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The indigenous school education policy in the state of Acre: between the riverbanks and the intersectionalities of knowledge

La política en educación escolar indígena en el estado del Acre: entre orillas de ríos e interseccionalidades del saber

A política de educação escolar indígena no estado do Acre: entre as margens dos rios e interseccionalidades do saber

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Abstract: This article discusses the indigenous schooling policy in the state of Acre. The reflections of this study come from a master's research in education, with the general objective of unraveling the public policies developed from the 1988 Brazilian Constitution that underlie indigenous school education in Acre. The methodology utilized was bibliographic and documentary research, following a qualitative approach. Analysis of the official documents reveals the valorization of indigenous peoples, their languages, and their own formulation of knowledge. However, the Brazilian legislation that advocates the guarantee of these rights is the same that restricts them from full access to differentiated schooling due to the bureaucratic and administrative elements imposed on the school space as a constructed social institution, entirely based on Western culture. Thus, there are many challenges to be faced in structuring the desired school project that meets the educational needs of the different indigenous peoples of Acre.
Keywords: indigenous school education; 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution; indigenous peoples of Acre.

Resumen: Este artículo desarrolla una discusión sobre la política escolar indígena en el estado del Acre. Las reflexiones de este estudio surgen de una investigación de maestría en educación, cuyo objetivo general fue desentrañar las políticas públicas elaboradas con base en la Constitución Federal de 1988 que sustentan la educación escolar indígena en Acre. Como metodología, se utilizó la investigación bibliográfica y documental, siguiendo un enfoque cualitativo. Se constató que los documentos oficiales transmiten el aprecio por los pueblos indígenas, sus lenguas y su propia formulación de conocimientos. Sin embargo, la legislación brasileña que aboga por la garantía de estos derechos es la misma que les restringe el pleno acceso a escuelas diferenciadas debido a los elementos burocráticos y administrativos que se imponen al espacio escolar como institución social construida, en su totalidad, a partir de la cultura occidental. Así, son muchos los desafíos a enfrentar para estructurar el proyecto escolar deseado que responda a las necesidades educativas de los diferentes pueblos indígenas de Acre.
Palabras clave: educación escolar indígena; Constitución Federal Brasileña de 1988; pueblosindígenas de Acre.

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Resumo: Este artigo desenvolve uma discussão acerca da política de escolarização indígena no estado do Acre. As reflexões desse estudo advêm de uma pesquisa de mestrado em educação, cujo objetivo geral foi deslindar as políticas públicas elaboradas a partir da Constituição Federal de 1988 que fundamentam a educação escolar indígena no Acre. Como metodologia, utilizou-se a pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, seguindo-se uma abordagem qualitativa. Verificou-se que os documentos oficiais veiculam a valorização dos povos indígenas, de suas línguas e formulação própria de saberes, no entanto, a legislação brasileira que preconiza a garantia desses direitos, é a mesma que os cerceia ao pleno acesso à escola diferenciada em razão dos elementos burocráticos e administrativos que se impõe ao espaço escolar enquanto instituição social construída, em sua integralidade, com base na cultura ocidental. Assim, são muitos os desafios a serem enfrentados para a estruturação do almejado projeto de escola que atenda às necessidades educacionais dos distintos povos indígenas do Acre.
Palavras-chave: educação escolar indígena; Constituição Federal de 1988; povos indígenas do Acre.

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Introduction

The missionary and colonizing project developed a process of education centered on the action of erasing/diluting the differences between men, denying them otherness and their forms of existence. The education promoted by the Jesuits in the settlements served as an instrument for the imposition of other people's values, having as guiding elements the Catholic Christian faith, European habits and way of life, which implied the denial of the cultural practices of these peoples and the imposition of the Western standard.

The historical relations established between the colonizers and the indigenous peoples of Brazil demonstrate that school education was used as a political action that aimed to meet the interests of the eviction/occupation of indigenous lands. In a milder or more sensitive way, this purpose will extend to the phase recognized as integration (1910-1987), based on the idea of incorporating indigenous people into national society and introducing agricultural practice fostered in school activities of professional training, to make them fulfill the duties of a useful citizen, through the lens of the State (Feitosa and Vizolli, 2019).

In this paper, the use of the word *índio* (Indian) has been maintained only in direct quotation. Indigenous peoples should be recognized by their individual identities. The term *indígena* (indigenous) considers the uniqueness of each people, unlike the common and crystallized use of the word *índio*. The latter, in turn, is a generic term that disregards the linguistic and cultural specificities of different indigenous peoples. Historically,

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Portuguese and Spanish colonizers used the term *índio* to generically and pejoratively refer to all native peoples they encountered throughout the territory. In this sense, it can be said that the use of the word *índio* impoverishes, devalues, and reproduces stereotypes by minimizing the plurality of existing ethnicities.

Due to the pandemic situation experienced more intensely between 2020 and 2021, bibliographic and documentary research was chosen during the master's program in education. The delimitation of the research's time frame, starting from the Federal Constitution (FC/1988), was because it represents a redefining milestone in the relationship between the Brazilian state and indigenous societies. The FC1988 allowed the first steps to be taken in favor of the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil.

This topic stands out and has significant social relevance because it remains underexplored in the academic field, especially in the state of Acre. Among the research conducted in the Graduate Program in Education (PPGE) at UFAC, none (up to 2023) address school education among indigenous peoples. In the Graduate Program in Letters: Language and Identity (PPGLI) at UFAC, few studies relate to Indigenous School Education (ISE) or establish connections with the schooling of indigenous peoples in Acre. Therefore, this study is justified by its importance and scientific necessity.

However, the intention here is not to argue that indigenous peoples should strictly maintain their traditional customs, nor to advocate that, given the inevitable contact with the dominant society, they should be encouraged to adopt the benefits and/or values esteemed by Western culture. The guidelines, based on the law, state that it is up to the indigenous peoples to decide their future (Dalmolin, 2004).

Venturing into the theoretical field concerning indigenous knowledge and their own processes of teaching and learning enables the understanding that the indigenous territory "is an educational, political, social, and cultural institution, as learning takes place everywhere and at all times, with systematization and organization in its formative practices" (Feitosa; Vizolli; Biavatti, 2020, p. 74). Moreover, it should not be ignored that struggles still persist to advance the conception of policies that embrace cultural diversity.

The indigenous population in Acre

The state of Acre is home to a rich diversity of indigenous peoples, comprising 16 ethnic groups, namely: Huni Kuĩ, Ashaninka, Yawanawa, Puyanawa, Noke Koĩ, Nukini, Nawa, Yine/Manchineri, Jaminawa Arara, Jaminawa, Kuntanawa, Shanenawa, Shawãdawa, Madijá,

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Apolima Arara, and the voluntarily isolated and contacted peoples of Xinane. These peoples are classified into three linguistic families: Arawá, Pano, and Aruak.

The region where the state of Acre is located was already inhabited by various indigenous ethnicities before the arrival of the colonizers. Prior to the invasion and subsequent contact with non-indigenous populations, there were at least 50 indigenous peoples, now reduced to 16. Some of these groups are referred to as resurging or emerging peoples (Kaxinawá et al., 2002). This is the case of the Nawa indigenous people (variant Náua), thought to be decimated due to the raids that marked the enslavement of the peoples in the Amazon region during the rubber boom.

The indigenous population in the region that would become the Federal Territory of Acre in 1903 was significant, according to Castello Branco (1950):

> The indigenous population, particularly from the valleys of Juruá, Tarauacá, and Iaco, **was considerable**. However, they were **driven out by gunfire** by the so called civilized: Brazilians (rubber tappers) and Peruvians (caucheros). Additionally, internal conflicts among the tribes themselves further **diminished their numbers**. By the time the Brazilian government established the Territory of Acre, these groups had **already been greatly reduced.**
> Indigenous people were viewed as harmful and malevolent animals, incapable of being civilized— a belief held by influential figures who directed the colonization. However, these individuals were ignorant and unable to take a different direction at the time, primarily due to the resistance they encountered in occupying the land. This led to the **nearly total extermination of these people** (Castello Branco, 1950, p. 13, emphasis added).

Thus, it is noted that the indigenous populations in voluntary isolation in the Amazon region are remnants of peoples who resisted the raids and survived the violence of the different economic fronts of forest colonization by rubber tappers and Peruvians (caucheros - latex collectors) in the early 20th century. The "correrias" according to Iglesias (2008, p. 79), "constituted an inherent mechanism of exploitation, opening, and the initial functioning of the rubber enterprises in Alto Juruá, as well as the activities of the Peruvian caucheros, resulting in a process of (de)territorialization" of a significant number of indigenous peoples. Such armed actions were based on the discourse of the bosses, rubber tappers, and caucheros, who denied the indigenous peoples the right to live according to their customs:

> (...) through the combination of a series of images, values, and prejudices that denied the indigenous peoples' humanity. Equated to wild animals, 'irrational', 'beasts', it was considered legitimate to kill and drive them out, as was done with certain wild animals that 'infested' the forest and posed real threats to the lives of the rubber tappers and/or competed with them for certain food sources (Iglesias, 2008, p. 79, author's emphasis).

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In this context, the "correrias"—armed expeditions organized by rubber barons and caucheros—led to the near-total destruction of indigenous peoples and their homes, and the dispersion of survivors to the headwaters of the region's main rivers in an attempt to escape these violent incursions. Those who could not escape were enslaved and forced to work in latex extraction under the rubber bosses between 1840 and 1850 (Kaxinawá *et al.*, 2002; Iglesias, 2008; Paiva, 2020).

The demand for Amazon rubber, in addition to rapidly occupying territories, had as its main tragic consequence the decline of the indigenous population and the extinction of many ethnic groups. Tarisson Nawa[3] (2021) states that the indigenous people of his group were documented as extinct when they fled their lands to escape enslavement and death, dispersing from their ancestral territory located in the municipality of Cruzeiro do Sul, Acre. Victims of a process of civilization and extermination, the Nawa themselves did not identify as indigenous. They state that they were instructed by their ancestors to do so in order to avoid persecution and prejudice (Pontes; Noronha, 2022).

The region inhabited by the Nawa is one of the most coveted by representatives of Acre's political sphere, who support the advancement of projects related to infrastructure development and the exploration of oil and minerals. To halt the progression of such projects, as well as potential threats to indigenous territories and the region's natural resources, the leaders and representatives of the Nukini, Nawa, Shawãdawa, Noke Ko'ĩ, Apolima Arara, and Huni Kuĩ peoples gathered in September 2022 at the Nukini indigenous land, Recanto Verde village, in the municipality of Mâncio Lima, Acre. The purpose of the meeting was to formally document their perspective and stance regarding the invasion of their territories (Silva, 2023).

According to the demographic census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE/2022), the state of Acre has 31,699 indigenous people in its resident population, which corresponds to 3.82% of the state's total population of 830,026 people. The 2022 Census also shows that Acre ranks 13th among the states of the federation (federal entities) in terms of the percentage of indigenous people (Graph 1). In 2010, the IBGE recorded 17,578 indigenous people, equivalent to 2.4% of Acre's total resident population. Based on these numbers, it is noticeable that the indigenous population registered in Acre by the 2022 Census almost doubled compared to the previous 2010 Census.

[3] **Note:** Tarisson Nawa is an indigenous person from the Nawa people, from the municipality of Mâncio Lima - Acre, based in the Novo Recreio Village. Graduated in Social Communication - Journalism (UFPE). Works in the field of communication, with an emphasis on communication management and special reports on indigenous issues. Produced the documentary "Memórias Nawa - das malocas ao contexto urbano" (Memories of the Nawa - from the traditional villages to the urban context).

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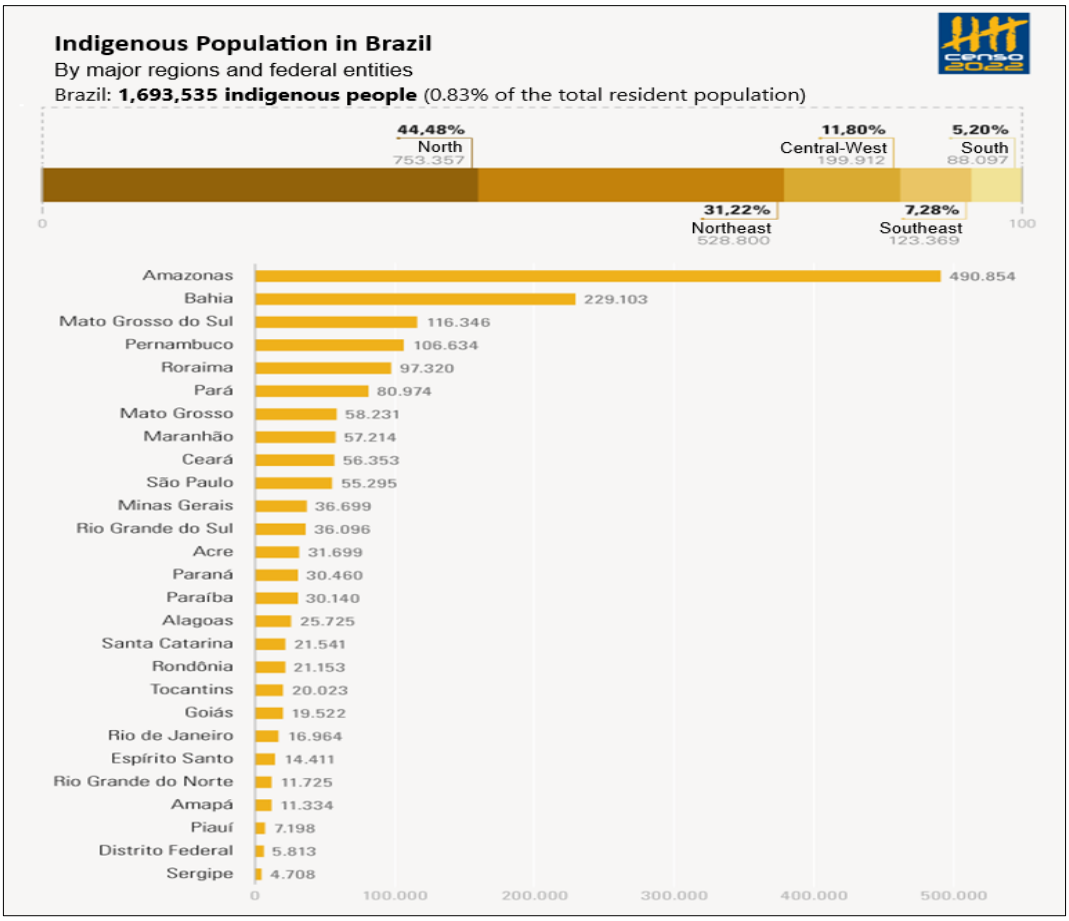
According to IBGE/2022 data, the number of indigenous residents in Brazil is 1,693,535. This figure represents a significant increase of 88.82% over 12 years, compared to the 2010 Census, which recorded 896,917 indigenous people. The Northern region has the largest number of indigenous people in Brazil, accounting for 44.48% (753,357). The second region with the highest percentage is the Northeast, with 528,800 (31.22%) indigenous people.

Graph 1 - Indigenous population of Acre and other Federal Entities



Source: IBGE News Agency, 2022.

In Acre, the municipalities with the largest indigenous populations, according to the 2022 demographic Census, are: Feijó in first place with 4,436 people; Santa Rosa do Purus in second with 4,297; and Jordão in third with 4,115 indigenous residents.

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Table 1 - Indigenous population in the state of Acre by municipality

City	Indigenous population	General population	% of indigenous population
Acrelândia	30	14.021	0,21
Assis Brasil	1.207	8.100	14,9
Brasiléia	282	26.000	1,08
Bujari	30	12.917	0,23
Capixaba	7	10.392	0,07
Cruzeiro do Sul	1.678	91.888	1,83
Epitaciolândia	26	18.757	0,14
Feijó	4.436	35.426	12,52
Jordão	4.115	9222	44,62
Mâncio Lima	2.827	19.300	14,65
Manoel Urbano	962	11.996	8,02
Marechal Thaumaturgo	3.355	17.093	19,63
Plácido de Castro	52	16.560	0,31
Porto Walter	868	10.735	8,09
Rio Branco	1.827	364.756	0,5
Rodrigues Alves	85	14.938	0,57
Santa Rosa do Purus	4.297	6.723	63,91
Senador Guiomard	34	21.453	0,16
Sena Madureira	1.681	41.349	4,07
Tarauacá	3.775	43.464	8,69
Xapuri	43	18.243	0,24
Porto Acre	82	16.693	0,49

Source: IBGE, 2022.

In contemporary times, there is a coexistence of two educational processes within indigenous communities: indigenous education, which relates to traditional processes of socialization and the reproduction of elements specific to indigenous cultures, grounded in orality; and indigenous school education, a form of teaching in which indigenous peoples integrate "Western knowledge with indigenous knowledge" in their pedagogical practices (Feitosa; Vizolli; Biavatti, 2020, p. 73).

Regarding the school education accessed by different peoples, the following section will expand on the discussion of the mechanisms of knowledge transmission occurring within indigenous communities.

Indigenous School Education After the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution

Regarding the mechanisms of knowledge transmission that occur during various daily activities in indigenous communities, parents and grandparents play a crucial role in sharing ancestral knowledge with their children and grandchildren from their earliest years of life.

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When recounting his education in the village, Eldo Shanenawa (2022) states that his first school was in the forest. It was in the indigenous territory, beyond walls, that he learned the necessary knowledge to live among the members of his people. In his account, Shanenawa (2022) mentions that:

> The school of the forest has no walls, no roofs, and certainly no defined area, like the schools of non-Indigenous people, because our learning spaces are those created by the universe, in which my ancestors, embodied in the figures of my parents and grandparents, were my first teachers" (Shanenawa, 2022, p. 27).

Thus, children, from a very young age, begin to develop the ability to face challenges and assume responsibilities that help them integrate into the organic unity of nature and the world as a whole. This process is facilitated through observation, practical learning, and personal reflection, mediated by myths, narratives, celebrations, rituals, and ceremonies conducted for this purpose (Luciano, 2006). The education embraced by Indigenous peoples is a movement, a dynamic system that occurs throughout life, as the individual is in a constant state of learning. As Bonin (2012, p. 36) reiterates, education is alive and exemplary: "one learns through participation in life, observing and acting."

Eldo Shanenawa (2022) discusses in his research the interrelationship between the language spoken and what it means to be Shanenawa. From this reasoning, the author reflects that there is a strong connection between language (the human ability to communicate and a distinct linguistic system) and people. This allows us to consider that for the members of this ethnicity, there is no separation between language(gem) and the individual. Within Shanenawa culture, Indigenous people are not required to pursue professional training or obtain a formal education, as is the case with non-Indigenous individuals. The Shanenawa are born with their social roles established, without the obligation to attend school to gain knowledge about what they are expected to do in the environments in which they are integrated.

When discussing his place as an indigenous person born in the Morada Nova village, Indigenous Territory Katukina/Kaxinawá, in Feijó, Acre, Professor Eldo Shanenawa states that he learned:

> "to be a hunter, fisherman, storyteller, and singer of my Shanenawa songs; I learned to navigate within the forest by the points of reference provided by nature and needed to learn to be a leader and, in some way, guide my community based on its interests; by acting in these ways within my community, I will be respected, recognized, and valued, even without having a piece of paper called a diploma" (Shanenawa, 2022, p. 11).

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Based on the words of Shanenawa (2022), it can be affirmed that indigenous education is intertwined with life in the village and the points of reference provided by nature, where such interactions with the land are dialogical relationships that always involve mutual learning among beings, beyond the experiences of formal schooling.

Thus, it is possible to argue that the education traditionally pursued or aspired to by indigenous communities does not carry the repressive characteristics associated with the European educational model. From this standpoint, everyone possesses knowledge and can determine which insights should be shared among social members, whether they are indigenous or not.

Navigating the pathways of indigenous knowledge and their teaching and learning processes enables an understanding that territory plays a multifaceted role as an educational, political, social, and cultural institution, as learning occurs everywhere and at any time, involving a structure and organization in their formative practices. Social experiences are dialogical relationships in which there is always mutual learning, without disregarding the interests of the communities.

With the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the category of indigenous school education (ISE) was officially recognized, "although its implementation occurred after a journey of 11 years, in 1999, with Opinion No. 14/1999 and Resolution No. 03/1999" (Feitosa; Vizolli; Biavatti, 2020, p. 73). Thus, indigenous school education, a result of the demands of indigenous peoples, became a form of basic education offered by the education systems of the country's Secretaries of Education, grounded in the principles of difference, specificity, bilingualism, and interculturality (Silva, 2023).

Munduruku (2012, p. 29) emphasizes that the catechesis and education administered to indigenous peoples by the Jesuits represented a form of violence against these groups, "characterized by the imposition of social, moral, and religious values, leading to the disintegration and subsequent destruction of countless indigenous societies." As a result of physical and cultural violence, a diversity of indigenous peoples and individuals perished. This genocide was fueled by various elements: indigenous slavery, diseases unknown at that time, the greed of colonizers, the idea of erasing differences, and a policy of prohibition, demonization, and devaluation of indigenous cultures (Munduruku, 2012).

Therefore, the importance and fundamental role of the 1988 Federal Constitution in ensuring and advancing the rights of indigenous peoples cannot be denied. Eldo Shanenawa (2022) reports that he was registered in the registry office with the name Eldo Carlos Gomes because he was born before 1988, the year the Constitution was enacted. In Acre, indigenous individuals born before this period could not be registered

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with names derived from their native/indigenous languages. It was only after the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution that indigenous peoples gained the right to maintain their cultures and languages, and consequently, the right to register their names in their own languages.

The right of indigenous peoples to use their native languages and their own learning processes, as stipulated by the 1988 Federal Constitution, triggered several other changes in the legal field. The first of these occurred through Presidential Decree No. 26/1991, when the Brazilian government assigned the Ministry of Education (MEC) the responsibility for coordinating actions related to indigenous school education in the country, which had previously been exclusive to the National Indian Foundation (Funai), now called the National Indigenous People Foundation. The execution of the political actions outlined in Article 1 of this decree was assigned to the state and municipal education departments, in coordination with the national education departments.

Following the 1988 Federal Constitution, extensive legislation was created to ensure the right of indigenous peoples to school education using their native languages, in addition to Portuguese. Article 210 of the 1988 Federal Constitution guarantees indigenous peoples the right to use their languages and their own learning processes: "Paragraph 2. Regular elementary education shall be given in the Portuguese language and indigenous communities shall also be ensured the use of their native tongues and their own learning methods" (Brazil, 1988, p. 182).

Regarding the curriculum of indigenous schools and its flexibility to ensure a differentiated education, CNE/CEB[4] Opinion No. 14/1999 demonstrates that it is not enough for the content to be taught using native languages. It is necessary to include specifically indigenous curricular content and to embrace the unique ways of transmitting indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, it is essential that the development of curricula, understood as a process of continuous construction, occurs in close harmony with the school and the indigenous community it serves, under the guidance of the latter.

Regarding the situation of professionals who work and/or will work in indigenous schools, it is crucial to establish and regulate the career path of indigenous teaching within the State Departments of Education, as well as to ensure adequate working conditions, fair compensation for the functions they perform, and proper training for the exercise of teaching.

[4] CNE/CEB stands for "*Conselho Nacional de Educação / Câmara de Educação Básica,*" which translates to "National Education Council / Basic Education Chamber.""

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It is also essential to ensure that these teachers receive the same rights as others within the same education system, with remuneration corresponding to their level of professional qualification. As stated in CNE/CEB Opinion No. 14/1999: "The remuneration must be compatible with the function performed, ensuring parity with that offered by the states and municipalities to which the indigenous schools are administratively linked" (Brazil, 1999).

It is worth emphasizing that the participation of indigenous social organizations and non-indigenous supporters was decisive in the drafting of the 1988 Federal Constitution and subsequent legal frameworks addressing Indigenous School Education (ISE). Their involvement influenced the way indigenous schooling policy is conceived in Brazil. Consequently, there was an expansion of the debate on Brazilian Indigenous School Education and a call for a new educational model that considers the self-determination of indigenous peoples and their own processes of learning and schooling (Oliveira, 2012; Munduruku, 2012).

However, it is important to remember that the school is not a neutral enterprise, as it stems from a specific political action and constitutes a cultural system that seeks to standardize teaching and learning processes (Silva, 2023). Therefore, considering that a large part of indigenous communities interacts with members of Western culture, it is unlikely, as Dalmolin (2007) points out, that these communities will remain immune to the dominant school model, which is often tied to the demands of the labor market.

The nature of this formal education is revealed, in other aspects, by the predominance of a universalist and civilizing perspective, which ends up shaping children and young people to adapt to the demands of the capitalist market (Dalmolin, 2007). In effect, any project developed with these peoples will be guided by some stance or goal, which may ultimately aim at either the self-determination of indigenous peoples in the school processes or their subjugation and destruction (Silva, 2023).

According to Dalmolin (2007, p. 4-5), it is unlikely that the indigenous teacher or the indigenous school "will completely depart from certain references transplanted from the national school: conformity, obedience, individualism, various explicit divisions and categorizations, such as the most capable and the least capable, which are typical of the school experience."

Bonin (2012) echoes the thoughts expressed by Dalmolin (2007) when she states that indigenous peoples find it a significant challenge to take on formal schooling because the underlying logics of the school's organization are different from those of their community life. As stated by the author:

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> "It is challenging to control an institution that reproduces capitalist relations—individualism, competition, hierarchy, merit-based selection, and vertical relationships between individuals—and make it compatible with cultures that live, and wish to continue living, according to different rationalities (Bonin, 2012, p. 34)."

Thus, it is crucial to envision Indigenous School Education (ISE) in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, incorporating alternative models of schooling. This approach must be grounded in their aspirations, the cultural diversity present within each ethnic group, Indigenous thought, and their pedagogies, distinguishing it from a "homogenizing and exclusionary school" (Ferreira, 2014, p. 90).

It is also important to remember that, historically, Indigenous peoples have been disadvantaged by the process of formal education. Therefore, it is primarily their responsibility to determine the type of school they wish to access, while the State must provide the necessary resources to ensure that Indigenous peoples have full access to formal education.

Indigenous school education in the state of Acre

The State Department of Education of Acre (SEE) is responsible for the support and guidance of 168 Indigenous schools located in 12 municipalities. In accordance with Article 46 of Law 3.467/2018, the SEE "must guarantee specific and adequate technical and financial support for the full provision of Indigenous school education in its formative, managerial, administrative, and structural dimensions" (Acre, 2018b, p. 27).

According to data provided in December 2022 by the Department of Indigenous School Education (DEEIND) of SEE/AC, the overall situation of Indigenous School Education (ISE) was as follows: 537 teachers (509 Indigenous and 28 non-Indigenous) distributed across 168 schools (149 schools and 19 annexes).

The educational qualifications of these teachers are classified into five categories: 133 teachers with elementary education, no teachers with Indigenous elementary teacher training, 164 teachers with high school education, 64 teachers with Indigenous high school teacher training, and 176 teachers with higher education, the latter accounting for 33% of the total presented.

The information provided by the Department of Indigenous School Education (DEEIND) of Acre regarding enrollment numbers by ethnicity reveals that the Huni Kuĩ make up the largest percentage of students, with 2,378 enrolled in basic education. Following them in descending order are the Shanenawa (600), Manchineri (596), Madija (547),

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Yawanawa (402), Jaminawa (388), Ashaninka (380), Noke Koĩ (370), Shawãdawa (321), Puyanawa (272), Nukini (175), Nawa (98), Jaminawa Arara (27), and Kuntanawa, with 9 students in elementary education (see Table 1).

The municipalities serving diverse ethnic groups include: Feijó (4 groups: Ashaninka, Madija, Huni Kuĩ, and Shanenawa, which together account for a total of 45 schools); Tarauacá (4 groups: Ashaninka, Huni Kuĩ, Noke Koĩ, and Yawanawa, with a total of 30 schools); Mâncio Lima (3 groups: Nawa, Nukini, and Puyanawa, totaling 8 schools); and Marechal Thaumaturgo (3 groups: Huni Kuĩ, Jaminawa Arara, and Kuntanawa, which together represent 5 schools).

It is evident that the training of Indigenous teachers in Acre varies significantly, reflecting the complexities and challenges faced by Indigenous educational systems. Furthermore, this variation is not unique to Acre, as many Indigenous teachers have historically encountered (and continue to encounter) barriers to accessing formal education.

Discussions regarding the role of teacher training among Indigenous peoples are crucial, particularly in how this process can contribute to their communities' well-being. In this regard, the methods used in training programs deserve special attention. Ideally, these programs should be designed to create a bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures, allowing teachers to understand and address the specific educational needs of their communities.

Strengthening Indigenous teachers' access to ongoing training programs is essential for these educational agents to effectively engage with the unique characteristics of their communities and promote an education that respects and values their cultures and ways of life.

As shown in Table 1, it is possible to see the number of Indigenous students enrolled in basic education within the context of the villages. In total, there are 6,563 students: 308 in preschool; 3,372 in elementary school (the largest percentage); 2,137 in middle school; 620 in high school; and 126 enrolled in the Youth and Adult Education (EJA) program. Elementary school levels I and II account for the highest number of enrollments, totaling 5,509, compared to high school.

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Table 1 - Number of indigenous students enrolled in the State Education Network of Acre by municipality

MUNICIPALITY	PRESCHOOL	1ST TO 5TH GRADE	6TH TO 9TH GRADE	ELEMENTARY	HIGH SCHOOL	ADULT EDU.	
	SUBTOTAL	SUBTOTAL	SUBTOTAL	SUBTOTAL	SUBTOTAL	SUBTOTAL	TOTAL
Assis Brasil	23	418	402	820	0	0	843
Cruzeiro do Sul	0	125	108	233	60	0	293
Feijó	139	1286	464	1750	212	0	2101
Jordão	0	87	82	169	0	31	200
Marechal Thaumaturgo	0	80	46	126	0	0	126
Mâncio Lima	64	191	144	335	98	48	545
Manoel Urbano	0	193	0	193	0	0	193
Porto Walter	57	121	143	264	0	0	321
Rodrigues Alves	5	48	30	78	0	0	83
Santa Rosa Do Purus	0	141	0	141	112	0	253
Sena Madureira	0	74	0	74	0	0	74
Tarauacá	20	608	718	1326	138	47	1531
TOTAL	**308**	**3372**	**2137**	**5509**	**620**	**126**	**6563**

Source: DEEIND/SEE-AC, 2022.

Regarding high school in the indigenous schools of the state education network in Acre, only five municipalities have enrollments in this segment of basic education: Feijó with 212 students, Tarauacá with 138, Santa Rosa do Purus with 112, Mâncio Lima with 98, and Cruzeiro do Sul with 60 students. Three municipalities have indigenous students enrolled in Adult Education (EJA) within the context of the villages: Jordão with 31 students, Mâncio Lima with 48, and Tarauacá with 47 students.

An analytical look at the number of indigenous students enrolled raises at least two questions: Why is the largest share of indigenous students enrolled in elementary school? What factors have hindered these students' access to and progression in indigenous high school education?

At least three factors related to these issues can be cited, including:

a) Geographic Location: Many indigenous communities are situated in remote areas that are difficult to access, which can hinder the establishment of schools and students' access to them. In this case, the need to travel to urban areas can serve as both an option and an obstacle for accessing high school education.

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b) Lack of Public Exams for Hiring Indigenous Teachers: There is a shortage of public exams for the recruitment and job stability of indigenous teachers, along with inadequate compensation for these professionals.

c) Lack of Infrastructure: This is primarily due to insufficient financial investment for the maintenance and/or construction of new schools. Many indigenous schools struggle with a lack of resources, including didactic materials, equipment, suitable facilities, access to technology, and school transportation.

The lack of basic infrastructure in schools can also impact the fundamental operations and delivery of Indigenous School Education (ISE). Some Indigenous schools in Brazil do not have their own physical space, leading to classes being held in makeshift and inadequate locations. There is a pressing need for increased public investment and the implementation of services that can address the specific needs of the most remote areas.

Indigenous schools that are farther from urban centers require more investment due to the barriers faced in accessing these territories. For instance, some Indigenous schools in Acre have been without pedagogical support since 2014 because of the difficulties in reaching Indigenous lands, particularly due to the lack of financial resources allocated for such purposes. Accessing certain locations may require traveling for six days by boat up or down the river, with travel times varying depending on water conditions (Silva, 2023).

In 2022, students and teachers from the school located in the Água Viva Village of the Carapanã Indigenous Territory, in the city of Tarauacá, Acre, had to adapt to the available conditions to start the academic year in July (already halfway through the year). A video recorded by an Indigenous teacher showed the return to classes at the Keã Huni Kuĩ School on July 11, 2022. Without proper infrastructure for the resumption of in-person educational activities, the community had to improvise, using tree stumps as benches, which served as seats and desks for the children to study. Below is a transcript of the testimony of teacher/chief Tuĩ Huni Kuĩ to the news portal G1 Acre:

> This is a situation that has been ongoing for some time. We understand that there was a problem, and we went through a difficult time with COVID, but that doesn't justify it. The school we have was built in 2006. Today, it is no longer suitable for the students. When it's sunny, the sun rays hit directly; when it rains, everything gets wet. It's a very difficult time, and we need to find a solution so that these children in Indigenous lands and schools—not just in our school, but in many Indigenous schools—don't have to go through this. So, we need to work with the State Department of Education to find an alternative. There are students who live near the village, and there are some villages that have schools, but this year, there weren't enough students to form a class, so we had

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> to relocate these students. In the dry season, it's manageable, because there's a path, but in the rainy season, when the rivers flood, it's impossible. So, these are the problems we face." (Tuĩ Huni Kuĩ [interview / G1 AC], July 14, 2022).

It is evident from Professor Tuĩ Huni Kuĩ's statement that the neglect by public authorities towards some Indigenous schools in Acre is a recurring issue that has persisted for a long time and did not arise from the pandemic. Additionally, the school faces problems related to the lack of transportation for students, as during the rainy season and river floods, students living in more distant areas are unable to cross the river to reach the school. Since 2006, without maintenance and structural repairs, the school has deteriorated rapidly, eventually falling into a state of complete abandonment, with no furniture.

Law No. 3,466, approved on December 26, 2018, regulates intercultural democratic management within Indigenous school education in the state of Acre. It also ensures participatory planning, the presence and dialogue of all segments of Indigenous communities concerning the processes of shaping political actions in schools and/or other decision-making bodies, as well as in the monitoring of actions to be implemented (Acre, 2018).

On the other hand, from the perspective of Indigenous teacher Txuhuã Puxi Inuvake, the participatory planning and/or prior consultation regarding Indigenous school education, as guaranteed by Brazilian legislation, has not been effectively implemented in practice:

> In my community, in my land, we have a school, but it is not Indigenous. An Indigenous school, first and foremost, needs to be approached and consulted. And this prior consultation, my people do not have. Whenever an engineer from the State comes to build a school on our Indigenous lands, in our villages, they already come with the blueprint, and they just insert it. Many times, we can't even give input on the deteriorated wood that is provided. For me, an Indigenous school must consult the people or the community that will receive the school, about the format they want, and if the schools that will be built there, what kind of space, for example, will be created inside that school (...). (Inuvake, speech broadcast on YouTube, 2024).

The school in Indigenous communities can be understood as a border space conducive to the development of encounters and conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge, between the riverbanks and intersectionalities[5] of power, and consequently,

[5] It is the study of 'how intersectional power relations influence social relationships in societies marked by diversity, as well as individual experiences in everyday life. As an analytical tool, intersectionality considers that categories such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, ethnicity, and age group—among others—are interrelated and mutually shape one another. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining the complexity of the world, people, and human experiences' (Collins & Bilge, 2020, p. 16).

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knowledge. The school routine represents this intersected, inter-relational space, which unfolds "the tension and the expression between Indigenous and Western knowledge, between public policies and community policies" (Dalmolin, 2004, p. 134).

By establishing a metaphor with the abyssal cartographic lines that marked the Old and New Worlds during the colonial era, and the dominant thinking stemming from European culture, Santos (2007, p. 3) argues that these lines retain their strength in modern Western thought and remain characteristic of the "exclusionary political and cultural relations maintained within the contemporary world system." Broadly speaking, social injustice is, in this sense, directly associated with "global cognitive injustice, so that the struggle for global social justice requires the construction of 'post-abyssal' thinking," whose principles are presented by the author as premises for the practice of an ecology of knowledges.

The distinctive feature of abyssal thinking is the impossibility of the co-presence of both sides of the line. From the Western perspective, European culture is constructed as the model of universal culture, and adversely, beyond it "there is only non-existence, invisibility, and non-dialectical absence" (Santos, 2007, p. 4). From this point of view, other cultures disappear as realities, they are considered inferior, less evolved. The other side of the line becomes non-existent and is produced as non-existent; for Santos (2007), non-existence means not existing in any form that is relevant or comprehensible.

The other side of the line, in Santos' (2007) words, in the riverbanks, encompasses a multiplicity of wasted experiences, rendered invisible, and conceived as incomprehensible, magical, or idolatrous practices that, at best, serve as objects of scientific investigation. The rejection and alienation of such practices led to the outright denial of the human nature of their agents.

Abyssal lines continue to structure knowledge; they are rooted in the interactions and political and cultural relations that the West undertakes within the world system, sustaining forms of violence and injustice. Thus, Santos (2007) concludes that the struggle for global social justice must also be a struggle for global cognitive justice. For this struggle to be satisfactory, it requires a new way of thinking—a post-abyssal thought.

Some considerations

Based on the bibliographic and documentary research, it was found that the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 marks the beginning of a phase known as identity reaffirmation, which emerges with the intercultural purpose of respecting and valuing diversity without the overshadowing of cultures. From that point onward, access to education will be embraced by Indigenous peoples who seek formal schooling as a tool

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for defending their rights, grounded in the principle that educational knowledge cannot be imposed or produced unilaterally but must be the result of a collective construction that considers the internal differences of each community, Indigenous voices, and primarily, the guarantee of survival and well-being for each community.

It was also noted, through theoretical studies and the documents gathered, that official provisions promote the valuing of Indigenous peoples, their languages, and their own formulation of knowledge. However, the Brazilian legislation that ensures these educational rights for Indigenous peoples is the same that restricts their full access to differentiated education due to bureaucratic elements, administrative barriers, and funding limitations imposed on schools—these schools being social institutions wholly based on Western culture.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that the right to cultural diversity and the respect for difference enshrined in Brazilian legislation concerning Indigenous Education (Educação Escolar Indígena - EEI) do not necessarily guarantee a transformative political stance, considering that Indigenous peoples in Brazil continue to face significant challenges, such as the invasion of their lands, conflicts over natural resources, and a lack of access to quality basic services.

The effective guarantee of Indigenous rights remains a topic of debate and struggle in the country. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss the prevailing educational model formulated predominantly by agents of governmental representation who are responsible for organizing, structuring, and monitoring formal education in Indigenous territories.

The statements from Indigenous teachers regarding formal education reveal the weaknesses in the structure of Indigenous schools. These issues highlight that there is still much to be done to achieve an educational project based on the recognition and valorization of other knowledge systems and, above all, that meets the aspirations and needs of the Indigenous audience concerned.

However, in many instances, there is a predominant lack of dialogue with Indigenous populations and leaders, inertia, and/or neglect in addressing demands and enabling the full and effective participation of these peoples and traditional communities. Establishing dialogue between different knowledge systems without hierarchizing them and respecting the worldview of these collectives is the first step towards valuing and recognizing the cultural diversity present in school routines and within each Indigenous territory. It is essential to listen to the communities interested in formal education in their territories and to create space for them to manage their own ways of transmitting and constructing knowledge.

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