

When Time Belongs to the Land: Indigenous Resistances to Capitalist Temporalities

Vanessa Caroline Tomazini de Almeida
Universidade de São Paulo

Silvino Sirnãwe Xerente
Universidade Federal de Goiás

Claudia Roberta de Castro Moreno
Department of Health and Society, Faculty of Public Health, Universidade de São Paulo

Keywords: • Time • Resistance • Capitalism • Guarani Mbya • Akwẽ-Xerente • Indigenous Peoples • Counter-Colonial

Abstract

This article examines how conceptions of time among the Akwẽ-Xerente people of Salto Kripre village (Tocantins State) and the Mbya Guarani people of Nhanderekoá village (São Paulo State) constitute counter-colonial forms of resistance against the temporal orders imposed by capitalist society. Drawing on an analysis of cultivation practices, hunting, and foodways as expressions of temporal relations within these communities, the article argues that these peoples sustain ways of life rooted in shared time—organized in synchrony with land, natural cycles, and spiritual relationships—countering the Western worldview of linear and production-centered time. In both contexts, time is not treated as a resource to be optimized but as a relational dimension involving humans, non-human beings, and territory. Through personal narratives, the article demonstrates how temporal experience shifts within and beyond the villages, revealing tensions between Indigenous temporalities and capitalist acceleration. Ultimately, the study argues that Indigenous struggles for land are simultaneously struggles for the right to live according to temporalities that resist dispossession and affirm that time can belong to the land.

Indigenization Statement

Vanessa Caroline Tomazini de Almeida is a non-Indigenous researcher who has established a research relationship, a bond of friendship, and a partnership in collective projects with the two Indigenous communities to which this work refers since 2023. She lives in the city of São Paulo, Brazil.

Silvino Sirnãwe Xerente, an Indigenous researcher of the Akwẽ-Xerente people, lives in the Salto Kripre village, in the Xerente Indigenous Territory, Tocantins, Brazil.

Claudia Roberta de Castro Moreno is a non-Indigenous researcher and does not have a direct relationship with the Indigenous communities. Claudia is the first author's advisor. She lives in the city of São Paulo, Brazil.

Introduction

Time is a multifaceted concept that takes on different meanings across disciplinary fields, ranging from Aristotle's measure of motion to Einstein's relativity of spacetime, to the social and cultural dimensions analyzed within the humanities and social sciences. As a relational category, the conception of time across different human groups is neither fixed nor universal, but shaped by distinct lifeways, collective experiences, and sociopolitical contexts specific to each community.

Far from being an absolute truth, time is produced and redefined according to the interests and values held by a society. In the case of modern Western societies, time is strongly marked by the political-economic worldview underpinning capitalism and its colonial roots (Thompson, 1967). Indigenous Peoples strongly resist the temporal dynamics produced by colonization and modern-day capitalism, grounded in their own diverse epistemologies, cosmologies, and ways of inhabiting the world, which enable the construction of other temporalities.

This study explores the temporal relationships developed by communities of two Indigenous Peoples in Brazil, the Mbya Guarani of Nhanderekoá village in São Paulo State, and the Akwẽ-Xerente of Salto Kripre village in Tocantins State, observed primarily through the relationships established among people, food, and land. In doing so, the study reveals how Indigenous temporal organization resists capitalist pressures in a counter-colonial manner.

Foodway relationships were a central focus of the analysis of time among these two Indigenous Peoples, drawing on findings from an umbrella study¹. Through these relationships, it became apparent that time was a highly significant dimension of foodways,

¹Almeida (2025). The study consists of a master's thesis conducted with two indigenous peoples between 2023 and 2025, titled "Eating time, living time: reflections on Akwẽ-Xerente and Mbya Guarani food relationships to think other ways of inhabiting the world."

yet one that remains largely unexplored in the related literature. Thus, approaching time through the lens of Indigenous foodways proved highly effective for establishing critiques of exploitative, non-Indigenous modes of development that threaten countless lifeways on the planet, given that industrial-scale production of commodities and plantations (Shiratori, 2022), deterritorialization of traditional peoples (Pompeia, 2023), and the deliberate production of hunger (Teixeira, 2022), are strongly associated with processes of domination and the rapid onset of climate change.

This analysis is reported by first providing a brief background on the Akwẽ-Xerente and Mbya Guarani peoples, on their territories, and histories of contact. Western conceptions of time are then discussed, addressing how time was transformed into money and a tool of control. Subsequently, personal narratives of two of the authors (one Indigenous and one non-Indigenous) are presented, describing their experiences of time within and outside the villages. A deeper analysis of Indigenous temporalities is then carried out, focusing on how foodway relationships and cultivation cycles among the Akwẽ-Xerente and Mbya Guarani reveal alternative temporal logics. Lastly, the concepts of ‘spiral time,’ ‘body-territory,’ and ‘collective subject’ are outlined, framing how these practices constitute counter-colonial resistance.

The Akwẽ-Xerente and Mbya Guarani Peoples and Territories: A Brief Background

The Akwẽ-Xerente people, belonging to the Macro-Jê language family and the Jê linguistic stock (Instituto Socioambiental, [n.d.-d]), have a current population of 3,152 individuals (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2010) and inhabit a territory within the *Cerrado* biome within Tocantins State, central Brazil. Prior to European invasion, the people inhabited territories extending across the *Cerrado*, *Caatinga*, and *Sertão*, encompassing areas that today comprise parts of Goiás, Pará, and Maranhão States

(Schroeder, 2006). The history of the Akwẽ-Xerente people's contact with colonization is marked by violence, expropriation, and resistance.

According to dos Anjos Raposo (2019), the arrival of Europeans in the region intensified in the 18th century, when the discovery of gold led to invasion of their lands and the enslavement and trafficking of Indigenous Peoples deemed "wild" or "untamed." Following rapid depletion of the gold deposits, the Empire shifted to incentivizing agricultural and pastoral production, promoting an assimilationist policy aimed at "pacifying" Indigenous Peoples as a source of labor. The Akwẽ, however, systematically resisted invasion and enslavement through coordinated attacks on livestock and settlements, evading capture, and via confrontations with imperial troops. Despite strong resistance, the people became victims of massacres, kidnappings, imprisonment, and destruction of their crops (dos Anjos Raposo, 2019).

From the 20th century onwards, with the expansion of ranches, road infrastructure, and the establishment of Tocantins State, the Akwẽ were progressively displaced and confined to restricted areas. Attacks intensified again during the military dictatorship, accompanied by Brazil's developmentalist projects which, coupled with epidemics stemming from contact, including smallpox and yellow fever, resulted in a dramatic decline in the Akwẽ population from approximately 1,300 people in 1930 to around 300 in 1970 (dos Anjos Raposo, 2019; Schroeder, 2006). Consequently, the Akwẽ people were confined to the right bank of the Tocantins River, where today the two Indigenous Lands belonging to this people are located: the Xerente Indigenous Land and the Funil Indigenous Land. The demarcation of their territories², significantly smaller than their ancestral domain, was carried out in a fragmented manner, having been officially recognized only between 1989 and 1991 (Instituto

² A juridical-administrative procedure that identifies, demarcates, and formally recognizes an Indigenous Land in Brazil, becoming protected for permanent possession and exclusive use of Indigenous peoples, as enshrined in the 1988 Federal Constitution.

Socioambiental, [n.d.-b]; Instituto Socioambiental, [n.d.-c]; dos Anjos Raposo, 2019).

Together, the Xerente and Funil Indigenous Lands contain dozens of villages, including Salto Krippe, the village where this research was conducted, currently the largest Akwẽ settlement.

Even after demarcation, the Akwẽ continue to be impacted by colonialism and development projects in the surrounding region. Notably, the construction of a Hydroelectric Plant, commonly known as the Lajeado Dam, which dams the Tocantins River a few kilometers from the Indigenous Land, has radically altered the river flow, affecting the community's fishing and floodplain cultivation practices and, consequently, their food security and sovereignty (Venâncio & Chelotti, 2016). Additionally, the expansion of soy, sugarcane, and corn farms around the Indigenous Land, together with intensive pesticide use, has affected the community's health, well-being, and hunting (Xerente, 2023).

The Mbya Guarani, the second Indigenous people examined in this study, have a current population of 8,026 people (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2010) and belong to the Tupi language family and Tupi-Guarani linguistic stock (Instituto Socioambiental, [n.d.-a]). This distinguishes them from the Akwẽ people, linguistically, culturally, and territorially. Data from the most recent census conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2022 indicate that 295 Indigenous languages are spoken in Brazil, reflecting the diversity of 391 registered ethnicities (Agência IBGE, 2025). Amid this linguistic and cultural diversity, the present study identifies points of convergence between the two ethnicities to theorize temporality.

The Guarani with whom this work was conducted reside in Nhanderekoá, a *tekoa* (village, territory) in the process of territorial reassertion since May 2022. It is, therefore, a newly created territory that still needs to be demarcated. This process has been led by a Guarani couple, R. and J., who lived in another village near the region until a dream R. had revealed that the Nhanderekoá territory is part of Guarani ancestry. Currently, they continue

to be the community leaders. The territory comprises a small area of Atlantic Forest biome affected by urbanization, located in the coastal town of Itanhaém, São Paulo State, and is currently home to approximately 20 families.

The Guarani constitute a highly mobile people that, prior to European invasion, traveled on long journeys throughout territories that today correspond to areas spanning Brazilian states including Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, and Mato Grosso do Sul, as well as neighboring countries such as Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina (Guarani Continental, 2016). These journeys were motivated by the search for what the Guarani call the *land-without-evil*, guided by *Nhanderu Nhadexy ete kuery* (the ensemble of Guarani “gods” and “goddesses”, literally translated as “our true fathers and mothers”), according to the cosmology of *Mbya Reko*—the distinctive way of life of the Guarani people (Guarani Continental, 2016).

After centuries of invasion, the journey in search of the land-without-evil has not ceased, but become more localized. Territorial reassertions enable the Guarani to circulate among different *tekoas*, which represent sacred places through which they have historically traveled. In this respect, reclaimed lands are manifestations guided by *Nhanderu Nhadexy ete kuery* of an attempt to walk, live, and be where they have always been. Therefore, being in a territory involves not only the desires of the Guarani but also a series of negotiations, management practices, and care. Given that the forest is considered an inheritance left by the divinities who created the world and that it is the dwelling place of the *ija*, the owner-spirits of all that exists (plants, animals, rocks, water, crops, etc.), life in the forest requires a multispecies collaboration (Papá & Vera Britos, 2023).

In Guarani cosmology, there are no neutral spaces, as everything has an “owner” possessing their own agency, power, and intentionality. This concept, *ija*, does not refer to an owner in the sense of a proprietor, but rather to the agent responsible for the care, attention,

and protection of a specific being or element, acting as a mediator of resources or elements.

Negotiations with the *ija* involve “cosmopolitics,” fundamental for maintaining cosmic balance and *teko porã* (Guarani well-being) (Papá & Vera Britos, 2023, p. 7).

According to the village leadership, R. (personal communication, March, 2024), the area now occupied by the Nhanderekoá reclamation was formerly used as a solid waste disposal site for Itanhaém city and had been in disuse for some time. Despite soil degradation, the Atlantic Forest region still boasts many native trees and species. The area has been gradually recovering and reforested in accordance with *Mbya reko*.

The location of the Xerente Indigenous Land, the site of Salto Kripre village, together with the region of territorial reassertion of Nhanderekoá village of the Mbya Guarani, are depicted in the maps below (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Location of the Akwẽ-Xerente and Guarani Mbya territories



Note. A) Location of Xerente Indigenous Land (Akwẽ-Xerente) and Nhanderekoá village (Mbya Guarani) in Brazil. B) Boundaries of Xerente Indigenous Land, located in Tocantins;

and region inhabited by the Mbya Guarani in the territory of the Nhanderekoá village reclamation. Source: Author elaboration using the tools Google Earth and Google My Maps.

When Time Becomes Money

The successive notion of time underpins the idea of modern progress, which in Western civilization is synonymous with advancement (Martins, 2021). This logic was the basis of assimilationist policies that subjected Indigenous Peoples in Brazil to ethnocide, from the time of the Empire through the military regime (Furtado, 2009; Núñez, 2023). To understand how the current temporal organization of non-Indigenous societies was structured under hegemonic thought, Thompson (1967) presents an account of how the internal perception of time among European workers was transformed through new working habits during the industrial revolution, with the measurement of time serving as a means of labor exploitation and control.

Prior to the formation of industrial capitalism in Europe, daily tasks followed what Thompson (1967) termed task-oriented time, guided by a logic of necessity; that is, time was organized according to needs as they arose, ranging from harvesting, planting, repairing tools, making clothing, building houses, and other activities necessary for everyday life. In contrast to this type of temporal organization, as paid labor was hired, task-oriented time gradually gave way to timed work, and time became money. Thompson (1967) observes that the logic of industrial work introduced a new perception of time in societies, establishing a distinction between the worker's time and the employer's time. Work time becomes a property to be controlled and measured, no longer according to task completion, but according to its monetary value, requiring constant administration and optimization. What becomes central is not the accomplishment of the task itself, but the value of time converted into money. Thus, time gradually ceases to be something one “lives” and becomes something one “spends.”

Work that, hitherto, was characterized by variations in tasks and switching between intense activity and rest, took on precise and inflexible schedules. Idle time became condemned and, in Western and Westernized societies, acts such as doing nothing, contemplating life, resting, and sleeping are construed as wasted unproductive time. Borrowing from Thompson's (1967) reflections, when reversing the popular phrase “time is money” to “money is time,” a common point becomes clear: money (i.e., the collective idea of money as a social agreement of exchange) reflects the life-time of people exchanged unequally. When hiring a service or purchasing a product, what is acquired is not merely an object or action, but also the time expended. Money, in this sense, carries time transformed into value. Within capitalist dynamics, this exchange is profoundly unequal; the accumulation of wealth by few reflects the expropriation of time from countless others, apparently marked by social determinants such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Time was not only taken from people, but was expropriated from land and many other living entities.

At this juncture, one can draw a connection with what Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019) calls total expropriation, which represents the “expropriation (monetary and symbolic) of the productive capacity of non-European lands and bodies” (p. 37) that enabled the production and maintenance of the world as we know it, through processes of colonization. Resisting this process, the temporal organization of Indigenous communities, as well as other earth-bound peoples, continues to follow rhythms that counter colonial and capitalist mentalities, despite being profoundly marked by them.

The task-oriented temporality described by Thompson (1967) is evident in the Akwë and Guarani villages, where activities vary according to each person's needs and desires. This is possible because the maintenance of life is undertaken collectively and without intention to produce surpluses for capital accumulation. However, among these communities, temporal organization is not only task-oriented but is also oriented by a shared temporality that

includes the time of other beings, elements of nature, and spiritual entities. In other words, the performance of daily activities considers not only the necessity of planting or harvesting food, for example, but also, as guides for ways of life, the time of lunar cycles, the flow of rivers, the reproduction of animals, the slow growth of plants, the dreams of spiritual leaders, the holding of ceremonies, and so forth. Other concepts of time, non-human and non-productivist, are an integral part of the relational network of living life, whereby time is respected rather than expropriated.

As Jerá Guarani (2020), a recognized Indigenous leader in Brazil, affirms, “the *Juruá* [non-Indigenous people] should be told to become wilder, more uncivilized, for all the bad things happening on Planet Earth are caused by ‘civilized’ people, who are not, supposedly, ‘savages’” (para. 3). She invites us to rediscover our wild side and reconnect with the land and its different rhythms of life. The term “savage” was—and remains—used as a tool of colonization against the Indigenous Peoples. Guarani (2020), by claiming the term “savage,” imbuing it with positive meaning, in stark contrast to the term “civilized,” synonymous with planetary destruction and extinction, spawns a narrative and epistemological shift.

In Indigenous territorial reassertion (political and epistemological processes of reclaiming colonized territories) as is the case of Nhanderekoá village, the first gesture is to reconstruct engagement with the land, taking the opposite path to that of civilization (i.e., reforesting monocultures, expanding biodiversity, and slowing down time). At Nhanderekoá, after two years of reassertion, community members have collectively built an *opy* (prayer house), a plant nursery, cultivated fields, gardens, a fish farm, a communal kitchen, a school, and a number of houses. New relationships, sounds, and smells again become part of the environment and the relationships with time, in a counter-colonial process.

The concept of counter-colonization, as proposed by Antônio Bispo dos Santos (2015), refers to practices of active resistance by *quilombola* (maroon community members),

Indigenous, and Afro-diasporic peoples against invasion, expropriation, and subjugation of ways of life. Unlike decoloniality, which addresses those who were colonized, counter-colonization derives from the recognition that some communities were never fully colonized and, therefore, do not decolonize, but instead oppose colonialism through their own cultures, ways of life, practices, and epistemologies that are kept alive (Santos, 2015).

For the Akwẽ, There is Time for Everything

This section presents an account of one of the study's authors, a member of the Akwẽ-Xerente people, discussing the relationship with time within the community of Salto Kripre village, written in the first person. The contrast made by the author with respect to time is particularly noteworthy: for the Akwẽ, there is time for everything; for non-Indigenous people, everything has its time. In other words, in the Akwẽ worldview, time is available for everything: for clearing fields, planting, harvesting; while for non-Indigenous people, time is defined for everything, in fixed schedules that follow a production-centered mentality, in which people frequently complain of "not having time."

Silvino Sirnãwe Xerente

Here I'm going to speak about the time that the Akwẽ-Xerente people respect, preserve, and obey in relation to Mother Earth in their daily lives. In the worldview of the Akwẽ-Xerente people, there is time for the things they do. Work time occurs when they prepare fields only at the right time, which is during summer, during the dry season when there is no rain, spanning the months of May, June, July, and August³. In May the people prepare fields for survival, beginning to clear the fields. Then, in June, they fell trees to later

³ In the *Cerrado*, the seasons follow two marked cycles of rain and drought, called winter (rainy season) and summer (dry season), which differ from the standard calendar seasons of "summer, fall, winter, and spring" established in Brazilian official calendars. Thus, although May, June, July, and August officially correspond to fall and winter in Brazil, the predominance of rains characterizes this period as summer for Cerrado populations.

burn and dry them out. In September or October they burn the fields and the trees that were felled. Outside of these months, the Akwẽ-Xerente people do not tend the fields.

There are fields we call *capoeira*, which are cleared in August or September and burned in October. The Xerente do this to avoid felling native trees, thereby preserving nature, and also to reduce the work preparing fields, because some clear *capoeira* rather than native forest to avoid felling native trees. For the Akwẽ-Xerente people, Mother Earth is a living entity; so they ask nature's permission when preparing fields, plucking a leaf, lifting a root, stripping tree bark, because without nature the Akwẽ-Xerente cannot live—Mother Earth. The Akwẽ-Xerente have time for everything: for planting, harvesting palm fronds to build houses, and for gathering wood to make houses.

Here I want to say a little about the moon, which is very important in the life of the Akwẽ-Xerente people. In the work of the Akwẽ, they plant during the full moon, which yields a good harvest, increasing the harvest. In the past, for Indigenous Peoples there was no fixed time for eating, finishing work, hunting in the forest, fishing... because they lived from farming, hunting, and fishing—everything was done in its own time to carry out work and daily activities. To gather *piçaba* palm fronds for housebuilding, they gather them during the right moon phase so they don't spoil, harboring insects that then damage the fronds. Similarly, they gathered wood during the favorable moon phase to ensure it would last many years in contact with the soil.

I also want to speak about the times when an Akwẽ leaves their village, which for them is like another time, particularly in the city, at school, work, when traveling... everything has a fixed time schedule. An Indigenous person takes a while to get up to speed with all the non-Indigenous times; it is a very different reality for Indigenous Peoples to adjust to. When studying in the city, one must arrive at the correct time; when working in the city, one must arrive on time; when traveling, it's important to be there at the right time.

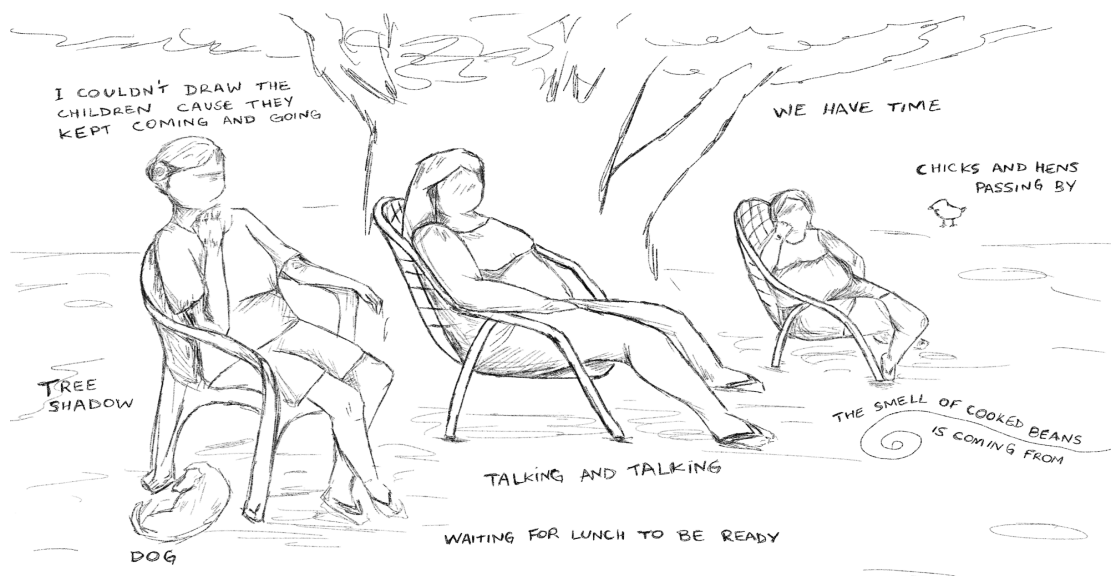
There is a major difference between the time-experience of the Indigenous person in their village versus the time of non-Indigenous people. Today we Indigenous Peoples have both our own time and the time system of non-Indigenous people; we need to know how to navigate the times of the world when an Indigenous person leaves their village, their community, their people. The time in which we grew up was much better for the Akwẽ-Xerente people, because we grew up in the time that our parents passed on to their children, all these traditional knowledges of our ancestors.

Other Experiences of Time

This section covers the account of one of the non-Indigenous authors of this article who, while living with the two Indigenous peoples in their villages, experienced a shift in perception and relationship with time. Figure 2, which depicts three women sitting in the shade of a tree, serves as the starting point for this reflection. As this is a personal account, the text is presented in the first person.

FIGURE 2

Field drawing: women have time. Source: produced by Vanessa Caroline Tomazini de Almeida.



Vanessa Caroline Tomazini de Almeida

To the right is S., in the middle her younger sister, B., and to the left their grandmother, P. On this occasion, we were sitting in the shade of the tree facing the kitchen of B.'s house. We were conversing while waiting for lunch to be ready. The three of them talked more among themselves in Akwẽ, while I drew. As always, the weather was very hot. The cool breeze that, occasionally, rustled the tree leaves, carried with it the aroma of beans cooking from the kitchen. Attracted by the smell of food, and also the shade, the *wapsã* (dogs) began to gather nearby. Under P.'s chair lay one of her female dogs, which followed her everywhere she went. The *sika* and their *sika krarê* (chickens and chicks) scratched here and there, in search of morsels of food that had fallen to the ground. *Turê* and *tarê* (children, boys and girls), children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews of the three women, ran back and forth and played. The overall atmosphere was a combination of calm, with a lot of movement. Nothing extraordinary happened, while at the same time there was a lot of life going on. While lunch was being prepared, we could simply wait. In this scene, there was something that struck me deeply, as a non-Indigenous woman raised by non-Indigenous women: the women in the village had time.

Since I began visiting the villages, both Akwẽ-Xerente and Mbya Guarani, I noticed the sensation of experiencing the passage of time differently. I felt this in the first few days I was in Salto village, still in the initial stages of fieldwork, when I had not yet considered the relevance of time to the topic I was seeking to study. The hours were long, and the four days seemed to draw out. Slow. Silent. Hot. It felt far longer than four days. I remember spending afternoons sitting under the shade of trees, simply existing, waiting for something to happen.

During these days, I accompanied K., my first host in the territory, on visits she made to her relatives' houses in the village, allowing me to gradually get to know people. Since I was still in the early stages of fieldwork, I had no intention whatsoever of collecting data or

asking many questions; I simply accompanied her, mostly in silence, listened to conversations in Akwẽ without understanding them, joined in a few conversations in Portuguese, and shared long silences. A strange thing among non-Indigenous people—in my world, silence tends to be uncomfortable; it is unusual to visit someone and share time in silence, nor is there time for this.

Differently, yet similarly, time passes slowly in the Guarani villages. Entering the *opy* (prayer house) each night is like going through a portal to a world in which the hours do not matter. Of all the occasions I was in the *opy*, in none of them was I able to estimate how long I had been inside.

In the *opy*, time follows the wisps of smoke in the air, the crackling of the fire, the stamping of feet on the ground. Time accompanies the singing and dancing prayer. Time seems to go by differently in the Guarani *tekoa* in general, but it is in the *opy* that this becomes more noticeable, within the body. The *opy* concentrates time-shaping elements and makes us perceive, in confluence with the terms of Leda Maria Martins (2021), that it is in the body that time dances.

Time to Eat, Time to Live

The ensuing paragraphs provide some examples of Indigenous temporal dynamics that can be observed through foodway relationships, first in the Akwẽ-Xerente context and then in the Mbya Guarani context.

Akwẽ-Xerente

Currently, most Akwẽ follow meal schedules that encompass breakfast, lunch, and dinner, a practice that developed through greater contact with the *ktuanõ* (white, non-Indigenous) world, driven by the need to align with school and work schedules. However, the accounts of Elders reveal that food relationships previously adhered to different timing. In the

past, feeding was tied to periods of harvesting, hunting, and fishing. One ate when there was food to eat—and what was available depended on the relation among people, seasons, and places. Hunting called for silence and patience; manioc required care; rain brought its own temporal rhythm. The act of eating was thus deeply interwoven with the experience of temporality and interdependence.

This relationship still manifests in some food preparation practices. The ritual of making a *kuparipe* (the Indigenous term for *beiju* or *tapioca*, a traditional Brazilian food made from cassava and cooked as a flatbread) is not reduced to the act of cooking, but entails a cycle that can span more than a year: the time of planting cassava, harvesting, grating the roots, drying them out in a *tapiti* (traditional press made from woven buriti palm leaves, used to extract water from grated cassava), and, finally, the heating of the grated cassava over the fire. When purchasing ready-made *beiju* from the market, this temporal dimension evaporates; the food comes devoid of memory, of waiting. Although theoretically the same food—with both consumed in daily Akwẽ life—only one carries the name *kuparipe* and only one is made up of many relationships that mark time and the transmission of knowledge: how to plant and cultivate manioc, how to weave a *tapiti*, and how to prepare the *beiju*.

The same temporal relationship involving food is found for *kupakro*, fermented and pounded cassava flour that can take days to make, and also with *kupakbu*, cassava paste filled with smoked game meat, roasted by being buried and having embers placed on top. The processes are long, typically undertaken by more than one person. To eat such foods, one must begin today so as to eat several days later. This waiting time goes hand in hand with the time dedicated to tending the crop, since cassava requires care and attention. Thus, body-time shares the time of other living beings, the body-territory time.

Akwẽ farming is based on two techniques: the growing of tubers, such as cassava, *cará*, and yam, done in shifting-cultivation plots, a management technique that presupposes

crop rotation, including burning periods for soil preparation, as described by the Indigenous author in his account. Grains, such as corn and wild rice, were usually sown in floodplain fields, located on river margins, where the phases of planting, growth, and harvesting align with the seasonal periods of dry weather and flood waters. During the period when the river's floodplain recedes, moist fertile soil is exposed on its banks, used for cultivation. However, floodplain fields rarely occur today, as the building of the Lajeado Hydroelectric Plant altered the water flow, precluding cultivation. The consumption of wild rice—adapted to areas prone to flooding—was replaced by rice sold commercially, becoming more commonly eaten and accompanying the Brazilian habit of eating rice and beans every day. Additionally, the effects of climate change are becoming apparent. As P., an elder of the community (personal communication, July, 2024), recounts:

In the beginning, we planted many things. Nowadays, nothing grows properly. We don't irrigate, but we knew how to make plants grow near water. We used to harvest a lot of corn, rice, watermelon. If you try to plant corn today, it won't grow, it's stunted. The sun is scorching. Back then, we would go out to the fields, walk for hours to get there, but it was cooler. If I had to do it today, I couldn't stand walking in this sun. (P., personal communication, July, 2024)

Climate maladjustment is also temporal maladjustment; a tension in the relationship among body, land, and food that Indigenous peoples are acutely aware of. Moreover, the natural cycles of the Cerrado, marked by six months of drought and six months of rain (both with high temperatures, ranging on average from 20°C to 35°C), continue to dictate the daily activities of the Akwê. One of the most striking examples is the gathering of native fruits, which ripen only during the rainy months.

To collect native Cerrado fruit, one must venture into the forest. Children always accompany their parents in daily activities, and the walk in search of fruit—especially *pequi* (*kabarê*)—represents a veritable school of the Akwê, where knowledge is transmitted among generations through orality and via gestures, movements, and interactions among bodies in and with the forest. Knowing how to walk, where to tread, how to observe animal tracks,

knowing how to listen, sense smells, and recognize trails—these are some of the teachings conveyed. As Santana et al. (2024) argue, Akwẽ-Xerente teaching is characterized by non-verbal practices, expressed through silence, glances, and gestures. Thus, the picking and consumption of native fruits constitutes a set of relationships far more complex than a simple act of eating; an activity that involves investment of time.

Mbya Guarani

Among the Mbya Guarani, farming and hunting occur during *Ara Pyau* (new time) and *Ara Ymã* (old time). Fields are prepared for the *Ara Pyau*, which begins around August, when, at the first waning moon, planting takes place. The period between August and February coincides with the reproduction of many animal species, which is why hunting is suspended. It also marks the time when the Guarani more regularly frequent the *opy* (prayer house), engaging in prayer through chants and dance. Hunting resumes during *Ara Ymã*, which corresponds approximately to the months between March and July, when animals fatten and crops decline, especially in colder regions. During this period, people tend to be more secluded and spend less time in the *opy*.

Throughout the day, from dawn until bedtime, the Guarani drink *ka'a* (yerba mate, prepared in *chimarrão* with hot water) and *pitar*⁴ *pety* (tobacco, inhaled using a sacred pipe called a *petyngua*). Both yerba mate and tobacco are sacred plants for the Guarani. Yerba mate, according to Macedo (2019), represents the daughter of *Kuaray* (Sun), who transformed her body into a plant to remain on Earth with the Guarani. *Pety* acts as a bridge connecting Guarani with the spiritual world and constitutes an essential plant for food blessing rituals, called *nhemongarai*, in which the *xeramoï* (spiritual leader) can converse

⁴ The Guarani generally prefer to use the verb '*pitar*' (smoke held briefly in the mouth and then exhaled) to refer to the act of smoking a pipe, as opposed to '*fumar*' (smoking), which involves full inhalation.

with spirits through the smoke of *pety*, giving thanks and asking permission for safe consumption of foods.

Pety and *ka'a*, together with *tembiu ete*, the “true foods” for the Guarani, promote states of lightness of body and spirit. According to Macedo (2019), the Guarani say that, in ancient times, some were able to achieve such lightness that they could reach the celestial dwellings of the immortals with their own bodies, without parting from their *nhe'ẽ*, their spirit-name. This lightness was achieved through dance, song, tobacco smoke, and a diet consisting solely of *tembiu ete*.

The *nhe'ẽ* is the foundation of a Guarani, connecting them with their origin in the spiritual world. Translated as spirit-name, the *nhe'ẽ* begins to settle in the child's body after the first months of life and, by around one year of age, it is considered fully established, manifesting with the first spoken words, since the capacity for language is an expression of the *nhe'ẽ*. This explains why words are so sacred and powerful for the Guarani, deemed capable of promoting cures for illnesses, since using the voice is expressing one's own spirit. And by the same logic, prayers are practiced through *mborai*, sacred songs. The strengthening of the *nhe'ẽ* indicates the health of the body: when it withdraws, the body becomes ill; when it draws near, there is joy and strength. Thus, the connection with the *nhe'ẽ* is strengthened by practices in the *opy*—through *petyngua*, singing, dancing, speaking—and eating *tembiu ete* (true foods for the Guarani). Thus, according to Macedo (2019), the Guarani differentiate between living food and dead food. Living food possesses spirit and, like everything that is alive, its existence stems from connections with the celestial world; living foods have owners (*ija*). In order to eat, therefore, it is necessary to establish relationships with the owner-spirits (*ija*) of the foods, preventing them from becoming angry and ensuring that the food is consumed safely and that it benefits the body. This relationship

is mediated by prayers expressed through songs and dances in the *opy*, along with concentration and *petyngua* smoke.

Industrialized foods, or those contaminated by pesticides, have a weaker connection to the *ija*. Because the Guarani do not know the provenance of these ingredients, they also cannot know their owner-spirits, relationships, or affective potencies. As a result, they are unable to ask permission or determine the potential dangers associated with eating them. Consequently, ultra-processed foods are considered dead by the Guarani, who believe consuming them leaves the body heavy. The foods disrupt the connection to *Nhanderu* and *Nhandexy kuery*, rendering the person more susceptible to illnesses, whether from external agents or through withdrawal of the *nhe'ẽ* from the body.

The *nhemongarai* rituals, which provide a blessing of foods for safe consumption, strengthening of body and spirit, and baptism of children, are moments that strongly express the counter-colonial relationships that the Guarani maintain with time. In the ceremony, there is a consubstantiation: tobacco (plant), when burned (fire) and inhaled (air), mixes with the body (animal, human), promoting dialogue with the spiritual plane. The tobacco smoke must integrate with the body and then traverse the air of the *opy* among other bodies together with the fruits. By blowing the smoke over the fruits, the *xeramoi* gives thanks and asks permission from the *ija* so that the food confers health and all may eat. Time in the *opy* is suspended. Just as individuality dissolves into a group and substances mix, the past, present, and future also intermix.

Indigenous cultures reveal cosmo-perspectival and onto-epistemological possibilities that dialogue with what Leda Maria Martins (2021) calls *spiral time* (unlike linear time) that encompasses movements of reversibility, dilation, contention, and simultaneity among past, present, and future. Thus, she argues that the end of the world is a Western idea, since the world can only end if time runs linearly. Spiral time has no end; it entails transformation. In

Indigenous and African ontologies of time, ending and death incorporate the possibility of life in continuity. The reverence for ancestry, a characteristic of these peoples, concerns not only a remembrance of ancestors but the conceptual wisdom that interacts actively and mutually with the present.

Body-Territory, When Shared Time Belongs to the Land

“All this territory once belonged to us,” affirms R. (personal communication, November, 2025). To be “ours,” among the Guarani, as well as the Akwẽ and other Indigenous Peoples, is not linked to a notion of possession or ownership of land. “Our territory” alludes more to the idea of the people belonging to the territory. “Our territory” is the territory where we come from and of which we are part. From this perspective, it is not the territory that belongs to the people, but the people who belong to the territory, in the sense of an intrinsic link. The notion of “territory” defining an area with established boundaries, as explained by Gallois (2004), was a concept not present in Indigenous vocabulary before the worldview imposed by colonization. “The idea of a closed territory only arises with the restrictions imposed by contact, through processes of land regularization” (Gallois, 2004, p. 6).

There exists, among Indigenous Peoples, an inseparability between body and territory. It is a body-territory, in which the notion of person is derived from relationships with the land and all its living beings and spirits (Benites, 2023). The word *tekoa*, commonly used as a synonym for “village” or “territory,” has a broader meaning that can be translated as “the place where we live according to our own way of being,” where *teko* means life, way of being, and -a is the suffix indicating place (Papá & Vera Britos, 2023, p. 5). *Teko porã* (*teko* = life, way of being; *porã* = good, beautiful), in turn, is a “philosophical, political, social, and spiritual concept” (Papá & Vera Britos, 2023, p. 6) associated with Guarani well-being, which represents a manner of living and of being, in which everything coexists in balanced

harmony. Hence, for the Guarani people, there is no *teko* without *tekoa*; that is, life is not separate from the environment in which it thrives, and well-being cannot exist without a place where we can live according to our own way of being.

The body-territory present in Indigenous thinking questions the notion of individuality, as evidenced among the Guarani by the existence of *ija kuery*, the owner—spirits, and the consubstantiation of bodies in *nhemongarai* rituals that allow connection with the spiritual plane. Everything that exists possesses *ija* and, therefore, when relating with other beings, it is impossible to relate with a biological individuality separated from its *ija kuery*. This explains why, for example, permission from the *ija* must be sought to hunt, forage or fish, and even to move a rock from one place to another.

Individuality, on the other hand, is one of the most active devices of modernity, whose definitive and unquestionable separation of self and other supports the organization of a capitalist system based on the nuclear family, divided into domestic units, separated from community and collective care. Thus, the concept is also associated with the organization of clocked time dictated by a productivity-oriented mentality (Thompson, 1967). In an interview with de Souza e Silva (2018), Krenak explains that countering individuality, Indigenous ways of life support the notion that the Indigenous person, while having their own identity, is a collective subject, made up of a network of relationships with the community, the territory, animals, plants, foods, and spirits (de Souza e Silva, 2018). Under this collective arrangement, the experience of time includes the diverse temporalities that permeate life in which human time is intrinsically shared with the time of trees, hummingbirds, the moon, roots, and so forth.

The scene of Akwê-Xerente women described earlier, in which the women rested under the shade of a tree while lunch was being prepared and children played around them, reveals how the sharing of care tasks multiplies available time. Care for family, food, the

land, the home, when shared among the community, allows life to follow rhythms that resist the individualistic productivist exploitation of capitalism that transforms time into a resource.

Conclusion

This work analyzed how the Mbya Guarani peoples of Nhanderekoá village (São Paulo State) and the Akwẽ-Xerente of Salto Kripre village (Tocantins State) articulate their conceptions of time as a form of resistance to the temporalities imposed by capitalism and colonization. The Western notion of time—linear, progressive, and organized based on the logic of “time is money”—has been shown to be a tool of control and exploitation. This mentality is grounded in the expropriation not only of human time, but of the time associated with the land and other living entities, which translate into the accumulation of power and capital by a small contingent of the population. Countering this worldview, Akwẽ-Xerente and Mbya Guarani practices treat time not as a resource to be expropriated, but as a dimension to be respected and shared. The present analysis, focused on foodway relationships, was central in revealing this approach to time, paving the way for challenging the factors driving the climate crisis, given that contemporary industrial food production systems are strongly implicated in contributing to its principal causes.

Since colonization, the multispecies landscapes of South America have been systematically and violently replaced by monocultures, while lineages of Europeans established their oligarchies, delimited their properties, formed governments, and established markets (Tsing, 2015). The economic nature of slavery, beyond the sale and possession of people and land, also involves the productive capacity in economic, architectural, and juridical dimensions of slave labor. In forming the Brazilian nation, it was Black and Indigenous Peoples that erected the walls of its buildings, carried out transportation, cared for its children, and harvested the sugarcane plants and coffee beans on plantation lands (Ferreira da Silva, 2019).

The plantation systems that established the hegemony of agribusiness throughout Latin America are, in the words of Anna Tsing (2015), “ecological simplifications in which living beings are transformed into resources—future assets—removing them from their worlds of life” (p. 206), which align with a process of onto-epistemological alienation that allows lives to be regarded as a resource. Contrasting with this worldview, the practices of consumption and cultivation of foods among the Akwẽ and Guarani peoples revealed a belonging and fundamental integration of communities and non-human lives, which express a capacity to keep other ways of life and temporalities alive even amid a colonized world. From this perspective, the sense of belonging of the Indigenous person to their territory, the notion of collective subject, and sharing of daily care—which question the notion of individuality—are framed as processes that slow time and resist the colonial and capitalist pressures of acceleration and a notion of world-ending, through a counter-colonial worldview. Thus, the struggle for land by Indigenous Peoples is also a struggle for time to live. By reaffirming a notion of time oriented by shared relationships, these peoples slow the colonial clock and prove that time can, indeed, belong to the land. The so-called non-Indigenous civilization needs to promote social deceleration, not in the sense that tasks and activities should be carried out more slowly, as “deceleration” has often been interpreted, but that they should be shared with the land and with all beings. Hence, Indigenous relationships with time can inspire contemporary non-Indigenous ways of life to be more harmonious and respectful toward the land. As Redvers (2021) states, environmental crises cannot be solved from the same worldview that created them, “as it will continue to perpetuate a disconnect between us and the planet as 'relatives'” (para. 5)

Funding

This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001.

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