

The training of Gadjé teachers in the municipality of Raposa/MA

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Abstract: This paper presents a research situation carried out in the municipality of Raposa/MA, on the training of Gadjé teachers *in view* of the students' cultural diversity. The investigation originated from questions raised from the experience of a public school teacher in the municipality of Raposa, when coming across a student body composed of Roma and non-Roma children. From this larger exercise, this paper addresses the challenge contained in training non-Roma teachers, who need to deal with cultural and ethnic diversity in the school environment. The objective is to analyze the training of Gadge *teachers* in the municipality of Raposa/MA in face of these issues. To this end, we will present experts' reflection on teacher education and the importance of including diversity, as well as present the first empirical evidence ever found. This paper adopts a qualitative approach, collecting teachers' speeches in the categories Teacher Education, Cultural Diversity and Gypsies, and using content analysis techniques, according to Bardin (2011). We also rely on the methodological contributions of Historical-Critical Pedagogy. The research's main finding is that the training of Gadge *teachers* in the municipality of Raposa can be improved by incorporating inclusive and culturally sensitive practices that consider the seasonality and specific cultural habits of Roma families. We conclude by bringing perspectives to a training that reaches not only teachers, but also students' cultural diversity, highlighting possible challenges faced by both.

Keywords: teacher training; ethnic identity; gypsies.

1 Introduction

Although the Pedagogy course is essential and introduces many important questions, it is not always sufficient to prepare educators for unexpected situations. When starting their trajectory in the educational field, it is possible that newly graduated meet unforeseen challenges, as was the case of one of the authors of this paper when engaging as teacher at the São Joaquim Teaching Unit, located in Jussara's neighborhood, in the municipality



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of Raposa, state of Maranhão. Working as a teacher for almost 12 years, she found a community made up of fishermen, shellfish gatherers, horticulturists and gypsy families. Being a non-Gypsy, a *gadjé* (as the *Calon* gypsies identify non-Gypsies), she was led to reflect on the process of teacher training. To move forward, it was essential to mobilize theoretical perspectives, authors and materials that would allow us to present the scenario and bring situations and participants to light in a reflective exercise.

This context takes place in a school maintained by the Municipal Department of Education (SEMED), located in an area where Roma families live. Most students come from this nucleus, whose seasonality and specific cultural habits challenge assumptions and routines incorporated into the school institution's daily life, especially children's school attendance. These challenges add up to other social situations that affect the learning process of these students. This leads us to ask: What are the teachers' conceptions about their training as *Gadje teachers* in the municipality of Raposa/MA, considering the context of cultural diversity and presence of Roma families?

This research relevance on teacher training in the municipality of Raposa is justified by the municipality's strategic location in the microregion of São Luís Urban Agglomeration, just 21 km from the capital of the State of Maranhão. Currently, Raposa has a population of approximately 31,586 inhabitants and is located on the Island of Upaon-Açu, a region that is also home to the municipalities of São José de Ribamar, Paço do Lumiar and São Luís, capital of Maranhão.

Although it is a small municipality, the proximity to the capital gives Raposa a considerable strategic importance in the metropolitan region, facilitating access to the capital's resources and services. The beachy and mangrove-fenced landscape attracts several communities, including Roma peoples, due to the presence of many vacant land plots, overlooking the sea and close to the capital. This combination of factors also attracts fishing families from Ceará, shellfish gatherers, horticultural¹ and gypsy families, forming a diverse and unique community.

Cultural and social diversity in the municipality of Raposa presents significant challenges for training teachers, who need to deal with seasonality and specific cultural habits of Roma families, as well as other social situations that affect student learning. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the conceptions of these teachers about their training, given the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive practices in the educational context in Raposa. In addition, we seek to list opinions of the reviewers on this issue.

Based on the contributions of André (2001), it is extremely important that the future teacher learns to observe, formulate questions and hypotheses, and select instruments and

¹ Horteiras – name given by the residents of Raposa to professionals specialized in the cultivation of plants or vegetables, such as coriander, vinegar, pepper, lettuce and others.

data that help to elucidate problems and find alternative paths for his or her teaching practice. In this perspective, training courses play a significant role in developing a vigilant and inquisitive attitude in teachers, enabling them to make assertive decisions in their teaching situations, marked by urgency and uncertainty.

Therefore, this research's hypothesis is that the training of Gadjé *teachers* in the municipality of Raposa can be improved by incorporating inclusive and culturally sensitive practices that consider seasonality and specific cultural habits of Roma families. This can be achieved mainly through continuing education courses, school mobilization and official documents that highlight this school identity in its core. The research also considers historical speculation about the origin of Roma in India, acknowledging that over the centuries many Roma communities have adopted a sedentary lifestyle.

It is crucial not to associate Gypsy identity exclusively with nomadism, but to understand that wandering was, for many years, a survival strategy. Following the perspective of Goldfarb, Toyansk and Chianca (2019), who state that “[...] gypsies are an ethnic intergroup community, composed of more than fifteen million people around the world”, the research aims to analyze the challenge contained in the training of non-gypsy teachers. These teachers need to deal with cultural and ethnic diversity in the school environment.

This study is part of a Master's research in Education at the Federal University of Maranhão, currently under development, which analyzes continuing education of non-Roma teachers who work in teaching with gypsy students in the municipality of Raposa, Maranhão. The study focuses mainly on the conceptions of these teachers and on institutional and material work conditions.

We are based on Historical-Critical Pedagogy, as it was the one that most allowed us to dialogue with pedagogical conceptions of teacher training in the context of cultural diversity, in view of the challenge presented in the conception developed in the Brazilian notional, which prioritizes the idea of a people formed by mixing, and does not consider a society formed by different ethnic groups acceptable. For Saviani (2011, p. 80):

This formulation involves the need to understand education in its historical-objective development and, consequently, the possibility of articulating a pedagogical proposal whose reference point, whose commitment, is the transformation of society and not its maintenance, its perpetuation. This is the basic meaning of the expression historical-critical pedagogy. Its presuppositions, therefore, are those of dialectical conception of history. This involves the possibility of understanding school education as it manifests itself in the present, but understanding this present manifestation as a result of a long process of historical transformation.

First, teacher training and respect for diversity will be explained, reflecting on the effort made by society to include diversity in the school context, including the reviewers' opinions. Next, will be presented the first empirical evidence on the training of Gadjé teachers *in* the municipality of Raposa, Maranhão (MA). In a conclusive analysis, we will establish a correlation between teacher education and respect for diversity, bringing considerations about what it is to be a gypsy and non-gypsy, as well as observations about Gadjé teachers *and* their challenges in the municipality of Raposa/MA. We will conclude by suggesting procedures to be adopted in training, so that its scope is not restricted to teachers, but also includes all students, with emphasis on the challenges faced by teachers and students, in the sense that cultural diversity is a characteristic of multi-ethnic societies and needs to be positive within the scope of school experience.

2 Teacher training and respect for diversity: what do reviewers say

With regard to respecting and valuing diversity within the scope of teacher education, we highlight Resolution CNE/CP No. 1, of May 15, 2006, which establishes National Curriculum Guidelines for Pedagogy Course, undergraduate degree, and in its Article 5 mentions that its graduates must be able to:

- IX – identify socio-cultural and educational problems with an investigative and propositional stance in face of complex realities, aiming to contributing to overcome social, ethnic-racial, economic, cultural, religious, political and other exclusions;
- X – demonstrate awareness of diversity, respecting differences of environmental-ecological, ethnic-racial, gender, generational groups, social classes, religions, special needs, sexual choices, among others (Brasil, 2006, p. 1).

In this same sense, the Statute of Children and Adolescents (Law No. 8.069, of July 13, 1990) says:

- Art. 5 No child or adolescent shall be subject to any form of neglect, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression, and any attack, by action or omission, on their fundamental rights shall be punished in accordance with the law. [...] Art. 17 The right to respect consists in the inviolability of the physical, psychological and moral integrity of children and adolescents, comprising the preservation of image, identity, autonomy, values, ideas and beliefs, and personal spaces and objects (Brasil, 1990, p. 1).

It is also worth recalling the principles established in Resolution No. 2, of July 1, 2015, which defines the National Curriculum Guidelines for initial and continuing education at high-

er education level, through undergraduate courses, pedagogical training for graduates and second degree, of which we highlight:

II – the training of teaching professionals (trainers and students) as a commitment to a social, political and ethical project that contributes to the consolidation of a sovereign, democratic, fair, inclusive nation and that promotes the emancipation of individuals and social groups, attentive to the recognition and appreciation of diversity and, therefore, contrary to all forms of discrimination (Brasil, 2015, p. 4).

And, among the aspects to be considered in the teacher training project, the 5th article of said Resolution mentions: “[...] socio-environmental, ethical, aesthetic and ethnic-racial, gender, sexual, religious, generational and socio-cultural diversity as principles of equity.” (Brasil, 2015, p. 6).

This Resolution also determines that “Human rights education is a strategic need in the professional training of teachers and in educational action in line with the National Guidelines for Human Rights Education”, established by Resolution No. 1, of May 30, 2012, whose Article 8 defines that “Human Rights Education should guide the initial and continuing education of all education professionals, being a mandatory curricular component in courses for these professionals” (Brasil, 2012a, p. 2).

More specifically, regarding to the rights of gypsy peoples to school education, the Chamber of Basic Education (CEB) of the National Council of Education (CNE) approved Opinion CNE/CEB No. 14/2011, Guidelines for providing school education to children, adolescents and young people in itinerant situations.

V – regarding teacher training: a) it is the duty of Higher Education institutions that offer initial and continuing teacher training courses to provide teachers with knowledge of pedagogical strategies, didactic materials and pedagogical support, as well as evaluation procedures that consider cultural, social and professional reality of circus children and adolescents, as well as other collectives in wandering situations, and their parents and/or guardians as part of fulfilling the right to education (Brasil, 2011, p. 4).

With content in line, we have Resolution No. 3, of May 16, 2012, resulting from the aforementioned Opinion, of which we highlight:

Art. 1 Children, adolescents and young people in a wandering situation must be guaranteed the right to enroll in a public school, free of charge, with social quality and that guarantees freedom of conscience and belief.

Single paragraph. Children, adolescents and young people in itinerant situations are considered to be those belonging to social groups that live in such a condition for

cultural, political, economic, health reasons, such as gypsies, indigenous people, nomadic peoples, itinerant workers, campers, circuses, artists and/or workers of amusement parks, mambembe theater, among others (Brasil, 2012b, p. 1).

Regarding teacher training, the aforementioned Resolution states:

Art. 5 Courses aimed at initial and continuing education of teachers should provide teachers with knowledge of pedagogical strategies, didactic materials and pedagogical support, as well as evaluation procedures that consider the cultural, social and professional reality of the itinerant student as part of the right fulfillment to education (Brasil, 2012b, p. 2).

It is important noting that the Guidance Document for Education Systems was published by the Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI) of the Ministry of Education (MEC) and produced by the Working Group to monitor the implementation of Resolution CNE/CEB No. 3/2012. The purpose of the document is: “To give the possible unity to the procedures that Brazilian Education Systems adopt in relation to this theme, in the different places where gypsies are present” (Brasil, 2012, p. 4).

Resolution CNE/CP No. 2, of December 20, 2019, which defines the National Curriculum Guidelines for Initial Training of Teachers for Basic Education and establishes the Common National Base for the Initial Training of Basic Education Teachers (BNC-Training), in its Chapter III - The curricular organization of higher education courses for teacher training – establishes, in Art. 8, the pedagogical foundations of courses aimed at the Initial Training of Teachers for Basic Education, of which we highlight:

VIII - commitment to the integral education of teachers in training, aiming at the constitution of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and forms of conduct that respect and value diversity, human rights, democracy and plurality of ideas and pedagogical conceptions (Brasil, 2019, p. 5).

It lists as one of the general teaching skills:

Exercise empathy, dialogue, conflict resolution and cooperation, respecting and promoting respect for others and human rights, welcoming and valuing the diversity of individuals and social groups, their knowledge, identities, cultures and potential, without prejudice of any kind, to promote a collaborative environment in places of learning (Brasil, 2019, p. 13).

In Maranhão, Resolution No. 93/2015 of the State Council of Education of Maranhão, which establishes rules for the service of school education for populations in wandering

situations in the State System of Education of Maranhão and makes other provisions, thus determines:

Art. 3 - The Education System of State of Maranhão, through its public and private Basic Education establishments, must ensure the enrollment of students in itinerant situation without the imposition of any form of impediment, prejudice or any form of discrimination, as it is a fundamental right upon declaration by parents or guardians. [...]

Art. 5 Courses aimed at initial and continuing education of teachers should provide teachers with knowledge of pedagogical strategies, didactic materials and pedagogical support, as well as evaluation procedures that consider the cultural, social and professional reality of the itinerant student as part of the right fulfillment to education. [...]

Art. 9 The State Department of Education of Maranhão must create special programs, actions and guidelines for the schooling of children, adolescents and young people living in wandering situations.

§ 1 Socio-educational programs or actions aimed at itinerant students must be elaborated and implemented with participation of the social actors directly interested (students' responsible, the students themselves, among others), aiming at respecting the socio-cultural, political and economic characteristics of those aforementioned.

§ 2 The socio-educational assistance offered by schools and educational programs must guarantee respect for the cultural, regional, religious, ethnic and racial specificities of roaming students, as well as pedagogical, ethical and non-discriminatory treatment in accordance with the law (Maranhão, 2015, p. 2-3).

Resolution CNE/CP No. 4, of May 29, 2024, provides for the National Curriculum Guidelines for Initial Higher Education Training of Professionals in the Teaching of Basic School Education (undergraduate courses, pedagogical training courses for non-degree graduates and second degree courses), presents among the principles of Training of Professionals in the Teaching of Basic School Education:

X - the commitment that training of teaching professionals seeks to contribute to the consolidation of a sovereign, democratic, fair, secular, inclusive nation that promotes individuals and social groups' emancipation, attentive to the recognition and appreciation of diversity and, therefore, contrary to all forms of discrimination;

XI - education for the construction of a sustainable world, addressing issues that threaten the future, such as poverty, predatory consumption, urban deterioration, conflict and violation of human rights, always respecting plurality and cultural diversity; and

XII - freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate culture, thought, art, knowledge and pluralism of ideas and pedagogical conceptions (Brasil, 2024, p. 4).

And, according to art. 7 of the aforementioned Resolution, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) responsible for offering courses and initial training programs at a higher level for professionals in the teaching of basic school education must ensure: “[...] the consolidation of inclusive education, through respect for differences, recognition and appreciation of ethnic-racial, gender, sexual, religious, age diversity, among others [...]” (Brasil, 2024, p. 7). In Art. 10, The document in question defines that, at the end of the initial higher education course, the graduate must be able to:

X - structure pedagogical actions and educational environments that promote students' learning about: a) ethnic-racial relations established in Brazilian society in the present and in the past and that guarantee the appropriation of knowledge related to African, Afro-Brazilian history and culture and those of native peoples of Brazil, as well as values and attitudes aimed at deconstructing and combating all expressions of racism, with due appreciation of Brazilian cultural and ethnic-racial diversity (Brasil, 2024, p. 8).

However, in its art. 8, when defining guidelines for initial training courses for professionals in the teaching of basic school education for Indigenous School Education, Rural School Education and Quilombola School Education (Brasil, 2024, p. 7), it does not allude to itinerant peoples. The legal support for a teacher education focused on diversity is not recent at both national and local levels. However, the explanation of gypsy peoples right to school education is only found in specific resolutions, which contributes to their non-visibility and to the fragility with which the subject is treated in teacher training, considering the challenges that reality presents both for them and for professionals who work with gypsy children and young people.

3 Gadjé teacher training: first empirical evidence in the municipality of Raposa-MA

The first evidence begins with the analysis of a school institution, in which the presence of the Roma population manifests itself as a challenge for the promotion of cultural inclusion. Although São Joaquim School can be initially perceived as “a common school”, there is a significant detail: many families in the community avoid enrolling their children in school to avoid living with gypsy students. Consequently, this situation explains the low number of students compared to other public schools in the municipality.

The school's official name is Escola São Joaquim, but it is often called the “gypsy school”, which erroneously suggests that only gypsies can study there, which is not true. Children do not know their own history, origin, or culture, and they often hide this information to avoid discrimination. Teachers and staff do not recognise Roma culture in the classroom

as a relevant curricular element. Neither the municipality nor the school have records of this population. These data were collected based on the experience of one of the authors, who was a professor linked to the institution.

Figure 1 – Entrance of Escola São Joaquim



Source: Author's collection.

Brazil, with its vast cultural diversity, poses unique challenges for teachers across the country. Ethnic diversity in the classroom can include situations involving diverse groups and institutional apparatuses, such as indigenous peoples, quilombolas, gypsies, traditional populations, and school and health care institutions, among others. Regarding the gypsy universe and camped way of life, IBGE data confirm that this reality is common to several regions of Brazil, not restricted to the location of our research:

The states of Bahia, Minas Gerais and Goiás have the highest concentrations of Roma settlements. According to a survey carried out by IBGE, in 2011, the camps that exist in Brazil, based on information provided by municipal managers, according to these data, 849 Brazilian cities have camps. Most of them (372) are in 293 municipalities in the Northeast. In the Southeast region, Minas Gerais is the state with the highest number: 175 camps in 127 cities. Historicity of the displacement of Roma peoples in Brazil points to an initial arrival by the State of Bahia, the first colonial Brazilian capital, from there they had migrated to the State of Minas Gerais. There are multiple other migratory flows²

² Brazil. <https://www.gov.br/saude/pt-br/composicao/saps/equidade-em-saude/povos-ciganos-romani>. Accessed on June 6th 2024.

These data influence Brazilian school context by integrating teacher education and cultural diversity, bringing gypsies and the various situations experienced by this community as a source of reflection. Therefore, the challenge contained in the training of non-gypsy teachers, who need to deal with cultural and ethnic diversity in school environment, becomes evident.

During the teacher's experience, we realized that Roma children are unaware of their own history, origin or culture, and often, when they know, they omit this information for fear of prejudice. We can, however, report that Roma are a heterogeneous ethnic community, whose identity is marked by a strong symbology resulting from interaction with non-Roma societies. As discussed by Goldfarb, Toyansk, and Chianca (2019, p. 15), gypsies are:

Divided into various groups and subgroups, each one with its own cultural characteristics and identity perceptions, gypsies are influenced by historical and cultural contexts resulting from political, social, and economic formations of the countries where they live, and the attitudes of societies towards them. The multiple impacts of broader societies contribute to shaping the multidimensional structure of Roma identities, in a distinct and irregular way.

Given this clarification about the Roma community, we can associate the lack of knowledge of gypsy culture at São Joaquim School with Roma's history. According to Moonen (2011, p. 12):

Gypsies themselves have never left written documents about their past and many gypsyologists report that gypsies, in general, have no idea about their origins and, what is worse, show no interest in knowing where their ancestors came from.

In addition, since the first studies on Roma, there has been no consensus on their origin and the term "Roma". Assumptions lack sufficient empirical basis. They have been called by various names and there are records of their presence since the 11th century in Turkey, where they lived in caves, as nomadic musicians, blacksmiths and shoemakers. Although there is a hypothesis of Egyptian origin, it remains undefined and based on legends. Gypsyologists consider an Indian origin more likely due to linguistic and physical similarities; however, there is shortage of data for several reasons. The origin of gypsies remains a topic of debate.

According to Goldfarb, Toyansk and Chianca (2019, p. 72):

As for the exonym 'Gypsy', it probably finds its origin in the Persian *chaugān*, which was the name given to the military training of fighting horses, a term that, through semantic evolution, came to designate the stable employee or the horse merchant.

Sejuk armies, whose language was Persian, misrepresented the pronunciation in Cigan/*Cingene* that came to designate certain castes specialized in the arts of cavalry.

Several generic terms or denominations that Europeans have given to mysterious and exotic immigrants are not accepted or a self-identification by the gypsies themselves, since:

The fact that it is called 'gypsy' – a word created by non-gypsies, already establishes emblematic exchanges between universes, since the attributes impregnated in this word suggest symbolic behaviors and representations. If 'being a gypsy' is the same as being a thief or a vagabond then the non-gypsy who treats the gypsy as a 'gypsy' 'gets back a convenient and conventional treatment after all', as Fazito (2006, p. 691) states 'calling a gypsy a 'gypsy' constitutes a serious offense' (Goldfarb, Toyansk and Chianca, 2019, p. 106).

Therefore, it is important for this research, which *locus* is a school where Roma presence is manifested, to emphasize that this unnoticed presence becomes a challenge of cultural inclusion. This situation can affect interaction among children and poses a significant challenge for teachers, who need to deal with cultural diversity effectively and inclusively.

It is essential to clearly delimit who are the gypsies who belong to the community in the vicinity of São Joaquim School to avoid contradictions and stigmas. According to Goldfarb, Toyansk and Chianca (2019, p. 16), it is possible to observe in literature review four main groups of gypsies: Roma, Sinti, Romanichal and Calon and, among the closest to those to which our study focuses is the Calon group, since members of this group: "Usually speak Spanish or Portuguese and Chib (derived from Romani). They were the first to arrive in Brazil, as deportees from Portugal from the 16th century. Alongside the Romá, they make up a numerous group in Brazil".

As stated above, the accurate identification of these groups is crucial for the implementation of inclusive and culturally sensitive pedagogical practices that recognize and value the ethnic diversity present in the school environment. As Goldfarb, Toyansk and Chianca say (2019, p. 19):

Roma would be a heterogeneous ethnic community, divided into diverse groups and subgroups with their own cultural characteristics and perceptions of their identities, classified according to language, lifestyle, inbreeding, occupation, length of residence in a given country, religion, etc., whose common denominator of collective ethnic identity is usually observed from some elements that would form the core identity: the notion of shared origin (Indian) and similar cultural traits (despite relative diversity derived mainly from external factors and flexibility of oral tradition). We add

that the notion of distinguishing non-Gypsies is an important feature common to all Roma.

However, the view about who is considered a gypsy has been disseminated in various times and places, bringing the following stereotype:

Gypsies were described as having 'dark skin, short stature, naked children, dwelling in tents, preference for red clothes, secret language, sensual dances, inbreeding; dirty and horrible individuals, fearful and cowardly, thieves, liars, without sense of sin' (Fazito, 2006, p. 707 *apud* Goldfarb, Toyansk and Chianca, 2019, p. 108).

Faced with the tension between considering students as a heterogeneous ethnic community and based on stereotypes, we can identify as empirical evidence São Joaquim School, where the presence of students of ethnic origin distinct from the local society manifests itself as a challenge for an inclusive and multi-ethnic education. This is because curriculum assumptions are based on a perspective in which culture is generally taken as something homogeneous and shared by all.

We, then, reflect on the registry of this population in our state, something that has been present for a long time. It was in 1574 that the first cluster of *Calon* or *Kalé* ethnic group, deported from Portugal, arrived. According to Cavalcante (2021, p. 30):

Maranhão was pointed out by some authors and researchers as the place destined for João Torres and his wife, the first Calons exiled from Portugal to Brazil, in 1574 [...], who, researchers identified documents highlighting the lands of Maranhão as a place for exiled gypsies to be sent.

And, according to Braga, Ferreira and Braga (2012, p. 1):

The choice of Maranhão was by no means random: the exiles' fate would be the areas less densely occupied by the colonizers, in which space would be disputed with Indians. Although segregated in the metropolis, preference was given to gypsies, and not to the land's gentile, in the process of occupying certain areas of the Portuguese colony in America.

As the survey carried out by the Maylê Sara Kali International Association (AMSK) shows, Maranhão has approximately four thousand gypsies established in municipalities such as Afonso Cunha, Alto Alegre do Maranhão, Barra do Corda, Barão de Grajaú, Boa Vista do Gurupi, Central do Maranhão, Codó, Governador Edson Lobão, Cachoeira Grande, Icatu, Itapecuru Mirim, Lagoa do Mato, Miranda do Norte, Morros, Pinheiro, Pirapemas, Nova Olinda do Maranhão, São João do Paraíso, São Pedro dos Crentes and São Roberto. Among these municipalities, Raposa is not mentioned.

Although Maranhão is cataloged as a state where gypsy families live, with data mainly from health agencies, such as the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS), on the care of Roma peoples by Person Traditional and Specific Population Groups in Roma Family, the municipality of Raposa is still invisible. Data presented in the document “Subsidies for the Health Care of Gypsy People” (Brasil, 2016) reinforce this invisibility of Gypsy people in the municipality. When presenting data from the Northeast region and the state of Maranhão, the cities listed are Afonso Cunha, Alto Alegre do Maranhão, Barão de Grajaú, Boa Vista do Gurupi, Cachoeira Grande, Icatu, Itapecuru-Mirim, Morros, Pirapemas and São João do Paraíso, and Raposa is not mentioned.

Considering the reality of our research site in Raposa, Maranhão, there are 23 municipal schools that offer elementary education. Among them, São Joaquim School stands out, located near a camp of gypsy families. We have experienced this presence not by school or municipal data, but in a concrete way, when observing the predominance of the name Sarah/Sara among enrolled students. This name is popular because it is the name of *Saint Sara Kali*, who is considered the gypsies patron saint and whose celebration is held on May 24.

The second evidence refers to teachers’ professional profile. As already highlighted in the previous section of this paper, an ethnic group such as the Roma have incorporated themselves into national society using strategies to deal with prejudices. Therefore, they live exercising available economic functions – itinerant merchant, artist, fortune teller, palm reader – that brought with them the need for travel / itinerancy, which generates a challenge: how to deal with children and young people who need to attend school, while parents are engaged in activities that can make them travel? We remind you here that the absence of bond/enrollment in school institutions can generate a threat of legal punishments, including the loss of paternal power.

On the other hand, it is worth asking: who are the teachers who work in the proper school? Most teachers are women between 20 and 30 years of age; the others, between 40 and 50, and there is a single teacher over 50 years old. The latter has been working at the school for more than 10 years, while the others work at the school between 1 and 4 years. Those who do not live near São Joaquim school live in another neighborhood in the municipality of Raposa. None of them live in another municipality. They consider themselves of white or black ethnicity, and there is no teacher who considers herself/himself indigenous or gypsy.

Teachers include all professionals who deal directly with students in the classroom and who are linked to the school in the observed period (2023-2024), including tutors, classroom assistants and regent teachers. Most are linked via contract with the city hall. The initial academic training is well balanced between not having, being attending, having com-

pleted higher education and having only done the teaching course. In continuing education, most prefer the 100% in person modality, on a decreasing scale to online and in person, and 100% online, considering it more useful for their learning as teachers.

Most teachers participate in other non-school activities, such as social projects in underprivileged communities (Solidarity Project), online courses, application of ABA methodology, Pedagogy and Modern Language courses, school reinforcement, graduate studies, among other online courses. The school became a full-time school in 2023 and currently has 8 classes and 145 students. They report that, in each classroom, there are between 1 and 6 students who declare themselves gypsies. Therefore, we can perceive a close relationship between the non-Roma teacher and the teaching-learning process of a Roma child burdened with stereotypes, prejudices and cultural identity arising from its history and diaspora. This leads us to question what pedagogical conceptions teachers of the 1st phase of elementary school at São Joaquim School Unit have about continuing education focused on the cultural diversity of their students.

The third evidence is centered on teachers' statements, analyzed from the categories of teacher training, cultural diversity and presence of gypsy population. Far from resolving all relevant issues, this third evidence is entangled in contributions of Bardin (2011) to the analysis of collected content; of Nóvoa (2019) to pedagogical issues; and of DaMatta (1987) and Teixeira (2008), to themes related to gypsies.

Data collection was carried out through interviews in a focused group format, in order to rescue memories of classes and classroom routines during the period from 2023 to 2024. Notebooks and filming were used by the researcher. The Transkriptor *application* was used to transform teachers' speeches into text, facilitating analysis. Among the 14 employees present were: teachers of Early Childhood Education and Elementary School, tutors, class assistants and the manager. Twenty-three speeches were collected in two meetings held at the school itself. Among these statements, we highlight and analyze one for each category of the research.

Regarding the category of analysis of Teacher Training, it is essential to identify and understand the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers, as this facilitates the identification of gaps in teacher training and contributes to the development of educational policies. Such policies should aim at the adequate preparation of teachers to deal with the cultural and ethnic diversity of students. We highlight the following statements by teachers, which well illustrate these aspects:

When I leave the house, my husband says, 'Where are you going? To your gypsies?' I thought very differently when I did not work at São Joaquim school, today I see that it is like another school and even better (Teacher A, 2024);

You have to have experience to know how to deal with Roma students, because deep down they are affectionate and are 'sassy' like any child (Teacher B, 2024).

This speech reveals a significant change in the teacher's perception of the gypsy community. Initially, she shares a comment from her husband that carries a pejorative and stigmatizing tone, referring to Roma students in a possessive and dismissive manner. However, the teacher points out that her experience at São Joaquim School transformed her point of view. She came to perceive the school as a common institution, and even better, than other schools. This change of perspective is crucial, as it demonstrates that direct contact and coexistence with the Roma community can deconstruct prejudices and stereotypes, promoting a more inclusive and positive vision.

So, we observed in the speeches a change in perception on the part of school employees. Outside of school, there is a different (and possibly negative) view of school and gypsy presence, but direct experience in the school environment brings a new positive perspective to those who work there. This suggests that direct interaction and working in a diverse environment can change perceptions and attitudes.

In this regard, Nóvoa (2019, p. 11) points out:

School's metamorphosis happens whenever teachers come together collectively to think about work, to build different pedagogical practices, to respond to the challenges posed by the end of the school model. Continuing education should not dismiss any contribution that comes from outside, especially the support of university students and research groups, but it is in the school that it is defined, enriched and, thus, can fulfill its role in teachers' professional development.

In view of this analysis and in accordance with Nóvoa (2019), we reach the result that it is in continuing education, in the collective and within the school that alternatives are consecrated for the development of a solid, autonomous and conscious teaching practice in view of the historical, social and cultural context in which these teachers are inserted.

First, when analyzing the speech of Professor C (2024), when she says: "*I affectionately call my students 'my little gypsies'*", we refer to DaMatta (1987), when mentioning that forms of treatment are representative of social hierarchies in the Portuguese colonization model. He states that:

Portuguese society at Brazilian colonization time is a highly hierarchical social whole, with many different and complementary social layers or "states". So hierarchical that even nominal forms of treatment, that is, the way one person addresses another, were regulated by law since 1597 and were regulated again by law of 1739 (DaMatta, 1987, p. 65).

The use of the diminutive “little gypsy” exemplifies a mechanism that, at the same time, seems affectionate, but functions as a social disqualifier. Calling a student “my little gypsy” reflects a pattern present in our society, which is often not perceived as a problem. Although it may seem affectionate and desirable, this treatment does not generate knowledge or recognition of the Roma ethnicity. Instead, it perpetuates a stereotyped and stigmatized view, seeing gypsies as exotic, poor, half savage, or uncivilized.

Likewise, using terms such as “my little Japanese” or, even less acceptably, “my little black”, does not contribute to breaking these stereotypical and prejudiced views. These expressions reinforce the idea that certain ethnicities are seen in an inferior or exotic way, rather than being recognized and valued in their cultural diversity.

According to Teixeira (2008), speech’s mention of the student falls on a pejorative tone and deserves significant reforms, possibly related to diversity and the improvement of educational quality. He states that:

In the absence of a word that properly designates the complete set of all Roma communities, the expression ‘gypsies’ will be adopted, whose meaning is generally accepted, to refer to all individuals so called. Although it is recognized that such use has never had full legitimacy within the various communities analyzed (Teixeira, 2008, p. 11).

This point suggests that continuing teacher education is a crucial factor in integrating cultural diversity and creating a welcoming and inclusive school environment. We must emphasize the importance of referring to ethnic groups in a respectful way and avoid generalizations when calling students “gypsies”, even if it is affectionately, as this can perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices.

Regarding the second category of analysis, Cultural Diversity, it is necessary to recognize that it allows us a deeper understanding of cultural, historical and social practices of gypsies, often stereotyped and misunderstood. In this perspective, Teacher D’s speech (2024) was highlighted, which illustrates this aspect well: “They know things that go beyond their age, they do not use ‘excuse me’, it is not childish knowledge, it is malice and dating.”

This speech evidences the belief that there is a unique way to be a child. It problematizes the way in which the conception is constructed from a middle and urban class view. The speech reveals prejudices in relation to gypsy children, suggesting that they have knowledge considered inadequate for their age. This indicates the need for continuing education that helps teachers better understand and respect different forms of cultural knowledge and behavior.

Historical narratives about gypsies are often lost through exaggerated generalization ('gypsies' are spoken of as having only a single culture); only a few lines support the differential character of each studied gypsy community. And when authors get tired of individualities, they sketch the (fragile and perhaps nonexistent) unity of multiple gypsies. Both the historian and gypsyologist write as if all gypsies were just one (the 'typical gypsy' or the 'generic gypsy') (Teixeira, 2008, p. 12).

Karpowicz's research (2018, p. 155) reports that children, when asked what identifies them as gypsies, answer that they are the forms of treatment, in addition to language and clothing because, according to the gypsies' own report, they are not in the habit of using expressions such as "excuse me", "thank you", "please", among others. This example makes us reflect on whether the fact that children do not use the same treatments as teachers and are seen as rude, or whether there is a pedagogy that is not consistent with the construction of gypsy peoples' identity.

Regarding the third category of analysis, Gypsies, it contributes to the strengthening of research and studies on this community, giving visibility to its demands and needs. We highlight the speech of Teacher E (2024), who says: "I do not see gypsy culture here as I imagined, I see a lot of children lacking hygiene and care." This statement reveals a negative perception of Roma identity, underlining the lack of hygiene and care, which demonstrates a stereotyped and limited view. This underscores the importance of promoting a more comprehensive and positive understanding of Roma and aligns with Teixeira's (2008, p. 66) contribution on hygiene:

hygiene caused a transformation in clothing, especially in the upper layers, introducing a set of strict rules. This sharply distanced elite families from poor white families, but mainly from gypsies. Despite the existence of some rich gypsies, mainly in Rio de Janeiro, most gypsies were poor. That is why women, above all, wore costumes considered exotic. Men, on the other hand, as seen on Debret's boards of 1823, wore clothes like any other men of their social classes; since to negotiate it was not interesting that they were identified as gypsies. It was, therefore, a strategy of concealment of identity (Teixeira, 2008, p. 66).

Teixeira's (2008, p. 66) analysis of hygiene and its implications on clothing is crucial to understand how strict rules of hygiene and appearance, especially in the upper strata of society, have affected different social classes and, in particular, gypsies. While some wealthy gypsies managed to fit into certain social circles, most lived in poverty, which was reflected in their clothing considered exotic, especially among women.

This limited and stigmatized view reported by both Teixeira (2008) and in Teacher E's speech (2024) can negatively affect the self-esteem and school performance of Roma children. When seen in a pejorative way, they may feel discriminated against and excluded from

the school environment, which can impact their motivation and engagement in their studies. Teachers' lack of understanding and appreciation of Roma culture can result in inappropriate and exclusionary pedagogical practices. Teachers need to be prepared to deal with cultural diversity in a respectful and inclusive way, promoting an environment in which all cultures are recognized and valued.

5 Conclusion

In summary, this research has demonstrated that cultural diversity has a significant impact on the training of *Gadjé teachers* in the municipality of Raposa/MA. The main finding of the research is that this training can be improved by incorporating inclusive and culturally sensitive practices, which consider the seasonality and specific cultural habits of Roma families. These findings have important implications for teaching practice and suggest that cultural diversity should be considered in the training of *Gadjé teachers* in the municipality of Raposa/MA, in future programs of teacher training courses.

Practical implications show that the historical rescue of students' ways of life becomes an ally for the continuing education of teachers from the perspective of cultural diversity, aiming at greater portions of learning. During this research, a brief survey of the historical-cultural trajectory of gypsy peoples was carried out, contributing to the analysis and understanding of Roma ethnicity, so we consider it equally important that teachers also know gypsy history and culture.

Theoretical implications of this research reveal the need to address ethnocentrism in teacher education. By not including Roma culture in the curriculum, school contributes to the invisibility and cultural disrespect of this community, reinforcing ethnocentrism in the school environment. Resistance to understanding and integration of diverse cultures demonstrates the importance of promoting teacher training that values and respects cultural diversity. Therefore, it is essential to highlight that the training of *Gadje teachers* must be based on the concept of culture so that they recognize and integrate Roma culture as a fundamental part of the educational process.

When teachers do not integrate gypsy culture into the curriculum, they fail to recognize and value the history, beliefs, and habits of a meaningful community. This gap in teacher education perpetuates the cultural invisibility of students and prevents an inclusive education that respects and values cultural plurality present in the school. Therefore, recognizing and including Roma culture in the curriculum is a vital step in promoting a more inclusive education and honoring the multiple narratives that make up the school community. This is reflected not only in the enrichment of pedagogical content, but also in the construction of an environment where all children feel seen and valued, regardless of their cultural origin.

The main limitation of this research was the inability to infer the importance of participation and democratization of school content for all children, including Roma. There are still questions that remain unanswered, such as: Has there ever been a school in the municipality that improved its educational quality by valuing the cultural diversity of its students? Has cultural diversity ever been a point of quality improvement in other schools? Has any school in the municipality of Raposa ever implemented educational practices that welcomed cultural diversity?

Advancement in knowledge of the area brings new perspectives for a training that covers not only teachers, but also students' cultural diversity, highlighting the possible challenges faced by both. The close relationship between the non-Roma teacher and the teaching-learning process of a gypsy child, loaded with stereotypes, prejudices and cultural identity, results in the need to recognize the didactic problem among teachers and the challenge of cultural diversity in the classroom. There is a social friction between gypsies and non-gypsies throughout Brazil, with representations and stigmas associated with savagery, dishonesty, cruelty, cannibalism, immorality, lying and witchcraft, which fall on student learning and the continuing education of teachers in service.

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