

**IGNACIO MARTIN-BARÓ, EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE, PROCESSES OF
SUBJECTIVATION AND DECOLONIALITY AT SCHOOL**

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SUBJETIVAÇÃO E DECOLONIALIDADE NA ESCOLA**

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SUBJETIVACIÓN Y DECOLONIALIDAD EN LA ESCUELA**



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ABSTRACT: The text discusses epistemic violence from the perspective of fatalism, examining how processes of subjectivation are shaped by colonialities. It argues that fatalism reflects this violence, especially when analysed through intersectionality and the psychosocial processes that structure identities. Based on a narrative review, it problematises how the (re)cognition of colonialities influences subjective experiences in contexts marked by silencing and neoliberal logic. Social changes require critical reflection on discourses that affirm identities but also restrict autonomy. Thus, the text proposes the construction of new narratives and everyday meanings that confront the tensions of neoliberalism and promote freedom, autonomy, and epistemic justice. It highlights the importance of spaces that enable action and expression, especially schools, as settings for practices that break with epistemic violence and expand possibilities for existence.

KEYWORDS: Memories Emancipation. Decoloniality. School. Identity.

RESUMO: O texto discute a violência epistêmica a partir do fatalismo, examinando como processos de subjetivação são moldados pelas colonialidades. Argumenta-se que o fatalismo reflete essa violência, especialmente quando analisado pela interseccionalidade e pelos processos psicossociais que estruturam identidades. A partir de uma revisão narrativa, problematiza-se como o (re)conhecimento das colonialidades influencia experiências subjetivas em contextos marcados por silenciamentos e pela lógica neoliberal. As mudanças sociais exigem reflexão crítica sobre discursos que afirmam identidades, mas também restringem autonomia. Assim, o texto propõe a construção de novas narrativas e significados cotidianos que enfrentem os tensionamentos do neoliberalismo e promovam liberdade, autonomia e justiça epistêmica. Destaca-se a importância de espaços que possibilitem ação e expressão, especialmente a escola, como cenário para práticas que rompam com a violência epistêmica e ampliem possibilidades de existência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Memórias. Emancipação. Decolonialidade. Escola. Identidade.

RESUMEN: El texto analiza la violencia epistémica desde el fatalismo, examinando cómo los procesos de subjetivación están moldeados por las colonialidades. Se argumenta que el fatalismo refleja esta violencia, especialmente cuando se analiza desde la interseccionalidad y los procesos psicosociales que estructuran las identidades. A partir de una revisión narrativa, se problematiza cómo el (re)conocimiento de las colonialidades influye en las experiencias subjetivas en contextos marcados por el silenciamiento y la lógica neoliberal. Los cambios sociales exigen una reflexión crítica sobre los discursos que afirman las identidades, pero también restringen la autonomía. Así, el texto propone la construcción de nuevas narrativas y significados cotidianos que enfrenten las tensiones del neoliberalismo y promuevan la libertad, la autonomía y la justicia epistémica. Se destaca la importancia de los espacios que permiten la acción y la expresión, especialmente la escuela, como escenario para prácticas que rompan con la violencia epistémica y amplien las posibilidades de existencia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Memorias. Emancipación. Decolonialidad. Escuela. Identidad.

INTRODUCTION

Since we began examining the topic of epistemic violence (Bizarria et al., 2021, 2025b), references to fatalism and violence, as conceived by Ignacio Martín-Baró (1942–1989), have emerged as a way to understand the processes of subjectivation related to violence from the perspective of epistemicide.

To what extent do structures of oppression shape our identities and beliefs? Epistemic violence, by silencing voices and narratives, constitutes one of the forms of domination that define the history of colonization processes, with particular manifestation in the Global South.

This text argues that fatalism is a phenomenon related to violence, sustained by the processes of subjectivation inscribed by colonialities and reinforced by neoliberal logic. Understanding, elaborating on, and confronting this phenomenon suggests the deconstruction of dominant discourses and the reconstruction of narratives from the perspective of epistemic justice.

The aim is to construct an argument in support of the claim that fatalism is a phenomenon related to epistemic violence, in light of the psychosocial processes engendered by the logic of intersectionality, whose elaborations would resonate in the (re)cognition of differences in the context of a reunion with silenced memories and the (re)construction of identities in spaces that enable action (Bizarria et al., 2025a), particularly in the school setting.

The starting point is the psychology professional, drawing on reflections by Martín-Baró (1996) regarding their role in the context of violence, committed to the realities experienced by the population and communities—ranging from food, shelter, health, and work to humanizing relationships, love, hope, identity, and social meaning. Furthermore, this role is considered within the framework of analyses of the oppression they face and collective action for justice and dignity. As part of this work, the analysis of the state's ideological instruments is acknowledged, as these are also used as a form of symbolic and epistemological violence (Althusser, 1970).

Ignácio Martín-Baró, as defined by Waeny and Vaz de Macêdo (2019), contributes to this debate, based on the understanding that his work is rooted in the insights and commitment sparked by social crises, civil wars, and the interaction between oligarchies, the armed forces, and the clergy in his adopted country, having worked at the Central American University (UCA) in El Salvador⁵ and discussed state terrorism and the importance of the people's autonomy. In

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addition to analyzing issues such as machismo, mental health, and violence in the context of oppression and the expression of fatalism, he sought to understand the perceptions and needs of the Salvadoran people, drawing on critical psychology, in the formation of identities that would respond to the authentic demands of the people, uniting theory and practice in the struggle for justice and social transformation (Gómez Lacayo, 2021).

Ignácio Martín-Baró's socio-scientific contribution is rooted in a Christian-humanist perspective (Rubilar Solis, 1998), stemming from his connection to the Catholic Church as a Jesuit priest and influenced by Paulo Freire, George Politzer, Henry Wallon, Lucien Sève, José Bléger, and Enrique Pichón-Rivière. Furthermore, Rubilar Solis (1998) argues that his psychology is an interpretation of 'concrete' issues, based on the dialectical method and grounded in the specific reality of Latin America—with its long struggles for justice, freedom, and equality—starting from an understanding of the human being as a 'social configuration,' an entity in a dialogical relationship, with epistemological approaches drawn from the writings of Lev Semionovich Vygotsky.

For Rubilar Solis (1998), the central issue addressed by Martín-Baró's theoretical framework is hegemony, recognizing that the psychology of his era is shaped by Eurocentric and North American capitalism, whose theoretical framework is dominated by imported modernization, neocolonialism that unfolds in the economic, cultural, and psychosocial⁶ spheres, resulting in the structural marginalization of a significant portion of the population, which disregards issues specific to the Latin American population (Paredes & Veloz Serrade, 2024).

In this context, fatalism emerges as the way in which war victims and affected communities respond to the traumatic circumstances they have endured, reflecting their powerlessness in the face of a system that perpetuates violence and oppression. Through this experience, people feel deprived of control over their own lives and circumstances, given their perception of an inability to change their fate (Martín-Baró, 1996). Violence and mechanisms of social control can reinforce this fatalistic view, amplifying the sense of dehumanization and weakening their capacity to act. Therefore, it constitutes a psychological response to the

⁶ Of particular note is Ignacio Martín-Baró's engagement with Liberation Theology in the Latin American context, influenced by Catholicism in the 1960s, which focuses on socioeconomic analysis, with a social concern for the poor and the political liberation of oppressed peoples. According to Burton (2004), Martín-Baró, who was the first to introduce the term 'Psychology of Liberation,' and Maritza Montero, who adopted it from Martín-Baró, and, subsequently, other authors, such as González Rey and Silvia Lane, developed a movement called Social Psychology of Liberation, a project inspired by Enrique Dussel's philosophy of liberation and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, beginning in the 1960s.

oppressive conditions imposed by war and torture, contributing to a sense of despair and acceptance of one's fate (Martín-Baró, 1990).

Furthermore, in the context of war, with exposure to intense violence, dehumanization leads to an impairment of the abilities to think, communicate, and feel empathy, undermining social coexistence and manifesting in attitudes of contempt for human life, where violence is accepted as a means of conflict resolution, social relations deteriorate, and trust is lost—a cycle that can be perpetuated across generations (Martín-Baró, 1990). According to Costa and Barroco (2021), Ignacio Martín-Baró's psychosocial explanations of violence offer a critical reflection on the role of psychology in addressing the conditions that foster social violence.

According to Martín-Baró (1989), war is characterized by extreme polarization among social forces and the systematic use of violence, which undermines collective coexistence and interpersonal relationships. As psychosocial consequences, social polarization, the devaluation of victims, and psychological warfare are some of the repercussions of the ideologization of violence (Martins & Lacerda Jr., 2018). Reconciliation and peace, as conceptual constructs, result from overcoming this polarization, in the search for forms of dialogue and understanding among different social groups (Martín-Baró, 1983).

Given the various expressions of violence, in the context of the discussion centered on the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró, the analytical advancement of this study's argument regarding epistemic violence in the face of the phenomenon of fatalism adopts narrative review (Rother, 2007) as a methodological framework. The selection and analysis of the literature are based on the authors' personal interpretation and critical analysis, guided by the definition of 'psychosocial violence.'

NOTES ON PSYCHOSOCIAL VIOLENCE BASED ON IGNÁCIO MARTÍN-BARÓ

Ignácio Martín-Baró's contributions are set against the sociopolitical reality of El Salvador from 1980 to 1989, a period marked by intense violence and social conflict (Rubilar Solis, 1998). In this vein, he asserts that psychology should not uncritically import Western theoretical models, but rather develop itself based on local demands and realities, as an action-oriented discipline aimed at social transformation and the liberation of Latin American peoples. In presenting the interdependence between the individual and society, he frames his ontological vision as the 'Social Configuration of the Person,' in which the individual's identity and characteristics are the result of continuous interpersonal interactions—a product of their social

relationships. Social, economic, and cultural conditions, therefore, shape individuals' needs, values, and behaviors.

In the quest to advance our understanding of violence, as defined by Martín-Baró, reference is made to Faria and Martins (2024) and their interpretation of colonial violence, considering the repercussions of colonization on peoples, including dehumanizing practices carried out in the name of civilization. Furthermore, it links territorial violence to colonial violence from the perspective of agribusiness interests, which marginalize communities. In both cases, the authors affirm the need to recognize and redress the violent experiences of historically oppressed populations, including reflection on the psychosocial repercussions of colonial violence.

In a related discussion, Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2020) analyzes the experiences of Palestinian children, observing how they experience and contextualize their suffering in light of racialized colonial violence, which displaces, harms, and oppresses the Palestinian community. In doing so, they reinforce the need for psychological approaches to be critical and context-specific, emphasizing the political and social context and adopting practices that take into account children's lived experiences and their ongoing realities of suffering, in an effort to transform the context of oppression.

Upegui-Hernández (2008), in Colombia, in line with the two studies by Faria and Martins (2024) and Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2020)—both inspired by Martín-Baró—engages in a discussion regarding the ethical dimension of psychology's role in support of oppressed communities, including efforts to decolonize knowledge with the aim of promoting a critical understanding of the power relations and inequalities that affect these communities. An ethics that, according to Costa and Barroco (2021), calls on psychology to address not only the consequences of violence but, above all, the conditions that generate and perpetuate it. This is work that must be undertaken in schools.

We begin with colonial violence to address epistemic violence, understood as a phenomenon of colonialism that manifests in the silencing, discrediting, and delegitimization of the knowledge, narratives, and identities of subalternized cultures (Bizarria et al., 2021, 2025a). Decolonization, in contrast to colonization, proposes related processes that reclaim, activate, and integrate knowledge, while recovering memories in light of the recognition of the plurality of ways of life.

Drawing on Walter Dignolo and Edgardo Lander, Maldonado-Torres (2008a) undertakes an analysis of the coloniality of being and knowledge, challenging Western thought, which

often ignores the experiences of the colonized and perpetuates forms of exclusion—including repercussions in the form of violence manifested at both personal and collective levels, and the denial of the existence and dignity of social groups—leading to a hierarchy of beings centered on the Eurocentric ‘being.’

Epistemic violence, therefore, manifests itself in the devaluation of the traditions, cultures, and knowledge of colonized populations, which are often considered inferior or irrelevant. He argues that the coloniality of knowledge is related to that of power, where knowledge is used as a tool of control and exclusion. Maldonado-Torres (2008a) emphasizes that ‘science’ (knowledge and wisdom) cannot be separated from language, and that languages are the site where knowledge is inscribed, implying that the coloniality of power and knowledge engender the coloniality of being.

Psychological research and practice, in this context, are called upon to embrace marginalized and/or oppressed narratives and experiences. Hammack and Toolis (2015), drawing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, observe that identities are shaped by ‘master narratives,’ or cultural scripts, shaped by social interactions and dominant discourses. Thus, it is essential to create spaces to overcome preconceptions and expectations regarding how individuals should behave and how their stories should be told in relation to a group—expectations that often limit self-expression (Hammack & Toolis, 2015).

As a result, a strong sense of group identity can lead to resistance to shifts in perspective—especially those involving direct interaction with members of rival groups or accounts that contradict those presented in collective narratives—which may lead to a questioning and reassessment of internalized beliefs (Hammack & Toolis, 2015). An analysis of power relations, based on the ideas of Ignacio Martín-Baró, emphasizes that individuals who identify with the norms of a power system tend to support them, influenced by their emotions and values. Those who are marginalized, on the other hand, may develop critical beliefs, leading to resistance to established norms.

In the field of decolonizing methodologies, a debate has emerged regarding dominant representations that often minimize or ignore the realities experienced in contexts of oppression (Segalo et al., 2015), such as apartheid in South Africa, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the war in Syria, conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar, and the occupation in Israel/Palestine. Thus, the challenge of bringing other narratives to light requires an understanding of adherence to dominant discourses and the narratives that silence alternative

perspectives, which in turn demands creativity to foster different interpretations of the realities experienced within communities.

If the movement is one of reclaiming memory to facilitate the reconstruction of narratives, the goal is, therefore, to denaturalize violence in everyday life, as Zóttola (2016) notes. In referring to Martín-Baró's contributions, Zóttola (2016) highlights the need to recognize the legitimacy constructed by the logic of power and the discursive circularity that even encompasses an understanding of fatalism, acknowledging that the discourses circulating in society influence how people understand violence and oppression.

For Coleman (2021), the recovery of historical memory stands in contrast to the ahistorical influence of neoliberalism, which creates a 'permanent psychological present,' resulting in difficulties in understanding the institutional oppressions that affect marginalized communities. As a result of this ahistorical approach, the culture of violence is presented by the dominant discourse as responsible for the cycle of poverty, associated with individual or psychological characteristics and structural conditions that lead to states of resignation and fatalism among marginalized populations (Sánchez & Trejo, 1999). In this cycle, for example, ancestral knowledge is dismissed as incapable of contributing to the present—a legacy of colonial culture—while in Africa, the wisdom of the elders, which was once important in the past, is now neglected and/or marginalized (Nyerere, 1967), with their wisdom and cultures being disregarded.

Zóttola (2016) refers to the idea of 'psychosocial hermeneutics' as a methodological approach, in light of the effort to understand the dynamics that generate violence and oppression, fostering understanding from the contexts in which acts of violence occur, through an analysis of the social, political, and economic conditions that enable the emergence of oppressive acts, while considering the social norms that underpin structures and behaviors. This involves questioning the justifications for everyday violence and its subtle manifestations, encouraging critical reflection on how these realities are accepted without challenge.

Martín-Baró (1988) introduces this discussion by affirming the need for a process of social depolarization that allows for overcoming division and conflict among different groups in society, promoting mutual understanding and respect for differences as a new social contract based on principles of dialogue, respect, and recognition of human rights. Only in this way, Martín-Baró (1988) notes, can the healing of social relations affected by war take place, allowing people to construct their history in a different context, where peace and cooperation

prevail. To this end, psychology plays a role in the effort to contribute to policies and practices that recognize the impact of psychosocial trauma, with reflections on social structures.

Thus, drawing on Ignacio Martín-Baró, extreme situations—as well as the experience of living in ‘territories of fear’—suggest that approaches to psychosocial trauma should go beyond financial compensation, taking into account the psychological and social impact of violence, which is not limited solely to corrective or moral aspects, but should address the relationships between victims and social responsibility regarding acts of violence. In this context, Moffett (2024) emphasizes the importance of dialogue and negotiation among the parties involved, suggesting that reparations should go beyond a corrective or moral approach to justice. From a practical standpoint, with regard to Africa, it is worth mentioning the work carried out by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established by the post-apartheid South African government, which led a process that allowed victims to be heard and to tell their stories in an atmosphere of respect for them and their suffering, thereby establishing a genuine dialogue (Tutu, 2000).

The psychosocial analyses of violence developed by Ignacio Martín-Baró—through his historical and cultural interpretation of violence in everyday contexts—enhance our understanding of how subjective and psychosocial experiences intertwine in the lived experience of violence, which is recognized as a product of social relations that expresses and channels class interests in a context shaped by social conflicts (Martins & Lacerda Jr., 2014). The denaturalization of violence is fundamental, for the more violence is trivialized, the more the roots of this type of human relationship are strengthened. For Martín-Baró (1998), violence is a social relationship in which its resources are used to secure class interests and privileges.

The psychosocial dimension is recognized in light of the psychological mechanisms that influence individuals’ perception, interpretation, and response to their social and political realities, which involve emotions, identities, values, and beliefs integrated into a system of power relations. Martín-Baró (2014), in stating that “psychology, both theoretical and applied, like any other activity, is conditioned by competing social interests” (pp. 592–593), argues that psychology should be “aware of its social conditioning and that, rather than assuming a supposed scientific neutrality, it should proceed from a clear awareness of its assumptions, its social embeddedness, and, therefore, *the possibilities and limits of its own perspective*” (p. 593).

Given this understanding, Martín-Baró (2014) recognizes that human relationships are defined by power dynamics, and any analysis of these interactions must take these aspects into account. Awareness of how power operates can empower individuals and groups to seek

meaningful social change, recognizing, above all, that colonial frameworks shape the processes of subjectivation within the sociabilities embedded in neoliberal ways of life, as discussed in Bizarria (2025). Among the social institutions that require understanding and analysis in this context are schools, which will be the focus of our reflection below.

NEOLIBERALISM, SCHOOL, AND EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE

According to Costa (2024), Martín-Baró criticizes the way mental health and psychological distress are addressed in the neoliberal context, which reduces them to symptoms and diagnoses, arguing that psychological distress reflects expressions of social or structural forces that have repercussions on subjectivities. Costa (2024) links this context to the increasing overmedicalization of everyday life and the pathologization of emotional experiences, a trend that has been on the rise since 1970. As a result, individuals are held responsible for their psychological distress, which increases feelings of guilt and self-criticism, diverts attention from related social issues, and leads to feelings of anguish, frustration, and hopelessness, thereby fostering relationships based on competitiveness and consumerism.

Colonialities, as a continuation of colonial logic in contemporary contexts, are embedded in subjective processes from the perspective of value-based psychosocial dynamics, which underpin representations of the self and the world. This dynamic is driven by power relations, circumscribed by cultural, identity-based, and epistemic patterns legitimized as universal, which classify alternative forms of existence as marginal; these subjectivities reflect the oppression of bodies and knowledge, naturalizing relations of inequality that reproduce subjugation in the form of beliefs of inferiority (Santos & Passos, 2024).

Criticism of colonialism, therefore, has shifted its focus to its more subtle and enduring manifestations. Among these, the various forms of what has been known as the “colonization of the mind” are particularly significant. This is one of the forms of “epistemic violence” that philosophers certainly have a duty to help identify and combat (Dascal, 2009). Consequently, systems of oppression that reproduce class division are maintained through structural violence, with psychosocial repercussions that dehumanize and polarize society as a whole, generally eroding the political dimension (Bizarria et al., 2020).

The ideologization of violence manifests itself in social relations under capitalism as a phenomenon inherent to the social and historical structure, which must be analyzed within its context. According to Martins and Lacerda Jr. (2018), the need to denaturalize and critique the

ideology that sustains violence and the social perception of it represents an important step toward a psychology inspired by the principles of Martín-Baró. The relationship between ideology and violence is fundamental to Martín-Baró, who asserts that dominant ideologies legitimize violence while simultaneously shaping individuals' perceptions of what is acceptable or unacceptable in society (Costa & Barroco, 2021). These means range from semiotic displays of authority—through the overvaluation of certain epistemic sources of authority and the devaluation of others—to the use of observable and covert forms of discrimination, employing socioeconomic rewards or punishments and outright violent coercion (Dascal, 2009).

In light of this, Martín-Baró (1984) argues that mental health reflects social relations and community cohesion, with community life and human interactions being fundamental to emotional and social development. The forced exodus of populations, for example, results in the loss of homes and profound traumatic experiences, weakening the social fabric, given that displaced people face a continuous state of insecurity and helplessness, which often interrupts the grieving process and hinders the continuity of support networks, causing a devastating effect on identity and psychological well-being. Those in vulnerable situations are further weakened by the stigmatization that affects victims' self-esteem, creating challenges for rebuilding their lives in a society that often views them as 'others' (Martín-Baró, 1984).

The ubiquity of violence creates an environment permeated by fear and mistrust, undermining collective mental health. Fear, rooted in violence, becomes a constraint that affects daily life, an impact that is reflected in family and social relationships, eroding the capacity for empathy and mutual understanding (Martín-Baró, 1984). Consequently, Paredes and Veloz Serrade (2024) observe that violence is reflected in the subjective processes of victims of structural oppression, suggesting the recovery of collective and individual memory regarding traumatic experiences to strengthen collective identity—which empowers grassroots groups to act toward social transformation and the promotion of epistemic justice (Oliveira et al., 2014).

From the perspective of a responsive, liberation-oriented psychology (Gonzaga & Amozou, 2024), we seek answers to the emerging need for analyses of violence in the contemporary context, striving for epistemic justice, equity, and the recognition of difference—which must serve as the pillars for the recovery of memories and the reconfiguration of subjectivities.

Violence in schools, in various contexts around the world, can be linked to the issues discussed thus far—such as epistemic violence, colonialities, fatalism, and the construction of alternative narratives. And, in this context, we must acknowledge what Althusser (1979)

asserts: that the repressive state apparatus “functions through violence,” while the ideological state apparatuses *function “through ideology.”* Both are interlinked and reinforced in various social contexts, including schools.

Epistemic violence occurs in schools when certain forms of knowledge, identities, and histories are systematically marginalized at the expense of others. School curricula, in general, in colonized countries such as Brazil and African nations, still reflect Eurocentric perspectives, thereby delegitimizing local cultures and forms of knowledge. This erasure of diverse narratives creates an environment of exclusion that contributes to symbolic and structural violence in schools. This exclusion, in turn, can generate tensions and acts of violence related, for example, to cultural and racial identity—issues that are very present in contemporary society, as discussed in Bizarria et al. (2025c).

Colonialities influence conditions in schools and educational systems, especially in marginalized contexts marked by structural precariousness and insufficient resources. Coupled with social and economic inequalities, these conditions foster tensions and violence in the school environment, reinforcing authoritarian practices and generating fear, anxiety, and insecurity in classrooms. This context can foster feelings of worthlessness and fatalism, associated with neglect and academic failure. Linked to epistemic violence, fatalism leads students and educators to accept conflict and violence as an inevitable part of school life, hindering the creation of safer and more inclusive environments.

Digital technologies and dynamics are also intertwined with violence in schools, especially in the form of cyberbullying. This type of violence reflects the imposition of dominant narratives and digital exclusion, where voices are silenced or attacked through online platforms (Mariano et al., 2025). The neoliberal logic of validation on social media intensifies tensions among young people and can contribute to episodes of violence both inside and outside of school (Bizarria et al., 2022). In this context, artificial intelligence systems can also reproduce discourses associated with domination and symbolic and epistemic violence. Fanon (2021), in this regard, denounced the colonization of subjectivity, language, and knowledge—a process now practiced by artificial intelligence—which manifests as epistemic ‘racism.’

Moreno Artal (2005) asserts that violence in school communities requires interdisciplinary approaches involving schools, families, and the government, taking into account factors such as poverty, neglect, unemployment, and experiences associated with a culture of violence. In this context, it becomes necessary to develop conflict mediation strategies in everyday educational life. Lizarralde Jaramillo (2012) notes that Martín-Baró

believed in education's capacity to bring about significant change by fostering a culture of peace and solidarity, despite the climate of violence.

Drawing inspiration from Ignacio Martín-Baró, Lizarralde Jaramillo (2012) observes that fear and dehumanization, intertwined within the cultural dynamics that permeate educational environments, can also affect how communities relate to one another and educate themselves. To this end, they note that 'territories of fear'—areas where a culture of mistrust and the psychological impacts of violence affect daily school life—lead to the normalization of fear as part of existence, influencing school culture, socialization practices, and the learning context—with the normalization of aggressive behaviors, where individuals or groups are viewed as less human, which serves to justify violence against them, and a lack of empathy among young people and toward school and education.

Furthermore, in studying the school context and the concept of psychosocial trauma, Moreira and Guzzo (2015, 2016, 2017) expand Martín-Baró's definition of a 'limiting situation,' understood as a set of critical everyday circumstances that reveal the relationship between the individual and society, elucidating the formation of subjectivity in social interactions. It thus represents moments or circumstances that significantly affect students, such as personal crises, social conflicts, or learning difficulties. By identifying a limit situation, one can also transform crises into opportunities for growth and learning, exploring the possibilities for action and development that these situations offer.

According to Guzzo et al. (2015), the trivialization of education under the influence of neoliberalism is reflected in the presence of violence in communities, which directly affects the school environment. Families' economic hardships, such as unemployment and informal employment, impact children's ability to attend school and concentrate on their studies, just as difficulties in accessing adequate healthcare can hinder students' development.

The educational context fosters an understanding of fatalism as an expression of epistemic violence, characterized by a lack of belief in the face of violence, social conflicts, and power relations. In Martín-Baró's work, fear and psychosocial trauma undermine the capacity to act. In the school environment, this manifests itself in the interpretation of aggression and rebellion through homogenizing perspectives that silence differences, conflicts, and power relations, as reflected in the works of Martín-Baró (1990) and Maldonado-Torres (2008b).

As a result, memories of these experiences can give rise to narratives and voices that have been silenced in many ways, which in turn fosters analytical insights—understanding them through a political lens—while ensuring an enabling space for the reconstruction of identity can

be a powerful way to ‘postpone the end of the world’.⁷ And, as Viñas (2018) states, “knowing the many stories ... will allow us to recognize that there are many and very diverse ways of engaging in dialogue with others and with the world” (p. 104, our translation). Furthermore, “visiting the past ... seeking in it tools of understanding to reconstruct the course of life when it has been damaged, and perhaps triggering resilient processes of reflection to combat and (actively) resist the fear of freedom and difference” (Viñas, 2018, p. 105). And finally,

we understand that time is alive. This memory is alive, and the impulse to be pulses within it. We also recognize that there is a time beyond chronological time, one that is far more powerful and mystical: human time, which demands and cries out daily. (Viñas, 2018, p. 105)

Thus, the struggle for (re)cognition of differences through a psychosociology of absences—defined as “that which seeks to understand, validate, and acknowledge alternatives in terms of ways of being, living, loving, working, feeling, appearing, nurturing, and consuming that differ from traditional ones or those considered the only valid ones” (Veronese, 2008, p. 33), takes place within the context of recovering silenced memories and (re)constructing identities empowered for action.

Melo (2022), citing Michael Pollak, asserts that the recovery of memory involves the selection and construction of narratives that can be used to affirm identities and claim rights, thereby expanding contributions to the field of symbolic violence—inspired by Pierre Bourdieu (1989)—in the sense of the imposition of meanings and values by dominant groups. Thus, “by definition, as a *retrospective reconstruction*, the life narrative orders the events that have marked a life; ... Everything unfolds as if *coherence and continuity were commonly accepted as the hallmarks of a secure identity*” (Pollak, 2010, p. 45).

It is tentatively understood, based on the studies presented, that the challenge of understanding epistemic violence through the lens of fatalism leads committed psychology, as Martín-Baró argues, to recognize the colonialities at work in the subjective processes related to the historical and cultural contexts that serve as references for identities.

We therefore advocate for an ethics of care committed to promoting health and to contextualized interpretations of psychosocial and epistemic violence, taking into account the times, spaces, and territories of collective life. In dialogue with Martín-Baró, we seek to prevent the reproduction of forms of epistemic violence in the name of confronting oppression. This

⁷ In reference to Ailton Krenak’s book *Ideias para adiar o fim do mundo* (2019).

understanding calls for further reflection in the field of interpretations regarding the meanings of the exercise of ‘conscientization’ in relation to representations of the ‘oppressor’ and the ‘oppressed,’ as expressed in the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who influenced Martín-Baró’s psychology of liberation.

By taking awareness as the horizon of psychological practice. ... There is no person without a family, no learning without culture, no madness without social order; therefore, there can be no I without a we, no knowledge without a symbolic system, and no disorder that does not refer to moral norms and social normality. (Martín-Baró, 1996, p. 17)

Here, Martín-Baró (1996) incorporates the idea of psychology’s commitment to action in support of freedom and autonomy, grounded in epistemic justice, equity, and the recognition of difference.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

At this point, we will revisit some aspects—addressed throughout the reflections under discussion—related to epistemic violence, with the aim of presenting decolonial proposals as an invitation to critique, action, and the development of different approaches to the issue of violence in the school context.

Fatalism can be understood as an effect of epistemic violence, which undermines possibilities for action through the exclusion and delegitimization of social experiences. Linked to colonialities and neoliberal logic, confronting it requires the construction of meanings that foster collective action and other forms of social existence.

This challenge requires ethical and political reorientations within psychology and other fields of knowledge, taking into account contexts of oppression, autonomy, and freedom. Recognizing the colonialities present in subjective processes implies rethinking practices and valuing different forms of knowledge and experiences. Overcoming fatalism can foster the recognition of silenced memories, identities, and possibilities for social transformation.

Decolonization, in this sense, seeks to overcome fatalism by offering alternative perspectives that value local knowledge and promote the autonomy of individuals. It encourages the imagination of diverse and emancipatory futures, challenging the imposition of hegemonic narratives. In this vein, the psychosociology of absences highlights the importance of recognizing and filling the gaps in meaning created by colonial silencing, bringing to light

narratives that have been marginalized and reconfiguring identities that can act in an active and transformative manner. Confronting epistemic violence and empowering identities for action are fundamental steps in this process, given the active engagement required to promote structural change.

In the school context, violence in schools, in all its forms, is a reflection of global dynamics of oppression and exclusion. Combating it requires immediate action and structural efforts to deconstruct colonialities, overcome fatalism, and promote epistemic justice. Psychology and education can lead this movement, serving as tools for emancipation and the creation of school environments that celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion, and enable the creation of inclusive and safe spaces (Bizarria et al., 2022). For example, incorporating epistemic justice and equity into curricula, valuing local cultures, and promoting a school environment that respects differences can prevent violence while honoring local traditions.

As limitations, this narrative review is grounded in a reflective framework rooted in a set of authors situated within a specific epistemological perspective—particularly within the frameworks of social and historical knowledge—and adopts a dialectical approach. Considering epistemic plurality, it is understood that the argument presented can be expanded through different interpretations of the phenomenon of violence in schools and can mobilize discourses and social practices attentive to educational dynamics—dynamics that are so vivid in societies that prioritize the sociabilities produced within their spaces.

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