

Indigenous community psychologies, decolonization, and radical imagination within ecologies of knowledges

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Abstract

As the American Psychological Association Taskforce on Indigenous Psychology acknowledges, fidelity to the inalienable right to self-determination is the ethical foundation of Indigenous psychology. The task of decolonizing psychology is not only about divesting from Eurocentric paradigms that have controlled and limited Indigenous wellbeing, but producing new paradigms founded on indigenous knowledges. The indigenous paradigm of social and emotional wellbeing is both a new therapeutic practice and theory of wellbeing. As the exploration of the domains of SEWB has shown, findings from the National Empowerment Project indicate that strengthening a connection to culture is identified as of highest importance to the flourishing of indigenous individuals, families, and communities. Wellbeing in Abya Yala (the Americas) is conceived as *Sumak Kawsay* or *Buen Vivir* and Māori constructs of wellbeing as *Hauora*. These transnational wellbeing conceptualizations can be situated within a larger global health movement, which is centered on strengthening indigenous cultures of wellbeing, and sustainable planet–people relationships. Indigenous community psychologies are not anthropocentric and are centered on the sacredness of nature, the cultivation of spirituality, and accountability to maintain harmonious ecosystem relationships. Indigenous community psychologies from Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Mexico are brought in plurilogue envisioning international solidarity networks that engage communities, activists, and committed student generations.

KEYWORDS

Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, decolonial psychology, ecologies of knowledge, indigenous psychologies, Mexico, radical imagination

Highlights

- Indigenous community psychologies constitute global movements forging transnational solidarities
- Indigenous psychologies are not anthropocentric and promote holistic wellbeing.
- Embodied examples of indigenous community psychologies trace hopeful pathways toward decoloniality.
- Transnational collaborations among indigenous psychologists create innovative pedagogies.
- The inalienable right to self-determination is the ethical foundation of Indigenous psychologies.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGIES AND RADICAL IMAGINATION WITHIN ECOLOGIES OF KNOWLEDGES

Settler colonialism

European economic expansion and Christian ideology drove the colonization of the American continent from the 16th century as the Spanish Empire sought to expand its dominance and from the 17th century driven by the British empire onwards, causing devastating outcomes inflicted upon the original inhabitants. Settler colonialism allowed for the greedy accumulation of wealth in the hands of dominant elites and nation states. These drivers continue in the form of global capital and transnational corporations under the discourse of economic, political, religious, educational, and military “protectionism.” Native lands were usurped, tribal people enslaved, displaced, confined in reservations or extinguished. Treaties were not respected and sovereignty struggles severely punished and repressed. Oral histories of the original people testifying to their experiences and the continuing impact of British colonization upon their lives are well documented (see Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014). This violence continues with exponential impacts including the devastating separation from sacred lands, intrusive mental and physical health ailments, and pervasive poverty. Unsurprising, the continued diminishing of indigenous peoples' bodies, minds, histories, lifeways, and Earth relationships serves to exacerbate already shocking rates of poverty, marginalization, and exclusion.

Australia and the lands of indigenous people in the south were colonized later by the British, beginning in the 18th century. Similar patterns of invasion unfolded, including the violent takeover of lands, genocide, and removal of indigenous people to reserves or missions, which led to the absolute disruption of cultural ways of life. Colonial laws were enacted, taking away any rights of indigenous people. In Australia, legislation enabled the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their communities. This widespread practice and the impact on victims are known as the Stolen Generations and it was only recently that the government officially recognized and apologized. Indigenous peoples' struggles in resistance have continued in contemporary times (Dudgeon et al., 2014). The disadvantage and exclusion of indigenous people in Australia is well documented with national strategies such as the comprehensive Closing the Gap strategy that aims to overcome disadvantage and work in partnership with indigenous people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have put the importance of culture as central to any policy that concerns them and this holds promise for a significant change.

The Māori of Aotearoa New Zealand concluded Te Tiriti o Waitangi with the British Crown in 1840, to pave the way for peaceful settlement. Although parties held to the Treaty for some 20 years, war broke out and colonial incursions similar to those suffered by indigenous people in other parts of the world enacted. Almost two centuries later, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is still

struggling to find voice irrespective of Māori resistance, reclamation, and regeneration struggles. As with indigenous people of the American continent and Australia, the same patterns of increasing extreme poverty, dispossession, insecurity, and soaring mental health concerns are apparent.

Struggles for decolonization

After the many struggles for decolonization throughout North America and Latin America—referred to as *Abya Yala* in precolonial times—as well as Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, what continues is the coloniality of power, being, knowing, and feeling that maintains the racist colonial difference between Westerners as superior and indigenous people as inferior, barbaric, and primitive (Quijano, 2000). In the 1960s and 1970s, emancipatory movements reconceptualized the hegemonic regimes of truth contained in the Western sciences but locked out contributions of indigenous people keeping them at the margins, misrepresenting, erasing, and/or silencing their contributions (Coulthard, 2014; Smith, 2012). Social scientists of the Global South are critiquing Western hegemonic discourse and deconstructing coloniality propelled by science and technology, neoliberal capitalism, and heteropatriarchy. Santos (2016) shed light on other knowledges in which Western science had played no role such as, “...the preservation of biodiversity made possible by rural and indigenous forms of knowledge, which, paradoxically, are under threat because of increasing science-ridden interventions (Santos et al., 2009)” (p. 201).

We must dismantle the “geopolitics of knowledge production” to radically imagine other worlds (Dutta, 2018; Sonn, 2016). Yehia (2007) stated that we must listen to the silence in our own theoretical frameworks, or what Santos (2016) called the “ecologies of absences” to imagine “ecologies of emergencies” that avoid one episteme and consider many. In this process, we use “...intercultural translation that questions both the reified dichotomies among alternative knowledges (e.g., indigenous knowledge vs. scientific knowledge) and the unequal abstract status of different knowledges (e.g., indigenous knowledge as a valid claim of identity vs. scientific knowledge as a valid claim of truth)” (Santos, 2016, pp. 212–213).

In the next pages, we will share contributions in three geopolitical regions that may sketch pathways toward the co-construction of decolonial community psychologies informed by indigenous psychologies emerging within diverse ecologies of knowledges. In this way, we hope to begin forging transnational solidarities to collectively strengthen indigenous epistemic, cultural, ecological, and healing justice.

Guidelines of Indigenous Psychology American Psychological Association Taskforce and Australian Psychological Society

Indigenous psychologies have emerged as a global response to the imposition of culturally inappropriate Western healing practices and have coincided with a cultural

renaissance of indigenous knowledges and ways of being and doing. For example, the American Psychological Association Indigenous Taskforce website states that indigenous psychologies are necessary in part as a form of resistance against the hegemony of western perspectives, particularly in the realm of health and healing.

Indigenous psychology is an intellectual movement across the globe, based on the following factors:

1. A reaction against the colonization/hegemony of Western psychology.
2. The need for non-Western cultures to solve their local problems through indigenous practices and applications.
3. The need for a non-Western culture to recognize itself in the constructs and practices of psychology.
4. The need to use indigenous philosophies and concepts to generate theories of global discourse (www.indigenouspsych.org).

Understanding the different worldviews that frame indigenous and nonindigenous belief systems and subsequent practices, as well as an accurate knowledge of colonization and its contemporary impacts, is necessary to more culturally responsive and clinically effective pathways to well-being. As indigenous psychologies center on collective wellbeing conceived as individual, family, and community wellbeing, and all our relations with humans, nonhumans, and nature, these can inform the coconstruction of indigenous community psychologies conceived as social movements for cultural, epistemic, ecological, and healing justice.

Indigenous community psychologies as a larger global movement

Indigenous psychologies emerge in their particular localities; consequently, there are as many psychologies as there are indigenous cultures in the world. Applying these psychologies in communities and creating alternatives to modernity means cocreating pluriversal “indigenous community psychologies” instead of one universal community psychology. The emphasis lies in the non-imposition of one science over the other under justifications of hegemonic truth as a means of maintaining coloniality (Dutta, 2018; Quijano, 2000; Sonn, 2016).

Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and praxes are centered on the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities, which is one of the fundamental principles of community psychology (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Riemer et al., 2020). Consequently, these contributions can inform the cocreation of indigenous community psychologies that delink from Euro-centric psychology. For instance, Duran (2006) critiqued the relationship between Western healing professionals and Native American healers. The former professionals have been immersed in what he called a “historical narcissism” validating Western belief

systems and delegitimizing other epistemologies (p. 7). Furthermore, they have imposed foreign mythologies based on the hegemonic Greek and Roman archive to understand the mental health ailments of Native American people and communities that are a pervasive outcome of colonialization and continue impacting their lives.

Indigenous psychologies address psychological phenomena within political, economic, historical, philosophical, religious, spiritual, cultural, ecological contexts and non-Western paradigms (Kim et al., 2006). By contrast, hegemonic psychology decontextualizes psychological phenomena and produces universal theories based on White male regimes of truth. It is legitimized as discipline within Western scientific paradigms. Indigenous community psychologies must question and dismantle the universality of existing Western scientific paradigms that serve to perpetuate and maintain coloniality. Throughout the Global South, indigenous scholars from the Americas, Africa, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, China, Hawaii, India, Japan, and The Philippines (among others) contest the hegemonic imposition of colonial epistemologies and, instead, promote their cosmologies, ontologies, knowledge, and community praxes systems. Another contested issue is the subordination of indigenous peoples, the inequality of power, and the lack of opportunities to access resources (Ciofalo, 2019).

Indigenous community psychologies are based on plurilogues of decolonial epistemologies and praxes to coconstruct a different world in which—paraphrasing the Zapatistas from Chiapas, Mexico—many worlds can exist outside the capitalist hydra (Sixth Commission of the EZLN, 2016). “Plurilogue engagements bring these conceptual strategies and understandings of multiple oppressions together to more effectively ascertain the complexities of, and varied strategies for, resisting racialized, heteropatriarchal oppressions of global capitalism and colonialism” (Roshanravan, 2014, p. 42). These movements are coconstructing alternatives and building transnational partnerships with silenced intellectual traditions to decolonize science and address the imperative issues of genocide, epistemicide, and ecocide (Almeida & de Rivera, 2016; Ciofalo, 2017,2019; Dudgeon, 2017; Dudgeon & Bray, 2018; Gone, 2016; Nikora, 2002; Nikora et al., 2004,2007). In the next pages, we share approaches and praxes in our cultural settings that address collective wellbeing from three different perspectives and delineate emergences of indigenous community psychologies from the Global South.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community psychologies for social and emotional wellbeing

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the indigenous people of Australia, social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) has emerged as one of the decolonizing paradigms that better articulate indigenous health and



FIGURE 1 A visual depiction of the social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) paradigm adapted from Gee et al. (2014) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

wellbeing (Dudgeon, 2020). The SEWB paradigm is based on a holistic approach to wellbeing that includes the influences of past and current policies, history of colonization, social and cultural determinants of health, such as racism, intergenerational and transgenerational trauma, access to food, water, housing, healthcare, education, and the centrality of culture in wellbeing. Recognizing indigenous knowledges and strengthening cultural resilience, connection to Country, and self-determination is inextricably connected to wellbeing.

The model of SEWB has been developed by, and for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using participatory action research with a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. SEWB includes seven overlapping and interconnected domains of wellbeing, which recognizes that individual wellbeing is intimately linked to one's connection to their body and behaviors, mind and emotions, family and kinship, community, culture, country, and ancestors and spirituality, as depicted in the SEWB model in Figure 1.

In the first segment of the SEWB model, connection to body and behaviors refers to components of physical wellbeing, including markers of health such as age, nutrition, and disease. The next component of SEWB considers a connection to mind and emotions. Here, connection to mind and emotions does not solely refer to an individual's mental health, but also makes reference to a person's experience of the entire spectrum of psychological and emotional experience, including experiences of cultural security, self-esteem, self-determination, belongingness, values, and the right to determine needs through an indigenous standpoint. An individual's connection to their body, mind, and emotions is pivotal in strengthening sense of self, building relationships with others, and, critically, in experiencing connectedness to each of the other SEWB domains (Dudgeon, 2020; Gee et al., 2014).

The SEWB domain of family and kinship recognizes the central importance of indigenous family systems, in

strengthening individual and community wellbeing (Dudgeon et al., 2020). Further, this domain considers the intricate forms of kinship, which shape communities and embeds a person in relation to the broader environment (Dudgeon, 2020). For example, kinship with country is critical to cultural identity, reinforces strong networks within and between communities, and lies at the center of cultural practices (Dudgeon, 2020; Rose et al., 2003). It is important to note that kinship systems are diverse, and language and family groups vary within and across communities and regions (Dudgeon, 2020; Gee et al., 2014).

Next, connection to community is considered. Connection to one's community is recognized as instrumental to the formation of strong indigenous cultural identity (Dudgeon, 2020). Cohesive and healthy communities enhance individual wellbeing. Further, the role of elders within communities is crucial in strengthening the continuation of cultural practices and providing harmonious community governance (Dudgeon, 2020). The formation of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organizations has been identified in reinforcing cultural and community identity, and strengthening SEWB, indigenous governance, and self-determination (Dudgeon, 2020; Gee et al., 2014).

The SEWB model also recognizes connection to culture as a central part of whole-of-self wellbeing. A large body of evidence has established a relationship between indigenous knowledges and cultural practices (i.e., ceremonial practices, language, lore, and kinship systems) and collective community wellbeing (Bourke et al., 2018; Dudgeon, 2020). Cultural identity is instrumental to mental health and SEWB, and can act as a protective buffer from external stressors within colonial cultures (Yap & Yu, 2016). Further, strong cultural identity has been linked to decreased suicide rates and greater resilience (Dudgeon et al., 2020; Prince et al., 2018). Within this domain, elders and older people are regarded as vital knowledge-holders, who share important relationships with younger generations in the passing of cultural knowledges, language, customs, wisdoms, values, and connections to kinship (Dudgeon, 2020; Gee et al., 2014).

Connection to country and land is also a central component of empowering each of the relational domains of SEWB (Dudgeon, 2020). Country is articulated as an area (including land, sea, and sky) that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a spiritual, ancestral, or traditional connection to (Dudgeon, 2020; Gee et al., 2014). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, going back to country or "being on country" is regarded as a cultural and therapeutic practice that aligns people to sacred places, lore, birthing sites, and cultural responsibilities to care for country, which forms part of the custodial relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to the land. Despite this, Western psychology and colonial structures rarely acknowledge the importance of land for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the connection to SEWB (Dudgeon, 2020).

Finally, indigenous spirituality, and connection to spirit and Ancestors, is considered an integral part of SEWB



(Dudgeon, 2020). Connection to spirituality refers to the complex relationality connecting past, present, and future life forms (Dudgeon, 2020). Spirituality can be strengthened through understandings of traditional and cultural knowledge systems left by the ancestors, which link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to country (Gee et al., 2014). Disruption of SEWB domains through colonization led to dispossession of land, forced removal of children from their family (stolen generations), and a severance of connections to family and kinship, community, culture, and country for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Such acts of colonial violence have resulted in intergenerational and transgenerational trauma and impoverished SEWB among individuals, families, and communities (Atkinson et al., 2014; Dudgeon, 2020). Through the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultural reclamation, people and communities are rebuilding their SEWB. To continue to support and restore health and healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, community psychologists must gain awareness of the importance of SEWB as a holistic health paradigm and the effect of intergenerational trauma through deep examination of the impact of colonization, privilege, and Whiteness (Dudgeon, 2020; Dudgeon & Walker, 2015; Dudgeon, Bray, et al., 2017).

Māori community psychologies

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the development of an indigenous psychology along with Māori conceptualizations of wellbeing is a transdisciplinary effort and part of an ongoing assertion of *tino rangatiratanga*—Māori autonomy and self-determination. *Hauora* is a complex and sophisticated cultural concept that defines wellbeing as a culturally dynamic, relational, and biopsychosocial state (Durie, 1998, 2001; Moewaka Barnes & McCreanor, 2019). Much more than physical and mental health, *Hauora* emerges from the Earth and permeates all life, animate and inanimate. *Hauora* fosters a sense of belonging and identity; presents a place to anchor oneself and collectivities in the world; enables a portal to indigenous knowledge, wisdom, and critical culture learning, and transmission opportunities; and invigorates and permits uniquely Māori forms of expression and being. *Hauora* asserts a spirituality within and beyond the body and into relationships where wellbeing can be expanded as an unlimited quality. When living life in the historic and continued presence of a dominant colonizing majority, articulating fundamental indigenous views of community wellbeing become critical to ongoing survival.

In 1999, Mason Durie (1999) attempted to define a Māori Psychology. In what continues as a seminal piece of writing, he identified a unifying conceptual framework for the field and proceeded to identify contributing components such as space, time, mind and earth, safety, and interconnectedness. He anchored these contributors to Māori world concepts such as

tūhonohono—synchronicity and *marae ātea*—space, and then elaborated associated psychological and behavioral attributes. Two decades on, few scholars have built directly upon Durie's "above the field" view and much remains to be advanced. Even so, his method for bridging and fusing Western and Māori psychological constructs has granted permission to next-generation Māori scholars and practitioners to do likewise in tandem with continuing resistance struggles and cultural regeneration efforts. Although some concern themselves with the relevance, contribution, and worth of Western psychological knowledge (Nikora et al., 2007), most are getting on with the job of harnessing multiple knowledge systems and, where appropriate, creating sophisticated fusions to emerge new knowledge for new worlds as Māori navigate the spectrum of being alive in this and future milieus (Nikora, 2021; Waitoki & Levy, 2016).

Recent research, science, health, and education sector-wide policy changes in Aotearoa New Zealand have created space for *mātauranga Māori* or Māori knowledge systems, helping to accelerate the growth, presence, and application of *mātauranga Māori* fashioned or informed solutions. Theorizing has flourished giving rise to a growing number of indigenous psychological models, frameworks, interventions, and methodologies that are transdisciplinary in nature and reflective of a collaborative and solution-focused effort to address pressing issues and challenges confronting Māori. This focus is not unique to Māori scholars. Similar efforts are highlighted in the writings of indigenous theorists and practitioners in journals such as the *Journal of Indigenous Wellbeing* (<http://journalindigenouswellbeing.com>), *MAI Journal* (<http://www.journal.mai.ac.nz>), and *AlterNative* (<http://www.alternative.ac.nz>).

An exemplar of emerging indigenous psychological models and their application in communities is that by Dudley et al. (2019). Dudley et al. (2019), investigated Māori understandings of dementia or *mate wareware*. With an aging Māori population, the incidence of Māori diagnosed with *mate wareware* is expected to reach about 4500 by 2026. As an age- and gender-stratified culture group, *kaumatua* or elders are valued and prescribed traditional roles within Māori communities. With rising inequities and new wellbeing challenges, new ways need to be found to differently enable *kaumatua* to continue to make valued community contributions. When *kaumatua* are diagnosed with dementia, the impact is not just on an individual but on a wide intertwined network of relationships. Families and communities have to understand, adjust, and accommodate to the presence of *mate wareware* and relationships, and resources must be reconfigured for continued wellbeing. Similar to Durie (1999), Dudley's team identified the unifying concept, *Te Oranga Wairua* or spiritual wellbeing, with five attendant dimensions: *Ngā Rongoa*—protective factors; *Ngā Putake*—causes; *Aroha/Manaakitanga*—acceptance of illness; *Kaitiakitanga*—caregiving; and *Ngā Ratonga*—dementia services.

The Māori descriptors of these five dimensions carry a depth of meaning beyond their English equivalents

highlighting the importance of language to meaning and understanding, the embeddedness of Māori researchers, and a capability to engage multiple world knowledge systems. This team has since gone on to develop much needed, meaningful, and relevant diagnostic and support tools for Māori and their communities, who are living with dementia (<http://matewareware.co.nz>), demonstrating the significant burden upon indigenous community psychologists to produce impactful and transformative research, and enhance community resilience. As noted by Nikora, Levy, Waitoki, and Masters (as cited in Allwood et al., 2006), indigenous community psychology in Aotearoa New Zealand pursues a Māori development agenda, that is “to create psychologies to meet the needs of Māori people in a way that maintains a unique cultural heritage and make for a better collective Māori future. It is a journey towards Māori self-determination” (p. 255).

Mayan community psychologies

The historical–social–political–cultural context

The magnificent Mayan culture included Guatemala, some parts of El Salvador, Belize, Honduras, and Mexico—the states of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Campeche, and the eastern side of the State of Chiapas (Muench, 2008). During the classic Mayan period (325–800 AD), the archaeological sites of Bonampak, Yaxchilán, Petén, Toniná, and Palenque were founded in the Lacandon Rainforest. In this region, scientific developments in many areas such as mathematics, astronomy, architecture, literature, and the arts took place. The Mayans emigrated to Northern Yucatán during 975–1200 AD, where the great Mayan culture flourished. *Kulkukan*, also known as *Quetzalcoatl* by the Aztecs in central Mexico, was worshiped among other deities. When the Spanish colonizers arrived in Chiapas in 1524, the Mayans believed they were sent by Kulkukan and offered them a friendly reception (Muench, 2008). The history of the Lacandon evidence a violent ethnocide. However, some managed to rebel and hide in remote places within the southeastern rainforest. By the end of the 17th century, they were the only indigenous tribe that survived the colonial violence in this region (Muench, 2008). They built a small town called *Sac-Bahlan* (White Tiger) and two other smaller settlements: *Peta* and *Map* along the Lacantum river—known as Lacantun (De Vos, 2015).

The Spanish conquerors and missionaries feared the rainforest and considered it a dangerous and hostile environment not worth the conquest. Anthropologists who have written about the Lacandon call them the last descendants of the old Mayans. Many refer to them as a “culture in extinction” or “a dying culture,” expressing their arrogant coloniality (Ciofalo, 2019). The Lacandon culture is still alive and thriving. The Lacandon call themselves *Hash Winik* (the true people). This region continues to be vibrant in social movements that warrant the peoples' survival and resistance. In the last decades, many Mayan groups have joined the Zapatista movement,

the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), demanding their land, human, and cultural rights. The EZLN (n.d.) published a “*Declaración de la Selva Lacandona* (Declaration of the Lacandon Rainforest)” that describes in detail their cosmovisions, values, and demands.

The Mayan cosmovision

Indigenous community psychologies are informed by spiritual and philosophical roots and people's unique relations to the world and each other. The Mayan Sacred Books such as the *Popol Vuh*, as well as origin narratives preserved as historical memory in oral traditions, are rich sources for the coconstruction of Mayan community psychology. *Popol Vuh* means the book of the community—*popol* means gathering or house and *vuh* or *uuh* means *amate* (tree bark). The *Chilam Balam* of the Yucatecan, the *Popol Vuh* of the Quiches, and the *Solala Memorial* of the Cakchiqueles are the most important Mayan books. These Sacred Books have preserved knowledge, religious traditions, and original narratives. As a result of colonization, the Mayans incorporated the Latin alphabet in their Sacred Community Books kept by the noblest families and passed on to their children. These books or codices describe time and space, and the universe formed by the sky, earth, and underworld, and ruled by the Gods (Di Girolamo, 2017).

Mayan cosmogony represents relational ontologies between human beings and nature. These include animals, flowers, plants, rivers, mountains, and stones. Its main structure is built on a terrestrial level, a level above it that makes the sky, and a level below it that makes the underworld where nine Gods called *Bolon Tiku*, the God of the Death *Kisin*, and his wife, *Ixcab*, reside. The Divine Twins *Hun-Hunahpu* and *Vucup-Hunahpu* play ball and make great noise causing the Earth to tremble. The *Chilam Balam* describes four Gods, *Bacabs*, who are brothers and support the sky with its 13 layers forming four cardinal points that divide the Earth, and who are also her destroyers (Di Girolamo, 2017). The Lacandon believe that the pyramids of Palenque, Bonampak, and Yaxchilán are the residences of their Gods and Goddesses. They used to practice rituals in these sites until the mid-1900s (Boremanse, 2006). Due to the current imposition of evangelic religions, these rituals are not happening anymore (Ciofalo, 2019).

Dreams

For the Lacandon culture, dreaming occurs as the extension of waking life. The first thing Lacandon ask family and friends when they wake up is what they have dreamt. Anthropologist Bruce (1975) spent many years studying and writing about their dreams and their systems of interpretation in two books. Besides dream contents, this author reported on philosophical concepts and cultural values. Lacandon dream analyses and associations are also found in other indigenous groups. Bruce (1975) stated that Lacandon dream to be with their dead and alive companions as an extension of the self.

Sumak Kawsay/Buen Vivir (collective wellbeing) in Abya Yala

This construct emerged from indigenous cosmovisions in Ecuador (Gudynas, 2014). It articulates collective relations among humans and nature. Buen vivir incorporates equity, inclusion, and social cohesion as solidarity and cooperation to take care of the rights of the Earth. These values are reflected in the policies of Ecuador to design and implement wellbeing economics. They question the neoliberal economies that are extractive, exploitative, and maintain coloniality. Almeida and de Rivera (2016) stated that ethical community praxis is cocreated and weaved within dynamics of conflict and hope to attain utopic goals of “*vivir bien*” (wellbeing) to confront neoliberal capitalism and coloniality. *Sumak kawsay/buen vivir* embraces an ecology of knowledges in solidarity with communities' struggles to sustain cosmovisions that imagine a new era, the Ecocene. Reformulated in Bolivia as “*Suma Qamaña*” in the Aymara language, it is integrated into the constitution to promote ethical values for a pluralistic society. It emphasizes harmonious coexistence in the spiritual and material domains, community power, and sovereignty. Buen vivir is an example from which the powerful countries of the North must learn, as it promotes endogenous and inclusive (social, cultural, economic, political, and ecological) wellbeing that warrants human security, dignity, and sustainability (Gudynas, 2014).

Flourishing of indigenous methodologies

Indigenous research applies indigenous guiding principles for research engagement and indigenous data sovereignty (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016). There is a growing array of indigenous methods, qualitative and quantitative, such as storytelling, ceremony, and awareness of spirituality and interdependence (Chilisa, 2019). A collaboration between indigenous researchers in Canada and Australia highlights interdependent relationships among humans, other-than-humans, and nature as the foundational ethical value that transforms research into ritual and ceremony (Wilson, 2008). Among the frameworks used to generate knowledge with communities in some localities in Abya Yala are: affective conviviality, epistemic resistance against the Western empire, centering indigenous knowledge and praxes systems for epistemic and ecological justice, and practicing decolonial solidarity (Ciofalo, 2019).

Likewise, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, indigenous knowledges, including those arising from cultural healing practices, inform and guide indigenous research. Knowledges from cultural healing practices, in particular, provide culturally safe solutions to local matters, such as suicide prevention in communities and guide ethical research. For example, the Spirit (*Ngarlu*) Model, a traditional healing model arising in north Western Australia (Yawaru and Karajarri Country) posits that one's inner spirit resides at the center of the stomach, where

emotions stem from (Dudgeon, Bray, Smallwood, et al., 2020). This model links the inner spirit to the mind and emphasizes the importance of strengthening connection to one's inner spirit and emotions to enhance health and healing (Casey, 2014; Dudgeon, Bray, Smallwood, et al., 2020). Another holistic model (Mabu Liyan, Mabu Ngarungu, Mabu Buru or Strong Spirit, Strong Community, Strong Country), owing to the Yawuru peoples in the Kimberley, focuses on the interconnection between spirit, community, and country. This model identifies the vital role of celebrating culture and connecting to country, to empower collective and individual wellbeing (Dodson, 2016; Dudgeon, Bray, Smallwood, et al., 2020).

Further, the role of traditional indigenous healers is recognized as providers of best practice and culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' wellbeing, drawing on ancient wisdoms and knowledges that span thousands of years (Dudgeon, Bray, Smallwood, et al., 2020). Together, cultural knowledges and healing practices provide culturally responsive suicide prevention initiatives, which empower communities, support self-determination, ensure reciprocity, and indigenous values are embedded in indigenous methodologies. More recently, George (2020) gathered together these principles across the field in an informative collection to present clear arguments for evolving regulatory instruments that govern ethical standards in research. This author draws significantly on cutting edge work by scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand, who have developed influential decolonized kaupapa Māori research approaches led by Māori and for Māori, as have other indigenous researchers around the world.

Examples of indigenous community praxes within ecologies of knowledges

In the next pages, we share praxes in our geopolitical localities as examples of applications of the indigenous community psychologies described above. These praxes present ways to cocreate cultural contributions to forge transnational solidarities, learning from each other, and imagining decolonial possibilities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychology: The National Empowerment Project

The National Empowerment Project (NEP) was an aboriginal-led program of research that worked in strong collaboration and partnership with eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Australia, beginning in 2012 (Brennan et al., 2014; Dudgeon et al., 2014). The NEP employed a strength-based, decolonizing, and participatory action research approach to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to delineate and address SEWB challenges among people and communities. The NEP were informed by six governing

principles. That is, (1) social justice and rights (i.e., recognizing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination and human rights); (2) community ownership (i.e., grounding the project in community, owned by community); (3) resilience focused; (4) respect for local knowledge and intellectual property; (5) building empowerment and partnerships, and (6) community capacity building (Dudgeon et al., 2014). To better understand the challenges communities were facing regarding their SEWB, the NEP first held community consultations at each of the sites they worked with, and then delivered a 2-day SEWB workshop to support community members to strengthen their SEWB via culturally appropriate and safe constructs. Key findings of the NEP revealed cultural strength and identity were considered paramount to strengthening SEWB (Dudgeon et al., 2014). Moreover, the program enabled participants to discuss a broad array of challenges and experiences, and to reflect on one's own issues and how this relates to SEWB domains (Dudgeon, Bray, Darlaston-Jones, et al., 2020; Dudgeon, Scrine, et al., 2017). Further, the NEP established the need for community-owned and delivered programs that build individual's capacity and skills, focus on family and community healing, and strengthen SEWB.

The work of the NEP pioneered the way in developing a nation-wide health promotion strategy to facilitate strong SEWB, empower community resilience and wellbeing, and decrease suicide in aboriginal communities (Dudgeon et al., 2014). Since the original project, a number of aboriginal communities and organizations have adopted the core principles arising from the NEP. In particular, the cultural SEWB (CSEWB) program was established, with the intention of strengthening cultural, social, and emotional wellbeing, promoting resilience, decreasing distress, and preventing suicide (Dudgeon, Bray, Darlaston-Jones, et al., 2020; Mia et al., 2017). The CSEWB program was initially trialed as a 12-month program, in Kuranda and Cherbourg communities from 2014 to 2016. The CSEWB program utilized core indigenous knowledges and values, and embedded participatory action research in the program methodology (Dudgeon, Bray, Darlaston-Jones, et al., 2020; Mia et al., 2017). Findings from the CSEWB program evaluation revealed (1) positive outcomes for participants, through utilization of the knowledge gained in the program to empower themselves, their families, and communities, and (2) established the importance of decolonization and strength-based indigenous methodologies in the practice of indigenous community psychology (Dudgeon, Bray, Darlaston-Jones, et al., 2020; Mia et al., 2017).

Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, New Zealand's Māori Centre of Research Excellence

In 2001, the Aotearoa New Zealand Government established the Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE) Fund to encourage the development of excellent tertiary education-based research that is collaborative, strategically focused and creates significant knowledge transfer activities (Ruru

& Nikora, 2019). Before the CoRE Fund, there were no large interinstitutional research networks in Aotearoa New Zealand and certainly no Māori-led national research network of any kind. Through fiercely competitive bid processes, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (NPM) was founded in 2002 under the sound and steady leadership of Professors Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Michael Walker. Nineteen years later (2002–2021), NPM has since survived three subsequent competitive funding rounds to successfully remain as New Zealand's Māori CoRE.

Māori scholars, Māori-led research, and mātauranga Māori are relatively new to tertiary settings, because such environments have been largely hostile environments for Māori staff, students, and their knowledges. NPM has been able to mediate these environments by creating a national and readily accessible network for Māori researchers and scholars, and students who work towards the goal of realizing more promising futures for Māori. As a network of the most highly qualified Māori in the country, they have set about growing an evidence-base that is mātauranga Māori derived or informed, and that presents novel indigenous solutions for many of our societal persistent community issues and challenges (<http://www.maramatanga.ac.nz>).

Community research and praxes in Lacanja Chansayab, Lacandon Rainforest of Chiapas

Building everyday conviviality with those placed under the oppressive side of “the line,” that Santos (2016) referenced as the manifestation of the margin, the erasure, the absences, we can include pluriversality that promotes the cocreation of innovative paradigms for transformative praxes to cocreate pathways toward decoloniality. Centering other knowledges (*otros saberes*), the colonial practice of privileging the English-written archive is disrupted.

The community of Lacanja Chansayab is located in the southern state of Chiapas within the pyramidal triangle of Palenque, Bonampak, and Yaxchilán. It is about nine miles from Bonampak. As dreams are a very important part of the Lacandones' life, dream circles were carried on with children in an afterschool program as community praxis to enact the still existing historical memory of the above described rich legacies. As a result, the children composed a story entitled, “Once Upon a River and Kisin” and shared it in a community performance. It is about the God of the Underworld or Death, Kisin, who resides with his ghosts on the other side of the Lacantun river that runs through their community. Kisin appears in their dreams and threatens them. The children built a bridge to cross the river and confront Kisin and the ghosts. They exhaled a strong wind out of their mighty lungs and caused Kisin and the ghosts to fly away to another planet. A meteorite fell from the sky and destroyed them. The community lived happily ever after. There is common lore that states the Lacandon rainforest is “the lungs of the Earth.” This story evidence the interplanetary and spiritual consciousness of the ancient Mayans. Boremanse (2006) stated that Kisin appears in many of the stories he collected in his trips to the Lacandon Rainforest. During the last decades, the new colonization

carried on by evangelists has caused Kisin's association with the devil and, consequently, this memory is repressed in the Lacandon imaginary. The story told by the children emerged from their dreams, from their unconscious as historical memory (Ciofalo, 2019). The father of one participant engaged the children in performing an ancestral legend about a hunter who wants to kill monkeys. The Monkey Lord appears and orders to take the hunter as a prisoner who is forced to live with them. During the long conviviality with the monkeys, the hunter learns to respect and love them. This story is also described in Boremanse's book and in a childrens' book that shares the secret that the children do not only live in the jungle but are the jungle (Ciofalo, 2019).

This community project engaged teachers, children, and artists to perform their still existing and traditional popular power, deep respect for Mother Earth, cosmology, and dreams for an indigenous education nourished by their cultural wisdom. Their stories weaved the ancestral oral history of harmonic and respectful interspecies relations. Their conviviality with the rich biodiversity of the *Montañas Azules* (Blue Mountains), the Natural Protected Areas of their sacred Lacandon Rainforest of Chiapas that they inhabit, cherish, and protect. Indigenous adult and youth leaders raised their voice for epistemic and ecological justice, and co-wrote a book with one of this paper's authors (Ciofalo, 2019).

CONCLUSION

We have described diverse indigenous knowledges and praxes in three ecologies: Abya Yala, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand. In all three geopolitical localities, individual and collective wellbeing are intimately tied to land, culture, spirituality, sovereignty, and self-determination. Participatory action research and other indigenous research methodologies that include dreams, original narratives, stories, community theater, and indigenous-driven research allowed us to assess ecological impacts on the community psyche, as well as to coconstruct indigenous community psychologies nourished by radical imagination within ecologies of knowledges. Wellbeing in Australia is expressed as SEWB and as findings from the NEP indicate, strengthening a connection to culture is identified as of highest importance to the flourishing of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities. In Abya Yala, wellbeing is conceived as *sumak kawsay* or *buen vivir* that includes the rights of the Earth. Māori wellbeing is constructed as *Hauora* that fosters a sense of belonging and identity, and asserts a spirituality within and beyond the body and into relationships where wellbeing can be expanded as an unlimited quality. These transnational wellbeing conceptualizations can be situated within a larger global health movement that is centered on strengthening indigenous cultures of wellbeing, and sustainable planet–people relationships. Indigenous community psychologies are not anthropocentric and are centered on the sacredness of nature, the cultivation of spirituality, and accountability to maintain harmonious ecosystem relationships.

Furthermore, significant innovations in indigenous-driven academic research are sprouting in Aotearoa New Zealand, leading to Indigenous Research Centers of Excellence; in Australia, research and education departments that teach indigenous psychologies are growing significantly and several indigenous universities in some localities in Abya Yala have been established. We hope to continue forging networks and webs of solidarity applying radical imagination to cocreate changes in academic education based on these transnational efforts, strengthening collective learning opportunities that are centered on culture, the sacredness of nature, the cultivation of spirituality, indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, and epistemic and ecological justice. The stories of our work both in academia and with communities are embodied examples of indigenous community psychologies that trace hopeful pathways toward decoloniality.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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