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# INDIGENOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF PERNAMBUCO: NEW PARADIGMS FOR ANOTHER SCHOOL EDUCATION

## ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of contact between indigenous people and Europeans, especially from the second half of the sixteenth century, education was used by the colonizers as a tool of control and domination of native peoples. This interest in the "instruction" of the Indians, therefore, was not disinterested, but sought to meet the religious, agrarian-mercantile, warlike demands, etc., of the colonizers themselves. Starting mainly in the 1980s, this way in which the State relates to indigenous peoples was called into question, shifting the paradigms of control, assimilation and integration to intercultural paradigms. This article deals with these changes in the context of Pernambuco, from the mobilizations of indigenous peoples for the implementation of a specific, differentiated and intercultural indigenous school education.

**Keywords:** Indigenous school education. Intercultural Education. Indigenous peoples in Pernambuco.

## EDUCAÇÃO ESCOLAR INDÍGENA EM PERNAMBUCO: NOVOS PARADIGMAS PARA UMA EDUCAÇÃO ESCOLAR OUTRA

## RESUMO

Desde o início do contato entre indígenas e europeus, sobretudo a partir da segunda metade do século XVI, a educação foi usada pelos colonizadores como ferramenta de controle e dominação dos povos nativos. Esse interesse na "instrução" dos indígenas, portanto, não era desinteressado, mas buscava atender a demandas religiosas, agrário-mercantis, bélicas etc., dos próprios colonizadores. A partir, sobretudo, dos anos 1980, esse modo de o Estado se relacionar com os povos indígenas foi colocado em questão, deslocando os paradigmas de controle, assimilação e integração para paradigmas interculturais. O presente artigo versa sobre essas mudanças no contexto de Pernambuco, a partir das mobilizações dos povos indígenas para a efetivação de uma educação escolar indígena específica, diferenciada e intercultural.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação escolar indígena. Educação Intercultural. Povos indígenas em Pernambuco.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of contact between indigenous people and Europeans, especially from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, education was used by the colonizers as a tool of control and domination of native peoples. This interest in the “instruction” of the Indians, therefore, was not disinterested, but sought to meet the religious, agrarian-mercantile, warlike demands etc., of the colonizers themselves. Only since the 1970s, with the intensification of the indigenous movement in Brazil, supported by universities, NGOs and sectors of the Catholic Church, has specific and differentiated indigenous school education become a relevant agenda for these peoples. These demands accompanied the configuration of new paradigms, which rethought the way the State had been relating to indigenous communities.

This article deals with the mobilizations of indigenous peoples in Pernambuco, for the realization of a specific, differentiated and intercultural indigenous school education. To better understand this process, we will make, at first, a synthesis of education policies for indigenous peoples, from the beginning of contact with the colonizers to the displacement of the paradigms of control, assimilation and integration to intercultural paradigms. We do not intend, however, to make an exhaustive analysis of the theme, which would require the inclusion of the different contexts and events that marked this displacement. On the other hand, in addition to moving far away from our most immediate objectives, which is to reflect on indigenous school education in Pernambuco, a more extensive analysis, with its complexities and idiosyncrasies, would be practically impossible within the limits of the present work.

The article makes a critical hermeneutic of the discursives about the indigenous peoples, present in the educational policies from the beginning of the contact to the present time, having as cut the indigenous peoples in Pernambuco. In the first part of the article, we present a synthesis of educational policies in the context of Jesuit settlements, through the changes in the context of the Pombaline Directory, to the creation of the Indian Protection Service (SPI). The second part is focused on the implementation of indigenous school education in Pernambuco, from the 1980s to the implementation of the Indigenous Intercultural Degree of the Federal University of Pernambuco, which took place in 2021. Our objective is to reflect on

these policies from the different paradigms that marked the discourses on school education for indigenous peoples in Brazil, with the state of Pernambuco as a focus.

## 2 DOMINATION, INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION

Although the Franciscans first arrived in Brazil, a systematic project of education and evangelization would only be initiated with the coming of the Jesuits in 1549, in the context of the creation of the General Government. The Ignatian would be the first missionaries to officially act in Brazil, having their actions aligned with the “patronage regime”<sup>1</sup>. Their main objective was the spread of Catholicism and catechization in the New World, based on education. To this end, they instituted the settlements - a model that would later be used by the other Catholic orders that would operate in Brazil -, breaking with the model hitherto employed by the Franciscans, in which evangelization took place in the traditional spaces of habitation of the indigenous people.

The Jesuits taught their classes in the general language, a variation of the Old Tupi that they imposed as the standard language. The translation of the biblical texts, prayers and sermons, used in instruction and catechesis, was done by the linguas, priests specialized in the native languages, who also took care of the translations, mediations and interpretations necessary for the activities of the Jesuits. Instruction, as they called the educational activities, took place in the schools of reading and writing, following the rules of the *Ratio Studiorum*, the basic compendium of Jesuit pedagogy. The classes were directed exclusively to indigenous boys, excluding girls. The strategy employed was to teach the “good manners” to the children of the natives, who would take them to their parents, since the adults were considered difficult to learn the Christian teachings.

The end of the settlement policy, instituted by the Jesuits, occurs in the second half of the eighteenth century, with the advent of the secular and integrationist project of the Pombaline Directory. This is implemented by the Marquis of Pombal, when he assumes, in 1755, the function of Prime Minister of King D. José I. With the mission of integrating the indigenous peoples into the Luso-Brazilian

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<sup>1</sup>The patronage regime grants the kings of Portugal and Spain the right to evangelize the peoples of the lands colonized by them.

society, Pombal expels the Jesuits from the metropolis and the Portuguese colonies, accusing them of being the main obstacle to the creation of a modern and secular State.

In the context of the Directory, indigenous girls, previously excluded from instruction by the Jesuits, were to study “[...] the Christian doctrine, reading, writing, spinning, lace-making, sewing, and all the more misteres proper to that sex”<sup>2</sup>. The boys would study Christian doctrine, read, write, and count. For Pombal, indigenous children should be educated “in the way that is practiced in all [schools] of civilized nations”. The masters and mistresses would be non-indigenous people, “endowed with good manners, prudence and ability”<sup>3</sup>.

The Directory would become extinct in 1798. However, the interest in the integration of indigenous peoples, inaugurated by him, would remain in later legislation. Education for indigenous peoples, which in the context of Jesuit settlements would constitute a Christian pedagogy (SALLES, 2021), becomes educational-integrationist actions.

In the context of Imperial Brazil, the Regulation on the Missions of Catechesis and Civilization of the Indians is promulgated. The document is close, in several respects, to the proposals of the Pombaline Directory. The Regulation proposes “the creation of schools of first letters for places, where the missionary is not enough for this teaching” (Art. 1 § 18). Continuing what was proposed by the Directory, the Regulation recommends that indigenous children learn to read, write and count. Adults could also have similar “instruction” as long as they showed interest.

In 1910, the Indian Protection Service and Location of National Workers (SPILTAN) was created, which eight years later would be called only the Indian Protection Service (SPI). In this context, the protection of indigenous peoples is assumed by the State, officially ceasing to be a responsibility of religious entities. Its first director, Marshal Cândido Rondon, assumes as objectives of the SPI the protection and integration of indigenous peoples into national society. Regarding the agency’s policy, Lima makes the following observation:

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<sup>2</sup>Trimonthly magazine of the Instituto Historico, Geographico e Ethnographico do Brazil, XLVI, 1888.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Paragraph 9.

Implicit is therefore the idea that: The physical 'salvation' (as biological units) of indigenous peoples would ensure desirable cultural survival: As an origin and a partial component of nationality. Thus, if, on the one hand, physical survival is taken as synonymous with ethnic survival, it in fact suppresses it, since the final destination is assimilation (LIMA, 1985, p. 17).

In the context of the SPI, the gradual integration of indigenous peoples is advocated, since this would be considered inevitable. The anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, who from 1947 to 1957 was part of the professional staff of the agency, even stated that his concern would be to save indigenous lives and not with the maintenance of their tribal lives (PEIRANO, 1981). Regarding education, Ribeiro states that it would be the best way for the integration of the Indian into society.

### **3 LANDMARKS OF INDIGENOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION IN PERNAMBUCO**

The struggle to guarantee a specific and differentiated indigenous school education in Pernambuco took place in unison with the other demands of social public policies for rights essential to the survival and quality of life of indigenous populations. These demands are intensified, especially in the context of an epistemic and political displacement, which occurs at the national level, opposing integrationist and assimilationist policies. Two references are significant for this displacement: The Federal Constitution of 1988, which guarantees indigenous peoples the right to their own forms of teaching and learning, and Convention 169, on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, of the International Labor Organization (ILO), of 1989, ratified in Brazil in 2002 and promulgated in 2004. It recognizes the right of these peoples to create their own institutions and systems of education.

As mentioned, the support of universities, non-governmental organizations and sectors of the Catholic Church was important for the organization of the indigenous movement and for the consequent struggle for another education. Among these supports, the Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI), created in 1972, linked to the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), stands out. Unlike the project of instruction and evangelization that marked the contact between Catholic missionaries and indigenous peoples, CIMI will assume a new discourse in relation to these peoples, committing itself to the demarcation of their lands and other rights,

replacing evangelizing actions with political actions.

CIMI's actions have been developed since the 1970s with indigenous peoples in Brazil. Regarding the importance of the agency for indigenous school education, Saulo Ferreira, an indigenist at CIMI and professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco, in an interview granted during the research that gave rise to this article, highlights the following:

Who in fact will create a work in the villages is the CIMI, [...] in 1972. [...] It's a full military dictatorship, and many young people who questioned the military dictatorship, who were at university [...] decide to enter CIMI. So, CIMI takes on a job with an avid youth, right? by transformative processes. And they will live in the villages. Then you have a lot of people [...] who are already graduates, and then they will learn the indigenous language, they will do a school work, creating a school that is not officially recognized. From there, the Indians begin to be literate and others also begin to fight for schools in the villages, so that the State recognizes, so that it creates schools. [...] CIMI begins to invest in the training of indigenous teachers, so that the people of CIMI no longer need to take over these schools, nor the children of the invaders, the children of the farmers.

Teacher Eliene Amorim, also with extensive experience as an indigenist of CIMI, and one of the main references in the field of indigenous school education, brings us the following reflection:

If we didn't have it in the community, listening to the indigenous peoples, seeing what the indigenous people live, we didn't know the distinction between indigenous education and indigenous school education, right? So, we also learned, even though we explained the concept, [...] the difference between indigenous education and indigenous school education. But it stands to reason that we learned in this context. If we were not in the village, if we had only formulated outside the village, we might not have reached these conclusions [...] these terms that will be constructed from this concrete practice that we have with the indigenous peoples, right? Seeing that reality, experiencing that reality, listening to how indigenous peoples understand. Even if it was we from CIMI or the comrades from CIMI, the comrades from CIMI who have [...] expressed, [...] these expressions were the fruits of these learnings that we have in the village.

The development of a work with, and not for, the indigenous community, was one of CIMI's prerogatives. The holding of meetings, the development of projects, in short, the establishment of direct contact with the indigenous populations and territories were fundamental for the understanding of the social and political realities of these peoples. Still according to Eliene Amorim, the processes of experiences with the indigenous people were fundamental to get to know them, in order to reflect on the implementation of actions for their benefits.

In 1989, through the mobilizations of indigenous peoples and allied groups, the Pernambuco Indigenous Education Group (GREI) was created, coordinated by the State Department of Education. The group had among its elementary objectives the role of “studying, analyzing, discussing, guiding, articulating and forwarding the issues related to indigenous school education, according to the specificity of the theme to be treated in the various appropriate sectors” (PERNAMBUCO/SEE, 1989, p. 13).

In 1990, the GREI elaborated a diagnosis of indigenous school education in Pernambuco, after being faced with a presumed result - the precariousness of both schools and teaching. Thus, it proposes to the government of Pernambuco a policy of training indigenous teachers; training for the technicians of the Department of Education for the specificity of the issue and the elaboration of specific curricula and calendars (SANTOS, 2004).

The proposals conceived by GREI were not accepted in their entirety by the State Department of Education of Pernambuco. Discussions about indigenous school education continued to take place in education plans, meetings, seminars and training courses. The actions recommended by GREI, according to Almeida (2001), were disregarded for the elaboration of new projects on indigenous school education in the state.

Through Ministerial Ordinance No. 559, in 1991, interinstitutional spaces were created in several Brazilian states, such as councils, commissions, committees and nuclei, with the objective of addressing indigenous school education. Based on indications provided for in this Law, the Nucleus of Indigenous School Education (NEEI) was created in Pernambuco. The GREI was then replaced by this Nucleus, consisting of non-governmental organizations, the indigenous movement, the Federal University of Pernambuco (*Universidade Federal de Pernambuco*) and the Department of Education (SANTOS, 2004).

The NEEI also had the support of specialists and researchers from other universities, the Northeast Indigenist Missionary Council (CIMI-NE) and the Luiz Freire Culture Center (CCLF). These, according to Cunha Júnior, “by their historical practices acted beyond the institutional space, visiting the villages and advising the indigenous peoples in the state” (2016, p. 69).

The NEEI had several functions, such as working with indigenous schools

located in indigenous areas, whether they were under the administration of municipalities, states or FUNAI; promote and provide assistance to training courses for indigenous teachers and produce teaching materials; collaborate in the elaboration and implementation of the indigenous school education policy for the State; provide supervision and monitor the distribution and application of resources in the area of indigenous school education, at the state and municipal levels; work in conjunction with the National Committee for Indigenous Education; and disseminate information about the indigenous reality in Brazil, to awaken the knowledge, in the non-indigenous school, of a bibliography that contributes to overcoming prejudice and misinformation about indigenous peoples in Pernambuco.

Faced with so many attributions, the NEEI became “a space for the exchange of experiences, discussion and monitoring of the State Policy of indigenous school education” (ALMEIDA, 2001, p. 148). However, it was not configured as an instance for its implementation, with such broad and complex objectives. According to Santos (2004), it was not even possible to specify the nature of this nucleus - whether it was advisory, deliberative, executor of actions, or monitoring.

Due to this scenario, the Ministry of Education (MEC) promoted debates, discussions and guided the federated entities to carry out the necessary adjustments for the implementation of Indigenous School Education (EEI). This resulted, in 1993, in the publication of the Guidelines for the National Policy of Indigenous School Education, “providing the federated entities with new parameters for the normative ordering of their policies and actions aimed at the EEI” (CUNHA JÚNIOR, 2016, p. 69).

Also in 1993, the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Indigenous Teachers of Pernambuco took place. The event was held in the Xukuru territory of Ororubá, in the village of Lagoa, with the participation of the Xukuru, Atikum, Fulni-ô, Kambiwá and Kapinawá peoples, as well as representatives of the Department of Education of the municipality of Pesqueira. Through this meeting, according to Santos (2004), in addition to remembering the mobilizations of resistance, there was a first attempt to build a scenario for indigenous school education in Pernambuco, based on the statements of teachers and leaders, resulting in greater interactivity and articulation among indigenous teachers in the state.



In 1994, CIMI-NE, faced with the disorganization of the State in fulfilling roles of its competence, rethought its performance in the educational field, taking an interest in areas in which there was a greater political organization among indigenous peoples. CIMI-NE, in Pernambuco, then begins to intervene with the Xukuru people of the Ororubá. The social political organization of this people claimed important agendas for the benefit also of the other indigenous peoples in the Northeast.

In the same year, the 1<sup>st</sup> Seminar of Indigenous School Education of Pernambuco took place, promoted by the Secretary of Education of the State of Pernambuco (SEE-PE). After the debates and listening to the indigenous peoples, it was possible to formulate and present a report to the ESS-PE on the weaknesses within the EEI. From these data, with a greater intervention of the CCLF, “the construction of education that would be differentiated, specific and intercultural began” (CUNHA JÚNIOR, 2016, p. 69).

It’s important to highlight, in 1995, the performance of CIMI-NE in partnership with CCLF, in indigenous school education, with the development of the Indian School Project (PEI). This aimed to contribute to the strengthening of indigenous identity through school education, through schools that recognized the importance of interculturality in the process of knowledge sharing. The first experience of the PEI took place in the Xukuru territory of the Ororubá, in 1996. From then on, based on the good results achieved, the CCLF decided to take the project to other indigenous peoples in Pernambuco, such as the Atikum, Fulni-ô, Pankararu, Truká and Tuxá.

In 1999, in November, after the publication of Resolution No. 3/99 of the Chamber of Basic Education of the CNE - which defines that the offer and execution of the EEI should remain in the state sphere of education -, the Commission of Indigenous Teachers of Pernambuco (COPIPE) was created, in a meeting held in the Xukuru territory of the Ororubá, in the village of Pé de Serra. COPIPE is configured as a space for mobilizations, articulations and inspections of public policies, in favor of indigenous school education in the state. According to Eliene Amorim:

[...] Resolution No. 3 [...] which creates the category of indigenous teacher; which says that the State that has to take responsibility for basic education, makes definitions that, until then, had not been resolved. The resolution of 99 is very important in this sense, because it brings [...] definitions, concepts of how the State is incorporating this discussion, which is very important for indigenous school education in Brazil. Even if others come later [...] resolution [...] No. 3, in my view, it’s more significant in this sense.

Among the main agendas and demands proposed by COPIPE, we highlight the struggle to guarantee a specific, differentiated and intercultural indigenous school education; the defense of schools that respect their own teaching and learning processes; and the strengthening and valorization of indigenous identity and cultural knowledge.

The path to the establishment of COPIPE is related to other struggles, such as the processes of land retake, fundamental to the processes of ethnogenesis of indigenous peoples in Pernambuco. The resumptions consist of the return of communities to the possession of their lands, exploited by invaders, large landowners or small squatters (LACERDA, 2021). The term would later be used by teachers in the state referring to the resumption of education. In this sense, the advice of CIMI and CCLF, made directly in the villages, was very important, since the current indigenous school education policies were discussed. According to Eliene Amorim, who worked in this process with CIMI, several reflections were made on what an indigenous school would be.

What is the role of the school? What is the political pedagogical project of the school? What institution is this? Is it that necessary? Why do indigenous peoples need this [...] institution [...]? The school we have, the school we want. We have made several reflections in this regard. What is it to be a teacher? What is the difference between being an indigenous teacher and being an indigenous teacher? What do we want with this category? What relationship do we have with the community? [...] What do we want from this school in the community, in terms of content, form, management [...] of subjects, of methodologies? [...]. So that when we arrived in 1999, when COPIPE was created, we had a base of indigenous teachers [...] formed [...], who knew what they wanted, who understood the discussion, had an ethnic identity mobilized, constantly.

COPIPE began to hold a series of meetings, called encounters, through which not only the demands of indigenous school education were discussed, but also moments of exchange of experiences and affectivity. According to Eliene Amorim, they were “encounters of life: of affective life, of political life, of social life [...]. They were moments where [...], really [...], a people strengthened each other”.

In September 2000, the First State Conference on Indigenous School Education (I CEEEI) took place in the city of Caruaru, Agreste de Pernambuco. This event was attended by teachers and leaders of the Atikum, Kambiwá, Kapinawá, Pankararu and Xukuru indigenous peoples.

At the time, there were discussions, starting with Resolution No. 3 of 1999 of the CNE, on the proposal for statehood of the provision of indigenous school education in Pernambuco (FERREIRA, 2018).

Although Resolution No. 3/99 established the creation of the categories indigenous school and indigenous teacher - since the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988 had already guaranteed indigenous peoples the right to a specific and differentiated education - these categories did not exist in a practical way. The implementation of the category of indigenous teacher, however, still remains the agenda of the mobilizations of indigenous movements in several Brazilian states, including Pernambuco, whose proposal for recognition continues to be neglected by the bureaucratic apparatus of the State and its norms (*ibid.*, 2018).

### **3 INTERCULTURALITY: A NEW PARADIGM FOR A NEW INDIGENOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION**

Having emerged in Mexico, the intercultural perspective will be adopted in several Latin American countries, as a critique of official education and as an alternative to bicultural bilingual education, in the late 1960s (TUBINO, 2004). Not always, however, policies that define themselves as intercultural have been committed to the interests of indigenous peoples. The point is that the recognition of cultural diversity can become a new strategy of domination, which operates in a subtle way, maintaining the colonial difference. This would be continued “through the discursive rhetoric of multiculturalism and its conceptual tool, the ‘functional’ interculturality, understood in an integrationist way” (WALSH, 2009, p. 16). In a functional perspective, there would be the promotion of dialogue and openness to difference, but with the purpose of keeping it under control and incorporating it into the matrix and established structures.

Critical interculturality, in turn, would be a project committed to political, social and epistemic ruptures (TUBINO, 2004), with the transgression of the current colonial matrix. It consists of a constant process of negotiation and interrelationship, as well as collaborations, coexistence and solidarity.

For indigenous peoples, it’s essential that their teachers assume a critical position, of militancy and commitment to political issues in defense of the territory,

culture and rights of their people. Thus, non-indigenous knowledge is important when it allows the creation of bridges of interepistemicity between the knowledge of academia and the knowledge of indigenous peoples. To break with the educational perspectives that promote the former at the expense of the latter, indigenous school education needs to be truly intercultural. According to the teacher Xukuru Tarcísio Silva:

[...] interculturality involves a globe itself, both indigenous culture and non-indigenous culture [...] Both the academic and scientific formation, as well as the formation of people that we already take [...]. Try to make this exchange, to dialogue so that you can make this bridge, between the global knowledge with the knowledge of the people.

In 2002, the Ministry of Education created the Secretariat of Continuing Education Literacy and Diversity (SECAD), later called Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI). This aimed to collaborate for the development of education systems, aimed at valuing differences and socio-cultural diversity and promoting inclusive education, human rights and socio-environmental sustainability. To this end, it developed actions in the areas of Youth and Adult Education, Special Education, Environmental Education, Human Rights, Rural Education, Indigenous Education, Quilombola Education and Ethnic-Racial Relations. In the same year, the MEC published the Reference for the Training of Indigenous Teachers. This document presents the training policy for indigenous teachers in Brazil.

Also in 2002, the II State Conference on Indigenous School Education (II CEEEI) took place in Pernambuco, with the theme “For the officialization of the school and the category of indigenous teachers”. The event sought to discuss, among other issues related to indigenous school education in the state, the process of statehood of indigenous schools in Pernambuco. COPIPE members, teachers and leaders of the Atikum, Fulni-ô, Kambiwá, Kapinawá, Pankararu, Pipipã, Truká, Tuxá and Xukuru peoples were present (FERREIRA, 2018).

Due to the mobilizations, the debates held at the state conferences and the deliberations of the indigenous peoples, the statehood of indigenous school education in Pernambuco took place, through Decree Law No. 24,628, in 2002. In this Decree, “the SEE-PE highlights the norms present in Resolution No. 03/99,

which establishes the National Guidelines for the operation of indigenous schools, thus taking them as a normative reference for the elaboration of a State Policy of EEI” (*ibid.*, 2018, p. 93).

In 2003, the III State Conference on Indigenous School Education (III CEEEI) was held in the village of Vila de Cimbres, in the Xukuru territory, with the theme “Statehood and quality of indigenous school education in Pernambuco”. Its objectives were to ensure the commitment of government agencies to implement the indigenous school education policy in a qualified manner; define the spaces for co-management of the policy, at the state level of indigenous school education; and to present the pedagogical political projects of indigenous schools, in view of their knowledge by government agencies (*ibid.*, 2018). In this III CEEEI, as in the previous Conference, members of COPIPE, teachers and leaders of the peoples were present Atikum, Fulni-ô, Kambiwá, Kapinawá, Pankararu, Pipipã, Truká, Tuxá and Xukuru.

As a consequence of COPIPE's claim, in 2004 the NEEI was replaced by the State Council of Indigenous School Education. In the same year, the IV State Conference of Indigenous School Education (IV CEEEI) takes place in Recife, with the theme “The State Policy of Indigenous School Education and the Diversity of Peoples in Pernambuco”. In addition to the peoples who were present at the previous conferences, the Pankará people also participated in the event. The objectives of this conference were: To deliberate on the State Policy of Indigenous School Education establishing guidelines, goals, deadlines, sources of funding and care strategies; present and approve in plenary the document of the State Policy of Indigenous School Education; deliberate on the creation and functioning of the State Council of Indigenous School Education in Pernambuco; present the structure of SEDUC to serve indigenous schools; ensure the commitment of government agencies in the implementation of the policy (BARBALHO, 2007).

From the reflections on these objectives and the discussions held during the IV CEEEI, a document was produced, in which issues such as management, pedagogical political project, the mechanisms of social control, the process of training and valorization of indigenous teachers and the general recommendations of COPIPE were discussed (*ibid.*, 2007). The debates held within the scope of COPIPE, among indigenous teachers, leaders and partner entities, contributed significantly to the strengthening of discussions on the state policy of indigenous school education in

Pernambuco.

The motto of the IV CEEEL, “education is a right, but it has to be our way”, suggests the prerogatives expected by indigenous peoples and COPIPE around indigenous school education. It’s, therefore, a matter of affirming and strengthening the basic principles of indigenous school education, through a political position and a proposal for EEI formulated from the educational, social and political realities of the indigenous people themselves (CUNHA JÚNIOR, 2016).

For the construction of a specific, differentiated and intercultural education that would meet the real needs of indigenous peoples, it was essential to rethink the school model. The process of creation of indigenous schools occurred through Resolution No. 05 in 2004, of the State Council of Education of Pernambuco, which defined their modes of operation. Then, in 2005, the government of the state of Pernambuco transformed this Resolution into Decree 27,854/2005, formally creating the indigenous school. Normative Instruction 001/2005 was established, which indicated the criteria for the accreditation of these schools, with the objective of ensuring the provision of basic education for indigenous peoples in Pernambuco (*ibid.*, 2016).

In 2005, the MEC publishes the first notice of the Support Program for Indigenous Licentiate Degrees (PROLIND), which offers financial support to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for the creation of intercultural degree courses for indigenous teachers. These degrees appear in Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, aligned with the new paradigms that suggest rethinking the relationship between the State and indigenous peoples.

In 2008, the second PROLIND edict was launched. The Federal University of Pernambuco (*Universidade Federal de Pernambuco - UFPE*) participates in this call for proposals, starting in 2009 in the *Campus Agreste*<sup>4</sup>, the formation of the first class of indigenous teachers from Pernambuco, who would complete the course in 2012.

In the document entitled “COPIPE's letter on the licensing project for indigenous teachers, presented by UFPE/Campus Caruaru”, COPIPE already highlighted the urgency and importance of the Indigenous Intercultural Degree for the realization of the guarantee of the right to a specific and differentiated indigenous school education.

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<sup>4</sup>The campus is located in the city of Caruaru, Central Agreste of Pernambuco.

This degree is attentive not only to the scientific knowledge taught in the academic sphere, but also to those experienced in the indigenous communities by the students. Through impressions and reflections, fruits of personal experiences as a graduate of the Indigenous Intercultural Degree, the indigenous professor Xukuru Tarcísio Silva points out that the course can offer:

[...] Range of opportunities to work on the specific and intercultural education of the people, because it's no use just working on specific knowledge without interculturality. And this course, it's of paramount importance also because many of the university doors in Brazil are closed to minorities [...] they do not meet the specificities of the riverine peoples, nor quilombolas, nor indigenous, nor gypsies. So, this degree, it comes to break down these barriers and give opportunities for indigenous people to access this scientific knowledge that has been denied for centuries by the archaic society [...] of this country.

The course emerges as a product of the claims of the indigenous people, strengthening the achievements achieved in the educational management of the state and, above all, to promote a specific and differentiated higher education, guided by the principles of interculturality.

In 2013, the second class of the Indigenous Intercultural Degree begins, which concludes the course in 2018. This year, marked by instability in the political scenario, CIMI denounced the rupture of the agenda of indigenist policies, from 2016, when Dilma Rousseff was removed from the presidency of the republic, through the questionable impeachment process. The denunciation took place through the publication of the document "Anti-Indigenous Congress: The Parliamentarians Who Acted Most Against the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (CIMI, 2018). In this, the political setbacks and the discontinuity of actions and projects that had been built in favor of the ISS in the country are pointed out.

As a consequence of these political setbacks, SECADI is abolished in January 2019. This year, the Indigenous Intercultural Degree of UFPE, which until then had been functioning as a program of the MEC, suspends its activities, not starting a new class. With the paralyzation of the degree, the mobilizations for its effectiveness are intensified, no longer as a program of the MEC, but as a regular course of UFPE.

In the year 2020, in the month of October, the V National Forum of Indigenous School Education took place. This, due to the context of the Covid-19

pandemic, took place through video conferencing, and the event was made available on the internet. At the V Forum, the dismantling of indigenous school education policies was discussed, which go against the rights conquered and guaranteed in various legal provisions. This event resulted in a letter, in which a range of emergency issues that should have been adopted are pointed out. The following is an excerpt from it:

Although we defend that the activities of Indigenous School Education in person are essential to ensure the effectiveness of traditional teachings, the absence of internet in indigenous lands, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and access to information and communication, has aggravated the isolation and abandonment in which many communities in the country live, in addition to exacerbating the precariousness of education. Communities needed to organize themselves in remote actions that cannot be realized without technologies, obstructing the right to education for all. There are schools without access to water, both for personal hygiene and for drinking, making any safe school educational activities in these locations unfeasible (FNEEI, 2020).

In addition to this issue, the discussion of previous guidelines was also resumed, which, although fundamental, were not fully complied with and continue to instabilize indigenous school education in the country, as denounced by the letter of the FNEEI 2020.

[...] Brazil needs to build a national policy for the valorization of Indigenous School Education professionals, with effectiveness and functional stability, to compromise the education systems in the establishment of career plans and salary equity in relation to other teachers in the country. Temporary contracts predominate, which generate great turnover and instability in the achievement of bilingual intercultural education in all regions of the country, and without labor rights for indigenous professionals, such as, for example, the 13th salary and paid vacations (*ibid.*, 2020).

We consider it essential that indigenous peoples take over the management of their schools. In this sense, reflecting on advances and setbacks around indigenous school education, Saulo Ferreira points out that it would be essential that there be specific public competitions for indigenous teachers. However, she pointed out that, for this, it would be necessary to recognize the category of indigenous teachers. On the subject, Eliene Amorim made the following observations:

[...] It would be a great advance, if we could achieve something that we have been wanting for a long time... how we fight for our own system of indigenous school education that in Pernambuco had at least one network,



its own network of indigenous school education that [...] went parallel with the network [...] for the non-indigenous, that could circulate, and could have a whole dynamic of specific care [...] for each people [...]; the creation of the category of indigenous teacher, with public competition, with clear criteria [...]. The intercultural degree was a great advance [...]. The union of the indigenous teachers I think was the best of all [...]. What the encounters of COPIPE meant, what the creation of COPIPE meant. [...] if you have a more favorable government, you have some achievements, as you had in the Lula and Dilma Government, which [...] SECADI was created, [...] the action of PROLIND; the PIBID Diversity [...]. Fruits of this policy. When you have unfavorable [...] to these issues you [...] end up losing.

Both Saulo Ferreira and Eliene Amorim understand that the state itself creates adverse situations, which end up diverting the focus of the struggles for indigenous school education. In this way, a significant part of COPIPE's work is committed to issues such as the salary payment of employees and the administration of school transport. These bureaucratic activities that fall on COPIPE negatively impact the indigenous school education policy in Pernambuco.

In 2021, as a result of the mobilizations and struggles, especially of the indigenous peoples in Pernambuco, the Intercultural Indigenous Degree course at the Federal University of Pernambuco was finally implemented. This realization happens despite the extinction of Secadi and Prolind, in a scenario marked by the threat, promoted by the federal government, to territories, rights and indigenous lives.

### **3 CONCLUSION**

This article sought to discuss some issues related to the process of implementation of specific, differentiated and intercultural indigenous school education in Pernambuco. At first, we sought to reflect on the paradigms of control, assimilation and integration, which marked the contact between native peoples and colonizers for centuries. In the context of the Jesuit settlements, education was conceived as a mere tool, from which the indigenous people could be molded and transformed into Christians, thus configuring a Christian pedagogy.

Education in the context of the Pombalino Directory breaks with the salvationist discourse of the missionaries, assuming the “civilizing” mission of integrating the indigenous populations into the Luso-Brazilian society. The integration and assimilation of native peoples would be maintained in later policies, under new discourses and arguments, with education always aligned with these purposes. With the advent of the SPI, education is conceived as the least violent means of promoting

integration. Under the discourse of protection of the Indians, the agency seeks to assure them of physical salvation, while promoting their assimilation.

About the process of effecting specific and differentiated school education in Pernambuco, we try to show that it occurred from the struggles and mobilizations of the indigenous movement in the state, with emphasis on the emergence of COPIPE. As mentioned, this process accompanies an epistemic and political displacement, which occurs at the national level, opposing integrationist and assimilationist policies. The intercultural perspective emerges in this context as a new paradigm, calling into question the way the State had been relating to the indigenous peoples and the school education policies for these peoples. Starting from the postulates of Tubino (2004) and Walsh (2009), we argue that, even when it becomes an official, prescriptive discourse, as in the case of Peru, Mexico and Colombia, if it does not properly consider the dialogue and interests of indigenous peoples, if it does not engender a radical and necessary rupture, interculturality has its meaning emptied, becoming an uncritical discourse.

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