

# Methodologies of life, research and struggle: the Panhã experience<sup>1</sup>

## Metodologias de vida, pesquisa e luta: a experiência panhã

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## Abstract

This essay presents the reflections of Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje and Júlio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje on their work as researchers of the *Plataforma de Antropologia e Respostas Indígenas à COVID-19* (Platform of Anthropology and Indigenous Responses to Covid-19) (PARI-c), in the Apinaje Indigenous Land, in the context of the global health crisis caused by the new coronavirus. Through the description of the research procedures adopted, the authors appropriate the concept of methodology in a unique and creative way. They reflect not only on the strategies to produce academic knowledge, but also on the urge to align these strategies to Panhã struggles for the protection of their autonomy over their ways of living and their territory.

**Keywords:** Research Methodology, Covid-19 Pandemic, Panhã-Apinaje

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## Resumo

Este ensaio apresenta as reflexões de Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje e Júlio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje sobre sua atuação como pesquisadores da Plataforma de Antropologia e Respostas Indígenas à COVID-19 (PARI-c), na Terra Indígena Apinaje, no contexto da crise sanitária mundial provocada pelo novo coronavírus. Através da descrição dos procedimentos de pesquisa adotados, os autores se apropriam do conceito de metodologia de forma particular e criativa, refletindo não apenas sobre as estratégias de produção de conhecimento acadêmico, mas também sobre como, para eles, cada uma destas estratégias deve estar alinhada às lutas panhĩ pela proteção de sua autonomia sobre seus modos de vida e seu território.

**Palavras-chave:** Metodologia de pesquisa, Pandemia de covid-19, Panhĩ-Apinaje

This article presents reflections by Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje and Julio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje, researchers at the *Plataforma de Antropologia e Respostas Indígenas à COVID-19* (Platform for Anthropology and Indigenous Responses to COVID-19) (PARI-c), on the research methodologies developed by them within the project *Indigenous peoples responding to Covid-19 in Brazil: social arrangements in a Global Health emergency*. Both authors were part of the Panhĩ-Apinaje cluster of the Brazil Central and Southern Amazon team. In all its teams and clusters, the project was conducted by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, located in different regions of Brazil. It aimed at producing knowledge about the various strategies of coping, resistance, and care employed by Indigenous peoples in their territories, yards, villages, communities, and cities during the pandemic. All over the Brazilian territory, teams were build seeking equity between male and female researchers, as well as between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The Panhĩ-Apinaje cluster replicated, on a smaller scale, the principles of the PARI-c research, relying on Indigenous and non-Indigenous male and female researchers in different regions of the Apinaje<sup>2</sup> Indigenous Land (*Terra Indígena*, TI) and in different cities of Brazil. In Indigenous Land, two male and two female researchers were part of the research team. Oscar Wahme and Diana Amnhák worked in the region of the TI known as São José, which corresponds to the portion of the Panhĩ territory connected to the mother village of the same name. Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje and Júlio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje worked in the region of the mother-village Mariazinha, another portion of the TI.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the aforementioned equity criteria, the Panhĩ-Apinaje cluster tried to pay attention to Panhĩ categories of territory organization, distribution of villages, and, consequently, the autonomous sanitary barriers established during the covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic was the research subject that gave

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<sup>2</sup> Although the TI's registered name is Apinaje, the Panhĩ people do not use and do not write their name with epsilon. In order to avoid the linguistic colonialism, we have followed the Panhĩ's preferred spelling, Apinaje, without an acute accent on the last syllable.

<sup>3</sup> The Apinajé case study team also included the teachers and researchers Amanda Horta, Odilon Rodrigues de Moraes Neto, Welitânia de Oliveira Rocha, Nayane Januário Costa, and André Demarchi.

rise to the case study “*Luta, vida e pandemia na TI Apinaje*” (Struggle, life, and pandemic in the Terra Indígena Apinaje) (Ribeiro Apinaje et al., 2022). In addition to the case study, five research notes produced by Panhĩ researchers were published (Amnhák Apinaje et al., 2021; Brusco et al., 2021; Dias Apinaje et al., 2021; Regitano et al., 2021a; 2021b; Wahme Apinaje et al., 2021), all in co-authorship with researchers from this and other clusters of the Central Brazil and Southern Amazon team.

Like the research notes and case study mentioned above, this text was drafted by many hands. Its objectives, however, are distinct: if in the previous productions we wanted to tell about the Panhĩ experiences in the context of the pandemic, the focus here is on the cluster’s reflections on our research experiences. In the case study in which we actively participated, we worked to accommodate the many voices in the text into a single narrative, signed by all. In this text, on the other hand, we chose to keep the voices separate, highlighting the differences and the approximations between the research experiences of two Indigenous researchers: Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje and Júlio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje. The texts by Sheila and Julio, elaborated through conversations with the non-Indigenous co-authors of this article, highlight how the way of formulating the research conduct, the development of interviews, and the theoretical perspectives in question have similarities and differences with each other and with the mode of knowledge production used by non-Indigenous researchers from different fields of knowledge. In fact, the current text does not bet on a convergent composition between the voices of different researchers and researched people (as we did in the case study that we produced together with other authors), but on the distinction between the voices of Sheila and Júlio, the two main authors of this reflection.

Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje and Júlio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje are both academics, graduates of the Intercultural Education course at the *Universidade Federal de Goiás* (UFG). Júlio holds a Master’s degree in Social Anthropology from the UFG, and Sheila is a Master’s student in Social Anthropology from the same institution. Each in their own way, both authors talk about the methodologies they developed

in the scope of PARI-c research, connecting them with their previous experiences of producing academic texts. In this process, as we will see, the authors appropriate the concept of methodology in a unique and creative way, thinking not only about their paths, modes, approaches and strategies of academic knowledge production, but also about how, for them, these choices always aimed to make research contribute to the Panhĩ life project, their resistance as a people and their future perspective.

## Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje

My name is Sheila Baxy P. Castro Apinaje, Panhĩ leadership and researcher. For 14 years I have worked as a teacher in basic education at the Pepkro Indigenous School in the Botica Village, located in the Apinaje Indigenous Land. I have a degree in Intercultural Education and I am a master student in Social Anthropology, both from the *Universidade Federal do Goiás*. I am currently in the Indigenous working group on the care and quality of the Panhĩ health to seek improvements in the current precarious scenario of Indigenous Health in Brazil. I have a technical course in Nursing, and with this training I worked for a year in the fight against Covid-19. In addition, I was part of the PARI-c research team in the Apinaje territory.

To do research you need an object, or at least an objective. These are words that have a long-lasting tradition in hard sciences, and to which humanities are still tied. I don’t like this term very much, but I will use it to start this reflection. In the Apinaje TI the PARI-c research came in late 2020, with the proposal that we, Panhĩ researchers, would investigate Indigenous responses to the pandemic, in remote partnership with former Kupen partners (which is how we call non-Indigenous people in the Panhĩ language). I, Sheila, was invited along with Julio, who signs this text with me, Diana, and Oscar. Far from us, talking by phone or computer, were the non-Indigenous researchers Amanda Horta, Odilon Rodrigues de Moraes, Welitânia de Oliveira Rocha, Nayane Januário Costa, and André Demarchi. We did not research an object; rather, we studied lives, the behavior of a humanity. So what we found by researching the responses to Covid-19

is much bigger than the virus and the fight against it. We found something called “resistance”, which interested us in such a way that we sought to dive deeper into the subject.

Resistance is a behavior that I had been searching for a long time. Today, in Brazil, indigenous peoples are generalized. Darcy Ribeiro wrote, in an old book, that the advance of colonization would transform the different Brazilian Indigenous Peoples into generic Indigenous Peoples, and then into *caboclos* (Ribeiro, 1986). This did not happen with our people, nor with many other peoples who resisted and continue to resist. But the non-Indigenous in Brazil have established this idea of the generic Indigenous, and continue to close their eyes to our differences, our particularities. The PARI-c research contributes in the sense that other people can observe what the Apinaje is like. Having the Indigenous peoples themselves conducting this research is a way of saying that we are not all alike, that each ethnic group has its uniqueness in the way they respond to the Covid-19. Each ethnic group has its way of living, of thinking about its past and its present. At the same time, the struggle is just one, as the demand for public policies, recognition, respect, and dignity is the same for everyone.

In the old days, when my brothers and I were small, my great-grandmother (*dona Doca*) used to say that if someone asked us if we were Indigenous or if we lived in the village, we should always deny it. She was afraid of being attacked, of dying. Denying was a way to protect us. Today, I think differently. We have to show society the research done by the Panhĩ themselves. Show our resistance in the barriers we build on the roads in critical moments, in the advice of the elders, in the bush remedies: to resist the Covid-19 is to resist genocide. PARI-c was an opportunity to show, to record as research our Panhĩ way of resisting. Doing the research was also a way to contribute to the resistance of my people. As such, in this text I want to tell a little about what it was like to face Covid-19 and to research about it at the same time.

Before participating in the PARI-c research I had already produced other academic works and published articles, the last one about the struggle of the Panhĩ against the advance of Covid-19 (Castro

Apinaje, 2019; 2020). These works differ from the PARI-c research, but they are all important in my training as a researcher, in the way I think about and put into practice research with my people.

My first research was in the internship of the intercultural degree, and although the authorship is mine, I did not conduct the research alone. I don't do anything alone, only based on what I know. My (deceased) great-grandmother was a singing queen, but this doesn't mean I don't need to do more research. It is not like that; we do not have this individualism. So we end up asking a lot of people. Panhĩ people don't do anything alone, it's always collective. To write, you have to have an opinion, you have to listen. During my undergraduate studies I started researching my teaching internships, focusing on the forms of treatment and respect for our culture. This theme brought a lot of debate here within the Apinaje, because some terms are no longer used. And, during the research, I talked a lot about the importance of using the terms in the community, not only in the classroom. I would research first to be able to take it to the classroom, I would talk to the elders, they would explain it to me. Even if my grandmother had already passed on the knowledge to me, I had to research again. The PARI-c research was also like that: even if I already knew the teachings of my grandmother and my father, who is a Chief, I had to ask again, listen to the other person's experience in their own way, the way they lived it.

In this aspect it was the same. But on the other hand, the PARI-c research was different from my other experiences, because we were four Panhĩ researchers and, remotely, by cell phone and computer, the Non-Indigenous and Indigenous researchers from other regions. We, the Panhĩ, formulated together how the research would look like. Our “object” was to research the pandemic, the Panhĩ responses to the pandemic. From the very beginning, I was asking: “How are we going to talk only about the pandemic?” Then we started disseminating the subject, paying attention to everything around, as a preparation to be able to talk about the pandemic. Because for our people, the traditional medicine is not enough to prevent the pandemic. The Non-Indigenous people think that it is like this: when a person feels sick, they

go to the doctor and that is it. The doctor gives the prescription, the exams, and the medicine, and the person follows these instructions, observing if they get better or not. I started thinking that for the Panhĩ people we were defended not only by the medicine, but by painting, roots, sunrise, cloud and what it will mean, the haircut. All of that has something to tell and help protect us.

So that's how we did it. The research was remote, but we, the Panhĩ researchers, met each other because we were in the same territory. From the beginning we were discussing our research ideas not only among ourselves, but also with other Panhĩ people, thinking broader about the pandemic. We listened to relatives, the thoughts of school teachers, aligning what was talked about. Based on these conversations, Júlio prepared a report and a script of questions and interviews. Each Panhĩ researcher targeted more on a specific question, an interest, more mobilized with a part of the research, and focused more on the region of the TI in which they lived. Diana focused more on the paintings and their meanings, acting mainly among the guardians of the Pyka Mex (Prata) Village sanitary barrier from her residence; Wahme brought more questions about the movement and participation in Panhĩ struggles in the region of the mother village São José; Júlio had a previous research on the Pěpkaàk (name of an ancient initiation ritual of Apinaje young people) and wanted to go deeper into this subject; I, as I am a leader, teacher, and nurse, had a more generalized view. Júlio and I focused our research on the region of the mother-village Mariazinha, which had two autonomous sanitary barriers installed during the pandemic.

Each Panhĩ researcher's thinking did not contradict what the other researched. Everything was connected there. We held meetings, and in our conversations we would not delete the other's account because we liked more the account of another person. Each one brought a contribution, a subject for discussion, and then we started to write. Diana said she had difficulties with writing, so I had the idea of asking her to record audios and we, me, Professor Odilon, and Welitânia, would transcribe them. We had this union. Each researcher brought

a set of real history experiences, and we sewed these experiences into our conversations. Then, together with the Non-Indigenous researchers, we put all this into the texts that we wrote.

Nothing I wrote was on my own. It wasn't like this: "I've seen this here and I'm going to write it". No! We had this research union, formulating these questions together and interviewing the relatives even when we already knew some information. Each Panhĩ individual tells the experience of the moment they lived, especially when the subject is diseases from the past. Each one tells an experience about what happened, so even if I know these stories, if I know what happened to my people, I have to search, to ask. Júlio interviewed Raimunda from the São Raimundo village. She told about the experience of measles, of several diseases that she had witnessed. Although I knew that this happened to my people, that it killed many people, Júlio's interview tells the experience of Raimunda, how she dealt with the disease at the time, what kind of medicine she used, what kind of food she ate and stopped eating, how she was instructed at the time by her relatives who are now gone. This I didn't know. That is why these questions should be asked, especially to the elders, who are very few, so that this knowledge is not lost.

We also had weekly meetings with all the participants. Our team at PARI-c was called "*Central Brazil and Southern Amazon*". The meetings were attended by researchers from the Xavante people (as well as the Panhĩ, a Jê-speaking people), Karitiana, Puruborá, and Kamaiurá of the Xingu Indigenous Territory. The Xingu researcher was Kaianuaku Kamaiurá, and I already knew her from the Universidade Federal de Goiás, when we were colleagues. It was great to follow the way she and her relatives were living, reacting and thinking about the pandemic. We always started these team meetings by bringing news from the regions where each of us lived and about what we saw and talked about with our relatives. I would learn what was going on in other places, in other Indigenous lands or cities where the other researchers lived.

We, the Panhĩ researchers, would listen to the information from other ethnic groups and the issues

that were being researched and then discuss among ourselves. We organized presentations in Village Prata to inform the community about the research, and tell about what we knew about the other peoples. The colleague and researcher Arthemiza Puruborá, who lives in the city of Guajará-Mirim, in Rondônia, passed on information about the traditional medicines she uses, the herbs; Elivar Karitiana, who lives in Porto Velho, told about baths, showed the preparation; all this was passed on to the community, in order to introduce of other ethnic groups' knowledge.

When we did the interviews we also told the respondent what other ethnic groups were going through. When I interviewed the Chief and leader Nhiro, for example, I asked her about some things, but I also told her what was happening with the Indigenous populations in other places in Brazil. For example: death. Elivar Karitiana told us that a relative of his died in the city and that the State did not allow him to be taken to the village, to be buried with his relatives, on his land. There was a concern to tell the community how difficult the pandemic was for other ethnic groups, how they were not being able to bury their dead. And together, we, the Panhĩ, wondered: what will it be like here? Are we prepared for that, to see relatives die and not be able to bury them? What would it be like for the Apinaje to be faced with that situation?

From the moment we started doing the research, we began to pay attention to the tiny details. A research is a "research experiment": an experience and an experiment. You need to experience what happened, as if you were inside the action - this is what anthropologists call "participant-observation" (Malinowski, 2018). Otherwise, you will not be able to observe the depth behind that whole context. But a research is not only the experience, the record of actions and context. For us, the Panhĩ, a research is also an experiment, because doing research was also a way to fight directly the pandemic by talking with people, with leaders, with families aiming at transforming our future. Research is an experiment, an attempt to create something new.

I was a teacher in Aldeia Botica, but when the disease arrived in Brazil, the city hall prohibited classes by decree, and the school stopped working

for ten months in 2020. By that time I was already acting as a PARI-c leader and researcher, and I put my name at the disposal to help educating the villages as a Panhĩ nursing technician. During that period I heard many reports concerning the Covid-19.

In 2021, we started the PARI-c research. As a researcher, I was active at the sanitary barriers, visiting relatives from home to home, observing, taking photos, and also had a notebook for notes. At the sanitary barriers the guardians would talk in a circle with Indigenous people who were looking for information about Covid-19, passing on the information of the day's work. They also talked about territorial protection, about the fires and the burnings that generated smoke that could do even more harm to health at times of pandemic. I participated as a researcher and told them about the new health protocols, because not all Indigenous people had access to this information. I carried out the field research in the village where I live and in the surrounding area. When I got to the elders' house, before starting the interview, I tried to invite the relatives who were there to listen as well. I would sit down and not go straight to the point of the research. It was the height of the pandemic, we were all worried, so the elders spontaneously started talking about the anguish and suffering of the current events, such as the revolt over the poor health care, exposing the responsible bodies, and talking about the disease.

At these times they would talk not only to me, but also to the grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and other members of the community who came up to listen together to their accounts. I always ask permission to record the conversations, because they are long conversations, many hours long, in which the elders tell the whole path of past illnesses. We paused the recording, have a coffee, a snack, and then continue. The elders explain everything to us calmly, sing, and sometimes get emotional and cry. The children and grandchildren would ask them how we could take care of ourselves, and received guidance during the interview. Sometimes the conversation was so long that the elder would ask me to come back another day so they could continue talking. As I listened, I remembered the knowledge I had heard from my grandmother throughout my

life, the oral histories of how the Apinaje people behaved in face of events that occurred in the past, the time of epidemics, the time of land demarcation. I saw the stories of diseases of the past reflected in the narratives of today.

Then, at home, I would write down on the computer my notes about the interviews. Every day, doing research, I was faced with new situations. The advance of the disease, the arrival of vaccines, the psychological impacts of all that on children, young people, women, men, and the elderly. I interviewed each one of them, to know their stories. I had this open dialog with both the women and the men, especially with those who were guardians at the sanitary barriers. This dialogue was intensified during the research: we exchanged lots of knowledge and shared our concerns.

The elders always say it is not only in research that we, younger Panhĩ, should seek them out to ask questions and listen to their accounts. They say that because of technology, because of television, their grandchildren are losing interest in asking questions, in listening. So whenever I do research, I tell the elder what I want to ask about, and I invite their grandchildren to listen to what they are going to answer. Even if the elder or another younger person is talking to me in the context of the research, of the interview, other people in the family, in the community, are listening. So I see research this way, as a moment of passage, of transmission and exchange of knowledge.

Today, most of the elders are charging to participate in research in the village. It is not that they charge values, money, but you have to bring something: a hammock, for example. That is why it is important for the researcher to have an income so they can bring meat, rice, a pot or a machete to the respondent. Recently I went to research a cultural festival with an old man and he said (although in jest) that he needed some help. It was not exactly a matter of charging. I brought him a hammock so he could lie down, rest, swing. The financial issue is very important. I always took some food, some cloth. Here, in Apinaje, it is very important to give a person a cloth as a gift. A piece of cloth has several uses: we use it to cover the floor in the naming ceremony of the godchild, and to cover the logs used in the log

race in the cultural festival that we have to mourn those who have lost relatives. So I would buy piece of cloth and take it. Most of my research is conducted with women. I also have to listen to men, of course, but I don't talk to many of them. Women are in charge of acquiring the knowledge about medicinal plants, care of children, search for food, and educate their daughters to obtain the traditional and cultural knowledge. Among the Apinaje people, women are considered to be wise and men accompany and follow what they say.

Moreover, in the village there is the right time for each conversation. The research with an elder is usually at night. In the silence of the night, there is not much noise from the birds. It is in the silence that they tell their story. I remember that when I was very young, my great-grandfather Joaquim Nhĩno Gregório, a wise elder who had an important role in telling us the Panhĩ stories and all his experiences and other acquired knowledge, would spend long hours telling me stories, sometimes for the whole night. I would sleep while he was telling, and cried because I didn't want to listen anymore. Other people from the village used to come to our house at night to ask my grandfather to tell stories, and I would watch. The little I learned makes me who I am. Today, being a researcher allows me to dive deeper into the Apinaje life. My grandfather José Tãpkryt is a Chief, the only son of my great-grandmother Amnhĩ Nhõkwa (Doca). After the death of my great-grandparents, my grandfather José Tãpkryt continued to pass on cultural knowledge. Today he is considered a source of research.

Doing research is a way to get to know better the culture of my own people. To contribute by valuing our knowledge, to help its dissemination inside and outside the village, to let the world know about the Apinaje people, to fight for our way of existing. But research is not the only way to contribute to our resistance. One day, talking to Zé Cabelo (Alessandro Apinaje) from the village Brejinho, a young professional singer (one of the best Apinaje singers!), I asked him why he didn't continue his studies. Zé Cabelo studied until the fourth grade, and then stopped. I asked my question and he watched. Then he said: "I'm not leaving my territory; I don't want the white people to take the

territory for them. So I will learn my culture, I will focus on my culture”. Today, Zé Cabelo is a mirror for me. He kept talking, and I recalled my grandfather. My grandfather used to say that study is important, but if I knew what was behind this learning I would drop everything. He meant that what is behind is the traditional knowledge, which is our basis of understanding, of learning. And that we can discover that at the university, but the ground of everything is traditional, the territory, the culture. Everything brings us back here.

According to Zé Cabelo it is with singing, with participation in the Panhĩ cultural movement that he can contribute to the resistance of our people. He says that by singing he may earn money or not, but that he doesn't care because with singing he is joyful, because he knows what his culture is. The research also brought me closer to my culture, to the culture of my people, and this also brings me joy.

Zé Cabelo's learning about culture is through singing, and my learning about culture, while working at PARI-c, was through research about our resistance. In both cases, questions arise, and we follow different paths to find answers. Then we see that everything is interconnected. Our basis is resistance. We, the Panhĩ, have been sustaining this culture for millions of years. I need grounds, just like Zé Cabelo and all the other Panhĩ. When I arrive at a person's for an interview, I have to hear about what life was like in the past, what the person sees, what they expect from here onwards. I recorded the observations of the children, the youth, the elderly, the men and the women. Each one has their own way of thinking and of comparing what they are living, with the past and the future that is yet to come. But we all share the same ground, which is our way of life based on the land, on the Panhĩ territoriality.

## Júlio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje

I am Julio Kamêr Ribeiro Apinaje, a teacher at the Tekator Indigenous State School, located in the Mariazinha Village. I am a researcher, anthropologist and coordinator of the singing project “*Grernhõxwỳnh Nywjê - Fortalecimento da cantoria entre os jovens nos rituais Apinaje*” (Grernhõxwỳnh Nywjê - Strengthening of singing

among young people in Apinaje rituals) and literacy project “*Processo de Educação e Introdução à Alfabetização na Língua Panhĩ kapêr*” (Process of Education and Introduction to Literacy in the Panhĩ kapêr Language), both created by me in 2012 with the support of the leaders and the pedagogical coordination of the village school and the *Secretaria de Educação e Cultura de Tocantins* (Secretariat of Education and Culture of Tocantins) (Seduc TO).

The purpose of this text is to reflect on how we, the Panhĩ researchers from PARI-c, carried out the research on Indigenous responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thinking about this makes me recognize what happened when I was acting at the sanitary barrier in the Prata Village, analyzing that pandemic situation as a PARI-c researcher and remembering past epidemics based on the elders' talks at the barriers and the interviews I did at people's homes. That moment was three simultaneous moments. We were facing the past, but also in the present, in that new stressful situation: at the same time, it was as if we were preparing for the future. This new analysis, when we write about how we did the research, made me perceive that during this whole process I was in between times (past, present, future). I see it as an unprecedented situation.

When the pandemic started we, the Panhĩ, thought about how previous epidemics had affected our population in other times. The population of Apinajé in 2020 was just over 2,700 people, according to data from the *Fundação Nacional do Índio* (National Indigenous People Foundation) (Funai). When the Covid-19 arrived and spread throughout Brazil, in just one month the number of deaths exceeded the total number of the Apinajé population. The data broadcasted on television caused us fear. With the pandemic taking hold nationwide, we asked ourselves: what are we going to do? As Sheila (co-author of this text) expresses in her article, this pandemic does not give signals. It is silent, it contaminates in all forms: through the air, by breathing, by contact. So we thought: what are we going to do?

When the disease reached the state of Tocantins, we were even more afraid. We, the Apinajé, already had experiences blocking roads, fighting to defend our territory, and controlling the flows to prevent alcoholism. We thought that the only way to prevent

the disease was to build ourselves roadblocks at the entrances to the territory. Nobody goes out, nobody comes in. When we were invited to carry out the PARI-c research, I realized that to address the research topic - the Panhĩ responses to Covid-19 - I couldn't talk directly about the sanitary barriers that were working to prevent Covid-19 from entering the territory. What supported the idea of building a blockade? What was moving that group organized there? I began wondering what was the cause, what was the main axis that gave strength to those people there. Then I thought about what my aunt had told me about the past, and I realized that to better understand this cause I would have to understand what the previous epidemics had been like, and also tell how we started to block roads that gave access to Apinaje territory. How did it happen? What happened? How did the Panhĩ think? What were the threats? Were there many deaths?

I had to go back in the past. So I went to ask my aunt again how other epidemics were, what the Apinaje thought, and how they prevented the epidemics. She told of the past, but also connected the memory with the present, with the recent performance of the Pẽp, which is what we call in Apinaje language the warriors who act at the barriers. That interview made me think, and I asked people not about the past, but the immediate question about that moment. What would they do to be able to be protected? What are they thinking about the disease? The answers from the elders brought back the memory of the past, the fear for the present and for the future of our people. The past epidemics issues guided me so that I could describe the current pandemic.

The core axis that brings together all this past, present, and future knowledge is the concept of Pẽpkaàk. The Pẽpkaàk is the name of an ancient ritual an ancient initiation ritual of Apinaje young people (Nimuendajú, 1983; Ribeiro Apinaje, 2019). The ritual is no longer held, but the concept of Pẽpkaàk, of training the youth for fighting, is everywhere in the social organization of the Apinajé. Pẽp means warrior: this is how the young people who participated in the ritual were called, and how we call today the young people

mobilized in the barriers we made to protect us from the virus, but also, at other times, to control alcoholism, to demonstrate for the improvement of roads, against deforestation, and against laws intended to destroy the Indigenous peoples. It is the Pẽpkaàk that prepares young people, that provides all the information about their social, cultural, and political obligations. This initiation process used to take place in the ritual, and even though it no longer occurs, we continue to initiate our youth through the struggle for life and territorial protection, as we describe in the case study "*Struggle, life, and pandemic at the Terra Indígena Apinaje*" (Ribeiro Apinaje et al., 2022). The Pẽpkaàk is present in our life: in our history, in our names, in our speech, in our thinking, in every cultural, linguistic and social organization, and in our philosophy.

I grew up hearing the history of Pẽpkaàk in the territory told by my grandparents. I learned their form of organization, their methodology and conception. My maternal grandfather is one of the members of Pẽpkaàk, and my grandfather's grandfather was also a member of Pẽpkaàk, as was my paternal grandfather. In Pẽpkaàk I was able to find the source of thought to elaborate on other questions. I have already described some of these concepts in my Master's thesis (Ribeiro Apinajé, 2019). The ritual's knowledge structure is a methodology for training the youth, protecting the territory, and preparing the community to face all kinds of situations. Therefore we, the Panhĩ researchers of PARI-c, thought that the ideal methodology to review the Covid-19 situation would also be Pẽpkaàk. To follow the line of Pẽpkaàk would be to bring information from the past, the present, and the ideas about the future to draft the texts. Therefore, in the case study we produced on how the Panhĩ faced the Covid-19 pandemic (Ribeiro Apinaje et al., 2022), we were able to talk about many things beyond the virus, because Pẽpkaàk encompasses everything.

With this, we as researchers are using the methodology and conceptions of this ancient ritual as a reference point, as if we took the reference from some thinker, some theorist, as anthropologists and non-Indigenous researchers do when referencing their articles, dissertations, and theses. But in our case, the reference is the knowledge and theoretical

thinking of the Panhĩ-Apinaje themselves. That is what helped us conduct the research. So, in practice, we are Panhĩ researchers, but it was not exactly us, by our personal idea, who conducted the research because we used the thought of the Pẽpkaàk as if that was our reference point. So the texts we published in PARI-c are not exactly what I, Sheila, Wahme or Diana were thinking, but rather our considerations of what Panhĩ used to think and continue thinking.

To put this thinking into practice, I needed conversations and interviews. During the work at the sanitary barriers, it is very boring for people to have a researcher asking questions. It is not the right time. PARI-c research is not like a field research where the researcher very easily goes into a context where people are not worried about some kind of disease. It was not easy, it was a difficult moment, it was a lot of worry and the care was redoubled. Also, I was there as a member and guardian, not as a researcher. I was playing my researcher role when I had free time, was off duty or resting. When I was at the barriers it was another matter at stake: preventing the virus from entering, instruct the relatives. However, everything that happened, I kept in my head. I would ask the elders about past epidemics and transmitted their teachings so that people could get guidance. It was very complicated, but it was clear that I needed to fulfill my role as a member of the barrier, and then my role as a researcher and analyst.

During my Master's degree at UFG, in the discipline of Anthropological Theory, professor Alexandre Herbeta, who was also my advisor, asked us about our perception of being at the same time a family member and a researcher. We told him that we faced difficulties in the field research. In my experience, it was always difficult to reconcile what I thought as a family member and what I thought as a researcher. Because the view of the person as a family is very broad: living with the family is free, there is no limit, it goes from one side to the other, from the other side to here, to the north or south. There is no restriction, neither in speech, nor in thought: it goes through conversations, speeches, stories. The person also has no limits, they articulate all of life in their thoughts as a relative.

The researcher's look, on the other hand, has restrictions. The very research already has a logic

of objectivity: there is no opening to get all the information, and this causes many limitations. So, several times some subject appears that is important to the family but that, from the researcher's point of view, has to be left out. It is not that the researcher didn't want to include other themes, but the research itself requires direction.

That is why mixing things does not work well. I come as a family and try to understand what the Panhĩ's thinking is like, and I come back again as a researcher to be able to categorically analyze the thinking. Results are different. Every moment my researcher self and my family self are fighting. The family member is collective, their thinking is broad and goes along with the relatives. The researcher doesn't. They cut thoughts out, analyze them part by part. But throughout my training I started to make the researcher's thinking and the family member's thinking more flexible so that they would be in tune with each other, and would no longer clash. The most important thing is for the researcher not to interfere in the thinking of the family or the people. That is how I have acted as a researcher, and how I acted in PARI-c during the pandemic.

This transit is quite complicated, but it was crucial for me to do the research with the guidance of Pẽpkaàk's methodology. It was because we were able to make our researcher self and our family member self go together that we were able to talk about so many things during the research, and bring it all into the text. In that sense, our work on PARI-c, the research notes, the photo essays, and the case study was well-crafted. Because if we talked directly about the topic of the pandemic, without seeing anything else but the virus, without going to other places, we would just talk about how Covid-19 was a threat to the Apinaje people, that the Apinaje people had no mastery, no strategy, and that there was a lot of disaster, fear, and psychological sequela. We would say that the Brazilian State did not provide enough inputs, and that the Apinaje suffered a lot. When the PARI-c presented the research theme, we could have talked only about this, we could have followed only this theme, this objective. But no. Faced with the situation we, the Panhĩ researchers, thought as researchers and relatives. We looked back and analyzed everything with the methodology of

Pêpkaàk, seeing how the family accounts, what was told in each house, allowed everyone to think about the current and the past situations, in continuity with the struggle for the future of our people.

The researcher's actions deviate from the patterns of Panhĩ coexistence. The researcher is always a bit alien, their presence is quite complicated. In order to make my researcher self and my family member go together, before I conduct the research I do a kind of negotiation of the family and social bond. I don't get to the relatives' house bringing a gift, I don't make an exchange in order to be able to do the research. I have a family and social bond before doing research. In my position, I am always collaborating with the people I want to interview. In my case, this collaboration is usually through sharing knowledge and guidance. This happens before the research, and is not calculated: it is the way of living of the Panhĩ-Apinaje. Then, in a different moment, I explain what research is, its topic, its goal, how it works, and who is involved. Then comes the third moment, which is carrying out the research.

Otherwise, the person won't even pay attention to you. Family negotiation is like this: the person knows you, knows how you treat your relatives and others. Little by little, you talk to them, you help them, and in this way you smooth things out, making peace without necessarily mentioning the research question. In the second moment you do the same process, now showing this issue. That is when you close the bond, the person gives you the opportunity to interview them, because they start to consider you as part of the family, they are intimate with you. To do research, you first have to become family. In this process, it is crucial to try to place yourself in a position of equality with the respondent, without placing yourself as superior, as if you were asking for something. The researcher cannot say: "I am this, I am that, and you have to give me the information like that".

The biggest mistake the researcher makes is when he/she asks the question directing the answer, forcing the respondent to say what he/she wants to hear. It is necessary to create situations first. That is why I talked about negotiating family bonds, intimacy, because it is within these contexts that I will approach the research. The respondent

will feel important and start to realize that the knowledge they have is of great value. That is when the opportunity for the researcher to get to know the *knowledge* and not the answer to a question begins. When a researcher arrives with a ready-made question, it is as if he/she is excluding all the knowledge the person has. The respondent will feel belittled because the researcher doesn't even bother to listen to what they have to say. If you ask directly, it is because you already know the answer. But if you don't know, you just listen, seek to learn.

## Non-Indigenous

Building the research with the Panhĩ-Apinaje researchers also entailed a number of challenges and twists for us, non-Indigenous researchers. Remotely, we were crossed by the constant need to be open to other, unforeseen paths, and to the perception that, although we shared the same words in Portuguese, we were not talking about exactly the same things. We could discuss together in several videoconferences, followed by countless exchanges of WhatsApp audio about our research object or methodology, and come to some important conclusions about how we were going to proceed. Our challenge as non-Indigenous researchers, however, was not only to align what our subjects and methods were, but also to make room for Panhĩ conceptions of object and methodology to displace our notions that are anchored in canons that we tend to take as too stable.

Such a challenge was posed from the very first conversations among the members of the Panhĩ-Apinajé cluster of the PARI-c project about Indigenous responses to the pandemic. The Indigenous researchers highlighted their interest in conducting research focused on the autonomous sanitary barriers installed at strategic points of the territory: they said this was an important action in the fight against the pandemic. Together we agreed that this would be our research subject. As non-Indigenous anthropologists, we are familiar with the idea that field experience, even the virtual experience, always poses new questions. So we took the sanitary barriers as a response to the pandemic not as a definitive cut-off but as a kind of centripetal force, a pole of

attraction that would drive the research. But that was not quite what the Panhĩ were proposing. The research subject worked for them as a trigger, a centrifugal force running in multiple directions: a starting point, not an ending point. As Júlio said, the biggest mistake a researcher can make is to want to know the answers to their questions beforehand. And in the conversations the Panhĩ researchers had in their villages about the pandemic, their relatives were telling them about things much bigger than the Covid-19. As Sheila recounts, they were talking about resistance.

Basically, what our Panhĩ colleagues understood by “research subject” was something different from what we, at first, understood. Our efforts to make the non-Indigenous sense of purpose feature in the productions we made are manifested in the constant resumption of the relationship between the responses to the pandemic and the (so much broader) world that the Panhĩ researched and brought into the texts of the research notes and the case study. Their efforts were always in the sense of expanding the initial question, of making it more complex, more vivid, and, above all, more relevant to them and to the Panhĩ-Apinaje people.

In this way, Sheila and Júlio bring up an important point in their texts, and also in the development of the research, that marked us deeply. According to them, the very act of doing research is at the service of Panhĩ interests, and not only its results; research is itself a mode of resistance, production of kinship, transmission of knowledge, and generation of joy. This is the Panhĩ notion of methodology, as used throughout the PARI-c research: the focus, for them, is not the production of research, but the production of the life that interests them as a people. The methodologies they describe and propose to us are methodologies of life, research, and struggle, in fine alignment with the processes they lead in their existences.

In her reflection, Sheila describes her research methodologies, but she also speaks of research as a methodology of production of Panhĩ sociality in a struggle against genocide. In this same vein, Júlio describes how the philosophical basis of his research methodologies replicates the life and struggle methodologies of the Panhĩ people, anchored in the

concept of Pêpkaàk. We, non-Indigenous researchers, understand that it is not just the same basis, but a twist on the very notion of methodology, much broader than that our academic disciplines provide us as students. Our intention, as academic fellows, is not only to register this Panhĩ notion here, but to enforce it as a matter of priority while conducting the research processes we share. In a research on Indigenous responses to the pandemic, which has been consolidated as a research on resistance, the most important thing, Sheila and Julio teach us, is to actually resist.

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### Authors' contribution

Sheila Apinaje and Julio Apinaje are the main authors, responsible for the conception and writing of the manuscript material. Horta, Rocha and Morais worked mainly in the organization, editing and proofreading of the text.

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