

YOUTH PROTAGONISM AND DIVERSITY IN CIVIC-MILITARY SCHOOLS IN PARANÁ



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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze how diversity and youth protagonism is understood in civic-military schools in the State of Paraná. This is a bibliographic and documentary research. Civic-military schools were revived during the Bolsonaro administration and the program discontinued under President Lula. After the discontinuation of the federal program, some states created their own legislation aimed at maintaining and expanding civic-military schools, as is the case in the State of Paraná. The research understands how, within these schools, the notions of diversity and youth protagonism, which permeate the legal documents, are instrumentalized and materialized by a process of monetization of ways of life and, in addition, also submitted to a logic based on customs and morals by introducing standardization in the daily school practice through the adoption of the rules and values of military training.

Keywords: Civic-military schools. Paraná. Diversity. Youth Protagonism.

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to analyze how diversity and youth protagonism are addressed in civic-military schools in the State of Paraná. Through bibliographic and documentary research (Weller, Pfaff, 2018), aspects related to the assumptions present in the legislation and in the ideas of civic-military schools in the State of Paraná are discussed.

Civic-military schools were established nationally in 2019 under the government of Jair Bolsonaro (BRASIL, 2019) through the National Program of Civic-Military Schools (PECIM) and were defined as "regular state, municipal or district public schools that adhere to PECIM" (BRASIL, 2019, art. 2). In turn, the definition given by the government of the State of Paraná (PARANÁ, 2022, art. 2) is "public educational institutions with regulatory acts in force, which have undergone a process of conversion to the civic-military model, as well as new units to be authorized". In both legal frameworks for the creation of the aforementioned programs (BRASIL, 2019; PARANÁ, 2022), we see that the objective proposed in its articles 1 is to "promote improvement in the quality of basic education".

In turn, youth protagonism and respect for diversity are addressed both in the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC for Elementary Education (2017) and in the National Common Curricular Base - BNCC for High School (2018).

Silva (2023), Ferretti, Zibas and Tartuce (2004) problematize the issue of youth protagonism in educational documents that discuss the curriculum. These authors show that, in the field of education, it is also not possible to think of the category of protagonism, dissociated from the context experienced by contemporary societies, dominated by the development of neoliberal capitalism. Because it impacts major changes, not only in the economic, but also social and cultural spheres, resulting in transformations in social life, daily practices and subjectivities. In the words of Silva (2023, p. 9), about curricular studies, it is necessary to "map the political rationalities that guide the organization and selection of school knowledge".

In view of this, Silva (2023) states that the curricular construction around youth protagonism is inscribed in this ambivalent relationship of thinking, on the one hand, what the demands of young people are and, on the other hand, meeting the social demand posed by the economic reality, which ends up associating the performance of young people with the individualistic logic of the market. In turn, Ferretti, Zibas and Tartuce (2004, p. 413) point out that: "Protagonism is seen, in this sense, as a promising way to deal with



both a social urgency and the personal anguish of adolescents and young people". In a way, the authors continue, "it seems to be this concept that is understood by the proposals of protagonism that target the institution and school practices, to the extent that their reference point is also the subjectivity of the students, with a view to the formation of citizenship and the education of values" (Ferretti, Zibas and Tartuce 2004, p. 419).

Although youth protagonism appears, as Ferretti, Zibas and Tartuce (2004) affirm, in the management axis and in the curricular axis, encompassing the pedagogical and political sense, this displacement from attributions that belonged to the State to individual accountability can result in a process of depoliticization of young people, which can only aim at their adaptation to this neoliberal societal model, constituted by deep social, economic and technological inequalities. Which, it is up to the subjects, in this case, the young people to find individualized ways to overcome adversity. However, economic inequalities, which generate differences in access to resources, are not put up for debate.

YOUTH PROTAGONISM AND DIVERSITY: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Youth protagonism and diversity are themes that appear in specialized literature wrapped in polysemic meanings, as we will see below. The discussion that will be undertaken below aims to problematize and seek a conceptual definition of these different understandings related to the historical context (social movements, academic production, etc.) and how such concepts are problematized in the field of education.

The emergence of the term youth protagonism is relatively recent and, also, there is no conceptual precision, as we find different definitions according to the author/institution/body that makes the debate. Souza (2009), through a study carried out in different official documents, bodies, institutions and, in academic production, in the period that comprises the years 1985-2005, mapped the construction of the discourse about youth that was built from 1980 onwards and that gave basis for the emergence of the term youth protagonism.

On the one hand, there is a set of debates on young people and youth, as explained by Abramo (1994) and Foracchi (1972), in which youth is invested with a contestatory political role, participating in the debates on political and social issues as agents of social transformations. The authors address the role of the student movement in Brazil, as an important instrument of struggles for rights and that ended up formatting in youth subjectivities the notion of citizenship, responsibility and social justice. In this sense, social



movement "is always an expression of a collective action and resulting from a sociopolitical, economic or cultural struggle" (Gohn, 2008, p. 14). This is in line with the definition of social actor in the classical theory of sociology, which is collectively constituted (Touraine, 1998).

Discussions about youth protagonism, on the other hand, developed and consolidated mainly from the discourses of international organizations such as the UN and UNESCO, and the third sector organizations represented by NGOs that were very influenced by the neoliberal capitalist context (Dardot; Laval, 2016). In Brazil, Souza (2009) states that the term became popular from the Odebrecht Foundation, the Ayrton Senna Institute and the International Institute for the Development of Citizenship (IIDAC). The production of Antônio Carlos Gomes da Costa (1999, 2000), who became a reference in this debate, confirms this statement, since he was a consultant, among others, for the Odebrecht Foundation and the Ayrton Senna Institute. In this author's perspective, for the young person to become a protagonist, it is necessary that he participates in the creative act of the educational action. And, it lists attitudes to be avoided by educators that can curb or curtail the protagonism and, consequently, the performance of citizenship by young people. They are:

- Announce to young people decisions already made, reserving only the duty to comply;
- Decide in advance and then try to convince the group to assume the decision, made by the educator, as if it were their own decision;
- Present a proposal for a decision and convene the group to discuss it;
- The educator presents the problem, takes suggestions from the young people and then decides:
- The educator presents the problem, collects suggestions and decides with the help of the group;
- The educator establishes the limits of a given situation and asks adolescents to make decisions within these limits;
- The educator leaves the decision to the group, without interfering in the process that originated it (COSTA, 1999, p. 77).

Costa (1999) proposes that the aforementioned creative act of educational action, which results in youth protagonism, takes place from a process that consists of the following stages: presentation of a problem-situation; proposals for alternatives or ways of solution; discussion of the alternatives of the solutions presented and decision-making. It is also necessary to build a new image of young people, which dissociates them from the notion of problem and starts to see them as active actors, capable of diagnosing and contributing to the solution of real problems of the school, and of the community around it:



Thus, when the adolescent, individually or in a group, gets involved in solving real problems; acting as a source of initiative, freedom and commitment; we have, before us, a picture of genuine participation in the school or socio-community context, which can be called the youth protagonist (...). To educate for participation is to create spaces, so that the student can undertake, himself, the construction of his being. (Costa, 1999, p. 75-6).

Although the author alludes to the importance of citizenship, the social actor represented by the juvenile protagonist, to whom he refers, can play this role in a collective way, but also individually. And, it also inserts in the discussion the notions of entrepreneurship and the responsibility of the subject himself in the construction of his being, which clearly refers to the context of neoliberal capitalism.

From the subject to the State, passing through the company, the same discourse allows us to articulate a definition of man by the way he wants to be "successful", as well as by the way he should be "guided", "stimulated", "trained", "empowered" to fulfill his "objectives". In other words, neoliberal rationality produces the subject it needs by ordering the means to govern it so that it truly conducts itself as a competing entity and that, therefore, must maximize its results, exposing itself to risks and taking full responsibility for eventual failures. "Company" is also the name that should be given to the government of oneself in the neoliberal era (Dardot, Laval, 2016, p. 328).

Still regarding the constitution of young people as this protagonist social actor disconnected from collective purposes, forged by societal changes brought about by neoliberal capitalism, it is possible to identify a paradigmatic change in the theoretical field. In this sense, Souza (2009, p. 8-9) points out that:

Social action is the activity of the social actor, today very different from the social actor of classical sociology: roughly speaking, the individual who, under the influence of institutions, internalized social norms and values and played a role assigned by society. Nowadays, the expression social actor names the individual who, pursuing particular interests or "personal goals": makes a diagnosis of the possibilities (or establishes realistic projects); dialogues, negotiates, establishes alliances and defends their interests before other actors (acts taken as examples of citizenship practices, for which communication skills are required); and does things for the benefit of himself and his nearest locality or group.

In this context, what is evident is that social actors come to be seen in an atomized way, where society is composed of an agglomeration of individual actors who tend to produce homogenizing discourses. The issues dear to the classical social movements, such as the existing social inequalities and the power relations between social classes, are hidden. For Souza (2009, p. 10): "The discourse identified here as youth protagonism [...] it



conceives society as the cast of social actors acting in a scenario. The theatrical metaphor draws attention, and the argument is defended here that the new form of politics prescribed by the discourse does consist in the annulment and staging of politics."

In the context of recent educational policies, such as Law No. 13,415 of February 16, 2017 (BRASIL, 2017) and the elaboration of the BNCC - High School (2018), which influenced the creation of the New High School, it is possible to perceive that the keynote of the discourse, named Silva (2014, p.47) as a "process of curricular customization devices", revolves around the notion that at this stage education has become more flexible by allowing the student to define his or her own training path, giving them the possibility of choice. Such initiatives are presented as ways to promote youth protagonism among students. However, what at first glance seems to be enriching in terms of the participation of the young person himself in his education, can result in a process of impoverishment of his education and another strategy for the individual responsibility of the subject. Since, "students' ability to choose is not natural, but needs to be pedagogically constructed and referenced in a common evaluative framework" (Silva, 2023, p. 6).

Behind the premise of youth autonomy proposed by the BNCC through the activation of youth protagonism, Braggio and Silva (2023) show that between the second and third versions of this document, the Life Project - which maintains greater organicity with the assumptions of youth protagonism - which was addressed as a guiding principle, began to occupy the place of a curricular component. This occurred after the beginning of research on Life Project and Youth Protagonism, such as those carried out by the Lemann Foundation with the support of the Everyone for Education Movement, which began to subsidize the revision of the BNCC. Making clear the interference of the economic field and the market in the formulation of educational policies.

In turn, diversity is understood in the present research as exposed by Gomes (2012, p. 687): "as a historical, social, cultural and political construction of differences, it takes place in the midst of power relations and the growth of inequalities and the economic crisis that are accentuated in the national and international context". For the author, "due to social pressures, the understanding of diversity as a social construction that constitutes historical, cultural, political, economic and educational processes and is no longer seen as a 'problem' begins to have more space in society, in political forums, in social and educational theories" (Gomes, 2012, p. 688).



However, it is important to emphasize that this understanding of diversity was not the only one produced or triggered. The process called by Abramowicz (2011) the "rise of diversity" was the subject of disputes by different discourses and theoretical perspectives, which produced different conceptions about the term. The use of the term difference (Abramowicz (2011; Costa, 2015; Brah, 2006) invariably appears in discussions about diversity and is fundamental to understand the variation of meanings attributed to this discussion.

Multiculturalism was one of the first theoretical perspectives to activate diversity as a central element of its debates. As Costa (2015) states, the expansion of the cultural rights of minorities that occurred from 1980 onwards is largely due to the adoption of the multiculturalism agenda by international organizations. Although discussions in the field of multiculturalism have arisen to oppose the Enlightenment project of modernity, which was based on the affirmation of the existence of a universal subject, the criticisms directed to this perspective, mainly by cultural (Hall, 2006) and postcolonial (Fanon, 1961) studies, lies precisely in the fact that their discussions ultimately resulted in the in a process of homogenization of differences. This is due to the adjective liberal attributed to multiculturalism:

Considering this analysis in a simplified and initial way, it is possible to identify in these matrices that diversity has a universal character, as it is a synthesis that totals differences, that is, differences and diversities are configured as a culture that, in this way, can then be exchanged. One of the resulting problems is that culture ends up losing its singular matrix and becomes a universal concept, like the biological (Abramowicz, 2011, p. 92).

The result of this process is the elaboration, in the multicultural context, of "an essentialist definition of culture that describes cultural identities as ancestral entities reproduced by endogenous processes to minorities, and which are, therefore, prior to politics itself" (Costa, 2015, p. 146). And yet, the defense of tolerance and respect for differences, as principles, makes it clear that difference is triggered in a clear relationship of hierarchy, because who should tolerate and who should be tolerated? Or, as Brah (2006) states, who defines the difference? From this perspective, power relations are not part of the equation of analysis of the constitution of diversity and/or differences. This ends up hiding, as Abramowicz (2011) states, inequalities.

As a result, the critiques of liberal multiculturalism, the culturalist and postcolonial perspective are based on the principle that there is no cultural identity prior to politics:



"Difference is constructed in the process of its manifestation, that is, it is not an entity or expression of an accumulated cultural stock, it is a flow of representations [...]. Discourses and subjects are simultaneously and mutually constituted" (Costa, 2015, p. 149-50). In this perspective, differences are no longer seen in a relationship of tension, occupying opposite poles, which would be resolved from a totalizing synthesis, as Abramowicz (2011, p. 92) points out: "For this perspective, difference is not appeased, since it is not a function to appease, what difference does is to differ; with each repetition it extracts a difference, that is, differences generate differences".

The influence of power relations in the construction of diversity is also introduced into the analysis. To this end, decolonial discussions (Lander, 1995), understood as a radicalization of postcolonial studies, bring great contributions. Postcolonial studies deal, as Oliveira and Candau (2010) state, with the extinction of the process of colonialism, understood as the process in which one nation (metropolis) exercises legal and economic power over another (colony). But, nevertheless, they do not question the permanence of coloniality. It is precisely on this that decolonial theorists will focus their attention, as it shows that all dimensions of the subject and spheres of society are affected, because, in addition to the coloniality of power (Quijano, 1995) we have been colonized and continue to suffer its effects also in the sphere of knowledge (Mignolo, 1995), through the imposition of knowledge produced by modernity, science, as the only legitimate knowledge, and of being (Maldonado-Torres, 1995), which also colonized subjectivities.

In this sense, a substantive diversity can only be unveiled when the epistemic hegemony of modernity is broken, and with that, we, peoples who have been subordinated, exploited, and racialized (Carneiro, 2023) can produce our own knowledge, be and be in the world from other epistemes. This process will result, as Walsh (2013) states, in critical interculturality, based on the coexistence between different epistemes and worldviews, which applied to education would result in what the author defines as decolonial pedagogy, as it is constituted from the need to deconstruct the monolithic and Eurocentric character from which the curriculum, methodologies and teaching practices have been historically constructed. In this context, diversity would no longer be presented as folklorization.

It is here that the cultural plurality of ethnic, social or cultural groups needs to be thought of as raw material for learning, but never as the content of special days, commemorative dates or certain moments in the classroom. To do this is to 'freeze' culture, to reify it, to transform it into a resource for folklorization and as such to accentuate differences. In this process, the possibility of communication and learning is broken to reinforce discriminatory mechanisms and inequality,



establishing the impossibility of exchange and equity processes between different subjects (Gusmão, 2003, p. 19).

According to the author, in addition to teaching, which is constituted in the act of repeating, creating a subordination, the act of learning is also necessary, constituted from the communication relationship, where the different agents of the educational process act as subjects with agency and, therefore, collaborators in the process of knowledge construction.

YOUTH PROTAGONISM AND DIVERSITY IN THE CIVIC-MILITARY SCHOOLS OF PARANÁ

On September 5, 2019 (BRASIL, 2019), the government of President Jair Bolsonaro instituted the National Program of Civic-Military Schools (PECIM). The implementation of PECIM in the State of Paraná took place on October 6, 2020 (PARANÁ, 2020) and amended on December 20, 2022 (PARANÁ, 2022), sanctioned by Governor Ratinho Júnior. Although the 2019 federal decree was revoked in 2023 (BRASIL, 2023) by President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, the government of the State of Paraná, which had already started the program in 2020 in 186 schools, expanded its reach and, in 2024, totals 312 schools (PARANÁ, 2024).

PECIM (BRASIL, 2019) adopts a management model managed by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces and promised to improve the quality of basic education (elementary and secondary education) in public schools that are in a situation of social vulnerability. The legislation in force in the State of Paraná for Civic-Military Schools (PARANÁ, 2022) follows the same objectives and also includes the modality of professional education. Article 3 points out that the management team will have the position of principal and assistant principal, which will be occupied by teachers from the teaching staff and monitors. These, according to the third item of the same article, are defined as follows:

[...] monitors, who may be military members of the Corps of Inactive Volunteer State Military - CMEIV, to act in activities of a civic-military nature, and the number of monitors will be established in a resolution of the Secretary of State for Education. (Text given by Law No. 21,388 of 05 Apr. 2023) (PARANÁ, 2022).

And yet, the sole paragraph of this same article defines that: "for the administration and coordination of the Program, at the discretion of SEED, state military personnel may



be assigned to SEED, the State Secretariat of Public Security - SESP and the Military Police of Paraná - PMPR" (PARANÁ, 2022). According to the Manual of Civic-Military Schools, it is up to the monitors:

The oldest State Military Monitor (of highest rank/graduation), organizes the team of state military monitors in each institution and assists the Director General in internal administrative activities, in the area of pedagogical management, as well as in extracurricular activities, all of a civic-military nature. Civil-military activities are organized and carried out by the oldest Military Monitor, with the highest hierarchical precedence (PARANÁ, 2024a).

According to the Guide for the Standardization of Activities of the Civic-Military College Program of the State of Paraná (PARANÁ, 2024b), the presence of the military in the school environment will contribute to the fight against violence in these institutions and, consequently, will result in increased security. According to this Guide, the standardization of actions and self-discipline and respect for norms and values are indispensable. This document defines the school routine, which is constituted by the civic moment: "This activity, among others that we highlight here in detail, also contributes to the formation of more critical citizens, able to live in society and reflect on which country we aspire to" (PARANÁ, 2024b, p. 2). The activity is coordinated by the Corps of Inactive State Military Volunteers – CMEIV, which consists of the "daily singing of the anthem", alternating between the national, state and municipal anthems. The so-called "graduations", in which the students of each class are organized in rows, with the help of students chosen by the monitors who perform the function of head and deputy chief (the deputy chief helps the head or replaces him in his absence) of the class, who, among other functions, are responsible for the organization of their class, to sing the anthem at the time the flags are hoisted. It is also up to the boss to present the class daily to the teacher or authority, as well as to report behavior of colleagues that transgress the disciplinary rules. There is a recommendation that these functions be assigned to shy students, with the intention of developing in them the strengthening of self-esteem and leadership. But, there is a reiteration, "if any student does not wish to exercise the function of class leader, the management team will solve the situation" (PARANA, 2024b, p. 7).

The military monitors are responsible for this organization, which includes checking the position of sense, the spacing between the students and verbally expressing the voice of command. There is also in this document the orientation that the form of greeting that students should spend on everyone is continence. The practice of *awarding* among



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students is also instituted , both with regard to the issue of grades and what is called "credit of positive observed facts" (PARANÁ, 2024b, p.12), with the delivery of certificates and medals.

The Manual of Civic-Military Schools of Paraná (PARANÁ, 2024a) is another document that claims to be in line with national and state educational legislation and that provides for teaching and social standards established for the school daily life of these institutions. According to its guidelines:

The fundamentals of respect and discipline are values that provide opportunities for the improvement of the school environment and collaborate for human and civic formation, enabling new ways of confronting violence, development of student protagonism and contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace in educational institutions [...]. In addition, it aims to offer conditions that promote equal conditions for the student's access and permanence in school, respect for individual differences, and that emphasize the freedom to learn, teach, research and disseminate culture, thought, art and knowledge along with the active participation of the family in school. (PARANÁ, 2024a, p. 2).

It also establishes a code of honor, which alludes to the main principles and values, such as respect and discipline. Standardization is also aesthetic, because the uniform, or in the terms used in the document, the uniform, is standardized containing the CCM logo, the name of the school and the name and surname of the student, which cannot be changed or customized. For both girls and boys, uniforms consist of pants, jackets and dress shirts, with the exception of physical activities that are carried out with a specific uniform. The use of the beret in uncovered spaces is mandatory. There is a detailed description of how the beret should be worn, the same applies to the rest of the uniform (e.g. the collar of the jacket should always be folded). There are even guidelines about accessories used in winter such as gloves, scarves and caps, which should be in black or blue. Boys are forbidden to wear long hair, and must be cut in the "half-hair style". And also:

Scraped cuts, drawings, such as letters, symbols, scratches, etc., colored paintings, topknots or "mohawk" cuts are not allowed. It is also not advisable to wear a mustache, beard or goatee for students. The use of earrings is not allowed, even superimposed by micropore adhesive tapes or adhesive dressings, etc [...]. The student will not be allowed to make drawings (cuts) on the eyebrows so that they do not alter their natural shape by cuts or scratches that disfigure them (PARANÁ, 2024a, p. 14-5).

With regard to girls' aesthetics, it is recommended that their hair is always tied and, when using artificial coloring, that it be with discreet colors, and it is not allowed to use props. The use of earrings is allowed as long as it is "small" and makeup as long as it is



"discreet". It is recommended to keep nails short and when painted, that they are with "discreet colors". The use of piercings and reamers are prohibited, both for girls and boys.

It is noteworthy that, in these documents, there is a rigid standardization both in terms of aesthetics and the behavior of the students: "The Guide makes everyone follow the same daily routes in the activities carried out in the school routine" (PARANÁ, 2024b, p. 2). But, at the same time, they affirm that it is necessary to "respect the peculiarities of each of the educational institutions in the state of Paraná, because each school and its community are unique and differentiated" (p. 2). It also talks about the importance of respecting individual differences and also the need to encourage youth protagonism, which seems to be contradictory in the face of the main theoretical discussions that conceptualize diversity and youth protagonism.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding diversity and youth protagonism in education must start from a plural perspective of youth. To this end, it is essential that the differences that constitute diversity consider social markers such as ethnic-racial, gender, sexuality, etc., and also the power relations that are implied and intersected.

The educational model of the Civic-Military Schools of Paraná is subject to the same legislation as the others in terms of curriculum, therefore, its pedagogical practice is associated with this guideline that preaches the encouragement of youth protagonism and diversity. As we can see, it is a dual logic, as they are subjected to this process of monetization of ways of life and, in addition, they are also subjected to a logic based on customs and morals by introducing standardization into daily school practice through the adoption of the rules and values of military training.



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