THE SOCIOGENESIS OF RACISM AND ETHNIC-RACIAL RELATIONS IN SCHOOL: A CRITICAL VIEW

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ABSTRACT

The present study deals with the sociogenesis of racism in Brazil, examining its manifestation in the school environment and the challenges of developing pedagogical practices capable of mitigating this exclusionary culture and its violence. From a current, historical and theoretical contextualization, it seeks to investigate how racism manifests itself in education and what are its consequences in everyday school life, analyzing how prejudice, discrimination and the devaluation of black and indigenous cultures and subjectivities impact the learning process of students. It is concluded that racism is prominent in Brazilian society and its consequences affect education, with impacts on school dropout, student performance and social inclusion.

Keywords: History. Ethnic-Racial Relations. Racism. Basic Education.

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INTRODUCTION

The analysis of the sociogenesis of Brazilian society, considering the trajectory of native and black peoples in the country, as well as the socially constructed identities that legitimized the Europeanized, white and census social primacy, is the starting point for understanding the reproduction of structural racism. As a consequence of a nation built on a slave-owning, authoritarian and patrimonialist construct, a hegemonic vision is consolidated that deprives the disadvantaged segments of society of their rights, while privileging a culture of criminalization of poverty and inferiorization of black and indigenous populations. As Mir (2004, p. 19) points out: "I define the Brazilian State founded in 1822 as a balkanized body. And I give this balkanization the nature of a threefold system: territorial confinement, economic exploitation, and ethnic segregation."

Racism has its origins in a slave past, in which black bodies were reduced to the condition of merchandise and subjected to tortures of all kinds, serving as the engine of the colonial and imperial economy. In addition, racism is configured as an ideology of racial hierarchization, in which white people believe in a false social, moral, religious, and cultural superiority in relation to blacks (Assis, 2023). This social hierarchy is manifested in a structural and institutional racism that catalyzes the differences between whites and blacks, evidenced in the selective treatment that institutions – educational, criminal, labor, jurisdictional, among others – give to blacks and indigenous people. In the specific context of the present study, the institution of the basic education school stands out.

The categorizations of racism, discrimination, prejudice and racial literacy are fundamental to understand the specificities of the racist phenomenon in Brazilian society and to analyze how it operates in the school context. In recent years, the phenomenon of racism in schools has been highlighted, especially due to serious cases involving educators and students. This generates a latent concern among parents, teachers and society in general in relation to debates that are often avoided or silenced. The current social structure favors the incidence of racism by not providing the means of subsistence, excluding social groups and reproducing inequality in the relations of production and in the structure of capitalism. It is in this system that inequality manifests itself effectively, accentuating the social markers of differences.

The school, as a social subsystem, reflects the violence present in society. Among the various expressions of violence in the school environment, racism materializes in aggressive speeches, pejorative nicknames and derogatory discrimination, both among

students and teachers. The school, as an institution, also reproduces structural and institutional racism by neglecting the inclusion of content related to the personalities and historicities of black and indigenous cultures.

The consequences of the various cases of racist violence in schools negatively impact student learning, compromising their permanence in the school environment and disrupting the meaning of education. This results in a perception that the school does not offer meaning to the students' life projects. The study of ethnic-racial relations in schools is of paramount importance for the improvement of school performance and for the prevention of dropout. This relevance is justified, above all, by the need to propose forms of teaching that are more connected to the cultural characteristics of students, promoting motivation and stimulating reflection on racial discrimination and violence in the classroom.

In the Brazilian educational system, in addition to the Federal Constitution of 1988 (Brasil, 1988), the Statute of the Child and Adolescent, Law No. 8,069/1990 (Brasil, 1990), and the Laws of Guidelines and Bases of Education, Law No. 9,394/1996 (Brasil, 1996), regulate schooling based on freedom of thought, religion and political positioning. In this way, education is understood as a space of respect for differences, pluralism of ideas, diversity, and ethnic multiculturalism (Freire, 2021).

The article is divided into three parts: the first presents a historical conjuncture that favored the promotion of racism in the country; the second brings some theoretical categorizations, such as racism, prejudice and discrimination; and the third part addresses ethnic-racial relations in the school space. The methodology consists of a literature review of a theoretical, reflective and analytical nature on the theme of ethnic-racial relations and Brazilian basic education. To support the work, statistical data from official bodies are analyzed, as well as works, scientific articles, legislation and thoughts of authors who discuss racism and propose anti-racist practices.

It is concluded that education needs actions and strategies aimed at an anti-racist and inclusive approach, which values African and Afro-Brazilian cultures, in order to resignify historical icons, cultures and knowledge that have been historically marginalized.

THE SOCIOGENESIS OF THE FORMATION OF BRAZILIAN SOCIETY: THE ORIGINS OF RACISM

The formation of Brazilian society is marked by violence, characterizing a civilizational clash between Europeans, native peoples, and blacks, whose wounds remain

exposed to the present day (Arend, 2020). Although many nations register episodes of conflicts in their formation, in Brazil, the trajectory of the State continues to be conducted as a state of permanent war against its citizens. In his work "Extermination: Two hundred years of a genocidal state", Gouveia (2022) describes:

> From the massacre of the cabanos, to the dead in the favelas, the police, the Army, the private security forces were never shy in the face of the tasks that the groups at the top of the political hierarchy (or, more crudely, at the top of the food chain) considered necessary for the people to become people again (Gouveia, 2022, p. 11).

Violence is a structuring element of Brazilian society, and racism has played a preponderant role in the manifestation of this phenomenon, from hereditary captaincies to the conurbations of poor "communities". Power is legitimized by the way in which the dominant political forces act against their peoples. There is a permanent conflict to guarantee the privileges of a select white group that, although it transforms over time, perpetuates its domination. From the masters of the enslaved to the big businessmen, social conflict is rooted in racial inequality, exploitation and the arbitrariness of the elites. According to Sodré (2023):

> In the passage from the despotic totalitarianism of the slave master to the 'calm' or perverse forms of racial hierarchization, the Afro way of life passes through greater forums of threat and, therefore, of rejection. From the beginning, everything related to blacks, even indirectly, was socially stigmatized. The rejection ranged from language to beliefs and music (Sodré, 2023, p. 73).

Schwarcz (2015) explains that an immeasurable slaughter occurred in the first decades after 1500 in America, during which the population of Amerindians, estimated in the millions, was reduced to only a few hundred thousand. The extermination and epidemics brought by the white man were decisive for the submission of these peoples.

Contrary to the "myth of racial democracy" and the "peaceful and cordial nature" of the formation of the Brazilian people, proclaimed by intellectuals such as Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1902-1982) and Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), as analyzed by Nascimento (2016), Lopes (1988, p. 20) states: "there was no racial democracy in Colonial Brazil, as there could not be in a colonial system". The author defines the structure of colonial society

as agro-latifundical, patriarchal, conservative, aristocratic and focused on the Portuguese coast.

In an analysis of the colonial world, Fanon (2022) states that violence presided over relations in this context, destroying native social forms and demolishing, without restrictions, the reference systems of the economy, the ways of appearance, the styles of clothing, the cultural models, and the religiosities of the colonized. These peoples gradually assimilated the social systems of the colonizers as they entered the cities.

Thus, according to Lopes (1988), whites dominated politically, economically and culturally, subjecting blacks and indigenous people to physical and cultural violence. As a consequence, they promoted the systematic genocide of these peoples.

According to Gomes (2019), in his work "Slavery", Brazil was the country that most enslaved blacks in the Western Hemisphere. For three centuries, it used about 5 million Africans as slaves, representing 40% of the total of 12.5 million who were taken to America. As Gomes (2019) explains:

> As a result, it is currently the country with the second largest black or African population in the world. Brazilian Afro-descendants, classified in the censuses of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) as black and brown, now total about 115 million people, a number second only to the population of Nigeria, of 190 million inhabitants, and higher than that of Ethiopia (Gomes, 2019, p. 24).

Racism also had roots in religion. During the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, when the Catholic Church still held great power, this institution played a significant role in the development of slavery, according to Nascimento (2016) and Fausto (2001). According to Schwarcz (2024), there was the biblical myth of the curse of Ham, present in the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis 9. This curse, placed by Noah on his son Ham and his descendants, was widely used in the Middle Ages and early Modern Age to justify the enslavement of African peoples. According to Schwarcz (2024, p. 290): "Ham exposes to his brothers Shem and Japheth the nakedness of father Noah, and for this reason he is condemned by the patriarch, along with his son Canaan, to be their slaves".

Ham's descendants were often represented by the Ethiopians, Sudanese, Ghanaians, and Amerindians. The narrative was used by Europeans as a justification for colonialism and the enslavement of other peoples, especially Africans, considered cursed in the biblical text. This distorted interpretation of the sacred text supported the idea that these

peoples could and should be subjugated.

As Fausto (2001) explains, in Colonial Brazil, the class division was based on the principle of blood purity, which persisted until the Charter of Law of 1773. New Christians, blacks, mestizos, when free, and part of the indigenous people were considered impure. According to Fausto (2001, p. 31): "this racial principle resulted in the impossibility of occupying positions, receiving titles of nobility, participating in prestigious brotherhoods, etc.".

Slavery represented the genesis of Brazilian society, configuring its economic, social and political matrix. It took about 358 years, from the first exploration settlements, in 1530, to the decree of the abolition of slavery in 1888. According to Thomson (2002, p. 364), slavery "was one of the most inhumane periods of exploitation and partial genocide in the history of civilization".

Thus, Nascimento (2016) recalls that blacks were introduced into the colonial structure of Brazil as a workforce on plantations, emerging soon after the occupation of national soil, still in 1530. For centuries, the rights to education, housing and citizenship were denied to indigenous and black peoples in the country.

Under the cloak of the economy, the enslaved constituted the foundations of the agrarian economy, providing wealth to the large landowners. They planted, fed, and reaped the material benefits that enriched a white aristocracy. Nascimento (2011, p. 59) points out that: "the role of the slave was decisive for the beginning of the economic history of a country founded, as was the case of Brazil, under the sign of imperialist parasitism. Without the slave, the economic structure of the country would never have existed."

Knowledge and social development, which were restricted in the colony, continued in the Empire, limited to its subordinate members. Education was prohibited by law for enslaved or freed blacks, as provided for in article 3 of Law No. 1, of January 14, 1837, during the Regency Period, which provided:

> Article 3 The following are prohibited from attending Public Schools:
> 1° All persons who suffer contagious diseases.
> 2º Slaves, and black Africans, even if they are free or freed. (Brazil, 1837).

Regarding property, the "Land Law", No. 601, of September 18, 1850, which regulated the vacant lands of the Empire, prohibited the enslaved from owning land and exclusively favored European immigrant settlers, offering subsidies for the acquisition of land.

> Article 19. The proceeds of the Chancellaria rights and the sale of the lands, which are dealt with in arts. 11 and 14 shall be exclusively applied:
> 1°, the further measurement of vacant lands and
> 2nd, the importation of free settlers, according to the previous article (Brasil, 1850).

Thus, until the black population had the opportunity to access the right to land and education, in addition to being objectified as a commodity, there was a prohibition on acquiring literacy. In the Second Reign, Decree No. 1,331-A, of February 17, 1854, continued the explicit prohibition of the education of the enslaved:

> Article 69. The following will not be admitted to enrollment, nor will they be able to attend schools:
> Paragraph 1 - Boys who suffer contagious diseases.
> Paragraph 2 - Those who have not been vaccinated.
> Paragraph 3 - Slaves.
> (Brazil, 1854).

In 1883, Joaquim Nabuco, an abolitionist, portrayed education in Brazil at the time in his work "Abolitionism". According to Nabuco (2011, p. 208): "slavery by instinct proceeded by rejecting the school, public instruction, and keeping the country in ignorance and darkness, which is the environment in which it can thrive. The slave quarters and the school are poles that repel each other."

The other laws of the time, such as the Feijó Law, of September 7, 1831, which prohibited the slave trade and declared free the enslaved who entered the country; the Law of Free Womb, of 1871, which freed the children of enslaved women; and the Sexagenarian Law of 1885, which freed enslaved people over 60 years of age (although the life expectancy of enslaved blacks was, on average, 40 years), were palliative and did not meet the real need for inclusion of blacks in society. The beneficiaries of these laws found themselves in a legal limbo, without any support from the State to provide for themselves (Gomes, 2019).

In 1888, the Golden Law was signed, which abolished slavery. Consequently, in 1889, the Republic emerged, bringing the modernization of public institutions and the beginning of industrialization in the country. However, these changes did not result in solid transformations in Brazil's social structures.

Despite all the changes and laws, blacks, now formerly enslaved, remained without jobs, without land and without access to education, piling up on the roads and on the outskirts of urban centers. This population was forced to accept subaltern and precarious occupations, being at the mercy of exploitation, discrimination and violence perpetrated by local rulers. Since their arrival on Brazilian soil, blacks have been thrown into the world of whites without any assistance, compensation, agrarian reform, guarantees or opportunities (Lopes, 1991, p. 94-95) explains this situation: "Blacks have been marginalized, unable to compete with immigrants in the countryside or in industry: between 1887 and 1900, 909,417 immigrants entered São Paulo alone."

In addition to the slavery violence since the Colonial Period, regulated by the Philippine Ordinances, which criminalized begging, capoeira and "magic" (referring to African-based religions), several laws in the Empire and, later, in the Republic were enacted with the aim of socially controlling blacks and repressing their cultural and religious manifestations.

Of particular note is Decree No. 145, of June 11, 1893 (Brasil, 1893), which determined the imprisonment of beggars, vagabonds, vagrants, capoeiras and troublemakers in colonies established by the Union or by the States. Another example is Decree No. 3475, of November 4, 1899 (Brasil, 1899), which denied the right to bail to defendants considered vagrants or homeless, in addition to authorizing police raids without judicial control, especially in regions with a higher concentration of blacks.

In the early twentieth century, the country was heavily influenced by eugenicist doctrines, known as "scientific racism," which were inspired by the thoughts of Georges Louis Leclerc (1707-1788), Paul Broca (1824-1880), Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), and Francis Galton (1822-1911). Several Brazilian intellectuals and personalities have adhered to these doctrines, as pointed out by Rocha (2018) and Sodré (2023). These ideas advocated that influences from races considered superior would provide innate qualities that would improve the existing miscegenation in Brazil. The plan aimed at a "positive miscegenation", promoting a systematic whitening through the massive immigration of about four million white Europeans, with the aim of improving the Brazilian racial quality (Teixeira; Karnopp, 2024).

In 1930, under the regime of the so-called "Estado Novo", the Federal Constitution of 1934 incorporated influences from eugenicist conceptions, promoting the idea of "whitening" the nation and education, as provided for in its article 138:

> Article 138 - It is incumbent upon the Union, the States and the Municipalities, under the terms of their respective laws:
>
> a)   to ensure support for the underprivileged, creating specialized services and animating social services, whose orientation they will seek to coordinate;
>
> b)   stimulate eugenic education; (Brazil, 1934).

In the Penal Code (Brasil, 1940) and in the Code of Criminal Procedure (Brasil, 1941), arbitrariness, discrimination and criminal inequality in relation to blacks continued, even with the myth of racial democracy and national identity dominating the debates among intellectuals in large urban centers.

During the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985), the apparatuses of police repression acted freely against social movements, carrying out kidnappings, torture and murders. In the peripheries, the action of "death squads" was common, and this selective police lethality persisted even after redemocratization, affecting mainly young people, blacks and residents of peripheral areas. The Candelária and Vigário Geral massacres, which took place in the 1990s, stood out for the high number of victims and the participation of police officers, as reported by Schwarcz (2015).

This process of criminalization of poverty has had repercussions on the exponential growth of the Brazilian prison population. Regarding selective confrontations by the Brazilian police, it is observed that there is a target directed mainly to blacks, as proposed by Carvalho and Boldt (2020):

> The processes of exclusion and victimization of subaltern social segments represent the hidden, undeclared mission of the Brazilian penal system, through ruthless punishment or the blatant and uninhibited elimination of the black and/or poor population from large urban centers, scandalously assumed as strategies for maintaining 'social order' (Carvalho; Boldt, 2020, p. 200).

Currently, Brazil has the largest prison population in its history, with about 832 thousand people in the penal system, according to the 17th Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security of 2023. The country ranks third in the world in the number of incarcerated people, second only to the United States and China. Among this total, 68% are black and brown, and 43% are young people up to 29 years old, characterized by low education and social and economic vulnerability. These data show how young black people are selectively

targeted by the criminal justice system, facing racial and class discrimination.

In this way, the construction of racism dates back to the social, cultural, economic and political formation of Brazil. It influences and shapes Brazilian governance, institutions, and society, constituting itself as a fundamental component in the structuring of the State, with foundations of authoritarianism, patrimonialism, and social inequality.

UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON OF RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE

Official statistics show that the ethnic-racial panorama in Brazil is predominantly composed of black and brown people. In the 2022 population census, more than 92.1 million Brazilians declared themselves brown, representing 45.3% of the population. In addition, 20.6 million declared themselves black (10.2%) and 1.7 million identified themselves as indigenous (0.8%). Thus, of the Brazilian population, estimated at 203 million people, 114.4 million are black, brown or indigenous, which corresponds to about 56.3% of the total. The same study highlights that about 88.2 million people declare themselves white, which represents 43.5% of the population, while 850.1 thousand identify themselves as yellow (0.4%) (IBGE, 2022).

A contrast can be perceived: although the data indicate that the majority of the population declares itself black, brown or indigenous, these groups still fall short in representativeness and performance in the spaces of power of Brazilian institutions and in the important positions of private companies. A possible explanation for these contradictions lies in the hierarchization of ethnic-racial relations present in Brazilian society, which originated in the formation of the Brazilian people.

Recently, in an attempt to correct this distortion in the executive branch, Decree No. 11,443/2023, of March 22, 2023 (Brasil, 2023), was published, which reserves for black and brown people the minimum percentage of 30% in the occupation of Executive Commissioned Positions (CCE) and Executive Commissioned Functions (FCE) in the direct, autarchic and foundational Federal Public Administration (Brasil, 2023).

Understanding the impacts of racism on society, and especially on schools, requires an understanding of the categories of prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Prejudice is a preconceived and superficial opinion about a reality, person or social group, which can generate forms of discrimination, such as racism. Discrimination, in turn, refers to unfair and negative behaviors or actions directed at a person, social group, or culture of the target group of discrimination. Prejudices can be pejorative, especially in relation to race, color, religion, ethnicity, age, gender and/or sexual orientation. According to Almeida (2019, p. 22), "it is the judgment based on stereotypes about individuals who belong to a certain racialized group". Discrimination, in turn, materializes prejudice in actions of physical, psychological or

moral violence, as occurs in racism.

Racial discrimination is a manifestation of prejudice and can be revealed through gestures, looks, and even words that morally hurt the person (Assis, 2023). Almeida (2019, p. 22) adds that "it is the attribution of differential treatment to members of racially identified groups". There are several hypotheses about the origin of the word "race". Etymologically, the concept of race derives from the Italian *razza*, which, in turn, originates from the Latin *ratio*, meaning luck, category, or species (Munanga, 2024). In the history of the natural sciences, the concept of race was first used in zoology and botany to classify animal and plant species, respectively.

Alexander (2017) explains that the creation of a racial categorization arises from the need to reconcile and legitimize European imperialism, especially through the colonial *plantation* economy and the exploitation of enslaved labor: "the concept of race is a relatively recent development. Only in the last few centuries, largely due to European imperialism, have the peoples of the world come to be classified into racial lineages" (Alexander, 2017, p. 62). According to Munanga (2024), Brazil lived, for many years, the myth of racial democracy, which delayed the national debate on "affirmative action" policies. At the same time, the myth of cultural syncretism or mestizo (national) culture overshadowed discussions about the implementation of multiculturalism in the Brazilian educational system.

The hundreds of cases of racism, police violence and institutional discrimination faced by the black population are just a reflection of this reality. Almeida (2019) highlights the instrumental issue of racism, which, in the mid-twentieth century, was supported by scientific theories that sought to legitimize it in the hierarchy of races in Brazil. In addition, he highlights how much intellectuals and renowned personalities in the country have condoned this ideology.

Racism is an ideology that sustains the hierarchization of races, resulting from a distorted social construction and mistaken learning during the individual and social formation of individuals. According to Almeida (2019), it is not an isolated manifestation, perpetrated by one or another criminal person; It is a social and structuring phenomenon. Racism is the result of a social framework, learned and perpetuated by a white elite that has remained in power for centuries. In addition, racism constitutes an institutionalized system of oppression that impacts people's living conditions and health based on race, color, and ethnicity (Assis, 2023).

The systematic racial discrimination present in social structures is known as structural racism. This phenomenon represents a racism rooted in society, becoming an integral part of a people's culture and contributing to the perpetuation of inequalities. According to Almeida (2019), this type of racism stems from the social structure itself and the way relationships are constituted, and is not a social pathology. Structural racism encompasses all sectors of society, including public and private institutions, and is often referred to as institutional racism. A clear example of this phenomenon is the criminal selectivity observed in criminal justice institutions, as well as the police action directed at the black and low-income population. Law enforcement agencies often conduct lethal persecution of young black people, resulting in a high number of police killings in the most vulnerable communities. Similarly, the prison system reflects social markers of difference, presenting harsh and punitive justice for black people, while granting a softer and more comprehensive approach to white individuals.

In 2022, the victimization of black people – which includes blacks and browns – accounted for 76.5% of the total homicides recorded in the country. Between 2012 and 2022, the total number of black victims reached 35,531, as indicated in the 2024 Atlas of Violence, prepared by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (Ipea, 2024). The proportion of black people killed by the police reached 87.4% of the total number of people killed in just eight Brazilian states in 2022, according to data from the study "Target Skin: the Bullet Does Not Miss the Black", carried out by the Network of Security Observatories, of the Center for Security and Citizenship Studies (CESeC) (Ramos, 2022).

According to data from the 2024 National Public Security Yearbook, cases of racial injury increased by 7% compared to 2022, totaling 13,897 records in 2023. In addition, cases of racism reached 11,610 in the same year.

Of the victims of murders in general (intentional violent deaths), 78% are young black people. Among children and adolescents, this rate is even more alarming, reaching 85.4% among those murdered from 0 to 17 years old. In addition, data on deaths resulting from police interventions in all states reveal that 82.7% of the targets of police actions are black (National Yearbook of Public Security, 2024).

There is a racial structure that Bento (2022) describes as a "pact" that establishes a white racial hegemony, sustained by privileges and symbolisms of hierarchization, superiority, and merit:

> Public, private and civil society institutions define, regulate and transmit a mode of operation that makes homogeneous and uniform not only processes, tools, value systems, but also the profile of their employees and leaders, mostly male and white. This transmission crosses generations and changes little the hierarchy of the relations of domination embedded therein. This phenomenon has a name, whiteness, and its perpetuation over time is due to an unspoken pact of complicity between white people, who aim to maintain their privileges (Bento, 2022, p. 18).

According to Ribeiro (2019), these categories of violence against blacks are the result of a process of homogeneous discrimination, originating during the colonial period. Racism was created by "whiteness" and is reproduced in ethnic-racial relations to perpetuate privileges.

To reflect on the problem and think about anti-racist actions, society needs a racial literacy that allows the appropriation of new knowledge related to black and indigenous culture, including vocabularies, characters and positive ethnic-racial references. A teacher, for example, must carry out racial literacy to develop anti-racist actions in their pedagogical practice, establishing their own knowledge and, consequently, offering their students new horizons resulting from this reflection.

According to Hooks (2017), educators have to understand that efforts to transform educational institutions in a multicultural and critical perspective must take into account teachers' fear of reflecting and changing the educational paradigm.

In this sense, the understanding of racial literacy allows us to reassess postures and behaviors in the face of the challenges of a multicultural, inclusive and otherness education aimed at racial equity and socially just power relations. According to Ferreira (2015), the concept of critical racial literacy is:

> reflect on race and racism, and allows us to see our own understanding of how race and race are treated in our daily lives, and how much race and racism impact our social identities and our lives, whether at work, in the school environment, in the university environment, in our families, in our social relationships. (Ferreira, 2015, p. 138).

According to Hooks (2017), educators must heed a call to renew and transform educational institutions, in order to teach and work in the face of cultural diversity, for justice

and freedom.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF ETHNIC-RACIAL RELATIONS-IN THE SCHOOL OF BASIC EDUCATION

According to data from the 2023 School Census of MEC/Inep, the percentage of black, brown, and indigenous people in relation to the stages of education is as follows: in the initial years, 54.3% are black or brown and 1.7% indigenous or yellow; in the final years, 55.1% are black or brown and 1.6% indigenous or yellow; and in high school, 53.8% are black or brown and 1.5% indigenous or yellow. It is observed that the highest percentage of blacks and browns is in youth and adult education (EJA), with 74.9%, along with 2.6% among indigenous or yellow people. In addition, the study points out that 25.5% of the sample did not identify ethnicity or race, according to the 2023 Census (Brasil, 2023).

In this survey, the illiteracy rate among blacks and browns fell in 2022 to the lowest level recorded, 7.4%, but is still more than double the rate among whites, which is 3.4%. The same survey demonstrates the inequality in access to education. In 2022, 70% of 14- to 29-year-olds out of school were black, while only 28% were white. This index showed a small variation compared to 2019, when 71% of young people out of school were black and 27% were white.

How can we explain that, even in the face of a school universe predominantly composed of brown and black students, there is not, in a daily and expressive way, adequate attention to the curricula and themes that reflect these cultural references? Although some advances have occurred since the adoption of laws that make the study of these issues mandatory, there is still a need for greater commitment on the part of education professionals, society and the State to establish actions that include these themes in the classroom. This can be done through public policies, flexible curricula, or interdisciplinary pedagogical projects that involve the participation of the school community.

The process of social banishment and exclusion from educational opportunities for black students constitute a significant barrier to their development, resulting in the imposition of cultural whitening. According to Ribeiro (2019):

> [...] The educational apparatus has been constituted, almost absolutely, for the racially inferior, as a source of multiple processes of annihilation of cognitive capacity and intellectual confidence. It is a phenomenon that occurs due to the lowering of self-esteem that racism and discrimination cause in the school routine;

by the denial to blacks of the condition of subjects of knowledge, through devaluation, denial [...] (Ribeiro, 2019, p. 65).

In current education, Law No. 10,639/2003 (Brasil, 2003) establishes the mandatory use of the racial theme in the curricula of Basic Education, applying to both public and private institutions. This law is corroborated by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, specifically in articles 26-A and 79-B. In addition, Law No. 11,645/2008 (Brasil, 2008) represented a milestone by stating that the study of the history of Africa and native peoples in school institutions is mandatory.

The Statute of Racial Equality, enacted by Law No. 12,288, of July 20, 2010 (Brasil, 2010), represents a significant legal framework for the guarantee of rights and equity for Afro-descendants. This statute serves as a foundation for the construction of public policies and for the struggles for dignity and recognition of the relevance of the black population. In the field of education, the statute requires the study of the general history of Africa and the history of the black population in Brazil in an interdisciplinary way. In addition, it fosters and creates incentives for research and study programs that address themes related to ethnic relations, quilombos and issues pertinent to the black population, in addition to stimulating teacher training with values that respect ethnic and cultural plurality (Brasil, 2010).

The 2017 National Common Curriculum Base (BNCC) addresses racial issues as transversal and integrating themes, emphasizing technical training. However, this approach ends up relegating to the background the training based on multicultural and multiethnic contents.

Racism is a reality in Brazilian public schools and should be treated with due importance in the school community. It is unacceptable that, in a country where the majority of the population is made up of brown and black people, the issue is still intentionally "passed over" in education, an environment that should contribute to the critical and conscious formation of citizens.

Among the impacts of racism on adolescents, mental disorders, low self-esteem and predisposition to self-mutilation and suicide behaviors, among others, stand out. Statistics reveal that young black men are more prone to disease, violent deaths, murders, and incarceration. In this sense, a study by the Brazilian Forum on Public Security and Unicef (United Nations Children's Fund), entitled "Overview of Lethal and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents in Brazil" (2024), points out that, between 2021 and 2023, of the total number of victims of Intentional Violent Deaths (MVI), 13,829 (91.6%) belong to the

age group of 15 to 19 years. In addition, 90% of the children and adolescents aged 0 to 19 years who are victimized are boys, 82.9% of whom are black. The lethal victims in Brazil continue to be predominantly adolescents, males and blacks.

It is essential that topics such as structural racism, prejudice and discrimination are addressed in schools through strategies that go beyond traditional classes. Often, these classes express empty and monocultural content, with colonialist and prejudiced biases.

Recently, the National Policy on Equity, Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations and Quilombola School Education was created, through Ordinance No. 470/2024, of May 14, 2024, of the Ministry of Education (MEC) (Brasil, 2024). This policy aims to implement educational actions and programs aimed at overcoming ethnic-racial inequalities and racism in educational environments, in addition to promoting educational policies aimed at the quilombola population. The target audience of this policy includes managers, teachers, employees and students, covering the entire school community.

The objectives of this policy include: structuring a system of goals and monitoring; ensure the implementation of article 26-A of Law No. 9,394/1996 (Brasil, 1996); to train education professionals for management and teaching in the field of Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (Erer) and Quilombola School Education (EEQ); induce the construction of institutional capacities for the conduct of Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (Erer) and Quilombola School Education (EEQ) policies in the federated entities; recognize the institutional advances of anti-racist educational practices; to contribute to the overcoming of ethnic-racial inequalities in Brazilian education; consolidate the EEQ modality with the implementation of the National Guidelines; and implement protocols for preventing and responding to racism in schools (public and private) and higher education institutions.

CONSIDERATIONS

The phenomenon of racism in Brazil transcends isolated events that generate indignation; It manifests itself as a structural and systemic ideology, deeply rooted in institutions, including school institutions. The country has made progress in identifying and combating practices of racial discrimination, evidenced by public policies such as the implementation of racial quotas and the inclusion of content on African history and culture in school curricula. Despite this progress, such measures are still insufficient to achieve effective equity.

In this context, the role of the educator is fundamental, not only in avoiding racist

behavior, but in adopting an active stance to combat racism. This implies recognizing and valuing black and indigenous cultures and histories, as well as intervening against discriminatory practices.

Confronting racism requires a collective and formative approach that goes beyond commemorative dates. The integration of diversified and interdisciplinary pedagogical strategies into the curriculum is essential to promote inclusive and anti-racist education. For this, it is necessary that educators commit to continuous training that enables them to respect cultural plurality and to develop a pedagogical practice that values ancestry and diversity.

It is imperative that anti-racist education starts from literacy, promoting practices that value cultural and ethnic diversity from the first years of schooling. Educators must cultivate an environment of belonging, establishing bonds of trust and empathy, and fostering attentive listening to the pluralities and subjectivities of students.

Schools should be spaces that promote listening and manifestation of students, valuing their representativeness and integrating their voices in educational processes. Critical racial literacy should be a fundamental component in teacher training, allowing reflections on racial privileges and conflicts, as well as the incorporation of students' experiences into educational practices. This approach is crucial to avoid microviolence related to "whiteness," which can lead to self-contempt among black students.

In summary, pedagogy should favor the awareness of students about their role in society and promote a commitment to social justice. Education, as an agent for the development of human rights, must be a space that respects diversity and promotes otherness. Access to education is a catalyzing factor for inclusion, equality, and changing discriminatory behaviors. Therefore, the basic education school plays a fundamental role in the deconstruction of racist thoughts, especially among children, by fostering worldviews that value diversity, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

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