

The pandemic in everyday life: reflections on the social and psychological impacts in the light of a critical perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present a reflection on the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic on the everyday life of Brazilians from different social classes, cultures, and institutions, highlighting the increase in social inequalities aggravated by the context of the pandemic. Critical psychology was used as a theoretical support, in its power to guide and organize social practices aimed at the collective and favor the creation of public policies that are instituted as a tool for confronting and overcoming their current conditions. Particularly, it questions the role of school psychology in the context of the pandemic with the proposition of issues to be faced by the discipline, such as the expansion of threats that affect human development, the main object of action in the area. The text ends by highlighting the role of the environment, especially the school environment, in promoting the development of children and youths so that they can face these new threats, placing school psychology as central in this process and historical moment, in which it must commit to transform reality through collective and collaborative actions.

Keywords: Education; Public policies; School psychology; Social inequity.

Introducing the issue of the impact of the pandemic in everyday life requires focusing on two dimensions of the same issue: firstly, the relationship between scientific production and the economic, political, and health demands that influence people's concrete lives; and, secondly, the social inequalities to which people respond differently regarding the same demands – that may worsen depending on the contexts in which they live.

Scientific and technical activities have been guided by economic imperatives, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, when resources destined to strategic areas were directed to the development of societies in

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accordance with what was established as a priority for the implementation of government programs. These priorities are related to a country project where consumer goods, profit, militarization of science, disease control, and quality of life (of some, but not all) were defined. Thus, the sciences have been identified with an alleged development of the productive forces in the capitalist system. People who live from their work and set in motion the productive forces struggle to survive, without being able to enjoy the culture and art that result from human productions. The productive forces are a complex of social relations within which the neoliberal project is set in motion, exploiting and marginalizing large numbers of people (Bloch, 1980).

The role of science in the development of a country in a globalized world, which involves the dispute over patents and innovations, ends up placing it as a powerful tool for economic dispute, which is evidence of scientific non-neutrality. While scientific production seeks to respond to social demands, investment in science is directly related to capital gains. The current race for a vaccine is not happening because of the need to end the pandemic, but for the possibility of patenting and selling it in the international market. Thus, what results from this dispute is an unthinkable number of deaths worldwide and rich countries concentrating the possibilities of faster vaccination of their inhabitants.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the pandemic resulting from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), a disease that causes serious effects on the health of infected people and can lead to death. National and international mental health organizations have announced serious emotional and psychosocial consequences in the face of this unexpected event, especially after social distancing and isolation/lockdown measures affected the population's lifestyle.

For Castro-de-Araújo and Machado (2020), the pandemic affected people in different ways, but especially those with mental disorders such as stress due to the imminent risk of infection or economic uncertainty. Middle- or low-income people who are unable to stay at home and need to work to have money for food have been more exposed to contamination and death by the coronavirus.

In 2020, Getúlio Vargas Foundation presented data from a survey on the effects of the pandemic on the job market. It showed that the number of formal and informal jobs decrease by 20.1%, while social inequality measured by the Gini index increased by 2.82%. The income of the poorest strata fell by 27.9%, while the income of the richest 10% fell by 17.5%. The Indigenous, the illiterate, and youths between 20 and 24 years old were the social groups that lost the most income due to the pandemic. In addition to an average income fall, there was a reduction in the number of jobs, affecting women more directly, especially those who were unable to work from home. The impact is devastating for the poorest communities and problematizes effective democracy in the face of a reality such as the pandemic in relation to health in general and to mental health in particular (Neri, 2020).

Dimenstein et al. (2020) addressed the relationship between democracy, mental health, and the pandemic. In a striking way, they demonstrate that, in an unfair, unequal, and culturally heterogeneous country like Brazil, the challenge of defending life, at singular and collective levels, unfolds in a complex way, in the form of unfinished struggles in defense of public policies that can ensure health for all. In this scenario, health, education, work, and income policies are laid bare, and social inequality expands into unacceptable indicators, demonstrating how problematic the lack of control over the pandemic is, directly affecting hunger levels, the lack of dignity in their households, and the social exclusion resulting from educational exclusion.

In April 2021, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) presented the scenario of school exclusion in Brazil, which indicated that this issue is related to social class and skin color, showing the vulnerability of children and adolescents who live without access to the necessary infrastructure to remotely participate in educational activities (Fundo das Nações Unidas para a Infância, 2021). Although the universalization of basic education in Brazil has been determined since 2009 through the National Education Plan, the right to education is still not effective. Although the number of school-age children and adolescents out of Primary

Education decreased until 2019, this situation has intensified with the pandemic, showing that there is a high relationship between poverty and school exclusion – the data on the number of children not participating remote school activities indicate, above all, the absence of minimum infrastructure for accessing the platforms and the high unemployment levels of family members, situations that bring more adverse conditions to the everyday lives of children, especially hunger (Guzzo et al., 2021).

The pandemic scenario, with data collected from 2020 onwards, demonstrates the dimension of the Brazilian tragedy in relation to school exclusion and the immense difficulties that this social group, excluded from learning conditions, faces to recover more favorable learning conditions. At the end of the 2020 school year, 13.9% of children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 were out of school and without school activities, living in rural areas and in precarious conditions. School exclusion originates from social inequalities that are reproduced in schools; limitations collaborate for children and adolescents to stop studying. Given these data, the Unicef report presents some actions that can reduce the impact of the pandemic on education. It recommends to actively look after children and adolescents who are out of school, strengthening communication within the community through different media and social networks and the system of guarantee of rights with intersectoral mobilization of civil society and families. Educators will need to create other opportunities so that children and adolescents can value their studies again and return to school when the transmission of the virus is contained.

Castro-de-Araújo and Machado (2020) highlighted that one of the measures to contain the transmission of the virus in the pandemic, social isolation, is (in a contradictory way) related to many symptoms, being able to anticipate possible infections and generalized anxieties about their health conditions. Most people, according to these authors, will be impacted in some way by COVID-19 and it is necessary to build strategies to ensure people have access to medication, when needed, and counseling during the pandemic.

Professional associations should be more active in providing guidance on preventive measures to assist people with problems arising from insecurity, fear and concrete concerns generated by the pandemic. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic has had serious effects on the mental health of the population, because, in addition to individual contamination, it has a collective character – the spread and contamination by the virus exposed the weaknesses in public health and social protection across the globe. It exposed social inequality in the different dimensions of everyday life, housing conditions, employment and income weaknesses, and participation in remote educational activities. The public space becomes a space of insecurity, while self-segregation and isolation impact social routines and organizations.

Verztman and Romão-Dias (2020) point out that the impact of the pandemic is diverse and unequal, causing psychic suffering in the search for references and a secure position of subjective location in the world. This cannot be ignored, and it is in this context, in the face of so many complex issues and affects suffered by people (especially those most deprived of resources and with less access to cultural goods and their rights), that psychology as a science and as a social and professional practice gains even more relevance. What is the role of psychology as a scientific practice of knowledge production in the pandemic? What investigations from what theoretical and methodological perspectives can shed light on the new questions that arise in the field of childhood and adolescence protection, for example? What about promoting development? Does psychological science have knowledge capable of contributing to the research and practices demanded by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Reflecting on these questions with the aim of broadening the understanding of the role of school psychology is what is proposed in this article, from the perspective of these initial considerations that insert psychological science as a political field that is influenced by the capitalist mode of production, the neoliberalism

that it aims at the well-being of the few – generally the most economically privileged –, and as a practice that can contribute to overcoming the inequality of access to culture and rights by Brazilian citizens.

The role of psychology as a scientific practice in the pandemic

As pointed out earlier, scientific production is related to economic, political, and health demands that influence people's lives. With the pandemic, profound changes took place in people's private lives, especially in the context of families and work, which, over time became economic issues in many cases due to lack of employment or income. So, this serious health crisis that affected the world – and in a more profound way the less developed countries, such as Brazil –, is intensified with the addition of the economic and political crisis, profoundly changing the population's way of life, worsening the life of most Brazilians.

The sanitary, economic, and political crisis also starts to be configured as a crisis of scientific production, to be taken by the reduction of the budget destined to the development of studies, especially in the field of Human Sciences. As already stated, science, even if it is postulated as such, is not a field exempt from economic and political interests, but, on the contrary, is involved in disputes over innovations and patents, as in the case of vaccine production, which is deeply related to earnings and profit, made possible by the great demand of national and international markets (Santos, 2021).

It so happens that science remains focused on these goals while many lives are lost and countless others live all sorts of suffering caused by various losses, such as those of close and work people, uncertainty, fear of COVID-19 itself, anxiety, anguish, etc.

In the field of psychology, these questions turned up unexpectedly. There was no time to problematize them as a demand; the professionals were not able to put the investigations to be carried out and their possible results into perspective. It was necessary to act, and, in some fields of psychology, such as school psychology, for example, the dimensioning of the problems seemed difficult to be done, given that schools were closed and that it was impossible to access students, family members, and professionals. During the first half of 2020, it took a great effort from researchers and school psychology professionals to remotely access the subjects to whom their actions and investigations were directed, offering moments of listening, warmth, and reflections that favor the expansion of conscience and understanding, as Rosa (2001, p. 369, our translation) put, that "[...] for the worst things, we cannot close the door". However, recent studies were being designed and the persistence in carrying them out becomes a challenge, justified by the role that education assumes in human development.

Education as a guarantee or deprivation of rights: the role of school psychology

It all starts in school. This is where you discover your dreams, this is where you discover the profession you want to have. You have an education at home and when you get here you come across different people, with different dreams, with different opinions, and then you create your own opinion, a dream of your own. So, this is where we have to be inspired, willing to come here, and often nobody does (Ale, 15 years old, resident of the outskirts of a big city, high school student (2nd grade), talking about the importance of school in a reflection proposal, in 2019. This research approved by the Research Ethics Committee of PUC-Campinas – Opinion nº 3778613/2019).

The above statement, by a young woman fictitiously named Ale, a high school student at a school on the outskirts of a large city in the countryside of the state of São Paulo, almost defines the role of the school and points out school education as a guarantee of rights – a right, however, that it needs to be better dimensioned and reflected, in order to become effective as being within the reach of all youths in the

country, and not just those from the most privileged strata of the population; this right as a way to overcome inequality and not its perpetuation (Souza, 2019).

Ale expresses the importance of the school in building the future of youths in this country, as a place of inspiration, birth of dreams and visualization of possibilities, but which, according to her own point of view, has not been constituted in this way, since students no longer want to go to school. In this sense, educational opportunities that are, according to Carneiro (2011, p. 92, our translation), “[...] the main asset for social mobility in the country”, were no longer guaranteed, even before the pandemic.

At the same time as the student’s statement, another 16-year-old student from the same school stated that when she met with the psychologists, they reflected on the possibilities of a career, work, and study, she was very excited and confident about the future, but when she arrived in class, she felt her confidence slipping, either because she did not understand what the teachers taught or because of the frequent speeches of these professionals, saying that the students did not try hard enough and would not achieve anything in life.

Here, another example emerges that the school can annihilate intellectual confidence by lowering the self-esteem of youths, especially black individuals, living on the outskirts of large cities, by denying them the condition of “subjects of knowledge” – a process that, according to Ribeiro (2019), would be analogous to what Boaventura de Souza Santos calls “epistemicide”, which refers to the subordination of knowledge that does not belong to dominant epistemologies. It results from attempts to silence, invalidate, and make non-hegemonic knowledge invisible. However, it is Carneiro’s (2005) reference to this phenomenon that best applies to what we want to draw attention to in this article. The author says that, in addition to invalidating the knowledge of subjugated peoples, culture is also invalidated by the denial of access to education, especially quality education.

This is the main concern of the authors in relation to the development of youths deprived of access and mastery of complex knowledge: having their possibilities of developing superior psychological functions harmed in the face of the non-appropriation of formal, schooled knowledge, capable of promoting new relationships between functions, which favor the expansion of awareness necessary for critical thinking possible through the mastery of scientific concepts (Friedrich, 2012). This appropriation process is made unfeasible precisely by the impossibility of relating to its historical consciousness and by the non-exercise of its place of speech, occupied by the dominant epistemologies, and it is understood that the main object of action of school psychology resides here, which marks its commitment with future generations and their ethical-political role in the formation/construction of a more just and egalitarian society.

This dialectical dimension that school education assumes in the development of the subject, promoting or preventing social mobility, makes school psychology scholars place educational institutions in a privileged place regarding inequality or its overcoming, to the perpetuation of social injustices or the achievement of equal rights. What is the space in the curricula for the cultural diversity present in the history of each subject? How to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents when curricula and practices are organized by content, methods, and strategies derived from hegemonic cultures, defending that only one perspective is the correct one and trying to make students have the same objective?

It is precisely these rights, already questioned by high school students in 2019, who suffered a major setback with the social isolation imposed by the pandemic in 2020. An example is what happened in the state education network of the state of São Paulo, which serves an immense majority of youths aged 13 to 18 in the country, characterizing itself as the largest public education network in Brazil, with about 4 million students, 250 thousand teachers and 5 thousand educational institutions: when realizing that closing schools would take longer than expected, those responsible for organizing these at the government level took some time to define what would be done in public education and how it would be done.

The emergency strategies made available by government officials proved to be ineffective in favoring the continuity of teaching and learning curricular contents, both in terms of the actions of teachers and students, which has resulted in the exhaustion of teachers who see students “disappear” from the remote channels despite their efforts to keep them studying, and from the students who, realizing that they cannot learn the way the classes are held, abandon them and show no willingness to return. Thus, as a consequence of the pandemic, the country has the greatest school dropout rates of its history (Oliveira et al., 2021).

What is the contribution of school psychology to this context?

Resuming the actions that school psychology has proposed as a way of acting in schools, which overcome the still hegemonic view of psychology as an adaptive practice and which aim to adapt behaviors and relationships to school curricula and norms (Guzzo et al., 2010; Moysés & Colares, 2013), it is worth noting that these proposals for actions called criticisms are based on the defense that the psychologist should focus on school relationships, having as a principle respect for the subjects’ personal history, creating conditions for cooperation as a way of facing challenges with a view to the protagonism of the participants in these relationships and in the movement to transform their realities.

However, what has been observed is that the fact of conceiving the performance in school psychology from this perspective does not guarantee the possibility of carrying it forward, since the adhesion of the school actors to the proposals and their involvement in the construction of it is a permanent challenge, involving the formation of bonds of trust with educators, students, managers, and the community, which is only effective through a dialogue that has the intention of explaining psychological practices and their objectives and the negotiation of meanings in the face of what is sought and expected in the school context (Souza, 2016). In this regard, Andrada et al. (2019, p. 7, own translation) state that:

It is necessary to explain the difference between these practices – which aim at relationships, affection, the development of the subject – and teaching practices, which also aim at development, but through the appropriation of formal, disciplinary, and coexistence knowledge. The explanation of the difference in intentions between these two forms of action is the first step to make the partnership between educators and psychologists possible. It is a process of permanent construction because questioning, resistance, and contradictions are constituents of relationships and must be welcomed and reflected upon when one intends to develop a praxis.

These challenges (posed to school psychology before the pandemic) become more complex with the need for remote contact with the public to which their actions are intended, paralyzed with the closing of schools, leaving professionals temporarily out of their field of action, making it impossible for face-to-face interactions, so fundamental to the actions of psychologists. It was also necessary to reinvent practices, modes of action, and create ways to access managers, teachers, and students. The actions already planned for 2020 and 2021 had to be completely reformulated, and more than a year after the closing of schools, psychologists were still struggling with the challenges of access and permanence of professionals and students in remote meetings.

However, of all the challenges faced, what causes the greatest discomfort is a certain feeling of impotence in the face of the scenarios observed in the various Brazilian institutions, which demands a reflection beyond psychological practices, questioning psychology itself as a science and the necessary advances to be made regarding the understanding and construction of knowledge that support political action in the face of social demands resulting from the historical inequalities of this country, torn wide open by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

With regard to the role of school psychology in this context, professionals in the field have invested in understanding the impacts of the pandemic on the development of children, youths, and education professionals, understanding that they can bring to light the expressions of these subjects in order to develop and propose actions and policies capable of mitigating the effects of social isolation, the threat to physical and psychological health caused by the disease or lack of food, housing, and work. In short, it is a matter of assuming the commitment to mobilize knowledge and people for access to the rights that they are guaranteed in the Constitution and to national and local programs and policies.

Here is one of the directions that answers the questions presented at the beginning of this topic: it is up to school psychology the commitment to fight for the guarantee of the rights of children and youths who attend public basic education in the country, listening and prioritizing their demands and needs – especially the affective ones.

The dimension that affections and emotions assumed in the pandemic constitutes a challenge to the actions of school psychology and not only to the health or clinical areas, the fields whose professionals were the first to speak up at the beginning of the pandemic, offering booklets, guidelines, and even therapy for coping with the suffering that was established mostly in families.

As already stated, school dialogue as a form of relationship in the construction of what is collective-collaborative favors the negotiation of senses and meanings and the elaboration of affections. We are talking about dialogue understood as a space for speaking and listening – and, at this moment of the pandemic, perhaps more of listening to the psychologist –, since we do not know the impacts of what has been experienced in and by the subjects. However, the way of contacting people has changed – now everyone is in a different place; places that set boundaries and limits, sometimes, the possibilities of expression of each subject, and the school psychologist needs to take this into account.

Bearing in mind that the role of the school psychologist is that of a mediator – above all, a mediator of affections, as stated by Souza (2016, p. 89, own translation), when seeking to explain the role of the school psychologist:

The psychologist “does not teach” at school; on the contrary, he learns and apprehends the senses and meanings that circulate in relationships and “promotes reflection” on them, assuming the role of a “mediator of affections,” understood as a way of living, feeling, perceiving reality, using appropriate knowledge, strategies, and techniques [...].

It seems that in the face of the difficulties posed to the psychologist’s actions as a result of the closing of schools, social isolation, the uncertainty that begins to permeate everyday lives, among others that have changed people’s routines, these professionals are forced to go back in their positions, which requires a posture of estrangement from reality that leads them to the need to listen and reflect, in order to find ways to develop the actions that are being constructed as psychology practices at school.

This movement, which was already on the horizon of critical school psychology and present in some of its actions, gains strength in the pandemic, taking professionals to the deepest layers of social inequality, almost forgotten by society and science (including psychology), forcing them to face the individuals who suffer, especially in the current government, simultaneously, the “erasure/abandonment” and the threat of loss of historical achievements, as is the case of Indigenous peoples.

In order to problematize the challenges that still persist to the performance of psychology in educational contexts, especially in distant locations, inhabited by communities that still claim their rights to education and development, the testimonies of two teachers about the experience of the pandemic by the communities in

which they live, collected as part of a study with Indigenous teachers to investigate their perceptions about changes in culture.

It is believed that, even though it is an educational context, which could be taken as issues approaching the field of education, the expression of subjects manifests through suffering, the conflicts experienced in cultural relations transformed overnight, the curtailment of the freedom of collective meetings so essential to culture; finally, their expressions reveal the obstacles to a healthy development, the appropriation of knowledge and the possibilities of overcoming precarious living conditions. It is, as observed below, about ethical-political suffering, with which psychology has much to contribute, insofar as it manages to intervene in the contexts and favor the awareness of the subjects about their living conditions and of the possibilities of overcoming issues. In the case discussed here, this challenge is being posed to the school psychologist in order to broaden the reflection on their role in moments of crisis, but, above all, demonstrating that historical-cultural psychology has much to contribute to the understanding of this context.

Challenges of School Psychology in acting in different contexts: the demands of Indigenous subjects

According to a survey released by the *Instituto Brasileiro de Pesquisa e Estatística* (IBGE, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) in April 2020, the state of Roraima has the second highest number of Indigenous locations among all states in Brazil. There are 587 Indigenous communities among the total of 7,103 existing in Brazil, the ranking being led by the state of Amazonas, with 2,602 communities. The survey data were anticipated, according to the IBGE, to promote actions to combat COVID-19 with Indigenous peoples. However, like the other Brazilian states, Roraima took a long time to implement practices to prevent and combat the virus, having its population affected with many deaths, and its public health structure facing great difficulties to meet the number of infected. Many of the loss of life took place in Indigenous communities, leaving them orphans of their leaders, so important to the maintenance of these communities, and making different Indigenous populations grief.

These questions became part of a postdoctoral paper (in progress since 2019) being conducted in the State of Roraima, in which one of the authors of this article develops a study to investigate the perception of Indigenous teachers about the changes in their culture and how they perceive these changes in their pedagogical practices and in the students' development and learning.

With the onset of the crisis as a result of the pandemic, we sought to understand its impact on people who live in community and for whom social isolation could bring a lot of suffering and demand psychological actions when fighting it. Thus, conversations were planned with some of the research participants to specifically address their experiences and perceptions of the pandemic. The two testimonies presented below come from this movement, from two teachers who insisted on maintaining the identity of the ethnic group to which they belong. The two teachers teach at an Indigenous state school in the Guariba community, in the municipality of Amajari, in the state of Roraima.

Some considerations about the experience of the pandemic by Indigenous subjects: an analysis from the perspective of cultural-historical psychology

For Vygotsky (2010), an author whose concepts have subsidized the work and investigations in school psychology of the authors of this article, the environment is a condition for the development of the subject, since it is in the relationship with other humans that the appropriation of culture takes place, mediated by

language above all. The possibility of new relationships between higher psychological functions resides in the school, a space in which subjects appropriate complex knowledge, resulting in superior qualities of thought and actions that have repercussions on the understanding of themselves and the world.

These meanings, which have been important in the construction of foundations for the actions that have been developed in educational contexts, lead the authors to question the impact of changes in the environment, understood by Vygotsky (2010), eminently as a social aspect, on the development and way of life of subjects – in this case, Indigenous people – who live in distant locations and whose culture is collective-collaborative at its core. What happened to these subjects during the pandemic, when they were prevented from meeting members of other communities – a vital activity in their constitution and survival process?

The lessons were suspended due to the pandemic, and a new strategy for teaching school content, remotely, was invented. The parents accepted it, as they saw the news, were aware of the pandemic and the risks it could bring to their own lives. Immediately, our community was scared, classes were suspended by the Department of Distance Learning and *tuxaua* (community leader), suspended community meetings and *ajuris* (collective/communitarian labor). Everything was different, it was extremely fast, there is no way not to be worried. There were many new things to do, wearing masks, avoiding crowds, and not visiting colleagues, there was a lot going on! The concerns were getting bigger, there is also concern about people going from the city to the community and vice versa. So, all monitoring was carried out at the beginning, but as time went by, the community could no longer escape the disease, and then the suffering increased. It seemed that we were somewhere else, without the day-to-day contact with people, there were hours, minutes, I do not know, it was as if we were not there, in our community, in our reality. We need to see people, to be with people. We are silent, but we speak with silence too, but we need to be together, because sometimes the other responds in silence too, we do things without saying a word, but together, with the help of each other, always (Teacher 1 – Taurepang ethnicity).

We do not intend to analyze the situation experienced by the Indigenous people interviewed, which is beyond the scope of this article, but to justify (based on two testimonies of Indigenous teachers, who are very important members of their communities, given the respect given to their role) the need to invest in school psychology actions that reach this population that, as stated in the testimonies, experience a lot of suffering. It is also important to highlight the relevance of cultural-historical psychology in understanding the phenomena manifested by the teachers, which characterize the way of living the everyday life in Indigenous communities and the suffering that affected their members during the pandemic.

If the environment, understood as eminently social, according to Vygotsky (2010), is fundamental in the constitution and survival of human subjects, in the case of Indigenous communities, as the name implies, this dimension of the collective assumes even greater relevance. Analyzing this issue requires a better definition of what is understood as collective from the perspective of cultural-historical psychology: it is a historical phenomenon, whose bases are based on ontology itself, which conceives man as its own social construct, giving him the gregarious dimension as constitutive of personality. However, the fact of living in a group does not guarantee a form of collective life, because:

The factor that transforms the group into a collectivity is the joint activity of its members, a socially significant activity that responds, at the same time, to the demands of society and the interests of the personality, thus overcoming the contradiction between the individual and the group (Petrovsky, 1984, p. 8).

It is possible to observe this characteristic of the collective in the speech of Teacher 1, when she refers to the condition of being apart from the members of the community in the pandemic: it is as if she is not in the community; that is, it is not possible to recognize oneself in that context by living alone, without the other's presence. This is because, as she herself says, in Indigenous communities everything is done together,

and in doing things together, identities/personalities are constituted as collective, incorporating the other's feelings, desires, and goals, as they come together to develop socially significant activities, whose collective nature presupposes the achievement of the common good.

Idea of the common as a concept was postulated by Espinosa (1957), the author who inspired Vygotsky in the understanding of affectivity as a mobilizing power of the subject's actions and thoughts. However, for Vygotsky (2010), the power of life does not affect the individual, but it needs the other to strengthen itself, because it is in this union that the strength to exist, to act, to overcome adverse conditions is established. It is, therefore, a collective that has the political as a conscious participation at its core. In this sense, Espinosa's (1957) idea of common does not concern the purposes of the group's actions, but the desires and affections that move its members.

This seems to be the idea that Teacher 1's testimony reveals when mentioning the other's strength in relationships: it is not even necessary to express oneself through speech, their presence is enough – a presence that speaks. So, the other person is a condition for her to feel that she belongs to the group, for her to identify and affirm her personality.

Still on the other's absence in relationships, it is possible to consider the weight that the changes assumed when taking the measures to contain the virus. Everything changed and fear was instituted as a result of the uncertainties that began to permeate the everyday life of the community. This social dimension that constitutes the subjects, makes them feel welcome, distributes the weight of fear, recognizes desires, differentiates them while identifying them, it seems to reveal the different foci of the school psychologist's work as a professional who turns to the collective and aims at the collaborative (Andrada et al., 2019).

This dimension of the collective and how the breakdown of relationships between community members generated negative feelings also appears in Teacher 2's testimony. The distant others as their responsibility as well. What can be seen in his expression is the manifestation of a critical awareness of the living conditions and characteristics of his people.

Oh my, the orientation was to stay home, and we really did. Physical activities were just our household chores. Everyone was very worried, really scared. [...] We did not have psychological support, but it would be good if we had, because we had several losses. When a voice is silent, the person takes the knowledge of learning from her life, in that, she takes what only she learned from our culture, from our people, from our struggles, and then, there is a hole, I don't know how the next community meetings are going to be without the people who died [...] Fear is the most present feeling in the community and it is the worst of all! Of going to school and getting infected or infecting someone with more difficulty than me. Fear of not being able to leave the household, it is bad, being locked home. Can you imagine an Indigenous person stuck at home? This virus came to eliminate people with low immunity, and many Indigenous peoples are on this list, especially those who live further away from the municipalities, there in the mountains, in the most distant communities (Teacher 2, Macuxi ethnicity).

The fear mentioned by the teacher seems paralyzing and, according to Espinosa (1957), it is. This is because its nature is negative, and, for the philosopher, negative affects do not generate power of action and make people suffer. In other words, there is nothing that can be done to change the affect and generate power of action. In the case of the reported situation, the conditions created to prevent the spread of the virus prevented people from meeting, getting together, or *ajuris* to solve their problems – precisely the ways they have always known as a way of life. They had to be, act, and think alone – even in their professions, where teaching is basically done with handouts, in the form of activities carried out and returned, without face-to-face contact. And this other person's non-presence allows us to understand why fear, for Teacher 2, is the worst of feelings.

Also, because it – the fear – relates to members of more distant communities, whose immunity is fragile in relation to the diseases of non-Indigenous people. What is possible when, as Rosa (2001, p. 369, own translation) says “[...] our arm is not long enough to close the door”?

In the initial part of this article, attention was drawn to the effects of the pandemic on people’s mental health by exposing weaknesses in public health and social protection, and this threat to life dimension, in the case of Indigenous communities, is much more evident, causing so many changes in everyday life and impacting, above all, the community character that is part of Indigenous culture, manifested by the encounters within the community and with neighboring peoples. In other words, the community character as a fundamental identity trait of the culture is compromised and starts to be experienced as a space of insecurity, and isolation impacts the routines that govern life (Verztman & Romão-Dias, 2020).

The question that emerges when trying to understand the senses and meanings expressed in the testimonials of the Indigenous teachers is, again, related to the contribution of school psychology: can their knowledge and practices address these problems? Are they able to shed light on the suffering, demands, and needs of these peoples? In this moment of a pandemic, what do you have to offer as a field of practice and research?

It is necessary to recognize that there is a long way to go towards a more effective approximation of the issues that intersect the life and culture of Indigenous populations in order to understand their processes in the production of meaning and constitution of life and its development. However, it is thought that, at the moment, it is possible to denounce, to question what has been instituted, aiming at the adaptation and maintenance of the social order, and this is done by listening and making the expressions of their life characteristics, values, beliefs, desires, affections, fears, anxieties, and dreams. It is about offering space for them to exercise their rights as citizens, understood as political rights, to participate in a society that is not outside, alongside, above, or below them, but integrates them and everyone else, as its members, constituting them while it constitutes all the participants of society. In other words, these peoples matter not because they originally inhabited this land or because they are our ancestors, but because they are part of all of us, of everyone’s history, of humanity.

School psychology in a critical perspective, which is supposed to be engaged, must have a commitment to the promotion of awareness – and this is what is sought at this moment in which we are experiencing an unprecedented crisis due to a pandemic that, in the case of Brazil, still seems a long way from the end.

Conclusion

If there is something that needs to be highlighted in an article that intends to present the contributions of school psychology from a critical perspective to the problem of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, it is the view of individuals that this perspective defends: they are at the center of their actions, conceived as a whole, integrated into the physical and social environment in which their development takes place. From this perspective, it is up to psychology to understand the impacts that the environment produces on development to propose ways of acting and approaching in order to enable the confrontation of the problems that threatens mental health, well-being and, above all, the learning of subjects, a dimension that anticipates development by promoting it. Hence the importance of school education regarding spaces for coexistence among equals, with the diversity of subjects, values, and cultures, and in the appropriation of formal knowledge, promoting the development of complex psychological functions that favor critical thinking and becoming aware.

In order to master their own lives through the understanding of its conditions, individuals need to be able to think in a more expanded way, understanding the reasons for their current and past living conditions

and visualizing their future possibilities. This understanding implies all the others in their relationships, with whom they share and produce new meanings, in a dynamic and permanent process characteristic of lived lives.

It is this look at the subject inserted in and with the collective, acting in a cooperative way and, therefore, with the transforming potential of himself and others, that it is believed that psychology can act in a way to contribute to overcoming the crisis installed by the pandemic – above all, school psychology, which takes the promotion of the development of subjects as the object of its actions. It can draw the attention of psychologists, educators, social workers and other professionals who are responsible for caring for individuals, in addition to public administrators, for the extremely harmful effects that social isolation, closed schools, lack of knowledge, and, above all, school abandonment and evasion can bring to children and youths in this country - damage that some specialists, especially in the economic area, believe as irrecoverable, but that professionals who work in school psychology consider fully possible to invest and overcome, just needing the commitment of government officials in the creation of public policies and emergency actions aimed at this population.

Contributors

R. S. L. GUZZO contributed to the conception and design of this study. V. L. T. SOUZA contributed to the analysis and interpretation of data and discussion of the results. Á. L. M. C. M. FERREIRA contributed to reviewing and approving the final version of the article in the language of publication, according to the journal's publication standards.

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