

Epistemological constructions and deconstructions of/in participatory research – a collective action with the Laklãnõ/Xokleng people

Karla Lucia Bento¹ 

Lilian Blanck de Oliveira¹ 

ABSTRACT

This article presents records of (de)construction, in different *times/spaces/places*, as experienced in a participatory research study developed with the Laklãnõ/Xokleng people residing in the Indigenous Territory Ibirama, in Santa Catarina, Brazil. The objective is to disclose some traces of the paths, mishaps and theoretical-practical results identified in the study, highlighting the role of indigenous subjects. Along the way, we try to keep the research in the perspective of critical interculturality, recognizing the potential to promote processes of decolonization, as the subjects who participate in the process acquire knowledge about their context and reinterpret it in interactive practices. The experience with participatory research has shown that the commitment to work with populations historically placed in vulnerable conditions by colonial processes should not be limited to the timespan of an academic work in order not to become an instrument of exploitation.

KEYWORDS

participating research; critical interculturality; decolonization; Laklãnõ/Xokleng people.

¹Fundação Universidade Regional de Blumenau, Blumenau, SC, Brazil.

CONSTRUÇÕES E DESCONSTRUÇÕES EPISTEMETODOLÓGICAS DE/EM UMA PESQUISA PARTICIPANTE — UM FAZER COLETIVO COM O POVO LAKLÃNÕ/XOKLENG

RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta registros de (des)construção, em diferentes *tempos/espacos/lugares*, vivenciados em uma pesquisa participante desenvolvida com o povo Laklãnõ/Xokleng, residente na Terra Indígena Ibirama, Santa Catarina, Brasil. O objetivo é socializar alguns traços dos percursos, percalços e resultados teórico-práticos identificados no estudo, destacando o protagonismo dos sujeitos indígenas. Durante o percurso, procuramos manter a pesquisa na perspectiva da interculturalidade crítica, reconhecendo a potencialidade de promover processos de decolonização na medida em que os sujeitos partícipes do processo adquirem novas compreensões acerca do próprio contexto e ressignificam saberes e práticas de forma interativa. A experiência com a pesquisa participante mostrou que o compromisso de trabalhar com populações historicamente vulnerabilizadas por processos coloniais não se deve limitar ao período de um trabalho acadêmico para não se converter em instrumento de exploração.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

pesquisa participante; interculturalidade crítica; decolonização; povo Laklãnõ/Xokleng.

CONSTRUCCIONES EPISTEMETOLÓGICAS Y DECONSTRUCCIONES DE/EN INVESTIGACIÓN PARTICIPANTE — UNA ACCIÓN COLECTIVA CON EL PUEBLO LAKLÃNÕ/XOKLENG

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta registros en diferentes *tiempos/espacios/lugares* de (de)construcción vividos en una investigación participativa desarrollada con el Pueblo Laklãnõ/Xokleng que reside en la Tierra Indígena Ibirama, Santa Catarina, Brasil. El objetivo es socializar algunos rastros de las rutas, percances y resultados teórico-práticos identificados en la investigación, destacando el rol de los sujetos indígenas. En el camino, tratamos de mantener la investigación en la perspectiva de la interculturalidad crítica, reconociendo el potencial para promover procesos de descolonización a medida que los sujetos que participan en el proceso adquieren conocimientos sobre su contexto y los reinterpretan en prácticas interactivas. La experiencia de la investigación participante ha demostrado que el compromiso de trabajar con poblaciones históricamente vulnerables por los procesos coloniales no debe limitarse al período de trabajo académico para no convertirse en un instrumento de explotación.

PALABRAS CLAVE

investigación participante; interculturalidad crítica; descolonización; pueblo Laklãnõ/Xokleng.

INTRODUCTION

This article presents some traces/moments of an epistemological path that has permeated a participatory study with the indigenous people Laklano/Xokleng. This people lives in Indigenous Land Ibirama (ILI), in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Today, the ILI is organized in nine villages, and Village Bugio is the territorial and human cut defined collectively as the time/space/place for the development of the investigation.

Firstly, we shall note that epistemology is a term coined by the combination of the words *epistemology* — referring to knowledge, scientific study, thinking and reflection — and *methodology* — as a method, a path to be followed. The union of these two in the word *epistemology* aims to highlight and strengthen, terminologically, the indissociability of theory from practice, thus triggering a resignification of educational conceptions (Pozzer and Cecchetti, 2016). The construction of an epistemological perspective presupposes the interaction between greater epistemic depth and the methodological route in the dynamic of the very study. Thus,

[...] knowledge understanding and/or construction, or access to it, cannot happen only in the realm of ideas, but also in life's relations themselves, in the "constitution of problems," meaning an investigative what-to-do questioned by and with the face and history of the otherness.¹ (Leme, 2019, p. 40)

For us, in line with a critical and intercultural perspective, such an indissociability is the underlying theme of any study process and/or practice.

The present research was conducted from 2014 to 2018. It is part of a wider context of teaching, research, and extension projects carried out by a research group with the indigenous people Laklano/Xokleng, which aim to make visible the history, culture, and problems permeating the ILI/SC, related to developments in that territory and surrounding area. These indigenous people, whose presence in the area go back more than five thousand years, are part of the wider context and problematics involving the other indigenous peoples of Brazil, Latin America, and the Caribbean. They have suffered antidialogical actions (Freire, 1987) carried out by the colonizers. Like the other peoples of the area, the Laklano/Xokleng underwent violent colonial processes that made their existence invisible and almost sent them into extinction. Violence is still present, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudice.

However, their presence and population increase in the area of Vale do Itajaí, state of Santa Catarina, have defied the predominant rationale that anticipated their assimilation into the national social context or a complete ethnical annihilation. Indigenous resistance demands recognition of these people's rights and their contribution to the history and culture of our society. Among the main

1 LEVINAS, E. **Entre nosotros. Ensayos para pensar en otros**. Valencia: Pre-Textos, 1993.; LEVINAS, E. **Nombres propios**. Madrid: Fundación Emmanuel Mounier, 2008.

struggles of such people are the following: to demarcate the indigenous land based on an anthropological survey (Pereira, 1998); to conduct a study on the environmental impact of a dam construction in the indigenous land, aimed to prevent floods such as the ones that used to devastate cities in the Vale do Itajaí area, which have been causing material and symbolic damage since the 1970s; to demand that indigenous school education take place under the law, that is, as an intercultural, specific, bilingual, differentiated, and community-based form of education, understood by the indigenous people as a chance to positively transform their relationship with non-indigenous society and as having impacts on the community's development.

The historical context of violence, struggle, and resistance led us to ask:

- a. where do the force and resistance of the Laklano/Xokleng people come from, in the face of the long and violent colonial processes promoted by the colonizing cultures?
- b. What is the role — *space and place* — of an intercultural, specific, differentiated, bilingual, and community-based form of education in this people's historical and cultural context of resistance? To answer them, we have traced an epistemological path whose features, setbacks, and theoretical-practical results we wish to share, highlighting the indigenous subjects' protagonism.

We understand that the possible answers to our questions can be chances to promote and strengthen decolonization processes for and with the indigenous people by identifying, making visible, and systematizing practices, ways of being and living based on values different from those of a globalized and capitalist world of production and consumption. To find such answers, the active presence of the indigenous people, as researching subjects, was crucial.

To assist us in our path, we reached out to authors such as Brandão, Freire, Fals Borda e Gajardo. Even though we do not quote Mills (2009) in our paper, his writings were relevant, particularly when he reflected on the work of social scientists as a process of intellectual craftsmanship. For him, intellectual work (trans)forms the worker him/herself as they work on their product. These authors have helped us look more deeply at the context and reality in question, considering that

The act of looking at something is directly associated to the amplification of a given level of conscience, bringing light and clarity to the facts, relations and conceptions, which, under a gaze that does not see them, can be naturalized and reproduced in daily practices. Seeing from various points of view, analyzing, questioning, and trying to understand are attitudes that enable moments of lucidity, gaps that are necessary to resist and intervene in reality. (Fleuri *et al.*, 2013, p. 12)

By sharing our experience of epistemological construction, we do not aim to set rules and/or procedures for a participatory study, except that which avoids reproducing antidialogical actions that seek to “further oppression, not

only economic, but cultural, by dispossessing the vanquished of their word, their expressiveness, their culture” (Freire, 1987, p. 136). These antidialogical actions are responsible for the colonialities produced during the colonial years in Latin America. A ground for these colonialities is the establishment of work relations based on the idea of races, which classified individuals as more or less rational and civilized and still model social relationships in Latin America and the Caribbean (Quijano, 2005).

Having introduced the context in which we wrote this article, we now reflect on the grounds upon which we conducted our research. Then, we describe the way in which bonds were established between the people involved in the study, that is, individuals associated with a university and the indigenous community. This was the context that enabled the present article, including the way in which the elements that turned into our analysis data were produced and disclosed. In the following sections we show how we have conducted our analysis and then present our final considerations.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH – THE CHALLENGE OF RESEARCHING *WITH*

From its first steps, a study developed *with* indigenous people, and not *about* them, demands establishing a relationship of reciprocity and dialogism in which the individual taken as the researcher and the community make joint decisions, defining in a shared way the path and procedures to be taken. This turns both into researching subjects. Local knowledge and how people read and interpret reality must take up and fill time, space and places during and in research, allowing reflections on the phenomena under study to be based on the real and experienced world. Such a study opens to the possibility of promoting changes and transformations in the territory, considering that the dynamic relation between objectivity and subjectivity is what constitutes a territory and promotes territorialities. This is because territory

[...] refers to the geographical space symbolically structured and politically constructed by a certain human group, whose organizational and subsistence modes, power relations, and identity definitions are, in turn, intrinsically dependent on it. (Aráoz, 2015, p. 176)

In this sense, the indigenous community is not an object upon which the one studying it focuses his or her attention, but a participating subject with whom decisions are made along the way. To act in such a way as to dismiss this active participation and not take into account the locals’ perception of their own reality turns the research activity into what Freire (1987) called antidialogical actions, which include amongst their strategies conquest, manipulation, division and cultural invasion. These actions “[...] might give the impression, in a naïve assessment, of a dialogue [but which], ultimately, are means used by the dominators to achieve their own ends” (Freire, 1987, p. 144-145). In other words, it is a process that reproduces colonialities, understood as

[...] a pattern of power that emerged because of modern colonialism, but instead of being limited to a formal relationship of power between two peoples or nations, rather refers to the way in which work, knowledge, authority, and intersubjective relations are articulated with each other, through the world capitalist market and the idea of race. Thus, although colonialism precedes coloniality, coloniality survives colonialism. (Maldonado Torres, 2007, p. 131)

This kind of action reproduces a system of domination historically known by the indigenous peoples, which, disguised as *natural*, must be examined in the different dimensions of human life and experience that form a paradigm and include: the epistemic level — as a coloniality of knowledge (Mignolo, 2005); the methodological level — a coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005); the ontological level — a coloniality of being (Mignolo, 2003); and the cosmogonic or axiological level — a coloniality of believing (Walsh, 2009).

In short, we explain the four dimensions as follows:

[...] ontological (on the nature of reality), epistemological (on the nature of knowledge and the process for its generation and appropriation), methodological (on the method and nature of inquiry/research) and axiological (on ethical and aesthetic values and the nature of the intervention), in which he answers the respective questions: what is reality?, what is relevant to know in reality, and through what process?, how to know what is relevant to know in reality?, what ethical and aesthetic values should prevail in the intervention to know what is relevant to know in reality? (Silva, 2013, p. 474, footnote)

In opposition to this system, our study sought to establish relations based on dialogical actions that have collaboration, union, organization, and cultural synthesis as relational tenets. These strategies allows “denouncing a ‘regime which encompasses this injustice and engenders this poverty’ to be carried out with its victims to search for men’s [and women’s] liberation in collaboration with them” (Freire, 2005, p. 171). Aiming not to reproduce a dominant system, we recognize the following need:

May we change our skin! Let us now “methodically” put on the skin of the Indian, the African slave, the humiliated mestizo, the impoverished peasant, the exploited worker, and the marginalized millions packed into the contemporary Latin-American cities. Let us make the eyes of the oppressed our own. (Dussel, 1993, p. 90)

We expand Dussel’s (1993) metaphor because we realize that this relationship and this system are entrenched in society, whose colonialities, produced by centuries of domination, are still present in daily life. Therefore, in addition to the skin, it is necessary to change the viscera and vital organs when trying to feel and understand the alterity in the Other, conscious that, for an indigenous

community, we are the Other. This epistemological challenge enables us to see and feel not only the pain, but also the presence and force of the community. While seeing it in its condition of oppression and possibility, we also establish a dialogical relationship with it, recognizing that, in such a meeting, men and women share the need for knowledge, aware of their incompleteness and being-more condition (Freire, 1987).

A study basing its actions upon dialogical practices does not overlap scientific with popular knowledge so as not to incur the risk of alienation and submission. The practical science and cultural manifestation of groups considered as and/or named popular groups, including indigenous communities, must be recognized in their own value so we can understand how they structure themselves to “find ways of incorporating those communities in the wider collective needs, without causing them to lose their identity and specific content” (Fals Borda, 2006, p. 47). This way, a study can promote popular participation and the autonomy of subjects so that they are able to act on/in/with their territories. In such a liberating and dialogical perspective, researchers, with popular groups, are cognizant researching subjects acting together to unveil concrete reality (Freire, 2006).

How we conduct a study suggests intentionality and, therefore, reveals the ideological and political character of our scientific activity. It is worth questioning whom this kind of science and research intends to serve, and developing a practice that is consistent with the answer (Freire, 2006). Such a posture as applied to our study has attached to it a critical, intercultural viewpoint that aims to promote the decolonization of knowledge, power, being, and believing. Thus,

[...] research can be a mobilizing factor of interaction between subjects, as it may promote understanding, resignification, and transformation of one’s interactive context. It is an elaboration and mobilization of forms of knowledge, power, being, and life that lead to all humans living with nature and themselves, beyond devices and structures of sociocultural domination and systematic destruction of nature, presently in the world context. (Fleuri, Coppete and Azi-beiro, 2009, p. 31)

In this intercultural and decolonizing perspective, we recognize that science is not an entity on its own, but it results from an intentional action of humans “responding to collective and concrete needs — including to those artistic, supernatural and extra-scientific needs — and also to specific goals determined by dominant social classes in precise historical moments” (Fals Borda, 2006, p. 43-44). As an existential experience (Marin, 2010), interculturality leads us to establish new and different relationships with science. We understand that

More than a simple concept of interrelationship, interculturality indicates and signifies processes of construction of “other” knowledge, of “other” political practice, of “other” social power, of “other” society and life systems. In short, it

marks different ways of thinking, acting and living in relation to the patterns of power that modernity and coloniality have installed. (Walsh, 2009, p. 232)

Being aware of this intentionality demands, from the researching person that opts for not reproducing antidialogical actions, a direct participation that, inductively, describes, analyzes, explains phenomena based on elements of his or her natural environment, always considering the meaning attributed by the subjects of the study, in this case, the indigenous people involved, to their own experiences and reality (Bogdan and Biklen, 1994). It is a reality taken as a concrete reality. In other words,

[...] it is more than facts or data taken, more or less, per se. It is all these facts and all these data and the perception the community has of them. Thus, a concrete reality occurs to me in the dialectical relation between objectivity and subjectivity. (Freire, 2006, p. 35)

In addition to the relationship between the objectivity of elements and facts found in the real context and the subjectivity of the vision subjects have in relation to this context, scientific research demands establishing a relationship between what was identified in the context studied and a theoretical field. Selecting and limiting a theoretical field leads to consistent research, being one of the first challenges to be faced and a task to be carried out by the individuals throughout the stages. In line with the critical and intercultural perspective we have adopted in our study with this indigenous population, our theoretical framework sought references that discuss processes of construction of coloniality and decolonial pedagogies.

A decolonial and intercultural approach demands a dialogical construction, challenging the researching subjects to understand how reality is construed, perceived, experienced, and lived. Existential situations are selected according to the meaning and importance attached by the group and in relation to the theoretical framework. In this sense, research is presented to and with the community as a means to realize their problems critically and as the result of a social and historical context. The goal is to “take up, in an increasingly lucid and autonomous way, one’s role of leadership and social player” (Oliveira and Oliveira, 2006, p. 27). Therefore, research is defined as a participant act, for

[...] *it responds especially to the basic needs of populations encompassing workers, peasants, farmers, and Indians — the most needy classes in contemporary social structures — considering their aspirations and potentialities of knowing and acting. It is the methodology that aims to encourage autonomous (self-confident) development from the ground and relative exterior independence.* (Fals Borda, 2006, p. 43, emphasis in the original)

It is important to say that participation in any phase of research must be predicted and encouraged by the researcher. However, it is not always possible for the entire community to be mobilized all the time at every stage. What makes it a

participatory study is that it is “politically a participatory study that is supervised by and serves popular projects of knowledge production and use” (Brandão, 2001, p. 251). Many projects designed under this perspective have had different levels of participation. Gajardo (2001), in reference to a study published by Ema Rubín de Celis in 1982, described a typology of five possible levels of participation in projects of this nature:

1. participation based on the return of information;
2. participation based on data collection;
3. participation in the whole process on the topic brought up by the scientist;
4. participation in the whole process on the topic brought up by the group itself;
5. participation in the study of educational action. (Gajardo, 2001, p. 44)

These levels reveal that there is not a single way of doing participatory research, nor a need for meeting all of them. That is, participatory research is not, by principle, normative and is constituted from the concrete reality of contexts. What makes it participatory is being a tool at the service of political practice inside a community, based on its decisions or needs. A study that is an instrument for the popular education of a given community must consider that “when people start participating in it, it must be that somehow it is already part of their practices, class projects, and that is why it is participatory” (Brandão, 2001, p. 252). How the relevance and the theme to be studied were construed is, in this sense, very important. The next section, therefore, presents the way bonds and relationships were established before, during, and after research.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RESEARCHING INDIVIDUALS

It must be said that our approach to the indigenous community Laklano/Xokleng did not happen, at first, out of the interest in developing a study. Our first encounter in 2014 aimed to develop an educational project with high school students of the Indigenous Basic Education School Vanhecu Patté, of village Bugio, one of the nine villages forming the ILI. The invitation was done via Conselho de Missão entre Povos Indígenas — COMIN (Council of Missions among Indigenous People) and was related to a project for the promotion of classes in different knowledge fields, which are part of the Brazilian High School Exam (ENEM). At the time, we developed a project in the field of languages, technologies, and writing. It took place systematically, with three annual meetings in 2014, 2015, and 2016. In 2017, classes took place in the Indigenous Basic Education School Laklano, in a village called Sede. This project started a relationship that has been fruitful as it has triggered participation in other events, projects, and activities in which the indigenous community is interested.

We have developed extension projects based on Law n. 11.645/2008 at local public schools, training indigenous teachers in events that debated topics such as the Barragem Norte (North Dam) and the inclusion of indigenous students in university. There was also participation in several initiatives offered by the community of ILI, such as the annual celebrations of April and September,

which mark, respectively, the Indigenous Peoples' Week and the resistance of the Laklano/Xokleng people since the so-called Pacification and/or Contact (which occurred in September 22nd, 1914, when this ethnical group set up its village and started living in the ILI).

The training conducted with indigenous leaders, community, and school, that took place in August 2015 around the construction of the Pedagogical-Political Project (PPP) of Vanhecu Patté school is also worth mentioning. The school community was working on it already, and a meeting was held on August 11th, when a draft was presented. They realized the need to expand knowledge on the stages of crafting such a document, its role in the school, and its legal support. On this occasion, we were asked to offer training on how to craft a PPP. We then booked a meeting for August 28th, 2015. We gathered in the school with teachers, parents, students, and community representatives. Professors and students of the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) participated, too. At the time, they had been developing a project called "Indigenous Action and Knowledge at School" with the federal administration's support, which encompassed two schools of the ILI and other Kaingang and Guarani schools of the state of Santa Catarina.

This account shows that the bonds between the people who became researching subjects in the present work were constructed for at least two years before we started the participatory research reported in this paper. The initial experience let us know more about the ILI's history and organization, more specifically about village Bugio. This relationship generated trust and led us to conduct a scientific study to systematize and make visible the ways of being and learning in Bugio village that taking place at the Vanhecu Patté school and somehow seemed to revitalize the community's strength and strengthen their persistence and resistance. The questions permeating the study derive from our observation of this reality and the community's desires manifested in our meetings, considering that the possible answers would bring to light topics hidden by a historical context based on antidiological actions (Freire, 1987).

Once we had decided on an action field, we talked to the school principal and a local leader to tell them that we wanted to develop a study that would contribute to making visible both within and outside the ILI, based on the notes and sharing of the reflections and actions of Vanhecu Patté school, its challenges, assumptions, objectives and proposals in line with Laklano/Xokleng history and culture. Having received permission from the school principal and the leader of the indigenous community, we widened our survey to include the teachers and got their permission to conduct our research in a participatory way.

In our conversation with the school community, we decided that, to reach our goals, in addition to a bibliographic study, which included a theoretical framework, public programs, and legislation, methodological procedures would be useful for data collection based on the analysis of Pedagogical Documents (PD) particularly related to Vanhecu Patté school and the production, by the teachers, of Pedagogical Reports (PR). At first, these reports were delivered orally and recorded in meetings between the researcher and each teacher, and finally transcribed.

Such an abundance of information led the group to propose a systematization of the data through a writing workshop. It took place in a continuous training project called “Memories of the traditional ways of teaching and learning of the Laklano/Xokleng ethnicity,” held in 2018, under the auspices of Ibirama’s teaching coordination office, responsible for local state schools. This resulted in a paper called “Pedagogical Experiences of Indigenous Teachers of Vanhecu Patté School”, which also included a documentary depicting a conversation with the elders of village Bugio, published as an e-book (EIEB Vanhecu Patte, 2018).

Decisions with regard to the subjects, forms of participation, and documents to be analyzed were made in talks with the group of teachers and management staff of Vanhecu Patté school, including those related to our continuous training project — given that “in the group situation, sharing and comparing experiences builds a set of common interests and concerns that, while experienced by everyone, are rarely articulated by a single person” (Gaskell, 2002, p. 77). Such a dialogical perspective was particularly in line with the indigenous community’s context and characteristics, in which the collective overlaps with the individual, mainly with regard to Laklano/Xokleng’s education, culture, and territory.

From these conversations, the sources for data production and analysis included the PRs, the PDs, a Final Paper (FP), and a documentary (DOC). We will focus on these productions in the next section.

PEDAGOGICAL REPORTS — SYSTEMATIZING PRACTICES

The PRs were written according to a set of questions crafted and approved by the group. They aimed to record the practices and ways of organizing activities that integrate the Vanhecu Patté’s specific, intercultural, differentiated, bilingual, and community curriculum. The questions were designed to help writing our reports; they were not, however, supposed to be followed strictly. Every participant could explore an item more than the others and add other topics at their will. Considering orality as a relevant cultural aspect for this indigenous community, the group agreed that the PRs would be created by recording the conversational meetings between the researcher and each participant individually. Then, the conversations would be transcribed. Later, these reports would serve as a base for our continuous, above-mentioned training project.

Considering the flexibility of the questionnaire, we can relate it to the technique of semi-structured interviews. In it, we established a conversation during which “questions are generally specified, but the interviewer [and the interviewee] is freer to go beyond the answers they get in a way that might seem harmful to standardization and comparability goals.” (May, 2004, p. 148)

Decision to participate in this stage of the study was a voluntary act and was made in a pedagogical meeting held at the school. Thirteen teachers out of 21 said they wanted to participate. The meetings were held on December 13th and 14th, 2017, when classes were over, and teachers were delivering students’ grades. Every participant produced a report, one at a time. Most took 35 minutes. It was agreed that every conversation would be transcribed and then edited by the participant. It would also be possible to change information when needed.

Transcriptions took place in January 2018 and were approved in the first week of February. As usual in the first months of the year, there were changes in the teaching staff. Some of them had a limited contract with the state administration. While we were in the process of approving transcriptions, three participants left school and moved to another village. In these cases, the information given in their transcriptions was not approved, and their data were not included in the documents produced in the continuous training. In addition to these teachers moving to another village, a Guarani language teacher, who worked with Guarani students in village Bugio, did not return to school; we were not sure about his continuation in the project. Thus, nine out of 13 transcriptions were approved.

In the transcription phase and during the reading with participants to get their approval, two factors were made clear. The first was that the presence of elders and wise community members was an important aspect of how the school was organized around indigenous history, culture, and language. The understanding that it would be necessary to talk to these people was taken unanimously. The second was that there was a large amount of information in the transcriptions, but they would require editing to remove repetitions and grammatical errors common in colloquial language. This led the group to participate in a writing workshop offered by the extension project above mentioned, and to produce a report of these pedagogical experiences.

On the first day of the workshop, we talked about the conversation with the elders and wise members of the community. The teaching staff suggested a Conversation Circle at Casa do Artesanato (Handicraft House), a place where elders get together to share food, produce their craftsmanship, and tell stories. On May 1st, 2018, we held a meeting with a small group of elders to present our proposal, which included recording the conversation circle and producing a documentary for the school. The circle would be coordinated by the researcher, who would post some questions about the foundation of village Bugio and the presence of the school in that community. The group endorsed the idea and, with the support of the school teachers, decided to increase the number of participants. More elders were invited and a second meeting was scheduled for March 15th, in the morning.

The number of participants increased compared to the first meeting. We were informed that one of the founders of village Bugio and his wife, Mr. Ivo Clendo e Mrs. Cocta C. Clendo, would like to participate, but their old age and health problems made it difficult for them to be present. It was decided that we would visit them at their home right after the meeting at the Casa do Artesanato. This resulted in two footages, with 90 and 56 minutes each. The title teachers chose for the documentary is "Memórias Laklano/Xokleng: saberes e resistências da e na Aldeia Bugio – Parte 1 e Parte 2" (Memories of the Laklano/Xokleng: knowledge and resistance of and in Village Bugio". The school allowed us to transcribe the documentary, and the text was attached to the PR and used as a data source for our research.

All the (re)definitions that are part of our final report, with the school and teaching staff's agreement, are in line with what we understand as a participatory study, which is supervised by the community and serves it (Brandão, 2001).

PAPERS THAT TELL STORIES

Along with the elaboration of the PR and the transcription of the DOC, which led to our final report, we searched for PD we could learn from and which presented data on the processes and practices reported by the school's teaching staff. The teachers helped by making available what was kept at the school's files of projects and planning of events and classes, such as mentioned in the meetings held in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

In addition to the documents selected and made available by the school, the final papers of the first class of students who graduated from UFSC, in 2015, from the Licenciatura Intercultural Indígena do Sul da Mata Atlântica (Indigenous Intercultural Licentiate Degree of the South of Atlantic Forest", are also part of our document analysis. We selected the final papers of Laklano/Xokleng indigenous students from village Bugio in particular. We understand that the inclusion of these papers has widened the participation of the indigenous community and strengthened the role of their perception about their own reality in this study.

Other documents we have analyzed are a paper written by the project Ação e Saberes Indígenas na Escola, also coordinated by UFSC. We have specifically considered activities conducted with the indigenous community Laklano/Xokleng.

The documents collected were not "simply taken as sources of information, but also as 'social products'" (Amado and Ferreira, 2013, p. 277). With the document analysis we aimed to see how the practices described in the meetings were recorded, considering that one of the advantages of document analysis is that the researcher does not, at least partially, influence the data with his or her presence, as it does more frequently in interviews and observations. During our analysis, however, we kept in mind that

If, effectively, the document analysis leaves partially out the dimension of the influence of the researcher over the subject, which is hardly measurable, it is no less true that the document is an instrument the researcher does not master. Here, information circulates in one direction; for, although chatty, the document remains deaf, and the researcher cannot demand additional precisions from it. (Cellard, 2010, p. 295-296)

We consider as a document any written text recorded in paper of primary or secondary sources. "At large, there is the distinction between 'primary' sources, produced by direct witnesses of the fact, and 'secondary' sources, derived from individuals that did not take part in it, but wrote it down afterwards" (Cellard, 2010, p. 297, footnote). Sources can be of public or private nature, archived or not. Archived documents are the ones found in a depository, as is the case of governmental, school, judiciary files (in these cases, public archives), and docu-

ments of non-governmental institutions, such as unions, companies, etc. (in these cases, private archives). Among the non-archived documents, there is also the distinction between public domain documents, such as papers, magazines, flyers, etc., and private domain files. The latter are personal documents such as diaries, letters, family documents, etc (Cellard, 2010).

The documents analyzed in our study were of public nature and archived. They were under the responsibility of Vanhecu Patté school or made available on UFSC’s website, as was the case with the final papers of the students of the Intercultural Indigenous degree; some were available for direct reading, such as the report based on the project Indigenous Action and Knowledge, exhibited in the first months of 2018 at UFSC’s Museum of Archeology and Ethnology.

For our preliminary analysis, which included collecting documents, we considered that “it is impossible to change a document; we need to accept it as it is presented to us, however incomplete, partial, or inaccurate” (Cellard, 2010, p. 299). This means that even documents with little content, apparently, can on the whole reveal details or confirm the researcher’s impressions of the problem he or she is studying. That is especially important in work with populations whose traditions are notably oral, therefore with few written texts. We note the documents we selected and took in their original condition underwent a critical evaluation to compose an analytical framework based on Amado and Ferreira (2013) and Cellard (2010). From the authors’ guidelines, we considered seven dimensions in our document analysis, as shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 – Preliminary document analysis.

Type of document	Production context	Authorship	Authenticity, reliability, and nature	Support and document synthesis	Key concepts or evidence	Notes: insights emerging from analysis
Identifies the physical characteristics of documents. Example: class plan, pedagogical project, etc.	Identifies when, where and who was responsible for elaboration.	Identifies authors’ names.	Identifies primary and secondary source, nature, depository (archived documents), and how they were accessed.	Identifies document’s media when accessed (printed, online) and its organization (parts, content).	Presents clips taken from the text, with information regarding the objectives of the study.	Presents extra information obtained when documents were accessed and preliminary perceptions.

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2022, adapted from Amado and Ferreira (2013) and Cellard (2010).

As for the documents, we note that, in agreement with Cellard (2010, p. 305), we “privilege here, in the scope of a qualitative study, the quality and diversity but not necessarily the quantity”. Thus, we have based our data selection on credibility,

reliability, proximity, and profundity criteria. We think these factors confer quality to the analysis, focused on in the next section.

DIALOGUING WITH THE RECORDS — AUSCULTATING, SYSTEMATIZING, AND ANALYZING

To dialogue with the documents from a dialogical perspective, our readings aimed to identify themes that answered the question, “what are we going to talk about?”. This question was asked alongside the conviction that the result of an analysis should be an “organized, systematized, and improved return to the people of the elements they gave it”, but that did not have any evident coordination among them (Freire, 1987, p. 84). This type of reading started when information, data, and records were being produced with the participants during document selection. Content analysis was based on an inferential process and tried to unveil what is impossible for us to immediately see when we look at the context or even at the data in isolation. Thus,

[...] in addition to a strict and objective representation of the messages' content or elements (discourses, interviews, texts, articles, etc.) through its codification and ranking in categories and subcategories, the most important aspect of content analysis is that it allows us to advance (in a fruitful, systematic, verifiable and even, to a certain extent, replicable way) in the direction of grasping their full meaning (because of interpretative inferences made from or inspired by the researcher's theoretical framework), via less evident areas constituted by the “context” or “conditions” of production. (Amado, Costa and Crusoé, 2013, p. 304-305)

To analyze the content of the records, including the PR and the DOC's transcription, which made up our final report and public archive documents, we initially used an induction method to construct our analytical thematic scope, meaning the set of themes interacting with each other (Freire, 1987). We conducted some comprehensive readings of the documents, firstly in a more rudimentary way to know the general context of each record. Then, in a more in-depth way, we compared all data and records, aiming to highlight the presence of elements and identify tenets that could help us answer our study questions.

To systematize and sort out the nine pedagogical reports, we gave each one a specific color. Then, we turned to the questions made in the first meetings and highlighted keywords and phrases, that is, the main topics about which the pedagogical reports could dialogue with each other, with us and with the theoretical framework. Organizing the reports according to the questions posed allowed us to analyze every record that was related to each of the main topics vertically, and the different colors enabled us to both keep the subject's identity in our vertical analysis and situate and analyze horizontally the answers of a single subject. Figure 1 exemplifies the exercise of contrasting the key themes of the first two questions.

After the vertical systematization of the PR according to the main themes and documents based on Chart 1 (after information was added) and the documentary's transcription, we conducted further and more attentive readings. It was then possible

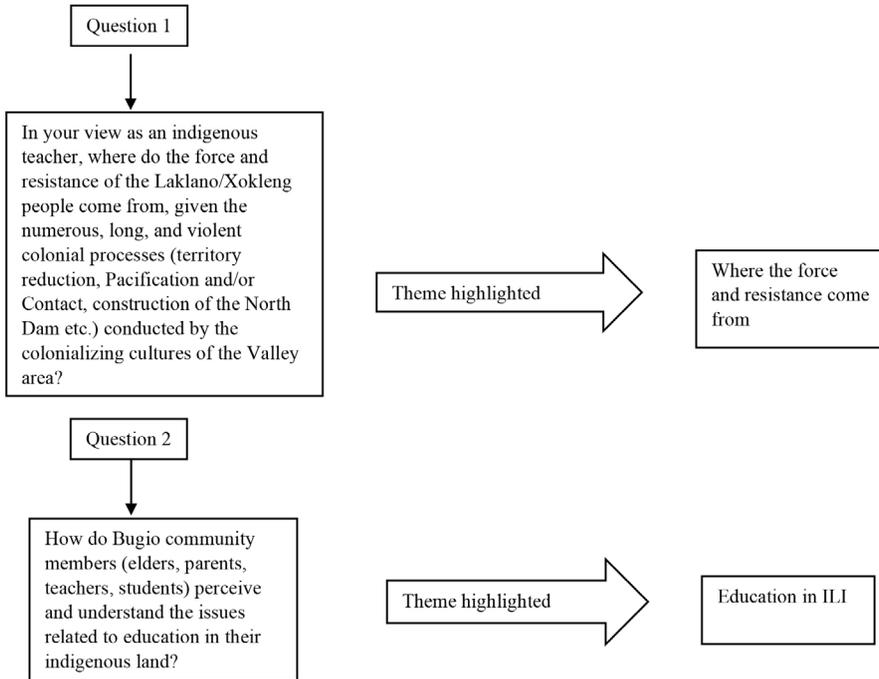


Figure 1 – Systematization of the pedagogical reports.
 Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2018.

to highlight excerpts and write side notes that were turned into three lists (DOC, PR and PD) of elements, facts, and principles related to the objective of our study.

We compared the lists and found a chance to work with four thematic universes of analysis (Chart 2). Each of these gathered generative themes whose general idea was manifested in short by manifestations or dimensions of reality (Freire, 1987). During this process of identifying the thematic universe of analysis, we used the method of content analysis for categorization, which explains that

We must choose the keyword or broader phrase translating a category so it reflects, comprehensively and precisely, the meaning of the record units and indicators in which these units are translated. We can use the elaboration of a subset of categories (*subcategories*) to better explain the entire meaning of the category. It will then have a broader meaning than that of the subcategories, subordinating the latter to the former and turning the information the latter carry critical for a better understanding of the category. (Amado, Costa and Crusoe, 2013, p. 333)

We do not use “category” and its derived words, for they manifest concepts such as division, class, or hierarchical position, that do not correspond to the search

Chart 2 – Thematic universes of analysis.

Analytical universes of analysis	Generative themes of analysis	Manifestations and/or dimensions of reality
1 Limit situations and the production of colonialities	1.1 Arrival of European immigrants in Itajaí Valley	Conquest as an antidialogical action. The construction of a negative image of Indigenous people as a justification for stereotypes, racism, and genocide.
	1.2 Establishment of villages and ethnocide	Territorial restriction and the imposition of a coloniality. Cultural invasion in antidialogical action. De-reterritorialization process.
	1.3 Construction of North Dam	Division and manipulation complement antidialogical actions. De-reterritorialization process.
	1.4 Social and political organization today	Strategies for survival in village Bugio.
2 Ways of teaching, learning, and living in village Bugio	2.1 The “Indigenous way”	Learn by doing. Reciprocity relations. Identifying with the land.
	2.2 External partnerships	Knowledge and technologies adapted to local reality.
3 School presence	3.1 A referential <i>locus</i>	A place for intergenerational encounters and knowledge.
	3.2 A differentiated education	A chance for promoting intercultural, specific, and bilingual indigenous school education. Revitalization and visibility of indigenous history and culture inside and outside of the village.
	3.3 Revitalization of language and culture	Reaffirmation of ethnical identity.
	3.4 Participation and engagement of students, elders, parents, grandparents	Encouragement of participation and autonomy. Strengthening relations with the community.
4 Force, persistence, and resistance	4.1 Identity	Reaffirmation of ethnical identity.
	4.2 Pride	Recognizing one’s role in history.
	4.3 Family bonds	Belonging to and continuity of the people.
	4.4 Professional training	A chance to occupy social and political spaces inside and outside the village.

Fonte: Elaborated by the authors, 2018.

we intended to make during analysis. On the other hand, “universe”, in addition to having other meanings, stands for a “set of parts united in harmony” (Houaiss, Villar and Frando, 2010, p. 784). That is why we turn to Freire (1987), whose use of the word is in line with the concept presented.

In the dialogical action proposed by Freire (1987), from which dialogue always intends to lead to reflexive actions, it is possible to identify, in a given reality, different thematic universes gathering generative themes made up of manifestations and/or dimensions of reality. Freire (1987, p. 93) writes that “I have termed these

themes ‘generative’ because (however they are comprehended and whatever action they may evoke) they contain the possibility of unfolding into many other themes, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled.”

Thus, even though the themes were systematized and presented in our analysis, they are not static or independent. It is possible to bring them into a dialogue. Chart 2 presents the four thematic universes based on our records and data systematization. It shows their respective generative themes and manifestations and/or dimensions of reality.

Each of these thematic universes, generative themes, and manifestations or dimensions of reality revealed elements and principles in the analysis and construed answers to our study questions. Reaching them demanded a constant exercise of (re)approximation and distancing, seeing and feeling, introspection and silencing so that it was possible to realize where they were, what was covering them up, and how to bring them up. Once we identified the elements and highlighted their principles, we arrived at our study’s final stage.

It took us around 30 months to complete all the processes, including theme definition, initial contacts, survey, production, data analysis, records, and conclusion. These steps were taken at different moments, most of them in the second semester of 2017 and the first semester of 2018. During these months, our study was presented as a tool for visibility, reflection, and collective support for the Laklano/Xokleng people. That is, in addition to “knowing and explaining, our research [intended] to understand in order to serve” (Brandão, 2001, p. 12). Thus, it was at the service of this people with the chance to widen and occupy social and political times/spaces/places and break with the colonization and subordination processes these people have been systematically and historically subjected to.

In line with what has been detailed so far and with the procedures of a participatory study (Brandão, 2001), we presented the findings to the teachers of Vanhecu Patté school. We visited the school on August 28th, 2018. Because it was not possible to have all the teachers together for a presentation, we talked individually to them about their participation and contribution to our results. We were also able to present our paper to two of the elders who had participated in the DOC. In this conversation, we realized that every one of them could see themselves and the community reflected in our work, that is, they realized their way of being and living was present in the final report as a whole. It was based on this sentiment that the participants chose to be identified by their real names in the quotations of their speeches. Their identities are revealed because they are authors, researching subjects who recognized themselves in the work, rejoiced in it, and were proud of the results.

CONCLUSION

Sharing this epistemological construction experience, bringing much of — and at the same time only a part of — what was written in the full doctoral dissertation, was a necessary task due to the peculiarities of this trajectory, lived timely, but unfinished and in continuous reconstruction processes. Disclosing the construction experience of our research can help researchers aiming to develop a

participatory work not to fear walking a path that is constructed in collaboration, union, organized collectively, in order to produce, in the end, a synthesis among other possible syntheses, that is, based on viewpoints, readings, and criteria set by the group. The path was guided by a critical and intercultural perspective and by decoloniality, constantly avoiding the traps placed by antidialogical actions in our daily work. These are colonial actions that cover up problems and naturalize historically-built phenomena. Constructing paths that consider these factors becomes a challenge and compromise between researchers that intend to know, learn, and apprehend while walking together with the participating subjects, crafters of and in contemporary life.

As mentioned above, meeting the Laklano/Xokleng people was not intended to turn into a study at first. This happened as the meeting unfolded. Such an encounter has not ended with our final report; it keeps eliciting dialogical actions such as conferences and lectures, basic education teacher training programs in different cities of Santa Catarina, and taking the indigenous problem and context to several educational spaces. Whenever possible, people from the indigenous community, particularly teachers, participate in the training events and are responsible for workshops and training meetings.

As a result of this relationship and the set of actions that lies beyond the study conducted, the community has gained a specific indigenous pedagogy course for Xokleng people that intends to train 45 indigenous teachers to work at schools inside and outside the ILI. It is promoted by the Regional University of Blumenau (FURB) in partnership with the state administration of Santa Catarina. Its pedagogical project was written with indigenous teachers and leaders. All of these actions were made possible thanks to a relationship of trust, partnership, respect, and reciprocity that has been construed and solidified over time between the university and the indigenous Laklano/Xokleng people.

Therefore, we will continue to participate and construct possibilities for and with populations whose context has been mostly one of violence against rights and who, even so, keep resisting and fighting. It is not simple nor easy, but it is possible, viable, and necessary.

REFERENCES

AMADO, J.; COSTA, A. P.; CRUSOÉ, N. A técnica da análise de conteúdo. *In*: AMADO, J. (org.). **Manual de investigação qualitativa em educação**. Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 2013, p. 301-351.

AMADO, J.; FERREIRA, S. Documentos pessoais (e não pessoais). *In*: AMADO, J. (org.). **Manual de investigação qualitativa em educação**. Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 2013, p. 275-298.

ARÁOZ, H. El territorio moderno y la geografía (colonial) del capital. Una arqueología mínima. **Memória e Sociedade**, Bogotá, 2015, v. 19, n. 39, p. 174-191. <https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.mys19-39.tmgc>

BOGDAN, R.; BIKLEN, S. **Investigação qualitativa em educação**: uma introdução à teoria e aos métodos. Porto: Porto Editora, 1994.

- BRANDÃO, C. R. (org.). **Repensando a pesquisa participante**. 3. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2001.
- CELLARD, A. A análise documental. *In*: POUPART, J.; DESLAURIERS, J-P.; GROULX, L-H.; LAPERRIÈRE, A.; MAYER, R.; PIRES, A. P.; JACCOUD, M.; CELLARD, A.; HOULE, G.; GIORGI, A. **A pesquisa qualitativa: enfoques epistemológicos e metodológicos**. 2. ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2010, p. 295-316.
- DUSSEL, E. **1492 o encobrimento do outro: a origem do mito da Modernidade**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1993.
- EIEB VANHECU PATTÉ. **Experiências pedagógicas de professores e professoras indígenas na E.I.E.B.** Vanhecu Patté, José Boiteux, 2018.
- FALS BORDA, O. Aspectos teóricos da pesquisa participante: considerações sobre o significado e o papel da ciência na participação popular. *In*: BRANDÃO, C. R. (org.). **Pesquisa Participante**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2006, p. 42-62.
- FLEURI, R. M.; COPPETE, M. C.; AZIBEIRO, N. E. Pesquisas interculturais: descolonizar o saber, o poder, o ser e o viver. *In*: OLIVEIRA, L. B. de.; CECCHETTI, E.; CEZARO, R. A. de.; KOCH, S. R. **Culturas e diversidade religiosa na América Latina: pesquisas e perspectivas pedagógicas**. Blumenau: Edifurb; São Leopoldo: Nova Harmonia, 2009, p. 30-46.
- FLEURI, R. M.; OLIVEIRA, L. B. de.; HARDI, L. S.; CECCHETTI, E.; KOCH, S. R. **Diversidade religiosa e direitos humanos: conhecer, respeitar e conviver**. Blumenau: Edifurb, 2013.
- FREIRE, P. **Pedagogia do oprimido**. 17. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1987.
- FREIRE, P. **Pedagogia da autonomia**. 33. ed. São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 2006.
- GAJARDO, M. Pesquisa participante: propostas e projetos. *In*: BRANDÃO, C. R. (org.). **Repensando a pesquisa participante**. 3. ed. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2001, p. 15-50.
- GASKELL, G. Entrevistas individuais e grupais. *In*: BAUER, M. W.; GASKELL, G. (org.). **Pesquisa qualitativa com texto, imagem e som: um manual prático**. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002, p. 64-89.
- HOUAISS, A.; VILLAR, M. S.; FRANCO, F. M. M. **Minidicionário Houaiss da língua portuguesa**. 4. ed. rev. and increased. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2010.
- LEME, M. C. G. Territórios e afetos roubados: desenvolvimento urbano e processos de des(re)territorialização de pessoas menores de idade em situação de rua e de risco social. 2019. 339 f. Thesis (Doctorate in Regional Development) – Universidade Regional de Blumenau, Blumenau, 2019.
- MALDONADO-TORRES, N. Sobre la colonialidad del ser: contribuciones al desarrollo de un concepto. *In*: CASTRO-GÓMEZ, S.; GROSGOUEL, R. (ed.). **El giro decolonial. Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global**. Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana-Instituto Pensar, Universidad Central-IESCO, Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2007, p. 127-167.
- MARIN, J. A perspectiva intercultural como base para um projeto de educação democrática: povos autóctones e sociedade multicultural na América Latina. **Visão Global**, Joaçaba, v. 13, n. 1, p. 13-52, 2010.

- MAY, T. **Pesquisa Social**: questões, métodos e processos. 3. ed. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2004.
- MIGNOLO, W. D. Os esplendores e as misérias da ‘ciência’: colonialidades, geopolítica do conhecimento e pluri-versalidade epistêmica. *In*: SANTOS, B. S. (org.). **Conhecimento prudente para uma vida decente**: um discurso sobre as ciências revisitado. Porto: Afrontamento, 2003, p. 631-671.
- MIGNOLO, W. D. A colonialidade de cabo a rabo: o hemisfério ocidental no horizonte conceitual da modernidade. *In*: LANDER, E. (org.) **A colonialidade do saber**: eurocentrismo e ciências sociais. Perspectivas latino-americanas. Colección Sur-Sur, CLACSO: Buenos Aires, 2005, p. 33-49.
- MILLS, C. W. **Sobre o artesanato intelectual e outros ensaios. Seleção e introdução Celso Castro**. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2009.
- OLIVEIRA, R. D. de.; OLIVEIRA, M. D. de. Pesquisa social e ação educativa: conhecer a realidade para poder transformá-la. *In*: BRANDÃO, C. R. (org.). **Pesquisa Participante**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2006, p. 17-33.
- PEREIRA, W. S. **Lauda antropológico de identificação e delimitação de terra de ocupação tradicional Xokleng**: história de contato, dinâmica social e mobilidade indígena no sul do Brasil. Porto Alegre: FUNAI, 1998.
- POZZER, A.; CECCHETTI, E. Colonialidade do saber e formação docente: ensaios para episte(me)todologias interculturais. *In*: HARDT, L. S.; MOURA, R. S. de. (org.). **Filosofias da educação**: entre devires, interrupções e aberturas – outro mundo contemplado. Série Saberes em Diálogo, Blumenau: Edifurb, 2016, p. 73-92.
- QUIJANO, A. Colonialidade do poder, eurocentrismo e América Latina. *In*: LANDER, E. (org.). **A colonialidade do saber**: eurocentrismo e ciências sociais. Perspectivas latino-americanas. Colección Sur Sur, CLACSO, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2005, p. 117-142.
- SILVA, J. S. La pedagogía de la felicidad en una educación para la vida. El paradigma del “buen vivir”/“vivir bien” y la construcción pedagógica del “día después del desarrollo”. *In*: WALSH, C. (ed.). **Pedagogías decoloniales**: prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re) existir y (re)vivir. Tomo I. Serie Pensamiento Decolonial. Quito, Ecuador: Ediciones Abya-Yala, 2013, p. 469-507.
- WALSH, C. **Interculturalidad, estado, sociedad**: luchas (de)coloniales de nuestra época. Quito: Universidad Andina Simon Bolívar/Abya Yala, 2009.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

KARLA LUCIA BENTO has a doctorate in Regional Development from the Fundação Universidade Regional de Blumenau (FURB). She is a professor at the same institution.

E-mail: bento.karlalucia@gmail.com

LILIAN BLANCK DE OLIVEIRA has a doctorate in theology from the Escola Superior de Teologia (EST). She is a professor at the Fundação Universidade Regional de Blumenau (FURB).

E-mail: lilianbo29@gmail.com

Conflicts of interest: The authors declare they don't have any commercial or associative interest that represents conflict of interests in relation to the manuscript.

Funding: The study didn't receive funding.

Authors' contribution: Conceituação, Curadoria de Dados, Análise Formal, Metodologia: Bento, K. L.; Oliveira, L. B. Investigação, Escrita - Primeira Redação, Escrita - Revisão e Edição: Bento, K. L. Supervisão, Validação: Oliveira, L. B.

Received on February 5, 2021
Approved on November 11, 2021

