Indigenous School Education as Contested Spaces: The Brazilian Experience in São Paulo and Mato Grosso do Sul

accepted on 17 January 2022 for publication in the journal The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education

https://ajie.atsis.uq.edu.au/index.php/ajie/index

Antonio A. R. Ioris

Cardiff University, School of Geography and Planning,

Glamorgan Building, King Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, Wales, UK, CF10 3WA

Co-Authors:

Antonio A. R. Ioris (IorisA@cardiff.ac.uk; first author)

Flávia Vitor Longo (longo.fla@gmail.com)

Jose Mauricio Paiva Andion Arruti (jmarruti@unicamp.br)

Roberto do Carmo (bobcarmo@uol.com.br)

Abstract:

Indigenous school are spaces for the convergence of different worldviews and to demonstrate how the creativity of each ethnic group challenges exogenous and established concepts and methodologies. The present article examines main trends and pending gaps related to indigenous education in Brazil between the years 2007 and 2019. Issues such as the characterisation of indigenous schools, teachers and students are analysed, such as the evolution of the number of students enrolled, infrastructure, language and pedagogic approaches. The analysis is focused on the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, which has a large indigenous population and an economy based on export-oriented agribusiness, and São Paulo, the main economic, demographic and political centre of Brazil with a much smaller indigenous population. The results demonstrate concrete improvements, especially the expansion of the number of schools and the student population. A growing number of schools are now dedicated to serve indigenous populations and make use of specific teaching material (although this material is of uneven quality). However, many problems remain unresolved, as in the case of threats to funding and uncertain administrative support from public authorities, a situation that has been aggravated in recent years with the growing adoption of elitist, anti-indigenous government policies.

Introduction: Autonomous and Creative Indigenous Schools

The school constitutes a privileged space for sharing the past and bringing it into the present as a collective learning strategy that can mobilise transformative powers to disrupt processes of domination and exclusion. That is even more the case in indigenous communities where the interaction between schoolteachers, pupils and parents is often an important element of their struggle for land, rights, entitlements and recognition. In many cases, the introduction, functioning and appropriation of indigenous schools are directly related to the preservation or recovery of traditional territories and the campaign for self-determination. Formal school training may greatly deviate from the knowledge of indigenous peoples accumulated over several generations, but it can nonetheless be an important empowering step in the difficult interaction with the national state and the non-indigenous society. The organisation and implementation of education programmes that reflect the particular socio-spatial features and demands of an indigenous group certainly plays an important strengthening and compensatory role. All that makes indigenous schools a very contested space and a field of confrontation, reflection and solidarity. Instead of empty, liberal calls for nationalist and equality (simply) before the law, the recognition of colonial legacies and persistent injustices are fundamental instruments of the decolonisation effort, a creative reaction based on community experiences and subaltern perspectives (Mignolo, 2012), which also relies on adequate and autonomous indigenous schools.

The right to good quality, appropriate indigenous education has been increasingly recognised by sectors of national and international civil society, some segments of the state apparatus and many multilateral agencies, in particular the United Nations (Absolon, 2010; Battiste, 2017; Brant Castellano et al., 2000; Ioris, 2021). For instance, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, of 2007, acknowledges in several articles that an education adapted to the culture and condition of ancestral peoples is fundamental to their autonomy, self-determination and guarantee of the preservation of such groups (Bellier and Préaud, 2012). The Declaration maintains the right of indigenous peoples to control their institutions and educational system, such as in the Articles 14 and 15, which ensure that their knowledge and traditions must be properly reconciled with general non-indigenous education. However, it is still necessary for those agencies to appreciate that the collective endeavour to decolonise and indigenise school education cannot be dissociated from reactions to underlying processes of power control and reparation of the impacts of colonialism, racism and sustained violence. It cannot be missed that, over the last four decades, indigenous schooling has been a fundamental instrument for the affirmation of languages, worldviews and socio-spatial practices

of indigenous peoples fighting for land, rights and survival. That is related with a mobilisation to secure control over education and trying to influence pedagogies that are relevant educationally and politically (Hampton, 1995). This educational, social and political process can be described as "indigegogy", the application of a new school paradigm that restores the presence of indigenous knowledge in teaching and learning practices and processes, that is, it is basically the indigenised version of pedagogy that takes on board traditional knowledge systems that are lived, spirited and embedded in traditions (Absolon and Dias, 2020).

The focus on indigenous education is part of the recognition of the interconnections between racism and socioeconomic exploitation. An effective transformation of educational practice cannot be dissociated from overcoming the hegemonic production of knowledge and also the deconstruction of forms of racism and the myth of universal rationality (Fleuri and Fleuri, 2018). Social categories of difference, such as race and culture, operate not just as principles of exclusion, but racial knowledge and power produce unfair local and global spaces (Silva, 2007). Ethnicity and racially-related differences, therefore, play a very important role in the present configuration of global power and have become key signifiers of the globalised world, directly challenging the abstract principles bequeathed from the Enlightenment, such as universality and formal civil rights. Ethnic stratification has been maintained and reinforced through class struggles, that is, the ideology of ethnic superiority has reinforced the position of upper classes, which are not necessarily white, as in the case of Latin America, but become increasingly whitenised because of their privileges (Stavenhagen, 1975). Ethnic categorisation is nurtured in an ideological system of stratification that has its origins in the conquest and colonisation and continues to reiterate class differences primarily in ethnic terms. Whiteness is actually something that can be possessed or purchased and that is integral to conservative nation building (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. 52). The ethic stratification that underpins class-based exploitation is also reinforced through the control of space, as due to the formation of ethnic enclaves (deprived neighbourhoods and rural communities where the disparaged ethnicities prevail) and in the case of the agricultural and resource frontiers where the aggressive, often illegal, privatisation of land and resources are defining patterns of social exclusion.

The Brazilian context is of great relevance here due to the wider political struggle of indigenous peoples, recent legal and institutional developments and the rich experience of communities, students and teachers. The implementation of indigenous school education in the country has been a fundamental element of the search, since the 1980s, for politico-spatial sovereignty and against paternalistic, superficial responses (Meunier, 2010). Indigenous school education is an important part of the reaction to what Paulo Freire (1987) called 'original

violence' against the oppressed and marginalised. As part of the national redemocratisation context, a new Constitution was approved in 1988 that specifically determines that indigenous school education should be 'intercultural', observing and maintaining indigenous cultures in dialogue with non-indigenous cultures. It is also prescribed in the Constitution the offering of a bilingual education, to be delivered both in Portuguese and in the ancestral mother tongue, as well as the proper training of indigenous teachers and the use of specific didactic material that respects the history, practices and social values of each ethnic group. The political-administrative organisation of indigenous education was amended three years later, in 1991, and included under the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education but in coordination with state and municipal layers of public administration. In addition, an extensive regulatory framework was introduced regarding staff training, school curriculum, provisions for language use, local school calendars, and school management. The next pages will contrast the situation in the two Brazilian states, based on the assessment of official school data and of teacher and student attributes, but before that it is necessary to explain the research strategy.

Methodological and Analytical Approaches

Our two case studies were designed to address specific questions about basic indigenous education through the examination of national tendencies and two concrete regional realities. To achieve that goal, some important notes on data availability are needed. The only survey specifically on indigenous school education carried out so far in Brazil happened in 1999. After that, the National Institute for Educational Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), responsible for the regular school census, has also included questions on indigenous school education in their surveys. Although it is the main source of information on basic education, the data collected by INEP are of questionable value, because there is often no correspondence between what is observed *in loco* and the statistics produced (Luciano, 2015). Problems occur at several stages of these surveys, from the incorrect filling of the forms to the processing and post-processing of the information provided. Despite those shortcomings, school census data were used here to assess the basic features of schools, teachers and students for the period 2007-2019. The selected variables of indigenous schools and the profile of school communities are listed in Table 1:

Table 1 – School Census: Variables Considered in the Analysis

Unity of analysis	Variables

School	Differentiated location in indigenous land: indigenous territory; indigenous education; teaching language; indigenous specific teaching material
Enrolment	'Colour' (i.e. ethnicity); school location; school administration; indigenous education
Teacher	'Colour' (i.e. ethnicity); educational attainment; continuing education in indigenous education

Data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2019

Because over the years, there were changes in the definition of those variables, to allow an intertemporal and cross-regional comparison, we worked with the following assumptions and conceptualisations:

a) Location of Schools on indigenous land: until 2015, only schools in demarcated areas, owned by the federal government (the Union) were considered. From 2016, it refers to schools located in territories occupied by one or more indigenous peoples, in urban areas or rural, and does not need to necessarily be in a demarcated or regularised area. Between 2012 and 2018 the School Census also had the category of location of the school in a 'sustainable unit' on indigenous land.

b) Indigenous school education means teaching offered exclusively to indigenous students, by primarily indigenous teachers from their respective communities. Indigenous schools are located on lands occupied by indigenous communities, regardless of the situation of land tenure regularisation, which may extend over territories of one or more states or contiguous municipalities.

c) Learning activities are developed in the mother tongues of the communities, whether these languages are indigenous or Portuguese (Resolution CNE/CEB 5/2012). These schools are considered by the National Education Council (CNE) (Resolution CNE/CEB of 1999) as a specific category of educational establishment and, therefore, have pedagogical, organisational and managerial autonomy (according to INEP, 2019, p. 40).

d) Indigenous didactic material: until 2018, this material was considered specific to the linguistic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects of indigenous students. In 2019 the definition changes and is understood as: "pedagogical materials aimed at indigenous

school education the specific didactic materials published and distributed by the Ministry of Education or by the education departments, aimed at indigenous communities and for use in Brazilian schools with the aim of valuing their cultures" (INEP, 2019: 39).

e) Continuing indigenous education: question answered only by schoolteachers and refers to courses lasting at least 80 hours on specific pedagogical practices for indigenous school education.

Another methodological point concerns the handling of schoolteacher information and the enrolment database. In terms of enrolment, there is a person identification variable, which is a unique code, and the registration identification variable. This could be a problem sometimes, as the same student can have more than one record if he/she is enrolled in more than one course. For this reason, after organising the database according to the person's identification codes, the only the first register (i.e. which appears at the first line) of the individual was taken into account. In this way, cases with multiple enrolments were eliminated and the total number of students was obtained. That may cause the loss of information about other courses being taken by the same person, especially in secondary level: a student can attend regular secondary school or professional preparatory and this one counts as two different enrolments. A similar procedure was applied to the teaching bases: it was considered a unique identifier code for each teacher, as it is common for these professionals to teach classes in more than one establishment. For this reason, one the first record of each schoolteacher was also chosen, thus allowing us to know precisely the total number of teachers. As in the case of students, there may be consequently a loss of information about the other schools in which these professionals might also teach.

National Context and Institutional Reforms

The importance of indigenous schools has increased significantly in Brazil, following a national policy aimed at increasing the number of students and improving school infrastructure in order to close the gaps that negatively affect indigenous peoples. As a result, there exist today schools functioning in indigenous lands in all Brazilian states (except in the small Federal District around Brasília), as can be seen at Figure 1 and Table 2. The academic literature on indigenous education has likewise expanded, what can be demonstrated by the growing number of publications and graduate thesis on the national experience. Yet, it should be noted that indigenous school teaching is not something new, but already in the colonial period there were scarce opportunities to attend formal education, particularly in the small number of Catholic schools. These meagre opportunities somewhat increased in the early 20th century with the

creation of the Indian Protection Service (SPI, later transformed into National Indian Foundation, FUNAI), despite the misgivings of the agency's strong assimilationist ideology. Schools typically made use of questionable techniques approaches and learning strategies that greatly contrasted with the religious, scientific, economic and historico-geographical knowledge of the communities, which caused serious disappointments and aggravated processes of ethnic-based discrimination.

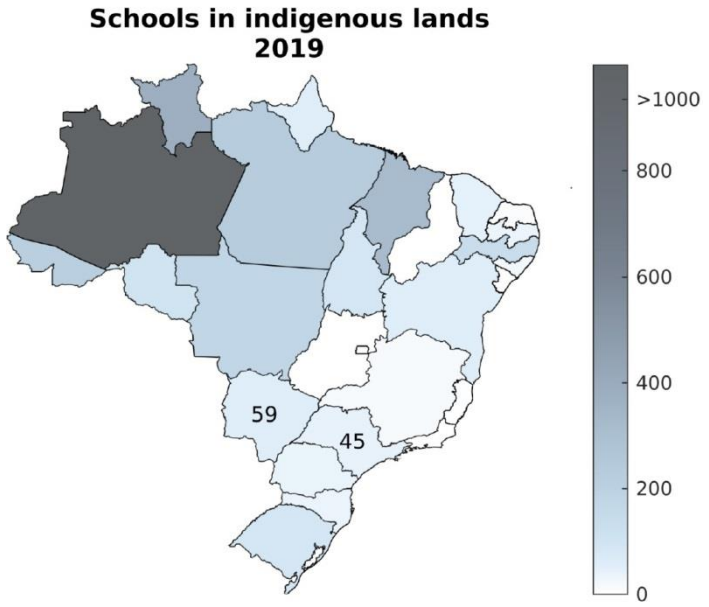


Figure 1 – Distribution of Indigenous Schools in Brazil (data: INEP, School Census, 2019)

Because of accumulated distortions and inequalities, the demand for good quality indigenous school education became a fundamental expression of collective struggles, in particular the campaigns for the preservation and retaking of ancestral lands lost to mainstream development (Aires, 2012). With the approval of a new Brazilian Constitution, in 1988, which formally abolished indigenous tutelage and the aggressive integrationist policies, a differentiated and dedicated indigenous education system started to be designed (Ioris, 2019). One of the main innovations was the recruitment of schoolteachers from the different indigenous peoples and the adoption of pedagogical practices that are more sensitive to the life and ethnic identity of the communities, including their ancestral languages (Guilherme and Hüttner, 2015).

Table 2 – Indigenous Schools per Brazilian State – Year 2019

Region				Type of school (%)

	State of the Brazilian Federation	Indigenous population in the state (2010 data) – self-declared	Number of schools in indigenous land	State	Municipal	Private
North	Rondônia	12,015	106	100	0	0
	Acre	15,921	226	63.7	36.3	0
	Amazonas	168,680	1068	5.0	95.0	0
	Roraima	49,637	407	62.4	37.3	0.2
	Pará	39,081	246	7.7	92.3	0
	Amapá	7,408	62	87.1	12.9	0
	Tocantins	13,131	96	96.9	3.1	0
Northeast	Maranhão	35,272	340	80.3	19.7	0
	Piauí	2,944	1	0	100	0
	Ceará	19,336	48	81.3	18.8	0
	R.G. Norte	2,597	9	0	100	0
	Paraíba	19,149	37	29.7	64.9	5.,4
	Pernambuco	53,284	150	97.3	2.7	0
	Alagoas	14,509	22	77.3	22.7	0
	Sergipe	5,219	1	100	0	0
	Bahia	56,381	59	33.9	66.1	0
Southeast	Minas Gerais	31,112	19	100	0	0
	Espírito Santo	9,160	6	0	100	0
	Rio de Janeiro	15,894	3	33.3	33.3	33.3
	São Paulo	41,794	45	88.9	8.9	2.2
South	Paraná	25,915	38	100	0	0
	Santa Catarina	16,041	37	81.1	18.9	0
	R. G. Sul	32,989	92	93.5	6.5	0
Midwest	M. Grosso do Sul	73,295	59	25.4	72.9	1.7
	Mato Grosso	42,538	192	37.0	62.5	0.5
	Goiás	8,533	4	75.0	25.0	0
	Federal District	6,128	0	0	0	0
Brazil (total)		817,963	3,373	45.4	54.3	0.2

Data: INEP, School Census, 2019; IBGE, Demographic Census 2010

The organisation of a specialised educational provision represented an important social and political achievement, which to some extent diminished trends of domination and helped to re-signify the learning process by the indigenous groups themselves (Oyarzún et al., 2017). Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in the number of courses and, since around 2000, in the training of indigenous schoolteachers in partnership with various public universities. "The school, previously imposed as a form of assimilation to the national society, is today sought as a means of affirming the educational and cultural specificities of indigenous peoples" (Bergamaschi and Antunes, 2020, p. 112). The Guidelines for the National Policy on Indigenous School Education (launched in 1994, p. 11) state that indigenous school education must be

intercultural and bilingual, specific and differentiated, "that is, the characteristics of each school, in each community, can only be the result of an ample dialogue and of the involvement and commitment of the respective groups, as agents and co-authors of the whole process". The National Education Legislation, introduced in 1996 as the Law 9,394, further strengthened the importance of bilingual and intercultural indigenous schooling. Since the Lula government (2003-2010), two routes entry routes into higher education became more widely available, namely: 1) the mechanism of affirmative action, with dedicated places at the undergraduate level, and 2) intercultural degrees with specific undergraduate courses for indigenous students in the field of education. The second scheme allows those with a degree to teach in primary, secondary and professional schools, while the first scheme qualifies professionals in various fields of knowledge. It should be mentioned that the beginning of affirmative action for the admission of indigenous people into universities and the training of indigenous teachers predated the Lula administration, as it was first an initiative of the states and not of the federal government. Still, the sequence of initiatives by the Lula government made it possible to expand and support policies for teacher training and the recognition of the specific demands of indigenous schools.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education launched the Support Programme for Higher Education and Indigenous Licentiate Courses (PROLIND) to encourage the creation of intercultural degree courses for the training of indigenous teachers in public higher education institutions. Although there were important earlier experiences, until PROLIND there was no permanent and specific policy for schoolteacher training. Likewise, there was a shortage of advanced training for those who were already working in their schools, but needed theoretical and methodological support to ensure appropriate, improved pedagogic approaches. A few years later, the Presidential Decree 6,861/2009 created the Ethno-Educational Territories (TEs), which recognise the ethnic identities of indigenous peoples and the possibility of a more autonomous management of school units. Also in 2009, the First National Conference on Indigenous School Education (CONEEI) was held, whose final document called for the creation of continuing education programmes, which was later achieved with the formation of the Indigenous Knowledge Network at School (SIE), which has currently more than 20 public higher education institutions. The SIE Network was established by Ordinance 1,061, of 2013, by the Ministry of Education and is aimed at the continuous training of indigenous teachers who work in primary and secondary indigenous education and also helps in the implementation of pedagogical proposals and the preparation of teaching material. In the end, the major advance to the graduate indigenous students at Brazilian universities occurred during Dilma Rousseff

government (2011-2016) with the remarkable Law of Quotas, 12.711, of 29 August 2012, which amplified the efforts of the previous administration (i.e. Lula's).

Despite those significant legal and institutional improvements, many barriers and unfulfilled demands remain outstanding. One of the main issues is the dubious quality of the teaching equipment and the widespread use of Portuguese instead of native languages, many of those with a high risk of disappearing. Until very recently, there was great disregard for the ancestral language, even by indigenous families exposed to sustained racism. Many believed that, without mastering the official national language, indigenous people would have much more difficulty to deal with public agencies and non-indigenous people. Other groups resisted teaching in Portuguese, as the Guarani groups in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, who for many years opposed the introduction of mainstream school in their communities (according to the Guarani worldview, society is a totality in which education cannot be separated from other socio-spatial practices), although more recently some have become more amenable and accept conventional education as a way the prepare for the interaction with the non-indigenous society (Bergamaschi, 2007). School evasion and high dropout rates also deserve attention, for example, of the 89,074 enrolled in basic education in 2010, only 12,152 progressed to secondary education (Guilherme and Hüttner, 2015).

An additional difficulty is the low investment in school infrastructure and in the qualification of such spaces, as well as the processes of participation of indigenous groups in the decision-making process of each school unit. "This results in the need to deepen the knowledge of the team that will develop the school's architectural project about the spaces where learning takes place, considering the context in which the contents are addressed in each ethnic group. In this sense, it is seen as pertinent that the architectural project should be based on the guidelines and educational processes defined by the pedagogical project of each school, based on the protagonism and autonomy of the indigenous community in the elaboration of such document" (Zanin et al., 2018, p. 209). Overall, the national experience demonstrates that despite "the colonialist structure that still persists, there is a process of resistance to coloniality that impels many indigenous peoples to appropriate the school, making it a favourable mechanism for their cultures and identities" (Scaramuzza and Nascimento, 2018: 551). Last, but not least, the important achievements and relative success of the measures and interventions mentioned above have all been undermined since the election, in 2018, of an ultra-conservative and anti-indigenous federal administration, what has required renewed efforts from leaders and communities to preserve indigenous schools and schoolteachers. The consequences of such perverse policies are still unknown, but the impacts are likely to be severe and long-lasting. In the

next section, those old and new challenges will be examined in relation to the two selected Brazilian states, São Paulo and Mato Grosso do Sul.

Indigenous Education in the States of São Paulo (SP) and Mato Grosso do Sul (MS)

This section examines main trends and gaps related to school indigenous education in Brazil between the years 2007 and 2019. The main characteristics schools, teachers and pupils are analysed, including the evolution of the number of enrolled students, infrastructure, language use and pedagogic approaches. The analysis is focused on the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, which was chosen because it has a large indigenous population and is the main arena of conflicts between farmers and indigenous groups in the country, and São Paulo, which is the main economic, demographic and political centre of Brazil with a smaller indigenous population, but also emblematic pressures associated with urbanisation and proletarianization (Ioris, 2020). In historical terms, São Paulo was, since the 16th century, a main centre of indigenous slavery and coordinated attacks on the indigenous peoples, whilst Mato Grosso do Sul was on the border between the Portuguese and Spanish colonial enterprises, also had an economy largely based on the exploitation of indigenous land and labour. In recent years, the number of students increased significantly in Mato Grosso do Sul, while in the State of São Paulo there was a drop in the number of enrolled students, which raises important questions, mainly related to the need for students to abandon their studies to enter the labour market. Empirical evidence suggests that, despite some improvements and better opportunities in the two states, more progress is needed in terms of investment in school infrastructure, material well-being and adapted teaching strategies.

The introduction of indigenous school education in the States of Mato Grosso do Sul (henceforth MS) and São Paulo (henceforth SP) has had important consequences for the organisation of communities and the affirmation of ethnic identities against a background of discrimination, marginalisation and land grabbing. Data of the 2010 census show that the MS had 73,295 indigenous individuals (8.7% of the national indigenous population), of which 80% were domiciled on indigenous lands; SP, in its turn, had 41,981 indigenous (5.4% of the total of indigenous population in Brazil), of which 6.5% living on indigenous land. According to the Department of Education of the State of São Paulo, the main ethnic groups with indigenous school education – including early education, primary and secondary schools, and adult education – are Guarani Nhandeva, Guarani Mbya, Terena, Krenak and Kaingang (see more on Table 3). Classroom syllabus follows the guidelines of the São Paulo State curriculum but adjusted according to the knowledge of each ethnic group. Most teachers are indigenous and

normally belong to the villages where the schools are located. The preparation of school meals tends to take ethnic habits into account, adding products such as maize and manioc flour to the menu, in addition to other ingredients commonly found in the non-indigenous schools. In terms of institutional organisation, the programme of indigenous primary and secondary education started to receive a specific attention in 1997, with the creation of the Nucleolus of Indigenous Education. An important milestone was Terms of Adjustment of Conduct agreed between the Ministry of Education (MEC), the Secretariat of Education of the State of São Paulo, the Secretariat of Education of the Municipality of São Paulo and the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) in 2003, which defined joint obligations necessary to guarantee that indigenous education fulfilled legal requirements and was aligned with national policies. As a result, dozens of indigenous schools were created, followed by the introduction of an intercultural training course for schoolteachers and other related measures. However, inadequate infrastructure and the lack of a satisfactory teacher training continue to hinder the consolidation and improvement of indigenous school education in the state.

The situation in Mato Grosso do Sul is slightly different, considering the larger indigenous population (the second largest in the country) and the more sizeable student community. Tangible progress was achieved in the early 1990s regarding formal school education in indigenous communities, with a series of six important regional meetings and the approval of the General Guidelines of Indigenous School Education in 1992. Several other documents and policies reflect the expansion of indigenous schools, as well as the offer of secondary and university training for indigenous schoolteachers. In 2009, the state created its Ethno-Educational Territories as socio-spaces aimed at improving the provision of basic education and at reaffirming ethnic identities, as well as to develop health, education and local development policies. There are two Territories in the state, the South Cone, associated with the ethnic groups Guarani e Kaiowa, and the Peoples of the Pantanal, which include many other groups such as Guató, Kadiwéu, Kinikinau, Ofaié and Terena (Table 3).

Indigenous communities can opt for a dedicated school education and have the right to define which education system the schools will be linked to. Most existing schools are located in indigenous lands belonging to state and municipal education authorities and some are administered by the private sector (run by Christian churches). Research conducted by Gonçalves and Oliveira (2018) in Mato Grosso do Sul shows that teachers hold great prestige and power within the community. Notwithstanding the growing attention given to the formal aspects of the indigenous school education, important operational, pedagogic and political problems remain unresolved. One thorny issue is the observation of socio-spatial and ethnic

demands without downgrading the quality of teacher training and student education. For instance, meetings held between indigenous communities and indigenous teachers of São Paulo and Mato Grosso do Sul strongly condemned any form of discrimination, whilst also called for additional resources and preparatory time to train new educators (Ladeira, 2004). There are also important gender issues involved, particularly the greater difficulty faced by indigenous women, compared to men, to leave the village in search of university education (because of their own children and household demands), which helps to explain the high proportion of primary education male teachers.

Table 3 – Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Population in São Paulo and Mato Grosso do Sul (individuals five years of age or older who self-declared as indigenous)

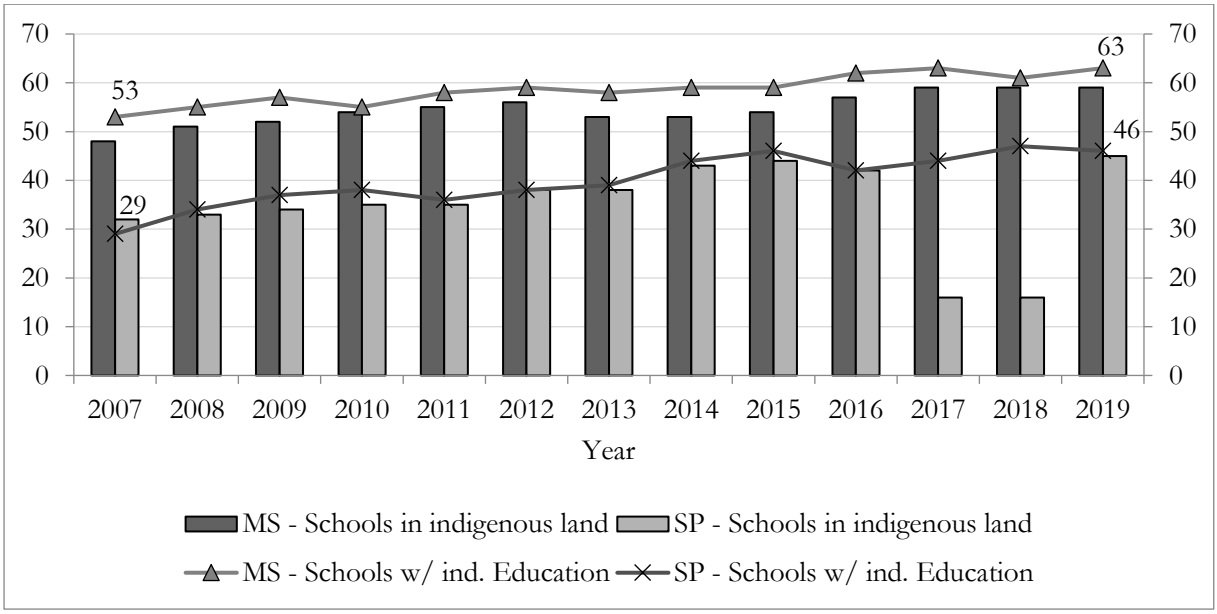
São Paulo		Mato Grosso do Sul	
Ethnic group /spoken language	Individuals	Ethnic group /spoken language	Individuals
Macro-Jê	137	Macro-Jê	47
Jê	89	Jê	8
Kaingáng	81	Jê (unspecified)	1
Tupinambá	2	Guató	29
Xavante	8	Xavante	7
Krenák	48	Tembé	1
Tupi	1,403	Ofaié	10
Mundurukú	2	Tenetehara	1
Kuruáya	2	Guajá	6
Kuruáya	2	Guaikurú	649
Tupi-Guarani	1,393	Tupi-Guarani	30,241
Guarani	1,623	Guarani (unspecified)	32,170
Guarani Kaiowa	8	Guarani Kaiowa	24,135
Guarani Mbya	907	Guarani Mbya	403
Guarani Nhandeva	72	Guarani Nhandeva	3,698
Tupi-Guarani (unspecified)	88	Tupi-Guarani (unspecified)	31
Tupi (unspecified)	8	Aruak	6,141
Aruak	172	Aruak (unspecified)	2
Terena	172	Terena	6,124
Kiriri	1	Baníwa	1
Kariri - Xocó	1	Baníwa - Kuripáko	1
Pankararu	1	Kinikinau	14
		Kadiwéu	649
		Samúko	1
		Chamakóko	1
Other linguistic families	172	Other linguistic families	6,791
Undeclared indigenous language	4	Undeclared indigenous language	136

Don't speak any indigenous language	512	Don't speak any indigenous language	13,090
No information	109	No information	1,141
Undetermined language	1		
Languages without specific classification	5		

Data source: IBGE, Demographic Census 2010

School Characterisation

Graph 1 shows the number of schools on indigenous lands and schools with indigenous education in the states of MS and SP. Although the numbers in these categories are close, this differentiation is necessary as there are schools offering indigenous education outside indigenous lands (according to FUNAI's website, consulted on 3 May 2020, there exist 63 indigenous lands in MS and 34 in SP). We emphasise that there was an increase in the number of indigenous schools in both states since 2007. As expected, MS has a higher number of these schools than SP in all observed years. In 2007, MS had 48 schools on indigenous lands and 53 schools with indigenous education; in 2019, there were 59 and 63, respectively. SP went from 32 to 45 schools in indigenous lands and from 29 to 46 schools with indigenous education.



Graph 1 – MS and SP, 2007-2019: Indigenous schools (data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2019)

Table 4 consolidates some key data on the number of people who claim their indigenous heritage and live on indigenous land, together with the ratio of enrolment of indigenous pupils per indigenous school and the ratio of self-declared indigenous people per school available in the area where they live.

Table 4 – Individuals living on indigenous land, indigenous people per school and school enrolment per indigenous school

Self-declared indigenous individuals / indigenous school		Indigenous' enrolments / primary indigenous school		Self-declared ind. individuals living on indigenous land
2010		2010	2015	2010
São Paulo	1,199.5	616.7	331.0	2,767
M. G. do Sul	1,426.4	324.3	465.9	61,158
Brazil	324.4	xxx	xxx	517,383

Data source: IBGE, Demographic Census (2010) and INEP, School Census (2010, 2015)

One crucial element of indigenous schooling is the language used in the classroom and the basic community right to have school activities not only in Portuguese. It was only from 2015 that School Census started to directly record bilingual education and, according to the most recent data, 85% of schools in MS and 76% in SP had bilingual education in 2019 (see Table 5).

Table 5 – Language used in the school

State	Language	Year				
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
MS	Only indigenous	3	3	2	3	2
	Only Portuguese	8	7	7	7	7
	Both (indig. & Port.)	48	52	54	51	54
	Schools w/ ind. educ.	59	62	63	61	63
SP	Only indigenous	37	23	3	12	9
	Only Portuguese	9	16	0	5	2
	Both (indig. & Port.)	0	3	41	30	35
	Schools w/ ind. educ.	46	42	44	47	46

Data: INEP, School Census, 2015-2019

Another aspect related to specific indigenous education refers to the use of didactic material that is sensitive to the values and knowledge of the indigenous groups. The curricular content of indigenous schools cannot be static or abstract, but "must be understood as relationships" between different perspectives and expressions of particular cosmologies and cosmopolitical assumptions (Verran, 2018, p. 118). On Table 6 it can be seen that, despite the fluctuations, there was an increase in the number of schools that have adopted dedicated indigenous teaching material in both states. In 2019, the way of asking in the survey about the use of this type of material changed, therefore, the corresponding values are not easily comparable with previous years. Most of these materials are produced by indigenous teachers themselves while in training courses and later adapted to their specific needs.

Table 6 – Use of indigenous specific didactic material

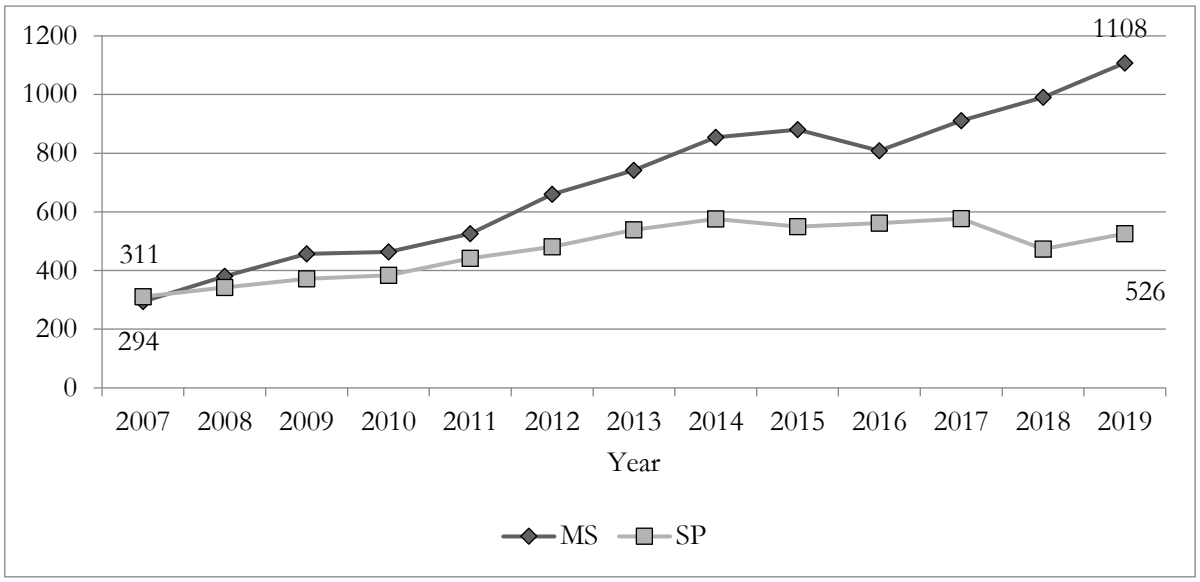
State	Year											
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
MS	18	33	32	33	36	37	44	38	42	35	44	38
SP	34	33	37	36	25	9	11	7	49	49	48	71
Total	52	66	69	69	61	46	55	45	91	81	92	109

Data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2018

It is relevant to point out situations in which the traditional leaders of the indigenous community and the academic leaders (i.e. teachers and school managers) of the same group disagree. There are villages in which the academic leaders prefer a pedagogic approach and associated material developed for the community and according to their social characteristics (to preserve and reinforce their identity), political leaders maintain that young people must attend non-indigenous school and receive the same training of the rest of the national population (what they consider the best possible survival strategy; this is also the favoured option for some youngsters who seek social a deeper integration with non-indigenous people). This dilemma can have a direct impact on the search for indigenous or non-indigenous schools, sometimes producing a decrease of the enrolment in the dedicated indigenous schools.

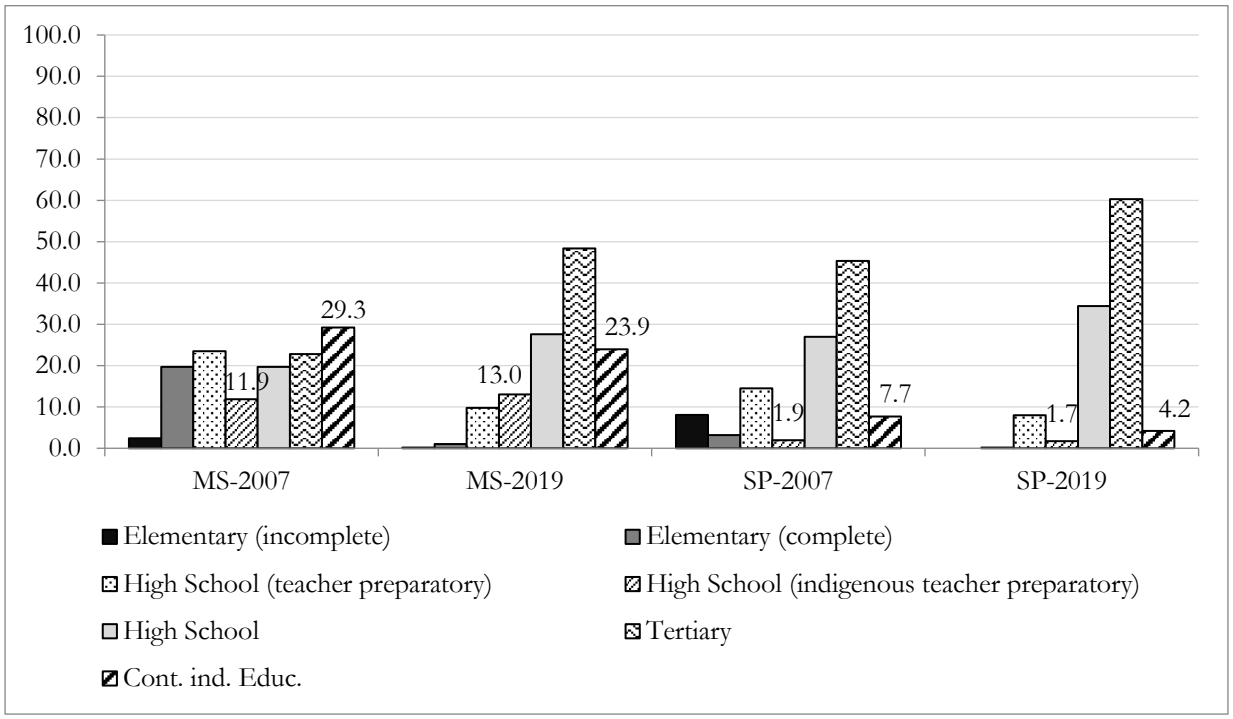
Schoolteachers and Teacher Training

The training of indigenous schoolteachers should encompass, in addition to the ability to educate and prepare didactic material, the mastery of their own ethnic knowledge and culture (Maher, 2006). According to the last author, the first training programmes for indigenous teachers in Brazil started in the 1970s and were initially carried out by non-governmental organisations. Such courses have instructed teachers to dedicate themselves to the registration, transcription and organisation of their peoples' knowledge in books and other pedagogic tools (Grupioni, 2006). Normally those who attend these courses already have a job as teachers in their communities and receive additional support to be able to better negotiate the indigenous and non-indigenous worlds. Graph 2 shows the evolution of the number indigenous schoolteachers in the two states. There is an important increase, especially in MS since 2016, which is consistent with the mobilisation of the regional indigenous population and the introduction of new programmes by the state administration in collaboration with several regional universities.



Graph 2 – MS and SP, 2007-2019: Indigenous teachers (data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2019)

By its turn, Graph 3 presents the evolution of the training of indigenous teachers, in particular the growing number that receive university education. In MS there is an increase in the proportion of indigenous teachers with specific Secondary School (notably, indigenous teacher preparatory) and Tertiary (i.e. university) education, however the proportion of those in continuing indigenous education decreases. A similar phenomenon can be observed in SP but note the decrease proportion of those with specific preparatory training.

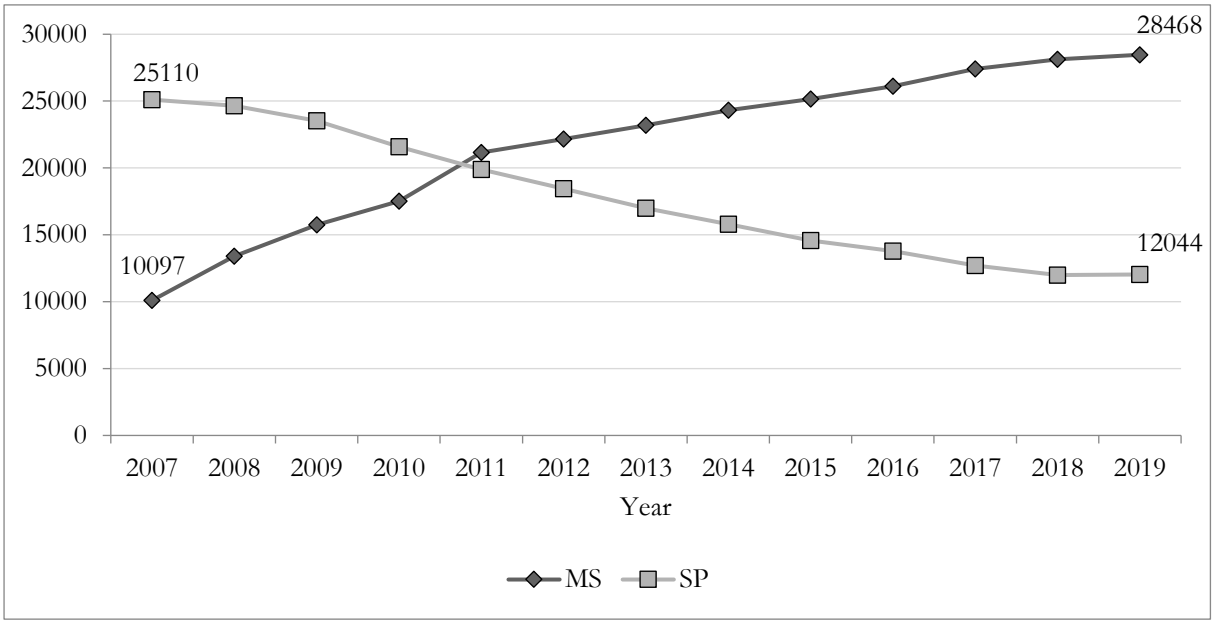


Graph 3 – MS and SP, 2007 and 2019: Indigenous teacher's educational records (data: INEP, School Census, 2007 and 2019)

In MS, from 2007 to 2019, there was a greater presence of indigenous teachers in rural areas (approximately 85%), which are almost all located on indigenous land. About 90% are in schools under the responsibility of municipal authorities. In SP, by contrast, in every observed year, there was a greater presence of indigenous teachers in urban areas and more than 50% work outside indigenous lands and a minority who teach on indigenous land. Thus, unlike MS, most indigenous teachers in SP work in schools that do not have a dedicated indigenous education. Most schools in SP are under the responsibility of state authorities (53% in 2019). In SP there are also more indigenous teachers working in private schools (18% in 2019, which have 13% of the indigenous students in the state), while in MS on 2% of the teachers were based in private schools in the same year.

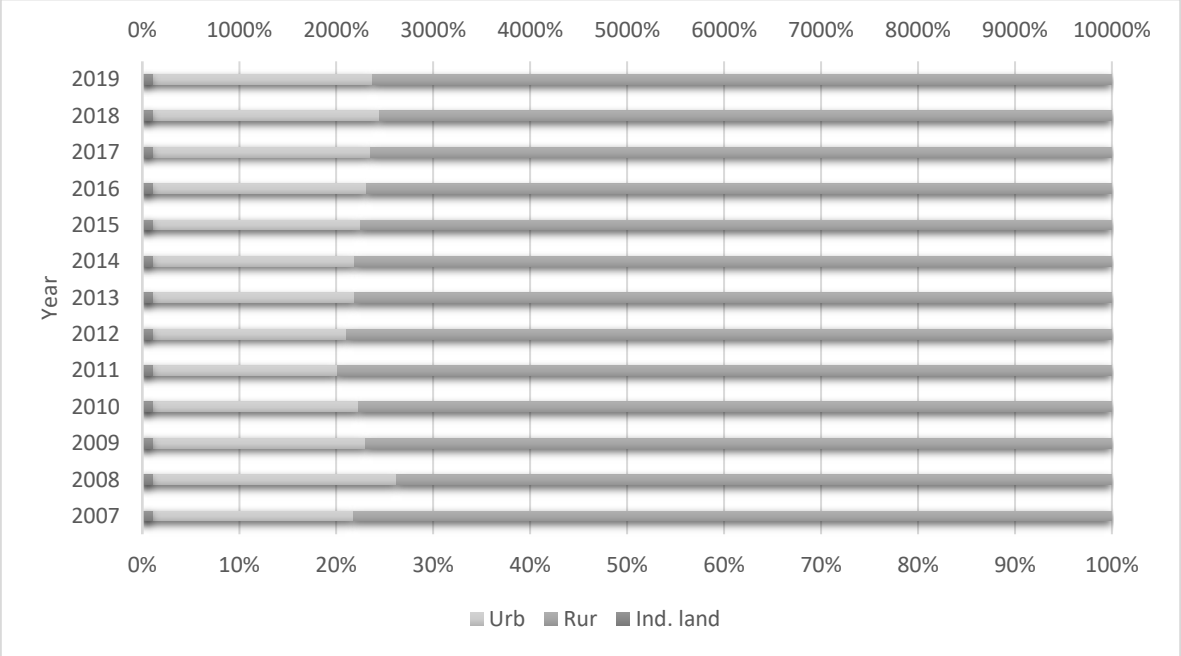
School Population

Another interesting contrast is the trend of student admission in MS and SP. While in the former there has been a steady and significant increase in the number of students enrolled in indigenous schools, the SP the tendency is one of constant decline. As evident on Graph 4, from 2007 to 2019 the number of indigenous students in MS almost tripled while in SP it fell by half. There are specific operational reasons for those conflicting trends, in particular stronger government support and the prioritisation of indigenous education in MS. In addition, the result can be related to the coordinated mobilisation and more influential political campaign raised by different ethnic groups in MS.

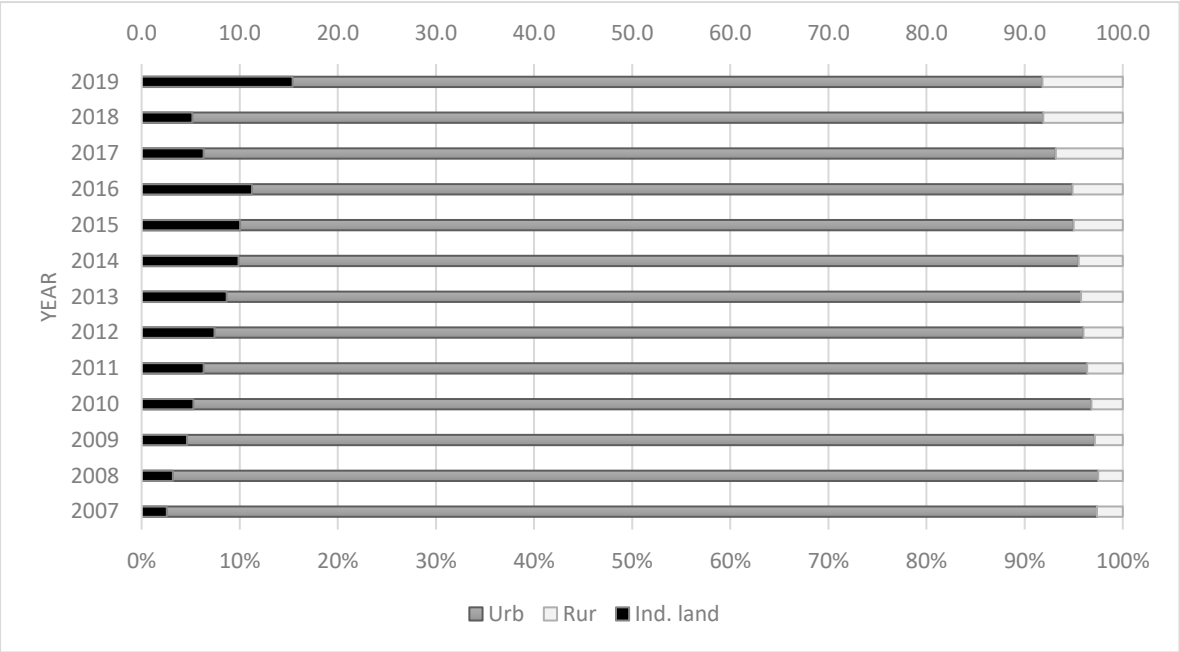


Graph 4 – MS and SP, 2007-2019: Indigenous students (data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2019)

The state of MS has had a relatively steady overall student population over the 13 years considered here (2007-2019): about 60% of indigenous students were found in schools on indigenous land and approximately 80% in rural areas. Also, about 80% received specific indigenous education municipalities (Graph 5). The state of SP, in its turn, has shown an increase in the number of students in schools localised on indigenous lands: from 2% in 2007 to 15% in 2019, with the same percentage of students in schools with indigenous education. Most of indigenous students in SP study in schools in urban areas (Graph 6).



Graph 5 – MS, 2007-2019: Indigenous students by area (data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2019)



Graph 6 – SP, 2007-2019: Indigenous students by area (data: INEP, School Census, 2007-2019)

Discussion and Overall Conclusions

The previous pages presented the results of a brief comparative study between two relevant Brazilian states, São Paulo and Mato Grosso do Sul, where indigenous schools have occupied an increasingly relevant role in terms of social inclusion, the improvement of basic public services and the struggle for political recognition. Although data availability and reliability constitute a main barrier, it is clear from our results that in both states the number of indigenous schools and student population have increased. A growing number of schools are now dedicated to the indigenous communities and make use of a tailored teaching material, although the quality of such material deserves further investigation. Likewise, the involvement of indigenous peoples in socio-spatial transformations still demands further conceptual and empirical scrutiny. Secondary-data studies (like this one) need to be complemented with qualitative research at the local level and involving indigenous communities, public authorities and wider society, which will help to further explain the gap between plans and results and, in addition, connect the evolution of the school network with the affirmation of indigenous rights and the pursuit of better public services. School education requires a dynamic dialogue with the knowledge held by families and communities and their own understanding of knowing and being indigenous, as well as traditional forms of education and learning.

Recent changes in policies and teaching strategies demonstrate some growing respect for the specific educational needs of indigenous peoples and the productive dialogue between communities and the surrounding society, however many pending problems and insufficiencies

remain unresolved. Most official narratives about indigenous school education, influenced by a colonialist or modernist mindset, continue to overlook the perceptions, the inventiveness, the active reactions and the complex ontology of indigenous peoples. Public policies in Brazil are still largely assistentialist and tend to ignore the waves of domestic or international migration promoted to foster economic activity, at the expense of the land and resources of those who were already living in the area. State agency continues to impose a socio-spatial order in the name of regional development, at the expense of pre-existing institutions such as common ownership of land, a self-sufficient economy, stateless collective life and spiritual bonds to the land.

The indigenous school must be a window into the collective past and a door into a future, which is uncertain and cannot be taken for granted (Ioris et al., 2019). Among the aspects that differentiate indigenous school education compared to conventional schooling, the participation of the community in the definition of educational projects, the development of teaching materials based on the reality and community needs (great attention to the linguistic issue), the predisposition for teaching and learning are carried out based on research activities (based on the notion that teachers are researchers) and the intention that the school contributes to the realisation of future community projects (Abbonizio and Ghanem, 2016). It should serve to demonstrate how the creativity of each ethnic group challenges mainstream, exogenous pedagogical concepts and methodologies that do not take into account the concrete, lived reality of the community. If properly pursued, the contact between indigenous ancestral knowledge and formal education can result in hybrid teaching contents that may facilitate the negotiation between assimilationist pressures, isolationist reactions and the risk of anomie (Stairs, 1994).

Indigenous education should be seen as an integral element of the mobilisation of indigenous peoples and their struggle for the recognition of basic rights and compensation for past violence. The increasing relevance of indigenous education coincides with the enhancement of indigenous political agency in the last four decades in Brazil. Groups that were greatly impacted by land grabbing and racism more directly connected their wider political and economic platforms with the creation and proper management of basic schools and, in addition, the access to university education. These are signs that the individuals, families and communities continue to claim an indigenous identity in daily life activities and maintain attachments to places under difficult circumstances. Consequently, the indigeneity of education is a concrete demonstration of decolonisation sensibilities and recognition of the political significance of ethnic identities in space. Beyond essentialist, romantic and reductionist positions, there should be a concern for the politics of ethnicity, as well as questions of representation and the

ideological construction of various racialised 'others', in favour of conceptualisations that are time and place specific.

Overall, notwithstanding the fact that the wider pursuit of a bespoke indigenous education is relatively recent phenomena in Brazil, this is directly associated with the progressive strengthening of democratic reforms, which in recent years have been increasingly attacked by neo-conservative political movements. In that context, the mobilisation and political intervention of indigenous groups, which are increasingly trying to restore valued elements lost to national development, are crucial components of a wider campaigns for social and environmental justice. This is a historical and geographical process that connects the classroom to national struggles and connects the indigenous groups with other social groups marginalised by development and socio-spatial exclusion in urban and rural areas. In the end, the expansion and enhancement of indigenous schools represent a crucial reminder of the huge debt by the non-indigenous society and the state in relation to the ancestral, indigenous population.

References

Abbonizio A and Ghanem E (2016) Educação Escolar Indígena e Projetos Comunitários de Futuro. *Educação e Pesquisa* 42(4), 887–901. http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1517-9702201612144628

Absolon K (2010) Indigenous Wholistic Theory: A Knowledge Set for Practice. *First Peoples Child and Family Review* 5(2), 74–87.

Absolon K and Dias G (2020) Indigegogy. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. National Association of Social Workers Press and Oxford University Press. Available at https://oxfordre.com/socialwork/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.001.0001/acrefore-9780199975839-e-1354 (accessed 24 April, 2020)

Aires MMP (2012) Legalizing Indigenous Identities: The Tapeba Struggle for Land and Schools in Caucaia, Brazil. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 17(2), 320–340.

Battiste M (ed.) (2017) *Visioning a Mi'kmaw Humanities: Indigenizing the Academy*. Sydney, NSW: Cape Breton University Press.

Bellier I and Préaud M (2012) Emerging Issues in Indigenous Rights: Transformative Effects of the Recognition of Indigenous Peoples. *The International Journal of Human Rights* 16(3), 474–488.

Bergamaschi MA (2007) Educação Escolar Indígena: Um Modo Próprio de Recriar a Escola nas Aldeias Guarani. *Cadernos Cedes* 27, 197–213.

Bergamaschi MA. and Antunes CP (2020) Professores Indígenas no Sul do Brasil: Dos Contextos de Dominação/ Submissão aos caminhos da Autonomia. *Foro de Educación* 18(1), 103–124.

Brant Castellano M, Davis L and Lahache L (eds) (2000) *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia.

Fleuri RM and Fleuri LJ (2018) Learning from Brazilian Indigenous Peoples: Towards a Decolonial Education. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 47(1), 8–18.

Freire P (1987) *Pedagogia do Oprimido*. 17th edition. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra.

Gonçalves JP and de Oliveira EL (2018) Diversidade Cultural e Relações de Gênero em uma Escola Indígena Sul-mato-grossense. *Educação e Pesquisa* 44, e185144. http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/s1678-4634201844185144

Grupioni LDB (ed) (2016) *Formação de Professores Indígenas*: *Repensando Trajetórias*. Brasília: MEC/SECAD/UNESCO.

Guilherme A and Hüttner É (2015) Exploring the New Challenges for Indigenous Education in Brazil: Some Lessons from Ticuna Schools. *International Review of Education* 61(4), 481–501.

Hampton E (1995) Towards a Redefinition of Indian education. In Battiste M and Barman J (eds), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, pp. 5–46.

INEP (2019) *Censo Escolar*. Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira: Brasília. Avaliable at: http://portal.inep.gov.br/censo-escolar (accessed 12 April, 2020)

Ioris AAR (2019) Political Agency of Indigenous Peoples: The Guarani-Kaiowa's Fight for Survival and Recognition. *Vibrant, Virtual Brazilian Anthropology* [online]. 16, e16207. http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1809-43412019v16a207

Ioris AAR (2020) Ontological Politics and the Struggle for the Guarani-Kaiowa World. *Space and Polity* 24(3), 382–400.

Ioris AAR (ed) (2021) *Environment and Development: Challenges, Policies and Practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan:

Ioris AAR, Benites T and Goettert JD (2019) Challenges and Contribution of Indigenous Geography: Learning with and for the Kaiowa-Guarani of South America. *Geoforum* 102, 137–141.

Ladeira ME (2004) Desafios de uma Política para a Educação Escolar Indígena. *Revista de Estudos e Pesquisas, FUNAI* 1(2), 141–155.

Luciano GJS (2015) Relatório Técnico Diagnóstico e Avaliação dos Formulários e da Metodologia do Censo Inep Referente à Questão Indígena. *Ministério Público Federal*. Available on: http://www.mpf.mp.br/atuacao-tematica/ccr6/grupos-de-trabalho-1/educacao-indigena/mpf-em-defesa-da-escola-indigena/docs_relatorios-tecnicos/relatorio-diagnostico-censo-escolas-indigenas-inep-vf.pdf (accessed 11 April, 2020)

Maher TM (2006) A Formação de Professores Indígenas: Uma Discussão Introdutória. In Grupioni LDB (ed) *Formação de Professores Indígenas: Repensando Trajetórias*. Brasília: MEC/SECAD/UNESCO, pp. 11–37.

Meunier O (2010) Dynamique de l'Education Bilingue Interculturelle dans l'Amazonie Brésilienne. *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* 20(3), 391–414.

Mignolo WD (2012) *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Moreton-Robinson A (2015) *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Oyarzún JDD, Perales Franco C and McCowan T (2017) Indigenous Higher Education in Mexico and Brazil: Between Redistribution and Recognition. *Compare* 47(6), 852–871. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1354177

Scaramuzza GF and Nascimento AC (2018) Produzir a Educação Intercultural na Escola Indígena: Desafios aos Educadores de um Novo Tempo. *Curriculo sem Fronteiras* 18(2), 550–565.

Silva DF (2007) *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Stairs A (1994) Indigenous Ways to Go to School: Exploring Many Visions. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 15(1), 63–76.

Stavenhagen R (1975) *Social Classes in Agrarian Societies*. Trans. J.A. Hellman. New York: Anchor Press.

Verran H (2018) The Politics of Working Cosmologies Together While Keeping Them Separate. In de la Cadena M and Blaser M (eds) *A World of Many Worlds*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 112–130.

Zanin NZ, Silva IMM and Cristofoli MS (2018) Espaços Escolares Indígenas no Brasil: Políticas, Ações e Atores Envolvidos. *Educacao e Realidade* 43(1), 201–222. http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2175-623662535