

## ARTICLE

# Reflections about the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in indigenous teacher education at the Universidade Federal de Rondônia

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### ABSTRACT

The text presents an analysis of the perceptions of indigenous students of the Intercultural Basic Education undergraduate degree at the Universidade Federal de Rondônia about the inclusion of the discussions about gender and sexual diversity issues in the course. The research is based on authors from Gender Studies area and qualitative research was the methodological approach adopted. Students enrolled in the second semester of 2018 were included, from which a sample of 19 participants was selected. A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used to produce data and, for analysis, strategies from Content Analysis were employed. The results revealed that most participants consider that the course has contributed little to train them to deal with issues of gender and sexual diversity in teaching practice, considering that these issues are hardly discussed, and they consider relevant to include these topics in the course program, after consulting the indigenous communities.

### KEYWORDS

intercultural undergraduate degree; indigenous teacher training; gender issues; sexual diversity.

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## ***REFLEXÕES SOBRE A INCLUSÃO DE QUESTÕES DE GÊNERO E DIVERSIDADE SEXUAL NA FORMAÇÃO DE DOCENTES INDÍGENAS NA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE RONDÔNIA***

### **RESUMO**

O texto apresenta a análise das percepções de estudantes indígenas da licenciatura em Educação Básica Intercultural da Universidade Federal de Rondônia sobre a inclusão da discussão de questões de gênero e diversidade sexual no curso. A pesquisa se fundamenta em autores(as) da área dos Estudos de Gênero e a abordagem metodológica adotada foi a pesquisa qualitativa. Compreendeu os(as) discentes matriculados(as) no segundo semestre de 2018, dos quais selecionamos uma amostra de 19 participantes. Para produzir os dados, utilizamos o questionário e a entrevista semiestruturada e, na análise, recorremos a estratégias da Análise de Conteúdo. Os resultados revelaram que a maioria dos(as) participantes considera que o curso pouco tem contribuído para capacitá-los(as) para lidar com questões de gênero e diversidade sexual na prática docente, tendo em vista que tais assuntos praticamente não são discutidos, e considera relevante incluí-los no currículo, com prévia consulta às comunidades indígenas.

### **PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

licenciatura intercultural; formação de docentes indígenas; questões de gênero; diversidade sexual.

## ***REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA INCLUSIÓN DE LA CUESTIÓN DE GÉNERO Y DIVERSIDAD SEXUAL EN LA FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES INDÍGENAS EN LA UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE RONDÔNIA***

### **RESUMEN**

El texto presenta un análisis de las percepciones de estudiantes indígenas de la Licenciatura en Educación Básica Intercultural de la Universidade Federal de Rondônia, a respecto de la inclusión de la discusión sobre cuestiones de género y diversidad sexual en el curso. Es una investigación cualitativa basada en Estudios de Género. Incluye los estudiantes suscritos en el curso en el segundo semestre de 2018, siendo seleccionado una muestra de diecinueve participantes. Los medios de recolección de datos utilizados fueron el cuestionario y la entrevista semiestruturada. Para el análisis, adoptamos las estrategias de Análisis de Contenido. Los resultados revelan que la mayoría de las participantes considera que el curso poco ha contribuido en capacitarlos para manejar cuestiones de género y diversidad sexual en la práctica docente y señalaron que para ellos es importante la inclusión de esas cuestiones en la estructura curricular del curso, con previa consulta a las comunidades indígenas.

### **PALABRAS CLAVE**

licenciatura intercultural; formación de docentes indígenas; cuestiones de género; diversidad sexual.

## INTRODUCTION

With the arrival of foreign colonizers at the beginning of the 16th century at the Brazilian territory, the indigenous people were expropriated from their lands and submitted to processes of exploitation, marginalization, and assimilation that lasted for centuries. School education for indigenous people, in this context, worked as an instrument to impose the values of Western society and deny the history of these peoples, their identities, languages and cultures. Therefore, the country has a historical debt to the original peoples, who have always resisted and fought to guarantee the right to own traditional lands, maintain their ways of life, and preserve their cultural diversity.

Although there is still much to be conquered, the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Brasil, 1988) is among the legal documents that brought advances when it comes to guaranteeing the rights of indigenous peoples. According to João Pacheco de Oliveira and Carlos Augusto da Rocha Freire<sup>1</sup> (2006), the new Constitution broke with the integrationist perspective and with the tutelary heritage of the Civil Code of 1916 (Brasil, 1916), besides guaranteeing access to traditional lands and to differentiated, specific, bilingual/multilingual, and intercultural school education, among other things.

Since then, several changes have gradually occurred in the legislation for indigenous school education, as well as in the way it is conceived and the understanding of who should be the teacher in this space and how their education should be. If in a not-so-distant past non-indigenous people occupied the management and teaching functions in indigenous schools, today there is a consensus that, in order to consolidate a differentiated, specific, bilingual/multilingual, and intercultural indigenous school education, the members of the communities themselves (the indigenous people) must occupy these roles.

Helena Alessandra Scavazza Leme (2010) explains that public policies aimed at the training of indigenous teachers in Brazil, as well as the legislation that supports them today, are inspired by pioneering and innovative experiences of civil society movements put into practice in different regions of the country from the 1970s, when the first courses aimed at the training of indigenous teachers in the country were planned and implemented at the high school level. Aly David Arturo Yamall Orellana (2011) reports that these courses were generally called Indigenous Teaching and qualified them to work in early childhood education and elementary I education. This modality is still used, and the training generally takes place in service, considering that a significant portion of the indigenous people who attend these courses are already teaching in village schools (Leme, 2010; Orellana, 2011).

In Rondônia, as happened in other Brazilian states, the first indigenous teacher training courses were offered by civil society organizations from the 1970s on. Mario Roberto Venere (2018) found out, in his research, that the first govern-

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1 In the text, to give visibility to the gender of the referenced authors, we chose to transcribe their full names the first time they are mentioned.

ment initiative occurred in 1998, with the creation of the Açai Project — Teacher Training Course for Indigenous Teachers Middle Level, through the State Department of Education (SEDUC/RO), to qualify indigenous teachers to work in the early years of elementary education.

Leme (2010) reports that, with the indigenous teachers' training at the high school level, a demand for higher education opened up, and the Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso was a pioneer when it created, in 2001, on the Barra do Bugres (MT) campus, the first degree to train indigenous teachers. Following this example, other universities have also opened similar courses, among them the Universidade Federal de Rondônia (UNIR), which, with resources from the Ministry of Education's Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais (REUNI), instituted the Intercultural Basic Education degree course in 2008, at the Ji-Paraná (RO) campus, where Josélia Gomes Neves, Heliton Tinhawambá Gavião, and Cristóvão Teixeira Abrantes (2018) participate.

According to the pedagogical project of the course (PPC), the target public of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR is made up of indigenous people from Rondônia, the south of Amazonas, and the northwest of Mato Grosso, preferably those who have a link to teaching (UNIR, 2008). The geographical area it covers is extensive, and training indigenous teachers in this context is complex, given the sociolinguistic, cultural, and historical diversities of the peoples of the region. The course lasts five years, the first three years comprising the basic training cycle, and the last two, the specific training cycle in which students can choose one of the four different areas offered: Intercultural School Education in Primary Education and School Management; Intercultural Language Sciences; Intercultural Mathematics and Nature Sciences; and Intercultural Society Sciences (*idem*).

More than a decade after the creation of the Intercultural Basic Education degree, its PPC has not been reformulated, and new demands have been detected through periodic evaluation seminars, such as the reduction of the course time from five to four years and the change of the curricular structure so that the students already started in the specific area of study.

At the moment, the process of reformulating the PPC is paralyzed because of the covid-19 pandemic, but we consider it relevant to also advance in discussions related to issues of social urgency, such as gender and sexual diversity issues, to meet the demands of women and indigenous LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual, queer, intersex, asexual, and more), who argue that their agendas are not encompassed by the indigenous movement. Thus, the interest in conducting the present research arose with the objective of analyzing the perceptions of indigenous students of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR about the inclusion of the discussion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the course.

During the development of this work, we conducted online searches in the Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações — BDTD), in the Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior — CAPES) and in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) associating the keywords: “formação de

professors(as) indígenas”, “gênero” and “diversidade sexual”. The objective was to map the scientific productions on the subject, published from 2009 to 2020 — the period of operation of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR at the time the survey was carried out. We have not identified in the databases any work that intersects the three themes in focus. This highlights the originality of the present research and, with its realization, we intend to fill this gap, with the purpose of obtaining data that can effectively contribute to the discussion about the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in indigenous teacher training courses.

The methodological approach adopted for the execution of the investigation was qualitative research. The research population comprised 168 students enrolled in the second semester of 2018 in the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR, Ji-Paraná campus. From this group, based on pre-established criteria, a sample composed of 19 participants was selected. As instruments to produce the data, we used the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, and for interpretation and analysis, we resorted to strategies of Thematic Categorical Analysis, a modality of Content Analysis. These aspects will be detailed in the next section.

The research has as theoretical support authors from the area of Gender Studies, with emphasis on the post-structuralist strand, such as Joan Scott (1995), Guacira Lopes Louro (2007; 2008; 2014) and Dagmar Elisabeth Estermann Meyer (2013). From this perspective, gender is an analytical and, at the same time, a political tool. Therefore, it allows mapping the different meanings attributed to “being a woman” and “being a man” in diverse societies and historical periods (Scott, 1995). And, furthermore, it makes it possible to establish their meanings and their logics of operation to maintain or change the social order (thus the political dimension). Therefore, gender cannot be understood by biological determinism, but rather as a sociocultural construction that establishes standards to be followed, so that “being a woman” or “being a man” does not depend on biological sex, but rather on the embodiment of socially and culturally constructed and delimited roles for each gender (Louro, 2007; 2008; 2014).

Therefore, gender goes beyond what concerns masculine and feminine, it also includes human relationships, the products generated from them, and the implications resulting from their constructions. As stated by Márcio de Oliveira, Reginaldo Peixoto, and Eliane Rose Maio (2018, p. 31, our translation),<sup>2</sup> “[...] masculine and feminine are starting points for a discussion that goes far beyond, going through the product generated through human relations.”. Thus, this “product” must be widely discussed, including in schools, with the purpose of harmonious, balanced, and respectful relationships, contributing so that people do not suffer discrimination and prejudice because of their gender identities and sexual orientation.

Regarding sexuality, Louro (2007, p. 209-210, our translation) explains that, even though there are several understandings and concepts, most scholars tend to consider that “[...] sexuality implies more than bodies, that it involves fantasies, values, languages, rituals, behaviors, representations mobilized or put into action

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2 Direct citations have been translated respecting the original text.

to express desires and pleasures.” Based on this premise, it is possible to conclude that there is a multiplicity of ways to express sexuality, beyond the behaviors that are conventionally appropriate for women and men. Thus, there is not one sexuality, but rather, sexualities, thus justifying the use of the term “sexual diversity.”

The ideas of gender and sexuality maintain a relationship with each other. However, Dinah Quesada Beck and Bianca Salazar Guizzo (2013, p. 179, our translation) comment that this relationship is not supported by a dependency character and that

[...] sexual identities (which are of the order of desires, pleasures, and the experience of sexuality) are not fixed, terminal, and dependent on the biological sex endowed subjects. Gender identities (which are the origin of femininities and masculinities) are social and cultural constructions, and are not “attached” to the biological sex of men and women.

Radical positions on the subject, which link gender and sexuality to biological issues, foster prejudice, discrimination, and violence. Although issues related to the defense of human rights are present in legislation and curricula, the school contributes to the propagation of discriminatory ideas related to gender and sexuality (Oliveira, Peixoto and Maio, 2018). This allows us to conclude that the problem lies in the people who execute these policies, who insist on reaffirming prejudiced, racist, and homophobic positions.

Discussing gender and sexual diversity issues in the context of indigenous peoples is a complex task. The indigenous anthropologist Gersem dos Santos Luciano Baniwa (2006) explains that the social organizations of indigenous societies are based on ancestral cosmologies marked by the functions of social subgroups, which, articulated among themselves, make the existence of each ethnic group possible. For the author, the “[...] traditions [are the ones] that underlie the constitution of extended families and social and kinship relations [...]” (Baniwa, 2006, p. 212, our translation). And, in this context, women have a fundamental socio-educational role, since they participate intensely in the education of the children who represent the future generations.

However, contact with non-indigenous society has reflected on the traditional ways of life of indigenous peoples, considering that the established relationships enable the appropriation and re-signification of elements from these other cultures, which generates changes in the social behavior of the groups. Ângela Sacchi and Márcia Maria Gramkow (2012) report that traditional gender relations are still maintained in many of these societies, but, to a greater or lesser degree, they undergo constant transformations as a result of this intercultural contact.

Consequently, a number of factors have contributed to the reconfiguration of masculinity and femininity in the indigenous context, especially with regard to the sexual division of labor, such as: the promotion of indigenous rights, the creation of specific public policies, increasing access to formal education, interethnic marriages, the participation of women in the public space and in indigenous movements, new economic practices, the occurrence of new types of violence, and migration to urban centers (Sacchi and Gramkow, 2012).

In this context, Danielly Coletti Duarte (2017), based on readings from feminist anthropology, points out that indigenous women suffer a double condition of invisibility in the political field of the Western world because they are indigenous and because they are women, who are on a scale of greater vulnerability compared to others, because, in addition to the oppression experienced by the condition of “being a woman,” they face prejudice against their ethnic origin.

Sônia Guajajara (2020), one of the most important indigenous female leaders in the country, emphasizes the challenges faced by indigenous women, considering that they have historically been excluded from spaces of power, both within and outside their communities; and emphasizes the desire of the category to participate actively and in a qualified way in decision-making processes, both with regard to gender demands and the interests of their communities and their people.

Sexual diversity in the context of indigenous peoples is a subject relatively little explored in the academic sphere, perhaps due to its complexity. Estevão Rafael Fernandes (2016; 2019) explains that there is a false belief that indigenous sexualities outside heteronormative standards emerged with the colonization process and are considered, even by the indigenous people themselves, as synonymous with “cultural loss” or consequences of contact with the surrounding society. Research conducted by Luís Mott (1998; 2006), Amílcar Torrão Filho (2000), João Silvério Trevisan (2018), among others, present several records made by chroniclers, missionaries, anthropologists, travelers, and historians that refer to indigenous homosexuality before the beginning of the colonization of the Brazilian territory. They even show that there was no discrimination among the natives in this regard. It was the colonizer, based on Christian morality, who brought prejudice and intolerance against sexual diversity, considering that these issues were considered by “[...] Christendom as the most vile, dirty and dishonest sin, punished as a heinous crime [...]” (Mott, 1998, p. 6, emphasis from the original, our translation).

LGBTQIA+ indigenous people denounce that they suffer discrimination in their communities because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Rogério Macena (2019), from the Guarani ethnic group, resident in the Paranapuã village, São Vicente, on the coast of São Paulo (SP), informs that nowadays the indigenous communities have more information on the subject, but that there is still a lot of intolerance, that is why many LGBTQIA+ choose to leave the villages or do not assume themselves for feeling fear, insecurity, or shame. According to him, this situation has worsened with the arrival of evangelical religions in the villages, because they “[...] have been teaching indigenous people how to have prejudice [...]” (Macena, 2019, [n. p.], our translation).

Facing this reality, in recent years, indigenous women and LGBTQIA+ have been mobilizing through collectives to discuss the problems faced by them and to develop actions that generate inclusion and representativeness. These movements do not dissociate their struggles from the agenda of the indigenous movement, especially when it comes to territorial rights. They understand that guaranteeing the rights of native peoples is fundamental for their material and immaterial survival. However, they expect the traditional leaderships to recognize their claims with the purpose of guaranteeing a dignified life, with respect to the identity, gender, and sexuality of each one.

In light of the above, it is evident that there is currently a demand from indigenous peoples related to discussions about gender and sexual diversity issues. The reports presented show that those who do not fit into the heteronormative and gender standards in force, in many cases, suffer several forms of violence and exclusion, which becomes a social problem that should be discussed in the various instances that make up the indigenous societies to find ways to solve or minimize it.

Unfortunately, gender and sexual diversity issues do not appear in the National Curriculum Framework for Indigenous Schools (Referencial Curricular Nacional para as Escolas Indígenas — Brasil, 1998), the National Common Curricular Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular — Brasil, 2017; 2018), nor in the National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous Teacher Training (Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Formação de Professores Indígenas — Brasil, 2015). However, the indigenous school, like any other, is a reflection of the society in which it is inserted. Therefore, issues related to gender and sexual diversity are present in its daily life, regardless of being included in its curriculum.

The indigenous teacher, who works in these spaces, is faced with situations related to this issue on a daily basis, and his/her action can contribute to reaffirm prejudices and stereotypes already consolidated, as well as deconstruct them and contribute to the construction of a more inclusive society. In this context, inserting these discussions in indigenous teacher training courses can transform school practices by destabilizing preconceived patterns.

## PATHS OF RESEARCH

The present research is in the field of Gender Studies, with emphasis on the post-structuralist strand. This is an interdisciplinary field of study, and the research developed in this area seeks to understand gender identities and representations in the wake of the culture of human societies (Beck and Guizzo, 2013), as is the case of the present work.

The methodological approach adopted was qualitative research, in which we considered the social and historical context of the research object and the participants, aiming to get closer to the objective and subjective world. We consider qualitative research an adequate methodological approach to achieve the objectives intended in the present study, because, according to Antônio Chizzotti (2006), research of this nature is concerned with answering very particular questions, related to human phenomena, which have specific characteristics and their interpretation is independent of statistical quantifications.

The present investigation was developed in Rondônia, more specifically at the UNIR campus in Ji-Paraná, where the Intercultural Basic Education degree is offered. In the second semester of 2018, when the field research was conducted — with due authorization from the institution —, there were 168 students enrolled in the course, of which 118 were in the basic cycle and 50 in the specific one.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Data obtained through reports released via UNIR's Integrated University Management System, in the second semester of 2018.

To compose the research sample, we established three criteria:

1. to be enrolled in the specific cycle of the course, as we considered that students with a longer period of experience in the course have more elements to contribute to the research;
2. to work in an indigenous school as a teacher, considering that this is the preferred target public of the course;
3. to be interested and available to participate in the research, as the participation was voluntary, by signing the free and informed consent form, with the guarantee of anonymity.

After the study was approved by the Standing Committee on Ethics in Research with Human Beings (Comitê Permanente de Ética em Pesquisa com Seres Humanos), we started the field research at the end of the second semester of 2018 and found that, of the 50 students enrolled in the specific cycle of the course, 28 already practiced the teaching profession, and of these, 19 agreed to participate in the research. To guarantee the anonymity of the participants, we asked them to indicate a pseudonym of their preference to be identified in the text. Considering the ethnic diversity, gender representation and age of the research participants, we considered the sample representative of the students enrolled in the course (Chart 1).

**Chart 1 – Personal data of the research participants.**

n.	Identification	Ethnicity	Gender	Age (in years)
1	Āramirá Tupari	Tupari	F	48
2	Arikayru Arikapú	Arikapú	M	45
3	Asikat Tupari	Tupari	M	27
4	Dukaria Aikanā	Aikanā	M	22
5	Nakira Wirin Arara	Arara	F	29
6	Nakot Oro Waran Xijein	Oro Waran Xijein	F	31
7	Nicolas Suruí	Suruí	M	31
8	Okio Tupari	Tupari	M	29
9	Oy Atoah Suruí	Suruí	M	29
10	Pako Medjutxi Jabuti	Jabuti	F	29
11	Taodereka Karitiana	Karitiana	M	26
12	Tocorom Wajuru	Wajuru	M	37
13	Txiu Jabuti	Jabuti	M	31
14	Urerh Suruí	Suruí	M	28
15	Uruā Kanoé	Kanoé	M	34
16	Wagoh Suruí	Suruí	M	28
17	Wará Kaxarari	Kaxarari	M	29
18	Xiener Suruí	Suruí	M	27
19	Yunua Sabanê	Sabanê	F	28

n.: number; F: female; M: male.  
Source: elaborated by the authors.

The participants are from 12 different ethnic groups and this fact is a portrait of the reality of the course, considering that the region attended is part of the Legal Amazon and, as explained by Egon Heck, Francisco Loebens and Priscila D. Carvalho (2005), is an area known for its complex socio-diversity, occupied by a significant number of indigenous peoples.

Among the participants, five are female and 14 are male. The sample reflects the reality of the indigenous schools in the state of Rondônia, where most of the teachers are men. Data made available by SEDUC/RO — via the Electronic Citizen Information Service System (Sistema Eletrônico de Serviço de Informações ao Cidadão) — show that there are currently, in the state, 101 indigenous schools in activity and a quantity of 350 indigenous teachers, 212 of which are male (60.6%) and 138 female (39.4%).

The average age of the participants is approximately 31 years old, which is justified by the difficulty in completing basic education, since until recently high school was not offered in the indigenous communities' schools. There is also great difficulty in accessing higher education, since the quota system is not enough to meet the demand of indigenous peoples.

The data shows that the participants are from ten indigenous land, located in seven different municipalities of Rondônia (Chart 2). This fact is a small portrait of the extensive geographical area covered by the course. It is worth emphasizing that we chose not to inform the name of the village in which each participant resides as an extra care to ensure anonymity.

**Chart 2 – Distribution of the research participants per municipality and indigenous land.**

Municipality	Indigenous land	Participant identification
Alta Floresta D'Oeste	Rio Branco	Āramirā Tupari, Asikat Tupari, Okio Tupari and Uruā Kanoé
Cacoal	Sete de Setembro	Nicolas Suruí, Oy Atoah Suruí, Urerh Suruí, Wagoh Suruí and Xiener Suruí
Guajará Mirim	Pacaas Novos	Tocorom Wajuru
	Rio Guaporé	Arikayru Arikapú, Pako Medjutxi Jabuti and Txiu Jabuti
	Sagarana	Nakot Oro Waran Xijein
Ji-Paraná	Igarapé Lourdes	Nakira Wirin Arara
Parecis	Kwazá do Rio São Pedro	Dukaria Aikanã
Porto Velho	Karitiana	Taodereka Karitiana
Porto Velho/Extrema	Kaxarari	Wará Kaxarari
Vilhena	Parque Indígena Apurinã	Yunua Sabané

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Following the qualitative research perspective, we elected the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview as instruments to produce data for the investigation. In the questionnaire, we used a mix of open and closed questions, aiming to make the instrument more dynamic and self-explanatory, facilitating its completion.

Furthermore, we chose the semi-structured interview because it is more flexible. According to Maria Cecília de Souza Minayo (2010), this type of interview gives more freedom to the researcher, as it allows him/her to elaborate a pre-established script of questions and add others spontaneously, according to the momentary circumstances. Both instruments were applied according to the participants' time availability, with previous scheduling of date and time.

We chose to organize, treat, and analyze the research data through elements of Categorical Thematic Analysis, a modality of Content Analysis, with Laurence Bardin (2016) as reference. According to the author, this type of categorization is fast and effective when applied to direct and simple discourses, as is the case of the present research. Following this proposal, we followed three steps for the organization, treatment, and analysis of the data, namely: pre-analysis; material exploration; and treatment and interpretation of the results obtained.

Pre-analysis is the phase of organization in which there is intense contact by the researcher with the data produced with the aim of making it operational and synthesizing the initial ideas (Bardin, 2016). The material exploration phase "[...] consists essentially of operations of coding, decomposition, or enumeration, according to previously formulated rules." (*ibidem*, p. 13, our translation), with the aim of reaching the core understanding of the data. It was during this phase that we established three thematic categories around which the data content was organized:

1. Contributions of the Intercultural Basic Education degree of the UNIR in training indigenous teachers to deal with issues of gender and sexual diversity in the exercise of teaching;
2. Inclusion of issues of gender and sexual diversity in the curriculum of indigenous teacher training courses;
3. Suggestions for activities to discuss issues of gender and sexual diversity in indigenous teacher training courses.

Lastly, in the phase of treatment and interpretation of the results obtained, we organized the data by means of tables and highlighted excerpts of the participants' speeches to condense and highlight the relevant information that emerged from the data, which enabled the qualitative analysis based on the theoretical framework that supports this research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We organized the results and discussion by category of analysis, so the text is subdivided into three subsections. In the first, we will analyze the participants' conceptions about the contributions of the Intercultural Basic Education degree in Indigenous teachers' training to deal with issues of gender and sexual diversity in the exercise of teaching; in the second, we will deal with the inclusion of themes

involving gender and sexual diversity issues in Indigenous teachers' training courses; and, in the third, about suggestions for activities to discuss gender and sexual diversity issues in Indigenous teachers' training courses.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE INTERCULTURAL BASIC EDUCATION DEGREE  
OF THE UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE RONDÔNIA IN TRAINING  
INDIGENOUS TEACHERS TO DEAL WITH ISSUES OF GENDER  
AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN THE EXERCISE OF TEACHING

Despite the specificities, to form indigenous teachers is, above all, to form teachers, as Wilmar da Rocha D'Angelis (2003) states. In the same way as the other degrees, it is expected that the so-called Intercultural Degrees train and encourage the new teachers to assume the responsibility of fighting against the several forms of prejudice and discrimination that permeate the school space, among them those related to gender and sexual diversity issues. In view of this, we asked the participants if they considered that the Intercultural Basic Education course at UNIR is contributing to train indigenous teachers to deal with issues of gender and sexual diversity in the teaching practice.

The participants Asikat Tupari, Okio Tupari, and Wagoh Suruí answered affirmatively, justifying that, even though the themes are not part of the curriculum, they are discussed in some curricular components, and this enables everyone to have at least a notion of how to deal with gender and sexual diversity issues in the pedagogical practice. This can be observed in the following transcribed excerpts:

*There is no subject to work on this, but there are some teachers who explain how to deal with different people. There is a lot of prejudice against indigenous people, blacks, and even homosexuals [...], but through explanations the teachers show how to live in the world, how to respect others. (Asikat Tupari)*

*[...] even if it is not in the curriculum, but it is emphasized enough, [...] we end up exchanging ideas, giving points of view within the subjects. (Okio Tupari)*

*[...] this has already been discussed. [...] Here we learn a little of each thing [...] it gives us [...] a notion of how to deal at least. (Wagoh Suruí)*

We know that school is a microcosm of society and, therefore, is crossed by gender and sexuality issues. From Louro's (2014, p. 93, our translation) perspective, "[...] it is impossible to think about the institution without reflecting on the social and cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity." If teachers do not have access to solid training on the issues at hand, they can contribute to reinforce stereotypes and prejudices that generate violence and exclusion.

Therefore, it is not enough to have a "notion" about the subject. Nilson Fernandes Dinis (2011) points out that the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the curriculum of teacher education courses enables new teachers to develop strategies of resistance to heteronormative school curricula. In the specific case of Intercultural Graduate Studies, this issue is more complex, given that gender and

sexuality have their own representations within each social and cultural context (Louro, 2007; 2008; 2014; Meyer, 2013).

Therefore, there are several understandings to be considered. The inclusion of these themes in Intercultural Education demands the development of strategies so that the teachers in training from each ethnic group can appropriate knowledge that will allow them to promote a culture of peace and respect for human rights in the schools of their communities, according to the specificities of their cultures.

Participant Nakira Wirin Arara and participant Tocarom Wajuru evidenced, in their answers, that they do not remember having discussed gender and sexual diversity issues during their trajectories in the Intercultural Basic Education degree. Therefore, they understand that the students are not being trained to deal with this in the exercise of teaching.

The participants mentioned before are in favor of discussing these issues during the course so that indigenous teachers can be qualified to work with them in the schools of their communities, as can be seen in the transcription of Nakira Wirin Arara's answer: "I think it contributed too little, because we didn't discuss this issue. I think it could have contributed more to prepare us." (our translation).

The female participants Āramirā Tupari, Nakot Oro Waran Xijein, Pako Medjutxi Jabuti and Yunua Sabanê and the male participants Arikayru Arikapú, Dukaria Aikanã, Nicolas Suruí, Oy Atoah Suruí, Taodereka Karitiana, Txiu Jabuti, Urerh Suruí, Uruã Kanoé, Wará Kaxarari and Xiener Suruí believe that the course is failing in terms of training indigenous teachers to deal with issues of gender and sexual diversity, since these themes are not being addressed. The transcription of excerpts from the speeches of Wará Kaxarari and Nakot Oro Waran Xijein, presented next, summarizes the thoughts of all the participants mentioned before.

*[...] at no time we have had a lecture talking about this or a broad discussion. I see that Intercultural has not collaborated on this part.* (Nakot Oro Waran Xijein)

*Intercultural does not train anyone to work on these issues. I myself, when I leave here the day I graduate, I will not be prepared to deal with this [...], because it is not [being] discussed, they are not bringing this issue inside [the classroom].* (Wará Kaxarari)

Analyzing the answers, we found that most of the participants consider that the Intercultural Basic Education degree does not offer opportunities for indigenous teachers to study and discuss gender and sexual diversity issues during their education process. Consequently, it does not enable them to work these themes in the exercise of teaching. In consulting the PPC (UNIR, 2008), we did not find any curricular component focused on the discussion of gender and sexuality, nor did we find a topic related to this in the menu. Therefore, the approach to these topics depends on the individual initiatives of the teachers of

the course and, according to the results of the present research, this is practically not happening.

Unfortunately, the absence of themes related to gender and sexuality in the curriculum is not restricted to UNIR's Intercultural Basic Education degree. Helena Altmann (2013) says that these issues are more frequently discussed in basic education than in university courses, because universities have more autonomy than schools, including with regard to knowledge, which allows for both the inclusion and the suppression of these issues in the curricula.

If, on the one hand, it [university autonomy] guarantees that professors sensitive to this theme address such issues in their disciplines, or even offer specific disciplines about it in their courses, on the other hand, it also makes it possible that a not inconsiderable number of teachers and other professionals complete their higher education without these issues having been contemplated. (Altmann, 2013, p. 79, our translation)

Another issue pointed out by the author is that higher education courses have a more fixed and traditional structure, which makes it difficult to change their curricula, since dealing with issues of gender and sexuality requires a certain malleability, given that the more or less important aspects to be addressed change focus according to the historical moment (Altmann, 2013). In the case of intercultural undergraduate degrees, the demands of indigenous peoples are also changing over time, which represents a challenge to the training of indigenous teachers and requires that the course find ways to deal with it. One solution would be the constant reformulation of the PPC, which has not occurred until today in the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR, even more than a decade after it started operating.

#### INCLUSION OF ISSUES OF GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN THE CURRICULUM OF INDIGENOUS TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

The inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in teacher training curricula, according to Dinis (2011), contributes to these professionals' future development of strategies to resist the sexist and heteronormative curriculum. In view of this, we asked the participants if they were in favor of including these themes in the indigenous teacher training courses and, consequently, in the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR. The women Āramirā Tupari, Nakira Wirin Arara, Pako Medjutxi Jabuti, and Yunua Sabanê, and the men Arikayru Arikapú, Asikat Tupari, Oy Atoah Suruí, Tocorom Wajuru, Urerh Suruí, Uruã Kanoé, Wagoh Suruí, and Wará Kaxarari answered affirmatively, as we can see in some excerpts presented below.

*I think it could be. So, to end the prejudice, right? The relatives still have a lot of prejudice against this diversity. [...] because I would know more, I would have a better understanding to work in the community... know how to talk, explain... even give lectures to the community about this. (Āramirā Tupari)*

*I believe so, because the training should prepare the teachers for everything, [...] the teacher has to acquire a little knowledge to understand and take it to the classroom.*  
(Oy Atoah Suruí)

*It would be important, because nowadays we have to be prepared. Someday we may come across a situation like this within the community and we won't know how to deal with it.* (Wará Kaxarari)

Dukaria Aikanã, Xiener Suruí and Taodereka Karitiana, despite informing that they don't have an opinion about the inclusion of the themes in focus in the indigenous teacher education courses in general, were in favor of the inclusion of the themes in the scope of the Intercultural Basic Education course at UNIR. Dukaria Aikanã also understands that this could contribute to the deconstruction of prejudices of the students themselves, as can be observed in this fragment of her speech: "I am sure that today there are many scholars here at the university who are prejudiced. So they could treat [about gender and sexual diversity], at least to see if the person is touched and starts having respect for the other." This is relevant, because the lack of knowledge is one of the reasons for prejudice.

Most of the participants were receptive to the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the indigenous teacher training courses and, specifically, in the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR. For them, this would contribute to train the students to work with these issues in indigenous schools, as well as to take information and knowledge to their respective communities, acting against prejudice and discrimination. As Urerh Suruí explains, "[...] the community sees the teacher as someone who has a very important role. He is respected within the community." Therefore, the teacher can be an agent of transformation.

From this perspective, Louro (2014, p. 124, our translation) argues that it is important to develop formative experiences that seek to "subvert the unequal situations" — whether they are of class, race, gender, ethnicity, or related to sexuality — experienced by the subjects and, in this context, information and knowledge are key elements. According to the author, the situations of inequality, exclusion, and prejudice are only perceived, destabilized, and subverted to the extent that the subjects are aware of their form of production and reproduction. Thus, if the indigenous teachers, during their training period, have the opportunity to deepen their studies, discuss and reflect on gender and sexual diversity issues, they will be better prepared for a non-sexist and non-heteronormative educational practice, both in schools and in their communities.

The participants Txu Jabuti and Okio Tupari were in favor of including themes involving gender and sexual diversity in the indigenous teacher training courses, because they believe that nowadays indigenous teachers need to be prepared to deal with these issues in schools and communities, especially in fighting prejudice.

*I think that it would be good because if the communities have this kind of people that suffer prejudice, for example, homosexuals... then it would be good if the teachers had a way to work on this at school, so that this does not happen to this person. The trained*

*teacher that has gone through the university or the Açaí Project would already have this ability.* (Txiu Jabuti)

However, in a contradictory way, they make some reservations about the discussion of these issues in the context of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR, the course to which they are linked. Txiu Jabuti was inclined to consider the possibility as long as “*it wasn't a big workload,*” just enough for “*the person to have a notion.*” Okio Tupari claimed that he doesn't see the need to deepen this theme, because for him “*enough*” is already discussed.

We notice here a certain resistance to discussing gender and sexual diversity issues and a lack of knowledge about the complexity of the topics, because, to combat sexism and LGBTQIA+phobia in educational practice, it is necessary to have a more open look and make “[...] a problematization that will have to deal, necessarily, with the multiple and complicated combinations of gender, sexuality, class, race and ethnicity.” (Louro, 2014, p. 69, our translation), which demands a solid knowledge about the subject.

Participant Nicolas Suruí was against the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in indigenous teacher training courses, because, for him, this is a “*family responsibility*” and he would not “*feel comfortable*” if these issues were addressed in the Intercultural Basic Education degree. The participant Nakot Oro Waran Xijein, although she was in favor of including studies related to gender issues because she believed that this would contribute to informing indigenous women about their rights, also stated that she did not agree with the inclusion of the topic of sexual diversity because she also considered that this issue should be discussed at the family level, as can be seen in this fragment: “*Yes, on the issue of gender, women's rights, these things. [...]. I think this is very important, because many women stay inside the village, they don't know about their rights [...]. Now about sexual diversity, no, this is better discussed in the family.*”

In fact, the discussions proposed by the participants would contribute to inform the course participants about the rights of indigenous women, and they would be able to pass on this information to the women in their respective communities. In addition to theoretical and historical questions about the topic, issues such as the Maria da Penha Law — Law No. 11.340, of August 7, 2006 (Brasil, 2006) —, which creates mechanisms to curb domestic and family violence against women, regardless of class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income, culture, educational level, age, and religion, could be addressed, and, as Júlia Helena Rizzatti (2018) reports, many indigenous women have no information about this legislation.

However, the resistance to the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in teacher training courses or in school in general, based on the argument that the discussion of these issues should be restricted to the family environment — as stated by participants Nicolas Suruí and Nakot Oro Waran Xijein — reveals a mistaken view. Márcio de Oliveira, Reginaldo Peixoto and Eliane Rose Maio (2013, p. 18647) argue that sexuality education should be carried out jointly by both the family and the school. From the earliest age, children have doubts and curiosities about the most diverse subjects, among them sexuality. At home, they

usually express these doubts and curiosities in the form of questions to people in their circle of coexistence, such as their father and mother, at school, to teachers and colleagues. Therefore, the family and the school need to be available for dialogue. In the view of the authors,

In this way, children will feel safer to ask questions about certain issues that bother them and we will be reducing the chances of a child obtaining information — and transforming it into knowledge (often erroneous) — through people (other children, classmates, brothers/sisters) without any basis. (Oliveira, Peixoto and Maio, 2013, p. 18647, our translation)

It is common to hear speeches against sexuality education for children and adolescents, especially coming from adults responsible for them. In the view of Mary Neide Damico Figueiró (2010), in the sexuality education performed in an informal way, such as that which occurs within the family, the theme is often associated with something negative, dirty, shameful and about which it should not be spoken. The school can contribute to break these barriers and deconstruct prejudices, providing students with access to scientific knowledge about gender and sexuality, and this will only be possible if teachers are prepared to offer an adequate sexuality education, hence the importance of teacher training courses including these issues in their curricula. Eliane Rose Maio (2011, p. 200, our translation) explains that to perform this work implies that teachers have

[...] a vision of the whole and a frame of reference nourished by dialogue, by principles of justice, equity and democratic values. In this sense, positions trivialized by assimilationist, essentializing, or medicalized assumptions should be avoided, as well as positions packaged by differentialist, particularist, regressive, or separatist dispositions.

The myth that gender and sexuality should be discussed in the private space, according to Deborah P. Britzman (1996, p. 80, our translation), prevents the understanding that these issues are defined in a “[...] broader social space, across social categories and boundaries.”, besides contributing to the invisibilization and silencing of those who do not fit into the “standard” norms of gender and sexuality. According to the author, this discourse has consequences for the training of teachers, since it prevents them from being educated about it and, consequently, from understanding that this position contributes to the denial of rights.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN INDIGENOUS TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

According to Jimena Furlani (2011, p. 40, our translation), when themes related to gender and sexual diversity are worked at school, they disturb the “[...] truths that define the fields of production and reproduction of unequal power relations and legitimation of sexual and gender hierarchies.”, therefore contributing to the reduction of violence and discrimination.

We believe that the same can be said in relation to teacher training courses. Thus, we asked the participants if they had any suggestions for activities to stimulate discussion on gender and sexual diversity issues in the indigenous teacher education courses and, consequently, in the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR.

With the exception of two participants (Asikat Tupari and Nicolas Suruí), the others presented suggestions for activities to discuss gender and sexual diversity issues in the indigenous teacher training courses and, consequently, in the Intercultural Basic Education course at UNIR, with the lecture being the most cited activity, but all suggestions are pertinent (Chart 3).

**Chart 3 – Suggestions of activities given by the research participants to discuss gender and sexual diversity issues in indigenous teacher training courses.**

Suggested activity	Frequency	Identification of the participants
Lectures	9	Āramirā Tupari, Arikayru Arikapú, Dukaria Aikanā, Okio Tupari, Pako Medjutxi Jabuti Tocarom Wajuru, Urerh Suruí, Xiener Suruí and Yunua Sabanê
Seminars	1	Okio Tupari
Workshops	1	Taodereka Karitiana
Debates	1	Yunua Sabanê
In a transversal way, in the existing curricular components	3	Nakot Oro Waran Xijein and Oy Atoah Suruí Wagoh Suruí
Create a specific curricular component for this purpose	1	Txiu Jabuti
In a diversified way	1	Wará Kaxarari
No suggestions	2	Asikat Tupari and Nicolas Suruí
Total	19	-

Source: elaborated by the authors.

Mary Neide Damico Figueiró (2001), Furlani (2011), Eliane Rose Maio Braga (2012) and Reginaldo Peixoto (2013) suggest activities for the school context, but they may well be suitable for indigenous teacher training courses. For the authors, there is no need to have a specific subject in the curricular matrix for the discussions of gender and sexuality. This can occur in a transversal way, through projects or specific moments, with the realization of actions such as readings, lectures, seminars, workshops, debates, among others.

Altmann (2013) suggests that the Teaching Initiation Scholarship Institutional Program (Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência — PIBID) can be a space to be explored in teacher education. This program is linked to CAPES and the Ministry of Education and offers scholarships to undergraduate students in order to anticipate the relationship between future teachers and public schools. It has also received investment from both institutions, which makes possible

the “[...] creation of intervention programs on gender and sexual diversity, or that have these themes as one of their objects of attention, therefore, of professional training.” (Altmann, 2013, p. 80, our translation).

Following this same line of reasoning, the Pedagogical Residency Program could also be used with this same purpose. It was created in 2018 and is also linked to CAPES and the Ministry of Education and aims to induce the improvement of practical training in undergraduate courses, promoting the immersion of the undergraduate in basic education school, starting in the second half of his course.

The author also suggests that other educational possibilities linked to gender and sexual diversity in teacher education courses can be built from art — such as plastic arts, films, short films, adult and children’s literature — because these themes have been addressed “[...] directly or indirectly in these fields, which allows their reuse in the educational sphere.” (*ibidem*, p. 80, our translation). We can include here the indigenous myths, as suggested by Betty Mindlin (2002), which can be used to discuss gender and sexuality from the perspective of each people’s culture.

In addition, we suggest conducting research on the themes in focus in the various curricular components, in the end of course works, or through the Institutional Program for Scientific Initiation Scholarships (Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação Científica PIBIC) — funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico — CNPq) —, and has as its main objectives to develop critical thinking and awaken the scientific vocation among undergraduate students in different areas of knowledge.

Through this research, the indigenous teachers in training could investigate how the issues of gender and sexual diversity were dealt with in the past, how they are dealt with nowadays, and the needs of their communities related to this, which could be a starting point for the construction of proposals for pedagogical interventions for indigenous schools.

However, these issues cannot be imposed on indigenous peoples. The participant Dukaria Aikanã suggested that the course collegiate presents to the students and indigenous leaders a proposal for the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the curriculum of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR to be collectively discussed and approved, which would imply changing the PPC. One justification for the non-inclusion of the themes in focus in the current document would be the fact that they were not requested by the indigenous peoples at the time of its elaboration.

After more than a decade, we believe that new demands have emerged, among which is the need to discuss issues related to gender and sexuality. This is because, according to Maria Leonice Tupari (2017), with the creation of the Association of Indigenous Women Warriors of Rondônia (Associação das Guerreiras Indígenas de Rondônia — AGIR) in 2015, there was a strengthening of the indigenous women’s movement in Rondônia. The LGBTQIA+ indigenous population is also gaining visibility and presenting their demands. A proof of this was the participation of the trans indigenous woman, Sandra Kanoé, resident in Ji-Paraná

(RO), home of the course, in live held in the last edition of the Acampamento Terra Livre (Kanoó, 2021).

The elaboration of the text of a new pedagogical project for the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR has already started, based on the results of the evaluation seminars of the course with the participation of the students and indigenous leaders, but it has been paralyzed due to the covid-19 pandemic. We believe that the present moment may be the right time to consult the representative entities of the indigenous peoples, including the women's and LGBTQIA+ entities, about the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the course curriculum, and we believe that the results of the present research may serve as subsidies for the elaboration of this proposal.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present research was motivated by our concerns about the absence of gender and sexual diversity issues in the curriculum of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR. We do not intend to present a conclusive study on the subject, but to foster the discussion about an indigenous teacher education that contemplates the respect for diversity and the promotion of human rights.

The objective was to analyze the perceptions of indigenous students of the Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR about the inclusion of the discussion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the course. The data showed that most participants consider that the course has contributed little to train them in this aspect, considering that these issues are hardly addressed in the classes. Therefore, they were receptive to the inclusion of gender and sexual diversity issues in the indigenous teachers' training courses and, specifically, in the Intercultural Basic Education degree, because they consider that this would contribute to train the students to develop a pedagogical work aimed at respecting human rights, as well as to take information to the indigenous communities, acting against prejudice. To this end, they suggested that activities such as lectures, seminars, workshops, and debates should be carried out, in addition to the possibility of working on these themes in a transversal way or by creating a specific curricular component.

However, we also noticed resistance and discomfort in approaching the theme by some of the participants, because they consider that these issues are not part of traditional culture and should be discussed within the family context. Even those who were in favor usually enunciate a discourse focused on the "acceptance of the other" as a gesture of kindness, compassion, or tolerance, without, however, questioning the established hierarchies, power relations, and standards. This shows a certain degree of prejudice, because it is as if they are granted the right to exist, as long as they are on the fringes and do not disturb the established order. This probably occurs because they have little information on the subject and have not had the opportunity to broaden their knowledge in their education process, which highlights the urgency of talking to the indigenous peoples about the inclusion of these themes in the curriculum of the

Intercultural Basic Education degree at UNIR, as well as in other courses for the education of indigenous teachers.

We consider that the objective of the research was reached and that the inclusion of the themes in focus in the curriculum of the intercultural undergraduate courses, with previous discussion with the indigenous peoples, would allow the students to carry out research to identify the cultural elements that contribute to the production of prejudice, discrimination, and violence. And, from then on, promote discussions in their communities and think about inclusive pedagogical practices that fight prejudices related to gender and sexuality.

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