

Cultural diversity at risk: educational neocolonialism and the resistance of the peoples of the Amazon

ARTICLE

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Abstract

The central issue of this research is the proposed revocation of the Modular Teaching Organization System (SOME), which threatens the right to education of the peoples of the Amazon. Its relevance lies in highlighting the risks of educational neocolonialism and the urgency of critical decolonial and intercultural policies. A qualitative methodology is adopted, based on a historical-social review of the legislative process of Law 10.820/2024, through document and content analysis, grounded in decolonial theory. The findings indicate that revoking SOME would result in cultural erasure and the violation of the right to education of Indigenous peoples, Quilombolas, riverine communities, and rural populations. The mobilizations of ethno-racial and critical intercultural movements also stand out as a context of practice, in line with Ball's (2001) policy cycle approach. The study concludes that collective resistance reaffirms education as a right and underscores the need for plural, contextualized, and decolonial public policies.

Keywords: Public Policies in Education. Neocolonialism. Right to Education. Cultural Diversity. Intercultural Education.

Diversidade cultural em risco: neocolonialismo educacional e a resistência dos povos da Amazônia

Resumo

A pesquisa tem como problema central a tentativa de revogação do Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME), que ameaça o direito à educação de povos da Amazônia. Sua relevância está em evidenciar os riscos do neocolonialismo educacional e a urgência de políticas decoloniais e interculturais críticas. Adota-se uma metodologia qualitativa, com levantamento histórico-social da tramitação da Lei 10.820/2024, por meio de análise documental e de conteúdo, fundamentada na teoria decolonial. Os resultados apontam que a revogação do SOME representaria apagamento cultural e violação do direito à educação de indígenas, quilombolas, ribeirinhos e populações do campo. Destacam-se, ainda, as mobilizações dos movimentos étnico-raciais e interculturais críticos como contexto de prática, conforme a concepção de ciclo de políticas de Ball (2001), reforçando tal perspectiva. Conclui-se que a resistência coletiva reafirma a

educação como direito e evidencia a necessidade de políticas públicas plurais, contextualizadas e decoloniais.

Palavras-chave: Políticas Públicas em Educação. Neocolonialismo. Direito à Educação. Diversidade Cultural. Educação Intercultural.

1 Introduction

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The central problem of this research lies in the attempt to revoke the Modular Education System (*SOME*), which threatened the right to education of Indigenous peoples, *quilombola* communities, riverine populations, and rural communities, expressing the persistence of the coloniality of power and the neoliberal project in educational policies. The relevance of this study is in highlighting the risks of educational neocolonialism and the urgency of critical decolonial and intercultural policies for the Amazon. Thus, the objective is to analyze the content and potential effects of the revocation of *SOME* in Pará, showing how such a measure reinforces coloniality and threatens ethnic-racial diversity, by articulating cultural diversity, coloniality, neoliberalism, and educational policies.

The locus of this study is the state of Pará, whose cultural diversity is evidenced by Seixas Ribeiro (2020), who emphasizes the region as a complex network of interactions among *quilombola* communities, Indigenous peoples, and riverine populations who live along the rivers and in the forests.

The methodological approach adopted is qualitative, based on a historical-social survey¹, with emphasis on documentary and content analysis, in light of decolonial theory. The documentary research focused on current educational legislation in the state of Pará, particularly Laws 10.820/2024 and 7.806/2014. The content analysis, as proposed by Bardin (2011), made it possible to identify categories and traces of coloniality present in the educational policies analyzed. The theoretical perspective was anchored in the decolonial thought of authors such as Quijano (1992), Maldonado-Torres (2019), and Walsh (2009), ensuring analytical rigor and

¹ It is a study whose core is the analysis of dynamic social processes within a defined historical period.

interconnectivity in the interpretation of data. This methodological choice allows for an understanding of ethnic-racial dynamics in the Amazonian educational field, in critical articulation with global and local political structures.

The study is structured into five main sections: the first discusses the concept of culture, cultural diversity, and its relationship with neoliberalism and the colonality of power; the second examines educational policies in Brazil and in Pará; the third analyzes Law 10.820/2024 and its implications for the education of traditional peoples; the fourth presents the resistance of ethnic-racial movements and critical interculturalism in response to the legislation; and the final section presents the concluding considerations.

This research employs a qualitative methodology based on the interface between documentary analysis and content analysis, drawn from a historical-social survey, with a focus on decolonial theory and the analysis of educational policies. It seeks to demonstrate how the revocation of *SOME*, grounded in Law 10.820/2024, reflects the perpetuation of the colonality of power and undermines the right to education of the peoples of the waters, the fields, the forests, and the villages.

2 Cultural diversity, neoliberalism, and the colonality of power: a possible paradox

Culture is a polysemic term that metamorphoses according to historical time and society, as stated by Laraia (2001). Eagleton (2005) notes that, traditionally, it meant our humanity, as a concept that defines values shared by all; however, from the 1960s onward, conceptual shifts reframed it as the affirmation of specific identities.

According to Laraia (2001), culture must be understood as a dynamic system that organizes life in society and operates in different ways: it shapes the human worldview, since each social group interprets reality from its own values and beliefs; it influences the biological dimension, as cultural practices shape eating habits, health, and body care; it is experienced differently by individuals, given that factors such as

class, gender, age, and personal experiences influence how people engage in culture; it has its own internal logic, which must be understood within its own references, even when it seems incoherent to outsiders; and, finally, it is characterized by its dynamic nature, constantly changing due to historical, technological, and social processes. Thus, culture is a central element for understanding the human being in all its plurality, as it structures both everyday practices and ways of interpreting and relating to the world.

Beyond discussions on culture, cultural diversity has gained prominence. It is understood as the variety of cultural expressions such as customs, beliefs, and traditions among different groups, shaping how they interact and organize their societies. It also involves aspects such as language, clothing, religion, and ways of life, fostering coexistence among different identities (Oliveira & Souza, 2011). Discussions on culture and cultural diversity have gained global relevance, according to Carvalho & Faustino (2015). For Eagleton (2005), this occurs due to four possible factors: 1) When culture emerges as the only alternative to a decaying society; 2) When the absence of profound social transformation threatens the very existence of culture; 3) When culture becomes a means of political emancipation for a group or people; 4) When an imperial power must negotiate with the way of life of the dominated.

Eagleton (2005) also argues that recent transformations within the capitalist system have placed the idea of culture at the center. Similarly, Carvalho & Faustino (2015) emphasize that mobilizations and debates on cultural diversity at the end of the 20th century, driven by policies of recognition and tolerance of difference, were motivated by the global economic crisis, which intensified unemployment and social vulnerability. This context forced central governments to consider inclusion and to design policies focused on social cohesion.

The responses to this context have two dimensions: multiculturalism and interculturality (Carvalho & Faustino, 2015). For Fleuri (2003, p. 27), multiculturalism corresponds to the recognition of the existence of different cultures coexisting in the same territory, highlighting diversity as a given of social reality; interculturality, on the

other hand, is understood as a way of addressing this diversity, emphasizing dialogue, interaction, and the construction of relationships among distinct cultures, with the goal of fostering exchanges, mutual learning, and overcoming barriers that may generate exclusion or hierarchization.

It is important to note that these concepts are polysemic, as they are appropriated by different political and ideological groups. Within neoliberalism, however, the goal is to include difference without changing the structures of inequality. This perspective has been central to educational policies in Latin America, as Walsh (2009) observes.

Policies aimed at valuing diversity, promoted by organizations such as UNESCO since the 1990s, emphasize respect and tolerance as the basis for coexistence in a globalized world. However, by prioritizing culture as a solution to social problems, these policies render economic and social inequalities invisible, consolidating individualism and neutralizing class struggles. Moreover, cultural diversity is incorporated into the logic of capital as a market strategy, expanding consumption and legitimizing the existing social order (Carvalho & Faustino, 2015).

In Latin America, the adoption of neoliberalism as an economic and political model fostered the spread of the ideology of respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity. These principles were consolidated in documents that served as guidelines for the formulation of educational policies at global, local, and regional levels concerning culture and cultural diversity (Carvalho & Faustino, 2015).

Within this context, Harvey (2008) points out that neoliberalism is not merely a set of economic policies, but also an ideology and a way of reorganizing social and economic power. In his analysis, neoliberalism is seen as a strategy to reconstruct social and class relations in a way that favors capital, while simultaneously weakening the role of the state in areas such as social welfare and economic regulation.

The connection between Carvalho and Faustino (2015) and Harvey (2008) highlights the paradoxical role that cultural diversity assumes in the neoliberal context, since it only gains visibility when it becomes a functional discourse for neoliberal logic:

symbolic inclusion of cultural differences is promoted without altering the economic and social structures that generate inequalities. Thus, according to Walsh (2009), educational policies in Latin America have been shaped both by the valorization of diversity and by adaptation to the demands of a globalized market, which limits their emancipatory potential by restricting them to a perspective of diversity management under the neoliberal lens.

This paradox of the role of cultural diversity within neoliberalism can be explained by considering the relationship between coloniality and neoliberalism. Although political colonialism² officially ended with the independence of the colonies, its structures of domination remained. Coloniality, as Quijano (1992) explains, is precisely the continuity of this system, perpetuating mechanisms and social structures of oppression and inequality.

Both Maldonado-Torres (2019) and Césaire (2020) analyze coloniality as a structure of dehumanization composed of different layers³ that interact with and reinforce one another. Among the multiple dimensions of coloniality, the one that stands out is the coloniality of power, which is associated with the imposition of norms and values that sustain structural and cultural inequalities, according to Maldonado-Torres (2019).

In the present, the coloniality of power is reproduced through the contemporary operation of neoliberalism, as Loch (2019) points out. While in the colonial period it manifested itself through territorial and cultural domination, in the neoliberal context it is expressed through the imposition of economic and cultural policies that continue to subordinate the poorest regions of the world, especially former colonies, to the dynamics of global economic exploitation. It is also expressed through cultural diversity

² According to Quijano (1992), colonialism represented a process of political, social, and cultural imposition by Europeans over other peoples.

³ Maldonado-Torres (2019) identifies three main dimensions of this phenomenon: the coloniality of being, of knowledge, and of power. For him, what connects these spheres is subjectivity, since it sustains the coherence between the colonial structure and the prevailing order.

policies, such as those promoted by UNESCO, which reinforce unequal social structures (Carvalho & Faustino, 2015).

With regard to ethnic-racial relations, Nogueira (2023) states that one of the possible, among multiple, connections between coloniality, neoliberalism, and racism occurs through neoliberal policies that exacerbate social and economic inequalities, often associated with ethnic and racial divisions.

Applied to the educational sphere, we understand that the interface between neoliberalism, the coloniality of power, and cultural and/or ethnic-racial diversity can be interpreted as a means of perpetuating oppression and inequalities. Through economistic and standardized educational policies, this logic disregards cultural diversity, ignores local knowledge, and reinforces the erasure of identities (Nogueira, 2023). Ball (2001, p. 100) argues that we are living in a moment of “increased colonization of educational policies by the imperatives of economic policies.”. This is *context*⁴ in which Brazilian educational policies are influenced by international and multilateral institutions.

3 Educational policies as text and discourse of cultural power

Within this context, the conception of policy addressed in this study is grounded in the policy cycle proposed by Stephen Ball (2001). In this model, the author interrelates the macro and micro spheres, respectively associated with the State and civil society, in order to highlight policy as a multidimensional and multirelational construction, as noted by Lopes and Macedo (2011).

The policy cycle is composed of three contexts that are continuously interrelated, namely: 1) the context of influence, which refers to political groups that compete in the formulation of political discourse. This is the space in which the

⁴ Lopes and Macedo (2011) and Lopes (2004), drawing on Stephen Ball (2001), conceive as basic principles those that, mobilized by political discourses, guide policies within a play of power relations. We will detail this concept in the following section.

fundamental principles that guide public policies are established; 2) the context of production, which corresponds to the sphere in which normative texts are developed and to the objectives they aim to represent. This context encompasses the executive and legislative agencies responsible for legitimizing and regulating policies; 3) the context of local practice, where the normative texts of the production context and the discourses of the context of influence are reinterpreted, resignified, and recreated (Lopes, 2004; Lopes & Macedo, 2011).

Furthermore, this perspective is essential for understanding the educational policy established by Law 10.820/2024, since negotiations between policy and practice occur in a cyclical and interdependent manner, and are not opposed, antagonistic, or immutable. The decision-making role of ethnic-racial and critical intercultural movements demonstrates the relevance of interactions between policy and practice in the formulation and implementation of educational policies.

In this sense, it is important to emphasize that educational policies are understood, according to Libâneo (2016), as a set of guidelines and actions that reflect social, economic, and ideological interests, shaping both the functions of schools and of school knowledge. For the author, they are deeply connected to market logic and to the recommendations of multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and UNESCO.

However, for Mainardes (2006), educational policies, influenced by Ball's (2001) contributions on the policy cycle, are both text and discourse. They are the result of the interaction between macro- and micro-politics, within a complex process influenced by multiple contexts that interact through relations of power and force. We add the cultural dimension of text and discourse, since these constructions are not detached from the cultural dimensions that structure social relations.

In Brazil, educational policies concerning cultural diversity focus on issues related to ethnic-racial relations, understood here as the relationships among different social groups and their members, influenced by concepts and perceptions regarding differences and similarities related to the racial belonging of individuals and groups

(Verrangia & Silva, 2010). These relations are marked by a history of exclusion and by the struggle for recognition carried out by social movements, which played an active role in implementing educational policies that legitimized the ancestry of African and Indigenous peoples in the construction of what we now call Brazil, according to Gomes (2019).

Brazilian education, historically shaped by a Eurocentric logic, silenced the contributions of African and Indigenous peoples, reinforcing inequalities and stereotypes (Munanga, 2015). Within this context, Laws 10.639/03 and 11.645/08 gain relevance, since, according to Coelho & Coelho (2013), they are of utmost importance due to their peculiarity of emerging “from the bottom up.” They did not originate within educational systems, but rather from social movements. However, it is not their origin that exposes their importance. For the authors, what confirms their relevance and uniqueness is “the nature of the challenge they pose to school knowledge: to alter worldviews, to reframe memory, to criticize myths, and to confront prejudice” (Coelho & Coelho, 2013, p. 96).

In this context, identity, ancestry, and resistance are intertwined and manifest both in the struggle against structural racism and in the affirmation of the history of historically marginalized peoples. The Black Movement has been fundamental in promoting an antiracist education that recognizes and values the country’s cultural diversity (Coelho & Coelho, 2013; Gomes, 2019), since the recovery of ancestral memories and knowledge strengthens identities and contributes to a more inclusive education capable of transforming the school into a space of respect, belonging, and the construction of a more just and plural society.

It is also important to highlight that the centrality of culture for these populations, according to one of Eagleton’s (2005, p. 41–42) conceptions of culture, “provides the terms by which a group or people seeks its political emancipation.” Culture is also conceived as a central and dynamic element in the construction of identities and social relations within the educational environment, as pointed out by Brandão (2002). It assumes the role of breaking with the Eurocentric hegemony that dominated Brazilian

education and of critically and valuably incorporating the traditional knowledge and histories of struggle and contribution of these peoples.

In this sense, education presents itself as a field of disputes, since it is a fundamental agent in the construction of subjectivities and of society itself. The relations of power that permeate educational policies are evident, for these policies serve as paths toward realizing a political project of society, as demonstrated by Thiesen (2019) and Libâneo (2014).

4 Educational policies at national and regional levels: a direct alignment

According to Thiesen (2019), in Brazil, since 1990, educational policies have followed neoliberal agendas, making the Brazilian educational system more open to the demands of multilateral and international organizations. Similarly, Libâneo (2014) highlights that educational policies have become a kind of “bargaining chip” in the contemporary context. He also observes that the internationalization of education takes place through broad curricular policies, the adaptation of knowledge to global standards, and the emphasis on external assessments. Furthermore, it involves teacher training aligned with international demands, reflecting the adjustment of education to the global economic system. It is important to emphasize that these actions, although presented as modernization and innovation, reflect the submission of education to the logic of the global economic system.

In recent years, the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC) has been criticized by scholars for aligning with neoliberal educational discourse. Lopes and Macedo (2021) reject the common base, arguing that it reduces the curriculum to management and the objective–evaluation binomial. Alves (2014) questions its actual necessity, pointing to the imposition of a single model without considering context. Moreover, the BNCC seeks to standardize the curriculum, but Paraíso (2025) highlights the impossibility of doing so given Brazil’s sociocultural diversity. Thus, the

debate remains marked by criticisms of its homogenizing character and its alignment with global ideals.

With regard to ethnic-racial relations in the BNCC, there is a significant suppression of discussions on Africa and Indigenous peoples (Paraíso, 2025). This reveals the continuity of a structural atmosphere of erasure and denial of these peoples' existence, which extends across the states of the country. Such an atmosphere reflects the coloniality embedded in national educational policies, which perpetuate and intensify a historically constructed structure of oppression, silencing, and erasure, as evidenced in the case of Mozambique by Huo and Neto (2024).

In the North region, specifically in Pará, the locus of this investigation, Alves (2021) points out that educational policies follow the national logic of standardizing educational processes, disregarding local diversity. The alignment of the state with the national and global neoliberal context was already evident in 2015, with the *Pacto pela Educação do Pará* program, whose stated objective was to raise the IDEB index (Pará, 2016). The *Pacto* stands out for its partnerships with private institutions such as Fundação Itaú Social, Instituto Natura, Todos Pela Educação, Instituto Synergos, Instituto Unibanco, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), among others (Ladislau & Alves, 2025).

In 2017, as a development of the *Pacto*, the *Sistema Educacional Interativo* (SEI) was created, aimed at expanding upper secondary education through face-to-face teaching mediated by technology (Ladislau & Alves, 2025). However, the imposition of virtual classes on forest peoples produces concerning effects, as it reduces their ethnic-racial and sociocultural diversity to the category of "rural localities of difficult access," imposing standardized teaching that is detached from local reality. Such practice ignores ancestral knowledge and traditional forms of learning, reinforcing marginalization and contributing to the erasure of identities instead of promoting plural, contextualized, and intercultural education.

In 2018, the *Documento Curricular do Estado do Pará* was published, establishing the curricular policy that guides the state and continues the proposals of

previous years, aligning with the BNCC guidelines. The assessment of Professor Joyce Otânia Seixas Ribeiro (2020), PhD in Education, when tracing the identity policy of the document, points out that its discourse is opposed to the regional context, local knowledge, and cultural differences, being aligned instead with the demands of a BNCC that imposes the subjective requirements of the modern/colonial world-system and “seeks to shape the Being as citizen; the web leads to the entrepreneur of the self, competitive, consumerist, and racist” (Seixas Ribeiro, 2020, p. 28).

In general, it is clear that Brazilian educational policies, aligned with neoliberal and global agendas, disregard cultural diversity by imposing standardized teaching models, as Paraíso (2025) points out. In Pará, this is reflected in guidelines that ignore local knowledge and reinforce the erasure of the identities of forest peoples. The BNCC and SEI exemplify this process at both national and regional levels, promoting a technocratic education disconnected from sociocultural realities.

The centralization of the educational system and the standardization of curricula, shaped by capitalist ideals, can contribute to the maintenance of colonial practices, by devaluing and silencing the knowledge and experiences of local communities (Huo & Neto, 2024). At the regional level, it is also possible to identify a continuous process of rights violations and the dismantling of quality basic education that is socially grounded and contextualized with the local reality of forest peoples, through educational policies that reinforce the coloniality of power.

Law 10.820/2024 represents the continuation of the dismantling of education for the sociocultural diversity of peoples in Pará, reflecting policies of attack on the ethnic-racial diversity of this region. Influenced by global neoliberalism, it perpetuates a political project that restricts the rights of these peoples and sustains the coloniality of power.

5 Analysis of Law 10.820/2024 and the violation of the right to education

Within this context, it is important to consider that the locus of investigation of this article, and for which the legislation was created, is the state of Pará, located in the North region of Brazil. Seixas Ribeiro (2020, p. 16) emphasizes the cultural diversity of the region, noting that the state has “62 *quilombola* communities, 58 Indigenous peoples, and many riverine communities that live along the rivers and in the forests.” It is for this context that educational and curricular legislation is intended: a naturally multicultural space.

Furthermore, this is a historical-social survey of the law’s approval process, based on documentary research, with the objective of analyzing the content and potential effects of the revocation of the *Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME)* in Pará. It is important to stress that this research did not directly involve participants and, therefore, did not require formal ethical approval.

Regarding the analytical process of this study, we rely on documentary research, as proposed by Cellard (2021), incorporating elements of content analysis based on Bardin (2011), while following the flexibility that the author suggests for the use of this technique. Given the specificities of analyzing legislation, this interface allowed for the extraction of analytical categories.

The analyses and interpretations to be developed are grounded in decolonial theory and educational policies, with the aim of identifying traces of coloniality present in Law 10.820/2024. Decolonial theory makes it possible to understand the marks of colonialism that persist in social, political, and educational structures through coloniality. Thus, by investigating this legislation, the study seeks to highlight possible mechanisms that reinforce the colonial logic.

6 The erasure of SOME and the attack on the education of the peoples of the waters, the fields, the forests, and the villages

Regarding the structure of the document (Law 10.820, December 19, 2024), it is divided into five titles: 1) Concerning public teaching staff in the state of Pará; 2)

Recruitment and career; 3) Rights and benefits; 4) Financial rights and benefits; 5) Final and transitional provisions. The law regulates the Statute of Public Teaching Staff in the State of Pará. Approved quietly at the end of 2024, the law repeals five pieces of legislation, two sections, and one article.

It is possible to recognize the multiple dimensions of the attacks on the teaching profession represented by this legislation. However, in this context, we place greater emphasis on what is proposed in Article 67, section III. This article establishes the revocation of Law 7.806/2014, which regulated the functioning of the *Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME)*.

Sousa and Brasileiro (2025) demonstrate that *SOME* proved to be an innovative and essential educational policy for the expansion of secondary education into the interior of the state of Pará. This system enabled students from remote municipalities, previously excluded from access to education, to complete their studies without the need to migrate to large urban centers. Moreover, the modular model addressed regional specificities by making it possible for qualified teachers to be present without requiring fixed infrastructure, becoming an efficient solution for Amazonian realities. In this way, the importance of *SOME* is reaffirmed in the democratization of education and in the valorization of rural and interior communities.

Law 7.806/2014, which regulated *SOME*, represents an educational policy aimed at ensuring the right to free, quality public education, while taking into account the territorial diversity of the Amazon. Its scope went beyond access to school, seeking to value pedagogical practices linked to sustainable development, preserve community and family ties, and reduce regional inequalities through education that articulated social justice and inclusion (Pará, 2014).

In the case of modular Indigenous secondary education, the legislation recognized the need for specific and differentiated schools, grounded in interculturality and bilingualism as foundations for the preservation of identity. The curricular proposal valued specific knowledge and sociocultural practices, understanding the educational process in a holistic and contextualized way, so as to reinforce the autonomy and

diversity of Indigenous peoples in the face of the impositions of the hegemonic school model (Pará, 2014).

Within this context, the revocation of Law 7.806/2014 has profound and negative impacts on the peoples of the waters, the fields, the forests, and the villages, particularly with respect to the right to education. What becomes evident is the gradual dismantling of the *Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME)*, given that it was a model that considered the territorial and sociocultural specificities of the Amazon, making it possible for education to reach populations living in remote areas, and demonstrating how this legislation undermines the implementation of differentiated pedagogies that are contextualized with the realities of these populations.

At first, it is clear that there is an attack on the right to free, quality public education, since Law 7.806/2014 guaranteed such education aligned with the needs of the communities. Without this guarantee, there is a risk of precarious teaching or of adopting models disconnected from the realities of these populations, as had already been proposed by the state through the *Sistema Educacional Interativo (SEI)*.

Furthermore, it is possible to identify that this legislation directly impacts the cultural identity and social practices of Indigenous, *quilombola*, and riverine peoples, potentially causing a rupture in community and cultural ties, since *SOME* allowed young people and adults to study without leaving their communities, thereby ensuring the preservation of local customs and values. In this context, revocation may force migration to urban centers, disrupting family and community bonds and increasing social vulnerability.

We also highlight the weakening of Indigenous education, since the revoked legislation provided for specificity and differentiation in Indigenous schooling, proposing respect for their cultures, languages, and sociocultural practices. Without this regulation, there is a risk of a standardized education that does not recognize interculturality, bilingualism, and the specificities of these peoples.

Overall, the revocation of Law 7.806/2014, established in Law 10.820/2024, represents a significant setback in the educational rights of traditional peoples of the

Amazon. Sousa and Brasileiro (2025) emphasize the importance of *SOME* as an innovative and genuinely Paraense educational policy, essential to addressing the specific educational needs of the peoples of the fields, the waters, the forests, and the villages. The revocation of this legislation, through Law 10.820/2024, constitutes a direct attack on these peoples with respect to the guarantee of the right to education, especially given that it is restricted to only six articles (Articles 41, 46, 47, 60, 64, and 67), the last of which repeals Law 7.806/2014, which regulated the functioning of the *Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME)*.

7 Critical intercultural ethnic-racial movement in Pará: struggles and resistance

Decolonial Thought emerged with the invasion of Latin America and was consolidated through Indigenous resistance, becoming an ethical, political, and epistemological conception (Mota Neto, 2016). For Ballestrin (2013, p. 105), decolonial thought manifests itself as a “theoretical and practical, political and epistemological movement of resistance to the logic of modernity/coloniality.” The common ground between both conceptions is the proposal of resistance against historically structured oppressions.

In this context, Critical Interculturality⁵ (CI) arises. According to Walsh (2009), it is configured as a political, ethical, epistemic, and social project derived from decolonial thought. This project questions structures of power, promotes the articulation of knowledge, struggles, and movements, and has as its central objective the transformation of social structures that perpetuate inequality, exclusion, discrimination, and racialization (Walsh, 2009).

In the educational sphere, the relevance of CI intensifies due to the fundamental role of education in both the reproduction and transformation of social structures.

⁵ Critical Interculturality, inspired by Walsh (2009), consists of the articulation of knowledge and struggles of historically marginalized peoples, aiming to confront colonial practices and to affirm contextualized and plural educational alternatives, as in the Amazonian case.

Walsh (2009, p. 79) affirms: “It is not surprising that one of the central spaces of this struggle is education, as a political, social, and cultural institution: the space of construction and reproduction of values, attitudes, identities, and of the historical-hegemonic power of the State.”

Decolonial thought and critical interculturality are lenses that allow us to understand that this movement not only opposes exclusionary policies but also proposes profound social transformation, reaffirming the autonomy and rights of these peoples in building a more just and plural educational model.

Within this context of struggle for education in Pará, the union of the peoples of the waters, the fields, the forests, and the villages, as a materialization of an ethnic-racial and critical intercultural struggle in a context of practice, was fundamental to blocking the advance of Law 10.820/2024 as a neoliberal and neocolonial educational policy.

We call this movement ethnic-racial and critical intercultural because it embodies the collective resistance of diverse Indigenous peoples, *quilombola* communities, riverine populations, and other historically marginalized groups against educational policies that reinforce the coloniality of power and social exclusion. Its ethnic-racial character is evident in the relationship among these distinct groups in the defense of the right to differentiated education that respects the knowledge, identities, and ways of life of these peoples. Its critical interculturality is manifested in the articulation among different communities and social sectors, uniting knowledge and strategies of struggle to confront oppressive structures and aiming at social transformation.

Law 10.820/2024 was approved hastily by ALEPA on December 18, without public debate, generating strong resistance from education professionals and traditional communities, whose protests were met with violent repression. In January 2025, Indigenous peoples, in coordination with SINTEPP, intensified mobilizations with occupations, blockades, and a general strike, gaining national support from APIB and Minister Sônia Guajajara. Despite attempts at negotiation, the government was

accused of spreading misinformation, which motivated legal actions that secured the right of reply. The demonstrations continued until February, when the joint pressure of teachers, Indigenous peoples, *quilombola* communities, and riverine populations led ALEPA to revoke the law unanimously on February 12, 2025, marking a historic victory in defense of public education and the rights of these peoples.

The mobilizations described above, against Law 10.820/2024 in Pará, became an example of how social movements can and must organize in the face of far-right offensives. Confronted with a government that sought to demobilize the struggle through repression, authoritarianism, and misinformation, the movements responded with strategic organization, popular pressure, and well-structured political alliances.

The movement was able to combine direct tactics, such as occupations, highway blockades, and strikes, with institutional actions, such as legal proceedings and coordination with national and international human rights organizations. In addition, the resistance used media communication as a political tool, reversing the official narrative and exposing government brutality through independent media and social networks.

The convergence among different sectors of society strengthened the struggle and demonstrated that, even in the face of an adverse scenario, collective and coordinated mobilization can reverse attacks on fundamental rights. This experience leaves a valuable lesson: effective resistance against authoritarian policies is not built only in the streets, but also in political decision-making spaces, in coordination with different fronts of struggle, and in the capacity to maintain cohesion even under strong repression. Furthermore, the mobilizations confirm Ball's (2001) conception that the context of practice is a space of political creation and recreation, in which policies are reinterpreted and transformed by social struggles.

In sum, the events described above show the strength of the critical intercultural ethnic-racial movement in Pará and how it influenced resistance against exclusionary policies by forcefully halting the expansion of the far right in the state. Through educational policies, this offensive sought to perpetuate the coloniality of power by

denying the peoples of the waters, the fields, the forests, and the villages the right to quality basic education contextualized to their realities.

Moreover, in line with the proposal of critical interculturality as interaction among cultures as a form of social transformation, it is clear that the struggle of the critical intercultural ethnic-racial movement in Pará materialized what Walsh (2009) identifies as the central purpose of critical interculturality and of the decolonial turn.

8 Final considerations

The analysis of the impacts of the revocation of the *Sistema de Organização Modular de Ensino (SOME)* in Pará revealed risks of setbacks in the educational rights of Indigenous peoples, *quilombola* communities, riverine populations, and traditional communities. Law 10.820/2024 undermined the provision of contextualized education, acting as an instrument for the reproduction of the colonality of power by disregarding cultural and territorial specificities.

Based on a qualitative, historical-social approach and grounded in documentary analysis from a decolonial perspective, it was identified that neoliberal logic in educational policies reinforces identity erasure, marginalization, and exclusion, inserting *SOME* into a project of neocolonization that reduces diversity to a symbolic ornament.

On the other hand, the articulation between traditional peoples and education workers demonstrated the strength of collective resistance, whose mobilizations resulted in the revocation of the law and reaffirmed Critical Interculturality as a project of social transformation. This process confirms Ball's (2001) policy cycle, showing that norms are not static but reinterpreted within the context of practice.

Thus, this study contributes to the field of educational practices and ethnic-racial relations by demonstrating that organized resistance is a powerful response to attempts to deny rights, reinforcing the urgency of decolonial, intercultural, and

emancipatory educational policies aimed at building pluricultural and multiracial societies.

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