of knowledge waiting to be acknowledged. As is the case with the practice of caring and healing with medical plants, which, in addition to providing the communities with their daily subsistence and healthcare, also supported them during the violent ravages of war. Moreover, it is still alive throughout those lands. While the process of collective state reparation progresses, women in those

rural communities tackle the reparation while using the ancient, millennial knowledge of land and plants, the *hidden logos*, to heal themselves. In the words of De Certeau (1999), practical intelligence can be found in *ways to do*.

In Montes de Maria, the cure with plants entails enabling one subject to embody the disease, while another subject embodies the cure. This process gives way to a certain exchange between the neighbors in the community, allowing gender and intergenerational relationships to become more dynamic. For the communities that lived together and were affected by violence in Montes de Maria, these social practices are a means of liberation and cohesion. In a 2016 study of the Awá indigenous peoples[12], Barajas (2016) discovered among women community practices such as the exchange of seeds and plants and their uses, which was fundamental for enriching the subsistence own, of the vegetable gardens and the recovering their knowledge—as in the case of the women in Montes de Maria. These practices comprise both human and non-human aspects, which have come to be embodied by machines, artifacts, and objects (Barajas, 2016). The division between human and non-human is one of the consequences of the colonial violence that affected those who resided outside the West and those who denied the knowledge related to the use of plants, among others. When it comes to practices of everyday like of peasant and afro-indigenous roots, plants are more than a means to an end. They are regarded as sidekicks, to whom respect is owed. In traditional practices, plants are considered otherness, from whom permission is requested and to whom care is directed.

In his book *The life of plants: a metaphysics of mixture*, italian philosopher Emanuel Coccia (2017) argues that plants do not possess ears, noses, snouts, or other organs similar to those of our species and to zoo centrism. This is true, and a first glance at the debate might make it appear elementary. Coccia (2017) suggests that plants set limits to human exceptionalism, limits that force us to admit that we cannot understand the nature of plants if we do not understand the nature of the world. There is no way to dissociate either metaphysically or ontologically plantas and the world. According to the author, the life of most organisms is rooted in vegetal life as a product of daily colonization, e.g., furniture, food, oxygen. Coccia (2017) invites us to think the absence of hands in plants not as a sign of inferior evolution, but rather a sign of the immersion of plants in matter itself, that makes it emerge and where it acquires duration.

Tsing (2015) reminds us that (european) monocultivators left us as an inheritance cultivation by coertion; in sown fields related to monoculture, the knowledge and ontology does not expand upon the plots that connect people, plants, and places. That is why Tsing visits humid lands to pick mushrooms, accompanies harvesters, gets her feet dirty by hiking, and learns how to identify scents or articulate the body for new uses. The community vegetable gardens in San Francisco, Medellin, and Villa Colombia continue against the tide of epistemic monoculture and cultivation by coercion. The locals combine knowledge from the long period of social memory with native knowledge from local practices, developed in daily growing. Ana Tsing (2015), what we understand by human nature and a relationship between different species. This banal observation of Tsing (2015) invites research practices wherein living beings other than humans oppose and contaminate any supposition on behalf of human universalism. At a certain point, the author employs choreography to accompany mushroom harvesters in two areas abandoned by capitalist investors. In order for the choreography to be successful, the harvesters have to develop an ability to identify certain scents when approaching oak trees with the purpose of finding good mushrooms. In a

[12] An indigenous community located East of the Colombian departments of Nariño and Putumayo and the Ecuadorian region of Sucumbíos.

delicate and well-situated narrative, and by using mushrooms as a central element, Tsing gives us an historic account of the practices involved in the rise and fall of two big cities. It is a route that goes from smells to financial aspects.

The turn that occurs when we observe peasant practices of cure with medical plants is much more significant than the action of enhancing the pantheon of the living who would fill our writings. The idea is to put in check the attributes that we use to allocate humanities and to take into account an entire range of experiences and practices classified as 'leftovers', as well as bring back research and experimentation practices that were left behind along with the figure of the sorcerer, as happened with the use of plants in some practices employed by african diaspora and indigenous communities. In psychosocial studies, it is important to reaffirm political ontologies who restore animals and vegetables to practices of connection and disconnection with humans who live together with deep issues, without producing traditional, identity-possessing monocultures.

These practices help us bring back meanings and traditions through 'collective repetition', with the purpose of making them a part of our daily lives, as well as a means to rebuild the social sphere. This perspective is useful for understanding the manner in which we humans, as social beings, transform the world we live in through our activities. In the same way, women in the rural communities of Montes de Maria have retained the practice of cure with medicinal plants to preserve the health of their families as a strategy for survival, despite the violence brought on by war. If during the colonial period women's healing practices were persecuted and the women were condemned for witchcraft, nowadays, the state's colonial security practices do not regard these practices, which have been domesticated into vegetable gardens, as dangerous. From the state's point of view, there has been a transition from a persecuted practice to a harmless one.

Women in the rural community value both their knowledge of plants and the plants' knowledge. Once, during a meeting in 2016 with the community of San Francisco, one woman shared with us a story of plant healing that went back to her great-grandparents. In her own words, she said "We come from an ancient tradition. Both our great-grandfather and our grandfather were botanists. We come from a family that used medicinal plants to cure. They had plants in the yard" (Peasant woman. Community San Francisco. Fiel diary. November 30, 2016). During the same dialogue, the woman also acknowledged how valuable the knowledge of these ancestral skills was: 'Nowadays we keep this knowledge so we don't lose our tradition'.

Nevertheless, some peasant women refuse to hold certain positions that have been traditionally associated with women (such as midwife or folk healer), or devalued tactical ways of doing things, even inside their own communities. The knowledge of plants held by women in the rural communities is a strategy of resistance and bringing back monocultures that are agricultural and subjective.

Peasant women and decolonial epistemic fertility: final considerations

Taking into account the historical epistemological exclusion of certain community practices, we used this research to identify various articulating elements that could aid us on our journey toward decolonizing knowledge. The practical side of discourse was left out of coloniality and modern science. Therefore, any decolonial initiative must entail the inclusion of social practices in a human and non-human structure practices that, in the psychosocial field, articulate the existence of these communities through actions that fight back against the violence brought on by war.

We also highlight the inventive, appropriative nature of healing social practices in rural communities, which makes them impossible to recreate. This characteristic reinforces the agency and autonomy (Parra-Valencia, 2016) of those who enable healing practices to take shape and opens the door to social and political change. The latter allows us to locate ourselves in the socio-political field, a space of tension and fights. This is why practice is policy. It contains various types of knowledge that enables it to withstand the test of time. The diverse and multiple nature that enables the parallel coexistence of multiple types of knowledge can be found in the daily practice of the communities in Montes de Maria, at the border between Colombia and Ecuador, as well as in other places, always with the potential to decolonize knowledge.

Owing to the women in the rural communities of Montes de Maria, what we learned about scientific research in psychology was that there is a rich *logos* lying within daily practices, such as the one related to plant healing, regarded as a decolonial practice belonging to those epistemic, modern/colonial connections that remain intact and stifle local knowledge (Parra-Valencia, 2019). According to Tsing (2015), psychological research can recreate monocultures, not only those related to seeds, but also those related to the epistemic. Or assume decolonization practices in the participatory way of knowledge production about silenced knowledge. The peasant women teach us that monocultures leave the lands sterile.

We believe it is necessary for academic researchers, particularly those in the field of psychological knowledge, to reflect on one´s own colonial reproduction that they promotes in discourse and practice. Oriented to epistemic imposition relationships, disregarding other disciplinary and non-academic contributions from the local level. As the case of the hegemonic use of distant and out-of-context bibliographies that are far from our own reality. When it comes to the academic study of Community Psychology in Latin America, the syllabi are plagued with references from the United States and Europe, with notions, theories, or methodologies from our own harvest in the Latin American continent. Women, black authors or afro-indigenous, are far less included. With the peasant women of Montes de Maria, from a decolonial perspective, we learned about the possibilities of epistemic fertility in the psychosocial field.

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Received: Nov. 19, 2018
Approved: May 04, 2020

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