

PLACES OF MEMORY AND CULTURAL RE-SIGNIFICATION IN THE INDIGENOUS LAND TOLDO PINHAL, BRAZIL

Lugares de memória e resignificação cultural na terra indígena Toldo Pinhal, Brasil

Jessica Alberti Giaretta¹

Jaisson Teixeira Lino²

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ABSTRACT

The present article has as its objective to show some fundamental cultural aspects to achievement of demarcation of Indigenous Land Toldo Pinhal, located in the city of Seara, in the west of Santa Catarina State, south of Brazil, it reflects here the cultural identities elements that were added by the referred indigenous community in the struggle for the affirmation of the basic rights, as the access to the land and the maintenance of critical cultural traits of “being Kaingang”.

KEY WORDS: Indigenous History, Kaingang, Indigenous Land, Places of Memory

RESUMO

O presente artigo tem por objetivo apresentar alguns aspectos culturais fundamentais para a consecução da demarcação da Terra Indígena Toldo Pinhal, localizada no município de Seara, na região oeste de Santa Catarina. Utilizando-se de variadas fontes bibliográficas e audiovisuais, reflete-se aqui sobre os elementos identitários culturais que foram acionados pela referida comunidade indígena na luta pela afirmação de direitos básicos, como o acesso à terra e a manutenção de traços culturais críticos para a manutenção do “ser Kaingang”. Deste modo, apresentam-se lugares de memória distribuídos na paisagem juntamente com demais atividades culturais, com destaque para as semanas culturais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: história indígena, Kaingang, terra indígena, lugares de memória.

¹ Graduated in History from the Federal University of Fronteira Sul (UFFS), Campus Chapecó/SC. <http://lattes.cnpq.br/1125051321058688>. Email: jessica.giaretta@unochapeco.edu.br

² Teacher of the Federal University of Fronteira Sul (UFFS), Campus Chapecó/SC. Post-Doctor in Archaeology from the University of Amsterdam, Holand. <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4846026270176674>. Email: lino@uffs.edu.br

Thinking in order to address aspects related to the formation of pro-indigenous discourse formulated during the process of demarcation of the indigenous lands Toldo Pinhal in Brazil. The article seeks to develop a dialogue between the memory of the Kaingang indigenous people resident in the indigenous land and the historicity it provides for the legitimacy of land property. In this perspective, fundamental topics for the definition of memory will be addressed, as well as the role it plays in the construction of indigenous arguments to support their will / necessity for the recovery of territory. From this point, the knowledge acquired in Michael Pollak (1989) allows us to point out that there is a sense of belonging and that memory is used as a form of identification, what is common to a particular group and what differentiates it from others.

Beyond this approach, the text reaffirms the importance of the Kaingang indigenous tradition, which is relevant to the people of Toldo Pinhal. Being necessary to develop understanding regarding the mobility of this group, a historical approach was sought to understand how indigenous peoples move. In this aspect, the non-accumulation of goods, considered as differentiation from other groups, is a determining factor, which facilitates the process of change. This practice often generates a debate about land demarcation, where non-indigenous peoples question and negatively criticize this mobility.

The search for Places of Memory

Talking about memory is like going deep into an individual or collective feeling. It is linked to memories, which comes from inside a particular person or group, it allows people to keep certain information that is constantly passed on and rethought. According to Jacques Le Goff (2003), the conservation of memory, especially collective memory, plays a fundamental role in the dialogue of time and history, becoming one of the pillars of history itself, having recently been recognized as an important object of historiographical debate.

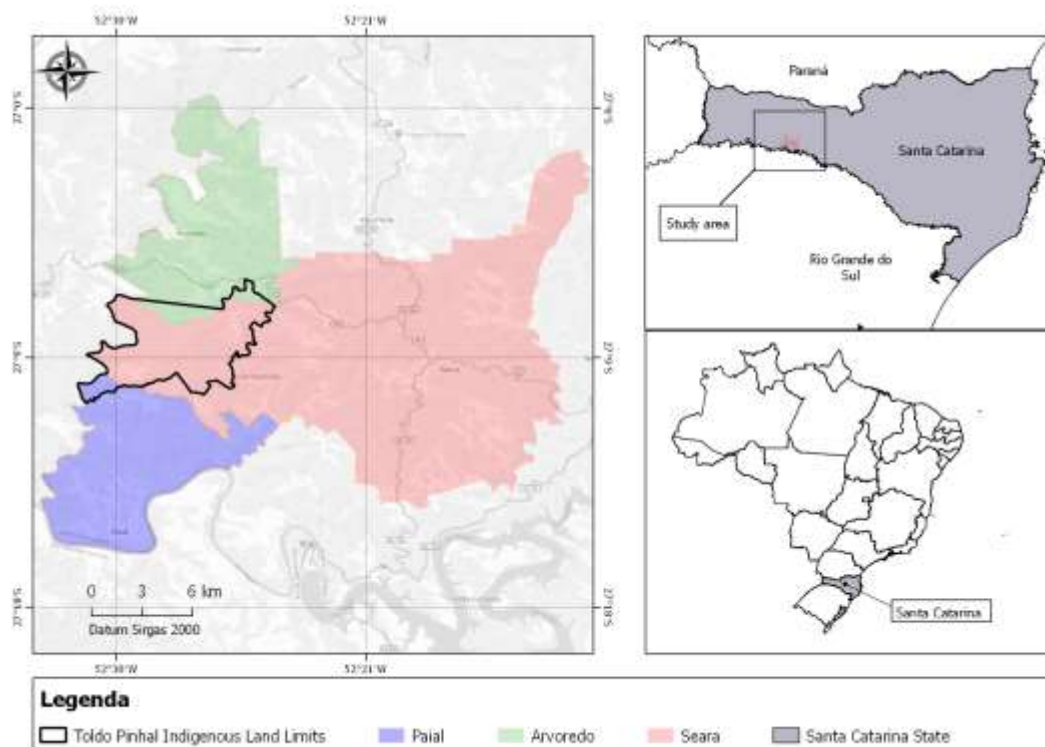


Figure 1: Geographical localization of Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land, in the western of Santa Catarina State, Brazil. Source: Drawing of Fábio Araújo.

In the case of the present study, when working the Kaingang memory in the retaking of the Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land, it is necessary and possible to understand it from Michel Pollack's definition, according to which the memory of a particular group concerns its sense of belonging and also of identity recognition. Memory allows the people to recognize themselves through it. Therefore, “by defining what is common to one group and what differentiates it from others, it underlies and reinforces feelings of belonging and sociocultural boundaries” (POLLAK, 1989, p.3).

Meeting this debate, it is possible to visualize according to Pierre Nora that memory is a current event and always represents a connection of the past with the present, so he says

Memory is life, always carried by lived groups and, in this sense, it is constantly evolving, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconsciously of its successive deformations, vulnerable to all uses and

manipulations, susceptible to long latencies and of sudden revitalizations (NORA, 1993, p. 9).

For the analysis of the process of retaking the Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land, memory is a supporting argument in pro-indigenous discourse. Pointing that in this context, the discourse has an ideology, which from speech produces a historical significance of great relevance to the indigenous population. The discourse, according to Kalina Silva and Maciel Silva (2009) is able to build relationships between the subject and the object that he represents, thus, the indigenous as subjects and their memory as an object.

In order to ensure land demarcation, the indigenous people had to prove their existence in the territory, that is, to prove that they lived in this place even before the arrival of colonization through the Rio Branco and Luce & Rosa colonizing companies. One strategy they adopted was to take advantage of the places of memory identified by the natives in the period prior to colonization around the 1930s. Understanding the relevant influence of these places from Pierre Nora (1993), because “the curiosity for places where memory crystallizes and takes refuge is linked to this particular moment of our history”. That is, the recognition of the memory places establishes a direct connection with the pro-demarcation discourse and the moment prior to the contact in which the indigenous people were present in the claimed territory.

We have for the case of Toldo Pinhal Indigenous land, what Aleida Assmann (2016) call “politics of remembrance”, for which the group uses remembering strategies based on the places aiming to signify their identity as a political act, claiming legal rights over those same places. The author calls the 20th century an era of “catastrophe and destruction” (p.22) and consequently, all the recent reaction from the groups, of the most different ethnic segments, politics or socials have been using the memory (mainly cultural memory) as a way to contest the forgetfulness of violence processes that, for the case of Brazil, have a prominent place in the endless silent

attempt at extermination of the native populations since the beginning of the European colonization, in 1500.

However, it's necessary to bear in mind that the memory of the Kaingang People from Toldo Pinhal had to be partly “forgotten”. That is, despite the entire struggle against state and private agents for the possession and maintenance of community land, as it will be seen in certain moments, the traumas of the past have been “softened” seeking to bring non-indigenous people closer to the case of the group in question. Andreas Huyssen (2014) analyzing the cases of the German holocausts and the Argentinian dictatorship, realized the importance that forgetfulness had in these two cases, in the sense that the society creates a minimum of coexistence between the two opposite sides of these traumatic episodes and, as a consequence, a much more mythical than real past was created. In part, this also must be the case we present here: Kaingang people created spaces for peaceful coexistence with the surrounding society around them, allow us to say, softening their traumatic memory.

However, it must be emphasized that indigenous peoples have the right to land guaranteed by law. This statement is supported, therefore, from the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, right in the first paragraphs of article 231, it is established that “they are lands traditionally occupied by the Indians and those inhabited by them permanently” (BRASIL, 1988, p. 133). Therefore, it is understood that these populations originated and inhabited the land even earlier than any other ethnic group, which also gives them the guarantee of having a living memory.

Starting from Pierre Nora's understanding that there is a reciprocity between memory and history, it is possible to affirm that the places of memory constitute places of history, since they “guarantee at the same time the crystallization of the memory and its transmission”. (NORA, 1993, p.7). Therefore, places of memory are factors that act actively in the permanence of the history of the indigenous people and are perceived from the study as sources of the knowledge of the forest, medicinal

plants, fruits, rivers that provided fishing and especially the cemeteries. The importance of its use becomes evident through Orides Cavalheiro's speech taken from the videodocumentary “Herdeiros da Teimosia” (2015) (Literally translated into Heirs of Stubbornness).

Formerly it existed since the flagstones, the rivers for example, the fishing. Where our people went fishing. The ancient cemeteries, in various places where our people were buried. Where we hunted, where we fished, where Chief Gregory died, where he made the campfire with bamboo. Where there was papaya that they liked to eat, where there were fruits, pine nuts, armadillos and the tapir path. The Paris (fishing trap) where he had and fished with the vine that intoxicates the fish (CAVALHEIRO, 2015).

The indigenous cemetery is one of the most important places of memory to prove the existence of the Kaingang population in this space. The moment of death of a member of the group is seen by him as a passage in which the spirit leaves the body and follows Numbê, the village of the dead, according to Juracilda Veiga (2006), the passage ritual is one of the most significant within the Kaingang culture.

The reading in Veiga (2006) allows us to understand that the indigenous believe that the Numbê "stays in the west and for this reason the dead must be buried with their heads to the east and their faces to the west." In addition, the rites of mourning were / are very respected, they believe that the soul of the dying person does not leave the living space immediately and therefore care should be taken with those close to the person who died, especially spouses and children. “The house can be painted black. Branches of a plant called *kiprer* are placed on the sides of the door of the house and a rite of mourning is performed.” (VEIGA, 2006, p. 175).

From the anthropological report made by Wagner de Oliveira in 1993 (OLIVEIRA, 1993), It is clear that the cult of the dead was one of the events that could gather the largest number of the indigenous population in the Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land. It is evident from the colonist's reports Guilherme Moeller, contained in the report, that the death of Chief Gregório Rodrigues, father of João

Maria, around the 1930s was a reason for settlers to see large numbers of indigenous people gathered for the rite of passage.

In addition, from the viewing of the videodocumentary “O Voo Solitário” (Literally translated into The Lonely Flight) (Directed by Chico Faganello) of 1991, the memory is used to understand that it lives together with the history of the Kaingang population, where João Maria Rodrigues himself made a report about his father's death,

My father, the chief of the Indians is buried here in this land. His death was made by the hand of a tiger. The tiger took my grandfather's pig. And the other day they armed a rifle, a 16. And the tiger in the night came and fired the rifle. The tiger came out injured but did not stay in place. The other day they released the dogs behind. And then they cornered the tiger. And my father was the fastest in the woods, he ran ahead and came in front of the other boys. And then the dog was cornering the tiger under a wood. Fallen. Thick wood. Then ... he climbed over the wood to remove the tiger, and in that he slipped on a bark of the wood and fell there along with the tiger. (RODRIGUES, 1991).

João Maria Rodrigues, the “Cacique Teimoso” (Literally translate into Stubborn Chief) was born in 1915 and died in 1996 and is also buried in the Indigenous Land, next to his father. Along with his burial, there is a cedar tree that by studying the indigenous memory found in the sources, it is possible to understand that the Kaingang population usually makes a cross with this wood to identify the tomb of their leaders. The tree sprouts and stands out within the indigenous cemetery, representing the protection of its ancestors for all its people. In the Indigenous Land cemetery of this study, there are two cedars that allow us to locate and highlight the burials of João Maria and his father, Indigenous Chief Gregório.



Figure 02: Kaingang Cemetery located in Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land. Jessica A. Giaretta Collection.



Figure 03: Detail view of the burial of leader João Maria Rodrigues, the “Stubborn Cacique”. Jessica A. Giaretta Collection.

According to the anthropological report of identification and delimitation of the Indigenous Land Toldo Pinhal, elaborated by Wagner de Oliveira (1993), João Maria led the resistance against the colonist advance, by refusing to leave the original area of the Toldo Pinhal Land. Also according to this source, he remained stubborn and would not leave the land on which its umbilical cord was buried. This attitude is justified because the Kaingang people used to bury the umbilical cords producing a relationship with the land, representing a connection with their ancestors. "It is true that they attributed and still attach great importance to the fate given to the umbilical cord, to the point of nostalgia for the land or the village where their navels are buried." (VEIGA, 2006, p. 27).

All the arguments presented regarding the memory of the Kaingang population of the Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land, as well as the identification of the memory places, provide a way to understand that the liberation of the area occurred legitimately.

The importance of re-signification and appreciation of Kaingang culture

Indigenous peoples are endowed with many beliefs and myths, which refer to the origin of groups, body traits, social and political organization, the formation of earth, sky and beings. The Kaingang people have in their founding myth the belief that they originated from the two brothers named Kamé and Kanhru. Veiga retrieved anthropologist Curt Unkel Nimuendajú's about this myth.

Kaingang tradition tells us that the first people of this nation came off the ground (...) they came off in two groups, led by two brothers named Kañerú and Kamé being that one who came out first. Each has already brought a number of people of both sexes. Kañerú and all his people are said to have thin bodies, hairy, small feet, that they were light in both their movements and resolutions, full of initiative but little persistence. Kamé and his companions, by contrast, had thick bodies, large feet, and they were slow in their movements and resolutions. (VEIGA, 2006, p.81).

The founding myth of the two brothers resulted in the division of the Kaingang people into two exogamous halves, Kamé and Kairu, which are determinants of the social and cultural life of the large group. To Veiga (2006, p.81) "this division is the fundamental aspect of the opposing and complementary Kaingang social organization", that is, there is a division / separation, but at the same time a union of the two groups, and one needs the other. From them internal relationships move like marriages, since, according to Nacke (2007) initially they were only performed between members of opposite halves.

When choosing a name for a Kaingang child, some factors should be taken into account at the time of birth. The reading in Veiga (2006, p.145) allows us to affirm that choosing a Kaingang name is an act of significance for the culture of this people. "They believed that the human being is formed of the organism and the spirit, being the latter one related to the name. Ideally the physical constitution and name (spirit-character) should match". In the Indigenous Land Toldo Pinhal, children receive a name in Portuguese language and a name in Kaingang language, which is mainly related to nature phenomena or animal names. This statement is based on the viewing of the videodocumentary "Herdeiros da Teimosia" (2015), (Literally translated into Heirs of Stubbornness). (Literally translated into, since in the first scenes, children mention and play with their indigenous names.

An important aspect to address is the relative marks for each of the halves. The Kamé group is identified by long scratch marks, the Kairu by round dots. Veiga (2006) identifies that round marks are the east and long marks the west. These marks are represented by the indigenous people from body paintings, which are part of origin identification of each individual during the performance of rituals.

Following this line of thought and analysis, it is possible to approach one of the main rituals of this culture, which the readings have several nomenclatures, called Kikoia or Veingreinyã, ritual of worship of the dead or rite of passage of the dead. From the observations of Wagner de Oliveira (1993) in his Anthropological Report

it is possible to state that this ritual is a moment of great expression of the Kaingang culture, with many dances, parties and a close relationship with mother earth, since for its performance they use herbs and the trunk of a specially araucaria chosen and removed from the bush, with the permission that indigenous people ask for nature.

In Toldo das Lontras ethnologist Robert Baldus was able to observe Veingreinyã (the cult of the dead, celebrated in the proper season of corn and pine nut), as the basis and strongest expression of the spiritual culture of the Kaingang, because the will of the community towards of his own psychic defense is founded on him and only on his occasion he presents himself collectively. Never except in Veingreinyã, the horde gathers so completely, showing their organization. (OLIVEIRA, 1993, p. 8).

Nacke (2007) states that this ritual is not practiced so often today due to spiritual risks to the participants, if not performed correctly. Therefore, there are no records on the performance of this ritual within Toldo Pinhal Land, which does not mean that they did not occur at any time.

The prohibitions of the state and the occupation of original lands represented great difficulties in the effective permanence of the rituals for the native peoples of all Brazil. However, although with the decimation of the Kaingang people by the colonization process, they still identify themselves as indigenous groups, this is due to their adaptability, being able to incorporate foreign elements into their culture, even though they have abandoned so many others. This indigenous suitability was what provided the survival of their people.

Therefore, in addition to the retaking of the lands, the Kaingang indigenous people of Toldo Pinhal realized the need to constantly reaffirm the indigenous culture, to recover the practices and rituals that had been absent from their daily living. Since the removal of the Kaingang population resulted in the absence of culture experience in the indigenous people of Linha Gramado, Rosario and Pinhal, it was necessary that their culture could survive the fog of the German and Italian colonization proposed by the Brazilian government.

Thus, it is important to point out that land demarcation does not mean an automatic resumption of cultural aspects. Henrique Kujawa (2015) states that due to the contradiction in the implementation of indigenous territorial policies, “the fact that the simple demarcation of the land does not necessarily guarantee the possibility of development of these peoples”. (KUJAWA, 2015, p. 33).

It is noticeable in the videodocumentary “Herdeiros da Teimosia” (Literally translated into Heirs of Stubbornness). The recognition of the gap that colonization leaves in their indigenous identity and the need to resume it. It is clear that they missed the moment when they could express their culture in an intense and true way: “It's not like in the past, but we can't forget about our culture, our traditions”, says the teacher Daniel Cadete Sêm (2015). That is why the work done by Toldo Pinhal members occurs through paintings, dance and the recognition of the importance of indigenous culture as a way of reestablishing and transmitting culture to children, who represent the continuity of cultural expression.

As a teacher, my goal is to rescue indigenous culture, as I said, it is already leaving behind, so I, like the other teachers, we bring it to the classroom. How the student has to speak, recognize the alphabets in Kaingang, recognize the Kaingang culture, the Kaingang marks, the Kaingang paintings and how the Indian lives in indigenous society. (SÊM, 2015).

As a form of cultural expression, the indigenous people of Toldo Pinhal develops an event called “Saberes e Sabores” (Literally translated into Knowledge and Flavors). Every year, on the week of April 19th, National Indian Day, activities are organized such as dancing, food preparation, painting and other ways of expressing the Kaingang culture, where the indigenous express their daily way of life. To this end, all schools and people in the region who are interested in experiencing and understanding the reality of the Indigenous Land are invited. The children and teenagers mostly students of the Cacique Pirõy indigenous school demonstrate aspects of culture that the community thinks are important for outsourcing to non-indigenous audiences.



Figure 04: Integration between indigenous and non-indigenous school students in the cultural week “Saberes e Sabores” (Literally translated into Knowledge and Flavors) Jessica A. Giaretta Collection.



Figure 05: Fênu – Insect collected from palm tree trunk. Jessica A. Giaretta Collection.

In 2017, the event had a particularity, which can be evaluated as a positive initiative by the indigenous people. In order to recognize that although colonization represented an attack on the local indigenous population, it is important to realize that miscegenation symbolizes the formation of the cultural identity of western Santa Catarina State.

As a way of integrating Indigenous Land with the surrounding community besides inviting teachers and students from other schools, Toldo Pinhal gave its “stage” to them, making room for the students, descendant of the colonizers to be able through cultural presentations to demonstrate aspects of the German and Italian culture of the region. People who were there were able to view the cultural presentations, taste specialties of indigenous cuisine in foods like aipim cake baked on boralho (palm tree leaf) roasted armadillo the fênvu (insect taken from the trunk of the palm tree), pine nut among others. In addition, both groups tasted food from German and Italian cuisine like “cuca” and “salame”(a typical kind of sweet bread and a sausage of the region), taken by the schools, since they had the space to do so. In this moment of cultural exchange became evident the interest in cultural recognition of the different identity forming groups.

The mobility of the Kaingang people and the question of territoriality

Territoriality goes beyond the understanding of simply dwelling on a determined geographical space, it means an identifying relationship with the land and its constitution as a motivator in the formation of individual and group identity. Therefore, due to their belonging, the defense of this territory is sought, which also means protecting / guaranteeing the permanence of culture. According to Arlene Renk (based on the reflection of Milton Santos), “territoriality does not come simply from living in a place, but from the communion we have with it” (RENK, 2007, p.15).

Henrique Kujawa (2015) discusses this theme stating that conflicts occur intensely since they involve the territoriality of the subjects. Thus understanding territoriality as the relationship that each individual or collectivity has with the land.

Indigenous peoples understand land as a place where they can realize themselves as a society, being the land a physical and symbolic space. Lappe e Laroque (2015, p.3) state that “it is possible to realize that the territory is not just a physical portion of the land, but a space permeated with symbols and meanings”. Regarding the Kaingang people, the authors also state that “the territory is sacred to the Kaingang, and the return to the spaces that were inhabited by their ancestors means the enhancement of aspects of their ethnic identity”. (Op. cit., p. 3).

In the years prior to the contact between indigenous peoples and colonists, descendants of Europeans who occupied the region due to the establishment of Colonizing Companies in the 1920s, indigenous peoples and also the “caboclos” (specific cultural group who shared the territory with the indigenous people) had a least restriction on land, regardless of the space in which they were, this is called mobility. However, as the Brazilian state determined the colonization plans on these lands, this practice was no longer possible. Arlene Renk (2007, p. 15) criticizes the colonizing practice and questions it “when will the desire for mobility be taken into account?”.

The Kaingang indigenous people, regardless of any land demarcation process, have a culture of mobility. They are families that do not seek the excessive accumulation of goods, but the welfare in the place where they live. In “Herdeiros da Teimosia” (Literally translated into Heirs of Stubbornness, SANTOS, 2015b) there is a statement that “living in different indigenous lands is part of the Kaingang culture”. The statements made in this videodocumentary make it possible to understand this practice, “The Indian has no frontier, the Indian doesn't have to say, no, I'll stay here because this is mine! [...] but, because it's been like this since our grandparents' time, we have the right to live wherever we want”. (SANTOS, 2015b). Moving from point

A to point B has several causes, ranging from environmental, cultural and cosmological reasons, which may have an internal character particular of indigenous culture and worldview, and external, referring to the pressures and intercultural conflicts arising from non-indigenous colonization.

In an extract taken from the videodocumentary “Herdeiros da Teimosia” (Literally translated into Heirs of Stubbornness) by the speech of current chief João Maria dos Santos, it is pointed out that the act of moving is related to the search for better living conditions, “Yeah, sometimes he has a relative there in another indigenous land, and he goes to visit that relative so he thinks the place is good, he thinks it's beautiful. Sometimes he'll even have a better job nearby and a little better living conditions, he moves, that's the way it has been”. (SANTOS, 2015a).

Final considerations

The memory of the Kaingang indigenous population contained in the reports presented by the sources served as the basis for sustaining the objective proposed by the work. It is considered that the Toldo Pinhal they claimed and in the final process of demarcation is part of the formation of their identity.

With the information covered in this article, about the conceptions about the formation of the Toldo Pinhal Indigenous Land, it is possible to point out that it also configures itself as a form of expressing the will contained in the indigenous population to revive over their territory and once again enjoy the Kaingang culture.

Currently and according to personal information, live in Toldo Pinhal around 30 families, led by the current chief João Maria Gonçalves and other leaders of the area. They maintain a good relationship with nature, plants and animals. They remain with the cultivation of various foods, what they do collectively, represent part of families' livelihoods as well as tied to hunting and fishing. Many people are also

looking for other forms of livelihood such as work in companies in the neighboring municipalities of the area.

Every year, during Indian week, the indigenous population conducts cultural activities involving the exchange of knowledge with indigenous people from other areas as well as with the non-indigenous population of neighboring municipalities, in which there is participation and cultural presentations by both indigenous schools as non-indigenous.

In this work we intend to produce a brief contribution to the indigenous history of western Santa Catarina, especially regarding the last decades of the twentieth century. Through the study of the demarcation of an indigenous territory, we seek to show the importance of valuing the past of the indigenous peoples of the region. To the struggle for rights and dignity of the Toldo Pinhal Kaingang people, we dedicate this work.

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