



Curriculum and the production of indigenous subjects¹

Adir Casaro Nascimento^{1*} and Antonio Hilario Aguilera Urquiza²

¹Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação, Universidade Católica Dom Bosco, Av. Tamandaré, 6000, 79117-900, Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. ²Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul, Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil. *Author for correspondence. E-mail: adir@ucdb.br

ABSTRACT. The policy on school education has always been explicit in its intentions to produce identities for indigenous peoples. The Federal Constitution of 1988 broke with the assimilationist/integrationist/colonizing proposal of curricula imposed on indigenous people and recognizes the ethnic identities of indigenous people inserted within the context of their cultural relations and the right to their customs, values, traditions, languages and knowledge. The use of the mother tongue and of learning processes has been orienting categories in the curricula of their schools. With culture as the focal point of discussion, this text is supported on testimonies by indigenous teachers from Terena, Guarani and Kaiowá tribes, subjects living the ambiguities and conflicts as well as their identities and the identities of those looking for schooling in different communities. Despite the difficulties that the indigenous school still faces, indigenous movements question homogenous and colonizing schooling models. This school is part of their lives and plays its social role of working with knowledge without excluding cultures as producers of sense and meaning, their knowledge that guarantees the difference in curriculum, area of struggle, and in the production of indigenous subjects.

Keywords: curriculum, identity, culture, indigenous school.

Currículo e produção de sujeitos indígenas

RESUMO. A política de educação escolar sempre foi explícita em suas intenções de produzir identidades para os povos indígenas. A Constituição Federal de 1988 rompe com o propósito assimilacionista/integracionista/colonizador dos currículos impostos aos indígenas e reconhece as identidades étnicas inseridas no contexto das relações culturais e o direito aos seus costumes, valores, tradições, línguas e saberes. O uso da língua materna e de seus processos próprios de aprendizagem são categorias norteadoras dos currículos de suas escolas. Tendo a cultura como centralidade da discussão, o texto apoia-se em depoimentos de professores indígenas das etnias Terena, Guarani e Kaiowá, sujeitos que vivem as ambiguidades e os conflitos bem como as suas identidades e a identidade que almejam para as escolas nas diferentes comunidades. Apesar das dificuldades que a escola indígena ainda enfrenta, os movimentos indígenas colocam em tensão os padrões homogêneos e colonizadores de escola. Essa escola faz parte da vida dos indígenas e cumpre a sua função social de trabalhar com os conhecimentos sem deixar de fora as culturas deles como produtora de sentidos e significados, os saberes que garantem a diferença no currículo, espaço de luta, e na produção de sujeitos indígenas.

Palavras-chave: currículo, identidade, cultura, escola indígena.

Currículo y producción de los sujetos indígenas

RESUMEN. La política de educación escolar siempre fue explícita en sus intenciones de producir identidades para los pueblos indígenas. La Constitución Federal de 1988 rompe con el propósito asimilacionista/integracionista/colonizador de los currículos impuestos a los indígenas y reconoce las identidades étnicas insertadas en el contexto de las relaciones culturales y el derecho a sus costumbres, valores, tradiciones, lenguas y saberes. El uso de la lengua materna y de sus procesos propios de aprendizaje son categorías orientadoras de los currículos de sus escuelas. Teniendo la cultura como centralidad de la discusión, el texto se apoya en relatos de profesores indígenas de las etnias Terena, Guarani y Kaiowá, sujetos que viven las ambigüedades y los conflictos así como sus identidades y la identidad que pretenden para las escuelas en las diferentes comunidades. A pesar de las dificultades que la escuela indígena aún enfrenta, los movimientos indígenas ponen en tensión los patrones homogéneos y colonizadores de la

¹ Graduate Program in Education (Master's Degree and PhD) / UCDB, Research Line: Cultural Diversity and Indigenous Education - Lidio Cavanha Ramires (Kaiowá), Claudemiro Lescano (Kaiowá) and Gerson Pinto Alves (Terena).

escuela. Esta escuela hace parte de la vida de los indígenas y cumple su función social de trabajar con los conocimientos sin abandonar sus culturas como productora de sentidos y significados, sus saberes que garantizan la diferencia en el currículo, espacio de lucha, y en la producción de sujetos indígenas.

Palabras clave: currículo, identidad, cultura, escuela indígena.

Introduction

The present text proposes itself to present considerations concerning curriculum and the production of subjects within the context of indigenous schools, particularly based on the experience of and reports by teachers of *Terena*, *Kaiowá* and *Guarani* ethnicities from Mato Grosso do Sul. It is a reflexive study founded on the testimonies of indigenous teachers recorded at events, in training and graduate courses, and on the interface with authors from the field of Cultural Studies and of the so called Post-Colonial Studies. If we look back at the history of the Brazilian school education in indigenous communities, since the colonization period until current times, we will have a strong evidence that to no other segment of the country's population the policy on school education has been as clear in its intentions to produce identities and subjectivities as it has been to indigenous peoples. Colonized identities, catechized, domesticated, homogenized, 'civilized' subjects... Indigenous subjects and ethnic identities in conflict, being the latter constructed, deconstructed, hybridized and intercultural. In this way, the title aspires to play with the possibility of a discussion around subjectivities, bearing in mind that such identity elements have been historically diluted and recomposed by creative movements in powerful singular subjectivations, and not only as subjects deprived from subjectivations in relation to other subjectivations. Thus, nowadays, indigenous teachers reconfigure and hybridize themselves in terms of subjectivity when searching for new curricula and new practices of indigenous school education.

The culture, identity and curriculum (school) relation has always been present in the purposes of different paradigms that guide social relations as practices of production of sense and meanings. By comprehending the place that the school, as an institutionalized action, occupies in different times and in different spaces within the context of colonizing policies – imposed to indigenous peoples – and in the process of construction of a policy that aims at reversing the situation of imposition guided by social indigenous movements, we will comprehend the importance given to curriculum as a producer of identity.

To the indigenous teacher Claudemiro Lescano (NASCIMENTO, 2015), from Taquaperi Village, important leader of the *Movimento dos Professores Indígenas Guarani e Kaiowá* [Guarani and Kaiowá Indigenous Teachers Movement], in a meeting held by *Programa Rede de Saberes* [Knowledge Network Program] in 2014 states that:

Over these 500 years the school has produced what we are and today we have to produce other subjects, so we need to break what there is inside us through dialogue, through interculture. Our communities are fruits of this colonial school too. The indigenous school has to build the enchantment, the pleasure for being in the school because there we find our traditions, our worldviews² (NASCIMENTO, 2015).

The proposal of a differentiated indigenous school education has been for a few years now a demand for all levels of Basic Education and Higher Education with the purpose of qualifying the construction of autonomy and of sustainability, as well as of the production of identities. Breaking with conservative and integrationist policies and paradigms has been the great challenge of indigenous systems and movements in the course of the reinvention of the indigenous school, after 500 years of coloniality of power and of knowledge (MIGNOLO, 2003; QUIJANO, 2005; DUSSEL, 2010; WALSH, 2010).

The power of coloniality is made evident in the speeches by indigenous teachers taking their masters in Education through the Graduate Program of the UCDB. Claudemiro Lescano (NASCIMENTO, 2015), when reflecting on coloniality, argues: "I identify with it a lot because we indigenous people also create stereotypes to ourselves [...]" and keeps on observing that this mark leads him to having conflicts, because

[...] negotiation has to do with the inner things, the reflections I do inside me, it is a spiritual negotiation, for me to try to make things flexible inside two contexts, to understand inside me this ambivalence that is in me (NASCIMENTO, 2015).

² Claudemiro's (NASCIMENTO, 2015) speech was recorded and transcribed during one of the meetings of the Programa Rede de Saberes /NEPPI/UCDB, funded by the Ford foundation which aims at building strategies for the support of indigenous university students so that they would continue in the undergraduate courses of UCDB, UEMS, UFGD and UFMS. Further Mais information on the program, access <http://nepi.org/rededesaberes/>.

The master's student Lídio Cavanha (NASCIMENTO, 2015), Kaiowá indigenous teacher, points the challenge of "[...] deconstructing the discourse that was shaped by colonization, because many things have changed due to this imposition. How can we realize this negotiation?" To him, it is necessary "[...] to seek the synchrony of the knowledge that the elderly have and 'guaranizar' what comes from the outside". Gerson Pinto, Terena indigenous teacher, also sees the need to

[...] deconstruct what has already been presented as true... the culture, the essence has been left behind and just as we take back the land we need to take back the culture... the community stayed asleep for a long period.

This teacher analyzes that his community "[...] has gone through a strong colonization process", that "[...] we have openly accepted the arrival of the other culture" and that, just as Lídio understands, there is a need to "[...] 'terenizar' the school, to resignify culture". This is the general tone of discourses by teachers who go through a differentiated formation³, by means of programs like *Saberes Indígenas na Escola*⁴ and the *Observatório da Educação*⁵. The tensions and conflicts that these formation spaces produce enables the aspiration to curricula that explicit the colonization process, evidence the marks of coloniality and of subordination, and that are re-signified by negotiation and translation. Curricula that can be systems open to 'decoloniality' and interculturality based on their epistemes that "[...] open spaces so that multiple epistemes can dialogue" (PORTO-GONÇALVES, 2005, p. 13).

Indigenous subjects, as peoples that have constructed other logics for production of knowledge, reach all school levels, bringing other values and conceptions of world. At the heart of these potential differences, they bring the comprehension that their formations are not mere individual desires but rather involve collective needs, an important characteristic for indigenous

ethnic groups, bearing in mind that they consider cultural or social identity as a basic reference that allows them to define what they are and that, in turn, serves as a horizon for them to define policies and projects to their peoples and their communities.

Eliel Benites (OBEDUC/CAPES, 2012b), Kaiowá indigenous teacher, currently a teacher at the UFGD⁶ after approval in public contest in 2012, observes that

[...] to have knowledge is a weapon today. This is fundamental in our context, in our formation; in our argumentations [...] the traditional knowledge forms us in the sense of believing in the other world, the world of the perfection of the gods.

Curriculum and the new legal order of indigenous education

The school as a space of borders between cultures, particularly in indigenous lands, follows, historically, in Brazil, political-pedagogical orientations and trends that start with the proposal of acculturation, integration and assimilation of indigenous peoples to the principles of the National State, and come to the decisions made by contemporary movements of indigenous peoples of turning the school into an institutional resource for the construction of autonomy and emancipation. This re-signified school will be able to guarantee the strengthening of its ethnic identities by means of contact, of articulation, of negotiations and exchange of knowledge with which the several indigenous realities are involved (NASCIMENTO; VIEIRA, 2011).

With a long story of subordination to curricula, such as artifacts that impose a disciplinary power with the aim of promoting the denial of their cultural identities, their differences, disclaiming their right to use their mother tongue and their customs and ethnic values (an investment so that the indigenous individual stops being an indigenous individual, assimilating and integrating himself or herself to the 'national identity' until very recently), in the mid-1970s indigenous movements consolidate in the national scenario and mobilize in the sense of having their identities acknowledge and, as a consequence, the right to their customs, values, traditions, languages and knowledge. Fruit of this mobilization, indigenous peoples manage to guarantee, through the Federal Constitution of 1988, their claims and, among other conquests, the use of their mother tongue and of their own

³ Mid-level teaching training Ara Verá (Guarani and Kaiowá) and Pantanal Peoples (Terena, Guató, Ofaié, Kinikinau and Kadiwéu) and intercultural licentiate degrees Teko Arandu/UFGD (Guarani and Kaiowá) and Pantanal Peoples/UFMS (Terena, Guató, Ofaié, Kinikinau e Kadiwéu).

⁴ Indigenous Knowledge in the School program (BRASIL, 2013), Decree no. 1.061, of October 30th, 2013, an action that is part of the 'pacto pela alfabetização' [literacy agreement] coordinated by the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (Campo Grande), together with centers at other higher education institutions from MS (UFGD, UEMS and ECDB).

⁵ OBEDUC/CAPES (2012a) project – Public Notice 049/2012 - Project: *Formação de professores indígenas Guarani e Kaiowá em Mato Grosso do Sul: relações entre territorialidade, processos próprios de aprendizagem e educação escolar*. [Formation of Indigenous Guarani and Kaiowá Teachers in Mato Grosso do Sul: Relations between Territoriality, Learning Processes and School Education].

⁶ OBEDUC/CAPES (2012b) Meeting about Traditional Knowledge, Serra do Cipó, MG, 7/5/2012. Promoted by the OBEDUCs (Education Observatory/CAPES/INEP) of the UFMG, UCDB and UFSCar.

learning processes (BRASIL, 1996) as guiding categories of the curricula of their schools.

Studies on Brazilian history and education leave evidence that no other segment of the Brazilian population has been able, by its identity presence, to cause the need for the National System of Education to change its attitude in order to meet and respect the several logics of knowledge production and different worldviews, as it has been happening with indigenous peoples.

Article 78 of the National Education Bases and Guidelines Law, of 1996, when assigning to the Federal System of Education the role of “[...] developing programs that integrate teaching and research, aiming at offering bilingual and intercultural school education to indigenous peoples”, established as one of its objects:

[...] to promote to indigenous individuals, to their communities and peoples, the recovery of their historical memories, the ‘reaffirmation of their ethnic identities’ and the valuation of their languages and sciences (BRASIL, 1996, art. 78, our underline).

In this way, the legal aspects conquered after the 1988 Constitution and the effort to bring into existence an indigenous school education that is community-based, specific, differentiated, intercultural, bilingual and high-quality are reinforced in the observations by Silva (2003, p. 27).

The critical education tradition has taught us that the curriculum produces particular forms of knowledge and of learning [...] Recent perspectives expand this view: the curriculum produces and organizes cultural and gender identities, racial and sexual identities... From this perspective, the curriculum should not be seen merely as a space for knowledge transmission. The curriculum is centrally involved in what we are, in what we become, in what we will become. The curriculum produces, the curriculum produces us.

This very same curriculum, which for centuries disregarded the cultural particularities of indigenous peoples, reinforcing colonial practices of denial of diversity and the construction of ‘subaltern subjects’, being today the fruit of a new legal order, proposes the respect “[...] to cultural practices and to traditional territories” (BRASIL, 1996, art. 32), as well as to the “[...] use of their mother tongue and their own learning processes” (BRASIL, 1996, art. 32, § 3º).

Legal opinion no. 14 (BRASIL, 1999) of the National Council of Education, which sets forth the National Curricular Guidelines for Indigenous School Education, argues that

The school among indigenous groups has acquired, then, a new meaning and a new sense, as a means to guarantee access to general knowledge, ‘without the need to deny cultural specificities and the identity of those groups’ (BRASIL, 1999, p. 5, our underline).

And continues, stating that

[...] the new constitution innovated by guaranteeing to indigenous populations the right to both full citizenship, releasing them from the state tutelage, ‘and to the acknowledgement of their differentiated identity and its maintenance’ [...] (BRASIL, 1999, p. 5, our underline).

The Legal opinion draws attention to the need for professionals working at indigenous schools to belong to the societies involved in the school process.

Indigenous communities, due to their claims, are thus called for the reinvention of a school, of a curriculum that can articulate the acknowledgement of the right to searching for equality in the construction of quality and of the guarantee of plurality, of the negotiation of concepts, of the presence of the other, or of others, in the discussion of the pedagogical process as a political act that crosses the field of relations of power between those who directly make use of it (teachers, students, managers and community) and the bigger society with which they are continuously interacting. All this dynamic context marks the curriculum through multiple references that effectively participate in the production and emersion of new identities.

To Silva (2003, p. 48-49, emphasis added), an event like that, of a new legal reality, which gives the school back to indigenous people, indicates that

Relations of power depended on the definition of certain identities as being ‘normal’, hegemonic. Through the ‘identity policy’, subordinate groups precisely question the normality and the hegemony of these identities. On this contested land, ‘repressed’ identities claim not only for their access to representation but above all else for their right to control the process of their representation.

In this sense, the school curriculum has to be translated as a language, or event, that expresses a reality, which walks through a way, which lives a time: a time of internal, local negotiations elaborated in fragments, in the everyday life and that in the *continuum* are gradually collectivized, assimilated.

It is in culture that the fight for signification takes place, in which subordinate groups try to resist to the imposition of meanings that sustain the interests of dominant groups (VORRABER COSTA, 2002, p. 138).

In this apparent 'turning point', at least in the theoretical and legal field, carried out by the indigenous school as of the mid-1980s, two categories begin to be fundamental and rigorously reflected: 1st – the curriculum for each one of the indigenous schools, which begins to be seen, above all, as cultural practice and whose identity is in the nature and in the story of each community, and 2nd – the emergence, as an epistemological and cultural need, of the figure of the 'indigenous teacher' as the producer and/or organizer of knowledge: traditional knowledge that is elaborated/re-elaborated and 'lived' by 'his' people, knowledge that should seek to conduct the articulation, or its comprehension, through dialogue with other cultures and other types of knowledge. In both situations, culture, in addition to a land of encounters, action, experience and creations, is understood as a practice that produces identities (NASCIMENTO; AGUILERA URQUIZA, 2005).

In this sense, it is possible to suppose that the curriculum of the indigenous school is mediated by discourses, narratives and pieces of knowledge that bring other stories and aggregate elements that still do not fit the conception of curriculum of official organs. Despite the progress achieved and the fact that a new discourse has been established among indigenous peoples, village schools remain at the mercy of the political availability of the managers of networks and of systems, which includes the recruitment of indigenous and non-indigenous professionals in order to meet the demands of communities.

The search for ethnic-cultural belonging by means of school curriculum requires taking equity, always posed as condition for quality, much more in the field of epistemology, of review of curricular relations and, among them, pedagogical relations that certainly will open spaces for the difference as being cultural-historical constructions. In this context, each social group can be doing the rediscovery, the re-reading, the revaluation of their specific stories and experiences, of their identities (culture), more than in the field of compensations or of subsidizes that historically the school culture has been considering as the deprivation (whether cultural, linguistic, cognitive, intellectual, technological) to which, according to it, most of the children from public schools and, more notably, the indigenous population, have been subjected.

With the direct involvement of communities, of political and religious leaders (prayers and shamans) in the construction of this specific and differentiated school and of the opportunity of formation of

indigenous teachers in courses specially designed to address indigenous and intercultural pedagogies, the curriculum of these schools has been standing out as a field of contestation, of conflicts and configurations of relations of power. The ambiguities, the denials and the confrontations that establish in the relations between culture and curriculum (between indigenous demands and the public power and even between indigenous people themselves) also configure as relations of power that produce identities.

The curriculum in the speeches by indigenous teachers

In the beginning of the movement of indigenous teachers from Mato Grosso do Sul, at one of its first meetings with Guarani and Kaiowá teachers and leaders (1991), the participants set the design of the indigenous school for their communities reported in the Field Notebook by Veronice Lovato Rossato⁷, whose publication was authorized in Nascimento (2005, p. 1):

We want indigenous people to have their own school [...] headed by ourselves [...] with teachers from our own people, who speak our language [...] The community must decide what it will be taught in the school, how the school will operate and who the teachers will be. Our school must teach the Ñande Reko (our way of being, our customs, beliefs, tradition), according to our way of working and to our organizations. The curricula must respect the customs and traditions of Guarani and Kaiowá communities and must be prepared by the teachers themselves together with leaders and the communities. Guarani and Kaiowá teachers must have professional qualification.

At another meeting of Guarani and Kaiowá indigenous teachers held in 2005, Maria de Lourdes (NASCIMENTO, 2005), Terena indigenous teacher, declares that:

Having laws is not enough if the different indigenous school is not different. So far the differentiated school is nothing but a plan. We have already talked about the different indigenous school a lot, but in practice things take long to change. We do not want to deny the good things that white people have taught us, but we do not want our history and our culture to be lost. For this reason many indigenous communities are creating their own curricula the way that they please. Now we

⁷ Veronice Lovato Rossato is a teacher and an indigenista. She works with Guarani/Kaiowá communities mainly in school education and in the Movimento dos Professores Guarani Kaiowá. Reports may be found in the (unpublished) text *A luta pela educação escolar diferenciada entre os Guarani Kaiowá do MS* given at the *Primeiro Encontro de Pesquisadores do Centro - Oeste sobre Povos Indígenas*, organized by the Universidade Católica Dom Bosco (UCDB), Campo Grande, in September 1996.

have laws that talk about indigenous education. The laws are on our side and we will fight so that they are fulfilled. The differentiated school is not a school for one to live the past but rather to learn about the past towards building the future.

Eliseu (NASCIMENTO, 2005), representing a study group from Porto Lindo village in Coronel Sapucaia, MS, confirms the commitment of the indigenous school and of its curriculum in the construction of identity when explaining why “[...] the place for learning more about indigenous peoples is the school itself”. According to records of his speech for the group:

[...] the traditional teaching is generated in the routine of the indigenous life [...] educative community and intercultural education, community-based, means that the community itself carried out a project and an educative education. The school is the place where the knowledge of the indigenous society and of other groups should get closer; the educative community is important as it involves the education passed on from parents to children, to grandchildren [...] living, speaking, the practice learned in your own house so you can come to school believing in your culture: values, respect [...] speaking the language, dancing the guachiré, doing the 'chicha' [...] the community is what leads to education.

Teacher Eliezer (NASCIMENTO, 2005), during the same meeting held at Porto Lindo village, when evaluating his teaching formation in a Specific Course of Initial Formation, highlights the importance of implementing a curricular proposal that contemplates “[...] the full exercise of citizenship and of interculturality, the respect to cultural-linguistic particularities” (BRASIL, 2002, p. 12):

The Courses⁸ made me understand that indigenous people are not only a tribe, headdresses, forest, but that we are a people that have different values. My grandparents felt really glad when they saw I had put on a paper everything about indigenous people. We have to put this into practice, to put in the minds of our students that they need to share our knowledge, to put it on a paper and then let it fly and to learn better about what indigenous people are... we are a people, a nation, and this is very poor, very slow for us to show to others... to make the myths, the Guarani stories all known. They need to fight to put our knowledge... in spite of everything we are not only the indigenous people that are written about in the textbooks... we are much more than that.

Teachers have become subjects directly involved in the dynamics and in the tensions of the school,

with their practices and their effects, which are interconnected with the reality of their communities. The curricula that they develop are involved in the relations of social power of the community and of their surroundings, and in their commitment as mediators of culture, of difference and of the production of the identity of Guarani and Kaiowá teachers. In another testimony, teacher Rudinei (NASCIMENTO, 2006), Kaiowá from Caarapó village, during a meeting held in 2006, states that:

[...] at that time I think it was easy, because the teacher only thought about making students learn, it was... about making them read. [...] And today, this is different, why? Because in the school, besides teaching how to read, he/she has another responsibility, for example, he/she prepares students for their future, how they have to live in society, with their parents, in a certain place, how they should involve the environment, how they have to be critical in their communities. So the teacher already has this concern, so he/she has to prepare students for this, what problem involves a village. [...] He/she already has, so to speak, something else, to prepare students. And when I was studying it was not like that, in those times it was just the school, you learned something and that was it. I often pass this on to my students, I, when I attended the 1st to the 4th grade I never heard the teacher saying that this problem is involving my village. I studied forms of phrases and formed phrases, the teacher used to give us a name for us to form a phrase, or then a text, something, everything came from the book, which did not involve our village, it was not allowed, and the student did not come to see how a village was doing.

Through these speeches it is possible to observe the entanglement of these two distinct elements of the school among indigenous peoples. In the first moment, a school ‘for’ indigenous people with decisive intentionality in the production of subjects detached from their cultures of origin, with a curriculum aimed at the integration of these societies, in the national society, or better, in the consumption society. After this new legal order, a real ‘epistemological swerve’ takes place. (NASCIMENTO; AGUILERA URQUIZA, 2010), when indigenous teachers conquer the right to teach literacy in their own language, to promote the translation/dialogue of their culture with the so called ‘western culture’, promoting the principle of interculturality.

The curriculum, which used to enable the production of subaltern subjects who were foreign in relation to their own culture, as of the last few decades has been promoting the rearrangement of

⁸ Ara Verá Project – Mid-Level Formation of Guarani and Kaiowá Teachers. SEE/MS.

contents and of didactical-pedagogical attitudes in the classrooms at the villages, in an attempt to awake one's self-esteem with regard to being an indigenous person, to speaking his or her own language, to valuing his or her own culture, and to provide a knowledge as important as "[...] the knowledge of the white man [...]", as some indigenous teacher say.

However, this curriculum, which proposes itself to produce new autonomous indigenous subjects capable of promoting an intercultural dialogue, also requires the return to some traditional practices, as the Kaiowá teacher Eliel Benites says:

[...] we need to be careful with the changes of our indigenous view, to keep the traditions inside of us, to know how to deal with other forms of building knowledge; knowledge needs be discussed, it is a process under construction.

Indigenous education in this new scenario might cause an impact on the revaluation of culture, as well as on areas in which currently the communities still depend on non-indigenous people exclusively. Medium term, assuming the right to reclaim lands that have been historically lost, the challenge is education through new curricular orders, the preparation for the 'management of lands'.

Thus, in these new contexts that villages are nowadays, we could see that ethnicity processes are produced as borders, experiences of personal character as well as community and identity-related. Without a doubt, in the villages the curriculum keeps contributing to the production of subjects, as stated by teacher Silva (2003). Curriculum is much more than a space for transmission of school knowledge; curriculum involves what we are. In this sense, the question is: what indigenous subject does the curriculum produce? Teacher Enoque Batista, in a testimony published on *Revista Tellus*, in 2006, Kaiwoá from Takuaperi village, speaks about being a teacher and about the indigenous school education:

I am a teacher at my village. I work more with the education area. I like to share my ideas with school colleagues, with students and with the community. I began teaching in the year of nineteen ninety-six [...] The academic planning was entirely established by the Municipal Secretariat of Education, and I had to accept it. The disciplines came all like in boxes, all separated. I taught everything that was in the book. I did not even know for what that teaching would serve, I did not even want to teach. But I taught in our language. [...] That is why the local community always asked me to not leave there. So I saw that they appreciated my job. One day I thought: why am I a teacher? Why do we teach children? I used to have the idea that students had to know how to read and write. That is all. During this period, I participated in many qualification courses,

indigenous meetings. And during those meetings our reflections were all turned to the reality of our villages. Then I acquired new ideas and a new perspective. I began to listen more to the elderly telling our story, our tradition. I put in my head that I wanted to foster this knowledge. This was the importance of my job in general, which is about thinking of a way for my students to acknowledge what is ours. I carried out a work of awareness with my students for them to respect the elderly; I warned them not to mock at them; I encouraged my students to talk more with them, to make questions. Today the students respect the elderly. I want to help more and to seek more and more to think about how the community can value itself (BATISTA, 2006, p. 140/141).

This testimony by teacher Enoque Batista (2006) shows the difficulties in the process of transition between the education models at the villages. It is possible to perceive the ambivalences of the process, caused by the Secretariat of Education itself, by the families, by the insecurities of the teacher. Finally, we can observe how the curriculum of the school produced indigenous subjects in the past and, currently, how this process continues with regard to the production of 'another subject', who is more aware of his or her culture and of the possibilities of dialogue between types of knowledge. Somehow, while the school in the past, with a colonizing project, intended to 'illuminate' the other (the indigenous subject) so that he or she abandons his or her ignorance and a civilized/modern subject is produced, the differentiated indigenous school also has as project the construction of another subject: the decolonization, at the same time that it aspires to resignify the indigenous way of being in the relation with other cultures. Teacher Joaquim, from Porto Lindo village, during a meeting of teachers in 2014 says:

The indigenous school has conditions to help with solving some problems: land-related problems, for example, but it needs to study the past of its people, to study the right of this people, to value culture. The school needs to organize the pedagogy, the spirituality that has been subverted by the colonial model.

Thus,

Differences are conceived as socio-historical realities, in a continuous construction-deconstruction process, dynamics configured amidst social relations and crossed by questions of power. They constitute individuals and social groups. They should be acknowledged and valued in a productive manner with regard to their always dynamic marks and identities, at the same time that we should fight the tendencies to turn them into inequalities and to

make the subjects referred to it objects of prejudice and discrimination (CANDAUI, 2011, p. 246).

We observed, through these testimonies, the awareness that indigenous teachers have of the centrality of culture in the curricular elaboration of the school and, consequently, in the processes of construction of indigenous subjects. Problematizing the homogenizing tendencies of the western school, the indigenous school seeks to acknowledge and value the identity-related dynamic processes in which differences should be taken as being that which constitutes living and dynamic human societies.

Final considerations

The historical trajectory of the reinvention of the indigenous school, considered from inside out, is centered specifically on cultural, epistemological and organizational matters ruled by social objectives that comprehend an inter-relation between universal and individual, understood as complementary and mutually beneficial, and is compared to the confrontations and challenges faced by schools that provide popular service as they search for a differentiated service for their students. In this context, it is possible to state that indigenous movements have been able, boldly, to break with standards and to design a model of school that can be part of their lives, the fulfills its social role of 'working with knowledge', transmitting, re-elaborating, producing, without, however, disregarding its tradition knowledge, which is traditional as it guarantees difference and has as horizon the future of their communities, the strengthening of their identities and the construction of objective and subjective tools for them to constitute themselves as citizens, within the context of the Brazilian society.

This transformation process that the curriculum went through in indigenous schools, as we have seen, it was not easy. In moments of crises and when the curriculum is re-analyzed, several questions about traditional knowledge are raised: how can we validate the knowledge that comes from inspiration, from intuition, from ancestry, which is rooted in one's memory or imagery, however much they have been violated, hidden and put to shame? How can we learn and produce with them, the indigenous people.

Other ways of reading, questioning and investigation, of seeing, learning, feeling, hearing and being that challenge the unique reason of western society, tighten our own discipline milestones of studies and interpretation, and raise

questions based on rationalities, knowledge, practices and civilizing systems that are radically different (WALSH, 2010, p. 222).

Thus, to re-write this curriculum in indigenous schools, with the action of teachers, themselves, is to materialize, today, the 'epistemological swerve' carried out in the post-1988 legal order, is to materialize the process of 'decolonizing' pedagogical practices, that is, to consider knowledge based on difference, on other epistemological logics other than that produced by the western culture and imposed as sole condition for the comprehension and conception of world. This practice generates instabilities of epistemological and methodological character that give consistence to the challenges of reflection on relations, such as local cultures, hybrid cultures and globalization; the academic field with the many forms of production of knowledge; the academy and the production of knowledge about differences; the university as a public space requested by indigenous people as a guarantee of ethnic sustainability and of re-elaboration of knowledge based on logics of comprehension of world, as anchors for the production of alternatives of economic sustainability.

Despite the whole colonization / subordination/occultation process present in the indigenous education, especially until the 1988 Constitution, it is now possible to bet on the plurality of knowledge in the historical process of production of new indigenous subjects, and to see that knowledge, when allowed, is present.

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