



Indigenous Issues in the Education of Rural Educators: Between Curricular Advances and Structural Limitations

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ABSTRACT. The incorporation of the histories, cultures, and knowledge of Indigenous peoples into the curricula of Rural Education degree programs has become a central challenge for building a plural and intercultural teacher education. In this context, this study analyzes how such knowledge is incorporated into the curricular components of Rural Education degree programs (LEDOCs). Adopting a qualitative approach with an exploratory-descriptive focus, the research is based on a documentary analysis of 488 course syllabi from seven programs with a specialization in Human and Social Sciences, offered by federal institutions (UFPA, UFCG, UFMS, UFF, UFFS, IFPA, and IFRN). Data organization and interpretation were conducted using Thematic Analysis, enabling the identification of patterns and recurring references to Indigenous peoples. The results reveal a growing, yet uneven, presence of Indigenous issues in the curricula, concentrated in specific disciplines and, in many cases, of a mandatory nature. Notable are contents related to territorial rights, ethnology, and Indigenous history, as well as the incorporation of decolonial and intercultural perspectives in some programs. However, structural limitations persist, such as the low degree of curricular integration and the persistence of approaches centered on the colonial period, indicating the need to deepen the integration of Indigenous knowledge in teacher education.

Keywords: indigenous peoples, training of rural educators, curricular components, interculturality.

Temáticas indígenas na formação de Educadoras/es do Campo: entre avanços curriculares e limites estruturais

RESUMO. A incorporação das histórias, culturas e saberes dos povos indígenas nos currículos das Licenciaturas em Educação do Campo tem se configurado como um desafio central para a construção de uma formação docente plural e intercultural. Nesse contexto, este estudo analisa como esses saberes são incorporados nos componentes curriculares das Licenciaturas em Educação do Campo (LEDOCs). De abordagem qualitativa, com enfoque exploratório-descritivo, a pesquisa fundamenta-se na análise documental de 488 ementas de disciplinas de sete cursos com habilitação em Ciências Humanas e Sociais, ofertados por instituições federais (UFPA, UFCG, UFMS, UFF, UFFS, IFPA e IFRN). A organização e interpretação dos dados foram realizadas com base na Análise Temática, possibilitando a identificação de padrões e recorrências nas referências aos povos indígenas. Os resultados evidenciam uma presença crescente, porém desigual, da temática indígena nos currículos, concentrada em disciplinas específicas e, em muitos casos, de caráter optativo. Destacam-se conteúdos relacionados aos direitos territoriais, etnologia e história indígena, além da incorporação de perspectivas decoloniais e interculturais em parte dos cursos. Contudo, persistem limites estruturais, como a baixa transversalidade da temática e a permanência de abordagens centradas no período colonial, indicando a necessidade de aprofundar sua integração na formação docente.

Palavras-chave: povos indígenas, formação de educadoras/es do campo, componentes curriculares, interculturalidade.

Temáticas indígenas en la formación de educadoras/es del campo: entre avances curriculares y límites estructurales

RESUMEN. La incorporación de las historias, culturas y saberes de los pueblos indígenas en los currículos de las Licenciaturas en Educación del Campo se ha configurado como un desafío central para la construcción de una formación docente plural e intercultural. En este contexto, este estudio analiza cómo dichos saberes son incorporados en los componentes curriculares de las Licenciaturas en Educación del Campo (LEDOCs). Con un enfoque cualitativo de carácter exploratorio-descriptivo, la investigación se fundamenta en el análisis documental de 488 programas de asignaturas de siete cursos con especialización en Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, ofrecidos por instituciones federales (UFPA, UFCG, UFMS, UFF, UFFS, IFPA e IFRN). La organización e interpretación de los datos se realizó con base en el Análisis Temático, lo que permitió identificar patrones y recurrencias en las referencias a los pueblos indígenas. Los resultados evidencian una presencia creciente, aunque desigual, de la temática indígena en los currículos, concentrada en asignaturas específicas y, en muchos casos, de carácter obligatorio. Se destacan contenidos relacionados con los derechos territoriales, la etnología y la historia indígena, además de la incorporación de perspectivas decoloniales e interculturales en parte de los cursos. No obstante, persisten limitaciones estructurales, como la baja transversalidad de la temática y la permanencia de enfoques centrados en el período colonial, lo que indica la necesidad de profundizar su integración en la formación docente.

Palabras clave: pueblos indígenas, formación de educadores rurales, componentes curriculares, interculturalidad.

Introduction

In its historical formation, Rural Education bears the marks of the participation of a diverse range of social subjects, peoples, and social movements. The recognition of such diversity enriches and confers a notable political-pedagogical radicality upon the educational project of Rural Education (Arroyo, 2012). As a result of this radicality, undergraduate teacher education programmes in Rural Education, hereafter referred to as LEDOCs, are called upon to engage with and value the histories, cultures, and knowledges of a wide range of subjects who live and or work in rural areas. In this regard, rural, riverine, and forest peoples, including Indigenous peoples, demand that education systems enable them to bring their histories, knowledges, and practices into dialogue with scientific knowledge and, through this encounter, “produce new knowledge that supports them in critically interpreting reality and, above all, in intervening in it” (Molina & Freitas, 2011, p. 25).

For Indigenous peoples, this claim becomes even more pressing in light of a broad context marked by historical erasures, physical violence, stereotyping, and the folklorisation of their knowledges and cultures across different social spaces. From a broader perspective, this context contributes to reinforcing the structural foundations of racism against these peoples, relegating them to the margins of history and citizenship (Andrade, 2023). Against this backdrop, it is important to note that Brazil has experienced an increase in its Indigenous population, according to demographic census data, rising from 896,000 to 1.69 million individuals, which corresponds to 0.8 percent of the national population (IBGE, 2022). These figures are also reflected in basic education, particularly in the existence of 3,541 schools located in Indigenous territories (INEP, 2022). In light of this context, the present article acknowledges the legitimacy of these peoples’ claims and, accordingly, aims to analyse the process of incorporating the histories, cultures, and demands of Indigenous peoples into the curricular components, including compulsory and elective courses, of undergraduate teacher education programmes in Rural Education.

The formulation of this research objective is grounded in the premise that the recognition and valorisation of Indigenous histories and cultures are supported by a broad legal framework at both national and international levels. Among these instruments, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (Convention No. 169), stands out, affirming that educational services for Indigenous peoples should “cover their history, knowledge and

techniques” (ILO, 1989). Similarly, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states, in Article 16, that “States shall take effective measures to ensure that the public media adequately reflect Indigenous cultural diversity” (United Nations, 2008). At the national level, the 1988 Federal Constitution recognises the diversity and plurality of Indigenous peoples by stating that “their social organisation, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions are recognised” (Brazil, Art. 231, 1988).

As a result of this legal framework, Law No. 11,645 of 10 March 2008 was enacted in Brazil, amending Article 26-A of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB). According to Law No. 11,645/2008, all primary and secondary education institutions are required to include the study of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous histories and cultures in their curricula (Brazil, 2008). Thus, one of the central aims of this law is understood to be the deconstruction of stereotypes and the combating of racism and prejudice against Indigenous peoples. In this regard, Cavalcante (2011, p. 365) raises the need to reflect on “which Indigenous history will be or is being taught”. According to the author, within the field of Indigenous studies, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a central role, as they have “become the privileged space for the production of knowledge, which is subsequently pedagogically mediated. Therefore, the history that is taught is, to a certain extent, a reflection of academic production within universities” (Cavalcante, 2011, p. 365).

For Law No. 11,645/2008 to effectively achieve its objective of combating racism against Indigenous peoples, it is essential that HEIs address Indigenous issues from a decolonial and intercultural perspective, particularly in teacher education programmes. However, the Potiguara Indigenous writer Graça Graúna observed, through her experiences in Brazilian public higher education institutions, that “indifference and neglect are also present in the university environment, where we encounter individuals who hold stereotypical views about Indigenous peoples” (Graúna, 2018, p. 223). Such representations largely reflect the coloniality of knowledge and being, manifested in the historical processes of inferiorisation, subalternisation, and marginalisation of Indigenous peoples in Brazilian society.

The coloniality of knowledge refers to the idea that only knowledge produced within the Eurocentric and Western canon is considered valid (Candau & Russo, 2010; Andrade, 2023). In turn, the coloniality of being concerns the inferiorisation and subordination of specific social groups, including Black and Indigenous peoples (Walsh, 2012). The operation of these colonial logics, according to the Guarani Nhandeva researcher Sandra Benites (2020, p. 198),

is evident in the perception that “many Brazilians, in fact many juruá, question our street demonstrations and refer to us using expressions such as ‘that bad race’, ‘those marginalised groups’, that they ‘do not develop’, or that they ‘are not civilised’”. Benites’ (2020) statement exposes the historically constructed racist view regarding the place assigned to Indigenous peoples, that is, outside history and citizenship. The exclusion of Indigenous peoples is reinforced by racist social structures that portray them in an idyllic or animalistic manner in order to disqualify them as subjects of rights (Gonzaga, 2022).

Regarding the marginalisation of Indigenous peoples from history and citizenship, Gonzaga (2022) argues that this perspective underpinned educational models for many years and shaped the place assigned to these peoples within Brazilian society. For this reason, it is important to recognise that racist perceptions of Indigenous peoples have also been taught and perpetuated within schools and universities. Thus, it is essential to engage with Cavalcante’s (2011) reflection on which history is being, or will be, taught. Otherwise, there is a risk of reproducing, both inside and outside the classroom, distorted discourses and misconceptions about Indigenous peoples, even after nearly two decades since the implementation of Law No. 11,645/2008. From this perspective, the training of educators committed to Indigenous issues becomes crucial, particularly given research indicating “that teacher education programmes do not adequately address this topic, a situation aggravated by a lack of knowledge and the absence of teaching materials that account for diversity” (Fernandes, 2017, p. 190).

Due to insufficient engagement with Indigenous issues during their training, many educators continue to teach “those ‘truths’ they learned from textbooks when they were students, without proper critical examination” (Fernandes, 2017, p. 190). In the absence of critical engagement within school curricula and teacher education, the Brazilian education system often overlooks the contributions and agency of Indigenous peoples as political actors who struggle for their territories and for respect for their ways of living, educating, and relating to nature and the sacred (Bonin, 2010). Consequently, as Fernandes (2017, p. 190) highlights, children and young people within educational institutions “continue to reproduce knowledge that is decontextualised from the lived experiences, political struggles, and histories of Indigenous peoples, which in many cases manifests as intolerance and prejudice”.

To address the reproduction of decontextualised knowledge and the processes of inferiorisation affecting Indigenous peoples and other rural populations, Arroyo (2012) emphasises the need to incorporate into LEDOC curricula the history of the racist construction

of patterns of power, knowledge, domination, and oppression. In other words, it is essential to confront the marginalisation and erasures of Indigenous peoples within teacher education programmes (Nogueira & Andrade, 2024). Furthermore, the histories of struggle and emancipation of these communities must also be incorporated into training processes. To this end, curricula should prioritise “the diversity of resistance, actions, and movements of diverse rural collectives and peoples, recognising the accumulated knowledge arising from these processes of resistance and liberation” (Arroyo, 2012, p. 235).

Within the LEDOCs, the focus on the histories of struggle and emancipation of Indigenous peoples is particularly relevant, given that these programmes were not originally designed specifically for Indigenous populations. However, due to the growing demand for teacher education in rural, riverine, and forest territories, LEDOC academic communities have become increasingly diverse, including Indigenous students (Andrade, 2023). Moreover, in 2025, the Brazilian State approved two specific public policies addressing the demands and rights of Indigenous peoples: the National Policy for Education in Rural, Riverine, and Forest Areas (Novo Pronacampo) and the National Policy for Indigenous School Education in Ethno-educational Territories (PNEEI-TEE).

The Novo Pronacampo aims to “overcome the historical inequalities affecting the educational processes of rural populations, with a view to ensuring access to quality education” (Brazil, 2025a). In turn, the PNEEI-TEE, guided by Decree No. 6,861/2009, seeks to “promote the organisation and provision of high-quality bilingual, multilingual, specific, differentiated, and intercultural Indigenous School Education, with respect for the specificities and ethno-territorial organisation of Indigenous peoples” (Brazil, 2025b). Both policies challenge the homogenising logic of the Brazilian education system and affirm the need for specific institutional responses to historically marginalised populations, including Indigenous peoples. In this sense, these guidelines reinforce the central role of LEDOCs as strategic spaces for the training of educators committed to valuing the histories, cultures, and knowledges of rural, riverine, and forest peoples, including Indigenous peoples, thereby contributing to the development of more inclusive, critical, and contextually grounded pedagogical practices.

Methodology

By mandating the study of Indigenous histories and cultures within the Basic Education curriculum, Law No. 11,645/2008 has direct implications for Higher Education, particularly for teacher education programmes. This impact primarily concerns the need for teacher education programmes, including undergraduate programmes in Rural Education (LEDOCs), to ensure the inclusion of content related to Indigenous peoples within their curricula. This requirement stems from the recognition that, for a long time, the curriculum has functioned as “a space of concealment, erasing their existences and the knowledge forged through their resistance” (Arroyo, 2015, p. 65). In other words, teacher education curricula have, at times, contributed to the invisibilisation of the diversity of Indigenous peoples, their struggles and demands, their languages, and their contributions to Brazilian society.

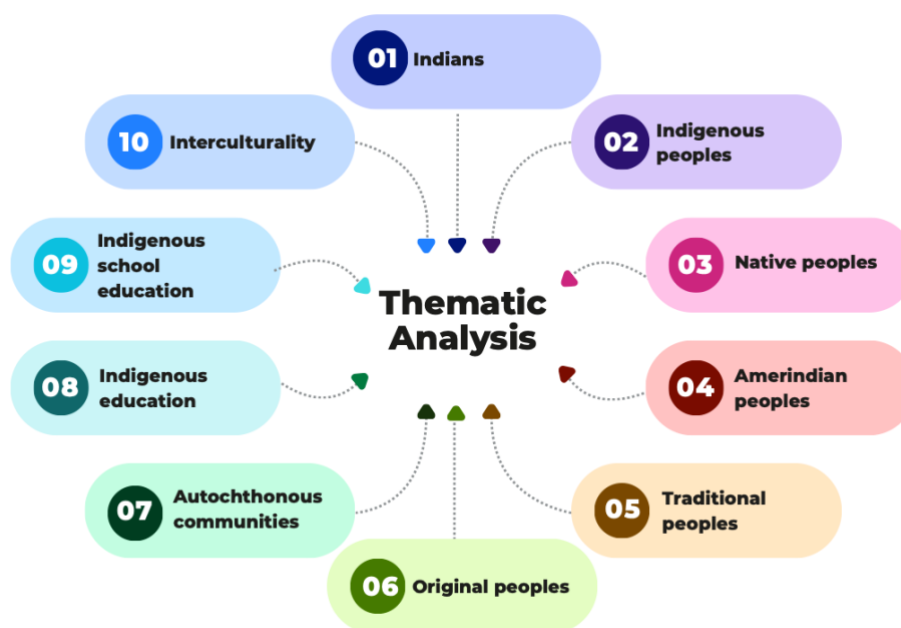
According to Peixoto (2017) and Nascimento (2021), the invisibilisation of Indigenous histories, cultures, and languages within university curricula has been denounced by Indigenous students as one of the manifestations of racism in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). In contrast to this scenario, the inclusion of courses addressing Indigenous peoples may be considered one of the strategies to combat racism in these institutions, particularly institutional racism. However, this measure alone is insufficient to produce substantive changes within universities. Beyond such initiatives, Beltrão and Cunha (2011, p. 35) argue for the need to deconstruct the notion of the “assimilated Indigenous person” and to “establish the idea of the Kaingang university student, the Kyikatêjê lawyer, the Baniwa physician, as part of a socio-institutional effort to redress historical injustices affecting the more than 230 Indigenous ethnic groups within the territory of the Brazilian state”.

The deconstruction and reconstruction of stereotypical perceptions of Indigenous peoples within HEIs necessarily involve the revision of teacher education curricula in ways that account for the diversity of these peoples, their demands, and their knowledges. Accordingly, the methodological design of this study, in line with the previously stated objective, adopts a qualitative approach with an exploratory-descriptive orientation. A qualitative approach was chosen due to its capacity to enable an in-depth analysis of the research topic, allowing for an understanding of meanings, experiences, and practices within the programmes analysed (Silveira & Córdova, 2009), as well as their implications for the education of rural teachers. The exploratory orientation was adopted given the nature of the research, namely, the investigation of a relatively underexplored phenomenon, thus enabling the development of explanatory insights regarding the research object (Jung, 2003).

The process of data construction was based on documentary analysis, through which the curricular components of Rural Education programmes offered by Federal Higher Education Institutions (IFES) were examined, including both compulsory and elective courses. To this end, the study established the following criteria for course selection: (a) specialisation track, prioritising Rural Education programmes with a focus on Humanities and Social Sciences, given their greater alignment with the subject under investigation; (b) public availability of information, selecting programmes whose official documents were accessible in the public domain through the official websites of the IFES; and (c) regional representativeness, selecting the only two Rural Education programmes with a Humanities and Social Sciences track offered by Federal Institutes, in addition to five programmes offered by federal universities, each representing one of Brazil's geographic regions.

These criteria guided the selection of the following institutions: North Region, Federal University of Pará (UFPA) and Federal Institute of Pará (IFPA); Northeast Region, Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG) and Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN); Central-West Region, Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS); Southeast Region, Fluminense Federal University (UFF); and South Region, Federal University of Fronteira Sul (UFFS). Across these institutions, the seven selected programmes comprise a total of 488 course syllabi, including 355 compulsory and 133 elective courses. In the documentary analysis of curricular components, Thematic Analysis was employed as the data analysis technique, as it enables the identification of patterns and relevant themes within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Accordingly, the inclusion criterion for course selection was based on syllabi that made direct reference to Indigenous peoples, identified through the keywords presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Thematic Analysis: research keywords



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The selection of these keywords, in both singular and plural forms, is grounded in the need to encompass the diversity of terms used in academic literature, public policy, and sociocultural contexts to refer to Indigenous peoples, following the methodological guidelines of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To this end, the study considered both historically established and more general denominations, such as “native peoples” and “autochthonous communities” (including historically used terms such as “Indians”), as well as more contemporary and politically situated expressions, such as “Indigenous peoples”, “original peoples”, “Amerindian peoples”, and “traditional peoples”. In addition, terms directly related to the educational field were included, such as “Indigenous education”, “Indigenous school education” and “interculturality”, in order to more comprehensively and sensitively capture the presence of these themes within the syllabi of the programmes analysed. Based on the established criteria, the analysis ultimately included 33 (thirty-three) courses.

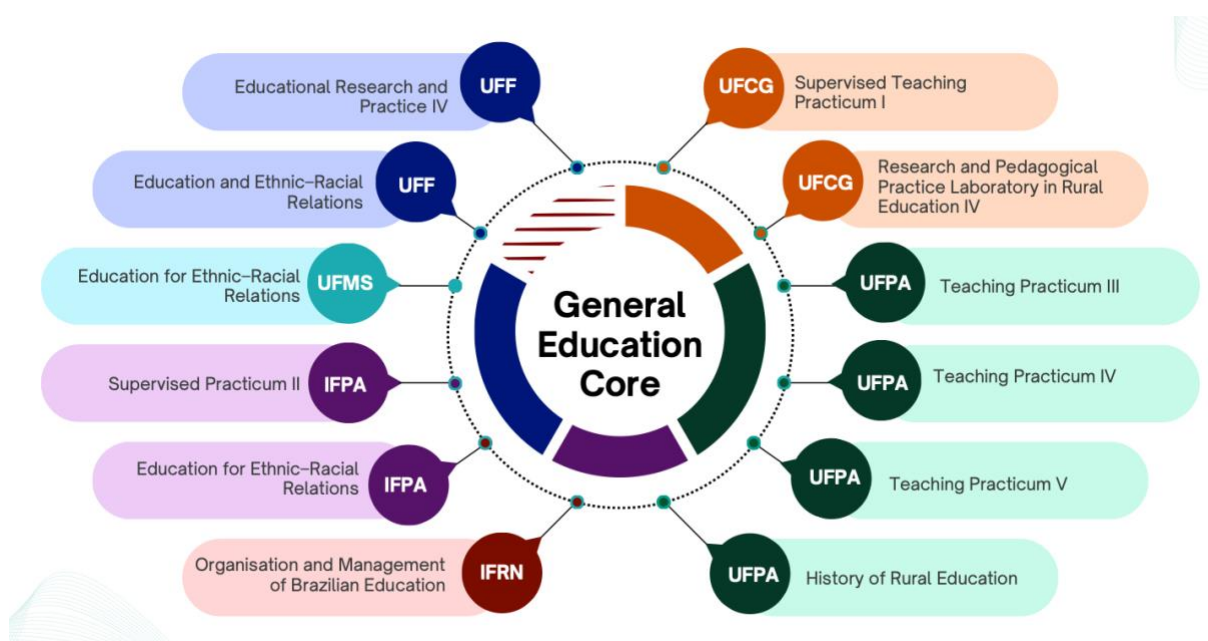
During the data analysis process, it was observed that the courses are organised into two main clusters: (i) a general education core; and (ii) a specialised or subject-specific core. The general education core comprises courses common to teacher education programmes, including components related to pedagogical knowledge and practice, educational policy, and the foundations of education, among others. In the case of Rural Education, this core also includes specific shared components of LEDOCs, as well as courses addressing teaching practices and

educational processes within Rural Education. The specialised or subject-specific core, in turn, consists of courses related to specific fields of knowledge required for professional practice in the final years of lower secondary education and in upper secondary education. It therefore corresponds to the curricular components specific to programmes with a specialisation in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This organisational structure of courses also informed the organisation of the research data and the analysis of the findings.

Analysis of Results

Within the curricula of teacher education programmes, a singular and hegemonic perspective on education, knowledge, and ways of thinking tends to prevail, often disregarding the specificities of rural, riverine, and forest peoples. However, “for an economic, political, and social project of the countryside, it makes little sense to train generic educators with generic competencies, assumed to be applicable across any economic, social, and cultural context” (Arroyo, 2010, pp. 482–483). In this sense, we argue that the educational process for rural educators must incorporate the specific realities of the subjects, spaces, and territories in which these professionals operate. This introduces into the discussion of teacher education key issues related to interculturality, as well as to Indigenous schools and territories. Accordingly, the research findings indicate that the curricular components of LEDOCs seek to acknowledge the multiple realities of rural peoples, including Indigenous peoples, particularly within the courses that comprise the general education core, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Courses within the general education core addressing Indigenous peoples



Source: Authors' own elaboration; research data.

According to the data presented in Figure 2, of the seven programmes analysed, six offer courses that make direct reference to Indigenous peoples, that is, they explicitly include the keywords outlined in the methodology. Only the LEDOC offered by UFFS did not present any curricular component meeting this criterion. In total, these six programmes offer 12 courses within the general education core, with particular emphasis on the LEDOC at UFPA, which offers four curricular components. Furthermore, the data reveal that the programmes at UFPA, UFCG, UFF, and IFPA, through courses oriented towards teaching practice, such as Teaching Practicum or Educational Research and Practice, provide opportunities for engagement with Indigenous schools and communities during the training of rural educators. The syllabi of *Teaching Practicum III, IV and V* in the UFPA programme explicitly indicate that practicum activities, including classroom observation and teaching practice, may be conducted in Indigenous schools.

Similarly, the syllabus of the course *Supervised Teaching Practicum I* in the LEDOC at UFCG emphasises that this component takes place in non-school rural contexts, such as Indigenous and quilombola communities. In line with the curricular components of UFPA and UFCG, the course *Educational Research and Practice IV* at UFF stipulates that practicum activities should be carried out in alternative educational settings, including Indigenous School Education, Quilombola School Education, social movements, cultural spaces, among others.

Along the same lines, in the IFPA programme, the syllabus of *Supervised Practicum II* frames Differentiated Education and Interculturality as guiding principles for teaching practice. These findings highlight that engagement with schools, communities, and Indigenous School Education during practicum experiences in LEDOCs is essential, given that “building Rural Education entails training rural educators to work across diverse educational spaces” (Caldart, 2004, p. 10).

Among these diverse educational spaces, Indigenous schools require a distinctive preparation of teachers. As emphasised by the Indigenous educator Bruno Kaingang (2019, p. 32), “an Indigenous school, where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers work, requires significant effort to establish dialogue between distinct cultural realities”. Without adequate preparation to foster such dialogue, that is, interculturality, non-Indigenous educators often end up imposing “their own rules as ‘universal education’, generating forms of domination that deny our rights and our ways of thinking” (Benites, 2020, p. 192). In this regard, it is important to note that the right of Indigenous peoples to a differentiated and intercultural school education is recognised in Brazil by both the 1988 Federal Constitution and Law No. 9,394/1996, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB) (Brazil, 1988; 1996).

The right of Indigenous peoples to a specific form of school education must also be respected within the training of rural educators, in order to ensure adequate preparation for teaching in Indigenous schools or in rural schools that include Indigenous students. In this context, the LEDOC offered by IFRN includes the course *Organisation and Management of Brazilian Education*. According to its syllabus, this course aims to enable students to understand Indigenous School Education as a right, reaffirming that the guarantee of this right must be aligned with the regulatory frameworks of national education policy. Among these frameworks, the Novo Pronacampo stands out, whose guidelines highlights, in Article 4, that “III – educational provision should be based on political-pedagogical projects that value culture, territorial specificities, and the learning demands of students from rural, riverine, and forest contexts” (Brazil, 2025a).

Regarding territorial specificities, in the UFCG programme, the course *Research and Pedagogical Practice Laboratory in Rural Education IV* aims to ensure that the educational practices developed by rural educators are contextualised and intercultural. To achieve this, the syllabus highlights that students will conduct research and observations in rural communities and or social organisations in order to identify and understand learning contexts and

subjectivities. Additionally, students are expected to learn how to design and implement actions that take into account the specific contexts in which rural communities are situated. These initiatives underscore the importance of training rural educators capable of critically contributing to the realisation of the right to Indigenous School Education through pedagogical practices that are sensitive to sociocultural specificities (Nogueira & Andrade, 2024).

The data presented in Figure 2 also indicate that the course *Education for Ethnic–Racial Relations*, included in the curricula of LEDOCs at UFMS, UFF, and IFPA, introduces discussions that challenge the colonality of *being* and *knowledge*. In the UFMS programme, this course seeks to explore different conceptions of time and space within Indigenous cultures. According to its syllabus, this discussion aims to demystify the hegemonic colonial conception of time, often reduced to a linear framework. Within the training of rural educators, such discussions may contribute to understanding the need for differentiated school calendars in Indigenous schools, respecting agricultural cycles, rites of passage, and cultural traditions. This pedagogical approach supports the development of educators who recognise diverse temporalities and reinforces the right to an Indigenous School Education that respects differentiated school calendars (Brazil, 1996).

In the LEDOC at UFF, the syllabus of the course *Education and Ethnic–Racial Relations* highlights, among its objectives, the introduction of students to discussions on the processes of knowledge production among Indigenous peoples. On this matter, it is important to emphasise that Indigenous peoples, as noted by Kaingang (2019, p. 36), hold bodies of knowledge that have enabled their survival to the present day: “they are societies that carry a philosophy, a way of understanding the world from alternative perspectives, which ensures their capacity to survive despite the multiple forms of extermination they have endured and continue to face”. Despite the existence of Indigenous epistemologies, the model of scientific knowledge production continues to be presented as hegemonic and universal:

This hegemony is evident even in everyday language, where the term “science” is unmarked, as linguists would say. That is, when one simply says “science”, one is referring to Western science; to refer to traditional knowledge, it becomes necessary to add a qualifier (Cunha, 2007, p. 79).

Recognising the existence of other logics of knowledge production beyond the hegemonic scientific paradigm constitutes one of the core aims of Rural Education programmes (Arroyo, 2012; Nogueira & Andrade, 2024). The research data indicate that this objective is present in the syllabus of *Education and Ethnic–Racial Relations* at UFF. Moreover, in the

LEDOC at IFPA, the course *Education for Ethnic–Racial Relations* addresses, among other topics, the cultural and economic contributions of Indigenous peoples to Brazil; Indigenous ways of life and work; the legal and pedagogical foundations of Indigenous School Education; the methods and techniques of Indigenous School Education; and the distinction between education of Indigenous peoples and education for Indigenous peoples. These discussions are consistent with the objectives, principles, and guidelines of the PNEEI-TEE (Brazil, 2025b), highlighting the contribution of this programme to the training of rural educators.

Regarding the distinction between education of Indigenous peoples and education for Indigenous peoples, Nascimento (2017) emphasises the importance of understanding these two orientations within Indigenous School Education. Education for Indigenous peoples is characterised by the imposition of educational models that disregard the historical, sociocultural and linguistic specificities of Indigenous peoples. In contrast, education of Indigenous peoples “is grounded in Indigenous protagonism and the particularities of each people, strengthening their struggles for recognition of their identities and differentiated rights” (Nascimento, 2017, p. 376). It is within this latter perspective that initiatives such as Indigenous teacher education programmes are situated.

By promoting discussion and recognition of these distinctions within the training of rural educators, the data indicate that the LEDOC at IFPA develops the course *Education for Ethnic–Racial Relations* from a decolonial perspective, placing interculturality at its core. Decoloniality, according to Gonzaga (2022), refers to the ongoing process of disentangling thought and practice from colonial logics. In this sense, the analysed syllabus suggests that the IFPA programme approaches these themes in opposition to colonial models of Indigenous School Education that disregard Indigenous interests, ways of life and cultures.

From a decolonial perspective, the UFPA programme includes, within its general education core, the course *History of Rural Education*. The syllabus highlights the study of new theoretical and conceptual perspectives in the analysis of Rural Education, including topics related to Indigenous peoples. This indicates that such themes are addressed through approaches that seek to destabilise “ways of thinking about Others as inferior in knowledge, rationality, and culture” (Arroyo, 2015, p. 62). Thus, the data suggest that, within the general education core of the LEDOCs analysed, content related to Indigenous peoples has been approached from a decolonial perspective.

A more in-depth analysis shows that the presence of these courses within LEDOCs broadens the understanding of the diversity of rural territories and fosters more contextualised, intercultural, and culturally responsive pedagogical practices. On the one hand, by challenging the centrality of Eurocentric knowledge, these curricular components contribute to the recognition of alternative epistemologies and to the training of educators capable of acting critically within rural, riverine, and forest educational contexts. On the other hand, the data point to the need for further curricular reflection and revision, as of the 12 courses that address Indigenous themes, seven are linked to practicum experiences and three to ethnic–racial relations, indicating a limited presence of these themes across other courses within the general education core. In other words, Indigenous issues are addressed in a fragmented and isolated manner, confined to specific courses, without being effectively integrated through an interdisciplinary approach.

LEDOCs Subject-Specific Core: courses related to Indigenous peoples

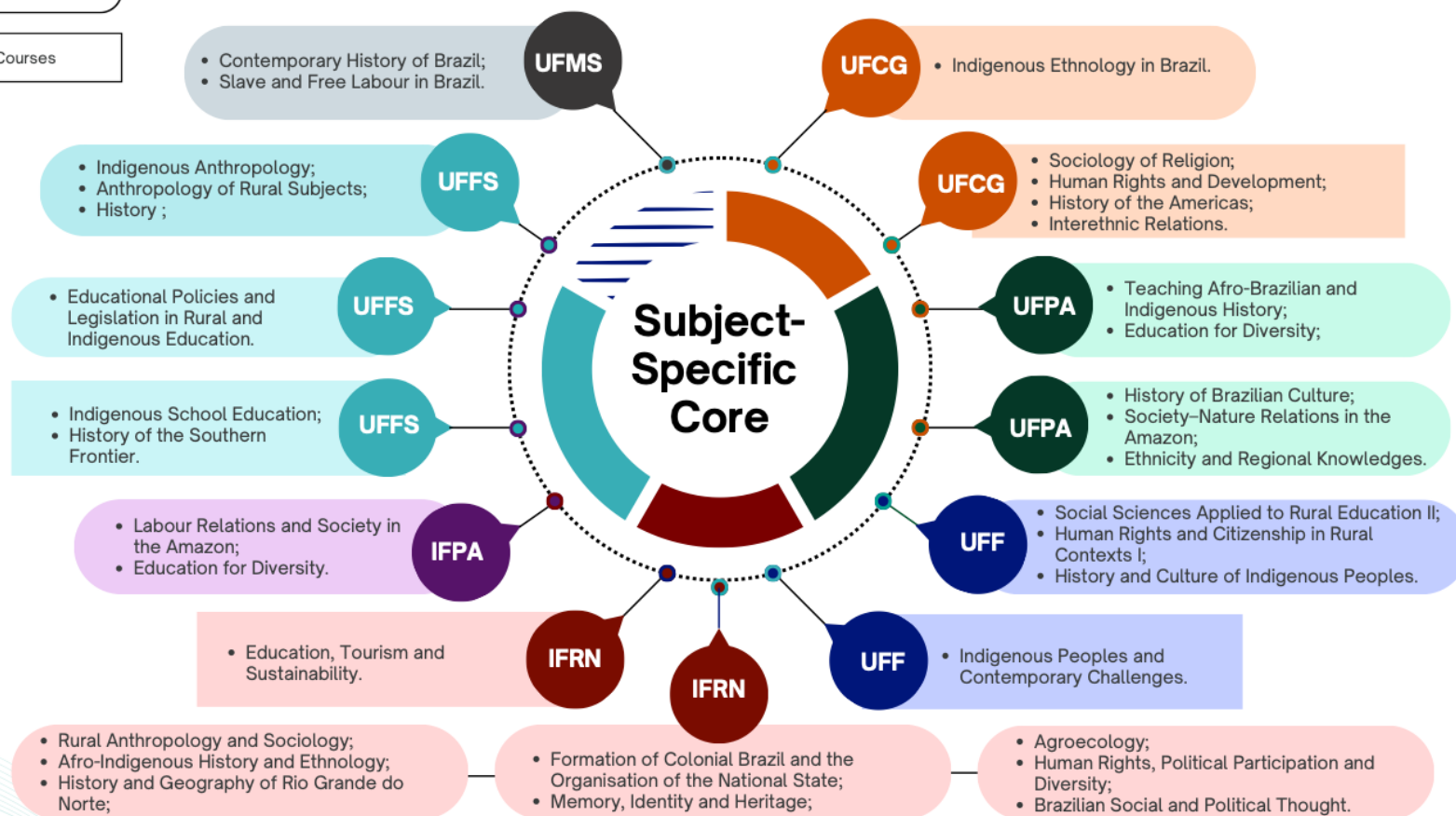
Within the field of the Humanities and Social Sciences, particularly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas were portrayed in racist terms as occupying the lowest stage of a supposed evolutionary scale of human development (Castro-Gómez, 2005). Such a stage was said to be defined by “savagery, barbarism, and the complete absence of art, science, and writing” (Castro-Gómez, 2005, p. 84). The effects of this representation continue to shape the ways in which Indigenous peoples are perceived and represented today. As a result, the complexity of their social organisations, languages, cultures, and contemporary Indigenous traditions is still, in most cases, ignored and erased (Fernandes, 2017). In light of this context, we sought to examine how the courses within the Subject-Specific Core in the Humanities and Social Sciences of the LEDOCs included in this study address Indigenous peoples, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Courses in the Subject-Specific Core: Presence of Indigenous Peoples in LEDOCs

Legend:

• Compulsory Courses

• Elective Courses



Source: Authors' own elaboration; research data.

The data presented in Figure 3 indicate that all LEDOCs included in this study offer courses related to Indigenous peoples within their subject-specific core, totalling 33 curricular components across the seven institutions analysed. Among these programmes, the LEDOC at IFRN stands out for concentrating the largest number of courses directly referencing Indigenous peoples, with eight compulsory and one elective course. This finding suggests a strong institutional commitment to incorporating Indigenous issues into the training of rural educators who are aware of and engaged with Indigenous agendas. By contrast, the programmes at UFMS and IFPA presented the lowest number of courses with direct references, offering only two compulsory courses each and no electives. This indicates that Indigenous-related content remains only marginally addressed within the subject-specific core of these programmes.

In turn, it should be noted that in the UFCG programme, although the data indicate the presence of four courses related to Indigenous peoples, only one of them is compulsory, Indigenous Ethnology in Brazil, while the others are elective. This means that students in this LEDOC must choose these curricular components in order to gain access, in broader terms, to the knowledge and debates produced about Indigenous peoples. The predominance of elective courses addressing Indigenous issues in the LEDOC at UFCG corroborates Arroyo's (2015) argument that, within the educational sphere, diversity is still viewed merely as something supplementary to the National Common Core. In other words, the view of diversity as something alternative and or complementary to content considered compulsory continues to prevail in general educational guidelines and policies, in content, in culture, and even in teaching materials.

According to the data presented in Figure 3, some courses within the subject-specific core centre their discussions on Indigenous rights. In this regard, the following courses stand out: *Human Rights and Development*, in the UFCG programme; *Human Rights, Political Participation and Diversity*, in the IFRN programme; and *Human Rights and Citizenship in Rural Contexts I*, in the UFF programme. In the syllabus of the elective course *Human Rights and Development* in the UFCG LEDOC, it is specified that the debates will address Human Rights, affirmative action, and their implications for Indigenous peoples. In turn, both the course in the IFRN programme, *Human Rights, Political Participation and Diversity*, and the course *Human Rights and Citizenship in Rural Contexts I* in the UFF LEDOC emphasise the study of Human Rights as they relate to Indigenous peoples, centring the discussions on land demarcation, the right to territory, and the existence of Indigenous diversity.

The demarcation of Indigenous territories constitutes a fundamental condition for the various Indigenous peoples to ensure their physical and cultural survival (Luciano, 2006). In this regard, the study by Andrade and Nogueira (2022) indicates that, for Indigenous peoples, life devoid of ties to land is unviable, since, due to their ancestral relationship with their territories, the absence of land gives rise to risks to life and security, as well as emotional and spiritual suffering for these peoples. However, despite the importance of land for Indigenous peoples, Indigenous territorial rights, guaranteed by the 1988 Constituent Assembly, are frequently violated. This violation occurs primarily through the expansion of agribusiness, logging, mining, the construction of hydroelectric plants and dams on Indigenous lands, or through the tensions surrounding the judicialisation of the Temporal Landmark Thesisⁱ (Tese do Marco Temporal) (Nascimento, 2022; CIMI, 2022).

In view of the violations of their original right to their territories, Indigenous peoples have made territorial demarcation their principal demand because, as Kopenawa (2015, p. 485) explains, “we do not want our forest to be destroyed and for white people to end up leaving us only small scattered pieces of what will remain of our own land”. Recognising, therefore, the need to support this demand and this right of Indigenous peoples within the education of rural educators, the LEDOCs at UFCG, IFRN, and UFF have included in their curricular matrices courses that address the rights of Indigenous peoples, especially the right to territory. This initiative on the part of the LEDOCs acquires particular significance, considering that Indigenous struggles for affirmative action measures, such as Rural Education programmes, are also associated with the pursuit of their territorial and cultural rights (Nascimento, 2022).

The research findings presented in Figure 3 also emphasise that some courses within the subject-specific core are dedicated to the study of Indigenous ethnologyⁱⁱ. Thus, the UFCG programme offers the course *Indigenous Ethnology in Brazil*; the UFFS LEDOC addresses the topic in the course *Indigenous Anthropology*; and, in the IFRN programme, the data indicate the course *Afro-Indigenous History and Ethnology*. The syllabus of the course *Indigenous Ethnology in Brazil*, in the UFCG programme, states that general data concerning Indigenous peoples will be studied, and that critical and historical reflections will be undertaken on the term “Indian”. With regard to the UFFS course, *Indigenous Anthropology*, the syllabus highlights the contribution of Indigenous ethnology to Anthropology in Brazil, as well as the study of Indigenous groups in Brazil and in Paraná, considering their rituals, cosmology, kinship, and politics.

The syllabus of the course *Afro-Indigenous History and Ethnology*, in the IFRN programme, indicates that the main themes and current debates in Brazilian ethnology will be addressed, with a primary focus on Indigenous societies, in addition to the study of diverse social representations of Brazilian Indigenous peoples. The undertaking of critical reflections on the terminology “Indian”, as proposed in the UFCG course *Indigenous Ethnology in Brazil*, is necessary for the deconstruction of certain misconceptions about Indigenous peoples. On this subject, Gonzaga (2022) emphasises that the term “Indian” carries a strong ideological connotation that associates Indigenous peoples with negative characteristics: “such as the notion that the Indigenous person is lazy, indolent, primitive, savage, backward, or even cannibal, in addition to ignoring all the diversity present among Indigenous peoples” (Gonzaga, 2022, p. 03).

The use of the term ‘Indian’ by the Indigenous movement in the 1970s was intended to facilitate the political relationship of Indigenous peoples with the Brazilian state, “seeking to demonstrate an ethnic awareness of unity in their political and social demands” (Kayapó, 2019, p. 71). However, within the Indigenous movement there was an internal understanding that this term encompassed multiple peoples, each with its own particular ways of life and sociocultural organisation (Kayapó, 2019). Nowadays, due to the negative connotations commonly associated with the word ‘Indian’, preference is given to the terms ‘indigenous peoples’ or ‘native peoples’ (Gonzaga, 2022). Or, in Kayapó’s view (2019, p. 71), rather than speaking of the ‘Indian’, “it would be better to speak of the Galibi, Xokleng, Kuikuro, Tukano peoples, Indigenous peoples, or of the Kayapó, Xavante, Guarani, Kaingang, Pataxó, Karipuna, Tupinambá, Tuxá, Guajajara, Fulni-ô, Baniwa, Panará and some three hundred other different peoples”.

In addition to the courses that address themes related to Indigenous rights and ethnology, the LEDOCs included in this study also offer History courses that refer to Indigenous peoples. In this regard, the data highlight the following courses in the UFMS programme: *Slave and Free Labour in Brazil and Contemporary History of Brazil*. The syllabus of the first course states that the Indigenous world during the period of Portuguese colonisation and the history of colonial agrarian expropriation and exploitation will be studied. With regard to the second course, *Contemporary History of Brazil*, the syllabus emphasises, among other themes, the study of contemporary Indigenous history. By proposing this study, the UFMS LEDOC

undertakes an action that counterpoints the “image of Indigenous peoples as belonging to the past, as though they no longer existed” (Kaingang, 2019, p. 34).

On the subject of the history of Indigenous peoples, Bittencourt (2013) argues that, in the curricula of educational institutions, Indigenous peoples appear almost always only in topics relating to the colonial period; after the period of the constitution of the National State, it is as if these peoples disappeared. As a result of this colonialist approach to Indigenous history within curricula, original peoples are “relegated to oblivion soon after the arrival of the Europeans, with the history of Brazil being understood as beginning with the arrival of the Portuguese” (Bittencourt, 2013, p. 112). However, we know that the history of Indigenous peoples is not limited to a remote past. As Xakriabá (2018) stresses, Indigenous peoples are protagonists of a history that continues to be written in the present. In the present time, the UFMS LEDOC has recognised the presence of Indigenous history in the course *Contemporary History of Brazil*.

Still within the scope of the History courses that refer to Indigenous peoples, some of the courses in the LEDOCs analysed address the issue of slavery and Indigenous resistance in colonial Brazil. In this regard, the data highlight the following courses: (a) *History I*, in the UFFS programme; (b) *Labour Relations and Society in the Amazon*, in the IFPA programme; and (c) *History and Geography of Rio Grande do Norte*, in the IFRN programme. The syllabus of the UFFS LEDOC course *History I* emphasises debates on Indigenous slavery during the period of Portuguese invasion, as well as the process of Indigenous resistance to the colonisation of Brazil. Similarly, the IFPA LEDOC course *Labour Relations and Society in the Amazon* addresses Indigenous slavery in the Portuguese Amazon. In turn, the IFRN course *History and Geography of Rio Grande do Norte* focuses on the process of internal expansion and the resistance of Indigenous peoples to this process in Rio Grande do Norte.

The research data emphasise that, in the courses mentioned above, the approach adopted in the study of Indigenous history concentrates on the colonial period, while also showing that, in portraying Indigenous slavery, these curricular components likewise highlight the processes of resistance undertaken by original peoples. On this point, it is important to note that, in the study of Indigenous history, especially with reference to the colonial period, school and university curricula commonly focus only on the histories of losses and defeats suffered by these peoples (Kayapó, 2019). However, for an understanding closer to Indigenous history, one must also consider “the histories of resistance and the strategies of continuity and maintenance

of traditions” (Kayapó, 2019, p. 72). In this way, the data reinforce that the LEDOCs at UFFS, IFPA, and IFRN, according to the syllabi of the courses mentioned, seek to include the histories of Indigenous resistance in their curricular components, stressing that these peoples were not merely passive victims of the colonial period.

Within the subject-specific core, the data also indicate the presence of History courses in the UFPA and UFF programmes that include Indigenous peoples. The UFPA programme offers the course *History of Brazilian Culture*, the syllabus of which states that the influence of Indigenous cultures on Brazilian cultural formation will be studied, as well as the historical trajectory of Indigenous culture in Brazil. In turn, the UFF programme offers the course *History and Culture of Indigenous Peoples*, with the objective of promoting critical reflection that makes it possible to value and respect difference. In view of this objective, the following themes are addressed within that course: the historical process of Indigenous peoples in Brazil, cultural diversity, the development of educational activity and current Indigenous legislation, as well as conceptions and myths about Indigenous peoples. These approaches not only strengthen interculturality within this LEDOC, but also broaden the repertoire for analysing and understanding the dynamics involving these peoples, their territories, and Indigenous schools.

With regard to elective courses that make direct reference to Indigenous peoples, the data in Figure 3 indicate that four LEDOCs in this study met this criterion, totalling eight curricular components. These LEDOCs are affiliated with the following institutions: UFCG, UFFS, UFF, and IFRN. In this regard, the UFCG LEDOC offers four courses: (a) *Human Rights and Development*, whose syllabus has already been mentioned in the text; (b) *Interethnic Relations*, a course focused on understanding interethnic relations and ethnic identity in the Ethnographic Northeast, especially with regard to the development of Indigenous and quilombola studies in Brazil; (c) *Sociology of Religion*, which is directed towards the study of religious phenomena in Brazil, including religions of Indigenous and African origin; and (d) *History of the Americas*, with a focus on the cultures and spatial distribution of the native peoples of the Americas during the colonial period. This set of components corroborates the findings of Nogueira and Andrade (2024) by showing that, although still concentrated in some institutions, there is an effort to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into the education of rural educators, particularly through interdisciplinary approaches that articulate rights, culture, religion and historical processes.

As for the UFFS LEDOC, the syllabus of the elective course *Indigenous School Education* addresses the following issues: the specificity of the Indigenous school within the context of Brazilian Basic Education legislation; Indigenous education policies in Brazil after redemocratisation; and also the didactic-pedagogical and cultural aspects that traverse Indigenous School Education and its relationship with Indigenous education. In turn, the syllabus of the elective course *History of the Southern Frontier*, from the same LEDOC, focuses on Indigenous issues within the historical context of southern Brazil. These courses reveal an approach that articulates normative, historical, and pedagogical dimensions, contributing to what Nascimento (2017) understands as a contextualised understanding of Indigenous education and its regional specificities.

Regional specificities are also present in the objectives of the elective course *Education, Tourism and Sustainability*, in the IFRN LEDOC. These objectives consist of discussing the importance of tourism as an alternative for rural development and its impacts on society, the economy, culture, and the environment, also considering, in this study, local Indigenous tourism. On the other hand, the normative, historical, and pedagogical dimensions of Indigenous School Education are found in the elective course *Indigenous Peoples and Contemporary Challenges* in the UFF LEDOC, which primarily emphasises the fundamental rights of Indigenous peoples, namely the right to territory, health, and education. The syllabus of this course highlights: (a) the historical aspects of the trajectory of Indigenous peoples' struggles in Brazil aimed at conquering and guaranteeing their rights; and (b) the social organisation and organic participation of Indigenous peoples and the Indigenous movement in the 1988 Constituent Assembly. In addition, this curricular component emphasises and problematises, on the basis of the political and pedagogical principles of Human Rights Education, teacher education processes grounded in a university model based on colonial foundations.

The results show that, although there is a quantitatively significant presence of curricular components focused on Indigenous peoples within the subject-specific core of the LEDOCs, this insertion does not necessarily translate into a structural and homogeneous incorporation of the theme into educational processes. The unequal distribution across institutions, the continued centrality assigned to elective courses in some programmes, and the persistence of approaches historically concentrated on the colonial period reveal tensions between curricular advances and deeper epistemological limits. These limits are directly related

to the striking traits of structural racism that operate across all spaces of society, contributing to the erasure of Indigenous peoples from history as subjects of rights (Andrade, 2023).

At the same time, the results related to the courses present in the subject-specific core of the LEDOCs indicate, among other aspects, the insurgency of movements of curricular resignification within programmes for the education of rural educators. This insurgency becomes manifest when courses begin to integrate territorial rights, ethnology, contemporary history, and perspectives of Indigenous resistance, indicating an opening towards a teacher education that is more critical, intercultural, and politically situated. In this sense, the data suggest that the LEDOCs are situated in a process of transition: between the reproduction of a training matrix still marked by colonial logics and the construction of curricula that effectively recognise Indigenous peoples as historical, political, and epistemological subjects who are central to the education of rural educators. In Andrade's words (2023), the presence of Indigenous peoples within the curricular components of the LEDOCs directs educational institutions towards a path that may strengthen what she terms "curricular villageing" (*aldeamento curricular*), understood as the active incorporation of Indigenous peoples, knowledge systems, and perspectives into the curriculum.

Final Considerations

The main findings presented in this article indicate that the LEDOCs analysed have incorporated courses related to Indigenous peoples into their curricular structure, albeit in uneven ways and under tension from structural constraints. Across the seven institutions examined, the study identified 45 syllabi containing direct references to Indigenous peoples, corresponding to 9.2% of the total of 488 courses analysed. Of this total, most are concentrated in compulsory curricular components (37), while a smaller share corresponds to elective courses (8), indicating an inclusion that remains partly confined to specific spaces within the curriculum. With regard to distribution across programmes, the data revealed significant variation in the presence of such courses. On the one hand, programmes with a greater curricular density of Indigenous-related content stand out, such as UFPA (9) and IFRN (10). On the other hand, programmes with lower incidence include UFMS (3) and IFPA (4). Programmes such as those at UFCG (7), UFFS (6), and UFF (6) show an intermediate distribution, with distinct combinations of compulsory and elective components, revealing different institutional strategies for incorporating Indigenous issues into the education of rural teachers.

The presence of these courses has contributed to strengthening Indigenous agendas and demands within the education of rural teachers, especially with regard to the right to territory and to specific and intercultural school education. Concerning territorial rights, the incorporation of these discussions into the curriculum enhances students' critical engagement with the contemporary threats faced by Indigenous peoples, making clear that teacher education cannot be dissociated from the political disputes that traverse these territories. In turn, by problematising the right to a differentiated school education, these courses challenge the hegemonic educational model, historically marked by the colonality of knowledge and being, and point to the need to build educational processes that are more responsive to Indigenous epistemologies, demands, cultures and histories.

Moreover, the findings indicate that the development of courses focused on Indigenous peoples has fostered the opening of new horizons for knowledge production and academic inquiry within LEDOCs and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). To a large extent, this incorporation takes place through a decolonial lens, one that seeks to denaturalise historically constructed, and often racist, conceptions of Indigenous peoples. In the field of the Humanities and Social Sciences, this inflection is especially relevant insofar as it helps challenge historical narratives that render these peoples invisible or subordinate them, thereby promoting a reconfiguration of the ways in which Brazilian social reality is taught, researched, and understood. For rural teachers, this implies an education that is less subordinated to the university's monocultural logic and more committed to intercultural, territorialised pedagogical practices that are ethically engaged with the concrete conflicts experienced by the peoples of the countryside, the waters, and the forests.

From this curricular incorporation, it is possible to affirm that the LEDOCs have played an important role in strengthening anti-racist teacher education by enabling access to historically silenced forms of knowledge and by fostering a critical reading of the violences and resistances that mark the trajectory of Indigenous peoples in Brazil. However, the data also reveal important limitations. Among them, the following stand out: (a) the low presence of elective courses in some programmes, such as UFPA, UFMS, and IFPA; (b) the concentration of these themes in specific components, which indicates that Indigenous issues still do not permeate the curriculum as a whole in a full and structuring manner; (c) the persistence of approaches historically centred on the colonial period, which tend to confine Indigenous peoples to the past, thereby limiting recognition of their contemporary protagonism; and (d) the

unequal distribution of courses across institutions, revealing that the incorporation of Indigenous issues still depends on isolated initiatives rather than on a consolidated curricular policy. All these limitations have implications for the implementation of Law No. 11,645/2008, which made the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture compulsory in public and private primary and secondary schools.

The analyses undertaken here lead us to problematise the very organisation of teacher education curricula more broadly with regard to the inclusion of Indigenous issues. If, in Rural Education teacher education programmes, historically committed to counter-hegemonic perspectives, this presence still appears limited in some cases, how is it configured in other teacher education programmes? These findings reveal the persistence of a university tradition marked by silences and by the reproduction of colonial logics, which are also reflected in the education of rural teachers. Thus, although the LEDOCs reveal important advances in the incorporation of intercultural and decolonial perspectives, the findings indicate that this movement remains under dispute, requiring a deepening of curricular transformations that recognise Indigenous peoples not merely as content, but as central subjects in the production of knowledge and in the redefinition of educational processes.

Finally, it is important to emphasise that the findings presented here derive from a documentary analysis of the syllabi of LEDOC courses, which implies limitations inherent to this type of approach. On the one hand, the formal presence of content related to Indigenous peoples in course syllabi does not, in itself, guarantee its effective implementation in pedagogical practice. On the other hand, teacher autonomy, expressed through academic freedom, allows lecturers to interpret, select, and develop content in different ways, which may either deepen or reduce the centrality of these themes in classroom practice. In addition, educational dynamics involve dimensions that escape the formal curriculum, such as the hidden curriculum, which manifests itself in interactions, values, silences, and practices that either reinforce or challenge hegemonic perspectives. In this sense, the analysis presented here offers an important understanding of the presence of Indigenous issues within the LEDOCs, but it does not exhaust the complexity of educational processes, thereby indicating the need for future research that considers concrete pedagogical practices and the lived experiences of teachers and students.

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ⁱ The Temporal Landmark is a legal thesis which proposes that Indigenous peoples should be granted recognition only of the lands they were occupying at the time of the promulgation of the Federal Constitution, October 5, 1988. Further information is available at: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/cp0zn65j548o>

ⁱⁱ According to the Online Portuguese Dictionary, Indigenous Ethnology can be understood as the “science that analyses situations and records documented by ethnography, that is, the description of different ethnic groups or the culture of a people, interpreting them in order to propose a comparison between cultures.” Further information is available at: <https://www.dicio.com.br/etnologia/#:~:text=substantivo%20feminino%20Ci%C3%A9ncia%20que%20analisa,dos%20grupos%20e%20etnias%20ind%C3%ADgenas>

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