

POVERTY CRIMINALIZATION IN SCHOOL TERRITORY

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ABSTRACT

The article is the result of analysis of intervention research conducted in an educational establishment located in a peripheral region of the city of Rio de Janeiro and presents reflections on the daily life of Brazilian public schools, analyzing the possible intersections between the demands presented and the poverty criminalization existing in society. It is important to understand how Psychology can act despite school demands in order not to contribute to the context of exclusion and criminalization experienced by students from the lower classes. The intervention is a bet that deviates from the logic of individualization, blaming and judicialization of school life. As a result, the study provided the creation of spaces for reflection for students, allowing analysis of school routine and their experience in society, aiming at the construction of a process of autonomy and inventiveness of young people.

Keywords: School psychology; social problems; adolescents.

Procesos de criminalización de la pobreza en el territorio escolar

RESUMEN

El artículo es efecto de análisis de investigación-intervención realizada en un establecimiento educacional, localizado en región periférica de la ciudad de Rio de Janeiro y presenta reflexiones acerca del cotidiano de las escuelas públicas brasileñas, analizando las posibles intersecciones entre las demandas presentadas y el proceso de criminalización de la pobreza existente en curso en la sociedad. Se juzga importante comprender de qué forma la Psicología puede actuar frente a las demandas escolares a fin de no contribuir con el contexto de exclusión y criminalización vivenciados por discentes derivadas de las camadas populares. Se apuesta en una forma de intervención que se aleje de las lógicas de individualización, culpabilidad y judicialización de la vida escolar. Como resultado, el estudio proporcionó la creación de espacios de reflexión a los estudiantes, posibilitando análisis del cotidiano escolar y de su vivencia en sociedad, visando la construcción de un proceso de autonomía e investividad de los jóvenes.

Palabras clave: Psicología escolar; problemas sociales; adolescentes.

Processos de criminalização da pobreza no território escolar

RESUMO

O artigo é efeito de análises de pesquisa-intervenção realizada em um estabelecimento educacional, localizado em região periférica da cidade do Rio de Janeiro e apresenta reflexões acerca do cotidiano das escolas públicas brasileiras, analisando as possíveis interseções entre as demandas apresentadas e o processo de criminalização da pobreza existente em curso na sociedade. Julga-se importante compreender de que forma a Psicologia pode atuar frente às demandas escolares a fim de não contribuir com o contexto de exclusão e criminalização vivenciado por discentes oriundos das camadas populares. Aposta-se em uma forma de intervenção que se afaste das lógicas de individualização, culpabilização e judicialização da vida escolar. Como resultado, o estudo proporcionou a criação de espaços de reflexão aos estudantes, possibilitando análise do cotidiano escolar e da sua vivência em sociedade, visando a construção de um processo de autonomia e inventividade dos jovens.

Palavras-chave: Psicologia Escolar; problemas sociais; adolescentes.

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INTRODUCTION

This article describes the production of knowledge that emerges from the intervention research “Psychology and criminalization of poverty in schools: history, reflections and analysis of school daily life”², whose objective was to analyze the discourses produced at school that help criminalize students belonging to popular classes of society.

The research was conducted in a municipal school, located in a region considered to be peripheral in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In this space, during 2017, group meetings and individual interviews were held with students who were identified by the educational establishment as ‘having’ some “problem” related to behavior, low school performance and other issues inherent to life school.

It was sought through the activities carried out to map the relations between the actors belonging to the space - students, teachers, management and pedagogical coordination. In an institution marked by crystallized practices, we sought to provide a field of reflection for young people, in which they could reflect on their experience at school and in society, differentiating them from the way of being a “problem student”.

Thus, we analyzed the presence of practices and discourses that help the exclusion and stigmatization of students. In these meetings, statements were made that justified the “inappropriate” behavior of students based on their way of living in society; sometimes they found in the family and in the neighborhood the reasons for the questions presented in the space.

Although the research was conducted in a public school in Rio de Janeiro, a municipality that has particularities in its dynamics of functioning, the events experienced in this space are not limited to isolated facts, which would occur only in school units in this city. It is believed that the situations presented throughout this article are related to how society operates and can be perceived in a similar way in other school units spread across the country. In this sense, this text does not intend to blame the actors that make up public schools.

The problems faced are part of a much larger network, which goes beyond the walls of educational institutions. These facts are the result of a political, economic and social project, which aim to maintain the context of precarious public education and the withdrawal of rights of the less wealthy population in the country (Bicalho, 2013).

²The research is registered with the Ethics Committee of the Philosophy and Human Sciences Center of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, under the number CAAE: 69372617.0.0000.5582.

In turn, it is necessary to analyze the action of psychology in maintaining the framework of criminalization and exclusion experienced by students from the lower classes in schools (Melsert & Bicalho, 2012). Recognizing that this area of knowledge has a history of contribution to the construction and legitimization of individualizing, pathologizing, criminalizing and psychologism-filled discourses (as intimacies) when understanding school demands is a powerful way of analyzing praxis in space (Cassal, Gonzalez, & Bicalho, 2011).

Education professionals are required to create new ways of inhabiting the territory, which must offer society mechanisms capable of rethinking its functioning (Bortolini et al., 2014). Therefore, contributions of psychology are considered important so that this area becomes an ally of educators for the construction of a space that is for everyone. For that, it will be necessary to work in a collective, dismantling the specialist knowledge that historically makes up the field.

Thus, it is necessary to understand the relationships that constitute the functioning of educational institutions and the context of criminalization of poverty in society (Decotelli, Cunha, & Bicalho, 2016), with the purpose of avoiding the production of speeches aimed at blaming individuals who are on the “school ground”, as teachers, principals, pedagogical coordinators. These are daily struggling, within their means, to build a quality public education, even though they live with countless difficulties to carry out their work. In addition, reductionist analysis of the students’ way of life are avoided.

Thus, it is intended in this space to give visibility to the reflections of young people about the territory they occupy daily. It is believed that, listening to their demands, carrying out provocations regarding the way the school institution operates and the space in which they live are effective ways of contributing to the affirmation of the power of these individuals, so that such provocations enable the formation of instruments to conceive themselves as reflective, inventive and autonomous subjects.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology chosen for the research originates from a form of intervention based on the cartography method, from which the construction of know-how is understood as monitoring processes, taking into account subjectivity as a procedural category and affirming our place of not-knowing about another who constantly reinvents him/herself.

“Cartography is a method formulated by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, which aims to monitor a process and not represent an object. Generally speaking,

it is always a matter of investigating a production process” (Kastrup, 2009, p. 32). This form of research breaks with the conception of modern science based on a positivist principle, which aims to separate the subject and the object of knowledge through supposed scientific neutrality.

The “cartographic researcher” when inhabiting a territory, finds hardened processes that constitute the field to be researched (Kastrup, 2009). From dwelling that space, it becomes possible to know how the force fields that crystallize the relationships and the way the place works are organized. Thus, it is required that the cartographer actively participates in the territory, through a sensitivity when looking at the facts, being affected by the events experienced there and by relating equally with the actors that make up the environment. It is understood that the research process requires the construction of an inventive and participatory methodology. From the analysis of the implications of the processes experienced in the territory, it is proposed to create new ways of inhabiting the field.

Thus, the construction of an intervention in psychology in the school environment - which aimed to research the speeches that help criminalize the poverty of students belonging to the popular classes - was intended enable potentializing meetings for individuals. These provided small movements capable of breaking relations crystallized by the school institution and by the scenario of inequalities experienced by young people in society. For this, individual interviews and group meetings were held with students from the teaching unit during school hours.

In the first moment, individual interviews were carried out with semi-structured questions, with the objective of gathering information about the students’ lives and providing a welcoming space. Then, eleven group meetings were held to discuss issues present in the school routine and the experience of young people in society. The themes presented at the meetings were chosen based on the speeches of the participants, using devices such as dynamics, texts and reports, which represented attractive tools for youth and provided a field for reflection and questioning.

In this way, group work proved to be a space capable of producing deindividualization, collectivizing the demands of individuals, listening, welcoming and inventiveness, in which we bet on the legitimation of all ways of being and being in the world. In addition, the study was based on the analysis of the field diaries produced during the meetings and the speeches of the actors that make up the space, so it is understood the need to provide in this text a participatory writing, in which the authors integrate all the reported process,

describing their reflections and perceptions about the investigated field.

Participants

When the research proposal was presented to the pedagogical team and the teachers of the teaching unit, the employees were asked to draw up a list of students within the desired profile for participation in the study. The list totaled 13 students, who were in the 13-15-year-old age group; of these, eight are boys and five are girls, mostly blacks, residents of slums.

Most of the participants, in their school trajectory, had experience of failing, dropping out, behavior “problems” and referrals to the Child Care Council. Because they had this school record, some students belonged to an accelerating class in the educational institution: nine participants studied in this teaching modality. Accordingly, there were students enrolled in the sixth and seventh grade of elementary school. In this sense, activities were organized at a common time between them, so that everyone could participate.

Because they came from referrals from professionals in the teaching unit, students showed initial resistance to the research. Thus, it was necessary to create strategies capable of explaining the objective of the study. In the first contact, a conversation was held, using group devices, which worked as facilitators for the explanation of possible doubts that might arise in relation to the research. The moment was conceived so that an invitation to participate in the research could be carried out, that is why we tried to maintain a horizontality in this communication, in order that the young people feel free to ask any questions, without any interruption or judgment.

During the dialogue it was necessary to explain the role of the university in society - some students did not know what was being done in that space; how was the form of access, for example - explain what was done in a survey; what was psychology; how a psychologist could act in the school context; among other issues. At all times, it was evident that participation was spontaneous and that they could stop doing it at any time. All received authorization from their parents to participate in this research.

The inhabited territory

To start reflecting on the process of criminalization of poverty in schools, it is necessary to present elements of the field investigated, such as information on the dynamics of the educational institution, the history of the neighborhood, the difficulties experienced by its residents, the current scenario of Education in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, among other issues found in a dense territory and full of singularities. The report

described below, recorded in a research field diary of the author, describes the conversation with a teacher at the educational institution and reveals particularities about the researched territory:

I waited for the final bell and talked to the teacher in order to present the research, get to know her point of view about the students sent to participate in the research and learn more information about the school operation. The professional showed to be tired and exhausted, however she was very helpful during the conversation, which was very cathartic. She has been a school employee for twenty-seven years ... she considers that she works with students who live in hostile territory, who do not live in a 'culture of peace'. The students recognize that there is no 'culture of peace' there and end up reproducing it within the classroom. She has to intervene at all times so that students do not put themselves at social risk. Her aim is to show students that she is not a discipline figure, she does not want to be rigid, she wants to be side by side with them. However, they must consider her as a respectful figure. She believes it is very complicated to work with her class, she needs to intervene in conflict resolution at all times. She works all the time with the purpose of 'putting out fires'. She seeks to encourage them to resolve their issues in peace, because there is something that comes from them and makes them hostile to each other. They are always restless, they cannot stop quiet in their place, they provoke each other at all times. In this space, all students are victims and perpetrators of bullying, they provoke themselves all the time, they like to "make fun" ... for the research, students were chosen who most disrespected the rules of social interaction, but for the professional the work could be conducted with all students of the class in which she works (Research field diary, Apr 11, 2017).

The teaching unit is one of the 1016 municipal elementary schools that, in 2017, were part of the municipal public education network in the city of Rio de Janeiro, alongside 518 units of early childhood education (SME-RJ, 2019). At a structural level, it can be considered a medium-sized school unit, with 700 students distributed in 20 classes of early childhood and elementary education. It operates in two school shifts; the first shift, comprises the hours from 07h30min to 12h30min and the second shift, from 13h to 17h30 min.

The educational institution is located close to the Cidade Alta Complex, in the Cordovil neighborhood, a region belonging to the suburb of Leopoldina, north of Rio de Janeiro. According to data from the Human

Development Index (IBGE, 2010), among the 126 neighborhoods in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, the Cordovil neighborhood ranks 98, with an HDI of 0.791, with a life expectancy of 68.32 years and R\$ 290.49 per capita income, while the Gávea neighborhood, located in the south of the city, ranks first on the list, with an HDI of 0.970, with a life expectancy of 80.45 years and a per capita income of R\$ 2139.56. The data show the existing inequality in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Cidade Alta emerged as a housing complex built on top of a small hill, within the slum eradication project carried out by the federal and state government in the 1960s and 1970s. The Complex is formed by the Cidade Alta housing complexes, located in the central regio , Porto Velho - known as "Pé Sujo" - and Vista-Mar - known as "Bancários" -, in addition to five slums: Divineia, Pica-Pau, Serra Pelada, Chega Mais and Avilã, which were built on the elevations, on the margins of the complexes. The local population is estimated at 23 thousand inhabitants, according to the City Hall of Rio de Janeiro, or 40 thousand, according to the residents' association. The performance of groups linked to the retail drug trade and the increase in violence in the area, as opposed to the atmosphere of tranquility presented until the early 1980s, is the main factor responsible for the slum character of Cidade Alta (Brum, 2011).

Slums, peripheries, communities in social vulnerability, places where poor people live, do not receive investments from the State on an equal basis like other regions of cities. Investments are lacking in essential areas, such as health, education, housing, lighting, among other services. This situation can be observed in the speech of a school student, a participant in the research, when asked about what could be changed in the locality: "*Change Cidade Alta for the better, because it is bad. Mayor is missing, it's his fault. There have been few buses circulating up there, they have to pave the streets, the holes up there*" (D., 15 years old).

In addition to the lack of investment in infrastructure, residents live with the high levels of violence in the region. Currently, the Cidade Alta Complex is marked by intense shootings caused by the dispute over the control of the retail drug trade between rival groups, in addition to constant police operations, which aim to repress trafficking in the region, to cause a supposed sense of security to society. Often students in the teaching unit have their lives altered due to violence: classes are canceled when gunfights occur, which prevents hundreds of students from accessing school. The situation can be verified through the dialogue recorded between two students during a group meeting:

[L., 14 years old:] *Like the teacher, the principal,*

knowing that there will be a war³, how will she start class? There we go, we are here at school and the shooting starts again? [B., 14 years old:] But this has already happened here. At the time of leaving, there was a shootout, a bullet back and forth and the teacher held us. [L., 14:] Are you going to lose your life because of school? [B., 14 years old:] It's crazy. I'm not losing my life. I still have a lot to live for.

The fear exposed by the students makes visible a management model of the cities whose poor people are most penalized (Oliveira, Rezende, & Bicalho, 2018), which authorizes repressive measures in popular regions during school hours. Behind this context there is an effective strategy to criminalize poor and black youth, which underlies public policies, especially related to security, which is responsible for organizing police operations.

According to data from the Municipal Department of Education, described in the article "Schools closed by violence" (2017), in the first 102 school days of the year 2017, in only seven the Teaching Network in the city of Rio de Janeiro worked with all schools out of a total of 1537 units. During this period, 382 were closed at least one day due to the violence in their surroundings; 129,504 students were affected by the closure of schools.

During the field research, according to information from the Municipal Department of Education obtained through the law of access to information, the teaching unit in which the research was conducted, in the first semester of 2017, had its operation interrupted for three school days as a result of police operations and clashes between rival armed groups.

The dispute over the local drug retail trade directly affects students' relationships, characterizing a challenge to be faced by the actors belonging to the educational institutional - students, teachers and the pedagogical team. The student body is formed, in large part, by residents of the Cordovil neighborhood;

³ The student refers to the local dispute between rival armed groups for control of the retail drug trade. For more than a year, since November 15, 2016, Comando Vermelho and Terceiro Comando Puro have been fighting for dominance in the region. The Cidade Alta Complex has a strategic location in the city, between highways that connect Rio de Janeiro to other states in the Southeast region, such as the Washington Luiz highway (Minas Gerais) and the Dutra highway (São Paulo). In addition to the main connections in the city: Avenida Brasil, which connects the center to the west and crosses the north, and the Linha Vermelha, the main access road to Tom Jobim International Airport and Baixada Fluminense. Faced with the increase in the number of cargo theft in the city in 2017, according to data from the Public Security Institute (ISP), this is one of the reasons for this region to be the target of constant dispute (G1, 2017; Gonçalves, 2017).

however, it also has students who live in slums located in adjacent neighborhoods - which are under the control of rival armed groups. The following statement, recorded in a conversation with a student, reveals how violence crosses the school walls and interferes with school life:

... in this school here, the kids fight over everything, for faction. These kids fight everything because of a faction ... There is C. he lives in [Parada de] Lucas, they keep messing with C., then I keep defending ... He is threatened because he lives in a slum that belongs to [Terceiro Comando Puro] terceiro [Parada de] Lucas é [Terceiro Comando Puro] TCP and TCP invaded Cidade Alta, in this school here, he is the only one from there; I have an aunt who lives there. After I asked him where he lives, we started to be friends. [The interview facilitator asks:] why do you think this happens inside the school? [The student replies:] There is no need for that to happen, because a faction is a faction. If you are going to have a problem with a faction, you solve it with the criminal and not with the resident. [The interview facilitator asks:] Are they part of the faction? [The student replies:] No, they only think that they belong to [Comando Vermelho] CV. Like, you're TC, I'm CV, for me, you're alemão⁴. Then the kids say: look at the alemão, alemão, let's get him. Then they will beat you up. [The interview facilitator asks:] who is from CV and who is from TCP here at school can't be friends? [The student replies:] Nope. (J., 15 years old).

Working in a school unit located between slums controlled by rival groups, under the strong influence of armed conflicts, demands an even greater challenge within an educational context. The actors that make up the space live with the effects caused by the historical absence on the part of the government in making investments in areas essential to the survival of residents of popular territories.

In addition, they relate to the impacts caused by inefficiency in the management of public policies, especially public security policies, whose focus is on a logic of war on drugs, causing the daily presence of confrontations and the death of thousands of young people, black and poor, local residents. Data from the Public Security Institute (ISP) reveal that, between January and September 2017, 813 people were victims of homicides resulting from opposition to police intervention in the state of Rio de Janeiro (UOL, 2017). Thus, the State chooses to be present in these spaces through repressive measures, contributing to the violence and oppression of its residents.

In modern society, the school institution is a great

⁴ Understood as a person who identifies or resides in a slum under the control of a rival group.

instrument of socialization, therefore, within the walls of educational institution, questions arise that should be analyzed beyond these walls. In order to intervene in existing conflicts in schools, it is essential to know elements of the way of functioning of a territory as unique as slums, to understand the social relations that constitute the territory, in addition to asking questions about the political and economic management model of cities (Cunha & Bicalho, 2018).

Therefore, when considering these dimensions, there is a need to problematize practices and discourses that enunciate notions of absence, lack and homogeneity as elements of reductionist perceptions and hierarchical classifications of the peripheries in relation to other spaces in the city (IMJA, 2018). In this sense, popular territories cannot only be conceived by society as a place of "lack", but they must be recognized for their power of creation and inventiveness, which cohabit the school places on the part of their students - residents of the localities. Thus, knowledge from slums should be valued and be part of the school space.

Having presented some constituent elements of the research field, it is necessary to take a look at history through a genealogy in order to understand how the model of education for youths of popular classes in society has been designed (Castro & Bicalho, 2013).

POVERTY CRIMINALIZATION AND EDUCATION

The historical process that fostered the criminalization of poverty in Brazil has been rooted in society since the Middle Ages, a legacy of more than 300 years of enslavement, as well as admirers in society of racist and eugenic theories, which emerged in the 19th century, in Europe, and the imminence of the capitalist work model that increased poverty, inequality and violence (Coimbra, 2001).

According to Dornelles (1988), the criminalization processes correspond to the historical and social constitution of normative systems. The author considers that the rules of a society are based on a penal code, which presents definitions about what the crime is and bases the practices that can be considered acceptable, in addition to legitimizing those that run away from normality. Thus, when the rules are violated, punishments are made to individuals. These norms will be parameters to classify which subjects will be considered ontologically dangerous in society. In this way, criminology emerges as an interdisciplinary knowledge that aims to analyze the links between norm, transgression and punishment (Dornelles, 1988).

Based on this logic, it is necessary to distinguish two instruments that constitute the mode of subjectification of individuals in society: the processes of incrimination and criminalization. The first refers to criminal laws

and the punishments corresponding to violations of those laws. The second relates to the transgression of norms, which are not penal, but designed by a social and cultural moral (Baratta, 2013). Criminalization processes have a strong interest for Psychology because they cover subjective aspects and help to determine which social groups receive differentiated treatments in society, operating through a logic of individualization, blaming and stigmatization of individuals.

In this way, poverty criminalization negatively impacts the lives of individuals, producing exclusion and stigmatization. These derived from the behavior of a standardized and normalized individual, in which poverty, dangerousness and criminality are closely linked. From this perspective, the use of disciplinary mechanisms against a specific portion of the population is justified.

Currently, blacks, the poor and residents of peripheral areas of cities are part of the group that receives a different look from the State and society. For Reishoffer and Bicalho:

Social control mechanisms are in place and the arguments that defend the violation of human rights for the most vulnerable sectors of the population increase. Precisely those who, due to inability to consume and the little possibility of insertion in the market, become the target of repressive policies of social control and public security. (Reishoffer & Bicalho, 2009, p. 434).

The results of these measures can be found through information published in the 2017 Atlas of Violence. The study carried out by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) and the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP) reveals that young people are the main targets of violence, 318 thousand were murdered in Brazil between 2005 and 2015, in which the black, young and low schooling population was the majority of homicide victims. In 2012, the risk of a young black man being a victim of homicide was 2.6 times greater than that of a young white man. The research shows that the experience of being black is intimately crossed by violence, because of every 100 people who suffer homicide in the country, 71 are black. These have a 23.5% higher chance of being murdered compared to Brazilians of other races (Cerqueira et al., 2017).

From the data presented by the study, we can see the existence of a genocide of black and poor Brazilian youth. The opportunity to have a basic right to every human being, to live, is taken from this population. However, when such a right is assured, it occurs precariously. Young people live with the inefficiency on the part of the State in implementing public policies that would provide them with basic guarantees for

survival, such as access to education, health, housing and security.

In a society that combines so many mechanisms for the exclusion of the black population, racism is revealed as an important factor in criminalization processes, as it is based on the idea that “some races are inferior to others, attributing social, cultural, political inequalities, psychological, to “race” and, therefore, legitimizing social differences” (Zamora, 2012, p. 565).

In this sense, the maintenance of racism is configured in a strategy capable of uniting devices that aim to contribute to the genocide of the black people. This is structured through medical, scientific, educational, political, security, media speeches that aim at the disappearance of black Brazilians and are scattered throughout the social environment. Thus, the physical death that affects this population through extermination policies is only one side of the Brazilian genocidal project (Nascimento, 2017).

Associated with this social context, the public school is recognized for the high number of dropouts and experiences of failure on the part of its students. There are several ways to experience this failure; the school institution is known for producing modes and patterns of behavior, and blaming its students for not being able to adapt to the space.

Since its emergence in the 19th century, with the advent of a gigantic series of institutions, which aim to frame the individual throughout its existence, the school would act to correct the virtuosities of individuals through a “social orthopedics”. It is a form of power classified as a disciplinary society, which will inaugurate the age of social control (Foucault, 2003). Discipline is established as an institution practice, to the point of capturing the singularities of individuals. In the name of control, it is authorized to elect behavioral models, which must be followed by everyone.

The student who respected the rules established by the school institution should be considered the model for the others. The individual who escaped this logic should be considered the deviant, who would need to be disciplined to inhabit the space. From this perspective, the school would assume the role of transforming individuals into citizens, becoming responsible for teaching the ‘basic prerequisites’ for living in society, in addition to explaining the essential content for their schooling. In this way, the school space would operate “as a machine to teach, but also to watch, to hierarchize, to reward” (Foucault, 2011, p. 242).

A student’s questioning about the operating mode of a school unit expresses how the institution manages to exercise control over individuals’ bodies and subjectivities: “*This looks like a jail; we can’t do anything. Have you seen how many people are here*

to take care of children? You cannot run, do nothing” (D. 15 years old). The school institution, even today, functions as a biopolitical and disciplinary apparatus of the State, capable of regulating the lives of individuals. Thus, students, teachers and school staff are captured by this model, and make the space work through disciplinary logic.

Moreover, public school students, from the poorest classes in society, mostly blacks and residents of the suburbs of large cities, are victims of “institutional discourses that tend to produce repetitions, sameness, in an attempt to prescribe the same and guarantee their permanence” (Kupfer, 1997, p. 54). Crossed by the crystallization of these speeches when fulfilling its role of schooling, the school institution silences its students by presenting difficulty in capturing the singularity of individuals.

Students who do not fit this model, become victims of a dangerous process of stigmatization and exclusion, are labeled as ‘messy’ and ‘bad students’ for inhabiting the school in a ‘differentiated’ way. The noise, the out-of-hour conversation, the agitation present in classrooms are rejected as something out of ‘normal’. Individualizing and prejudiced speeches are elicited in the institution, producing ways of being and being in society, choosing family models and prioritizing specific social groups.

Poverty is perceived as the result of personal failure, individual disabilities, laziness, lack of determination (Patto, 2015). The problems encountered at school tend to be analyzed out of context, in a reductionist way and affect the lives of individuals. To justify the experience of failure found in the classroom, poor students are held responsible for their low performance, seeking explanations in the family-raising mode in order to justify ‘bad behavior’, problems related to school dropout and fails. The issue of “school failure”⁵ (Paixão, 2003) is not usually analyzed beyond these issues: the current education system, the practices present in classrooms and the problems caused by the lack of investments by the public sector in the area education, are not put under analysis. Misfortune is located in the individual, in his/her family, in his/her neighborhood, in his/her way of living in society. Therefore, by reproducing prejudiced and excluding discourses, the school institution actively contributes to the growing movement to criminalize poverty in society.

⁵ The term used by Lea Paixão (2003) is used. For her: “Pedagogical literature usually encompasses evasion, abandonment, repetition under the expression ‘school failure’, which I prefer to replace with ‘failure of the school failure’ ... “generalized failure of all spheres at work in the school space” (Paixão, 2003, p. 55). In this sense, “failure of the school” removes the individual character that the term “school failure” carries, with the aim of carrying out an institutional and political reading on issues presented by individuals in the school space.

WHAT CAN PSYCHOLOGY DO IN SCHOOLS?

In view of the criminalization of the popular strata in society, it is necessary to analyze the role of psychology in educational institutions. Through a political praxis involved in a critical reading of the social context in which the subjects are inserted, the performance of the psychologist must be dedicated, mainly, to the affirmation of the power of individuals, with the reduction of reductionist and excluding practices in school units.

According to Patto (2015), from a historical analysis of the formation of Psychology in Brazil, it appears that the psi field was structured in the country, between 1930 and 1970, under the great influence of medical knowledge. "The first Brazilian works of psychological interest were theses at the end of undergraduate courses at medical schools of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, even in the last century" (Patto, 2015, p. 76). At the medical school in Bahia, Escola Nina Rodrigues was responsible for carrying out studies related to mental hygiene, criminology and forensic psychiatry, while in Rio de Janeiro, work was carried out on deviations related to the human mind.

During that period, racist theories from Europe circulated, which legitimized racial differences and ensured a superiority of European culture and the white race. These speeches were mainly responsible for the organization of racial thinking in the country.

In this sense, the physician Arthur Ramos - one of the main admirers and propagators of the work of Nina Rodrigues - can be considered a great reference in the formation of an educational psychology in the country. He was responsible for the creation and development of school mental hygiene clinics and centers, located in public schools in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In these spaces, the aim was to study and correct the child maladjustments diagnosed in children with learning disorders, by performing procedures from inferential psychology, such as psychological tests, which aimed to diagnose psychic disorders. The term 'problem children' was introduced to refer to individuals who were undergoing treatments and needed to be adjusted (Patto, 2015).

In addition, through the production of scientific papers, medicine had a strong influence on the training of education professionals in the country, when analyzing the problems of school learning. The causes of these deviations were identified as physical, emotional, personality and intellectual aspects. In his writings, Ramos spread the concept of cultural need to justify the said primitive trait of the Brazilian people; for the author, blacks brought to Brazil were culturally backward and ended up contaminating the entire population (Patto, 2015).

In this way, psychology was responsible for identifying the "lack" of problem children, as, for the most part, they came from environments considered primitive and/or popular. Thus, this field in the school space contributed to a practice aimed at framing individuals to a norm, crossed by racist theories, which disregarded the historical and social crossings that constitute subjects.

WITH THE WORD, STUDENTS: WHAT CAN PSYCHOLOGY DO IN SCHOOLS?

When starting the intervention research at the teaching unit, the participants were asked about what psychology could do in the space. The answers, in their majority, were crossed by the logic of a psychological practice marked by the adjustment of individuals:

It can help a lot of people inside the school, there is a lot of crazy person in this school (L., 14 years old).

Finding out more about people, talking, that's what I think, advising ... It's not my case, but there are people who come with a home problem and there is no one to talk to, to vent, psychology is good for that (T., 14 years old).

For these students, psychology has techniques and mechanisms capable of framing them in a norm accepted by society. Stigmatized by their condition as problem-students at school and crossed by the criminalization of their existence, they resort to psychology to assist in the desire to leave this way, which make them inferior as subjects. The following statement highlights this desire:

I'm not very perfect because I have my slum style, but a lot of people like me ... at school I don't do it anymore, principal director says it's unpleasant and I respect her, but on the street I do it like that [moves with her hands], I raise my foot, I scream. But not much. [The facilitator asks:] Do these behaviors, these gestures, only happen in the slum, do people in other places not raise their hands when speaking, for example? [The student is silent and the interview facilitator asks:]. Why do you think this is a slum style? I don't think it's a favela way, but in the way I am, everyone talks. I do not like that others call me a slum girl, I am born and raised in the community of Cidade Alta, but I do not like that others call me a slum girl (H., 13 years old).

In an institution that uses disciplinary devices to regulate the behavior of individuals, the "slum style" is not accepted. The student's behavior is rejected in the educational institution by actors who make up the space and by the student herself. Crossed by a mode of production of subjectivity, "essentially manufactured - as part of the production of the capitalist system - which

interferes with the way individuals perceive the world, articulate with it, with the social order, supporting the productive forces” (Will, 2015, p. 23).

The ways of being and being in the world that move away from the Eurocentric logic, whose school practices were influenced, are blamed and seen as something outside the ‘normality curve’ - behaviors considered inappropriate in the school institution, for example. Therefore, individuals who follow this logic should be qualified to behave properly and adapt in order to become a ‘good student’ in the educational institution that, for the aforementioned student and the school imagination, does not include the “slum style”.

In this way, it contributes to the maintenance of practices and discourses loaded with prejudice on the part of actors in educational institutions and by the individualization of the issues presented by the subjects in the space. In turn, psychology, when summoned at school, can be responsible for mitigating the process of criminalization of students, acting in school conflicts, helping to reduce the spread of the logic of judicialization of life present in society (Cunha & Bicalho, 2018). The following fragment reveals this perspective of the work: *The staff said that you are from the Child Care Council and will take us* (L., 14 years old).

The Child Care Council is a piece of equipment created with the advent of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, with the objective of guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents. “The singular characteristic of the Child Care Council is that it is not within the scope of justice, but its existence is directly linked to a law, which has contributed to its use of justice methods” (Scheinvar, 2012, p. 48). The student’s speech, charged with fear and distrust, reveals how this device has been presented in schools as a mechanism of punishment and control. When faced with a different person in the space, who asks him/her questions about his/her experience, the student assimilates him/her as someone from this space, who aims to frame his/her behavior. When called in the school institution, psychology can assume this function through a specialism, capable of reducing school demands in individual and psychologizing aspects, operating through the use of devices capable of producing fear and threat to individuals.

In this way, psychology, when inhabiting the floor of a public school crossed by infinite particularities, needs to make a critical reading of the space, know the singularities that make up the school institution and contribute so that there is no maintenance of exclusionary practices. Psychological praxis cannot be at the service for the use of legal mechanisms, such as punishment and blaming the actors of the school institution. In this sense, psychology must take the lead in the struggle for the construction of public policies that

offer the creation of a quality public school and that do not contribute to the logic of judicialization of the life existing in society.

CONSIDERATIONS

In the need to offer conclusions to the text, it is necessary to understand that when analyzing the speeches produced in schools that help the criminalization of poverty, it is not intended to determine ‘guilty’ or ‘innocent’ by maintaining exclusionary practices in educational institutions. Currently, the school model offered to these students comes from a political, economic and social system, which criminalizes and blames the poor for their condition of existence in society.

Thus, institutional measures are carried out at all times in the spaces they occupy, such as slums, public schools, given the data released by the 2017 Atlas of Violence and the number of public schools closed in Rio de Janeiro due to police operations during the school period, announced in this research.

Miguel Arroyo (2015) brings pertinent questions to be asked about the educational context in the capitalist system, in its neoliberal phase, in which we live:

A question is imposed on our professional, school and pedagogical ethics: how do such negative moral images of adolescence and youth, poor and black, neither moralizable nor educable, but rather exterminable, end up affecting the social and school imaginary about popular students that arrive to public schools? How do they end up denying their right to education? (Arroyo, 2015, p. 33).

Crossed by this social context, the actors that make up the schools, when performing their roles, often reproduce speeches that legitimize the exclusion and criminalization of the popular classes. In addition, they feel guilty for failing to carry out their activities, in a society regulated by competitiveness and productivity. The excerpt from a field diary of the authors reports a conversation with a teacher from the teaching unit that highlights this feeling:

Approaching the end of the school year, on a rainy Monday morning, I go to school to talk to the teacher. I would like to know how were the students who participated in the research. I arranged with the professional to meet her after the final bell. When the bell rings - warning the students that it is time to go home - I go to meet her in front of the classroom, where she works. She asked me to wait, as there were students who had not yet finished doing the activity. I wait, sitting in one of the chairs, watching her way of

relating to the students in the class. All the concern shown by the professional with young people left me enchanted. Patiently, even if her schedule had already been fulfilled, she went from table to table to help them. Then kindly she received me for a chat. I ask her how the students were doing. In her answer, she told me about the difficulties experienced in that school year, due to the intense conflicts that exist in the region: she complained about the fact that her students arrived nervous and just wanted to talk about the sad situations experienced in the slum during classes, such as shootings and issues related to conflict between armed groups - a fact that makes her very uncomfortable. She complained several times about how violence affects students' performance as, on many days, classes were canceled and students were afraid to go to school, due to the climate of insecurity. These facts make it difficult to follow academic planning, in order to meet the deadlines created by the city hall, she had to run a lot to teach all the contents. In her speech, she told details about the lives of young people, whenever a student stopped attending classes, she insisted on calling the parents in order to find out the reason for the absence. When she was unable to make contact with family members, she asked other students. Nine students in her class participated in the study, she said, only three students remained in her class. Several events occurred during the school year: two students were transferred to other schools in the region because they did not behave properly; two students went to live with other family members in other neighborhoods in the city because they were putting themselves at "social risk" situations in the slum; a student stopped attending classes and did not look for another school unit to complete the school year; a student, according to the other students living in the region, has run away from home and is "walking with a gun in the slum". These facts make the professional very discouraged to perform her job, she feels exhausted, considering that she cannot reach students. She states that she would not like to see them as another "student entering the drug trade". For her: "her validity code is expired" and she needs to start thinking about her retirement... (Field diary, Oct 23, 2017).

Individualization and blaming are two effective devices used by the state in capitalism. Structural problems tend to be analyzed individually. In this sense, individuals introject the responsibility of experienced misfortunes to themselves. This is an effective strategy used by managers who administer the public machine in order not to find efficient solutions to the problems

experienced in society. Thinking about structural changes in the school system at a time of setbacks in the field of social rights in which we live, is a major challenge.

Thus, in order to inhabit the ground of public schools in this context, the actors in this space - teachers, pedagogical coordinators, employees of educational institutions - need to invest in a micropolitics capable of provoking small events, which produce daily transformations in the school institution and are committed to power affirmation of students. Therefore, it is necessary to fight for the construction of a new school model, which focuses on the individualization of individuals' issues and recognizes students from the lower classes as - truly - subjects of law. Rethinking functioning is a political way of avoiding contributing to the maintenance of practices and discourses, which help in an exclusionary school model, whose poor students do not fit.

Psychology has the role of empowering small daily actions that are carried out in educational institutions, such as the case of a professional who seeks integration between family and school, for example. Operating through difference, believing in the collective and in the potential of individuals are powerful ways for this field to contribute to the construction of a school space for everyone.

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