

**POPULAR EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGICAL EXPEDITIONS IN THE
EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE OF THE GAMELA INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: RIGHTS
AND ETHNIC RESISTANCE**

***EDUCAÇÃO POPULAR E EXPEDIÇÕES PEDAGÓGICAS NA PRÁTICA EDUCATIVA
DO POVO INDÍGENA GAMELA: DIREITOS E RESISTÊNCIAS ÉTNICAS***

***EDUCACIÓN POPULAR Y EXPEDICIONES PEDAGÓGICAS EN LA PRÁCTICA
EDUCATIVA DE LOS INDÍGENAS GAMELA: DERECHOS Y RESISTENCIAS
ÉTNICAS***

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ABSTRACT: The original and ancestral knowledge of the Gamela indigenous people, based on Popular Education, play a leading role in the struggle for permanence on the land and the self-identification of their ethnicity, and constitute the central theme of this study. The starting question: how does Popular Education contribute to formative and educational processes in the struggle of the Gamela indigenous people, in the Laranjeiras community in the South of Piauí? The qualitative approach, the research of the participatory action-research type, in Borda (1981), and the dialectic analysis qualify the methodology of decolonization of knowledge in the struggle for the right to territory. The educational expeditions reaffirm the experiences, the educational and formative processes of the Gamela indigenous people, based on education for the use of water resources, for the sustainable management of native plants, such as the buriti, and the fight for land ownership, emphasizing the difference between the rights of indigenous land ownership and civil land, as provided by the Brazilian constitution.

KEYWORDS: Popular education. Pedagogical expeditions. Gamela indigenous people. Piauí.

RESUMO: Os saberes originários e ancestrais do povo indígena Gamela, fundamentados na Educação Popular, protagonizam a luta pela permanência na terra e a autoidentificação de sua etnia, e constituem o tema central desse estudo. O questionamento de partida: como a Educação Popular contribui com processos formativos e educativos na luta do povo indígena Gamela, na comunidade Laranjeiras no Sul do Piauí? A abordagem qualitativa, a pesquisa do tipo investigação-ação participante, em Borda (1981), e a análise dialética qualificam a metodologia de descolonização do conhecimento na luta pelo direito ao território. As expedições pedagógicas reafirmam as experiências, os processos educativos e formativos do

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povo indígena Gamela, baseado na educação para o uso dos recursos hídricos, para o manejo sustentável das plantas nativas, como o buriti, e a luta pela posse da terra, enfatizando a diferença entre os direitos da posse da terra indígena e da terra civil, conforme prevê a constituição brasileira.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação popular. Expedições pedagógicas. Povos indígenas Gamela. Piauí.

RESUMEN: El conocimiento originario y ancestral del pueblo indígena Gamela, basado en la Educación Popular, lidera la lucha por la permanencia en la tierra y la autoidentificación de su etnia, y constituyen el tema central de este estudio. La pregunta de partida: ¿cómo contribuye la Educación Popular a los procesos formativos y educativos en la lucha del pueblo indígena Gamela, en la comunidad Laranjeiras en el sur de Piauí? El enfoque cualitativo, el tipo de estudio investigación-acción participante, en Borda (1981), y el análisis dialéctico califican la metodología de descolonización del conocimiento en la lucha por el derecho al territorio. Las expediciones pedagógicas reafirman las experiencias, los procesos educativos y formativos del pueblo indígena Gamela, basados en la educación para el uso de los recursos hídricos, para el manejo sostenible de las plantas nativas, como el buriti, y la lucha por la tenencia de la tierra, enfatizando la diferencia entre los derechos de la posesión de la tierra indígena y la tierra civil, según lo dispuesto en la Constitución brasileña.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación popular. Expediciones pedagógicas. Pueblos indígenas Gamela. Piauí.

Indigenous voices on the “last agricultural frontier”: dissonant approaches to research

The decolonial legacy of indigenous voices is, and has been, dissonant and dissident from the indigenous policy of the Brazilian State. The knowledge of the native peoples, despite colonial ideas, results from their own educational processes and not from school, which in the context of the Gamela people and the oppressed, we call Popular Education. Another legacy is the struggle for ethnic identity, that is, self-identification as an indigenous people, inspiring the Gamelas' struggle. And, within the scope of institutionality, the ethnic issue of recognition of the indigenous people qualifies the narratives transmitted orally between different generations; for the memory of ancestry; in sociocultural experiences, ways of life and common usufruct of land and territory – there is no way to talk about indigenous peoples without the right to land.

In this context, Popular Education strengthens the self-organization of the Gamela indigenous peoples, contributing to the training for access to rights and training for propositive and demanding political incidence. Therefore, our starting question is situated in: how does the practice of Popular Education contribute to the struggle for the right to

indigenous land of the Gamela people in the “Last Agricultural Frontier”, in the face of the advance of agribusiness?

In the same sense, we situate the relationship between indigenous knowledge and academic knowledge, mediated by the educational practice of the pedagogical expeditions inspired by Freirean thought and the emergences of the reality of the Gamela indigenous peoples, which update the demands of the university. About Paulo Freire's thought, Jardimino and Soto-Arango (2020, p. 1084) define:

What I am calling the uniqueness and universality of Freire's thought should not be read only in the repercussion of the practical action of his literacy method in Brazil and in the world, but in his pedagogical proposal of a liberating and conscientizing education, which can be universalized in any space where men and women find themselves in a situation of oppressive and dehumanizing acculturation.

The Freirean educational practice based on Popular Education inspires the Gamela people, in the struggle for the right to land, to give visibility to the agrarian tensions and conflicts, due to the right to self-identification in the community Laranjeiras, in the southwest of Piauí. With INTERPI they are agrarian questions that involve the land regularization of settlement areas within indigenous territory, whose political intervention by the state ignores the existence of the Gamela ethnic group.

With regard to FUNAI (National Indigenous People Foundation), we highlight the administrative and institutional slowness in the process of demarcating the Gamela indigenous land, despite the existence of studies qualifying the land demand of this ethnic group. Thus, the narrative of the Brazilian state is being established not only by the ethnic negation of the Gamela people, but by the concealment of agrarian conflicts in the "last agricultural frontier" and the socio-environmental issues with the devastation of the cerrado biome by agribusiness.

Regarding the locus of the study, we investigated the traditional community of the Gamela indigenous people, which is located in the municipality of Currais-PI, 35 km from the city center, in the rural community of Laranjeiras. In the territory reside 85 (eighty-five) families who self-identify as Gamelas, who survive on family farming.

The community lives, primarily, from plantations; from the breeding of small animals; from the maintenance of productive backyards; from the production of flour and the extraction of the buriti tree (considered sacred and used both for the families' food and for the confection of different handicrafts) (FUNAI, 2020, p. 16).

While the agencies are beginning the process of recognizing the Gamela people in Piauí, this ethnic group has inhabited the southwestern region of the state for generations.

Regarding the delimitation of the investigation, we consider the decolonial pedagogical expeditions carried out by the university, through the extension project Universidade Popular dos Cursos de Licenciatura em Educação do Campo (LEDOC). The pedagogical expeditions are articulated by the visibility of agrarian and ecological issues and the self-identification rights of the Gamelas indigenous peoples, based on educational, pedagogical and political processes that strengthen the self-organization of the people in the community of Laranjeiras.

The decolonial pedagogical expeditions consider the principles of the State of Good Living, and reaffirm the relationship of inter-knowledge between popular and scientific knowledge from the intercontext between community and university. The epistemologies of the decolonial expeditions are based on the precepts and foundations of the paradigm of Proper Science (BORDA, 1985) and the educational practice of Popular Education (FREIRE, 1996). The educational processes are organized into: internships, knowledge workshops, systematization of the experience, and actions of self-organization of the indigenous community.

The article presents the discussion in three sections, in addition to the introduction. In the first, we present the theoretical and epistemological foundations that guide the research. In the second, we briefly situate the historical context of the Laranjeiras community and the Gamela people. In the third part, we relate the educational processes of the educational expeditions, highlighting how the educating territory of the Gamela people actualizes the social and scientific function of the public university regarding the issues of the rights of native peoples in the "last agricultural frontier". In the conclusion, we point out how the public university, by means of Popular Education, contributes to the strengthening of the struggle for rights together with the Gamela indigenous peoples, situating the territoriality of the educational issues in the context of the indigenous struggle for self-identification in the state of Piauí.

Popular Education and Decolonial Pedagogical Expeditions: Dissident Education of the Gamela Indigenous People

While Brazil recognizes the existence of indigenous peoples through the demarcation of their lands in much of the Brazilian territory, it was only in 2020 that the government of Piauí formally and expressly recognized the existence of indigenous peoples in the state. This recognition is the result of the struggle of the indigenous peoples of Piauí, due to the agrarian conflicts that are accelerating with the advance of agribusiness and the installation of large enterprises in traditional communities and on indigenous lands.

Given this context, the territoriality of education in the educational processes of indigenous peoples, specifically the Gamela people, finds in Popular Education an alternative pedagogy in the production of knowledge based on a socio-educational and political intervention of the oppressed and excluded in the world - right to say their word. Thus, Popular Education considers, as the central content of its educational processes, the social reality of the subjects in formation, that is, part of the experiences of indigenous peoples as ethnic groups that were historically denied and made invisible in the Brazilian social formation.

In this sense, the epistemological and methodological foundations of Popular Education that guide the decolonial pedagogical expeditions in the mediation of knowledge with the Gamela people in the struggle for permanence in the indigenous land are: the reality and social practice of subjects as the locus of knowledge; the action-participant pedagogy; the collective construction of knowledge; the participating methodologies; the transformation of social reality; the project of a society of good living as a construction of native peoples.

To speak of Good Living, it is necessary to resort to the experiences, visions and proposals of peoples who, inside and outside the Andean and Amazonian world, have committed themselves to living in harmony with Nature, and who have a long and profound history. , still largely unknown and even marginalized. They were able to resist, in their own way, a colonialism that lasted more than five hundred years, imagining a different future that could contribute a lot to the great global debates (COSTA, 2016, p. 19-20).

This original epistemology is based on popular and indigenous knowledge as their own readings, in which “[...] 'reading the world' and 'reading the word' impose themselves as an indispensable practice in the reinvention of the world. The assumption of ourselves as subjects and objects of History makes us beings of decision, of rupture, of choice, ethical beings” (FREIRE, 2014, p. 66). The Gamela indigenous people claim the historical legacy of

Popular Education as an epistemological place of organization of their existence and re-existence.

The Gamela ethnic group rediscovers in Popular Education its ancestral relationship with environmental, ecological and agrarian issues in the indigenous land, as historical subjects who carry centuries of resistance for a way of living well. According to FUNAI's Qualification Report (2020, p. 14): "[...]the indigenous people were responsible for the conservation of the territory, since they preserved the marshes, maintained a sacred relationship with the buritizais and did not deforest areas of permanent preservation", that is, FUNAI field data qualify the Gamelas as protectors of the cerrado biome, in the face of agrarian and socioenvironmental conflicts, because as they demonstrate the common use of the "cerrado" areas the "temples of the waters," the diversified uses given to the buritis, the networks of solidarity activated among the nuclei, the relations established with the "enchanted" spirits ("*cabocos*"/"*cumpades*"), and also the experiences of territorial expropriation experienced as a result of land and socio-environmental conflicts.

The territoriality of Popular Education in the context of the educational processes of indigenous education reaffirms a participatory pedagogy that opposes the pedagogy of exclusion and domination. Popular Education, in the context of the Gamela indigenous peoples, has as its educational base a dialogical pedagogy referenced in a decolonial epistemology, which reaffirms the historical memory of resistance and liberation of the indigenous peoples from European colonization.

Considering this paradigm, the pedagogical expeditions represent the link of the public university with the current demands of the rights and struggles of the Gamela indigenous peoples, announced from another paradigm of science and public university. "Podemos concebir una universidad en diáspora que se juzgue según sus efectos sociales de conjunto y no por facilidades físicas? Podemos articular este camino y permanentemente el conocimiento teórico con la práctica?"⁴. In this construction, "[...] Popular Education enables the dialogue of popular knowledge, of popular culture with the socially produced and systematized knowledge/knowledge [...] it is knowledge of an epistemology that unites action-reflection" (STRECK *et al.*, 2014, p. 93). The university educational practice changes, but also transforms itself when it recognizes other knowledge necessary for the production of science for the good life. In this way, the Gamelas strive to make the educational act a path to a

⁴Translation: "Can we conceive of a university in the diaspora that is judged according to its social effects of the whole and not by physical facilities? Can we articulate this permanently theoretical path and knowledge with practice?" (BORDA, 1981, p. 199).

critical consciousness and active participation in the transformation of the reality that they experience in the indigenous community.

The intelligibility between the popular and the scientific are ways to experience science in the production of a prudent knowledge for a decent life (SANTOS, 2010). Based on this assumption, the university must be committed to the formation of individuals who, through their knowledge, produce for the common good and for a fair life for all.

To achieve this goal, that is,

to support these processes, we need democratic and altruistic universities that stimulate the active participation of students in the search for new knowledge and, as such, consider research as pedagogical tools of the greatest value, as the basis for academic autonomy (BORDA; MORA-OSEJO, 2003, p. 720).

The public university, through the dimensions of research and extension, has been contributing to the emancipation of the oppressed and the original peoples in the struggle for rights.

Thus, the pedagogical expeditions aim at the decolonization of scientific knowledge and the emancipation of the intelligences in the production of an education as a practice of freedom. The interconnection between scientific pedagogy and the pedagogy of the oppressed, at the core of Popular Education, results from the dissident thinking of Eurocentric science and the traditional paradigm of education for and without the popular classes. Thus, as Paulo Freire states (1998, p. 20):

[...]what we have been calling the Pedagogy of the Oppressed: the one that must be forged with them and not for them, as men or peoples, in the incessant struggle to recover their humanity. A pedagogy that makes oppression and its causes the object of reflection of the oppressed, which will result in their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation, in which this pedagogy will make and remake itself.

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed has imprinted a new educative conception in the university, with the implementation of the Licentiate's Degree courses in Field Education (LEDOC) at UFPI. It is worth pointing out that these courses are the result of educative projects in non-school contexts mediated by Popular Education. The university extension of popular and decolonial character has been the educational space in the university to dialogue with the educating territory of the Gamela people, who have presented as demands for the university today issues such as: the rights related to the demarcation of indigenous land, the protection of water resources of the community as marshes and streams and springs, and the

self-identification and construction of their self-organization in the context of the struggles of indigenous peoples.

Traditional community laranjeiras as educating territory of the Gamela indigenous people

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2010), 34% of the population of Piauí lives in rural areas. When we verify this statistic in the southwestern region of the state, the rural population is 41%, that is, it is a region of accentuated rurality. The southwest region has a strong hydric potential, has large land extensions, solar energy incidence, monoculture production for corporate agriculture - agribusiness, and peasant family agriculture as vectors for the economic development of Piauí.

Family farming has a direct relationship with poverty reduction in the state of Piauí, because "the policies executed by the state government in favor of small agriculture (family farming). That is, poverty reduction through productive inclusion" (PIAUI, 2013, p. 81). Thus, peasant family farming is seen as a strategic field for economic development in that region. Despite this, traditional peasant and indigenous populations face the advancement of the process of expropriation and squatting of their productive lands, which since the 1990s has been carried out by agribusiness companies. And, in consonance with this context, indigenous people suffer with the lack of investments in family agriculture, on the part of the state government, which recently began the process of land titling for these communities and ethnic groups.

With a population of approximately 4,968 inhabitants, the municipality of Currais is basically rural, and the majority of the population lives off family farming. This municipality is located 660 kilometers from the capital, Teresina. Currais is a territory with potential for economic development, occupying large areas of land in the region of the Gurgueia Valley for the production of soybean monoculture, in the territory of the Mangabeiras plateaus. Despite the economic gains from agribusiness, this reality contrasts with the impoverished urban and rural landscape, like an inverted image, in which the accumulation of wealth does not mean the reduction of poverty; on the contrary, it increases the social strata of the miserable in the southwestern region of Piauí.

Currais is in the southern region of Piauí, known as "the last agricultural frontier" or, still, as the great development region characterized by MATOPIBA ⁵, area that is at the center of the agribusiness dispute, which advances over the cerrado biome, promoting socio-spatial and economic transformations in the ways of life of the region's population, especially the native peoples and traditional communities. Therefore, the traditional community of the Gamela people is located in the MATOPIBA region - which involves the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia.

In Piauí, this geopolitical and economic delimitation has intensified agrarian and environmental conflicts in the cerrado biome. According to the Newsletter 1 - Indigenous Gamelas in the Cerrado Piauí: "This situation resulted in the outbreak of socio-environmental conflicts and in the constitution of social mobilization actions that have resulted in the ethnic emergence of family groups that traditionally inhabit the region and that call themselves peoples of the Cerrado" (LIMA; NASCIMENTO, 2020, p. 1). In this region, peasant family farming and the expansion of agribusiness present themselves as antagonistic projects of economic development and environmental sustainability in rural areas.

While agribusiness is organized by the logic of commercialization of large-scale production for global export markets, based on monoculture, agroecological and agroforestry-based family farming has been responsible for guaranteeing food for 80% of the Brazilian population. In this context, agribusiness occupies large territorial extensions, in the midst of intense environmental and water degradation of springs, marshes, and streams; it imposes labor relations analogous to slave labor; and it is the main agent of agrarian and land conflicts with the Gamela indigenous peoples regarding their right to land.

The narrative of economic development hides conflicts, impasses, and challenges for the Gamela indigenous peoples, in the face of the advance of agribusiness, which marks the dispute for productive lands and water resources. The territoriality of education, specifically rural education, mediated by popular education, has been promoting educational processes of self-training of the Gamela people in the self-affirmation of their ethnicity.

LEDOC is the organizational locus of the decolonial pedagogical expeditions, whose commitment stems from a pedagogical and political action with indigenous and peasant

⁵“The expression MATOPIBA refers to an acronym formed with the acronyms of the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí and Bahia. MATOPIBA was made official as a region through Decree No. 8,447, dated May 6, 2015, which deals with the Plan for Agricultural and Livestock Development for MATOPIBA, whose purpose was to promote and coordinate public policies aimed at sustainable economic development based on agricultural and livestock activities” (RIBEIRO *et.al.*, 2020, p. 2).

peoples in the fight for rights, currently with the Gamelas peoples. According to Silva (2020, p. 2383-2384):

Rural Education bears the original marks of an educational project that breaks with the paradigm of hegemonic science in the university. It is an epistemological turn led by the social movements of the countryside for an educational policy of valorization of the subjects, the contexts and the knowledge of the peasants in the struggle for Agrarian Reform in Brazil.

Rural Education adds to the dissonant voices of the university the dissenting voices of the indigenous Gamela people in rural areas. In this field of inter-knowledge and inter-context, Freirean thought assures the epistemological bases of a university whose scientific knowledge is the basis for its intervention in the formulation of the knowledge of the original peoples. It is an epistemological rescue of the university into the field of cultural action and social commitment to the struggle of the oppressed.

The indigenous Gamelas of the Laranjeiras community recognize that the regularization of land ownership is an ethnic demand; and the recognition of indigenous land by the state, in the southwest of Piauí, passes through the process of self-organization and strengthening of the collective struggle for the right to self-identification. According to the United Nations Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples:

Indigenous or tribal self-identity is an innovation of the instrument, in establishing it as a subjective but fundamental criterion for defining the peoples subject to the Convention, that is, no State or social group has the right to deny identity to an indigenous or tribal people that it recognizes itself as such (OIT, 2011, p. 8).

Therefore, the right to self-identification regulated by Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples guarantees to the Gamela people, in Piauí, the resumption of their self-organization process in the territoriality of education, especially Popular Education, as a path inseparable from the struggle for liberation.

Decolonizing pedagogical expeditions and self-organization of the Gamela people in the context of the Laranjeiras community

Specifically, in the current demands of the Gamela people, the university, through educational processes of pedagogical expeditions, has accompanied how the indigenous struggle of the Gamela people points to the process of strengthening self-organization in the struggle for the right to land, from the affirmation of ethnic identity. Basically we start from

the social reality of the subjects, considering the collective construction of knowledge, through participant pedagogy and participatory methodologies of Popular Education.

The university, through research and extension projects, has accompanied the community since 2018. At present, we want to highlight that educational processes of the expeditions have been strengthening the ideas and practices, self-organizing for indigenous rights. We highlight as participatory methodologies of the pedagogical expeditions: living experience internship and experience and knowledge workshops in the Gamela community, which we will briefly describe and analyze in their educational practice.

First, it is necessary to situate our conceptual construction of decolonial pedagogical expeditions: they are educational, autonomous and training spaces in intercontext and interknowledge between university and community, from a dialogical pedagogy between **scientific knowledge** - of the subjects of the experience and popular **knowledge** - of the subjects of the lived experience, mediated by Popular Education educative processes, Own Science paradigm and decolonial thinking, which announce a new way of knowledge production for the good living. Having said this, we will now point out the methodology of the educational processes of the expeditions, in the context of the Gamela indigenous territory.

Experiential and Experience Stage – are the experiences in the process of **formation in action**, which result from practical activities, field visits, social mapping of the context of performance of the educational processes of Popular Education, that is, it means putting the subjects in the process of formation in direct contact with the field of research and study, for qualification and adequate understanding of the reading of reality and contexts.

This is what we call participant empirical observation, which is organized in three moments: **participative** - participation of the subjects in formations mediated by the theoretical contributions - study of reality from research and oral reports; **interventive** - application of the necessary instruments to collect data and information from the field visit; and **self-educative** - moment of organization of the field data for the systematized return of the results in a formative moment with the subjects involved in the research and the community subjects, a moment of data qualification from the dialog between scientific and popular knowledge.

This participant observation, which has in the systematization of the experience its strength, rejects the neutrality of thought, enabling self-criticism to think about our own educational practice. Medeiros (2010, p. 19) emphasizes: "Thus, we opted for a

methodological construction that both refuses determinisms and the supposed scientific neutrality, such option being part of a pedagogical and ethical-political intentionality". In other words,

The question is, therefore, that of a pedagogy that critically and historicistically articulates educational activity with the construction of a revolutionary social practice, that is, a social practice that positions itself in the perspective of overcoming bourgeois society (MARQUES; DUARTE, 2020, p. 2205).

It is this choice that we make in the historical context of the Gamela people's struggle.

In the educational expeditions, we registered that the Laranjeiras community of the Gamela indigenous people has a great reserve of fresh water, with rivers, waterhole springs, marshes, and streams, a strategic zone of water production. The region of the Gurgueia Valley, with its water network, supplies almost the entire territory of Piauí, whose water mark is the Parque das Nascentes do Rio Parnaíba. For a better understanding of the stages of experience in the Gamela territory, we present moments of field recording in the community:

Figure 1 – Field Trip to the Well at the Gamela Indigenous Community



Source: Popular University (2021)

Figure 2 – Visita in the fields in the Gamela Indigenous Community



Source: Popular University (2021)

The experiences in the stages of living experience promote the reconstitution of the lived situation: reflection, reflection and opening of concrete possibilities for new readings of reality, above all, by allowing the reading of the thing in itself, it makes it possible to go beyond the reading of the thing for itself - in moments of systematization of the experience. In the indigenous community of the Gamela people, researchers immersed in the experience of living, share it with those immersed in the real and daily experiences of the residents of the indigenous territory, and project experiences as alternatives in overcoming tensions and conflicts, and as a possibility of struggle and resistance.

Thus, the experience points to and projects itself in the formulation of a critical and self-critical consciousness for the construction of new existential projects, because "in the historical experience in which I participate, tomorrow is not something 'pre-given', but a challenge, a problem" (FREIRE, 2000, p. 36). In this sense, decolonial pedagogical expeditions allow the experience in locus based on the inter-knowledge between the subjects of the experience and the subjects of the lived experience.

The living internships are, therefore, an encounter of the reading of the word from the theoretical contributions that illuminate the context and the reading of the world experienced and lived by the subjects in the indigenous territory. After the encounter of theory with practice in the experiential and experiential internships, we resumed the theoretical readings, now illuminated by the data from reality, which in the pedagogy of the knowledge workshops are systematized and shared.

Knowledge Workshops - are educational and formative spaces of inter-knowledge and inter-context between the university and the indigenous community - programmed formation - moment in which the socialization of the results collected and produced in the field is carried out, already systematized, which should be submitted to the appreciation and problematization of the community and of the subjects participating in the projects for the new formulations or adequacy to the contents of reality, avoiding the negation of the original knowledge, the contexts and the contents of the demands of the Gamela peoples. About the experience of the knowledge workshops, we highlight some moments, as follows:

Figure 3 – Sustainable Agro-extractivism Knowledge Workshop of the Gamela People



Source: Research data (2021)

Figure 4 – Knowledge Workshop on Territory and Water of the Gamela People



Source: Research data (2020)

Figure 5 – Rights Knowledge Workshop of the Gamela People with OAB – PI



Source: Research data (2021)

In these moments of formation and self-organization of the Gamela indigenous people, we discuss the reality from the point of view of generating themes that involve the daily demands for rights, which include agrarian issues and the right to land; ecological and socio-environmental issues, such as the protection of streams, rivers, and wetlands; and sustainable

issues, which involve family agriculture. The knowledge workshops are also spaces for public hearings with entities that defend indigenous peoples and the state's indigenous bodies.

In the workshops we discussed the visibility of the ethnic issues of the Gamela people and the need to create an Indigenous organization or association of the Gamela people as an instrument of struggle, as emphasized by Resolution 169 (ILO, 2011, p. 6, emphasis added):

[...]Indigenous and tribal peoples have also awakened to the reality of their ethnic and cultural origins and, consequently, to their right to be different without ceasing to be equal. Aware of their importance and under the guidance of strong organizations to promote their interests and protect their rights, these peoples have assumed, themselves, the right to claim, above all, their ethnic, cultural, economic and social identity, rejecting even to be called "indigenous peoples".

In this sense, the knowledge workshops are organized in a pedagogical way, aiming to involve the participants in the process of reflection and decision-making. Based on the principle of collective construction of knowledge of Popular Education, the pedagogical expeditions are committed to promoting an encounter of love and hope with the reading of the word of the original peoples, situated in the reading of the world of the Gamela peoples in the indigenous territory. This moment is pedagogically subsidized by thematic lectures, photographic exhibitions, ancestral elements of the indigenous culture, audiovisual elements, texts and contexts, interaction dynamics, elements of reading of the political, social and economic conjuncture of the community and the Gamela territory.

The knowledge workshops are fundamental in the process of self-identification of the Gamela peoples, who begin to express their identity as an ethnic right to say their word after decades of denial of their identity, as stated by the indigenous people in the knowledge workshop: *"I am indigenous of the Laranjeiras community, a resident, born and raised in the Laranjeiras community"; "As the daughter of an indigenous person and an indigenous descendant we demand the regularization of the lands, being the 9 thousand hectares"* (Oral interview, indigenous Gamelas, 2021). The right to self-identification, as provided for in the report on the qualification of the land demand of the Gamela ethnic group in southern Piauí, presented by SEI/FUNAI - 1891052 - Technical Information, states:

By providing a broad spectrum of data that characterize the territory of the Gamela people, these actions have constituted themselves as sources of complementary information on the land demands of the ethnic group. With this in mind, the present document is organized with the objective of presenting to the Northeast Regional Coordination II of FUNAI the set of information identified in the field, and in this way contributing to the

planning and execution of actions for the promotion and protection of the Gamela indigenous rights (FUNAI, 2020, p. 2).

In announcing their self-identification, the indigenous people of the Laranjeira community have found an educational space for self-organization and self-reflection on agrarian and land issues that involve the right to land in the pedagogical expeditions and, therefore, in the social role of the public university. These experiences point to an educational process that Santos (2013, p. 471) called an epistemological revolution within the university, which "[...] consists in the promotion of dialogues between scientific or humanistic knowledge, which the university produces, and lay, popular, traditional, urban, peasant, and non-Western knowledge (indigenous, African, Oriental, etc.). This author defined this dialogue as the ecology of knowledges.

This perspective points a way to re-signify the senses and meanings of the university project towards a more democratic vision committed to the popular knowledge that takes place outside the academic space and in traditional communities. The educational practice that reunites the world of theory and the world of practice as a possibility of production of an alternative thought of knowledge in its set of relations, as proposed by Lefebvre (1983, p. 235):

Theory emerges from practice and returns to it. Nature reveals itself to us through practice, through experience; and only through practice do we effectively dominate. Practice, therefore, is the moment of every theory: first and last moment, initial immediacy, and the return to immediacy. And vice-versa, theory is the moment of developed practice, that which goes beyond the simple satisfaction of immediate needs.

This educational practice awakens the subjects to self-awareness, critical consciousness in which the very act of knowing finds the meanings of social relations. Thus, the decolonial pedagogical expeditions are based on formation in action - through the exercise of practice as the criterion of prudent knowledge, situated in the world of the Gamelas and the social issues in which they are immersed. It implies programmed formation that focuses on moments of execution of actions and activities planned with the community - courses, workshops, seminars, public classes, hearings, etc.

The educational experiences of the Gamela indigenous people impose themselves against epistemicide and colonial ideas, which Santos (2005, p. 23) defines as: "[...] the death of alternative knowledge entailed the liquidation or subalternization of social groups whose practices were based on such knowledge. Against epistemicide, Popular Education removes

the knowledge of native peoples from unfeasibility, but decisively unmasks the contexts of oppression that are established against the rights of native peoples, which for more than 500 years stubbornly reproduce the inferiorization of the knowledge of indigenous peoples and the denial of their rights.

(In)Conclusive Notes

The starting question remains open, due to the dynamics and the movement of the educational processes of Popular Education in the context of the Gamela indigenous struggle, which continues to pulsate, adding other educational and ethnic demands. In view of this openness of the Gamela people's struggle processes and the active presence of the university in the indigenous territory, we point out that the decolonial pedagogical expeditions contribute to the strengthening of the self-organization of the Gamela indigenous people in the Laranjeiras community.

In the same sense, it potentiates the struggle for rights, which includes the demand for land and ethnic identity and the need for social policies to strengthen the relationship of indigenous peoples with the territory. It strengthens a new logic of science production for the rights of native peoples, based on their own epistemology, against epistemicide.

In this sense, the subjects of the university also learn how the indigenous peoples' original knowledge and re-signify the foundations and principles of Popular Education. And, in this itinerary, the university adds to the voices that have historically been silenced and made invisible by colonial thought, which not only appropriated lands and natural resources from indigenous peoples, but also meant a long period of erasure of the culture of native peoples, especially in the context of the state of Piauí.

Popular Education reaffirms the experiences and the educational and formative processes of the Gamela indigenous people, for example, educational processes that involve the use of water resources, the sustainable management of native plants, such as the buriti, the use of land as a common good, and the struggle for land ownership, emphasizing the difference between rights related to the ownership of indigenous land and civil land.

Popular Education in the South of the Latin American world has long been based on the ideas of its own science, on the constitution of an education contextualized with the social reality, and on an educational practice as a tireless construction that takes place in the struggle of the popular classes and the oppressed. The ideas of Fals Borda's (1981) *own science*, Paulo Freire's (1997) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and Santos' (2010) *studies on emergent science*,

find in Popular Education a contribution to discuss new ways of knowledge production, democratization of science and university, but, decisively, as an epistemological instrument that has as its essence a cognitive, social, political, and economic decolonial process of the Eurocentric culture and of the dominant paradigms of the scientific canon.

This alternative thinking has been the main epistemological contribution in the decolonization process of the knowledge systems that impose themselves as absolute truth about the forms of domination of the popular classes in the South of the Latin American world, in a predatory way over the indigenous peoples in Brazil, as it has been since the European invasion. The pedagogical expeditions are decolonial experiences, which means to hope with the Gamelas peoples.

Popular Education, as an education originating from colonized peoples, promotes an educational intervention in action, transforming the contexts of oppression and subalternization, sharing dreams rooted in the construction of its own education, which updates the educational intervention of the university for the defense and protection of indigenous peoples and activates new knowledge in the daily life of the Gamela territory. In this sense, the pedagogical expeditions potentiate self-organization, re-signify resistance practices, articulate new modes of production of knowledge by means of knowledge workshops, conversation rounds, and promote scientific diffusion mediated by the systematization of ideas that takes place in the experiences, in the experiences and in the popular construction in the production of popular and academic sciences.

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