"FORCE-IDEAS" IN BOAVENTURA SOUSA SANTOS' THINKING AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Vera Maria Ferrão Candau[*]

Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)

ABSTRACT: Boaventura Sousa Santos' wide intellectual production has influenced various areas of expertise. It has also moved diverse social actors into promoting initiatives that aim social transformation and democratic building. We consider that his contributions are especially relevant to debate on educational issues in society nowadays. This article aims at identifying aspects which mobilize – the entitled "force-ideas"- by Boaventura Sousa Santos' thinking in order to deepen at a critical and intercultural perspective, both theoretically and practically. This work is built with three complementary parts. First, it contains a reflection on the expression "force-ideas". Second, it brings the main tendencies of today's intercultural education in Latin America. And finally it presents some "force–ideas" that allow us to deepen and enlarge the discussion about intercultural education in a critical perspective.

Keywords: Intercultural education. Boaventura Sousa Santos. "Force-ideas". Equality/difference. Knowledge Ecology.

"IDEIAS-FORÇA" DO PENSAMENTO DE BOAVENTURA SOUSA SANTOS E A EDUCAÇÃO INTERCULTURAL

RESUMO: A ampla produção do sociólogo português Boaventura Sousa Santos tem impactado diferentes áreas do conhecimento, assim como movimentos de iniciativa de diversos atores sociais, orientados a promover processos de transformação social e construção democrática. Consideramos que suas contribuições são de especial relevância para o debate sobre as questões educativas na sociedade atual. É nesse horizonte que se situa o presente trabalho, que tem por objetivo identificar aspectos especialmente mobilizadores – "ideias-força" – do seu pensamento para se aprofundar, tanto teórica como praticamente, na perspectiva da educação intercultural crítica. O artigo está estruturado em três partes que mutuamente se exigem: uma reflexão sobre a expressão "ideias-força"; as principais tendências da educação intercultural hoje na América Latina; e a apresentação de algumas das "ideias-força" do pensamento de Boaventura, que permitem aprofundar e ampliar a discussão sobre a educação intercultural na perspectiva crítica.
Palavras-chave: Educação Intercultural. Boaventura Sousa Santos. "Ideias-força". Igualdade/diferença. Ecologia de saberes.

INTRODUCTION

Portuguese sociologist Boaventura Sousa Santos is, definitely, one of the most prolific and creative intellectuals of our time. His wide academic production, as well as his militancy and dialogue with social movements in different parts of the world, express, in an eloquent manner, his varied interests and research focuses. Topics such as epistemology, democracy, social movements, multiculturalism and interculturality, equality/difference, human rights, globalization, social and cognitive justice, and emancipation, among others, are transversal to his work.

Education only becomes an explicit topic in his production in an article published in 1996, entitled "Para uma Pedagogia do Conflito" (For a Pedagogy of Conflict).[1] However, his reflections and research offer many significant elements to deepen the educational issues that currently challenge us.

Inês Barbosa de Oliveira, one of the authors who, among us, has most often worked on his thinking, in her book *Boaventura e a Educação* (Boaventura and Education) (OLIVEIRA, 2006, p. 10), highlights aspects considered especially relevant, considering the possibilities of appropriating his thinking by the field of education, emphasizing the "recovery of the inseparability between epistemological and political reflections, proposed by Boaventura, attempting to think their possible usefulness in reflecting on education".

In the last years, we have approached Boaventura's[2] production by means of the works we have been developing in the research group we coordinate, GECEC- Grupo de Estudos sobre Cotidiano, Educação e Cultura (Study Group on Daily Life, Education and Culture)-, associated to the Graduate Program in Education at the Catholic University in Rio de Janeiro. Our focus has been on exploring this author's potential to deepen discussions on the relations between education and culture, and, more concretely, on the perspective of developing intercultural education. Thus, we seek to identify especially mobilizing aspects – "force-ideas"- from his thinking in this process. This is this paper's main goal. Our starting point is the statement that Boaventura's thinking offers many contributions for developing, both in theory and in practice, the perspective of critical intercultural education. We do not mean to provide an exhaustive list of such elements. Rather, we will present and discuss some elements we consider especially relevant.

This paper is structured in mutually requiring parts. First, we start with an analysis of the expression "force-idea". We discuss the main perspectives currently in development in Latin America, regarding intercultural education, and our position towards this topic. We will analyze some of the "force-ideas" in Boaventura's thinking, which we deem capable of enabling deepening and increasing the discussion on intercultural education. Finally, we seek to draw some considerations on the relevance of Boaventura's thinking for developing intercultural educational processes, from a critical standpoint.

"FORCE-IDEAS": AN INSTIGATING EXPRESSION

The expression "force-ideas" is used as conceived by Abraham Magendzo (2009), well-known Chilean educator, with a wide production in curriculum and education on human rights. According to this author, this expression refers to converging, complex and mobilizing ideas and thinking, which share similarities, but do not assume uniformities. "They are strongly rooted in the historical time, understood as creation, as production of differences and diversities, as transformation, as movement, definite, as a process" (MAGENDZO, 2009, p.5). These "force-ideas" may not be reduced to a collection of notions, nor to a predefined structure. They may be considered as produced by the interaction between professionals, which lead to relative stability discourse configurations. They have a significant provoking potential. The invite us to go beyond the established and to deepen in meaning issues and perspective of future.

We consider Boaventura Sousa Santos' production to be crossed by numerous "force-ideas", which are constantly recaptured, resituated and re-signified, in light of his ideas' evolution, in interaction with social practices, and the challenges posed by the different contexts to his critical and reflexive abilities.

We do not mean to be comprehensive, but we will rather limit ourselves to presenting some of these "force-ideas" we consider key and especially relevant. It is also important to point out that it is critical to assume these "force-ideas" are interrelated. They may not be conceived as isolated or autonomous. They make up a dynamic constellation, interacting with one another. We are likewise aware that this is not a neutral construction. It also involves our subjectivity, uneasiness and searches. We will navigate among several of Boaventura's productions. We tried to impregnate ourselves with his intuitions, searches and commitments. We consider the "force-ideas" signaled constitute key reference points for a reflection on the development of intercultural education processes in the current scenario.

CRITICAL INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

Since 1996, we have developed our works in a systematic manner – research, papers, speeches in conferences and workshops, etc. – on several aspects of the relations between education and culture. These works, always anchored on a unifying research, developed with the support of CNPq, the Brazilian research fomenting agency, have enabled us to progressively broaden our gaze over this topic, from an approach centered mostly on the internal dynamics in schools, to a more comprehensive perspective, including the analyses of public policies and the dialogue with studies, experiments and authors from different countries in Latin America (CANDAU, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012).

A reflection we have carried throughout this entire path has to do with the relations between multiculturalism and interculturality. We do not propose, in this paper, to summarize the path we have treaded. We intend only to point out the polysemy in the terms multiculturalism and interculturality, as well as to mention that intercultural education has an original, plural and especially creative in Latin America (CANDAU; RUSSO, 2010). An expression coined in indigenous school education, intercultural education broadened its universe of concerns, and currently affects the search for schools and curricula, which respond to issues raised in Latin American societies nowadays (LOPEZ, 2007).

We have situated the intercultural perspective in the field of multicultural positions we have classified into three major approaches: assimilationist multiculturalism, differentialist multiculturalism or plural monoculturalism, and interactive multiculturalism, also known as interculturality (CANDAU, 2008).

The assimilationist approach acknowledges that we live in multicultural societies, in the descriptive sense, that is to say, integrated by plural actors, from the sociocultural standpoint. An assimilationist policy, from the prescriptive perspective, stimulates integration of all in its dynamic, favoring its incorporation to the hegemonic culture. For education, a policy of universal schooling and equal opportunities is promoted. Everyone is invited to participate in the school system, but the monocultural and homogenizing nature of school culture is not questioned, regarding both the curricula defined and the relations involving the different actors, the strategies used in the classroom, the values prioritized, etc.

Differentialist multiculturalism, or, according to Amartya Sen (2006), monocultural plural, originates in the statement that, when assimilation is emphasized, the difference is eventually rendered unfeasible or silenced. It proposes, then, placing the emphasis on the acknowledgement of differences, in order to promote the expression of several cultural identities present in a given context, and seeks to secure spaces in which they may be manifested. This is the only way different sociocultural groups may keep their reference cultural matrixes. Some of the positions in this line end up assuming an essentialist view of the formation of cultural identities. The access to social and economic rights is then emphasized and, at the same time, the formation of cultural communities considered "homogenous" with their own organizations – neighborhoods, schools, churches, clubs, associations, etc. In practical terms, in many societies nowadays, the development of true sociocultural apartheids has been favored.

These two positions, especially the first one, are the most frequent ones in the societies we live in. Sometimes they coexist in a tense and conflicted manner. In general, they focus on the polemic on the multicultural issue.

Nevertheless, we place ourselves in a third perspective, which proposes open and interactive multiculturalism, which accentuates interculturality, for considering it the most appropriate perspective for building democratic societies which articulate equality policies and identity policies.

In this context, among the different intercultural education ideas (WALSH, 2009a), across the literature over this topic, we adopt

the perspective of cultural interculturality and subscribe to some of its characteristics. This position promotes the deliberate interrelation among the different subjects and sociocultural groups in a given society and, in this sense, opposes all differentialist views, as well as all assimilationist perspectives. On the other hand, it breaks up with an essentialist view of cultures and cultural identities, conceiving them in a continuous process of construction, destabilization and reconstruction. It is constituted by the statement that, in the society we live in, the cultural hybridization process are intense and mobilizing of the construction of open identities, which presupposes cultures are not pure or static. It includes power mechanisms that permeate cultural relations, assuming these are not idyllic relations, they are built in history and, therefore, are crossed by power conflicts and marked by prejudice and discrimination by certain sociocultural groups. The last characteristics to be pointed out refers to the fact it does not dissociate current difference and inequality issues in a particularly conflictive manner, both globally and in different societies, among which the Brazilian society.

Among the authors who have worked under these assumptions, we highlight the contributions made by Fidel Turbino, a Peruvian educator, professor at the Catholic University at Lima, and coordinator of the *Red Internacional de Estudios Interculturales* (International Network of Intercultural Studies). In his text "La Interculturalidad crítica como proyecto ético-político" (Critical interculturality as ethical-political project" (TUBINO, 2005), singles out two fundamental perspectives: functional interculturality and critical interculturality. His starting point is the statement that growing incorporation of interculturality in the official discourse of states and international organisms is founded on an approach that does not question the sociopolitical model in effect in most Latin American countries, marked by the neoliberal logic, that is to say, "it does not question the rules of the game" (TUBINO, 2005, p.3), he states. In this sense, interculturality is assumed as an essential component, especially strategic to favor social cohesion, to minimize conflicts, and to assimilate subaltern groups to hegemonic culture. It is about "promoting dialogue and tolerance, with no impact on currently effective causes of social and cultural asymmetry" (TUBINO, 2005, p.5). Power relations among the different sociocultural groups are not questioned. Therefore, functional interculturality intends to reduce tension and conflict areas regarding the different social movements that focus on social and identity issues, without affecting power relations and structure in effect.

However, questioning these relations is exactly the focus of critical interculturality's perspective. It is about questioning differences

and inequalities involving the different sociocultural, ethnic-racial, gender, sexual orientation groups, among others, built throughout history. The starting point is the statement that interculturality points towards the construction of societies that embrace differences as constitutive of democracy, and that may be capable of building new relations, truly egalitarian among the different sociocultural groups, which means empowering those who have been historically considered inferior (CANDAU, 2012).

According to Tubino (2005, p. 5),

> Social asymmetry and cultural discrimination render authentic intercultural dialogue unfeasible. Therefore, the dialogue shall not be the starting point, but rather the question on the conditions for dialoguing. Or, in a more precise manner, it is necessary to require that dialogue among cultures be primarily a dialogue about economic, political and military, etc. factors, which currently condition the frank exchange among world cultures. This requirement is, nowadays, essential for not relying on the ideology of a decontextualized dialogue, which would be limiting to favoring interests created by the dominant civilization, disregarding power asymmetry that rules the world. In order for the dialogue to be real, it is necessary to start by making the causes of non-dialogue visible, which mandatorily passes through a social criticism discourse.

Critical interculturality intends to be a proposal towards the construction of democratic societies that articulate equality and the acknowledgment of cultural differences, as well as for questioning and building alternatives to the monocultural and westernizing nature ruling most countries in the continent.

These two perspectives cross each other, oppose and inspire several of the numerous searches, experiences and public policies, on this topic, which are developed in the continent.

In 2012, Fidel Tubino, Adhemir Flores Moreno and Vanessa Navarro Chávez, developed, for the Peruvian Department of Education, the document "Propuesta de incorporación de la Interculturalidad en el Marco Curricular de la Educación Básica del Perú" (Proposal for incorporating Interculturality in Curricular Milestone for Peruvian Basic Education). In it, they provide a concept of critical interculturality, based on a three-dimensional perspective of justice: acknowledgment of cultural diversity, redistribution of economic participation, and citizenship participation. Catherine Walsh (2009b), in addition to the aforementioned dimensions, also highlights interculturality's epistemological dimension, towards the valorization of dialogue among the various knowledges – scientific and social – present in societies.

According to this author, critical interculturality (WALSH, 2009b, p. 25):

> Enables considering the construction of new epistemological milestones that pluralize, problematize and challenge the notion of totalitarian, single and universal thought and knowledges, based on politics and ethics that always maintain present the power relations to which these knowledges have been subjected.

From the perspective of critical interculturality, we have collectively constructed, in the aforementioned research group, a concept of intercultural education that is a reference for the works we develop:

> Intercultural Education is based on the statement of difference as richness. It promotes systematic dialogue processes among various subjects – individual and collective -, knowledges and practices in the perspective of affirmation of justice – socioeconomic, political, cognitive and cultural -, as well as the construction of egalitarian relations among sociocultural groups and the democratization of society, by means of policies that articulate equality and difference rights. (CANDAU, 2013, p. 1)

We would like to emphasize the first statement in this conceptualization, which we consider key. The term difference, in testimonies of educators in different researches we have conducted, is frequently associated to a problem to be solved, to a deficiency, to cultural deficit, and to inequality. Those who are different have poor academic performance, as they come from endangered communities, from families in great social vulnerability conditions, and have behaviors with varied levels of violence and incivility. They are those who have identity characteristics and who are associated to "abnormality", to "special needs" and/or to low cultural capital. Finally, those who are different are a problem to be dealt with by the school and educators, and this situation has been worsening and we do not know how to handle it. Only in a few testimonies is the difference articulated to plural identities that enrichen pedagogical processes and must be recognized and valued. (CANDAU, 2012)

However, if we are not capable of changing our standpoint and position ourselves before cultural differences as richness that widen our experiences, broaden our sensibility and invite us to potentiate them as a requirement for building a more egalitarian world, we will not be able to be actors in the intercultural education process, from the standpoint we propose. For such, we are invited to deconstruct neutralized aspects in school dynamics that prevent us from positively acknowledging cultural differences, and, at the same time, promote processes that may potentiate intercultural education from a critical perspective. We believe Boaventura Sousa Santos' thinking offers us especially significant contributions to shift in that direction.

"FORCE-IDEAS" IN BOAVENTURA SOUSA SANTOS' THINKING

Using Boaventura Sousa Santos' broad academic production as reference, we selected some texts we considered as offering contributions more directly related to the topic of intercultural education. They deepen aspects such as the issue of universalism, the different types of globalization, the relation between human rights and multiculturalism, the articulation between equality and difference, the sociology of absences and emergences, the ecology of knowledges, and the formation of subjectivities.

The issue of universalism is present in many of Boaventura's texts. They are a key topic in his thinking, associated to the discussion on the modern concept of science and with unequivocal political dimension.

The paper herein is based on two of the author's texts: *A construção multicultural da igualdade e da diferença* (Multicultural construction of equality and difference) (SANTOS, 1999) and "Beyond abyssal thinking: from global lines to the ecologies of knowledges" (SANTOS, 2010). We emphasize a few points we consider especially important for the issue of intercultural education.

On the first text, the author correlates the issue of universality with that of inequality and exclusion in modernity. It states the existence of a contradiction between these realities and the basic statements of the paradigm of modernity, based on equality and social integration.

For Boaventura,

> If social regulation in capitalist modernity, on the one hand, consists of processes that generate inequality and exclusion, on the other hand, it defines mechanisms that enable controlling or maintaining these processes within certain limits (SANTOS, 1999, p.5).

From this perspective, he argues that universalism constitutes the ideological device favored in the fight for overcoming inequality and exclusion, but does not consider it a homogenous phenomenon. He distinguishes two types: antidifferentialist universalism and differentialist universalism. The first one, antidifferentialist, operates by disqualifying differences and reproduces their hierarchy in accordance with the standard of homogenization; and the second one, differentialist, operates by absolutizing the differences and making inferior by the excess of differences.

For the author, "if the first universalism abashes by the excessive likeness, the second one abashes by excessive difference" (SANTOS, 1999, p.7). Both of them result in making social groups/subjects inferior and in reinforcing the naturalization of social relations present in society. He also states that, in modern states, antidifferentialist state ideology predominates.

In this context, school plays a key role and is considered as one of the main institutions in charge of building equality that ends up identifying with the standardization and homogenization of subjects considered "equal" and of knowledges assumed as universal. Therefore, it reinforces hegemony of a given social group and the statement that only a certain type of knowledge, considered scientific and universal, is valid and should be the basis of school education.

These issues are key for promoting critical intercultural education. Denaturalizing and deconstructing the unique nature of valid knowledges, those considered scientific and universal, which are the basic reference for school curricula, constitute its main tasks. Antidifferentialist universalism is questioned and its construction based on determined and particular contexts is investigated. However, the critical intercultural perspective does not propose a differentialist universalism, which closes each specificity in its own context. It is geared towards the acknowledgment of plurality of socially produced knowledges and the promotion of dialogue among them, the construction of interrelations and confluences. The second text we analyzed directs us to this horizon.

Published practically ten years after the first one, in it, Boaventura is based on the statement that "modern thinking has an abyssal nature", that is to say,

> It consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms: the realm of "this side of the line" and the realm of "the other side of the line". The division is such that the "other side of the line" vanishes as reality, becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing under any relevant or comprehensive way of being. (SANTOS, 2010, p.31-32)

Therefore, the abyssal nature institutes the impossibility of co-presence of both sides of the line. For the author, the most evident manifestations of abyssal thinking take place in the fields of knowledge and modern law. We will focus, on this approach, on some aspects associated to the issue of knowledge.

For abyssal thinking, modern science has the exclusiveness of the universal and the true. Knowledges produced "on the other side of the line" are nonexistent. In this sense, knowledges produced by subaltern sociocultural subjects are denies, lowered to the status of beliefs, opinions, magic, or intuitive understanding, which, at best, may become object or raw material for scientific investigation.

Santos states that, originally, the abyssal line was articulated to colonialism and, therefore, it had a territorial location: the colonial zone.

However, this abyssal nature is structurally present in modern Western thinking. It remains structuring of political and cultural relations, exclusive and configuring the contemporary world system. For him, global inequality and social injustice are necessarily associated to global cognitive injustice. Therefore, in order to affirm processes geared towards the construction of global social justice, it is necessary to overcome the abyssal perspective and to institute a "post-abyssal thinking".

Recognizing this context is essential for thinking on how to contribute to overcoming it. For such, it is necessary we position ourselves from the epistemological perspective on the other side of the abyssal line, on the "Global South", understood as a "metaphor for human suffering" (SANTOS, 2010, p.33), which confronts modern science monoculture and the perspective that universalizes it as the only valid thought. It is about promoting cognitive justice, an indispensable component of social justice, which "will not be successful if it is based solely on the idea of a more equal distribution of scientific knowledge" (SANTOS, 2010, p.57).

In order to reach it, it is indispensable we have and ecology of knowledges, developed from a post-abyssal perspective. In this sense, we seek to explore alternative scientific practices, such as post-colonial and feminist epistemologies, and, at the same time, promote the interrelation between knowledges assumed as scientific and other knowledges, considered non-scientific. It is not about affirming some and denying others, but rather placing them in dialogue, having co-presence and mutual communication as starting points.

For Boaventura, "the ecology of knowledges enables us to having a much broader vision of what we do not know, as well as of what we do know, and also to be aware that what we do not know is our own ignorance, not a general ignorance" (SANTOS, 2010, p.66).

Ecology of knowledges constitutes, therefore, an essential component for intercultural education. It is important to highlight that, for such, positioning oneself on the other side of the abyssal line, enables knowledges denied by society in general up to now, and, especially by school, characteristic of invisible and subaltern sociocultural groups, constitutes a priority task, without which an ecology of knowledges will not be possible, what presupposes confronting the monoculture in modern science. It requires acknowledging a plurality of heterogenic knowledges, one of which is modern science.

Some characteristics of post-abyssal thinking include radical co-presence, which means practices and agents on both sides of the abyssal line are considered egalitarian; the affirmation that, in ecology of knowledges, these are crossed, and, therefore, so are ignorances,

and, consequently, the acquisition of certain knowledges may involve the forgetting of others; the awareness that all knowledges have internal and external limits; as well as the assumption that the credibility of cognitive construction is measured by the type of intervention in reality that it enables, favors or inhibits. Thus, it is possible to conceive "post-abyssal" thinking as destabilizing knowledges and perceptions of reality, and as mobilizer of emerging perspectives that potentiate energies present on the other side of the abyssal line.

It is important to emphasize that, for the author:

> As a post-abyssal ecology, the ecology of knowledges, while forging credibility for nonscientific knowledge, does not imply discrediting scientific knowledge. It simply implies its counter-hegemonic use. Such use consists, on the one hand, in exploring the internal plurality of science, that is, alternative scientific practices that have been made visible by feminist and postcolonial epistemologies, and, on the other hand, in promoting the interaction and interdependence between scientific and nonscientific knowledges. (SANTOS, 2010, p.57)

This perspective challenges us to problematize school knowledge and to acknowledge the different knowledges produced by the different sociocultural groups. It promotes an ecology of knowledges in the school realm, favoring dialogue among the socially valued and dominant school knowledge and those knowledges. This interaction may occur by confrontation, or by mutual enriching, and presupposes broadening our conception of which knowledges should deserve attention, amidst confluences and tensions, and be developed in school, considering the possible conflicts that may emerge from the interaction among these knowledges.

It is an essential dynamic for our being capable of developing curricula that incorporate references from different cultural realms, coherent with the critical intercultural perspective. Under this perspective, it is important to conceive school as a "live, fluid space, with a complex crossing of cultures", as proposed by Perez Gomez (2001, p.17).

What we consider important for the critical intercultural perspective is stimulating the dialogue among knowledges in the teaching-learning processes developed in the classrooms.

Streck (2012), in his paper with the intriguing title "Which knowledge matters? Challenges for the curriculum", states that:

> Knowledge is not a privilege of a certain group of people. I has its own history and geography […] It is necessary to recognize that the paths for emancipation are many, and that a democratic society may not dispense with cognitive ecology, acknowledging diversity of subjects and knowledge production manners. (STRECK, 2012, p.21)

Another contribution by Boaventura we consider especially relevant for intercultural education refers to what he calls "sociology of absences and sociology of emergences" (SANTOS, 2006).

Using as a reference the broad research work he coordinated on *Reinventing Social Emancipation*[3], he concludes that large part of the world social experience richness has been wasted by the hegemony of western scientific and philosophical tradition. Against this waste, and, in some cases, an actual epistemicide, he proposes the criticism of indolence in western thinking, which is manifested from a proposal for a new rationality, founded on the sociology of absences, the sociology of emergences, and the work of translation.

Based on the statement that understanding the world goes way beyond the western understanding of the world, he proposes a rationality that enables the expansion of the present and the contraction of the future, in an opposite dynamic to what is generally done:

> Whereas the expansion of the present is obtained through the sociology of absences, the contraction of the future is obtained through the sociology of emergences. [...] Rather than a general theory, I propose the work of translation, a procedure capable of creating mutual intelligibility among possible experiences and available without destroying their identities. (SANTOS, 2006, p. 95)

The sociology of absences seeks to reveal that which has been construed as ignorance and is residual, whereas the sociology of emergences acts upon what exists only as a trend in its power, possibility, signal or clue dimension, through the movement of symbolic amplification of knowledges, practices and agents. These two movements are intimately related.

According to Boaventura,

> The symbolic amplification operated by sociology of emergences is designed to analyze, in a given practice, experience or form of knowledge, what exists in it only a trend or future possibility [...] It identifies signal, clues or traits of future possibilities in all there is. (SANTOS, 2006, p. 120)

Intercultural education in a critical perspective presupposes identifying what has been produced as "absence", both in the epistemological plan and in the social practice plan, and, at the same time, acknowledging the "emergences" of knowledges, social practices and perspectives geared towards the construction of equal and just societies. This is not a spontaneous capability, which arises "naturally". In general, we are socialized to reinforce aspects that are confluent with the dominant logic. It presupposes developing a sensitivity to capture signs of "other" realities that simply emerge and

are not acknowledged. It presupposes being capable of identifying that, which, however, is not yet, in order to develop and contribute to the social emancipation processes.

Another "force-idea" present in Boaventura's thinking, that we consider especially significant for our reflection, refer to the relation involving Human Rights, globalization and multiculturalism.

Boaventura distinguishes four forms of globalization: globalized localism (the process by which a particular local reality is successfully globalized), globalized globalism (specific impact on local conditions of transnational practices), insurgent and subaltern cosmopolitanism (consist of transnationally organized resistance against the unequal exchanges produced or intensified by globalized localisms and localized globalisms) and common heritage of humankind (emergence of transnational struggles for values or resources that are as global as the planet itself). The first two are conceived as hegemonic globalization, from above, and the last two are conceived as counter-hegemonic globalization, from below. (SANTOS, 2006, p.417-421).

For him, human rights were constructed within the perspective of "globalized localism". This was the hegemonic matrix of modernity itself, clearly present in European expansionism, bearer of "civilization" and the "lights". This is the perspective that has predominated until today, with different versions, in the debates about human rights.

However, what Boaventura calls insurgent and subaltern cosmopolitanism is one of the processes that characterizes globalization from below. This globalization arises in local groups, in civil society organizations, in the topics that truly come from the uneasiness of the different subaltern social actors.

In this perspective, according to the author (SANTOS, 2006, p. 445-447), for human rights to be truly resignified nowadays, in a perspective that does not deny their roots or their history, but means to bring them close to current problems, they will have to undergo a reconceptualization process in a multicultural perspective, based on the statement that all cultures have incomplete and problematic human dignity concepts. Stating that no culture is complete, none encompasses the entire human culture, leads us to much more than working with the idea of a true and unique culture, which needs to be universalized. It presupposes developing sensitivity towards the idea of incompleteness of all cultures, and, therefore, the need for interaction among them. No culture accounts for all human. "Raising awareness about cultural incompleteness is one of the tasks

preceding the construction of an emancipating and multicultural conception of human rights" (SANTOS, 2006, p.446).

On the other hand, Boaventura states that all cultures tend to distribute people and social groups between two competitive principles of hierarchical belonging: equality principle and difference principle. This last assumption positions us in the core of human rights resignificance issue nowadays, that is to say, passing from the affirmation of equality or difference to equality in difference. It is not about denying difference to affirm equality, nor is it an absolute differentialist view, that relativizes equality. The issue lies on working equality in difference, and this begs mentioning what he calls new transcultural imperative, which, as he sees it, must preside over a multicultural articulation of equality and difference policies: "we have the right to be equal whenever difference diminishes us; we have the right to be different whenever equality decharacterizes us" (SANTOS, 2006, p.462).

It is in this dialectic between equality and difference, between overcoming all inequality and, at the same time, acknowledging cultural differences, which the challenges in this articulation place themselves. And, under this perspective, for Boaventura, intercultural dialogue is essential. This dialogue will require developing what he calls diatopical hermeneutics, thus conceived:

> Diatopical hermeneutics is based on the idea that the topoi[4] of a given culture, no matter how strong they are, are as incomplete as the culture they belong to [...] The purpose of diatopical hermeneutics is not, however, to reach completeness – an unattainable goal – but, rather, to broaden as much as possible the awareness of mutual incompleteness through a dialogue that is developed, so to speak, with one foot on one culture and another foot on the other. Therein lies its diatopical nature. (SANTOS, 2006, p.448)

This dialogue constitutes a complex and challenging task that is only in its first steps. Few authors and initiatives are positioned under this perspective. We consider education is a privileged space to develop it. Intercultural dialogue becomes more and more challenging in the different realms where it takes place. In school, it represents a challenge invited to resignify curricula, practices, institutional dynamics, relations among actors, etc., designed to reinvent school cultures. In order for this dialogue to be possible, we have to break away from homogenization processes, which hide differences and make them invisible, reinforcing the monocultural nature of school cultures. According to Luisa Cortesão and Stephen Stoer (1999, p. 56),

> By signaling to multiculturalism as new form of globalization, Boaventura Sousa Santos states that the world is a "rainbow of cultures" (SANTOS, 1995). If we use this concept as basis for a (occasionally risky) analogy, and admitting that it is

important to be able to 'see' this and other sets of colors, we may recall that some people, although equipped with a morphologically well constituted visual system, are not capable of distinguishing an entire range of shades that make up the rainbow. Some have a reduced ability to identify greyish shades: these are the colorblind. The analogy proposed herein is that unawareness of cultural diversity that surrounds us in many situations would constitute a type of "cultural colorblindness".

Breaking away from this *cultural colorblindness* and having the *rainbow of cultures* present in educational practices presupposes an entire process of deconstructing naturalized and rooted in school practices to become educators capable of developing new manners of positioning ourselves and intervening in our schools' and classrooms' routines. It requires valuing our students' and teachers' life histories, and building their cultural identities, favoring exchange and mutual acknowledgment, as well as stimulating teachers and students to question who they place under the category of "us" and who are the "others" to them.

For Boaventura, if we intend to promote an emancipating educational project, which is definitely in tune with critical intercultural education, we are called upon to "recovery our ability to feel awe and indignation, and integrate them in forming nonconforming and rebellious subjectivities" (SANTOS,1996, p.17). This constitutes an "force-idea" we consider especially updated and challenging. Dominant educational trends in our society are guided to the formation of individualist subjectivities, which favor the insertion in the consumption society and in the market. They inhibit critical and questioning perspective on homogenization and conformance, and end up strengthening them. Intercultural education, on the other hand, favors questioning this logic, stimulates collective processes and, in this sense, contributes to forming nonconforming subjectivities, capable of questioning *status quo* and favoring the construction of sociocultural dynamics designed to recognize different subaltern and discriminated groups, and to build social and cognitive justice. Rebellious subjectivities, thus, are committed to structural social change.

In this paper, we limited ourselves to pointing out some key ideas in Boaventura's thinking that we consider as capable of offering important provocations for the development of critical intercultural education processes.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Issues relating to cultural differences have acquired greater visibility in public scenarios. Social movements of identity nature have been their main protagonists.

This reality has led to the construction of public policies designed to provide answers to its different demands, among which, education.

However, it is possible to detect that initiatives in this direction, both in nationally and internationally, in general, are founded on the perspective of functional interculturality (TUBINO, 2005). They do not question society's structural bases, and are limited to offering proposals to minimize social conflicts caused by the demands of different sociocultural actors.

In the realm of school education, predominant initiatives are limited to introducing knowledges and cultural expressions from different groups in certain curricular components, in a perspective of juxtaposition, which does not question the construction logic of school cultures. Thus, a superficial vision of interculturality is promoted, which, in many cases, reinforces stereotypes and ends up naturalizing processes that diminish certain sociocultural groups.

Boaventura Sousa Santos thinking, provided herein in a synthetized and approximate manner, by means of some "force-ideas" that are transversal to it, seems to offer various clues and raise numerous questions so that we may position the intercultural perspective at a more consistent and radical level. Only by questioning dominant logic in school educational processes, heir to western modernity, based on standardization, homogenization, monoculturality and universality, can we advance in the perspective of building intercultural educational practices designed to favor an ecology of knowledges, the construction of nonconforming subjectivities and the emergence of a post-abyssal pedagogic thinking in the perspective of reinventing the social emancipation proposed by Boaventura.

REFERENCES

CANDAU, Vera Maria. Cotidiano Escolar e Cultura(s): encontros e desencontros. In: CANDAU, Vera Maria (Org.) *Reinventar a Escola*. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 2000.

_____ (Org.).*Sociedade, Educação e Cultura(s)* :questões e propostas. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 2002.

_____. Educação Intercultural no contexto brasileiro: questões e desafios. In:Seminário Internacional de Educação Intercultural, Gênero e Movimentos Sociais,2., Florianópolis, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2003.*Anais…*[CD-ROM].

_____. Universidade e diversidade cultural: alguns desafios a partir da experiência da PUC-Rio; IN: PAIVA, A. (Org.) *Ação Afirmativa na Universidade*: reflexão sobre experiências concretas Brasil-Estados Unidos, Rio de Janeiro: Ed. PUC-Rio-Desiderata, 2004.

_____(Org.).*Cultura(s) e Educação*: entre o crítico e o pós-crítico. Rio de Janeiro: DP&A, 2005.

_____ (Org.).*Educação Intercultural e Cotidiano escolar*. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras, 2006

_____. Direitos humanos, educação e interculturalidade: as tensões entre igualdade e diferença. *Rev. Bras. Educ.*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 13, n. 37, p.45-56, 2008.

_____ (Org.).*Educação Intercultural na América Latina*: entre concepções, tensões e propostas. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras, 2009.

_____. Educación Intercultural en América Latina: distintas concepciones y tensiones actuales. *Estudios Pedagógicos*, Valdivia, Chile, v. 36, p.34-352, 2010.

_____(Org.).*Diferenças Culturais e Educação*:construindo caminhos. Rio de Janeiro: 7 Letras, 2011.

_____. Diferenças culturais, interculturalidade e educação em direitos humanos. *Educação & Sociedade*, Campinas, v. 33, p. 235-250,2012.

_____. Educação Intercultural. GECEC- PUC-Rio. (documento de trabalho), 2013

CANDAU, Vera Maria; RUSSO, Kelly. Interculturalidade e Educação: na América Latina: uma construção plural, original e complexa. *Revista Diálogo Educacional* (PUCPR), Curitiba, v. 10, p.151-169, 2010.

CORTESÃO, Luisa; STOER, S. *"Levantando a Pedra"*:da pedagogia inter/multicultural às políticas educacionais numa época de transnacionalização. Porto: Afrontamento, 1999.

FREITAS, Ana Lúcia Souza; MORAES, Salete Campos. *Contra o desperdício da experiência*: a Pedagogia do Conflito Revisitada.Porto Alegre: Redes Editora, 2009.

LÓPEZ, Luis Enrique. Trece claves para entender la interculturalidad en la educación latinoamericana. In: PRATS, Enric (Org.). *Multiculturalismo y Educación para la Equidad*. Barcelona: Octaedro-OEI, 2007.

MAGENDZO, Abraham. *Pensamiento e ideas-fuerza en la educación en derechos humanos en Iberoamerica Santiago (Chile)*. OIE-Chile; CREALC-UNESCO, 2009.

OLIVEIRA, Inês Barbosa de. *Boaventura e a Educação*. Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2006.

PEREZ GOMEZ, Angel. *A cultura escolar na sociedade neoliberal*. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas, 2001.

SANTOS, Boaventura Sousa. Para uma Pedagogia do Conflito; In: SILVA, Luis Heron da (Org.) *Novos mapas culturais, novas perspectivas educacionais*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 1996.

SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. *A construção multicultural da igualdade e da diferença*. Oficina do CES, nº 135, Centro de Estudos Sociais, Coimbra: janeiro, 1999. (documento de trabalho)

SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. *A gramática do tempo*: Para uma nova cultura política. São Paulo: Cortez, 2006.

SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa. Para além do Pensamento Abissal: das linhas globais a uma ecologia de saberes, In: SANTOS, Boaventura de Souza; MENESES, Maria Paula (Org.). *Epistemologias do Sul*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2010.

SEN, Amartya. O racha do multiculturalismo. *Folha de São Paulo*, Suplemento Mais. 17 de setembro de 2006.

SILVA, Luis Heron da (Org.). *Novos mapas culturais, novas perspectivas educacionais*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 1996.

STRECK, Danilo F. Qual o conhecimento que importa? Desafios para o currículo. *Currículos sem Fronteiras*, Porto Alegre, v.12, n.3, p. 8-24, set/dez 2012.

TUBINO, Fidel. La interculturalidad crítica como proyecto ético-político. In: Encuentro continental de educadores agustinos, Lima (Peru), enero 2005. *Anais…* Disponívelem: <http://oala.villanova.edu/congresos/educación/lima-ponen-02.html>. Acesso em: 7 ago. 2014.

TUBINO, Fidel; FLORES MORENO, Adhemir; NAVARRO, Vanessa. *Propuesta de Incorporación de la Interculturalidad en el Marco Curricular de la Educación Básica del Perú*. Lima: Ministerio de Educación, 2012. (documento de trabalho)

WALSH, Catherine. Interculturalidad y (de)colonialidad: Perspectivas críticas y políticas. In:Congreso da AssociationpourlaRechercheInterculturelle, 12. *Anais…* Florianópolis: UFSC, Brasil.[CD-ROM]. 2009a.

WALSH, Catherine. Interculturalidade Crítica e Pedagogia Decolonial: in-surgir, re-existir e re-viver. In: CANDAU, Vera Maria (Org.) *Educação Intercultural na América Latina*: entre concepções, tensões e propostas. Rio de Janeiro: 7 letras, 2009b.

NOTES

[1] Article originally published in Silva (1996). Thirteen years after its publication, Ana Lúcia Souza de Freitas and Salete Campos de Moraes (2009) organized a book entitled *Against the Waste of Experiences: Pedagogy of Conflict Revisited*, designed to explore various perspectives raised by the aforementioned text.

[2] In several instances in this paper we have opted for using the author's first name, as we consider it is better known and referred to in the social and academic fields, as proposed by Oliveira (2006, nota p. 9).

[3] This project was coordinated by Boaventura Sousa Santos between 1999 and 2001, was developed in six countries considered outside hegemonic social science production centers (Angola, South Africa, Brazil, Colombia, India and Portugal) and was designed to study alternatives to neoliberal globalization and global capitalism in different areas and themes. It generated a series of publications on the following topics: democratizing democracy: the paths of participative democracy"; "producing to survive: the paths of capitalist production"; "acknowledging for freeing: the paths of multicultural cosmopolitanism"; "sowing other solutions: the paths of biodiversity and rival knowledges"; "world voices" (narratives of militants in social movements) and "reinventing social emancipation" (global reflection on the project and its results. Boaventura does not define social emancipation in an abstract manner. For him, it may be related to subaltern group processes of resistance to hegemonic logic and of construction of alternatives that are born "under", on the other side of the abyssal line.

[4] For Santos (2006, p. 447) "*topoi* are rhetorical common places, albeit comprehensive, in a given culture". They work as assumptions of arguments that, because they are not discusses, given their evidence, make the production and exchange of arguments possible".