ISSN 2178-2229

DOI: https://doi.org/10.18764/2178-2229v31n4.2024.63

Pedagogical coloniality in the brazilian amazon: Education for the Modern/Colonial World/System[1]

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Abstract: The aim of this text, which is based on a survey mapping historical, sociological, economic, and political aspects of the Brazilian Amazon, is to discuss how coloniality has acquired a pedagogical dimension that has been structured within educational systems. This dimension seeks to obscure the complex cultures developed by various Amazonian peoples and populations, along with their systemic alternatives to neoliberal societies. This is a bibliographic study with a qualitative approach, focused on the power relations that impose and sustain themselves in the Amazon, even after the end of formal colonial regimes, particularly in the modes of knowledge production and in the antidialogical relationships that underpin homogenizing public policies, which we designate as Pedagogical Coloniality. The data produced indicate that there are still institutions in this region that reinforce and are guided by Western civilizational standards, reflecting the colonial logic that persists in the devaluation, stigmatization, and subordination of local knowledge within the school environment. When these social references are depicted, they appear sporadically and through folklorization. The configuration of the environment and the organization of spaces, as they are based on hierarchical knowledge, present themselves as decontextualized, disconnected from the experiences, socialization methods, and identities of the different Amazonian peoples. However, we identify processes of resistance and struggle led by local populations.
Keywords: amazon; pedagogical coloniality; education.

1 Introduction

First introduced by the Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1992), the term Coloniality refers to the continuity of colonial forms of domination in modernity. It is said that this colonial matrix of power is constitutive of modernity. It is a pattern of power relations, domination, and dehumanization that persists and sustains itself even in the absence of formal colonies. Among nation-states, this logic manifests, among other things, in the imposition

[1] This work was carried out with the support of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq.

of Western epistemology and its influences on the subjectivities of different peoples, in the modes of knowledge production, and in the antidialogical relationships that sustain homogenizing public policies.

When we refer to the Brazilian Amazon, we are immediately called to reflect on the historical violence, genocide, tensions, and power relations translated into conflicts between indigenous peoples, traditional populations, and invaders that have involved and continue to involve this region. Although we have some understanding of the complexity of this vast territory, given the diverse peoples, cultures, and biodiversity that constitute it, and although we are discussing a strategic point in relation to global commitments, we are challenged by colonial thinking that often prevents us from seeing, feeling, and questioning the practices of domination present in the discourse of development and integration, forged in the capitalist neoliberalism of modern times.

Thus, the debate about Pedagogical Coloniality in the Brazilian Amazon and its interrelations requires us to problematize the power structure sustained by European colonialism and imperialist countries that regulate contemporary social relations and education, often underestimating local knowledge. However, in this text, which is based on a literature review that mapped the historical, sociological, economic, and political aspects of the Amazonian reality, our goal is to discuss how coloniality acquired a pedagogical dimension that became embedded in educational systems, aiming to obscure the complex cultures developed by Amazonian peoples and populations and their systemic alternatives to neoliberal societies.

To this end, in addition to the introduction and final considerations, the text is organized into three sections. In the first, *The Amazon and the Colonial Matrix of Power*, we aim to synthesize some of the fundamental premises of coloniality and decolonial thought, highlighting the “pedagogical” mechanisms used to maintain the colonial matrix of power in the Amazonian reality. In the second, *Pedagogical Coloniality in the Brazilian Amazon*, we discuss education in this region as a historical and formal process that sought to construct a symbolic imaginary that endorsed the interests of the metropolis and national elites, drawing attention to the suppression of local cultural systems through instituted formal education.

In the third section, *Transgressions, Confrontations, and Resistance Movements Against Pedagogical Coloniality in the Brazilian Amazon*, we critically examine the monocultural content and rigid curricular practices imposed on Amazonian populations, which have provoked transgressions and confrontations against pedagogical coloniality. These are realized through resistance movements, confrontations, and strategies of subversion and rebellion against the hegemonic disciplinary frameworks that tend to suppress the cultural practices and traditional knowledge of different peoples.

2 The Amazon and the Colonial Matrix of Power

The concept of *Amazônia Legal* was created by the Brazilian government in 1953 under the premise of planning and fostering the social and economic development of the states that comprise it. This region covers 59% of Brazil's territory and includes 772 municipalities across nine states: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, and Tocantins, as well as part of the state of Maranhão. In total, the area spans 5.1 million km².

It is a region that "[...] encompasses the entire Amazon biome, the largest of the Brazilian biomes, corresponding to 1/3 of the world's tropical rainforests" (Buscarons da Silva, 2022, p. 88). About 60% of the country's native forests are concentrated in this region, directly impacting Brazil's environmental balance and influencing the planet's climate dynamics. Due to its abundant "natural resources," the region is globally a target of economic and geopolitical interests.

Given this, many arguments have been and are still used to justify the exploitation of natural resources in various Amazonian territories. Among them, we highlight the argument of the "demographic void", employed by the Brazilian state to justify the authoritarian manner in which it occupied the land, ignoring the indigenous peoples and other populations that have historically lived there and depend on nature for their survival. In other words, both in Brazil and abroad, a "[...] colonial and dominant imaginary still prevails, which insists on erasing the historical socio-cultural record of the diversity of peoples, cultures, and the political practices of the ethnic-racial groups present there" (Conrado; Barros, 2022).

In the 16th century, with the arrival of Europeans in the region, the indigenous peoples who lived there were drastically reduced, mainly due to diseases brought by the Europeans. This marked a period of contact that involved mutual curiosity but also violence and exploitation. Many strategies were organized by the Europeans to control the region and protect their trade routes within this area. In this process, as in colonial Brazil, the Amazon experienced a long period of commercial exploitation, which intensified when it began supplying primary products to Europe.

At that time, and still today, the region was and continues to experience an accelerated and violent process of territorial occupation, notably in modern times with the clearing of native forests to make way for other land uses, such as agribusiness. This form of occupation and deforestation intensified in the early 1970s, "[...] mainly by farmers and ranchers from the south and southeast, as a result of the military governments' concern about the possible internationalization of the Amazon" (Lemos; Silva, 2011, p. 99).

The 1970s, in addition to being marked by the advance of deforestation, also represent the intensification of tensions experienced by local populations due to the interests of large mineral projects, driven by the influx and presence of foreign capital

in the region. These power structures grew over time, leading to forced changes in traditional ways of life by interfering with the social and cultural structures of indigenous and traditional peoples. The tensions experienced stem from colonial practices, which manifest primarily in the actions of dehumanization and attempts at control and domination imposed on these communities.

With this, we can say that:

> The images and social representations of the Amazon as an exuberant forest do not stop the destruction of its flora and fauna, of the Amazonian ecosystem (mangroves, forests, floodplains, savannas, coastal vegetation), or of ancient knowledge and wisdom threatened by the decimation of Indigenous peoples and other forest populations—quilombolas, rural communities, and riverine peoples with their ways of life that exist there. These do not gain the political visibility necessary to preserve people, ways of life, and the forest itself (Conrado; Barros, 2022, p. 234).

Given these relationships, when we speak of the Brazilian Amazon, we must consider the socio-historical and ideological context in which this region is embedded, its populations and their practices, and the social values mobilized in both their material and immaterial dimensions. These values and traditions are often challenged by the argument in favor of exploitation, almost always justified by the logic of development. Such an argument is based on the perception of a culture considered superior, delegitimizing other forms, subjects, places, and ways of being and living. These power structures continue to usurp the dignity of local populations, as they are guided by a hierarchical and antidialogical perspective.

In this region, the persistence of colonial practices causes concrete and diverse experiences—those that could be transferred from daily life to real learning situations in schools—to be viewed as poor and in need of correction. Often, those who produce these experiences are penalized for their “lack of culture,” language, and civility. This leads to attempts to suppress the expressiveness of indigenous, quilombola, and riverine students, among others from working-class backgrounds, who are made to believe in their supposed inferiority.

In this sense, it is urgent that we critically examine these relationships to avoid engaging in exclusionary actions, considering that “The decoloniality of education is achieved to the extent that the validity and importance of ‘other’ forms of knowledge not formalized by the colonial matrix are recognized” (Ocaña; López; Conedo, 2018, p. 118). To continue this debate, it is important to synthesize some of the fundamental premises of decolonial thought.

Arturo Escobar (2003) states that the concepts of the Modernity/Coloniality group, a network of Latin American intellectuals who study the marks of modern colonialism in con-

temporary times, are anchored in a series of operations that distinguish them from established modernity theories. The author enumerates:

> 1) Emphasis on locating the origins of modernity in the Conquest of America and the control of the Atlantic after 1492, rather than in the more commonly accepted milestones, such as the Enlightenment or the end of the 18th century; 2) a persistent focus on colonialism and the development of the global capitalist system as constituents of modernity; this includes a commitment to not ignore the economy and its corresponding forms of exploitation; 3) consequently, the adoption of a planetary perspective in explaining modernity, rather than viewing modernity as an intra-European phenomenon; 4) the identification of external domination outside the European center as a necessary dimension of modernity, with the concomitant subalternization of the knowledge and cultures of these other groups; 5) a conception of Eurocentrism as a form of knowledge of modernity/coloniality—a hegemonic representation and mode of knowledge that advocates its own universality and rests on a confusion between an abstract universality and the concrete world derived from the European position as center (Escobar, 2003, p. 60).

In this perspective, Quijano (2010) warns that the societal scale is historically marked by power relations, expressed through forms of exploitation/domination/conflict that are fundamentally articulated around the following means of social existence:

> 1) Labor and its products; 2) dependent on the previous one, 'nature' and its resources for production; 3) sex, its products, and the reproduction of the species; 4) subjectivity, its material and intersubjective products, including knowledge; 5) authority and its instruments, particularly coercion, to ensure the reproduction of this pattern of social relations and regulate its changes (Quijano, 2010, p. 88).

Thus, these relationships are established with the aim of maintaining practices of exploitation and domination that ignore the value of human plurality, especially when, in the field of education, the colonial logic that still persists in the devaluation, stigmatization, and subordination of local knowledge is concealed. In this way, we can say that the pedagogical field is permeated by profound repercussions of coloniality, especially, as Ocaña, López, and Conedo (2018, p. 120) assert, when "[...] the state or government imposes curricular content without allowing teachers to make the necessary adaptations and contextualizations, taking into account the particularities and singularities of their students".

Deepening our understanding of the profound repercussions of coloniality in the pedagogical field, we cite Arroyo (2014, p. 11), who highlights that pedagogical theories were conceived in the concreteness of "[...] the colonizing power/knowledge pattern, here, in the concrete processes of dominating and submitting indigenous, Black, mestizo, and free laboring peoples within the slave colonial order". This can be evidenced in the attempts at

linguistic standardization imposed on a multilingual and multicultural population, disregarding the legitimacy of the other languages spoken in the region, in addition to the colonizer's language, and the so-called non-standard linguistic varieties.

Assuming this dichotomy, pedagogical thought took on the role of "rescuing the ignorant" from their non-existence, from false ways of interpreting truths, bringing them to rational, scientific ways of thinking, in order to lift them from the abyss and accompany them on a successful journey toward knowledge, truth, science, and morality (Arroyo, 2014). What happens is that "Pedagogical, curricular, and didactic coloniality constitutes the hidden face of the educational discourse that has shaped modernity" (Ocaña; López; Conedo, 2018, p. 121).

Maldonado-Torres (2007) denounces the "pedagogical" mechanisms that maintain coloniality today and affirms that it remains alive in textbooks, in the criteria for academic work, "[...] in culture, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in the aspirations of individuals, and many other aspects of our modern experience" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 131). "[...] we breathe coloniality in modernity every day," says the Puerto Rican philosopher. Streck and Moretti (2013, p. 35) understand that coloniality conditions education to its destiny of forming for "minor citizenship or non-citizenship, that is, it is entangled in a form of subordinate citizenship.".

In examining the impacts of this coloniality on the education system, Candau (2012) observes that schooling in Latin America has primarily served to consolidate a Eurocentric-based culture on our continent, silencing the knowledge of certain groups. According to the author, this bias persists and manifests itself in various ways in everyday school life, such as when academic failure is attributed to the ethnic, social, and cultural characteristics of students. In this regard, Joaquim Maria highlights (1996):

> It is important to recognize that the prevailing pedagogy has devalued popular culture, following the logic of the colonizers who produced, in Amerindian lands, the devaluation of Indigenous and Black culture... and guiding their practices based on the culture of the 'center.' It is common in Brazil for a teacher to ask students to name examples of works of art, and the answers will be: Mona Lisa by Da Vinci, paintings by Picasso, Beethoven's symphonies, etc., and rarely will anything Brazilian be mentioned (Maria, 1996, p. 110).

In light of this discussion, we observe that some studies have been developed with epistemological support from the contributions of the Modernity/Coloniality network, aiming to show that, even after Brazil's political independence and, later, the proclamation of the Republic, the educational and cultural policies developed by the Brazilian state tend to privilege the cultural heritage of European descent.

Porta's research (2012) analyzed the actions of the National Historical and Artistic Heritage Service – SPHAN (which later became the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage – IPHAN), founded by the Vargas government as part of the Ministry of Education and Health, led by Gustavo Capanema. According to the author, the first decades of SPHAN's work — which helped shape the conceptions and actions regarding cultural heritage in the country — "[...] were strictly focused on protecting the material legacy of Portuguese colonization and the imperial period" (Porta, 2012, p. 11).

According to Motta (2000), the heritage constructed by SPHAN formed a social framework of memory referencing national identity, which fuels Brazilians' social memory so that they feel they belong to the nation. As a result, by cementing in memory the image of what was preserved as national heritage, this framework also consolidated the notion of cultural heritage in the broadest sense. Thus, we can say that:

> [...] what was valued as a reference for national memory, with its scholarly aesthetic and stylistic standards of exceptionality, became incorporated into social memory as a reference for cultural heritage in its broadest sense, serving as a benchmark for preservation practices even in the face of new concepts for its understanding" (Motta, 2000, p. 18).

In light of such facts, it is up to us to problematize and challenge the guidelines and rationalities that, in seeking to solidify a national identity that fuels the social memory of Brazilians, deny our ancestral sociocultural practices and our experiences, understandings, and meanings. As stated, "Living determines thinking and not the other way around, as Eurocentric epistemology leads us to believe. This points to a decolonial epistemology, pedagogy, and reason [...]" (Ocaña; López; Conedo, 2018, p. 123).

Considering that pedagogical practices in the Brazilian Amazon are still permeated by a colonial past that has yet to be properly overcome, it is urgent that we understand the functioning of this colonial pedagogy and develop a school pedagogical practice that accommodates many "other" worlds—creating schooling that is less exclusionary and more dialogical.

3 Pedagogical Coloniality in the Brazilian Amazon

In what ways do the mechanisms that reinforce colonial images of the Amazon operate within the school environment? How do school canons legitimize certain Eurocentric traditions that view our region as a geographic void, passive to foreign domination?

From here, we intend to discuss the roles that the school has fulfilled and continues to fulfill in the construction of the hegemony of the colonial imagination and how formal teaching processes were and are subsidized by the premises of coloniality in different aspects,

for, as Aníbal Quijano (2010, p. 86) states, “Eurocentrism is not, therefore, the cognitive perspective of Europeans, or merely of the rulers of global capitalism, but also of all those educated under its hegemony.”

It is worth noting that these colonial pedagogical devices began to be employed and gradually refined from the very beginning of the colonial enterprise. Enrique Dussel (1997) describes how the process of epistemological domination was implemented through teaching strategies, which he calls the pedagogy of domination, where the imperial culture (from the metropolises) acquires a methodology to project itself onto the consciousness of the dominated, causing them to be pedagogically educated to devalue their own culture.

> Cultural dependence is primarily external. From the empire to the elite: the elite is a minority, but holds the power; it is the dependent oligarchy. Thus, there is also an internal dependence, which is exercised by the educated cultural elite to dominate the people, even through schools (Dussel, 1997, p. 134).

This alienated elite, according to Dussel (1997), seeks to alienate the people. To that end, in schools, the reality of the popular classes is ignored in all its aspects. The alienating education promoted by the educated oligarchic elite is highly planned, looking towards the global “center” and denying its own traditions, which it does not recognize, leading to the annihilation of a popular culture for the benefit of the “center.”

The attempt to create profiles of state-coordinated subjectivity leads to the phenomenon that Santiago Castro-Gomes (2005) refers to as “the invention of the other,” which not only pertains to how a certain group of people mentally represents others but also to the devices of knowledge/power that serve as a starting point for constructing these representations. More than the “concealment” of a pre-existing cultural identity, the problem of the “other” must be theoretically addressed from the perspective of the material and symbolic production processes that Western societies have been involved in since the 16th century (Castro-Gomes, 2005).

To support his argument, the Latin American intellectual draws on the work of Venezuelan thinker González Stephan (1996), who studied the disciplinary power devices in the context of 19th-century Latin America. She finds that the technologies of subjectivation share a common denominator: their legitimacy rests on writing. Writing was an exercise that, in the 19th century, responded to the need to order and establish the logic of “civilization,” anticipating the modernizing dream.

Thus, the foundational project of the nation is carried out through the implementation of institutions legitimized by writing (schools, hospitals, workshops, prisons) and hegemonic discourses (maps, grammars, constitutions, manuals, hygiene treaties), which regulate the conduct of social actors, establish boundaries between them, and convey to them the

certainty of existing within or outside the limits defined by this written legality (González Stephan, 1996 apud Castro-Gomes, 2005). In this process, institutionalized education plays an important role:

> The school transforms into a space of internment where this type of subject that the "regulating ideals" of the constitution were calling for is formed. What is sought is to instill a discipline in the mind and body that enables the person to be "useful to the homeland." The behavior of the child must be regulated and monitored, subjected to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits, values, cultural models, and lifestyles that allow them to assume a "productive" role in society (Castro-Gomes, 2005, p. 170).

When we trace the history of schooling in the Amazon, particularly in its Brazilian portion, we observe that, with its own distinct characteristics, the phenomenon described by Castro-Gomes took place—the education system served as a tool for internalizing metropolitan social values, and literacy in the Portuguese language became a mark of social distinction and a representation of the civilizational advancement of local populations.

Throughout the history of education in the Brazilian Amazon, it is evident that during the different political-administrative regimes—colonial, imperial, and republican—formal education processes were established with the clear aim of constructing a symbolic imaginary that initially supported the interests of the metropolis and later, the national elites. Efforts to suppress local cultural systems through official education, using different strategies and nuances over time, have been a constant in the development of schooling in the region. Rodrigues (2024) is categorical in this regard:

> It is always interesting to remember that education, in its formal and informal aspects, reproduces the essential matrix of society—what it is, what it believes it is, and what it intends to be. Educating is undoubtedly about dealing with the ideals and values that society proposes as valid, which are defined through antagonistic processes where social groups seek to assert their hegemony, translating it into the content to be shaped and perpetuated through educational practice in all aspects of social life. For the Portuguese colonizers who established their economic-political-military project here (1616-1823), this was essential for their complete domination: to "civilize" the natives (Rodrigues, 2024, p. 16).

Rodrigues (2024, p. 34) focuses on understanding the pedagogical system established by colonizers in the Amazon during the 17th and 18th centuries, specifically the Jesuit mission, "[...] a competent ideological arm that supported the military power that determined the conquest of land and souls." For the author, the success of the education practiced by the Jesuits was anchored in adapting their European educational methods to the charac-

teristics of their students, effectively balancing reward and punishment in an effort to shape good subjects for god and the king.

One of the fundamental resources for the cultural domination of the region was the establishment of a common language, as the vast and complex linguistic diversity present in the extensive area to be conquered posed an obstacle to the colonizing task. Thus, the Língua Geral was formed, "[...] a codification of native speech supplemented with terms adapted from the colonizer's Portuguese, which served as a very important ideological instrument in light of the enormous tribal diversity" (Rodrigues, 2024, p. 34).

The Society of Jesus carried out its doctrinal and political actions in the region, with the education of the natives as one of its main strategies, organizing an educational system that endorsed the crown's exploitative practices but also served the interests of the order itself, which accumulated land, property, and wealth over its period of operation in these territories, establishing itself as a parallel power.

In this sense, Damasceno, Santos, and Palheta (2018) characterize Jesuit action as an ostensible state apparatus for acculturation, an organized mechanism for the cultural modification of individuals, aimed at inserting them into a civilizing process whose religious premises proved to be an important apparatus for controlling morality.

When Marquês de Pombal assumed the position of minister to D. José I in 1750, he implemented an economic and social policy that profoundly affected the history of the Brazilian Amazon (Navarro, 2012).

> It was the century of Enlightenment. The project of the Portuguese government was to expand the use of the Portuguese language, strengthen the state, integrate the indigenous people into colonial society, and weaken the Church, especially its main religious order, the Society of Jesus. In Brazil, Pombal appointed his brother Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado as governor of the State of Maranhão and Grão Pará (1751-1759). This governor would promote the secularization of colonial administration. Committed to the issue of demarcating new borders between the two empires, he traveled extensively throughout the Amazon (Navarro, 2012, p. 246).

On May 3, 1757, Pombal decreed the Directory to be observed in the indigenous settlements of Pará and Maranhão, as long as His Majesty did not order otherwise, which became known as the Directory for the Indigenous Peoples. In a notorious attack on the Jesuits, it prohibited the use of the Língua Geral and established the mandatory use of the Portuguese language in the settlements. The peak of Pombal's persecution of the Jesuits occurred in 1759 with the expulsion of the religious order from Brazil.

Pombal's policy toward indigenous peoples highlights the assimilative objectives of the crown, promoting the presence of non-indigenous people in the villages, interethnic mar-

riages, and aiming to eradicate the customs of the natives in order to make these groups vassals of the king of Portugal without distinction from others. This was the same process of cultural erasure but implemented through new strategies.

With the establishment of independence and the empire, the same tone prevails, with educational discourse serving as an instrument of acculturation and "civilization" of the archaic and primitive peoples of the Amazon.

Nery (2021) studied primary public education in the Macapá district between 1840 and 1889 and concluded, based on the documentary records of the period, that the educational model employed corresponded to the civilizational aspirations of the metropolises, linked to the idea of progress and the assertion of Modern States. The excerpt below, taken from a widely circulated newspaper of the time, expresses the enthusiasm and aspirations of the ruling elites regarding schooling:

> We want primary education to be spread from all angles, throughout all cities, towns, villages, parishes, and settlements of the province. Wherever there is a human breath for whom the alphabet is a ghost, an indecipherable enigma, there we want a teacher. Because only in this way will we reach the foot of a civilized nation, because, after all, only the light of education can free the Brazilian people from the ignorance in which they struggle [...]" (Province of Pará, 1876, p. 3, apud Nery, 2021, p. 74).

As an integral element of the colonial matrix of power, pedagogical coloniality continued to thrive after the proclamation of the republic, and the Amazon was a direct target of "modernizing" educational models by the Brazilian state throughout the different historical periods that followed.

With the Republic, regarding indigenous school education, according to Silva and Azevedo (2000), the inertia of the State and the large influx of religious missions responsible for the civilizing educational task are once again observed. In a few words, since the arrival of the first caravels, "[...] the panorama of Indigenous school education was singular, marked by the slogans 'to catechize,' 'to civilize,' and 'to integrate'" (Silva and Azevedo, 2000, p. 50).

The marks of the colonial legacy in the schooling developed in the Brazilian Amazon, even during the republican period, do not go unnoticed. Acculturation disguised as education continued to operate within the education systems, and many investigations conducted in our territories have denounced the action of coloniality in the pedagogical field here.

Lobato (2009) analyzed the educational policies implemented by Janary Nunes, appointed by Getúlio Vargas to be the first governor of the newly founded Territory of Amapá, from 1944 to 1956. Inspired by the ideals of the Estado Novo, the intervener implemented profound transformations in the territory, aiming at its "modernization." Education was seen by these public administrators as an instrument to change the ways of life of the Amapá

population, viewed in a derogatory manner. In the school envisioned by government actions, “[...] the values of modern man were projected as superior and universally valid. The clash of these values with the habits of popular cultures seemed inevitable” (Lobato, 2009, p. 24).

The Amapá intellectual asserts that the incongruities between modern education and the way of life of the people generated misunderstandings and high rates of school failure. And, despite a broad set of works and actions implemented over the years of the first Amapá territorial government, the main “school” “[...] continued to be the family, the river, and the forest — with their own rhythms and temperaments” (Lobato, 2009, p. 24).

Martins (2016), in a study conducted in the state of Amazonas, highlights the pedagogical dimension of coloniality in the education system through the incorporation of values from the modern-colonial world-system to obscure translocal knowledge and cultures. The aim was to investigate the extent to which the school curriculum engages with the local knowledge of elementary school students in Parintins-AM. To this end, the author sought to identify how teachers and students understand the curriculum and the local knowledge that identifies them as Amazonians, conducting theoretical discussions and analyses on school curriculum, knowledge, and cultural identities.

An important observation made by the author is that the legal bases guiding school curricula do not provoke the necessary inclusion and visibility of local knowledge produced in the cultural contexts of the students; for the school space, where such rights and principles should materialize, “[...] is rooted in bureaucratic demands and school routines that ignore the dynamism, hybridization, and peculiarities of the various cultures” (Martins, 2016, p. 173).

She emphasizes that while there are gestures towards flexibility and respect for different forms of knowledge, there remains a policy of controlling the limits of diversity, since teachers are forced to produce curricula that meet the demands of national standardized assessment results, disregarding the knowledge-rooted in the students’ reality.

With this information, the author brings forth elements that help us reflect on the power relations materialized in homogenizing public policies imposed on a complex and multicultural region like the Amazon. These policies still carry within their essence essentialist and assimilationist conceptions of identities, common and uniformizing projects constructed from non-dialogical, content-oriented, and market-driven perspectives.

Considering these relations, Martins (2016) notes that the identified curricular discourses and practices demonstrated insufficient visibility of local knowledge, that is, the cultural identities of Parintins students. However, the teachers and students investigated are aware of the importance of this knowledge and the need for it to be incorporated into the curricular content. According to the author,

> Based on the students' perspectives, the absence of local knowledge that reflects Amazonian cultural identities was evident. The trajectories, histories, and knowledge are confined to their homes, neighborhoods, and personal relationships. The school seems unable to connect this knowledge with pedagogical projects and planning. The research revealed that there is minimal openness to this in the curricula being practiced (Martins, 2016, p. 172-173).

In this direction, Mignolo (2006) emphasizes that the overlay of Western epistemology has led to the denial of bodies situated in specific historical contexts and the knowledge produced by these peoples, contributing to "[...] the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and the structures of the modern/colonial capitalist world-system" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p. 126).

Arroyo (2013) points out the importance of integrating individuals and the concreteness of their histories in the teaching-learning process, because:

> When the subjects of educational action are not represented in the curricula, it becomes difficult to understand knowledge as something that has happened, historically. The opportunity for children to build a political identity as active subjects, not passive producers or mere recipients, is lost. In learning, there are also authorship subjects: the students. (Arroyo, 2011, p. 145-146).

Rivas et al. (2020) note that higher education has historically been used not only to contest but, above all, to strengthen practices of coloniality of knowledge or epistemic coloniality, constituted "[...] based on the universalism of the production and reproduction of ways of understanding and living in the Western world" (Rivas et al., 2020, p. 84). When considering this relationship, it is necessary to understand the place of marginalization and subordination to which the so-called peripheral peoples and their knowledge, viewed as anti-scientific, have been subjected, in order to subvert the ongoing intellectual subjugation and marginalization to which they are subjected.

The study by Silva (2022), conducted at a public university in the state of Tocantins on the perceptions of Apinajé students regarding their intercultural experiences in a rural education course with a focus on arts and music, shows that interculturality is occurring in the contexts where indigenous students are inserted, comprehending University Time and Community Time. "In this process, the course tries to interrupt and transgress the silencing imposed by coloniality and the domination of the Western world that seeks to destroy the nature and ways of life of individuals" (Silva, 2022, p. 203).

However, it is highlighted that the syllabi of the music courses, even with all the efforts made to address the differences of the students, do not specify topics directly related to indigenous cultures, "[...] what is presented are some bibliographic references that address

the issues of Amerindian peoples" (Silva, 2022, p. 204-205). Nevertheless, the author observes that:

> [...] if the teacher had received training that involved interdisciplinarity, interculturality, and the appreciation of different contexts, subjects, and indigenous cultures, they would certainly have been more adept at incorporating the students' experiences and lived realities into the teaching process, which is also one of the course's premises (Silva, 2022, p. 205).

The results show that indigenous students face many difficulties upon arriving at the university, but over time they become integrated into the process and find ways to minimize their problems in order to complete their studies and give back to their people. According to Silva (2022), the challenges faced by Apinajé students range from the lack of transportation to get from the villages to the university, lack of internet access, to the absence of computers and obstacles in using the Portuguese language.

The difficulties that higher education institutions face in dealing with diversity, especially with indigenous peoples who have historically been relegated to cultural spaces defined as peripheral by modernity, are evident. The configuration of the environment and the organization of spaces, centered around Western knowledge, still appear to them as decontextualized because they do not resonate with their experiences, unique ways of socialization, and ethnic identities.

4 Transgressions, Confrontations and Resistance Movements Against Pedagogical Coloniality in the Brazilian Amazon

The issue of monocultural content and unchanging curricular practices directed at Amazonian populations has provoked transgressions and confrontations against pedagogical coloniality, as in many realities it is already possible to observe movements of resistance, where curricula begin to acquire new meanings and significance. These curricula are understood as spaces of contestation, critical and political reflection, provoking not only exchange but, above all, non-hierarchical dialogue between Western knowledge and the knowledge of Amazonian peoples.

Streck and Moretti (2013), when reflecting on the production of pedagogical alternatives in the face of the systematic violence and dehumanization carried out by the colonizer, emphasize that:

> The denunciation constitutes an important dimension in the production of pedagogical alternatives in light of the dehumanization then undertaken. Grounded in the imposition of the self-proclaimed superiority of the colonizer, justified by the sys-

> tematic violence of the so-called 'civilizing mission'; in the denial of the racial and ethnic identity of the colonized; in the forced abandonment of their own cultures; the construction of a Latin American pedagogy is challenged to move in the field of politics through praxis, through intentional struggles, in view of the announcement of liberation" (Streck; Moretti, 2013, p. 46).

The history of the process of Christianization and schooling of the Waiwai people, which took place in the Mapuera Village, in the state of Pará, is a good example of how ideas, knowledge, and concepts from a Western perspective were introduced among the indigenous people, with the intention of making them abandon their own knowledge and cultures under the argument of the "civilizing mission".

Câncio and Araújo (2021), in their study, aimed to demonstrate how the Christianized schooling mobilized by North American missionaries among the Waiwai people was appropriated by them and resulted in social and linguistic transformations that, in contrast, point to indigenous strategies and movements of resistance against attempts to undermine their subjectivities.

Waiwai is a generic designation, referring to a mix of originating ethnic groups that united at a certain historical moment and today occupy an extensive region that includes southern Guyana, eastern Roraima, and northwestern Pará (Mapuera River), a border area between Brazil and Guyana, where they have always established a wide network of exchange. However, according to the authors,

> This broad network of exchange occurs amid a process of coloniality that deepened from the 19th century onward, employing strategies other than persecution and capture, but religious conversion, the preaching of the Christian faith, which also reached peoples of African descent displaced to the Alto Trombetas-PA region, resulting in the formation of villages under religious guidance" (Câncio; Araújo, 2021, p. 8).

However, the more frequent coexistence of the Waiwai people with non-indigenous individuals intensified from 1950 onward, when North American (evangelical) missionaries began to settle along the banks of the upper Essequibo River in Guyana, using mechanisms of control and exploitation that reveal the continuity of colonial forms of social, material, and intersubjective domination.

The missionaries employed practices of Christianization that were quite different from those used among other indigenous peoples, investing in a strategic plan to reach everyone through the conversion of the Waiwai spiritual leader and shaman. Regarding the practices used, the authors explain that:

> This process was always initiated with prayers, and, just like the missionaries, Ewká, once converted, assumed the same behavior as the missionaries, such as using the blackboard to teach the alphabet and new knowledge about the Christian God to the other indigenous people (Câncio; Araújo, 2021, p. 9).

According to the authors, although the culture of those who held certain instruments of control, "[...] such as the knowledge of the language of those they wished to convert, had a greater tendency to prevail [...]" (Câncio; Araújo, 2021, p. 10), the Waiwai also demonstrated a certain interest in the knowledge of non-indigenous people, as they understand that the other is a challenge to be faced, not something to be avoided (Howard, 1993). This challenge of confrontation is understood among them as an opportunity to demonstrate their persuasive abilities, since this other may possess attractive resources and powers.

In this interplay of social forces, through the process of schooling their knowledge, North American missionaries began to introduce new moral and religious rules among the indigenous people, which was accentuated from 1976 onward with the arrival of a missionary who started teaching children to read and write in school. Thus, "The book, writing, and reading grounded in Protestantism became the strongest expression of Western culture in that context [...]" (Câncio; Araújo, 2021, p. 13).

In this way, "Everything that did not conform to the religious and moral standards defined by Christianity was considered by the missionaries to be outside the standards of humanity and civility, and was therefore combated" (Câncio; Araújo, 2021, p. 13). Regarding the use of languages, in a clear counter-hegemonic and resistant attitude, the desire to establish contact with Portuguese speakers, although prohibited, mobilized a movement of linguistic insubordination, manifested in the escape strategies of some Waiwai to the city, transgressing the rules imposed by the missionaries.

In order to continue the extensive network of exchange, which involved contact with non-indigenous people, the Waiwai had to resist the control of discourse and the tutelary power to which they were subjected. The desire for closeness with other peoples led them to break with the imposed rules and invest in expeditions to the cities. While the missionaries invested in strategies to subvert them by imposing their Western knowledge through comparisons between cultures, the Waiwai also began to appropriate this knowledge, using it according to their interests. An example of this was the establishment of an indigenous school that would respond to their own demands in that context.

However, this was only possible because there was confrontation, as they practiced acts of rebellion against colonizing strategies. There were many clashes, continuities, and discontinuities that contributed to forming an intermediary space between cultures and knowledge, which is the Mapuera Village. Regarding the social transformations resulting from this relationship, in Mapuera, there are indigenous pastors who preach the Bible in the Waiwai language; at the same time, they also express significant elements of their ancestral

cultures in these sermons. Concerning the indigenous school, the Waiwai are not satisfied with merely learning the Waiwai language, as monolingualism is seen as a disapproved activity among them, given their needs.

As an example of resistance to pedagogical coloniality and the need to articulate modern education with ways of life, we can cite the study by Apinagé (2017), conducted in the Apinajé Indigenous Land in the state of Tocantins. From a perspective on the interrelation of school, environment, and knowledge, the author discusses the Apinajé's relationship with their land to gain a possible understanding of the indigenous perception of the relationship with the environment. The work involved elders from different villages, youth from the São José Village, and students from the Mãtyk School.

The data revealed that the elders have a broader relationship with both their territory, due to the memory and strength of knowledge about the spaces traditionally occupied, and with the current indigenous land, due to the use and maintenance of the environmental space. In contrast, the younger generation demonstrates more limited knowledge about their territory, as they rarely utilize the indigenous land and have a more restricted understanding of the history of their own territory.

The author observes that there is no longer enough time to circulate through the territory and develop the traditional activities and cultural practices of the Apinajé people, as the younger individuals spend most of their time engaged in activities of the kupẽ (non-indigenous people), especially football. There is, therefore, a clear interference in daily life, which is intensified by the presence of the school, as it takes up most of the young people's time in the village.

Another important reflection that Apinagé (2017) presents is that the current school is responsible for the education of Indigenous people in non-indigenous knowledge, but it also becomes a reference for younger individuals in terms of stimulating traditional knowledge. However, what the author observed in that context is that most of the time, the school is absent from the training for Indigenous knowledge in practice; that is, it moves in the opposite direction to the objective of transforming traditional knowledge into pedagogical practices in the classroom, resulting in what we can call a cultural invasion.

The colonial way of conceiving Indigenous school education is still very present in the education systems. In the Brazilian Amazon, although indigenous movements have strengthened and achieved many advances in education, we still face a dominant educational system based on the logic of (re)production of the modern/colonial project of society.

In this direction, when there is no confrontation with this system, the hegemonic disciplinary matrices tend to suppress cultural practices and traditional knowledge through a "subtle" and prolonged imposition on the subjectivities of individuals, causing pedagogical practices to distance themselves from reality and their social struggles.

Regarding how mechanisms operate that reinforce colonial images of the Amazon within the school space, Furtado's (2022) study on the indigenous movement of the Munduruku people and their relationship with school education in the Kwatá-Laranjal Indigenous Land, using decolonial thought as an epistemological strategy for analysis and understanding of reality, shows that the indigenous movement for school education is part of what he describes as a historically constructed mosaic with a spirit of struggle that reconfigures, dismantles, appropriates, disapproves, dialogues, and confronts existing contradictions.

The author highlights that indigenous peoples, after centuries of conflict with non-indigenous people, decided to appropriate Western knowledge as a form of confronting the subjugation process generated in the post-contact period. He points out that the challenges currently faced by the Munduruku result from the projects and actions imposed by the logic of the colonial-imperial power matrix that has manifested as colonialities of power, knowledge, and being. Affected by these forms of coloniality, both the production of life and the constitution of their ethnic identities have been traversed by a social context of exploitation and oppression.

In contrast, to face such challenges,

> [...] the Munduruku people of the Kwatá-Laranjal Indigenous Land organized themselves as an indigenous movement, with legal representation, encompassing strategic aspects such as ethnic-political, pedagogical, formative, and organizational elements, produced in the process of resistance and struggle aimed at achieving constitutional rights and constructing dignified, possible, and desirable objective conditions (Furtado, 2022, p. 15).

The Indigenous movement in this process was elevated as a space for promoting broad debate and expanding ethnic-political consciousness. In this space, the Munduruku of the Kwatá-Laranjal Indigenous Land were maturing their social relations in the villages, "[...] being invited to accompany the leadership and participate in consultation spaces—expanding awareness of existence in the world as an indigenous person belonging to a people" (Furtado, 2022, p. 289). It was also through observations and participation in missions against invaders that they acquired the consciousness of protecting life, and the right to exist, so they could think and produce projects for the demarcation of their territory.

The struggle for school education was thus strengthened in the indigenous movement, which they see as an important space for promoting broad debate and expanding ethnic-political consciousness. The author emphasizes that school education became more than just an opportunity to access universal knowledge; it also became a possibility for a more critical formation of the Munduruku, enabling them to identify, evade, or even confront the traps that arise in their relationship with non-indigenous society.

The historical denial of the cosmogony, ethnic identity, and the being-ness of the Munduruku in the world mobilized the need for transgression, rebellion, and radicality in the face of the system's impositions. According to Furtado (2022), the efforts of this people to problematize their own school education would already be a harbinger of their project of transgression against the logic of the world-system, aiming to break with the utilitarian, impartial, and apolitical perspective that has been historically imposed on them.

Therefore, school education in the Kwatá-Laranjal Indigenous Land began to be understood as something that is not separate from the struggles; otherwise, it could become an instrument for reproducing social inequalities, causing suffering to the people and the territory. In view of this, they began to organize themselves to demand their own school education project that would meet their needs, as previous experiences were not aligned with the sociocultural reality of the indigenous people.

From a critical perspective on the logic of national and homogenizing identity, Munduruku school education has become a constitutive part of life projects, reinforcing the need to build intercultural curricula and pedagogical practices more integrated with the real needs of this people, contributing to the consolidation and strengthening of the foundations of their traditional organizations.

Regarding the resistance movement in higher education, in a study aimed at analyzing the dissident practices and social tensions of indigenous students at a public university located in the Brazilian Amazon, Câncio (2023) highlights that hegemonic disciplinary matrices have acted to suppress intellectual production practices that are not associated with this model, through an abstract universalism that distances itself from the reality of the students' discourses and social struggles.

He draws attention to the need to think about public higher education institutions that are opposed to exclusionary instruments, so that social inequalities are not reinforced in these spaces, which occurs through the strengthening of the hierarchy of social organization, especially when the institution acts to affirm the inferiority of indigenous identity, disapproving or segregating the individual.

The author emphasizes that when ancestral knowledge and indigenous cosmologies are ignored or confronted at the university, the academic space tends to destabilize the knowledge of the students, which occurs through the strengthening of mechanisms of invisibility and exclusion, under the argument that one follows the rules of what is understood as scientific.

He also points out that all the Indigenous students interviewed were emphatic in saying that there is no respect for their ancestral knowledge, meaning they do not feel included in this space. The data produced with indigenous students indicated that the majority of the faculty follow an instrumental thinking that unfolds into merely procedural attitudes towards

the students, in order to meet a disciplinary goal, which contributes to a feeling of destabilization among the indigenous students.

The author found that there is tension produced by the embargo on indigenous knowledge, which was recurrent in the students' speeches. However, he observed that there is a "[...] dissident movement among students that gradually begins to transcend the discursive plane and becomes incorporated into counter-hegemonic actions within the institution" (Câncio, 2023, p. 14). This becomes clear to the author when they question whether the university is genuinely interested in fulfilling its social function, beyond producing scientific and technological knowledge.

Therefore, questioning and confronting the centrality of hegemonic thought, which reverberates in imaginaries, development models, and public policies for education systems in various social contexts, imposes on us the challenge of unraveling the complexity of contemporary relations in which certain discourses and practices tend to forge the cultural and ideological conjectures that sustain them.

5 Final Considerations

We conclude that Coloniality, in its pedagogical dimension, continues to manifest itself in the educational systems of the Amazon. This phenomenon is by no means incidental. It is a reflection of the historical colonialist relationships established by the economic and decision-making centers of the country in relation to the region, as well as the influence and interference of global North nations that continue to exploit the Amazon through multinational corporate conglomerates.

Pedagogical Coloniality is expressed through educational initiatives that promote a genuine cultural invasion, seeking to instill in the Amazonian people the ideology of neoliberal globalization, and the values of the modern-colonial world-system, without ensuring an education that guarantees an understanding of the oppressive and exploitative processes to which we have been subjected, and silencing the systemic alternatives that the local populations have built.

Coloniality must ensure that the subalterns look towards the metropolises, praise their deeds, admire their discoveries, and see them as the reference and civilizing mark of the world. This institutionalized pedagogy creates mechanisms so that new generations do not learn how the metropolises exploited colonial violence to build their economies and how they silenced the Global South to assert themselves epistemologically.

This pedagogical violence is effective, as it marginalizes the ways of learning/teaching of the colonized. Through this, which is the colonizer's method of educating, a set of knowledge deemed relevant, useful, and necessary by the invader is introduced, seeking to

destroy the cultural heritage of the dominated. Part of these cultures attacked and silenced by this pedagogical action of the invader, pertains to ways of land use, relationships with nature, and other modes of sociability, among others.

The school is entangled and reproduces the narrative of modernity; thus, it reinforces the reproduction of westernized civilizational standards. The main way in which other social references are portrayed in this space is through folklorization. In this sense, folklore in the school represents sporadic encounters with spontaneous popular productions, completely stripped of their ethical, aesthetic, political, and epistemological meanings.

However, while the history of education in the Brazilian Amazon highlights the monocultural and Eurocentric nature of the schooling developed here, it also demonstrates the processes of struggle and resistance that local peoples and populations build in favor of an intercultural, critical, and inclusive education. We seek to show, through a small excerpt of existing intellectual production, especially regarding indigenous peoples, that the Amazonian people lead various fronts of contestation aimed at guaranteeing the right to formal education, but redefined and constructed in close relation to the territories, addressing the demands of local populations, attuned to global power dynamics, and built democratically and participatively, not merely in offices and under the lobby of market interests.

As we said, formal education is an epistemological cut that, in the social struggle marked by antagonistic and irreconcilable interests, is imposed by those who hold political and economic power. As we have seen, it was and continues to be implemented in the Amazon as a subsidy for maintaining power and exploiting the region in favor of national and global elites. Nevertheless, history continues to be written, and Amazonian peoples and populations continue to take the lead in fronts of reclamation, seeking to decolonize the school and imprint new cultural and epistemic benchmarks within it, aiming to build new societies, other political economy frameworks, and different ways of relating to nature; in other words, other possible worlds.

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Received in July/2024 | Approved in September/2024

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Nota: Translated by Vitória Nunes Menezes