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DOSSIER

Childhood(s), social movements and the city: curriculum(s) and teacher training

Meanings attributed to school education by the Guarani of the Indigenous Land Morro dos Cavalos/SC and the articulation of this right with other struggles

Sentidos atribuídos à educação escolar pelos Guarani da Terra Indígena Morro dos Cavalos/SC e a articulação desse direito com outras lutas

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on research with indigenous children and their teachers about the meanings they attribute to school education and how it is linked to the struggle of indigenous peoples for the recognition of their cultures and rights. Decolonial discussions are used as a theoretical contribution, in association with contributions from studies on indigenous school education. In addition to the stage dedicated to carrying out bibliographical studies and analysis of documentary sources, empirical research was carried out at Escola Itaty/SC, using strategies of the ethnographic method, such as participant observation, interviews, photographic records and drawings produced by children, with emphasis on the last two. The results show that the educational experiences highlighted by children and teachers, even when linked to the school context, expand beyond the school, mobilizing different social actors and blurring cultural, age and identity boundaries, to the point of creating teaching-learning situations agents of plural and sometimes insurgent ways of being a child, adult, teacher, student, Guarani, activist, citizen etc. It is concluded that knowing the perspective and aspirations of the actors directly involved in indigenous school education on this topic is a path that can lead not only to raising awareness in society about the role of the school in perpetuating or facing the countless oppressions and violence under which indigenous populations live, but to the potentialization of the resources made available to these populations in their struggles.

Keywords: Indigenous School Education. Indigenous School Agents. Guarani. Curriculum. Childhood.

RESUMO

Este artigo é fundamentado em pesquisa realizada com crianças indígenas e seus professores a respeito dos sentidos por eles atribuídos à educação escolar e como esta se articula à luta dos povos indígenas pelo reconhecimento de suas culturas e direitos. Utilizam-se como aporte teórico discussões decoloniais em associação com contribuições provindas de estudos sobre educação escolar indígena. Além da etapa dedicada à realização de estudos bibliográficos e documentais, foi realizada pesquisa empírica na Escola *Itaty*/SC, com emprego de estratégias do método etnográfico, como observação participante, registros fotográficos,

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conversas informais, entrevistas, desenhos e narrativas orais produzidas sobre estes pelas crianças, com ênfase nestes dois últimos recursos. Os resultados deixam entrever que as experiências educativas destacadas pelas crianças e professores, mesmo quando vinculadas ao contexto escolar, se expandem para além da escola, mobilizando diferentes atores sociais e borrando fronteiras culturais, etárias e identitárias, ao ponto de gestar situações de ensino-aprendizagem agenciadoras de modos plurais e, por vezes insurgentes, de ser criança, adulto, professor, estudante, guarani, ativista, cidadão etc. Conclui-se que conhecer a perspectiva e os anseios dos atores diretamente implicados na educação escolar indígena acerca deste tema é um caminho que pode levar não apenas à compreensão do papel que a escola exerce na perpetuação ou enfrentamento das inúmeras opressões/violências sob as quais vivem as populações indígenas, mas à potencialização da construção da luta política que elas podem empreender em diferentes campos (educação, moradia, território, saúde etc.).

Palavras-chave: Educação Escolar Indígena. Sujeitos Escolares Indígenas. Guarani. Currículo. Infância.

Introduction

The school has been more and more meaningful to the Brazilian indigenous population as a resource in the search for ethnocultural assurance and/or new ways of identification. As the indigenous movements have strengthened along the past decades, the access to the knowledge of the non-indigenous world provided by school institutions starts being advocated by these movements as capable of broadening the power of the indigenous struggle for their rights (Bergamaschi; Medeiros, 2010; Bergamaschi; Antunes; Medeiros, 2020; Silva, 2023a; 2023b).

Attentive to this scenario and encouraged by the intention to proceed on our trajectory of working with the indigenous peoples, it is of our interest herein to reflect on how the Guarani[1] from Tekoa *Itaty*/SC – the group which we have developed the study that is going to be presented with – have positioned in relation to the presence of a school in their territory. What do some central agents of this achievement, the Guarani children and their teachers, have to say about this school education dreamed and fulfilled in their community? This is the main question that guides our reflections, based on findings obtained through ethnographic research carried out in 2016 and 2017, at the *Itaty* Catarinense Indigenous School (Escola Indígena de Ensino Fundamental *Itaty,* of the Guarani people, located at Morro dos Cavalos Indigenous Land, in Palhoça, Santa Catarina, Brazil)[2].

In accordance with Clifford Geertz (1989, p.15), we understand that the ethnographic character of a research is given by the practice of "thick description" of the reality studied and

[1] According to Colman (2015, p. 3-4), "in Brazil, the Guarani population is divided into three socio linguistic-cultural groups: Ñandeva, Kaiowá and Mbyá; they live in hundreds of villages spread throughout more than 100 Brazilian municipalities, located in seven states in the Western Central, South and Southeastern regions: Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Espírito Santo and Mato Grosso do Sul". In Brazil, there are also nowadays, Guarani that live in "reclaimed lands" or territories designated by the non-indigenous people as "camps" located on road sides. In addition to the Brazilian Guarani, there are also those that live in other countries of South America, as Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

[2] During the participation in the Indigenous Knowledge Action Workshop at the School held in 06/06/2007, we obtained the information that there were eleven Guarani teachers giving classes at *Itaty* School that year, in Fundamental Education, Medium Education and Youth and Adult Education, in three shifts a day. Nowadays there are 96 Guarani students enrolled at the school. Nearly 600 people (MP/SC,2022) live in the Indigenous Land where this school is located (Morro dos Cavalos/ Palhoça- Catarinense coast).

of those who insert in it, taking as a basis the researcher's immersion in that reality, along with one's interpretation of what is heard, said and observed[3]. As part of this study's methodological design, a survey and analysis of documents (as the pedagogical policy project of the *Itaty* School and the curriculum regulatory policies related to the Indigenous School Education, among others), photographic records, in addition to individual and group interviews, context in which an invitation for the production of maps, drawings and oral narratives about them was made by the children and their teachers. The emphasis of the analysis presented in this article will be on the data obtained from these two former methodological resources, employed at the stage of the research carried out on July 06th, 2017, when the *Itaty* School was organizing to close the second school bimester that year. The stage in question[4], which will be more thoroughly described in the section titled "Tekoa *Itaty* and their school", included the participation of nearly ten teachers (a woman among them) and fifteen Guarani children and youngsters of different ages (mostly girls), who registered, through drawings, the learning places they liked most, taking into consideration that school activities may happen all over the Indigenous Land (IL).

Besides the central question already pointed out, we intended to discuss throughout the text and based on the data obtained, about how the struggle for education has been articulated or can be articulated to the struggle for other rights (the struggle for home and territory, health, security etc.) necessary for the indigenous peoples material survival and their culture and identity (re)existence. We understand that this discussion may contribute in a way that we can better understand and value the different ways in which the indigenous school education is present in contemporary Brazil, as well as provide subsidies that help the education professionals that work in these or other contexts, reflect on the scars of the past that are still felt in the present educational processes and the glimpse of desired and possible futures.

The article is divided into three sections, besides the Introduction. In the latter we inform the objectives and the design of the research, as well as the main question that guides the reflections produced herein. In the following section, the theoretical inputs and a general overview of the related scientific literature are presented. Then follows the presentation and discussion of the research's results (what was said, heard, and observed together with the Guarani), which have been cross-checked with the revised literature. Lastly, we make final considerations.

[3] The research described here was built based on choices and actions that took into account ethical criteria concerning the research with human beings proposed by the resolution 510/2016 of the Health National Council (Brazil, 2016), such as confidentiality and privacy, image protection, among others. Moreover, when defining the study's methodological design and pondering about its possible repercussions towards the Guarani community at Morro dos Cavalos, our aim was not to lose sight of the commitment with the promotion and protection of the indigenous populations rights.

[4] The data produced and some discussions that compose this article are derived from a broader research that originated the doctoral thesis titled "Architectural Interventions along with indigenous peoples: project process, appropriations and use of school environments" authored by Nauíra Zanardo Zanin (2018), developed in the Architecture and Urbanism Postgraduate Program of Santa Catarina Federal University. Besides the stage which we have referred to here, other stages were developed on that broader research, which included interviews with indigenous teachers, indigenous pedagogical advisers, non- indigenous principals, indigenous student (postgraduated), non- indigenous school cooks, non-indigenous education manager, technical assistant architect of the State Education Secretary (SED/SC), professionals/ researchers experienced in indigenous school space, architects and architecture students who co-operated in the villages.

Indigenous school education, curriculum and specific pedagogies[5]

In general, the Brazilian indigenous populations – protected by legislation that recognizes the need of a school in indigenous communities to be distinctive, specific, intercultural and bilingual – have targeted their struggle at the achievement of respect for their cultural ways of learning. As confirmed by several studies (Silva, 2016; Rodriques Marqui; Boldrin Beltrami, 2017; Souza; Bruno, 2017; Zanin; Silva; Cristofoli, 2018), it is expected that the school space may respect and welcome (not hinder) the ways of learning that are fully experienced in the social group's context and daily life, enabling the emergence of processes usually not considered in conventional urban schools.

That doesn't mean, as the anthropologist Antonella Tassinari (2012) alerts, that the school institution should reproduce native ways of education, superimposing the apprenticeship and knowledge which belong to the native body of knowledge. It's really about fomenting the possibility that the school may take over the role of cultural intermediary, being physically and symbolically present as a "bordering space"[6] between people and knowledge (ancestral and not indigenous – or *juruá* – among many others). A frontier that can be enriching as it allows the meeting, the contrast and the interchange of different ways of thinking, being, living and learning.

Nevertheless, the author also points out the complexity and the challenges that come along with this possibility, since the indigenous school as a frontier space may also contribute, in a way not expected by the school agents and the communities it is in contact with, to blur or erase frontiers that some (indigenous and not indigenous) would never want to see surpassed. That never fails to produce certain impasses, since the indigenous populations' survival depends on the school's success in the task of becoming this place where the new generations may not only value the traditions of their people, but also build new understanding from the contact with different knowledge. Certainly, the social role that those schools are able to play is very important nowadays in any context that forms part of a more and more globalized world and in constant diaspora as ours, but for the indigenous populations, it would not be exaggerated to say, this importance is being highlighted because the school institution can develop or destroy relations that condition their way of life and their own existence as part of humanity (Tassinari, 2012). She summarizes it well in another of her works:

> The school also 'blurs' frontiers when it stimulates the flow of young students to neighboring cities, in search of higher education, and where nurses, agricultural technicians, teachers,

[5] The term *specific pedagogies* is close to the expression "native pedagogies", used by Tassinari (2005, p.142-143) in reference to the set of "specific learning processes and the search for the mastery of repertoires, techniques and abilities and the specific strategies to convey them or to enable and stimulate the learners' initiative". This author considers that the term "pedagogy" is fruitful on researches that thematize the teaching and learning processes in which indigenous children take part, especially if the possible articulations existing between the learning processes and the conceptions specific of childhood and child development present in the reality lived by these children are considered (Tassinari, 2015).

[6] The use of the term frontier, not only by Tassinari (2001) but also by other authors cited along the present article, as Macedo (2006), referenced in the sequence of the argumentation, is inspired by the postcolonial discussions that those authors engage in, as the ones produced by Homi Bhabha, Néstor Stuart Hall and García Canclini, who employ this notion considering "frontier" as "a space of contact and interchange among populations, as a passable, transposable space, as a creative situation in which knowledge and traditions are re-evaluated, sometimes reinforced, sometimes rejected, and where ethnical differences emerge and are built" (Tassinari, 2001, p. 68).

> are formed, who often return to the villages with the narrative of "valuing the culture". The school also allows the flowing of knowledge, as mentioned above, towards a direction radically opposed to the one of the anthropological work. The indigenous individuals are the ones who ask questions, learn techniques, listen to stories, to interpret and use them in a variety of ways. That is, undoubtedly, a space of flowing and exchange of knowledge, even when it teaches the children in a very limited and reserved way, that they are indigenous, that their way of life corresponds to a "culture" and to a "tradition" that needs to be preserved, which opposes to their curiosity to know other ways of life and other cultures (Tassinari, 2001, p.65).

With the discussion general framework outlined, it is important to remember that conceptions and pedagogical practices valued by each specific school, the way in which the time and space is organized and used in it, among other aspects of the school curriculum[7] directly interfere in the character that will be assumed, at the very end, by the educational proposal encompassed by each school institution. Another factor that is part of this equation and must be considered carefully is the vision that the school community and its surroundings have about childhood, the place of school education in children's lives and the way it is thought they should be educated. In this regard, author as Tassinari (2007) and Cohn (2013, 2021) defend the need to look into the indigenous childhood without losing sight of the fact that they can, to some extent, even have a dialogue with the modern conception of childhood "built for a certain West"[8] (Cohn, 2021, p. 36), but do not establish equivalence relationship with them.

Still on indigenous childhood, Tassinari (2007, p.13) considers that it would not be possible to "define an indigenous way to conceive childhood, since we find several ways of treating this period of life in indigenous populations". Reasoning in the same direction, Clarice Cohn (2013) points out that it is necessary to be attentive to the characteristics of each indigenous group, because improper generalizations regarding childhood conceptions may lead researchers to misinterpretations, or even face methodological difficulties. This author also emphasizes that the dynamic of cultural transformation should be considered:

> Thus, the childhood experience (and its value), is diverse for each indigenous society. Therefore, we can neither confuse their conceptions about childhood with ours, nor with each other. So, whenever we dedicate to study with and about indigenous children, we should first look into how the children, and the childhood, are thought of in those places. We cannot presume a universal child and childhood, but maybe we cannot presuppose also a particular, but always valid notion of childhood (Cohn, 2013, p.227).

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[7] We understand the curriculum as "a space-time of frontier in which different cultural traditions interact and different discourses are mixed together - those of science, nation, market, 'common-knowledge', religiosity etc. and in which it is possible to live in multiple ways", that is, a cultural in between-place where principles of the Enlightenment and of the market are expressed, but so are the alternatives [to be built] that turn it into political […]" (Macedo, 2006, p. 288 and 372). This author, who we agree with, proposes that instead of considering the cultures present in the curriculum space-time as static objects of a dispute of "'sides' that demand our adherence, we should bet on the possibility of negotiation and creation inside that in between-place" (Bhabha, 1988 apud Macedo, 2006, p. 289), of ways of translating the differences, which do not need to be necessarily read as irreconcilable opposition.

[8] Historiographic studies as the one conducted by Philippe Ariès (1981) point out that, until the dawn of Modernity, the terms childhood and child could be used in reference to the first years of the life cycle and to the "little adults" that experienced them, without any of the special distinction or connotation that they attained throughout the last centuries.

Advancing into the scientific literature review, we have identified some studies which address the connections between school education and indigenous populations, with focus on the discussion about fundamental education and /or childhood, as seen in Santos e Silva (2021), Santino, Ciríaco e Prado (2021). However, the studies carried out together with the children and teachers involved in indigenous schools are relatively scarce, especially in regard to the fundamental education stage.

It's important to point out that several other researches which refer to the context of basic school or high education, but do not contemplate the discussion about childhood and children or fundamental and child education, were also examined while we dedicated to search the answer for the question that guided this study. Besides the studies of Tassinari (2001), e Tassinari e Cohn (2012), we referred to several works from Maria Aparecida Bergamaschi (2005), starting with her PhD thesis, which was based on research carried out in Guarani villages in Rio Grande do Sul. This author observed, moreover, that the indigenous groups she conversed with regarded all spaces in the community as learning places (the woods, the *Opy* – house of worship –, the plantations, the river). However, those same groups, and not only those (as confirmed by revised literature), considered the school as an element that doesn't belong to the traditional way of life, in other words, their culture. This perception is confirmed by Tassinari (2012) in studies developed also with indigenous groups in the South of Brazil: the indigenous school keeps always as something foreign, non- native, though many times almost unrecognizable as "school institution" (p. 287).

A question is born from this observation: Which social and symbolic place would then be attributed to the school by the Guarani? How could that space, demanded by the communities, welcome multiple languages and allow fluidity and filter on the flow of people and knowledge? Then, it seems, they are ambiguous and complementary functions that the school institution has been called upon to fulfill.

In the face of the ambiguities and the apparent contradictions that surround the meaning attributed to the school by the Guarani, Bergamaschi (2005, 2007) postulates that this institution represents a symbol of cultural interface for them, which integrates into the villages allowing several redefinitions and appropriations that may result in benefits for the communities, and, at the same time, a foreign element, as pointed out by

Tassinari (2012). It is foreign because "even operating in their villages", it comes from outside, "from the white people" (Bergamaschi, 2007, p. 205) and thus causes strangeness as it differs from the "Guarani way of being". This author also points that the Mbyá Guarani didn't want the presence of schools inside the villages, having been historically unfavorable to the process that enabled that in the beginning. Nowadays, though, some villages aim for that as a way of having one more instrument available to understand the "white people's world" and struggling for their rights, and by means of that institution, to access the necessary knowledge for a more symmetrical interaction, or less unequal, with the non- indigenous society. In the words of Bergamaschi (2005, p. 222), this process highlights that the Guarani "change to keep Guarani".

Itaty/SC Tekoá and their school

As we have mentioned before, the Guarani relationship with the school education was characterized, in the beginning, by certain distrust in relation to the possible repercussions that could be generated by the presence of the school in the villages. What would become of the children and the youth when exposed to external knowledge, from the *juruá* (non-indigenous people)? Could that exposition lead to their culture's weakening and restrain the continuity of their way of life? Due to those concerns, it took long for the schools to be accepted, especially by the elders (Bergamaschi, 2005).

As a recall of that not so distant past, one of the Guarani teachers from the *Itaty* School – *Karai* – clarified the motivation for the Guarani schools construction in Santa Catarina:

> In 2001 there was a great Guarani[9] assembly, which was a meeting of great teachers, the elders and the chiefs from five states, to decide whether they really wanted the school or not, and what the impacts inside the village would be. The elders requested that they would accept the school only if it was the way the Guarani wanted it to operate. And that in the school the Guarani would give classes. They were really right when they affirmed that when the school would come, some parts of the tradition would be forgotten by the youngest individuals. The school would be important to maintain the language, the values of tradition, family, and collectivity. (Conversation with teacher Karai, field record notebook, January 23, 2017).

For the elders, teachers and chiefs who participated in the meeting, the most important was that the children and the young people stayed in the village, they did not want a school outside the village. *Karai* says that from that meeting, a struggle for the construction of schools in the villages began – the existing building of the *Itaty* school was an achievement implemented in 2002 – and the access to teachers formation, which was enabled in 2004 by the Guarani/MEC Protocol[10].

The *Itaty* School offers Fundamental Education (initial and final years) and Education for Adults and Youngsters – Supletivo (EJA), from Fundamental to Medium Education. According to Gonçalves (2015), all teachers are Guarani, except the principal (non-indigenous). This author, who is a teacher at the school, emphasizes the affinity existing between what is taught in the school and what they live in the community, in such a way that the daily activities of the *tekoá*[11], in which the children learn by means of the Guarani education, are also considered school activities. It was not always this way, though. At first, after the *Itaty* School inauguration, the Guarani could not act fully as agents of their own education, as non-indigenous individuals took over the direction, coordination and teaching functions. There were Guarani interpreters working in class along with the teachers,

[9] Guarani School Education Meeting of the Southern and Southeastern regions (from Rio Grande do Sul to Espírito Santo) held from January 27 to 31, 2001, at the locality of Morro das Pedras, in Florianópolis-SC (Brighenti; Nötzold, 2010).

[10] The protocol was established by the Education Secretaries of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, Espírito Santo e Rio de Janeiro, the FUNAI and the culture and Education Ministry, to offer formation for bilingual teaching, specific for the Guarani, from 2004 to 2008, through the Formation Program for the Guarani School Education in the southern and Southeastern regions of Brazil *Kuaa Mbo'e – Know and Teach.*

[11] *Tekoá*: a place to live according to the *nhanderekó* (system, Mbyá Guarani way of life).

but the indigenous teachers were few and the way of education became very different from that experienced in the so called "true school"[12], which existed before, on the top of the hill, where only Guarani teachers taught.

Our research journey together with the Guarani from Morro dos Cavalos led us to interact with some of those teachers, including *Kerexu*[13], whose narrative tells us that from the moment of the new school building inauguration, a new way of teaching, different from what they had known before came to the village, controlling their routines, ruling and limiting their movements around the territory, changing the places of the houses and dictating new ways of learning. On her Graduation Work (Licenciatura Intercultural Indígena do Sul da Mata Atlântica/UFSC) about the special curriculum of the Guarani indigenous schools from Greater Florianópolis, the indigenous teacher Eunice Antunes (2015) discusses this process of hard trajectories that the school communities have covered to be able to develop/approve their Pedagogical Policy Projects (PPP) and earn space to practice, inside the school institution, the Guarani way of teaching.

In the face of the difficulties, they met in order to have the PPP recognized by the Santa Catarina State Education Secretary (SED/SC), the school community started to improve the study of the legislation concerning the indigenous education and, every year they gathered to discuss the education proposal and carry out new attempts to approve the document. While they could not have the PPP approved, they were able to create and implement a school calendar "with different times from the other schools in the region" (Antunes, 2015, p.18). Only in 2012, in the last months of the year, the community, with the support of a non-indigenous teacher who had taken over the school direction, succeeded in having the SED/SC to consider the sent document as a valid PPP, once the resistance the SED/SC had to accredit it was due, apparently, more to the form and structure than to the content, as Antunes explains (2015).

We can raise considerations about the challenges which often interfere in the path taken by the indigenous communities to implement their accomplishment for the right of education. Besides the *Itaty* School, other indigenous schools that we have heard of had to face the same challenges heavily burdening their operation and existence as part of the national education system. Among these challenges, one of the most frequent is the strangeness, rejection and even deconstruction of their curriculum proposals by the education secretaries and other state public jurisdictions that supervise their work and to whom they owe accountability in order to have their projects and actions approved, under the penalty of having their public financing discontinued.

Sustaining a similar perspective to ours, yet dwelling on the analysis of the underlying meanings and effects of the demand for the schools pedagogical policy projects, Guerola and Lucena (2021, p. 432-433) thus evaluate:

> The demand for texts in which the school activities have been proposed by specific text gender as "pedagogical projects" or "regulations" is not innocuous. […] the discourse possible inside those methods will be rather at the service of the governmental sphere's objectives (and of the State, ultimately) than at the service of the own communities' educational sphere […].

[12] A school led by the Guarani, in a wooden house, with a barren earth floor, considered as "a true school according to teacher Kerexu, in interview for this research, carried out on June 2, 2017.

[13] Field diary, conversation with teacher *Kerexu*, on June 2, 2017.

> Although not always knowledgeable of the epistemological and cultural peculiarities of the indigenous populations they work with, the education secretaries managers and technicians know well the discourse control proceedings articulated in superior jurisdictions (as the chambers and councils mentioned herein), necessary to limit the indigenous people's action inside their schools […]. Thus, what may seem a simple genre, or a simple text, it constitutes, in the end, in the context of the indigenous school education, especially in Santa Catarina, a battle front associated with literacy and the heavy and complex rules and demands that discursive policies seek to impose in order to ward off the powers and dangers of the discourses in relation to the school education that the indigenous people want.

Those authors warn, though, that when a "battle" around the PPP discursive genre involving the indigenous communities and the education secretaries' managers and technicians is identified, they don't understand that "once that battle is won, the teachers and the indigenous leaders will have their constitutional educational rights really recognized" (p. 433). From their view, textual genres like the PPP may be "instrumentalized as discourse control procedures that seek to recursively hinder the accomplishment of certain rights more than establishing rigor about the adequacy to textual patterns concerning to themes, structures and specific verbal styles" (Guerola; Lucena, 2021, p. 433).

The *Itaty* School itself, as discussed in a previous publication (Zanin, Castells, 2020), managed to have its PPP recognized by the SED/SC after some failed attempts, but that didn't prevent other challenges to occur, as interference during the construction of the new school building (as the location choice and project changes through the construction work), caused by different actors. The project's funding and development by government jurisdictions, although a community right, meant that it had little control over the result of the work. The state option, for example, for the location for the school construction by the BR-101 highway (whose flow of heavy traffic is intense) implied in negative repercussions, because when the new school started to operate, it attracted the family homes to its surroundings, disrupting the previous organization, in which the extended families lived in several *tekoa.* As a result, a school project whose execution could have contributed, from the beginning to the end, (from the planning and construction of the building to its full operation, passing through the preparation and approval of the PPP and the schedules with different times from other schools etc), to mark that community's own identity, was affected by disputes of interest and interferences that tested the agency of the Guarani from T.I. Morro dos Cavalos/SC in the achievement of the mission to make the new school truly theirs.

It's important to emphasize, though, that several situations of interaction between the indigenous communities and the state public power may function as opportunities of dialogue and collective construction of inter-culturally strengthened curricula, especially when there is political sensibility, technical preparation and willingness to collaborate by the agencies responsible for these populations social and educational policies management. After all, as Garcia Canclini (2007, p. 17) affirms, "the interculturallity brings us to the confrontation and interlacing that happens when groups engage in relations and exchanges […], and do not forget that "different is what they are, in negotiation affairs, conflict and reciprocal borrowings".

Considering the theoretical referential that postulates the school as a frontier space (Bergamaschi, 2005 Tassinari, 2001; Benites, 2015), we can understand that the frontier "highway-

village" does not simply mean a stalled divider between worlds whose differences, when they collide, will certainly bring conflicts. Perhaps it would be more prolific to associate the frontier, in this case, to a type of filter, which allows some things to go through it and not others, enabling constructive elements of both worlds to meet, based on constant negotiation about what goes in or out of each one, of what is considered interchangeable. From this angle, the *Itaty* School may also be seen as an "embassy" that, although it confirms that each world/country has its own identity and protects interests that can contrast with the ones of other agents, enabling exchanges, agreements or, to use an expression that is dearly appreciated by the Latin-American indigenous schools, the practice of interculturality. Besides this meaning, the Guarani who we talked to mentioned another one: that the indigenous school is a "government embassy" inside the villages since it is maintained by the government and by the presence of non-indigenous people in the management, who are not always prepared for the specificities of this kind of school, reinforcing the impression that the balance between the Guarani world and the *juruá* world in their historical cultural, territorial and epistemic dispute would be turning unfavorably towards the Guarani side. On the same topic, some narratives we had access to refer to the school as territory of free access to the non-indigenous people inside the villages, being constantly controlled and supervised, in other words, a flank.

Furthering the discussion on the relation between curriculum and indigenous school education, it is important to question if and how, in our country, the public power has aimed at investing in the creation of new curriculum policies whose principles truly contemplate this education modality specificities. Relying on studies as the ones of Gonçalves, Machado and Correia (2020), Filipe, Silva and Costa (2021) and Militão (2022), we can affirm that there is a long way to cover in that respect. The Curricular Common National Base (BNCC), for example, designed to be the national document which regulates and grants the accomplishment of educational rights to the most diverse segments that integrate the Brazilian population, in accordance with the Education National Plan – PNE 2014-2024 (Brasil, 2014; Brasil, 2018), does not contemplate the indigenous school education (or other education modalities, as Education for the Youngsters and Adults, quilombola education, and rural education etc.) taking their specificities into account as they might do. As synthesized by Militão (2022), in line with Gonçalves, Machado and Correia (2020, p. 338), the existing BNCC presents itself as " a form of prescribed curriculum", that is, it emphasizes the " planning for", which seeks to prescribe what the school must do, and not the "planning with", promoter of the participation and leadership of the indigenous populations (education professionals, students and their families, among other individuals) in the creation of a curriculum and a school compatible with their needs and aspirations.

When considering similar issues, Miguel Arroyo (2015) concludes that the indigenous school education – as well as the quilombola, rural areas, among others – "will not be accomplished while there is no advance in the creation of curricula which translate the conceptions, knowledge, cultures and values of which the social movements are producers and subjects" (p. 48); becoming imperative not to hinder this process with assimilationist and/or ethnocentric practices that see the difference as a deficiency that has to be erased or a mistake to be corrected. In the same reading key, it urges to discuss the limiting and simplified conceptions and analysis about cultural diversity, which has often been sustained by official documents (Arroyo, 2015, p. 58).

Having the environment as the central theme and the *tekoa,* earth, air, water and fire, flora and fauna as subthemes, *Itaty* School's PPP contemplates central aspects of the Guarani culture – their way to live and educate – and elements present both in the oral narratives shared by them, and in their daily experiences. That is, since its conception, it seeks to value the diverse knowledge and cultural experiences, including those built by the indigenous peoples as subordinated/excluded groups, which have been historically challenged to deal with the deleterious effects of coloniality/ modernity (Quijano, 2005)[14].

In this regard, the fact that they have created a differentiated PPP and sustained the search for its approval, even in the face of consecutive refusals by the SED/SC, could be read as an act of "epistemic disobedience", herein understood as a fundamental step in the direction of "knowledge decolonization"[15]. And as Santos (2018), clarifies,

> Without disobedience there is no contraposition to coloniality. When there is no contraposition to coloniality, there is no contraposition to the multiple unequal and discriminatory relations derived from the central dichotomy of the modern European paradigm – human x non-human: who is the agent of knowledge x who is its object; who deserves to be heard x who must be silenced; who deserves to live x bodies, lives that do not matter (Santos, 2018, p. 7).

Those remarks give us a more precise notion of the inherent complexity of the curriculum creation process, on the part of the indigenous schools that are coherent with the educational policies and their regulations and at the same time able to problematize the Eurocentric occidental knowledge conceptions, which devalue that which does not mirror them.

Kerexu, reflecting on the PPP he helped to create, points out that it is, as foreseen in the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Brasil, 1988), a pedagogical proposal that enables the consideration and valorization of the "specific learning processes" of the Guarani who composed it and will experience it, as a reality, in the course of their differentiated school calendar, on lines and between lines of the curricular matrix foreseen to be fulfilled, as well as the day by day unforeseen events that may happen in any school.

She also informs that, in the community discussions, the axles that should compose the PPP so that "it would be compatible with the demands of the Mbyá Guarani people were listed (Antunes, 2015, p.18), in the sense of contributing to "indigenize"[16] not only the school, but the society as a

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[14] According to Anibal Quijano (2009, p. 72-73), coloniality emerges from colonialism, also referring to a domination/ exploitation/ oppression structure, although with the difference of being always based on a racist/ethnological power, while colonialism "not always, not necessarily implies racist relations of power.". Modernity, in turn, is defined by the author as "the new universe of inter-subjective relations of domination under the Eurocentred hegemony, shaped by the combination of the experiences of colonialism and coloniality with the needs of capitalism" (Quijano, 2009, p. 74).

[15] In line with Walter Mignolo (2017, p. 6), who we have relied upon to define these concepts, "The decoloniality thought and the decoloniality options (that is, think decolonially) are nothing less than an inexorable analytical effort to understand, with the intent to overcome the logic of coloniality behind the rhetoric of modernity […]". It is important to have in mind when making that effort that in the core of the coloniality of knowledge, the government of the self and of the others dwells "in the name of the truth produced by the *expert* knowledge […]. And it is on the pretension of neutrality, objectivity and universality of the scientific thought that lies the alleged epistemic superiority that diminishes the other ways of producing knowledge and understanding the world" (Tonial; Maheirie; Garcia Júnior, 2017, p. 19).

[16] Bergamaschi and Silva (2007) define the "school indigenizing" as the process of "placing the school at the service of the indigenous peoples' interests and needs, as part of their present and future projects; what has made a positive

whole. Among the axles cited, we have highlighted three, from which we have reproduced some excerpts that more directly relate to the discussion proposed for this article.

> 1º **Guarani Orality:** (…) it involves simultaneously the corporeality, the vital force that is invoked, the ancestry, the approach context, and mainly because it **transforms the knowledge into the own agent, because it is the one who speaks [...].**
> 2º **Predestination:** Inside de Guarani conception, the child is a manifestation of another astral dimension. It is not completely from this world, and **it must be understood as a free spirit to be naturally "humanized" […].**
> 4º **Local policy: in the indigenous school the manifestations and policy tensions experienced by the community pulsate. In contrast to what it seems, those manifestations are profoundly positive because they enrich and mature the community management process, as well as the school management.** But it also implies considering that there are fluctuations in the rhythm of **the school community, since the school becomes the center where the immanent aspects of the local power are discussed**. This reflects on the student's adherence to school activities and their interaction with the school environment (Antunes, 2015, p.18-19, bolded emphasis added).

We call special attention to axis 4 (about policy manifestations), whose importance and articulation with the others (axis 2 – the vision about children; and axis 1 – learning and knowledge construction process) will be discussed based on the analysis of examples collected from the oral narratives and drawings produced by students and teachers at the *Itaty* School.

Thus, on our ethnographic forays into Tekoa *Itaty*/SC, we heard from the teachers that some of the school's learning environments extend to other places by the village, as the plantation fields, the woods, the rivers and hills, and the surrounding cities. From our observations, many of which accompanied by photographic records, also allowed to notice that the education activities surpass the spaces restricted by the school architecture, and as a result, several environments not defined as school in fact are part of it. It became evident when the students and teachers went to the woods to collect material for the construction of *Opy Mirĩ*, or when they went to the Rupa Tataendy Multicultural Center to cultivate the plantation fields (*kokue*) in spring time – *Ara Pyau.*

In these two examples, as well as in so many other daily activities at the school which included moving about the territory to collect materials, finding trails in the woods and/or learning about characteristics and resources of the environment[17], the centrality assumed by orality and corporeality (axis 1 of the community's proposal to compose the PPP) as favorable resources in learning and teaching relations, was demonstrated. Moreover, the learning places provided by

difference are the initiatives that were thought, coordinated and evaluated by the indigenous people themselves, through their different movements, especially from the indigenous teachers" (p. 129).

[17] Those walks around the territory enable the Guarani to convey to the new generations the knowledge acquired about the old pathways that are still necessary, for leading them to where the fruits, vines, trees, medicinal plants and animals are – for leading them through the history of the occupation of this indigenous land's hills. "It is at the location of the old villages, the old plantation fields that they find what they need to educate the children and the youngsters. But it is also on the journey, the walk through the woods, when many memories emerge, where knowledge and wisdom are shared", or even created (Zanin; Castells, 2020, p. 455). The teacher Werá Tupã, when discussing the subject in a conversation at the CFH/UFSC, on May 11, 2017, used the term *nhembo'e ka'eaguy r* to refer to going to the woods as a learning experience; *nhembo'e kokue py,* expresses the plantation fields as a place of learning; and *nhembo'e tekoa py* , which refers to the possibility of learning in the village as a whole.

the *Itaty* School for the children, and in the context of which this orality may be an instrument for the construction of knowledge, are not restricted to the TI Morro dos Cavalos. With a child being understood as "a free spirit to be naturally humanized" (axis 3), flexible and open opportunities of participation in environments and interactions are given to them, which might be forbidden to the non-indigenous children due to the childhood conceptions that have become hegemonic in modern western societies, especially in urban contexts.

That way, distant or neighboring villages, even in other countries or near the national borders, are places that need to be periodically visited by everyone, including children. There, they get seeds to plant and share experiences with relatives. However, this learning experience is not restricted to the Guarani system only, to the *nhandereko.* It is an intercultural learning experience, which implies being available for interaction and learning with the others. There are many opportunities to learn with and about the *juruá*: taking a bus; selling craftwork in the city center; singing along with a choir downtown or in events; taking part in street markets and events held in urban centers or in institutions as universities, school, public enterprises, non-governmental organizations (ONGs), in manifestations for their rights establishment etc.

We watched some of these events, others were described by those interviewed or, also followed by the publications of the school community on *Facebook* and on the blog Conexão *Itaty* (2016). The ex-director[18] of the school described many school outings organized together with partner institutions, as the Sítio Çaracura, Serra do Tabuleiro State Park, the Museu do Mar (Sea Museum) and the Campeche Island. He also explained that the transit by the hill always happens with respect for the private spaces, through clearings, places where they get water and gather materials, as when an art teacher took the students to fetch clay in the Massiambu River.

Therefore, as Oliveira (2012) mentions on her research carried out at the M'Biguaçu Guarani village, education takes place in many places and situations, inside the school (classroom, recreation yards, *Opy Mirĩ),* in other environments in the village (*Opy*, plantation fields, trails, woods, rivers), in other villages (to visit relatives or participate in events), and also in non-indigenous environments (urban centers, universities, schools and other institutions where choir presentations, lectures, events and craftwork sales, among others, are performed). We have realized through this research that all of those education possibilities are also present at *Itaty* village.

During one of the visits to the school for observation and interviews, we participated in the closing activities of the bimester with the work proposal produced by the children. The art trainee Suélen Avelleda[19], together with teacher *Karai,* handed the children the drawing materials and asked them to draw "what they liked most about the school", pointing out that they could surpass the reference to that built physical space and include in the drawings any element/place/situation that could be meaningful for them to associate with the school. We all sat in a circle with the children to talk about the drawings. The most prevalent drawing was the *Opy* (worship house), or *Opy Mirĩ,* the

[18] Interview carried out at the SED/SC, on 03/31/2017.

[19] Suélen Avelleda is not indigenous. At the time, she studied for Visual Arts Licentiate at Uniasselvi and she collaborated in the planning and implementation of the focal group with the teachers. We were together on the trails and also when the children and teachers elaborated the drawings.

*petyngua (*pipe) and the *mbaracá* (ritual rattle), emphasizing the relevance of the cultural learning that occurs in moments of spiritual and cosmological connection:

Pictures 1, 2 and 3: *Opy; petyngua* and *mbaraká; and classroom*

Source: Zanin (2018).

The children highlighted through their drawings that the school learning they have experienced happens in a fluid, continuous and rhizomatic manner across several places in the village (it is not restricted to the school building) and in different times (classes, manifestations, chatting around the fire etc.), including interactions with members of the whole community (human and non-human) that share the *tekoá.* This is consistent with that which was confirmed by Bergamaschi (2005) and Oliveira (2012) on their researches.

By means of observing the school practices carried out at Tekoa *Itaty*, the connection between the way they educate with the knowledge that is conveyed from generation to generation, about the territory where they live, becomes evident. However, to be able to achieve their goals, the Guarani need to grant their right to come and go, as well as to stay on those ancestral places. The TI Morro dos Cavalos still waits for the non-indigenous people non-intrusion process to be effective in order to conclude the homologation of the territory. During the research we observed several moments of manifestations reclaiming the homologation. In such situations, the school activities were relocated to the highway, or became moments of concentration in the school space, where the children, together with the adults, sang and danced, strengthening the spirit and the struggle (as explained on axis 2 of the PPP of the *Itaty* School, the respect for the children and their autonomy was present.

We could notice that, in such situations, the children could interpret both the aspects of their Guarani lives and the aspects of the so called *juruá* world. In the process of policy agency provided by taking part in those actions, adults and children, school agents (teachers, managers and students) and other members of the community become social actors, in the sense that "they elaborate demands and build spaces and time for sociability and the exercise of solidarity" (Gouvêa; Carvalho; Silva, 2021, p. 4).

The process of making banners and then holding them up, the interactions to define functions and activities etc. are all activities that bring the opportunity of learning, whose locus could be the school and then spread out by the *tekoa* or vice-versa. This way they also accomplish their rights to a diversified and intercultural education in which the policy issues integrate their learning movements, according to what is established in the school's PPP and beyond.

Pictures 4 and 5: Manifestations at the school and on the highway for the IL homologation are part of the learning process

Source: Conexão Itaty (2018) on *Facebook*

Final considerations/words

The history of the school education practiced towards the indigenous peoples goes back to colonial situations of cultural assimilation and imposition of the Eurocentric world vision. After centuries attempting to implement this project, today we are able to notice the indigenous culture's resistance and resilience to maintain their own ways of living, to interact with the environment and educate the children. The study presented herein reveals, among other questions, the tenacious capacity of the Guarani from Tekoa *Itaty* of reinventing a school that, at first, had the mission of erasing their ancestry, transforming them into tools on the struggle for their rights.

Epistemic disobedience has been practiced in the Tekoa *Itaty* through the construction and search for the recognition of a differentiated curriculum proposal for their school, as well as by establishing in the school and in the community life, a place of relevance for the children, seen as active individuals whose participation in different activities and social life spheres is valued as fundamental for the children themselves and for the ones who surround them.

Regarding the construction process of the Guarani of Tekoa *Itaty* specific pedagogies, it is important to mention that it was described, according to the teachers' narratives, as something necessary to produce more democratic ways of education, besides being important for the strengthening and valorization of the indigenous epistemes, knowledge and skills.

We conclude that, in the school education area, when tied to the "school indigenizing" (Bergamaschi; Silva, 2007), that is, the critical and creative appropriation of this institution by de indigenous populations, making it theirs, this process may work as a powerful strategy to combat the "curriculum uniformization policies" guided by an Eurocentric colonial rationality and "aimed at market values" (ANPEd; ABdC , 2018, p. 4-5). More extensively, it may also contribute to question the modern/colonial project (Quijano, 2005) and its legacy deconstruction, that keeps naturalizing differences to turn them into inequalities. This tends to favor more positive outcomes in other areas of struggle important to the indigenous populations, besides education.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1 – worked on planning and writing the article, having collaborated in the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained in the empirical research carried out.
Author 2 – carried out the doctoral research that served as the basis for the article. She worked on research planning, construction and analysis of data, as well as writing the article.

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