

Between Knowledge and Territories: A Systematic Review of Critical Interculturality and Decoloniality in Colombian Rural Education

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to evaluate the inclusion and diversity practices implemented in a Colombian rural school in order to determine whether they correspond to a model of functional interculturality, focused on the recognition of diversity, or whether they move toward critical and decolonial intercultural approaches that foster the transformation of power relations, cognitive justice, the defense of the commons, territorial autonomy, and the recognition of the knowledge systems and cultures of rural communities. Through a systematic literature review guided by the PRISMA methodology, thirty indexed scientific articles published between 2021 and 2026 were analyzed, contrasting the empirical evidence with the Epistemologies of the South. The results demonstrate the persistence of a functional interculturality that renders asymmetries invisible through folklorization and Eurocentric curricula, implemented through a one-size-fits-all model and shaped by the coloniality of knowledge and epistemic violence. It is concluded that there is an urgent need to move toward a curriculum grounded in the ecology of knowledges and participatory parity within rural Institutional Educational Projects.

Keywords: Rural education; Intercultural education; Cultural diversity; Social justice.

Introduction

The analysis of rural school environments in Colombia reveals a historical scenario marked by structural tensions, dynamics of resistance, and remarkable cultural diversity. Despite the above, the management of diversity and inclusion in these institutions has traditionally adopted vertical pedagogical models designed from and for urban rationality. In the context of current globalization, the educational policies of the Ministry of National Education have incorporated the principles of equity, inclusion, and quality promoted by international organizations, prioritizing strategies aimed at guaranteeing access, permanence, and educational coverage for historically excluded populations. However, from a critical intercultural perspective, several authors argue that these advances are insufficient when they do not transform power relations, the

epistemological referents of the curriculum, or the conditions for the recognition of the knowledge of the communities.

Despite the above, it is important to emphasize that Colombian education policies have progressively incorporated the principles of equity, inclusion, and quality promoted by international organizations. In this regard, the Ministry of National Education (MEN), through the Inclusive Education Policy (2013), the Special Plan for Rural Education (2018), and the Ten-Year National Education Plan 2016–2026, is directing its actions towards guaranteeing access, coverage, permanence, and improving the quality of education for historically excluded populations, recognizing the need to offer relevant education for rural and diverse contexts. However, from the perspective of critical interculturality, these advances may be insufficient when inclusion policies focus mainly on ensuring the incorporation of students into

the education system without transforming the curricular structures, power relations, and epistemological bases that have historically privileged Western knowledge as the only referent.

Along these lines, Walsh (2010) argues that interculturality should not be limited to the formal recognition of cultural diversity, but should be oriented towards the transformation of power relations that have historically produced exclusion and inequality. The author distinguishes between a functional interculturality, focused on the recognition and inclusion of diversity without questioning the social, political, and epistemological structures that reproduce inequality, and a critical interculturality, conceived as a political, ethical, and epistemological project aimed at transforming relations of domination, the coloniality of knowledge, and epistemic hierarchies through processes of educational decolonization. In accordance with this perspective, Quijano (2000) argues that the coloniality of knowledge continues to reproduce epistemic hierarchies that privilege certain knowledge and subordinate others, while De Sousa Santos (2010, 2018) proposes an ecology of knowledge that recognizes the legitimacy and complementarity of the knowledge produced by communities, favoring dialogue between different rationalities. From the perspective of social justice, Fraser (2008) argues that authentic inclusion requires guaranteeing conditions of participatory parity through the articulation of recognition, redistribution, and representation, transcending exclusively administrative or compensatory responses.

In this context, Núñez (2025) argues that curricular management based on critical interculturality constitutes an articulating process that integrates the dialogue of knowledge, the recognition of cultural diversity, and the participation of the educational community as axes to strengthen educational quality from a perspective of equity and inclusion. This vision coincides with UNESCO (2024), which proposes the need to transform education systems through inclusive, culturally relevant, and socially just

curricula, capable of responding to the diversity of contexts and contributing to the construction of more equitable societies.

The first critical knot identified in the recent scientific literature (1275-1287) refers to the stereotypes and interpersonal prejudices that permeate the daily life of rural schools. There is a tendency to evaluate the learning trajectories of peasant, indigenous, and Afro-descendant students under rigid regulatory frameworks, categorizing their rhythms of life, languages, and agricultural knowledge as lacking in the face of the standards of urban modernity. These social barriers are not isolated events, but are part of what Quijano (2020) called the coloniality of power, understood as a global pattern of domination based on the social and ethnic classification of populations. In rural schools, this pattern operates when the education system subordinates local identity, prioritizing global production logics over community life projects. This epistemic violence is complemented by the coloniality of knowledge. According to Mignolo (2007), Western modernity established a geopolitics of knowledge that self-proclaimed its rationality as the only universal truth, displacing and delegitimizing forms of knowledge from other latitudes.

In accordance with the above, it is stated that the rural school frequently functions as a device of this geopolitics by imposing homogeneous curricula where the only valid locus of enunciation is Eurocentric. Faced with this diagnosis, it is considered essential to discriminate between the different theoretical perspectives that address difference in the classroom: multiculturalism, which **promotes a static coexistence based on the passive tolerance of isolated identities, without altering the structures of economic and political inequality**. Relational interculturality, which is limited to pointing out the basic and interpersonal contact between cultures, hiding conflict and structural domination. Functional interculturality, **theorized by Walsh (2009) as a strategy that instrumentalizes diversity to incorporate minorities into the global market, assimilating difference within the**

hegemonic model and leaving intact the causes of social exclusion and critical interculturality, as an epistemological perspective that is assumed in this article, conceived as a continuous political, ethical and pedagogical project that seeks to transform asymmetrical power structures and refound social relations from the institutional base.

Complementing this framework, Grosfoguel (2011) invites us to understand how educational institutions act as apparatuses that reproduce the hubris of the zero point, that is, the illusion of neutral, delocalized, and unquestionable knowledge. This theoretical discussion has been taken up and updated by the most recent Latin American literature. The author, Simón (2021) delves into epistemic decoloniality by proposing symmetrical dialogue as an articulating principle between situated knowledge and Western scientific knowledge, preventing interculturality from becoming an exercise in subordination disguised as recognition. Along the same lines, Picón Nieto et al. (2024) systematize the concrete strategies to decolonize education: the inclusion of diverse cultural knowledge and practices, the revision of curricular content, and the design of curricula from a decolonial perspective, strategies that anticipate the proposal for a welcoming curriculum that we develop below.

Finally, Castillo-Guzmán (2015) warns that none of these curricular transformations is sustainable without teacher training in a decolonial key, which is why he proposes the Chair of Afro-Colombian Studies as a formative device capable of installing the epistemic question in everyday pedagogical practice, beyond the individual goodwill of the teacher. When confronting these theories with the documentary corpus, the guiding question of this study arises: To what extent do the practices of inclusion and diversity in rural schools in Colombia respond to a functional interculturality or move towards a critical and decolonial interculturality?

Theoretical foundation

In order to structure a rigorous answer to this question, it is necessary to analyze the concepts of culture, interculturality, and intercultural

education within the pedagogical ecosystem. In this article, we distance ourselves from essentialist visions that reduce culture to a folkloric inventory of isolated artistic or gastronomic expressions. In line with decolonial thinking, culture is assumed as a living praxis and a dynamic matrix of meanings and resistances through which human collectives interpret their territory. In the country's villages, this dimension encompasses both local historical memory and traditional agricultural technologies and cosmologies of environmental care.

For its part, interculturality represents an ethical imperative of otherness. In this regard, Dussel's (1998) ethics of liberation places the excluded subject in the exteriority of the modern system, likewise the author argues that the true pedagogical option does not consist in assimilating the subject within the dominant order, but in validating his word from his own ontological difference, likewise Arias-Gaviria (2021) affirms the importance of building a rural education that recognizes the peasantry as a subject of rights and as a fundamental actor within educational processes. In this sense, transposing this approach to rural intercultural education implies that the classroom is transformed into a place of dialogic enunciation, where educators and students participate in a liberating praxis that breaks the traditional epistemic asymmetry.

For this dialogue of knowledge to be authentic, it is essential to incorporate the concept of feeling-thinking, originally developed by the Colombian riverside communities and systematized by Fals Borda (2015). This approach proposes to overcome the Eurocentric separation between reason and emotion, inviting us to structure human action by combining thought with feeling. In rural schools, feeling-thinking requires dismantling the hierarchical distance between teacher and student, recognizing that popular knowledge has an autonomous methodological and existential validity. Feeling-thinking intercultural education promotes learning rooted in the defense of territory and community life.

The horizon of this theoretical effort consists of

proposing a theorization of intercultural education within the Institutional Educational Project (PEI). In this order of ideas, it is stated that the rural educational transformation requires that the PEI be resignified from its philosophical bases, adopting the concept of curriculum as a welcoming space formulated by Yepes-Cardona and Giraldo-Gil (2024), who conceive the school as a space that provides protection, recognition and ontological security from common and non-dominant languages, making difference the transversal axis of all the community, directive and pedagogical management of the institution.

Methodological Design

This research was developed through a systematic review design of the literature, following the quality control and transparency standards of the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) statement (Page et al., 2021). In order to mitigate selection biases and ensure the replicability of the process, subjective

assessments were dispensed with and a strict qualitative selection protocol was structured based on the use of document extraction matrices (Pardal-Refoyo & Pardal-Peláez, 2020).

The search strategy was limited to a fixed observation window between 2021 and 2026, ensuring the validity of scientific production in the face of the educational dynamics of the region. Based on the methodology, an inquiry was carried out in indexed databases of high impact and international recognition, selecting Web of Science, Scopus, SciELO, Springer and Redalyc.

For the formulation of the search equations, Boolean operators (DNA, OR) were combined with standardized descriptors validated in the UNESCO Thesaurus and the European Thesaurus of Education Systems, structuring the following key terms: Rural Education, Intercultural Education, Cultural Diversity, School Recognition and Inclusion

Table 1: *Sequential Flow of Document Selection under the PRISMA Declaration*

PRISMA Phase	Description of the Operating Process	Records (n)
1. Identification	Initial retrieval in metasearch engines and databases indexed using Boolean equations (n = 41), complemented by an update search aimed at recent Colombian empirical studies and decolonial theoretical literature not captured in the initial round (n = 10).	n = 51
2. Cribado (Screening)	Initial filtering by cross-reading titles and summaries. Verification of idiomatic relevance and elimination of duplicates (0 matches).	n = 51
3. Eligibility	Qualitative and critical full-text evaluation of the shortlisted documents. Application of specific exclusion criteria (applied to the initial round; the records of the update search were pre-selected for direct thematic relevance to the object of study, so they did not generate additional exclusions).	n = 51
4. Inclusion	Consolidation of the final sample of highly rigorous articles (Q3/SJR or equivalent) for analytical analysis and synthesis.	n = 30

Source: own elaboration (2026).

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flowchart of the document selection process (updated corpus).

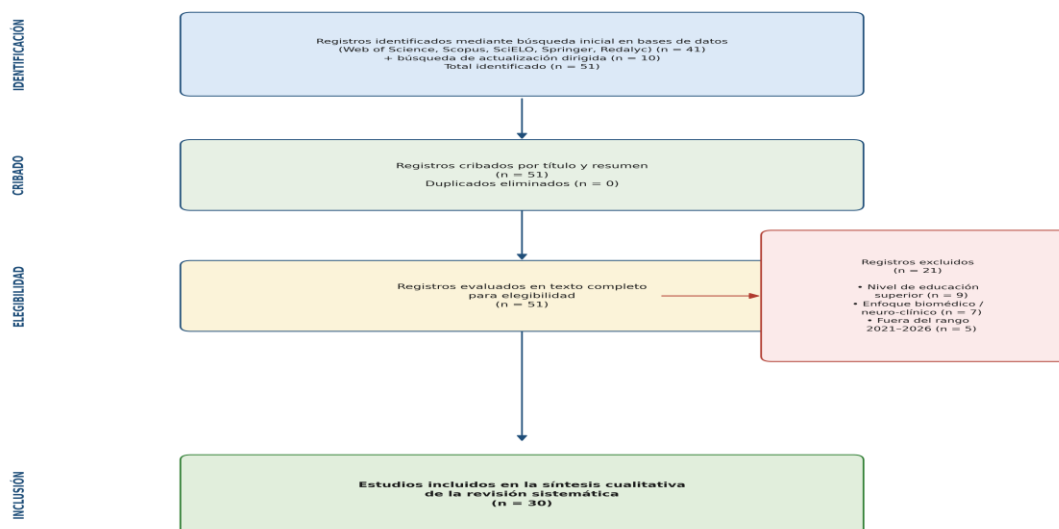


Figura 1. Diagrama de flujo PRISMA 2020 del proceso de selección documental (corpus actualizado). Fuente: elaboración propia con base en Page et al. (2021).

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Page et al. (2021).

The process of systematic purification of the literature was executed sequentially through the four phases normalized by the PRISMA declaration (Page et al., 2021), starting from an initial universe of $n = 51$ document records retrieved. In the Identification phase, the sources were collected using the search equations in the university library's metasearch engines. Subsequently, in the Screening stage, all the records ($n = 51$) were subjected to a cross-reading of titles and abstracts; as no inter-database duplications were detected, all units advanced to the Eligibility phase.

In this third phase, a full-text critical qualitative evaluation of the pre-selected corpus was carried out. As a result of this rigorous filter, 21 documentary entries that did not align with the objectives of the study were formally excluded. The technical reasons for exclusion corresponded to: a) research restricted exclusively to the higher education level ($n = 9$); b) articles focused only on neuro-clinical or biomedical metrics of disability, without intersection with cultural or territorial variables ($n = 7$); and c) chronological mismatches due to publications prior to 2021 ($n = 5$). Finally, the

Inclusion phase allowed the consolidation of a definitive sample of $n = 30$ highly rigorous scientific articles (with minimum indexing Q3 in the Scimago Journal Rank ranking or equivalent regional systems), which provided the final empirical support for the critical analysis. The procedural synthesis and the breakdown of the exclusion criteria are systematized in Tables 1 and 2 of this manuscript.

Aware that the sample incorporates some research of an international nature and of other educational levels, the validity of its inclusion does not lie in a claim of statistical generalization, but in the principle of qualitative transferability proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). From this perspective, the logics of institutional exclusion, centralist standardization, and curricular Eurocentrism analyzed in global latitudes do not operate in isolation. On the contrary, they constitute heterogeneous manifestations of the same structural pattern: the coloniality of knowledge. In this way, the international findings are methodologically extrapolated to the context of the Colombian villages not as an identical reflection, but as an analytical mirror that allows us to identify how the global dynamics of cultural

assimilation are aggravated and embodied on the margins of dispersed rurality.

Content Extraction and Analysis Techniques.

The information processing was carried out using the technique of thematic qualitative content analysis, structured from a hybrid methodological design that articulated deductive and inductive processes. As research and operational control instruments, we designed and applied two sequential matrix tools:

Deductive Way (Format 1)

Format 1: The selection and audit phase of the documentary corpus was consolidated through an eligibility register aligned with the guidelines of the PRISMA declaration (Format 1: Sample Eligibility Register). In this stage, three conceptual axes were used as a priori (deductive) analytical categories, delimited from the reflective dialogue and pedagogical practice of the team, made up of social science teachers located in various territorial contexts of the country: Educational Diversity, Recognition and Inclusion. In this way, these axes operated as the initial ordering framework to validate the conceptual relevance of the sources with respect to the object of study.

Inductive Route (Format 2)

Once the sample of 30 articles was defined, the sources were subjected to a pouring into *Format 2: Critical Synthesis Matrix*. Through an analytical, iterative and full-text reading of this corpus, the conceptual subcategories located in the rural territory (such as cultural blindness, bureaucratic exclusion and epistemic contempt) emerged in an inductive and organic way.

Theoretical Triangulation

Finally, the emerging subcategories were subjected to a process of triangulation and theoretical contrast with the postulates of the Global South and the decoloniality of knowledge (articulating authors such as Quijano, Santos,

Walsh, Mignolo, Grosfoguel and Dussel). This rigorous two-way instrumental procedure guarantees that the results and the final discussion of the manuscript are the direct product of the empirical evidence of rural realities systematized in the matrices, neutralizing any interpretative bias or conceptual imposition preconceived by the team of researchers.

Results

By processing the 30 sources included through the qualitative synthesis matrix, we were able to catalog the empirical evidence on rural classrooms in Colombia around the three conceptual axes of the research:

Educational diversity: The results expose a structural gap between the training programs of educators in the faculties of education and the socio-territorial demands of the villages. Teachers usually enter rural schools implementing linear didactic models designed for homogeneous urban environments. This situation can be analyzed from the perspective of teaching culturally proposed by Gay (2018), who highlights the importance of considering the cultural experiences of students within the teaching and learning processes. In a rural context, this approach allows us to understand that family, community, and territorial practices should not be considered external elements of the curriculum, but rather faces that can guide the selection of content, pedagogical strategies, and form of student participation. When confronted with the multiculturalism of the countryside, the literature evidences the emergence of practices based on what Vietze et al. (2026) call color evasion or cultural blindness: in school climates of high diversity, the absence of a situated perspective erodes the sense of belonging and well-being of students. This gap is not incidental, but structural: Montoya et al. (2022) document that the professional identity of the Colombian rural teacher is built on a permanent tension between the referents of initial training designed from urban matrices and the socio-territorial demands of the villages, a tension that Espitia (2022) characterizes as a systematic deficit of situated training, through which education

faculties continue to prepare professionals for an imagined urban student. Educators, lacking this situated training, omit ethnic or class particularities in their classroom practices, camouflaging social tensions under a discourse of formal equality that neutralizes the identity of the learner.

Ethical recognition: At the level of classroom interactions, scientific evidence reveals the persistence of institutional barriers that prevent real participatory parity. Institutional school evaluation systems (SIEE) continue to be parameterized under centralist standards that penalize the rhythms of life in the countryside. We find that the daily knowledge of rural students is disqualified and relegated in the face of Western scientific knowledge, which limits their self-confidence and professional self-respect. In the face of this institutionalized contempt, recent literature offers concrete ways to overcome: Mena-Mosquera (2022) argues that Afro-Colombian ethnoeducation constitutes a form of epistemic reparation that validates ancestral knowledge as legitimate knowledge and not as transversal folkloric content, while Restrepo et al. (2023) demonstrate that a contextualized curriculum with cultural relevance from rural early childhood effectively improves the recognition of learning trajectories situated in the face of the logic of deficit. At the level of pedagogical operationalization, Ortiz Castiblanco and García Suárez (2025) propose a decolonial didactic sequence—naming, making visible, understanding, imagining, and creating—that translates these principles into a replicable classroom practice. This institutionalized contempt weakens the student's academic self-esteem, causing them to not feel legitimized in their difference and accelerating the processes of motivated school dropout.

School inclusion: The articles in the sample denounce that inclusion in rural institutions continues to be subject to an administrative and fiscal dimension. Institutional management tends to evaluate inclusion based on the report of physical coverage and enrollment formats, relegating to the background the material conditions that make the student's habitability

and permanence in hard-to-reach villages viable. This instrumental reading is corroborated by Neira et al. (2024), whose systematic review of rural education policies in Colombia concludes that they prioritize coverage and permanence goals without transforming curricular structures or the power relations that sustain them. Ortega Bravo and Solano León (2023) provide a theoretical solution to this limitation by proposing the struggle for recognition as a driver of community participation, a category that dialogues directly with Fraser's (2008) participatory parity that guides this study. From a systemic perspective, Rapp and Corral-Granados (2024) reinforce this argument by arguing that educational inclusion requires transforming the school organization as a complete system, and not being limited to enrollment indicators. The work of Echavarría-Grajales et al. (2023) with teachers from Colombia's dispersed rurality illustrates what this substantive inclusion consists of: pedagogical knowledge that articulates peacebuilding, historical memory, and human dignity as axes that completely transcend the reporting of physical coverage. The analysis shows that this instrumental vision atomizes the work of teachers, ignoring the gaps in connectivity, decent infrastructure, and local productive projects that sustain peasant communities.

Discussion

When contrasting the findings of the systematic review with theories from the Global South, it is necessary to problematize rural school dynamics. Consolidated data provide evidence to answer the research question: inclusion and diversity practices in rural schools in Colombia operate predominantly under the precepts of a functional interculturality, functioning as devices for the reproduction of the coloniality of knowledge.

Taking the thought of De Sousa Santos (2010) as a reference, it is stated that rural schools suffer from a blindness caused by the sociology of absences, which produces as non-existent or invalid all knowledge that does not fit into the scientific rationality of the West. When the educational system proscribes traditional

agricultural technologies or reduces cultural diversity to isolated folkloric celebrations, it incurs in latent forms of epistemic exclusion. De Sousa Santos (2010) states that "there will be no global social justice without global cognitive justice" (p. 45); therefore, school inclusion is incomplete as long as a Eurocentric curriculum persists that devalues the cosmologies and knowledge of the territorial periphery.

To ground this global framework in the geographical specificity of the country, it is essential to appeal to the thought of Escobar (2014) who conceptualizes the Pluriverse as the world where many different worlds and knowledge fit and the ontological design, arguing that community life in the territories of the Global South is based on the radical interdependence between human beings and their local environments, a reality that the traditional rural school attacks by trying to impose a single model of development and knowledge. By cross-referencing the findings of the review with the perspective of Escobar (2014), it becomes evident that the Colombian village is not an empty scenario that must be "civilized" or "trained" by urban didactics; it is a space with its own ontology. Therefore, the transition of Institutional Educational Projects (IEPs) towards decoloniality is not only an adjustment of contents, but an act of territorial defense that seeks to protect the capacity of rural communities to narrate themselves, learn and exist from their own terms.

This perspective can be based on an approach by Freire (2012), who presents education as a process that must start from the reality of each individual and favor the critical reading of their context. From this perspective, rural schools should not limit themselves to reproducing external educational models, but rather generate

pedagogical processes that allow students to recognize and transform the realities of their own territories.

With this North, it is proposed that the management of the IEPs formally adopt the ecology of knowledge... This cosmetic inclusion coincides with what Walsh (2009) defines as functional interculturality. Here, the discourse of inclusion is used to assimilate historically excluded subjects within the dominant socioeconomic model, transforming them into functional actors in the global market without altering the asymmetrical power structures that cause inequality. Likewise, it is agreed with Walsh (2009) that the rural school must move towards a critical interculturality, conceiving the classroom as a space for dialogue where hegemonies are questioned and community ties are rebuilt. Along the same lines, Paris and Alim (2017) propose a sustainable pedagogy, a perspective that seeks to ensure that education not only recognizes different cultures of students, but also seeks to understand and strengthen students' cultural practices. Applied to the rural context, this proposal allows us to understand the school as a space of knowledge, traditions, identities and the practices of the territory that can be maintained and enriched through educational processes.

To materialize this decolonial turn in the territory, it is proposed that the management of the Institutional Educational Projects (IEPs) adopt the ecology of knowledge. This proposal does not imply rejecting Western scientific knowledge, but rather eliminating its dogmatic monopoly, allowing it to dialogue in conditions of symmetry with the popular and peasant knowledge of the region. This transition requires reorganizing the components of the rural IEP under technical and decolonial criteria, which we summarize below:

Table 3. *Critical Intercultural Transition Matrix for the Rural PEI*

Institutional Dimension	Approach Monocultural PDF	Traditional decision-making.	Intercultural Transition Proposal PDF+ 1	Review	Epistemic Referents of Backing
Governance and Community	Centralized Exclusion of rural families from management bodies.		Horizontal Binding Participation Community Leaders in school committees.	Governance:	Aníbal Quijano / of Enrique Dussel
Curriculum Design	Linear area plans and taxes. Eurocentric decontextualized.	Approach	Reception Organization by territorial and ecology of knowledge.	Curriculum:	Walter Mignolo / Boaventura de Sousa Santos
Internship of Classroom Evaluation	Penalizing standardized evaluation. Vertical pedagogy focused on technical reproduction.	Sentipensant Pedagogy:	Dialogue of knowledge, living laboratories and evaluation by situated capacities.	Orlando Fals Border / Catherine Walsh	

Source: Authors.

Assuming this matrix in the daily life of rural schools requires stripping away pedagogical romanticism. When contrasting this proposal with the material precariousness revealed by the results of our review – classrooms without connectivity, collapsed roofs and teachers suffocated by administrative formats – a legitimate suspicion arises: is this an unrealizable utopia in the forgotten villages of Colombia? If we understand decoloniality as a new package of bureaucratic demands or as an idyllic model that requires funding from the central level to exist, the answer is a resounding yes. The latent risk is that concepts such as the "welcoming curriculum" or "sentient pedagogy" end up domesticated, converted into politically correct slogans but empty of practical content, incapable of altering the physical reality that violates the daily life of the rural student and teacher. However, the viability of this decolonial turn does not lie in waiting for the budgetary permission of the hegemonic center, but in inhabiting and widening what Walsh (2009) calls the decolonial cracks of the system itself. In practice, moving towards horizontal governance

does not require fiber optics; it requires the political will of the Board of Directors to democratize decisions and give binding voice to peasant families in school assemblies. Similarly, dismantling the epistemic violence of the SIEE does not cost a single peso: it is a community and autonomous decision that allows learning to be evaluated through oral tradition, knowledge of the territory or the use of school radio instead of penalizing standardized tests. Decoloniality in Colombian villages is not a luxury that is implemented once infrastructure needs have been resolved; it is, on the contrary, the micropolitical strategy that allows the school to resist state neglect, turning material scarcity into a space of dignity, self-management and community emancipation.

When reflecting on classroom practices, the scientific literature demonstrates that the use of indigenous community media, such as school radio, constitutes an effective experience to mitigate the geographical isolation of dispersed rurality. Analyzed from the approach of Fals Borda (2015), school radio is transformed into a dialogic tool where students socialize their identities and recover the oral tradition of their

contexts, assuming the authorship of their own learning processes.

Finally, the transformation of the IEP requires the incorporation of Dussel's (1998) ethics of liberation into the evaluation models. Evaluating from the perspective of decoloniality implies recognizing the student in his or her specific material context, validating his or her situated capacities and territorial particularities, instead of employing standardized metrics of a centralist nature. As practicing teachers and co-researchers, we argue that the fundamental contribution of this article consists of

to highlight the limitations of bureaucratic inclusion, offering theoretical guidelines for the Colombian rural school to function as a space of equity and social emancipation.

Conclusions

As a team of researchers from the Master's Degree in Education, the systematic analysis carried out allows us to formulate precise conclusions about the pedagogical evolution in rural contexts. First, we affirm that the current practices of inclusion and diversity in rural schools in Colombia operate predominantly under the dynamics of a functional interculturality. The educational system is satisfied with the reporting of statistical coverage goals, maintaining Eurocentric curricular

structures that subordinate the identities of the countryside and reproduce the coloniality of knowledge.

Second, we critically show that the persistence of social barriers and stereotypes in the classrooms of the villages responds to a lack of cognitive justice in public policies. By cataloguing peasant trajectories under the logic of deficit and stripping local knowledge of scientific validity, the formal system generates forms of exclusion that affect the academic self-esteem of students and dynamize school dropout. Inclusion of a purely administrative nature omits the material and geographical urgencies that condition habitability in the periphery of Colombia.

Finally, we argue that in order to overcome this critical knot, it is essential to move decisively towards a horizon of critical and decolonial interculturality. This transition requires that communities of educators lead the reconfiguration of Institutional Educational Projects (IEPs), transforming curricular design into a welcoming space that legitimizes the ecology of knowledge and embodies a sense-thinking pedagogy. Only through participatory community governance, the flexibility of evaluation systems in the light of an ethic of liberation and the dignification of the situated teaching role, will we be able to consolidate the Colombian rural school as a scenario of social justice and mutual recognition.

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