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Rural Educators' Training: Indigenous Issues and Decoloniality¹

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the Rural Education policy project is to shine light on training provided to educators engaged in indigenous peoples' struggles and, therefore, in disrupting the colonial project, genocide practices and territory invasions. Based on these elements, the aim of the current study is to investigate indigenous representativeness as formative key to the Interdisciplinary Degree in Rural Education at UFF. In order to do so, it adopted a qualitative exploratory research methodology based on document analysis. Results have indicated that the investigated graduation course addresses topics associated with indigenous peoples' history, struggles and culture by taking into consideration the decolonial thinking.

KEYWORDS

Rural education. Educators' training. Indigenous issues. Decoloniality.

Formação de Educadores do Campo: Questões Indígenas e Decolonialidade

O projeto político da Educação do Campo visa, entre outras finalidades, contribuir com a formação de educadores engajados com as lutas dos povos indígenas e, portanto, desestabilizar o projeto colonizador, as práticas de genocídios e invasões de territórios. Com base nesses elementos, estabelecemos o seguinte objetivo de pesquisa: conhecer a representatividade indígena na matriz formativa da Licenciatura Interdisciplinar em Educação do Campo da UFF. Metodologicamente, adotamos a pesquisa qualitativa, exploratória, pautada na análise documental. Os resultados indicam que o curso desenvolve temas relacionados às histórias, lutas e culturas dos povos indígenas de forma articulada ao pensamento decolonial.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Educação do campo. Formação de educadores. Questões indígenas. Decolonialidade

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Formación de educadores en/para contextos rurales: cuestiones indígenas y *Decolonialidad*

RESUMEN:

El proyecto político de la Educación en/para los Contextos Rurales objetiva, entre otros fines, contribuir con la formación de educadores comprometidos con las luchas de los pueblos indígenas y, por tanto, desestabilizar el proyecto colonizador, las prácticas de genocidios y las invasiones de los territorios. Con base en estos elementos, establecemos el siguiente objetivo de investigación: conocer la representatividad indígena en la matriz formativa de la Licenciatura Interdisciplinar en Educación do Campo da UFF. Metodológicamente, adoptamos el enfoque de la investigación cualitativa, exploratoria, pautada en el análisis documental. Los resultados indican que el curso desarrolla temas relacionados a las historias, luchas y culturas de los pueblos indígenas de forma articulada al pensamiento *decolonial*.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Educación en/para los contextos rurales. Formación de educadores. Cuestiones indígenas. Decolonialidad.

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1 Introduction

Rural Education – which is an achievement of Rural Social Movements – aims at meeting the autonomy-related demands of peasant populations, as well as at acknowledging their historically built knowledge (Ribeiro, 2010). Among these populations, one finds native American peoples, mainly because data from the last demographic census carried out in Brazil, in 2010, indicate that, nowadays, there are 817,900 self-declared indigenous individuals, as well as 305 ethnicities and 274 different languages distributed countrywide (IBGE, 2012). According to Maher (2006), individuals’ right and access to specific indigenous school education are one of the main claims made by indigenous peoples, since their ways of life got endangered after they had contact with other cultures and were subjected to colonization processes. Therefore, orally-transmitted knowledge “was not enough to guarantee the survival and well-being of these societies. Nowadays, it is also necessary understanding the codes and symbols of ‘non-indigenous individuals’, since they, and their actions, started to populate the indigenous surroundings” (MAHER, 2006, p. 17).

The demand for specific training to indigenous teachers is associated with the claim for the right to indigenous school education. In order build schools capable of meeting indigenous communities’ specific needs, “the person accounting for conducting the entire school process must be, obviously, an indigenous teacher, who would be the most suitable professional to implement the political-pedagogical project in its community” (MAHER, 2006, p. 23). Thus, the insertion of indigenous peoples in educational discipline matrices and in university spaces is gaining room among demands by indigenous movements and indigenist organizations that play relevant role in society. The anthropologist and indigenous professor Baniwa (2019, p. 66) has emphasized the importance of paying close attention “to the fact that, despite the deep ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism, and arrogant scientism of both science and the hegemonic university, it is necessary, desirable and the right of indigenous people to have access to it”. This inclusion brings contributions to native peoples “in the fields of citizenship, historical awareness, protagonism; technical, scientific, political, economic and cultural empowerment; and cognitive and moral self-esteem” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 66).

With respect to the agenda of indigenous peoples’ cognitive and moral self-esteem, the specific training of indigenous teachers, their history and cultures remain poorly addressed at universities (BESSA-FREIRE, 2016). Such an issue has different meanings, such as the fact that “the development of public policies aimed at guaranteeing indigenous peoples’ entry and permanence in higher education institutions is relatively recent in Brazil” (GORETE-NETO, 2018, p. 1340). Among these policies, one finds Mato Grosso State University’s pioneering initiative to offer the first three higher education courses for indigenous teachers in 2001 (CURY, 2016)². In 2005, the Ministry of Education – together

² In 2001, Mato Grosso State University (UNEMAT – *Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso*) implemented three training courses for indigenous teachers, based on the following qualifications: Mathematical and Natural

with the former Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI – Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão)³ and with the Secretariat of Higher Education (SESu – Secretaria de Ensino Superior) – has launched the Program for the Support to Indigenous Higher Education and Intercultural Degrees (PROLIND – Programa de Apoio à Formação Superior e Licenciaturas Interculturais Indígenas) in order to support:

Specific Degree Course Projects to train teaching professionals focused on teaching indigenous peoples, who are capable of integrating teaching, research and extension, who promote the study about relevant indigenous topics, such as mother tongues, management and sustainability of indigenous peoples' land and culture, and who provide intercultural basic education in indigenous schools. The supported projects should also promote the political training of teaching professionals focused on educating indigenous peoples, such as intercultural agents who promote and implement projects in their communities (BRASIL, 2008)⁴.

PROLIND, among other achievements enabled by the 1988 Brazilian Constitution, plays important role in helping indigenous peoples to destabilize the historical invasion, appropriation and violence process, also known as colonization (Andrade, 2017). Nowadays, even after the end of the colonization process in Latin America, the colonial logics of knowledge, power and being remains acting to undermine indigenous knowledge, culture and ancestry, mainly when “conquest and colonization narratives praised the heroic and pioneering action of Portuguese colonizers, whereas indigenous peoples appeared to be easily defeated, catechized and changed by them” (ALMEIDA, 2017, p. 19). Throughout history, indigenous nations had their culture, history, knowledge and struggles silenced and erased by the colonial project that insistently tries to dominate their bodies, territories and singularities. Although this larger colonization Project seems to be overcome, it still persists through ‘coloniality’ markers understood by Aníbal Quijano as:

One of the constitutive and specific elements of the global capitalist power pattern. It is based on imposing racial/ethnic classifications on the world's population as the cornerstone of the aforementioned power pattern, and it operates in each of the material and subjective planes, scopes and dimensions of both everyday life and social scale (QUIJANO, 2009, p. 73).

The ecocide, genocide and ethnocide of indigenous peoples, among other elements, makes ‘coloniality’ in Latin America feasible, based on the “imposition of the European/Eurocentric thinking that erased so many different forms of thinking and that

Sciences; Social Sciences; Arts, Language and Literature. These courses were exclusively designed to serve different indigenous peoples living in the state (Cury, 2016).

³ The Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI) was extinguished by former Minister of Education Ricardo Vélez Rodríguez through Decree n. 9,465, from January 2, 2019. For further information, access: <http://www.justificando.com/2019/01/17/extincao-secadi-campo-educacao-conjuntura-atual/>.

⁴ Call Notice n. 3, from June 24, 2008:

http://portal.mec.gov.br/sesu/arquivos/pdf/PROLIND/edital_prolind2008.pdf.

condemned the traditional knowledge of many other Amerindian peoples to oblivion” (NEVES, 2008, p. 1). In addition to ethnocide, ‘coloniality’ is also ensured by the violation and neglect of indigenous peoples’ fundamental human rights, such as the right “to life, freedom and difference, to have their ancestral land marked, to have a place to live, to have differentiated assistance, as well as of their basic right to be subjects endowed with rights” (RANGEL; LIEBIGOTT, 2018, p. 15-16). Thus, the colonization process is intentionally updated in different ways, based on these elements, which are seen as State’s lack of effectiveness in ensuring indigenous peoples’ rights established on both national and international legal provisions.

The purpose of updating colonization is, among other aims, to ensure the “context featured by neoliberalism and by the economic development model based on agribusiness/agro-industry” (MARACCI, 2012, p. 602). Consequently, indigenous territories remain the object of economic interests; therefore, they reveal tensions taking place among indigenous demands, the economic agenda and environmental degradation. The association between the economic agenda and environmental degradation reveals the overwhelming effects of neo-developmentalism, such as ecocide and the murder of indigenous leaders, as well as of environmental and indigenist activists, which are recurring topics (RANGEL; LIEBIGOTT, 2018). Ecocide takes place in different contexts and territories. Among them, one finds the intentional forest fires emerging in indigenous territories located in the Brazilian Amazon and in the Pantanal region, between August and September 2019 and in 2020. These forest fires were associated with the land market and with the wild appropriation of nature, since:

Based on the ‘neo-developmentalism’ discourse, the Brazilian land market has been playing strategic role in restructuring the world’s agrarian capitalism, just as the frontiers of mineral, energy and water exploration by overall internationalized corporations keep on expanding (ACSELRAD, 2014, p. 89).

Indigenous peoples have historically co-evolved with nature, in opposition to aggressive neo-developmental practices; however, in some cases, their actions in defense of territories and forests have cost them their lives (Andrade, 2019). The murder of indigenous leader Paulo Paulino Guajajara⁵ - who was killed in Arariboia indigenous land, in an ambush set by loggers in Maranhão State, on November 1, 2019 - featured an attack on indigenous peoples’ rights and lives (JIMÉNEZ, 2019). According to data released in the report “Violência contra os povos indígenas do Brasil – Dados 2018” [Violence against Brazilian indigenous peoples – data from 2018] prepared by the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI – Conselho Indigenista Missionário), 135 indigenous individuals were murdered in 2018. This number corresponds to increase in indigenous murders by 22.7%, in comparison to 2017 – 110 deaths (CIMI, 2018). Roraima and Mato Grosso do Sul were the states accounting for

⁵ Paulo Paulino Guajajara was a forest guardian, who accounted for one of the most dangerous activities in Brazil, nowadays, namely: inspecting and reporting forest invasions. For more information, access: https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2019/11/02/politica/1572726281_632337.html.

the largest number of indigenous homicides – 62 and 38 murders, respectively (RANGEL; LIEBGOTT, 2018).

Based on Vicuña's (2019, p. 18) viewpoint, "the hate speech and prejudice shown by government representatives against indigenous peoples" is one of the factors worsening invasions in their lands. According to the aforementioned author, verbal attacks targeting indigenous peoples "during interviews and statements released by official offices have direct impact on indigenous villages and communities, such as physical attacks on their territorial rights and on their right to life, which play fundamental role in guaranteeing the physical existence of a given people" (VICUÑA, 2019, p. 19). These hate, racial and knowledge prejudice, and cognitive and moral self-esteem destruction speeches against indigenous peoples are widespread in Latin America. The 'resignation' of Bolivia's first indigenous president, Evo Morales, on November 10, 2019, after he was intimidated and attacked by the country's Armed Forces⁶, is an example of it. Morales' 'forced resignation' is associated with the systematic racism towards Bolivian indigenous populations, which was reported by former Bolivian vice-president, Álvaro García Linera, in the Argentinean newspaper "Página 12" [Page 12]⁷ (LINERA, 2019).

If one takes into consideration the violence and colonial historical contexts focused on ecocide, genocide and indigenous ethnocide in Latin America, indigenous peoples must take the leading role in their struggles, both in universities and in training provided to indigenous educators. Therefore, we turn our attention to Rio de Janeiro State, which houses 15,894 indigenous individuals living in different communities (IBGE, 2012). Based on surveys conducted by our research team on data made available by the Ministry of Education (MEC) at the e-MEC portal, about the offer of training courses for indigenous teachers in Rio de Janeiro State, it was possible seeing, on the one hand, lack of specific courses to meet that purpose (BRASIL, 2020). On the other hand, we identified two Degree courses in Rural Education: one of them is offered by Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ – Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro) and the other one, by Fluminense Federal University (UFF – Universidade Federal Fluminense) (Brasil, 2020). These degree courses – in compliance with Decree n. 7352, from November 4, 2010, which provides on the Rural Education Policy (Procampo) and on the National Program for Education in Agrarian Reform (PRONERA) – aim at meeting specific educational demands from rural populations:

Family farmers, extractivists, artisanal fishermen, riverside dwellers, agrarian reform settlers and campers, rural salaried workers, quilombolas, caiçaras, forest peoples, and caboclos, among others, who produce their material life conditions through their work in rural environments (BRASIL, 2010).

Although Decree n. 7.352/2010 does not make explicit reference to indigenous

⁶ For further information: <https://www.nexojournal.com.br/expresso/2019/11/11/Por-que-Evo-Morales-renunciou-%C3%A0-presid%C3%A2ncia-da-Bol%C3%ADvia>.

⁷ Link to the article: <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/231456-el-odio-al-indio>.

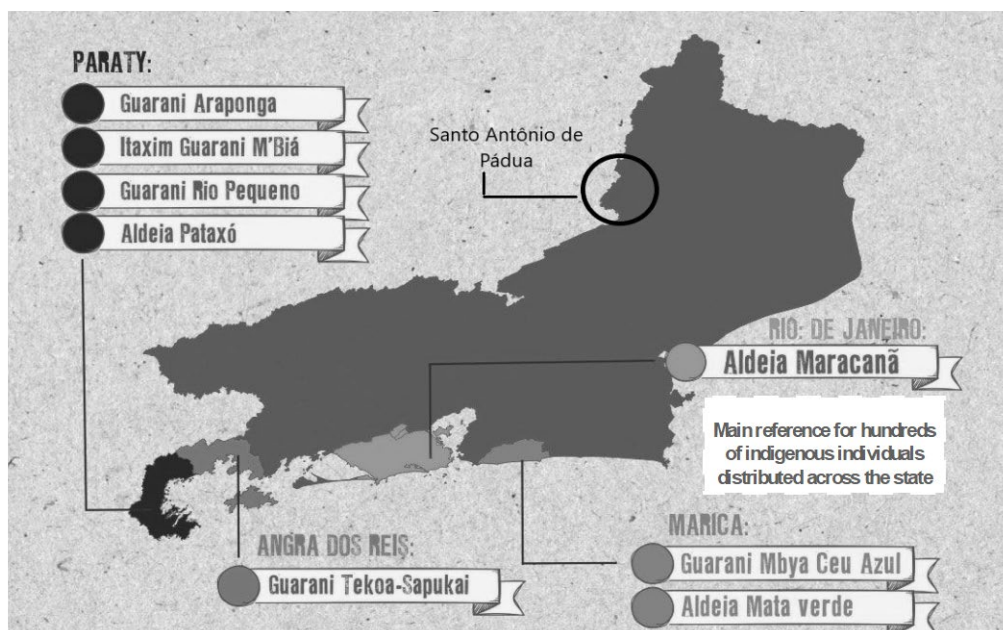
peoples, it addresses forest peoples, who – based on a self-definition indicated by one of the greatest indigenous leaders of contemporary times, Davi Kopenawa – represent the original peoples of the forest-land (KOPENAWA; ALBERT, 2015). From this perspective, the current research acknowledges the importance of expanding the Program for the Support to Higher Education and Indigenous Intercultural Degree Courses (PROLIND - Programa de Apoio à Formação Superior e Licenciaturas Interculturais Indígenas). At the same time, it understands that Degree courses in Rural Education, in Rio de Janeiro State, take shape as alternative to train educators by focusing on indigenous communities' demands. Within the scope of UFF, this alternative justifies the elaboration of the following research question: how are indigenous peoples' demands, histories and knowledge inserted in the formative discipline matrix of the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education (UFF)?

2 Trails and pathways covered by the research

Indigenous peoples' demands for specific training to indigenous teachers and, therefore, the presence of these peoples in universities pose the challenge of rethinking about “how this higher education institution can enable the coexistence, circulation, interaction, application and mutual acknowledgment of different knowledge types, based on different cosmological, philosophical and epistemological bases and logics” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 67). Given the expansion of policies, such as PROLIND and Procampo, which focus on repairing the historical violence imposed on both indigenous peoples and rural populations, universities face the challenge of promoting dialogue among different knowledge types and cultures, mainly if one takes into consideration the training to be provided to indigenous teachers and rural educators. The presence of indigenous peoples in Brazilian universities implies restructuring these institutions “based on the organization, production and reproduction of a unique, exclusive and individualistic knowledge at the service of the market” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 67).

Restructuring the university means overcoming, in its institutional policies and epistemic constructions, the misunderstanding about generic indigenous groups that are defined as the colonial construction of the dominant society's culture (BESSA-FREIRE, 2016). It happens because “there is a forged concept of ‘indigenous group’ that has little to do with the identity and culture of each people or group; consequently, it turns into a homogenizing classification since it encompasses remarkably different peoples in a single category” (MARACCI, 2012, p. 603). Several elements differentiate indigenous peoples, since indigenous communities “ancestrally experience [in their territories] complex interactions with environment and production, society and economy, knowledge types and their practices, whereas social forms of taking ownership of a given space” and turning it into territory have existential relevance to them (MARACCI, 2012, p. 603). Thus, we herein present the map comprising indigenous communities living in Rio de Janeiro State.

Figure 1. Rio de Janeiro State: indigenous communities and Santo Antônio de Pádua County



Source: Adapted from Mandato coletivo by Flavio Serafini⁸.

In light of the foregoing, the aim of the current research was to analyze how the indigenous issue is addressed in the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education, at Fluminense Federal University (UFF), Santo Antônio de Pádua campus. We herein commit to meet this research goal because we understand the importance of restructuring university policies aimed at ethnic-racial inclusion and at the representation of different knowledge and cultures forming the Brazilian society. Accordingly, we assessed rural educators' training fields and, more specifically, the insertion of indigenous peoples' demands, history and knowledge in the formative discipline matrix of the investigated course. The relevance of the current research is also emphasized by the historical institutional violence against indigenous populations, such as lack of specific courses to train indigenous educators in Rio de Janeiro State.

The current qualitative study has followed an exploratory approach based on document analysis, in compliance with the herein described research aim. With respect to its qualitative nature, we focused on analyzing "aspects of reality that cannot be quantified, as well as on investigating and explaining the dynamics of social relations" (SILVEIRA; CÓRDOVA; 2009, p. 32). Its exploratory approach, in its turn, aimed at "enabling greater familiarity with the problem in order to make it more explicit" (SILVEIRA; CÓRDOVA; 2009, p. 35). The document analysis research technique was adopted for data collection purposes; it was applied to official documents of the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education provided by Fluminense Federal University (UFF), Santo Antônio de Pádua

⁸ Available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/FlavioSerafiniPSOL/photos/a.743575935666697/2535197739837832/?type=3&theater>.

campus; as well as to data provided by students enrolled in the aforementioned course. Thus, the research data collection process was divided into three stages:

- Analyzing the syllabus and programmatic contents of the courses' mandatory and optional disciplines.
- Analyzing the Pedagogical Project of the Course (PPC).
- Recovering information recorded in a training journal.

The first data collection stage focused on identifying disciplines comprising social, territorial, historical, cultural, health and environmental aspects associated with indigenous peoples, among others. It was done to identify, and to help better understanding, indigenous representativeness in the disciplines of the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at UFF. In order to do so, we searched for keywords related or referring to indigenous peoples – i.e., to their history, culture, knowledge, ancestry and worldview – in descriptions of syllabus. These keywords were associated with the following denominations: *indians*, *indigenous peoples*, *traditional peoples*; *native peoples*; *indigenous communities*; *natives*; and *Amerindians*. The mandatory and optional disciplines covered in this document analysis process are described below.

Table 1. Discipline Matrix adopted by the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at UFF: *mandatory disciplines*⁹

Mandatory Disciplines							
1 st semester	2 nd semester	3 rd semester	4 th semester	5 th semester	6 th semester	7 th semester	8 th semester
Reading and writing workshop (60h)	Psychology of Education (60h)	Historical Studies (60h)	Education Organization in Brazil (60h)	Contemporary History II (60h)	Geography Applied to Rural Education (60h)	Sociology of Rural Education (60h)	History of Brazil II (60h)
Philosophy I (60h)	Philosophy II (60h)	Community Planning and Management (60h)	YAE applied to Rural Education (60h)	Philosophical Topics for Rural Education (60h)	Brazilian Socio-Spatial Formation (60h)	Research and Educational Practice IV: Rural Education (160)	Knowledge of the Land, Popular Culture and Intangible Heritage (60h)
Introduction to the Study of Human and Social Sciences I (60h)	Human Geography (60h)	Agrarian Geography (60h)	Social Sciences Applied to Rural Education II (60h)	Educational Research and Practice II: Rural Education (160h)	History of Brazil I (60h)	Education and Ethnic-Racial Relationships I (60h)	Afro-Brazilian History and Culture (60h)
Rural Pedagogy and Study Methodology (60h)	Social Sciences Applied to Rural Education I (60h)	Inclusive Education I (60h)	Contemporary History I (60h)	Education and Health I (60h)	Social Movements and Public Rural Education (60h)	Final Course Completion Paper (60h)	Human Rights and Rural Citizenship I (60h)
Agrarian Issue in Brazil I (60h)	Didactics (60h)	Education and Sustainability I (60h)	Educational Research and Practice I: Rural Education (180h)	History and Culture of Indigenous Peoples (60h)	Educational Research and Practice III: Rural Education (160h)	Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) I (30h)	Final Course Completion Paper II (60h)
Total = 300h	Total = 300h	Total = 300h	Total = 400h	Total = 400h	Total = 400h	Total = 370h	Literary Creation Workshop (60h)
Total workload = 2,770 h							

Source: Elaborated by the authors. Data from UFF's Academic Bureau – IDUFF (2019).

⁹ Discipline matrix version **114.01.002**, 2018. For further details, access: https://app.uff.br/graduacao/quadrodehorarios/grade_corpo_docente.

Table 2. Discipline Matrix adopted by the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at UFF: *optional* disciplines

Optional Disciplines		
Philosophy: Content and Method (30h)	Special Topics in History III (60h)	Special Topics in Philosophy I (60h)
Geography: Content and Method (60h)	Special Topics in History IV (60h)	Special Topics in Philosophy II (60h)
Sociology: Content and Method (30h)	Special Topics in Social Sciences I (60h)	Special Topics in Philosophy III (60h)
History: Content and Method (60h)	Special Topics in Social Sciences II (60h)	Special Topics in Philosophy IV (60h)
Special Topics in Rural Education I (60h)	Special Topics in Social Sciences III (60h)	Poverty, Inequality and Exclusion in Brazil (60h)
Special Topics in Rural Education II (60h)	Special Topics in Social Sciences IV (60h)	Sociology of Absences (60h)
Special Topics in Rural Education III (60h)	Special Topics in Geography I (60h)	Introduction to the History of Science (60h)
Special Topics in Rural Education IV (60h)	Special Topics in Geography II (60h)	Psychology of Emergencies and Disasters (60h)
Special Topics in History I (60h)	Special Topics in Geography III (60h)	Psychosocial Research on the City (60h)
Special Topics in History II (60h)	Special Topics in Geography IV (60h)	Film and Literature Dialogues (60h)

Source: Elaborated by the authors. Data from UFF's Academic Bureau - IDUFF (2019).

The second data collection stage – analyzing the Pedagogical Project of the Course (PPC) – focused on investigating elements in the proposition to train educators to work in the multidisciplinary teaching field, in rural schools. The Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at UFF provides this training type in the Human and Social Sciences field through Major Degree in Philosophy, History, Sociology and Geography. Training based on knowledge field in the aforementioned course stems from the understanding that “rural, indigenous and *quilombola* teachers’ training aims at overcoming knowledge fragmentation. Training based on knowledge field, rather than on disciplines, is a strategy adopted to overcome this issue” (ARROYO, 2012, p. 364). According to the Pedagogical Project, the course counts on total workload of 3,210 hours to complete the discipline matrix; they are divided as follows: 2,770 hours of mandatory workload; 240 hours of minimum workload for optional disciplines and 200 hours of complementary activities¹⁰.

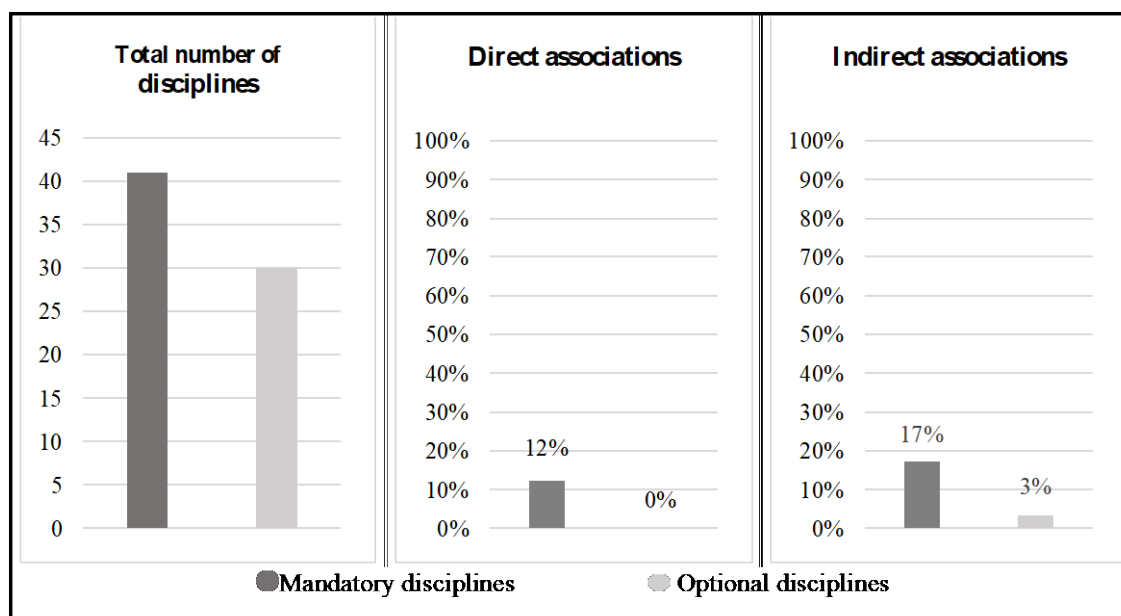
¹⁰ IDUFF 2019 information available at: <https://app.uff.br/iduff/consultaMatrizCurricular.uff>.

The third data collection stage has analyzed the training journal of a student; it was treated as “record of personal experiences and past observations, which was identified as personal document, whose writer recorded interpretations, opinions, feelings and thoughts” (ALVES, 2004, p. 4). This data collection instrument was used to help broadening the research horizons – i.e., to recover the records, transcripts and notes made throughout the training process in the investigated course, from the perspective of someone who sees the course from the inside out. We looked for other topics in the training journal that could indicate that the discipline addressed topics associated with indigenous peoples, such as *Brazilian territorial formation, Brazilian space occupation and transformation, environment and society, recovery of oral traditions, traditional populations’ health and counter-hegemonic essays*. Thus, the training journal was extremely important to help us identifying disciplines addressing indigenous issues, although they did not include the aforementioned keywords in the description of syllabus.

3 Indigenous issues in the discipline matrix of the interdisciplinary degree course in rural education (uff)

Rural Education courses are based on a plural training discipline matrix capable of communicating with different epistemologies, histories and knowledge accumulated and built by rural communities (CALDART, 2012). This differentiation in the formative discipline matrix takes place because Rural Social Movements demand a training type different from the single teacher-training prototype. More specifically, they demand that educators’ formative discipline matrix must include “rural knowledge, issues associated with land management throughout our history [...] movements fighting for peasant land and agriculture, as well as for *quilombola* and indigenous peoples’ territories” (ARROYO, 2007, p. 167). This scenario contradicts the ‘coloniality’ logic that has been acting to “strip [rural communities] of their intellectual knowledge, as well as of their externalizing or objectifying means of expression” (QUIJANO, 2009, p. 111). Based on these arguments, the aim of the present research stage is to identify the representativeness of indigenous demands in the formative discipline matrix of the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at Fluminense Federal University (UFF).

Figure 2. Representativeness of indigenous issues in the investigated course disciplines



Source: Elaborated by the authors. Research data (2019).

From the perspective of claiming for a formative discipline matrix comprising different epistemologies, we herein highlight the demands from indigenous peoples who – at the time they join university courses – “criticize the dominant knowledge mode and the epistemological hierarchy typical of contemporary society, which delegitimizes the original Rural Education protagonists as knowledge producers” (CALDART, 2009, p. 38). Thus, indigenous populations demand a broader and more diverse education project that also includes their knowledge, struggles and history in its discipline matrix. We analyzed 71 syllabi – 41 mandatory and 30 optional – of disciplines comprising the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at Fluminense Federal University (UFF) by taking into consideration the demand for a discipline matrix representative of indigenous issues. Our analyses aimed at identifying issues and topics focused on indigenous peoples’ demands categorized as direct and indirect relationships in the syllabi and content approaches, as described in the research methodology.

3.1 Indigenous issues in rural educators’ training

The implementation of the Rural Education course resulted from struggles of several rural peoples - among them, indigenous nations – for the right to education conceived from its place of origin, i.e., education *in* and *about* the rural context (CALDART, 2009). Thus, the right to Rural Education is based on the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, whose articles 205 and 206 ensure the universal right to education and the State’s duty to guarantee it (BRASIL, 1988). It is also based on Law n. 9.394/96 – Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB – *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação*) – which provides on the methodology, discipline matrix and organization of rural schools (BRASIL, 1996). In addition to these two legal provisions, Rural Education was based on Decree n. 7352, from November 4, 2010,

which subsequently consolidated the Program for the Support to Major Degree in Rural Education (Procampo - *Programa de Apoio à Formação Superior em Licenciatura em Educação do Campo*) in 2012 (MOLINA; ANTUNES-ROCHA, 2014).

It is worth emphasizing that the Major Degree course for rural educators takes place in the context of implementing the Rural Education Policy, since “communities have been organizing themselves to demand access to higher education courses, mainly to Major Degrees, in order to guarantee access to basic education in the environments they live in, namely: rural communities and villages” (CAIXETA, 2013, p. 283). Therefore, when indigenous peoples join university courses, mainly Rural Education courses, they claim that the formative discipline matrix should acknowledge “the key role played by land and territory in producing life, culture, identities, tradition and knowledge” (ARROYO, 2007, p. 167). If one takes into consideration this need, among others, as the result from rural populations’ claims and historical struggles for an education based on their ways of life, the formative discipline matrix of UFF’s Rural Education course presents some topics associated with indigenous peoples’ demands, as shown in Figure 1, and in the following table.

Table 3. Disciplines making direct reference to indigenous peoples.

Disciplines	Descriptions of Syllabus
Social Sciences Applied to Rural Education II	Rural Education as social practice and theoretical category: current issues. Ethnic-racial issues in rural Brazil. <i>Indigenous</i> social movements and black rural communities. <i>Indigenous</i> education. <i>Quilombola</i> education. Peasant, <i>quilombola</i> and traditional communities: memories, knowledge and practices.
Human Rights and Citizenship in the Countryside	[...] In-depth study about some topics: <i>demarcation of indigenous lands</i> and their conflicts, agrarian reform, pesticide- and Genetically Modified Organism-use policies and impacts, land grabbing.
Education and Ethnic-Racial Relationships	[...] African and <i>indigenous</i> education and knowledge construction processes; Analyzing issues associated with the education of Black populations and indigenous peoples living in Brazil; understanding the theoretical-methodological proposals for education on ethnic-racial relationships.
History and Culture of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil	Analyzing <i>indigenous peoples'</i> historical process in Brazil, cultural diversity, the development of educational activity and the current <i>indigenous</i> legislation, with emphasis on concepts of, and myths about, <i>indigenous peoples</i> , in order to promote critical reflections leading to appreciation and respect for difference.
Educational Research and Practice IV: Rural Education	Investigative practices and processes. Proposals for actions to be implemented in alternative systems, such as Youth and Adult Education, Inclusive Education, <i>Indigenous Education</i> , <i>Quilombola</i> Education, Social Movements, University Entrance Examination, and cultural spaces, among others.

Source: Elaborated by the authors. Data provided by the Course's Secretariat (September, 2019).

Based on the analysis applied to syllabi and programmatic contents, it was possible seeing that some disciplines make direct references to indigenous peoples. The incidence of disciplines addressing issues associated with indigenous' education, struggle for land, culture, knowledge, among others, indicates that the discipline matrix of the Rural Education course is not based on the hegemonic education model. On the contrary, it suggests "an expanded training matrix that starts from the specificities of individuals to be educated" (MOLINA, 2017, p. 592). In other words, by considering that Rural Education also targets indigenous peoples, the formative discipline matrix of the investigated course covers disciplines that address relevant issues to demands and interests of these peoples. This feature of the Rural Education course contributes to implement a 'decolonial' approach in the formative discipline matrix developed for rural educators. Likewise, it highlights the important role played by this

course as critique to the Eurocentric knowledge construction model that was naturalized throughout history as the only knowledge type (QUIJANO, 2009).

The incidence of all five disciplines – shown in Table 3 – in the formative discipline matrix also indicates the possibility to question the very basis of the *coloniality* project based on racial, knowledge and gender ‘inferiorization’, according to which, “indigenous peoples [are inferior] due to their ethnic-racial-primitive-native condition, whereas indigenous and black women are two times inferior for being ‘black’ or ‘indigenous’ and for being ‘women’” (WALSH, 2013, p. 55). According to Edgardo Lander, the pursuit of alternatives to the knowledge ‘inferiorization’ model starts by questioning one of the main hegemonic knowledge naturalization and legitimating mechanisms; i.e., “the set of knowledge globally know as social sciences” (LANDER, 2005, p. 8). Based on this argument and on research data, it is possible stating that, to a certain extent, the Rural Education course at UFF has been doing this questioning, mainly when the aforementioned course, with qualification in Social Sciences, includes topics associated with indigenous history, cultures, territories and knowledge that are historically questioned as valid (LANDER, 2005).

Indigenous knowledge has historically been silenced, marginalized and subordinated throughout the construction of Latin American universities, mainly in the Social Sciences field (CASTRO-GÓMEZ; GROSGOUEL, 2007). Movements towards ethnic-racial and knowledge expansion, and inclusion, in universities have only started in the last decades because of affirmative policies and racial quotas and, later on, due to PROLIND and Procampo. Among these movements, José Jorge de Carvalho (2006, p. 1) has emphasized the revision and “relocation of the center-periphery relationship in theoretical production; the expansion of the ethnic and racial place of academic students who, before, were almost exclusively white and who, nowadays, must also be black and indigenous”. The political proposal of Rural Education in this relocation process has found room to enhance the inclusion of these knowledge types, since it addresses the epistemological violence through which:

Subaltern knowledge types were excluded, omitted, silenced and ignored. Since the Enlightenment, in the 18th century, this silencing process was legitimized based on the idea that these knowledge types represented a mythical, inferior, pre-modern and pre-scientific stage of human knowledge. Only knowledge produced by the European scientific and philosophical elite was considered ‘true’ knowledge, since it was capable of disregarding its space-time constraints in order to place itself on a neutral observation platform (CASTRO-GÓMEZ; GROSGOUEL, 2007, p. 20).

Confronting inferior knowledge representations and, thus, articulating the relocation of the center-periphery relationship in theoretical production means, among other elements, thinking about the training of rural educators based on a plural formative discipline matrix (PPC, 2018, p. 14); mainly in a training program whose Pedagogical Course Project aims at, among other purposes, “*training educators who acknowledge and respect the social, cultural and physical diversity of rural populations, as well as who identify and fight against different forms of discrimination*” (PPC, 2018, p. 14). Thus, the discipline matrix enables structuring a pedagogical practice based on specificities of indigenous peoples, among other rural

populations. The importance of this discipline matrix is mainly evidenced if one takes into consideration “the denial, by training systems, of experiences lived by non-formal education sectors” (ALENCAR, 2010, p. 219).

In order to confront this denial, Arroyo (2012, p. 362) has emphasized the need of ‘repoliticizing’ formative discipline matrices; i.e., “incorporating knowledge about the history of inequalities’ production and the history of political domination-subordination relationships imposed by the logic of capital on agriculture, as well as on rural peoples and workers”. Based on these elements, research data have indicated that the training course for rural educators at UFF addresses issues associated with *Human Rights and Rural Citizenship*. Therefore, discussions about the demarcation of indigenous lands enable students to identify the conflicts featuring power and domination relationships observed in rural contexts. Having access to this discussion in the training process enables rural educators to re-read indigenous struggles for the right to land, among other fundamental rights.

In addition to the aforementioned topic, disciplines such as *Social Sciences applied to Rural Education II* and *Educational Research and Practice IV* address issues associated with indigenous education. Working *with* elements of indigenous education during rural educators’ training process helps these professionals to better understand education dynamics different from the hegemonic approach conventionally observed in educational spaces. For better clarification purposes, we herein emphasize that in indigenous education, for example, “the pedagogical discourse as we know it is not typical of indigenous societies: ‘Pay attention: this is how it is done. First, it is necessary...’. No” (MAHER, 2006, p. 8). Unlike this approach, “the indigenous learning model involves demonstration, observation, imitation, trial and error” (MAHER, 2006, p. 8).

Other approaches and learning dynamics applied in the rural educators’ training process enable students to build pedagogical practices based on communities’ singularities. The discipline *Education and Ethnic-Racial Relationships*, in its turn, addresses the indigenous knowledge construction process, among other topics. Therefore, it serves the purpose of including other knowledge production forms and of questioning the knowledge-coloniality logic, which is exclusively based on producing the so-called scientific knowledge. Instead of producing asymmetries between these two knowledge types, such a discussion suggests that they can complete each other. Accordingly, Baniwa (2019, p. 71) has stated that “from the indigenous perspective, there is no incompatibility among self-declared scientific, indigenous and other knowledge”.

Different knowledge types can dialogue with each other in indigenous wisdom. Thus, when indigenous students enter universities “they appropriate as much scientific and technical knowledge as they can – oftentimes, even the ones they should not – through a filtering process based on their individual and collective demands and interests” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 71). However, science and universities “take little or no advantage at all of indigenous students’ different knowledge types that silently and invisibly circulate through their corridors

and classrooms” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 71). In order to change this reality, data from the current research indicate the importance of structuring a formative matrix comprising disciplines associated with indigenous issues, as well as of expanding the basis of ‘decolonial’ thinking in the organization of anti-racist educational discipline matrices.

3.2 indigenous peoples’ struggles and resistance: interdisciplinary approaches

The Pedagogical Project of the Course mentions that the discipline matrix structuring process is based on *multidisciplinarity* and *interdisciplinarity*. Multidisciplinarity represents the study of a given topic through the eyes of several disciplines. Thus, assumingly, students’ education is based on an interdisciplinary perspective understood as “part of the premise that no knowledge form is exhaustive in itself. The interdisciplinary thinking pursues dialogue with other knowledge sources and lets itself be nurtured by them” (BRAZ et al., 2018, p. 279). Therefore, the Rural Education course at UFF organizes its disciplines in order to promote such a dialogue and to help students to better understand the taught topics. In addition to the 5 disciplines shown in Table 3, we identified - in this dialogue – other 8 disciplines that indirectly refer to indigenous issues. The description of syllabus associated with the aforementioned eight disciplines made it possible identifying other topics inherently linked to the indigenous issue – i.e., with the culture and history of indigenous peoples – although they were not directly associated with the research object, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Disciplines making interdisciplinary references to indigenous peoples

Disciplines	Descriptions of Syllabus
Education and Health	Concepts of health, education and their relationship with society to enable educators to be trained [...] by taking into consideration issues associated with <i>rural populations' health</i> and their interrelation to contemporary issues.
Brazilian Socio-Spatial Formation	<i>Brazilian territory formation process from the colonial period to contemporary times. The successive periods and the different forms of organizing and using the Brazilian territory. Brazilian socio-spatial formation.</i>
Education and Sustainability	Sustainability dimensions: the socially just, the economically viable, the politically ethical, the culturally accepted, the environmentally ecological, the generationally inclusive. Sustainability from the educational perspective [...] <i>counter-hegemonic essays</i>
Agrarian Geography	[...] The <i>Agrarian issue</i> and capitalism: Agriculture, occupation and transformation of Brazilian space. <i>Rural social movements and agrarian reform in Brazil</i> and abroad; Agriculture and agrarian reform in Rio de Janeiro.
Human Geography	The nature of geographic space. <i>Different forms of taking ownership of the natural environment</i> and its transformation into social space. <i>The organization of space in different societies</i> , based on cultural and material contexts. Historical evolution of the use of natural resources by man. [...]
Community Planning and Management	Concepts and ideas referring to community; associativism background; [...] Fundamentals of Community Management: <i>community management experiences throughout history</i> ; Sustainability and Community Management. Aspects of Community Management: case studies. [...]
Knowledge of the Land, Popular Culture and Intangible Heritage	[...] Recovering knowledge about healthcare-related traditions (healers, faith healers, medicinal herbs, midwives), and their protagonists. [...] <i>Recovering oral traditions (legends, tales, teachings, creation myths) and their protagonists.</i> [...]
Special Topics in Rural Education IV	[...] Analyzing recurring issues in the daily lives of Rural Education students. Providing <i>critical analysis of Rural Education and its associated topics</i> . Encouraging debates on <i>contemporary issues associated with rural education</i> .

Source: Elaborated by the authors. Data provided by the Course's Secretariat (September 2019).

According to data available in the *training journal*, the disciplines listed in Table 4 address, at some point, indigenous peoples' demands. For example, these topics were addressed in the discipline *Education and Health*, based on the documentary called 'Baniwa – A story about plants and cures'¹¹. Students talked about traditional healing practices adopted by the Baniwa indigenous community, after they had watched this documentary. They highlighted the need of acknowledging and including these practices in public health policies

¹¹ Full documentary and technical file can be accessed at: <https://portal.fiocruz.br/video-baniwa-uma-historia-de-plantas-e-curas>.

implemented in indigenous communities (DF¹²). From the perspective of Degree Courses in Rural Education, this discussion can contribute to articulate and build alternatives to “disintegrated, centralized, curative, urban and non-universal proposals” (CARNEIRO; BÚRIGO; DIAS, 2012, p. 691) public health policies focused on rural population are based on. Moreover, it plays important role in the training provided to rural educators, since these degree courses “aim at confirming these professionals as subjects of policies”, among other purposes (ARROYO, 2012, p. 360).

The discipline *Brazilian Socio-Spatial Formation* held discussions about the colonization process and, consequently, about indigenous peoples’ struggles in defense of their territories (DF). If one takes into consideration the current scenario focused on updating the colonization logics in Latin America, it is worth emphasizing that “we feel like we are reliving the existential dramas of the hardest colonial times” (BANIWA, 2019, p. 250). Thus, enhancing discussions about indigenous struggles to remain in their territories, in the discipline *Brazilian Socio-Spatial Formation*, is a powerful factor given the current political context, mainly if one takes into consideration that Rural Education “combines the struggle for education to the struggle for land, for Agrarian Reform, as well as for the right to work, to culture, to food sovereignty and to territory” (CALDART, 2012, p. 261).

With respect to the development of discipline *Human Geography*, data have indicated approaches to indigenous populations’ ways of life, to the way they *live* the territory and the environment, without colonial rationalities associated with the ownership of nature (DF). All disciplines listed in Table 4 include topics that are relevant to indigenous demands; as well as dialogues about territory, health, struggles, environment and indigenous education issues. Data collected in the training journal have evidenced that discussions are not promoted from knowledge ‘coloniality’ perspective when these issues are addressed in the course’s disciplines. According to Silva and Bicalho (2018, p. 246), this ‘coloniality’ type aims at “relegating the most diverse indigenous ethnicities to the role of supporting actors in their own land by cheating them as subjects of their own stories”. Unlike this ‘coloniality’, rural educators’ training is based on inter-epistemic approaches, since its disciplines aim at debunking “the idea of submitted and subordinated indigenous peoples” (NEVES, 2008, p. 2).

Research data have indicated that discipline approaches focused on indigenous peoples aim at overcoming prejudiced ideas (FD); i.e., beliefs that “indigenous cultures are backward and primitive” (BESSA-FREIRE, 2016, p. 6). This factor reveals the potential of Rural Education to promote, as highlighted by Molina (2017, p. 600), “an intense interdisciplinary work [...] to deepen and broaden the world view of in-training educators”. Based on this interdisciplinarity, the discipline *Education and Sustainability* enabled discussions focused on promoting counterpoints to the hegemonic developmental devices represented by agribusiness (DF). The aforementioned devices enable the “development logic

¹² Code assigned to data collected in the training journal.

capable of ‘deterritorializing’ communities and cultures”, to the same extent that it establishes aggressive forms of taking ownership of nature in rural environments (SILVA, 2012, p. 730). Moreover, the advance of agribusiness in indigenous territories in recent years has been encouraged by government representatives to help strengthening this logic. Consequently, there has been increase in the number of intentional forest clearing and burning events (ISA, 2019).

Discussions and inquiries held in the discipline *Education and Sustainability* about the excluding production model are of paramount importance, mainly if one takes into consideration that this “property, work and time organization [model] ceases to be a civilizing modality, in dispute with other modalities that retain their vigor, and acquires hegemony as the only possible way of life” (LANDER, 2005, p. 13). In other words, it is a scenario where the hegemonic economic and knowledge production model is considered the only one possible. Inquiries about hegemonic positions were also addressed in the discipline *Knowledge of the Land, Popular Culture and Intangible Heritage*, based on which, it was possible building dialogues necessary to enable rural educators’ training (DF). The inclusion of these inquiries, as well as of other understandings about the world, knowledge, cultures and indigenous ancestry – in both disciplines – represents the process of *giving meaning* to rural educators’ training, so they can understand the current political and economic dynamics and interests, according to which, the peasant territory is the object of capital’s desire.

In order to confront the interests of capital, the *training diary* emphasizes the contribution of Rural Education to political empowerment. The discipline *Community Planning and Management*, which is related to the organization of struggles and political confrontations, together with rural communities. In addition, the aforementioned discipline addressed the need of strengthening the ‘*re-politicization*’ of schools and rural territories to provide these communities with the political and legal tools necessary to have their demands met (DF). More specifically, within a broader view of linguistic diversities, indigenous peoples often need to defend their historical agenda in ‘territories’ where the logics of ‘coloniality’ – as well as of *knowledge, power and being* – prevail and so does the denial of their cultures, languages and social practices. Thus, disciplines described in Table 4 highlight the importance of a plural training whose discipline matrix takes into consideration the representativeness of rural populations, without neglecting indigenous peoples’ history, cultures, knowledge, ancestry and worldview.

4 Indigenous’ physical presence and knowledge at the university

Indigenous representativeness in the discipline matrix of the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at UFF has been achieved through the adoption of direct and interdisciplinary approaches in the offered disciplines. Such an approach enabled the course’s discipline matrix to work on topics associated with indigenous peoples’ history, struggles and cultures in articulation with knowledge belonging to the Human and Social Sciences fields.

The main results have indicated that the aforementioned course contributes to destabilizing the excluding education model, which has been using different strategies to disqualify, throughout the time frames of colonization, all the wealth of knowledge, culture and knowledge-production held by indigenous nations. Furthermore, research results have also indicated that the incorporation of indigenous issues to the discipline matrix enables a plural training based on a worldview capable of integrating both the knowledge and educational practices of different rural populations.

It is essential including the plurality of rural populations' demands in the discipline matrix of the course, mainly if one takes into consideration the current scenario of constant attacks on the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples. Among these attacks, we can mention invasions of native peoples' territories, which are encouraged by the weakening of environmental protection laws, by the State' slowness in the process to demarcate their lands and, mostly, by the intense advance of nature exploration projects at the service of capital. Thus, including and enhancing these discussions in the Rural Education course at UFF means, among other aspects, re-signifying educators' training to enable the commitment to a society project aimed at meeting specific demands and claims. Among them, one finds the commitment to build educational platforms aimed at destabilizing the culture of ecocide, aggressive appropriation of nature, rural peoples' removal from their territories and indigenous genocide, in order to help maintaining the current colonial logics.

The significant number of disciplines addressing historical issues associated with indigenous peoples in the discipline matrix of the Interdisciplinary Degree Course in Rural Education at UFF is an innovative movement in teachers' training programs, mainly if one takes into consideration professors' poor mobility among disciplines offered in the course. Therefore, these disciplines are developed based on the approach adopted by each professor. However, it is worth mentioning the low indigenous representativeness in the course's optional disciplines, a fact that raises other questions, such as the course teachers' training associated with this knowledge field. It happens because results have only indicated 1 optional discipline – *Special Topics in Rural Education IV* – indirectly addressing topics referring to indigenous issues and demands. However, results have also indicated that the course is building pathways to include indigenous issues in the university environment. Consequently, it contributes to strengthen 'decolonial' thinking in the academic environment.

In addition to pedagogical issues, results have evidenced that just including indigenous history, cultures, knowledge and ancestry in the discipline matrix is not enough to meet indigenous peoples' demands for differentiated educational rights. It is also necessary expanding policies focused on these populations' access to, and permanence at, the university, since the physical presence of these social and political actors helps strengthening issues such as democracy, citizenship and indigenous representation, in a broader scenario of struggle for differentiated educational rights. With respect to these rights, it is worth highlighting that the institutional infrastructure of Fluminense Federal University (UFF), Santo Antônio de Pádua campus, poorly contributes to the physical presence of indigenous

individuals in this environment. Lack of university restaurant and student housing, among other student-assistance programs, was one of the factors making it hard for indigenous populations to remain in the university space. This issue got even more evident when we analyzed the geographic distance between indigenous communities living in Rio de Janeiro State and Santo Antônio de Pádua County, based on the map shown in Figure 1, and when we did not identify Intercultural Indigenous Degree courses in universities of the aforementioned state.

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