

## FROM COLONIAL TRACES TO THE DECOLONIZATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

*DOS VESTÍGIOS COLONIAIS À DESCOLONIZAÇÃO DA EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL*

*DE LAS HUELLAS COLONIALES A LA DESCOLONIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL*

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**ABSTRACT:** This essay aims to analyze the influence of colonization in the field of early childhood education in Brazil, pointing to the emergence of a decolonizing pedagogy with children and childhood. It identifies colonial traces in the Brazilian social structure, in the late feeling towards childhood and in the pedagogical craft. In contrast to the ideal of the colonial aristocracy in educating poor children and daughters of slaves (sub-citizens) to be useful and productive for farming, it is understood that a decolonizing pedagogical work with children in early childhood education will educate them for citizenship of rights, of *invencionática*<sup>2</sup>, and of resignification of the world, so that they can love and respect all people, moving towards the construction of a fraternal and happy world.

**KEYWORDS:** Decolonizing Pedagogy. Early childhood education. *Invencionática*.

**RESUMO:** Este ensaio objetiva analisar a influência da colonização no campo da educação infantil no Brasil, apontando para a emergência de uma pedagogia descolonizadora com as crianças e as infâncias. Identificam-se vestígios coloniais na estrutura social brasileira, no tardio sentimento para/com a infância e no ofício pedagógico. Contrapondo ao ideal da aristocracia colonial em educar as crianças pobres e filhas de escravos (subcidadãos) para serem úteis e produtivas à lavoura, entende-se que um trabalho pedagógico descolonizador com as crianças na educação infantil irá educá-las para a cidadania de direitos, *invencionática* e de ressignificação do mundo, para que elas possam amar e respeitar todos os povos, caminhando rumo à construção de um mundo fraterno e feliz.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Pedagogia descolonizadora. Educação infantil. *Invencionática*.

**RESUMEN:** Este ensayo se propone analizar la influencia de la colonización en el campo de la educación de la primera infancia en Brasil, señalando el surgimiento de una pedagogía descolonizadora con los niños y la infancia. Identifica las huellas coloniales en la estructura social brasileña, en el sentimiento tardío hacia la infancia y en el oficio pedagógico. En oposición al ideal de la aristocracia colonial de educar a los niños pobres y a las hijas de los

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<sup>2</sup> *Invencionática* is a neologism using the Portuguese words *invenção* (invention) + *informática* (computing), somewhat of an inventionist characteristic that would also encompass the world of technology of nowadays. Due to it not having a correspondent in the English language, we will use the Portuguese word in this text.

*esclavos (subciudadanos) para que sean útiles y productivos para la plantación, se entiende que un trabajo pedagógico descolonizador con los niños en la educación infantil los educará para la ciudadanía de derechos, la invención y la resignificación del mundo, para que puedan amar y respetar a todos los pueblos, caminando hacia la construcción de un mundo fraterno y feliz.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Pedagogía descolonizadora. Educación infantil. Invencionista.*

## Introduction

Thinking about early childhood education and citizenship in a country like Brazil is different from thinking about this any other country in the world. Here there is a strange mixture of wealth and social inequality. It is the largest country in South America, one of the largest economic and scientific knowledge-producing powers in the world<sup>3</sup>. However, it is an extremely poor country, with its social composition rooted in slavery, being the largest black country outside the African continent<sup>4</sup>, and it is one of the national states in which the most women are killed in the world, about three per day<sup>5</sup>.

In Brazil, social inequalities are frightening. As sociologist Jessé de Souza (2003) warns, there is a widespread belief in the country's "dominant social imaginary" about Brazilians being all the same, evidenced in jargon such as "we are all Brazilians" or "Ninety million in action, ahead Brazil from my heart". This belief also feeds that the inequalities that exist between Brazilians are only in relation to the income they receive, contributing to the thought that only economic progress could solve this problem. However, when carrying out a historical analysis, it is possible to observe that Brazil was the country "[...] with the greatest economic growth in the globe between 1930 and 1980, without the rates of inequality, marginalization and sub-citizenship ever being radically altered, [which] should be a more than evident indication of the mistake of this assumption" (SOUZA, 2003, p. 51, our translation).

It is in this strange, rich and unequal postmodern land, with immense diversity of peoples and ethnicities, and yet racist, that primary schools emerged in the 16th century and in

<sup>3</sup> More information at: <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2018/nsb20181/tables/tt05-22>. Access: 15 Apr. 2020.

<sup>4</sup> More information at: <https://www.cadaminuto.com.br/noticia/312329/2017/11/05/brasil-e-o-pais-com-maior-populacao-negra-fora-da-africa>. Access: 15 Apr. 2020.

<sup>5</sup> More at: <https://catracalivre.com.br/cidadania/brasil-registra-um-caso-de-feminicidio-a-cada-7-horas/>. Access: 15 Apr. 2020.

the late 19th century the first institutions of early childhood education<sup>6</sup>. In this way, it is under the colonial bias of strange people that this land was violated, and in which the peoples who were already here were transformed into objects and goods, forcing them to hand over their labor power, their body, their mind and faith. Sometime later, these colonizers became kings, accumulated wealth and used charity as a form of social restraint. They provided, therefore, that children and young people were educated in the perspective they wanted, making them not want any other social status other than serfdom (LEWIS, 2019). This is one of the reasons that shows the urgency and the need for a decolonizing education to be implemented from childhood in Brazil.

This article, then, from an essayistic perspective, aims to analyze the influence of colonization in the field of early childhood education in Brazil, pointing to the emergence of a decolonizing pedagogy with children and childhoods. To this end, we will, briefly, discuss issues such as: the colonial heritage and children in the country's history, the fight for daycare centers as a fight for the right to education of black and peripheral children, the colonial roots in the pedagogical profession and paths towards decolonization from early childhood education towards the culture of *invencionática* (BARROS, 2008; ABRAMOWICZ; OLIVEIRA, 2012).

### **Colonial heritage and children in Brazil**

In the book, “History of children in Brazil”, Priore (2018) states that there is a late sensitivity to childhood in Brazil, related to the colonial heritage left in the culture of this society where there was not much space for an affective feeling to flourish. The author also points out that the evidence of this late feeling was: the absence “of an economic system that required the physical and mental adequacy of individuals to this new reality, the instruments that would allow adaptation to this new scenario were not implemented” (PRIORE, 2018, p. 10, our translation). An example of this is that it was only in 2014, in the middle of the 21st century, that the Brazilian State began to have a serious concern regarding the treatment of Brazilian families with children, which was made explicit in the approval of Law No. 13,010/2014, Law of Spanking, which says in its Article 18-A: “Children and adolescents have the right to be educated and cared for without the use of physical punishment or cruel or

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<sup>6</sup> The first institutions were kindergartens, an idea imported from Europe, the land of the colonizer. The audience for this service was not the children of slaves and the poor. These will be attended at daycare centers later on, already in the 20th century.

degrading treatment, as forms of correction, discipline, education or any other pretext, by parents, by members of the extended family [...]" (BRASIL, 2015, p. 12, our translation).

The role of the school is understood today as fundamental to build new perspectives on the potential of children and their human development in the relationship with families. But since colonial times, Jesuit schools have been aimed at a few people and, even when public education was minimally installed in Brazil, between the 18th and 19th centuries, there was already the concept that "[...] the alternative for children of the poor would not be education, but their transformation into useful and productive citizens in the fields, while the children of a small elite were taught by private teachers" (PRIORE, 2018, p. 10, our translation).

The child in Brazil has started to receive more attention from the family in more recent times, since this change also follows the developments of what society and the State have done in favor of it. It was after the 1988 Constitution and the approval of the 1990 Statute for Children and Adolescents that children began to be recognized as historical subjects of rights. Even so, this recognition did not happen in a synchronized way in all Brazilian families and communities.

Popular childhood has always been more vulnerable to family treatment, since child labor is a mark of a large part of the Brazilian population, which until the 1970s was still mostly rural. Many children from peasant families worked with their families in agriculture, for example. With the mechanization of rural production and the expansion of property speculation in rural areas by landowners, many families ended up migrating to large cities between the years 1970 and 1980 in search of work in urban industries (FERREIRA-DASILVA, 2016).

This territorial change did not necessarily provoke a change in the conception of popular families, regarding the childhood of their children. And beginning to inhabit the metropolises, various forms of oppression emerged and marked the routine of the lives of these migrants, such as, for example, the problems of infrastructure in large cities, the lack of housing and basic sanitation, overcrowding of the health system and insufficient daycare centers policies, among others.

## **Fight for daycare centers, fight for citizenship: the right to education for black and peripheral children**

After the abolition of slavery, the freed women and men continued to be bound by the bonds of their “ex-masters”, subjecting themselves to heavy work in exchange for very little money and food. As industrialization advanced in the country, black women who managed to enter the industrial market started to sell their workforce to drastically lower conditions compared to male earnings (LEWIS, 2019).

In the case of black women, due to activities carried out outside the domestic environment, such as domestic servants, industrial workers, prostitutes, among others, it was during the 20th century that the first daycare centers for children in the villages and slums of the Brazilian suburbs emerged. Women organized themselves in the struggle for the survival of themselves and their children, among those who cared for and educated children and those who would work outside the home to provide for their families<sup>7</sup>.

Faced with a bureaucratic rule of law<sup>8</sup> in Brazil, the absence of policies aimed at assisting peripheral children and supporting working mothers, social movements such as the Movement of Struggle for Daycare Centers (MSDC) have emerged. This social movement originated in the peripheries of the border between Belo Horizonte and Contagem, Minas Gerais, in 1979. MSDC was an instrument of popular mobilization led by pioneer women from community daycare centers in the region of the border, who started to fight for the rights of children access to quality education and care<sup>9</sup>:

These were initiatives by women living in poor neighborhoods, which at first had only the support of neighbors, mothers of children and, sometimes, the priest of the nearest parish. The first daycare centers were the embryo of what would later become the Movement of Struggle for Daycare Centers. They began to meet to exchange information and experiences and seek solutions to their difficulties (FILGUEIRAS, 1994, p. 19, our translation).

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<sup>7</sup> Ferreira-da-Silva (2020) presents an expanded analysis of the origin of these institutions, since the arrival of the first kindergartens in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the first decade of the Brazilian republican period, as well as the first interventions of the Federal Government for the sector, the period of recognition of early childhood education as a child's right and the period after approval of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) of 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the bureaucratic rule of law, Lewis (2019) says: “This violence endured, in Brazil, in the colonial period, in the empire period and in the republican period. To this end, the favored classes founded a bureaucratic rule of law, with their political, legal, police and military institutions, whose authorities perpetuated and perpetuate colonialist narratives and discourses, imported from past and present metropolises, as if the country, called Brazil, should perpetuate itself forever as a servant colony of international imperialism” (LEWIS, 2019, p. 8-9, our translation).

<sup>9</sup> Filgueiras (1994) says that in a 12-year period the MSDC underwent changes in its conception, moving from defending the maintenance of community daycare centers to the political struggle for the right to Early Childhood Education.

The struggle to recognize daycare centers as the responsibility of the State was in great effervescence in Brazil during the period from 1960 to 1980. This struggle was encamped by the women's movement, the black movement<sup>10</sup> and researchers in the field of childhood, together with other civil society movements. Because of this, the right of access of children from 0 to 5 years old to institutionalized education was conquered, after the approval of the Citizen Constitution, in 1988. In view of these facts, it can be considered that early childhood education and its recognition as the first stage basic education in Brazil was born out of a process of struggle for rights, led by identity groups that for 488 years<sup>11</sup> (1500-1988) lived in conditions of sub-citizenship and socioeconomic, cultural and political exclusion.

It was, then, almost five centuries after the arrival of the Portuguese Empire in Brazil that the Brazilian people legitimized a Constitution that contemplated specificities close to what is the real social composition of that nation that presents, at the same time, social inequalities and a diversity in age, color, race, culture, religion, gender and politics. With this Magna Carta, a structure for the protection of human rights was inaugurated in Brazil, where all individuals from early childhood have the right to protection by the State. The State also has a duty not to violate morally and physically any citizen, considering that this is a practice that still occurs with individuals living on the margins of society.

### **The pedagogue and colonization**

The changes in relation to the treatment of childhood in Brazil happened late and were influenced by the thinking of the Modern Age<sup>12</sup>. It is in modern times that in the Western world the pedagogical discourse has taken on “[...] psychological specificity and the social function of childhood as its core. In the field of pedagogy, the child has become the educational subject par excellence”, since childhood came to be seen with different characteristics from adulthood (CUSTÓDIO, 2019, p. 80, our translation).

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<sup>10</sup> In Brazil, with the emergence of the Black Movement in the 1940s, there is an intense process of organization to put racial and social inequalities experienced by black people on the public agenda. Every move of the Movement of black men and women will also have a great mobilization peak during the construction of the text of the 1988 Constitution, which will open “[...] an agenda of actions for black activism, whose demands turned to actions of implementing policies aimed at the black population” (HEILBORN; ARAÚJO; BARRETO, 2010, p. 215, our translation).

<sup>11</sup> It is noteworthy that even after the abolition of slavery “[...] independent Brazilian society continued to be exclusionary and violent towards the majority of the population. The slaves freed in 1888 were thrown into marginality” (LEWIS, 2019, p. 28, our translation).

<sup>12</sup> In the Western world, the new sentiment towards children has influenced the publication of official documents in defense and protection of children, such as the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).



The origin of the subject responsible for the formal education of early childhood children comes from the Greek world. The pedagogue was a slave in charge of leading the elite child to the master responsible for teaching him, with the objective of guiding and protecting him from unforeseen events along the way. His craft was developed until the time when the child became a teenager (CUSTÓDIO, 2019). Since that period, the emphasis of the pedagogue's work was based on an educational perspective and, as changes in the education scenario took place, new functions were being attributed to this slave. From the moment that schooled knowledge entered the lives of children who had access to this type of education, qualified professionals were required and, therefore, other subjects ended up working.

The field of pedagogy has a largely normative and prescriptive discourse since its origins in the work of the slave (pedagogue), such as, for example, that of conducting, directing and ordering the child. This discourse, although related to the work of the educator to the present day, is not produced only by these professionals, but by a series of stakeholders who see in the educational process the opportunity to shape, since childhood, the behaviors of newly arrived individuals to the world. This type of normative, targeted and orderly conduct affects children's lives and the teacher's work, as well as the school as a whole (CUSTÓDIO, 2019).

There is a strong colonial heritage of slave-based origin in the current education of pedagogues in Brazil that is unconsciously introjected in the minds of these professionals in early childhood and elementary education. And due to this marginalized past as a pedagogue, it is not surprising that early childhood teachers in Brazil receive the lowest wages and have precarious working conditions.

It is important to consider that necessary changes were made to the formation curriculum in the Pedagogy course, such as: the inclusion of disciplines on ethnic-racial relations in the advent of laws 10,639/2003 and 11,645/2008 (BRASIL, 2003; 2008a); new curricular guidelines for the Teaching Degree in Pedagogy in 2006 (BRASIL, 2006), when the field of early childhood education starts to be valued in the formation; and the implementation of the National Salary Floor for Teaching Professionals with the approval of Law 11,738/2008 (BRASIL, 2008). However, it is noteworthy that even with these legal measures, it has not yet been possible to end the colonial heritage present in the field of pedagogy in Brazil.

The understanding of the different meanings of education present in society and the impact they generate on the lives of individuals, especially children from 0 to 5 years old, highlights the importance of school institutions committing themselves to the construction of

a decolonizing education and focused on citizenship. I am not referring to citizenship directed towards the labor market and/or servitude, since this has slave-based roots and is a condition of sub-citizenship (SOUZA, 2003; BUFFA, 2007). I refer to citizenship that is truly democratic and focused on social rights, as emphasized by Noguera-Ramírez (2019, p. 57, our translation): “Political thought situates the educational issue in terms of democracy, that is, the State and the individual and your rights; the economy places the educational issue in terms of competitiveness, that is, in terms of the market and individualization”.

Regarding children's education, both institutionally and informally, there is a constant dispute of narratives. For this reason, if in the colonizing origin of education, people who did not have socially recognized citizenship, such as the enslaved and the natives of certain regions, for example, the indigenous people in Brazil, were Christianized by their colonizers so that they became “docile”, domesticated and live in poverty (LEWIS, 2019) - in education in postmodern times and with the emergence of the recognition of children's specificities, school education cannot give up this dispute with the market and prosperity. It is necessary to live up to the historical specificity achieved by children, which is to be educated as a subject of rights, being truly included in democratic life.

### **Decolonizing early childhood education: on the way to invention**

*I use the word to compose my silences.  
I don't like the words  
weary of informing.  
I give more respect  
those who live with stomachs on the floor  
like water stone frog.  
I understand the accent of the waters well.  
I respect unimportant things  
and unimportant beings.  
I appreciate bugs more than planes.  
I appreciate the speed  
of the turtles more than missiles.  
I have this birth delay in me.  
I was rigged  
to like birds.  
I have plenty to be happy about it.  
My backyard is greater than the world.  
I am a gatherer of wastes:  
I love the remains  
like the good flies.  
I wanted my voice to have a singing shape.  
Because I am not of computer science:  
I am from invencionática.  
I only use the word to compose my silences (BARROS, 2008, p.45, our translation).*



To think about early childhood education pedagogies that are not under the colonizing bias, it is necessary to refine the eyes to understand children, as shown by Manoel de Barros (2008). The poet helps us to think that the child's uniqueness is to produce experiences about what he lives, what he feels and thinks. When children express themselves about the world with their inventions, they are assuming the role of thinking and, thus, contradicting the economic logic that standardizes the functioning of the world and makes many people believe that liking birds, understanding the language of river and rainwater is less relevant activities. This great mass will also be educated to value, from the perspective of capital, that the important thing is to value the “words weary of informing”. To go against to the colonial and deadly logic of the world of capitalism requires learning what is the meaning of childhood in the modern era, its uniqueness of inventing and being inventive. In this sense, it is important to consider that the composition of the verb “to invent” is situated in an internal movement from the inside out, and not the other way around, which is what colonizing education does.

Childhood sociology has contributed to better understand the different childhood experiences of children. In the case of Brazil, these differences are present in the social inequalities that go through this initial stage of people's lives, as pointed out during the reflections of this work. The field of studies and research in the sociology of childhood is responsible for developing concepts such as: “[...] Child protagonism, socialization processes, social structure, childhood/child, social authorship/agency, children's culture, generation, ethnography, culture of peers [...]” (ABRAMOWICZ, 2018, p. 375, our translation). These concepts have contributed so that researchers and educators start to project new perspectives and create new approaches and analyzes regarding the relationships that children establish with other children and with adults. In addition, childhood sociology has rescued a movement to give children a voice, contrary to the adult-centrism<sup>13</sup> and colonialism present in education, where it is previously known that “[...] it is adults who speak of/about children and that this is part of one of the lines of the process that we call socialization” (ABRAMOWICZ, 2018, p. 375, our translation).

The socialization of children under adult-centered and colonizing logic tends to castrate their curiosity, removing their role in the pedagogical act of knowing and doing. And

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<sup>13</sup> Regarding the concept of adult-centrism, I agree with the definition of Santiago and Faria (2015, p. 73), who maintain: “Adult-centrism is one of the most naturalized prejudices in contemporary society. It attributes skills and actions to children so that they become adults in the future, disregarding the unique aspects of childhood itself, making this moment of life just a passage, just a becoming, in which we learn to relate and integrate ourselves. [...] Childhood, in the adult-centric perspective, is only a period of transition and acquisition of symbolic elements present in society, with the child, therefore, being able to be less, to be inferior, a place given to him by the group corresponding to the dominant: adults” (SANTIAGO, FARIA, 2015, p. 73, our translation).

yet, children are educated based on a Eurocentric perspective, which disregards the ethnic-cultural prejudices present in social media and inherited from the long process of colonization experienced in Brazil. Thus, understanding the micropolitical relationships that take place in Brazilian early childhood education in postmodern times requires the apprehension of social relationships in their intersectional perspective as race, gender and class.

The childhoods of Brazilian children are quite different from those lived in colonizing countries. As Abramowicz and Oliveira (2012) point out, studies such as Jens Qvotrup's on childhood as a permanent structural category, emphasize the analysis of children through a generational perspective, without considering the racial issue. In the case of Brazil, the situation is different, since social inequality permeates, above all, racial, gender and social class issues and, therefore, it is necessary to consider “[...] diversity as a factor that divides the understanding about the child and hides the generational perspective, as it leads us to discuss identity policies and not to develop studies about the child as a collective, that is, considering the common status among children” (ABRAMOWICZ; OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 52, our translation). Also, “[...] poverty impacts the black child in a more cruel and forceful way than the poor and white child, since the black family experiences social inequality with greater intensity. But it is not only that, poverty is crossed by race, which means to say that race is also an explanation of poverty” (ABRAMOWICZ; OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 50, our translation).

From a sociological reading on the condition of childhood in Brazil, it can be said that there is not a single childhood, that is, the conditions of human development are not the same for all Brazilian children. In order to provide equal conditions in social rights for all children, it is necessary to consider that there are differences between them. For this reason, a pedagogy that is understood to be suitable for children in early childhood education cannot be designed the same for the child who lives in Itaim Bibi, an upscale neighborhood of São Paulo with a “Very High” Human Development Index (HDI), and for the one who lives in Morro do Alemão, a popular neighborhood with the lowest HDI in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Also, this pedagogy cannot be defended as the same for children who live in indigenous reserves and for those who live in Nova Lima (the highest HDI in Minas Gerais). Even less the same for children in Norway and for those who study at municipal children's centers (CIM's) in the city of Betim/MG where 89.84% of the population of the city (FERREIRA-DA-SILVA, 2016) has a family income up to three minimum wages and live in low-income neighborhoods lacking basic infrastructure. A pedagogy that is said to be the same for all children, but denies sociocultural, ethnic and economic inequalities, ends up becoming exclusive.

In Brazil, the black child has in his family origin a slave descent and faces in a more lethal way the perversity of the male dominated social structure that tends to favor white men (BOURDIEU, 2002). Such aspects profoundly impair the possibility of social and professional stability for their respective mothers. There is also the fact that many of these children have little or no contact with their parents, considering that, in Brazil, 75% of the annual homicide victims are young blacks<sup>14</sup>.

Education in Brazil needs to think of pedagogical practices that minimize and end child oppression, especially of black children who live in marginalized situations. These children can no longer be perceived at school exclusively by “[...] relationship problems with their colleagues and teachers caused by color, generating a conflicting and, often, harmful relationship for those who end up being rejected for their physical attributes”, this since early childhood education (ABRAMOWICZ; OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 54, our translation).

Placing children aged 0 to 5 at the center of public policy planning and the teacher education curriculum is a perspective influenced by the sociology of childhood. In this direction, the protagonism that the child needs to occupy in a pedagogy of early childhood education that is really committed to overcoming the marginalities of the peoples of the world is reaffirmed. Ensuring the right to “[...] speak to the child is an inversion in the processes of subordination, it is a political movement [...]” (ABRAMOWICZ, 2018, p. 376, our translation).

Even if there is not “[...] something in the children's speech that is exceptional or different (although there may even be chance), but when the child speaks, he makes a discursive hierarchical inversion that makes voice for those whose speeches are not taken into account, not considered” (ABRAMOWICZ, 2018, p. 376). Because there are children who are not always considered in general pedagogical practices regarding the understanding of childhood, a pedagogy that wants to give a voice to all of them will only be possible if it is guided by differences (equity).

In the education for citizenship of children from 0 to 5 years of age, it is not enough to just break away from adult-centrism. It is also necessary to break with the colonialism present in pedagogical practice. Giving children a voice can break with adult-centrism, but if the teacher ignores the cultural stereotypes present in the relationships between children, there will be no real break with the colonizing marks existing in Brazilian society. Therefore, it is

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<sup>14</sup> More information at: <https://brasil.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,75-das-vitimas-de-homicidio-no-pais-sao-negras-aponta-atlas-da-violencia,70002856665>. Access: 17 Apr. 2020.

necessary that several routine situations are denaturalized and overcome, for example, when two girls play make believe and the white child is the boss and the black child is the nanny.

The pedagogy of early childhood education needs to be attentive to segregationist marks and cannot become permissive<sup>15</sup> in the face of the discrimination that black children experience in their own peer culture. Just giving children a voice and not making ethically necessary interventions in the face of discrimination is more oriented towards a new meaning of social Darwinism in the perspective of childhood, where the more “able” and “strong” children survive and dominate the others<sup>16</sup>, than to a pedagogy capable of forming citizens committed to overcoming social marginalities. For this reason, despite the immense advances brought by laws 10639/2003 and 11645/2008, there is a misunderstanding regarding the orientation that “African and Indigenous History and Culture” should be taught only in the elementary and high school curricula, excluding, thus, early childhood education. The work on this theme cannot be absent from a pedagogy of early childhood education committed to overcoming adult-centrism and colonialism.

To educate children in a decolonizing perspective, it is necessary to go beyond what pedagogies have done until today. New possibilities are needed for

[...] socialization for the production of new children and other childhoods, in the sense of thinking about another form of education with young children, who can be informed from a sociology of childhood that addresses aspects of our social, cultural, economic and, above all, racial reality (ABRAMOWICZ; OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 62, our translation).

Educating children from early childhood education to citizenship requires using decolonizing education, decolonizing pedagogies and methods that enable the teacher, first, to recognize herself as a subject involved in a micropolitical context. In this way, the pedagogical practice will be

strongly committed to understanding what children say, what they want to know, what is interesting to do and to stop doing, studying, letting go; think about what is interesting to visit, what new ways of playing can be played, what music and what dances can be invented (ABRAMOWICZ; OLIVEIRA, 2012, p. 62, our translation).

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<sup>15</sup> Regarding the concept of permissiveness, Freire (2019, p. 102) says: “To be permissive would have been if it had allowed the indiscipline of a badly centered freedom to unbalance the pedagogical context, thus impairing its functioning”.

<sup>16</sup> To see more about social Darwinism consult the studies by Heilborn, Araújo and Barreto (2010).

## Final considerations

Aware of the limits we have in view of the magnitude of the theme proposed in this work, we sought to discuss the colonial vestiges present in childhood and early childhood education in Brazil. In view of the drastic social, economic, racial and gender inequality of Brazilians, it is understood that achieving early childhood education with quality and social inclusion will only be possible through the implementation of public policies that start from the perspective of pedagogical decolonization.

There is a late awareness of issues regarding children aged 0 to 5 years in Brazil, which is even more pronounced in relation to black and peripheral children. These were recognized as subjects of rights only after 488 social exclusion, which continued even after the abolition of slavery in 1888. The consolidation of support and protection legislation with guaranteed rights also for black and peripheral children, which happened between the decades of 1980 and 1990, it was only possible through the social struggle led by black and peripheral women, such as the members of the Movement of Struggle for Daycare Centers in the metropolitan peripheries of Belo Horizonte/MG.

In view of the colonial vestiges in the pedagogue's profession, many still persist as the devaluation of the function and the discourses of normativity, of shaping, directing and ordering, for the inclusion of children and childhoods in a democratic State, it is necessary to dispute the discourse of education with a decolonizing pedagogy and on the *path of invencionática*.

This pedagogy, built with children, will *gather the world's waste* to rethink and reframe it, showing the way to *love the remains*, the marginalized peoples and the excluded from the land. Children will be taught from an early age that in order to reach a more just and loving world, it is necessary to *give respect to unimportant things and unimportant beings*.

Thus, educators and teachers will no longer educate children and young people to be useful and productive to farming, but citizens with rights and duties, who have the right to the city, to walk in the streets with tranquility and to live with happiness.

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