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BNCC FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND THE EMERGENCY OF RESISTANCES

ABSTRACT

This theoretical essay aims to problematize the idea of the Base Nacional Common Curricular (BNCC) for early childhood education and the paradoxical, universal and homogenizing proposal aimed at "building a fair, democratic and inclusive society". Throughout the text, we discuss the words/concepts that make up this document, critically dissecting what they supposedly call BASE - NATIONAL - COMMON - CURRICULUM. We point to the traps of a universal curriculum and the relevance of intersectional analyzes that consider markers of differences such as ethnicity, age, gender, and social class. Then, we approach some aspects of neoliberal public policies that defend privatist and competitive initiatives that place education as a commodity and a target for entrepreneurs. We finish by indicating elements of an emancipatory Pedagogy from birth that promotes resistance and fights for equity and social transformation.

Keywords: Early Children. Curriculum. Emancipation.

BNCC PARA A EDUCAÇÃO INFANTIL E A URGÊNCIA DE RESISTÊNCIAS

RESUMO

Este ensaio teórico tem como objetivo problematizar a ideia de uma Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) para a educação infantil e a paradoxal proposta universal e homogeneizadora, que visa a "construção de uma sociedade justa, democrática e inclusiva". Ao longo do texto problematizamos as palavras/conceitos que compõem esse documento, dissecando criticamente o que pretensamente denominam de BASE – NACIONAL – COMUM – CURRICULAR. Apontamos para as armadilhas de um currículo universal e a relevância de análises interseccionais que considerem os marcadores de diferenças como etnia, idade, gênero e classe social. Em seguida, abordamos alguns aspectos das políticas públicas neoliberais que defendem iniciativas privatistas e competitivas e colocam a educação como mercadoria e alvo de empresários. Finalizamos indicando elementos de uma Pedagogia emancipatória desde o nascimento, que promova resistências e lutas pela equidade e pela transformação social.

Palavras-chave: Crianças pequenas. Currículo. Emancipação.

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INTRODUCTION

After almost three years of the controversial approval of the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC) and in the midst of a pandemic, we are faced with a scenario that demands a lot of reflection and proposes to increase our capacity for overcoming and hope that, in spite of everything, better days will come. It's in this context that we accept the invitation to participate in the composition of this dossier and bring provocations to think about **Early Childhood Education and the curriculum(s)**.

In this essay, we propose to conduct a theoretical reflection, but with the air of denunciation and indignation that the proposal for a BNCC for children's education brings many more obstacles than solutions for the already known Brazilian social problems. "After all, who dictates a basis and why does it? At whose service?" (GOBBI, 2016, p. 120).

We will try to discuss here what a "curriculum" that is not "curriculum", but that everyone sees as a universal "curriculum" can guarantee of quality for the education of young children. And just like Gobbi (2016, p. 120) we still wonder:

[...] why propose a curricular basis and of a national character, when we still needed to know better, appropriate ourselves and materialize the National Curriculum Guidelines, which, it seems to me, had not yet reached their full force? What interests lie in these paths?

The National Curriculum Guidelines for Child Education (DCNEI, 2009) present the basic principles of pedagogical work in early childhood education without being prescriptive and places the child at the center of the educational process. Without disassociating education from caring and bringing as its structuring axes interactions and games, this document still needed to be better taken advantage of and disseminated in the country's educational institutions. Therefore, we agree with Arelaro (2017, p. 215, our griffins) when it says that:

There was a misconception on the part of social movements and syndicates linked to the teaching profession, especially those in the area of children's education, **not to try to prevent the inclusion of children's education** in the BNCC document, since, even though there are no legal requirements in the LDB for this inclusion, in versions I and II, started in 2013, it was included [...].

In order to discuss the universal curricular proposal, we must also discuss the inequalities that affect Brazilian children and relate to the intersectionality between race, ethnicity, age, gender and social class. As well as, the advance of neoliberal policies that take not only education, but also children, as merchandise.

The Sociology of Childhood in intersection with the studies of Social Sciences, in a post-colonial perspective, help us to reflect on the living conditions of young children, their subalternity, exclusion, but also resistances, since they are social subjects who act and react on reality, producing children's cultures. These subjects that society insists on excluding from the social scene and from political participation, as well points out Qvortrup (2010).

We understand social inequality as intrinsic to capitalism and we cannot fail to consider the economic and political factors that impact the education and life of children, since the discussion of the quality of early childhood education also involves the issue of financing (CORREA, 2019).

In the history of Brazilian children's education, Kuhllman Junior (1999) had already discussed in his studies that the proclaimed lack of pedagogy or of a curriculum in the care institutions that housed children from 0 to 3 years old, before the Federal Constitution of 1988, was actually a pedagogy and a curriculum directed towards the poor, an education for them to recognize from an early age their place of obedience and submission.

Thus, the discussion of a curriculum for early childhood education comes throughout our history bearing the hallmarks of inequality. Now, when he proposes a curriculum that compensates for the cultural needs of children from the popular classes, or when he promotes the anticipation of schooling, in spite of the fact that the researchers from the area present data on the inadequacy of subjecting children to the processes of early schooling.

Here are a few reasons why we advocate that children should be educated in public spaces and that they should be able to, collectively, play and explore the various ways of expressing themselves in multiple languages, which goes far beyond the learning rights propagated by the BNCC. We are talking about life, creation, production, interaction, experiences experienced by different, multiple children, who live in diverse spacetimes, cultures, rhythms and sounds, which are beyond the "common level of learning" (BNCC, 2018).

BASE: TO COVER, DISGUISE, HIDE... WHAT?

[...] the policy of children's education in Brazil is still based on economic, social, regional, racial, gender and age inequalities. (OLIVEIRA; ABRAMOWICZ, 2017, p. 296).

Based on the finding made by the authors in the above quote, and despite the advances in the access of small children to educational institutions, we still live disparities that require vigilance and struggle for public education, free and quality is offered to all

children from 0 to 5 years in the national territory. Given this, we can infer that the idea of a BASE arises much more as a <u>disguise</u> to convey the idea that everything is done and only the construction of a "National reference for the formulation of curricula of school systems and networks" (BNCC, 2018, p. 8).

In addition, BASE <u>covers</u> the interest in benefiting business groups that have in public education a motto to earn profits. By proposing that "in addition to curricula, it will influence the initial and continuing education of educators, the production of teaching materials, assessment matrices and national examinations that will be reviewed in the light of the approved text of the Base" (BNCC, 2018, p. 5) presents an arsenal of profitable possibilities, since it unfolds in several niches of a capitalism without risks in which the investment is made by the State. It's the state that builds new buildings and provides furniture for the functioning of school institutions, it also provides clients who need training (teachers, management teams and other public agents who work in the area of education). And so, the business class shares the market responsible for selling to the State the management of the educational units, the pedagogical material (handbooks, books, games, software, etc.) and the "necessary" formation of the teachers and everything else that they invent.

The idea of a BASE also <u>hides</u> the interest in the widespread standardized large-scale evaluations. By using the term "cognitive learning" it's restricted to learning reading and mathematical codes, which can, like other skills and abilities, be measured in large-scale tests. In this way, it compacts and feeds the evaluation system fostered by neoliberal policies, ratified by the idea that knowledge "[...] is basically merchandise and, strictly speaking, money; as neutral and interchangeable, as subject to profitability and accelerated circulation as money" (LARROSA, 2002, p. 20).

But there are escapes to this capitalist logic, for as Miller (2014) states, the "test creators and those who prescribe them disregard the nuances, the messy details of the lives lived", since "[...] thinking is not only 'reasoning' or 'calculating' or 'arguing', as we have been taught at times, but it's above all giving meaning to what we are and what happens to us" (LARROSA, 2002, p. 21).

NATIONAL: WHO IS PART OF THIS NATION PROJECT?

It must be emphasized that the universal perspective is not given a priori, it was produced as truth and as a value that is assumed and purported to be universal. The question is: why does the difference need to be purged of education? And why does kindergarten need a common basis? (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 49).

The idea of a national employed in a curricular proposal in the 21st century makes us understand that differences continue to be ignored and excluded. Every nation project excludes people, proposing what would be ideal for that territory and that people. It circumscribes a space-time and defines who is a citizen of that place, strengthens the borders and ratifies a standard of being and being in that territory. It's worth remembering, that all this was and is thought by adults, mostly male, white, heterosexual, Christian.

The proposal to unify learning disguised as rights, cancels out in advance any manifestation of the children about their wishes and realities. It assumes in advance the daily life of a generic child, which does not exist. It also aims to unify a country in a pedagogical agreement that omits any possibility of conflict and social transformation, disregards the core of a democratic society and ratifies the idea of homogeneity.

All this makes us think about the political setbacks that we are experiencing and that threaten our freedom of expression, such as the law of gag imposed by the projects of the so-called 'school without party', militarized schools, censorship in art and in the press, persecution and imprisonment of individual and collective demonstrations. Dark, difficult times, which call for attention to be paid to these kinds of proposals that induce an idea of non-existent neutrality and take away from education its power of transformation and its political character.

Whereas '[...] there is a certain type of life that will be taken as universal in the BNCC and, in the case of early childhood education, a certain type of child and, above all, of childhood' (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 52), we see as intentional the omission of precarious living conditions of street children, misery, child labor; the struggles of settled children, occupations; the cultures and ancestral histories of quilombo and indigenous children; the daily lives of riveritable children, of riveritable children honha, from the backcountry. Although they are silent existences, of an already lived and announced exclusion, children resist, insist, and today, almost always, survive.

It's worth bringing here the reflections pointed out by Abramowicz, Cruz and Moruzzi (2016, p. 48):

[...] The assumption that there is a universal space, where one can produce something that is common, generic and at the same time, unifying, from possible agreements is based on an idea of consensus that presupposes the explicit 'non-use' of force and power. That is, the apology of the concept of universal presupposes the underlying idea of the BNCC that there is a possible unity in multiplicity and that it can be realized without the use of a unifying force. In this bias, one type of thinking has almost the function of the State: To unify. That is, an idea, a knowledge, "a thought" unifies the differences, in a unity, for this function of State [...].

Unify to standardize, teach, identify, evaluate, examine, rank, program, annul, silence, control, alienate, hire, pay, erase, bury.

COMMON: WHAT IS COMMON ABOUT BRAZILIAN CHILDREN?

There are times, forms, values, contents, needs, conditions, diverse desires in the different groups and people that need to be considered and that cannot be converted into accelerated modes of knowledge production, regardless of age (GOBBI, 2016, p. 126).

We are almost 211.8 million Brazilians and Brazilians, of which 35.5 million are children (people up to 12 years old); (PNAD, 2018). In a territory calculated at 8,510,345,538 km². With an indigenous population of 817,963 (IBGE, 2010). "The IBGE estimates that in Brazil there were 7,103 indigenous localities and 5,972 quilombo localities in 2019¹". We asked ourselves in the light of this brief data: what should all these people have in common? The fact that it's a people? Or being kids?

Why do they continue to treat children as a generic, a-historical being, who lack a voice, who lack everything and who knows nothing? In spite of all the advance of pedagogical theories, of Social Sciences and of some currents of Psychology already affirming children as knowledgeable beings, who learn even when nobody teaches, who interpret the world and act upon it, who experience the blemishes and blessings of their social belonging, political-pedagogical documents insist on disqualifying all the complexity that involves children as human persons.

It's also worth highlighting the omission of the very cultural constitution of our country, which makes us diverse and multiple as social groups. The approach taken in these documents seems to be centered on south-south-east regions, urban children, white children and children without disabilities. We therefore agree with Abramowicz, Cruz and Moruzzi (2016, p. 48-9) when they state that:

https://www.geledes.org.br/contra-covid-19-ibge-antecipa-dados-sobre-indigenas-e-quilombolas/

The presumption of the common bumps into what is not bearable and not belonging to all, that is, what is put in the place of difference. The question is that a unified basis sets up a model and makes everything move towards a certain purpose, subordinated to certain processes.

We reiterate that children bear the marks of their class membership, their ethnicity, and their gender, among others, that is, "the proletarian child is born within his class" (BENJAMIN, 1984, p. 90).

Gobbi (2016, p. 120) still provokes us to think about the "effective promotion and guarantee of the presence of children as agents in different social, cultural and economic conditions and contexts". For it's only possible to guarantee the protagonism of children when their voices are legitimized, their stories respected, and their daily lives and their cultures known.

The power relations expressed in these policies show that antagonistic societal projects are in dispute, so there is no way to speak in unity, although the idea of something "[...] common appears as singular and is allied to the proposal that there may be a definition of something that can be materialized and applied to everyone in an equal way". (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 54).

The dangerous idea of equality confirms the exclusion of certain subjects and groups, as well as:

What is out of the ordinary are differences: *queers*, trans people, those who are not universal, blacks, the new forms of life, but the BNCC intends to contemplate them in a generic way in diversity, so that they do not claim differences (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 57).

To demand differences, to generate conflicts, to fight for the rights of each and every one, to go out of the ordinary and to go to the diverse, multiple, which is the margin, is the function of all, all and everyone who believe in a democratic, just and inclusive education.

CURRICULUM: TRAJECTORIES OF SCHOOLCHILDREN?

[...] talking about curriculum does not mean restricting knowledge to perspectives and subjects, as highlighted by Mantovani, in the opening ceremony; curriculum is exploring, learning in relationships and with art, establishing connections, documenting experience and assembling it with professionalism, organizational wisdom and creativity. (SANTIAGO; FARIA, 2016, p. 94).

The curriculum acts in the production of subjectivities, identity or belonging. Curriculum theorization in education is the fundamental axis in educational processes, much

more comprehensive and complex than a list of neutral minimum contents and based on scientific knowledge, as defined by traditional or non-critical theories of the curriculum.

The issues surrounding the curriculum in the education of young and small children, go far beyond the selection and valorization of some knowledge. The main question that is asked in relation to the curricular discussions "What to teach?" does not fit in this context, since in Child Education we do not refer to public education or instruction, but the integral education of the child shared between the family and society. In children's education, the inseparability of caring for and educating is also advocated, as is the value of multiple languages that go beyond school content.

The power disputes that involve valuing and selecting certain knowledge, expressed in curricular theories, currently extrapolate the capital and labor relationship and encompass the struggles of minorities for recognition of their differences and valuing the knowledge of groups subjugated by race, gender, and creed, among others.

The BNCC, with its odd codes, tables and age divisions, reduces day-to-day life in kindergartens and preschools to the fulfillment of educational goals that do not fit with a curriculum built collectively and in relation to children's cultures. On the contrary, it makes relations and interactions invisible.

There is even a risk that children's education will be considered as an educational and preparatory stage for entry into elementary education. This again contradicts the new pedagogical conceptions in defense of children, expressed in CNE Resolution n. 05/2009. (ARELARO, 2017, p. 215-6).

Early schooling devalues the various creative processes and children as producers of knowledge and their relationships in children's cultures. The learning and development goals for very young children (1 year and 7 months to 3 years and 11 months) privilege the fields of experience: Listening, speaking, thinking and imagination with 9 defined skills and spaces, times, quantities, relationships and transformations with 8 skills to be achieved. Thus continues the appreciation of Portuguese and Mathematics as the privileged languages in school.

In the framework it presents "learning rights" in early childhood education, it states: "Six learning and development rights, so that children are able to <u>learn and develop</u>". (BNCCEI, 2018, p. 25, our griffin) below when referring to the fields of experience the same argument is used "the BNCC establishes five fields of experience, in which children can <u>learn and develop</u>". (BNCCEI, 2018, p. 25, our griffin). It reduces life rich in plurality, discoveries, imagination, creativity, enchantment and experiences in "<u>learning and</u>".

<u>developing</u>". This cause and effect relationship in which adults act on children's minds and stimulate their learning and development as if there were pre-determined stages and patterns for child development has a castrating function.

Even the interactions and games that are the guiding axes of Childhood Education defined in the National Curriculum Guidelines were interpreted by this utilitarian bias: "Interaction during play characterizes the daily life of childhood, bringing with it many learning and potentials for the development integral of children" (BNCCEI, 2018, p. 37, our griffin).

The age division that it classifies as "babies (zero to 1 year and 6 months); very young children (1 year and 7 months to 3 years and 11 months) and young children (4 years to 5 years and 11 months)" (BNCC, 2018) is not justified in the document and our assumption is that it's also grounded in aspects of biological development, such as for example, babies are children who do not walk and wear diapers, which disqualifies babies and ignores the social perspectives of studies on childhood.

The concept of fields of experience of origin in Italian Pedagogy was misrepresented by the BNCC, because the idea of Fields of experience is antagonistic to the perspective of control of skills and competencies, since originally, they present that:

The center of educational actions and reflections is in children, focusing on the production of children's cultures, and the role of adults is to provide elements for the construction of meaningful relationships by boys and girls, seeking to evidence and enable the experience in the complexity of the world. (SANTIAGO, FARIA, 2016, p. 93).

Such misrepresentation converges to ratify the interests of neoliberal policies, as organized groups such as the "Movement for the Base" announce as the main principle: "To have a focus on the knowledge, skills and essential values that everyone has the right to learn for their full development and the development of society in the 21st century". And so follow "the recommendations of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, when adopting a BNCC, Brazil spells out its alignment to the impoverished model of education" (CORREA, 2019, p. 86).

Early Childhood Education from an equal rights perspective aims to train subjects who are not mere doers of things, skilled adults, and competent. Human formation in an emancipatory perspective acts by considering everyone as thinking beings from birth.

In contemporary urban life, the educational spaces of Childhood Education provide a socialization and opportunities to experience the first friendships among peers. In these

places it's possible to live with their peers, not only of the same age group, but with children of different ages and different experiences. Thus, exploring, creating and recreating children's cultures can contribute to thinking about society as a whole: "Children's cultures manifest themselves as openings for new ways of seeing and understanding childhood and its meaning, both for children themselves and beyond" (PRADO, 2006, p. 2).

The nurseries and preschools are spaces that also express the confrontations arising from curricular conceptions and training proposals, reaffirm themselves as spaces for political discussions, of disputes about the different perspectives of education and care.

THE URGENCY OF RESISTANCE

[...] in agreeing and converging towards a supposed consensus of acceptance of a common basis for children's education, there is a loss for those who take the difference as a pedagogical/educational motto, because the form or 'casing' on which the basis is based, that is, the common and the universal, imposes, from the outset, a content that must be 'homogeneous', unique, common and universal, because the difference does not fit, since it always differs. Furthermore, a theoretical and practical effort must be made so that the fields of experience are not the forefront of the classical contents systematized in disciplines (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 51).

The teaching of skills combined with the privatization and commercialization of life propagates the idea that children are the property of adults whose education should be the responsibility of each family in the case of young children. The appreciation of meritocracy, on the other hand, conditions success or failure to the individual effort of each.

One must keep reminding that a minimum national curriculum will not improve education nor guarantee development and better distribution of income. What he has to offer is only the attempt to control the 'imponderable' on which depends, not the success of education, but the hegemony of the neoliberal imaginary of which he is a part (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 64).

For decades, however, the neoliberal agenda has included direct actions on the education of young children and makes proposals for intervention from birth. Among these actions, the growing privatization of day care centers happens in contradiction, in parallel to important conquests, such as, for example, the recognition of the subjective right of Brazilian children to education since birth, inserted in the Federal Constitution of 1988.

The businessmen or business reformers who are working in Brazilian education want to expand to the day nurseries and preschools a version of toyotism and the neoliberal perspectives present in the schools of fundamental schooling. They prescribe a pedagogy of skills and competences for all basic education, with the argument that it's necessary to invest the resources in early childhood, promote privatization in all modalities and attack public higher education and financial resources destined to universities as prescribed by international bodies. They disregard the science and knowledge produced in the area of childhood studies. With a utilitarian vision and narrow-mindedness announce:

Early childhood education (ISE) has three overlapping functions: First, it's a form of care that keeps children healthy, well nourished and safe while their parents are at work; second, it's a means of socializing young children to acquire socio-emotional skills; and third, it's a vehicle for cognitive learning, including basic literacy and mathematical literacy (OECD, 2001-2018, p. 63).

We advocate that daily life in the educational institutions of childhood contemplate a life with art, joy and play in which collectively and, in relation to reciprocity with adult society, build the cultures of children, live the present, have their childhoods respected and are not sacrificed in the name of preparation for the future. Contrary to the entrepreneurial vision in which "life" is reduced to its biological dimension, to the satisfaction of needs (generally induced, always increased by the logic of consumption), to the survival of individuals and society (LAROSSA, 2002, p. 20) and on this entrepreneurial perspective that destroys the freedom and creativity of play.

And we reiterate the words of Arelaro (2017, p. 219):

In this dramatic moment that we are living in the country, more than ever the union is fundamental for us to be able to put actions and rights back in their proper place, in particular, the objectives and the role of children's education in the healthy development of our children. We must therefore organize ourselves to guarantee and fight for

- 1) Not incorporating literacy and literacy in preschool and all early childhood education:
- 2) Uncompromising defense of play in children's education;
- 3) Resistance to the application of statistical tests to "measure the quality" of early childhood education;
- 4) Construction of pedagogical projects that meet young children in the set of their psychological, cultural, emotional and educational needs;
- (5) Consistent theoretical and practical training of children and teachers of early childhood education, allowing them to choose differentiated and coherent methods for their childhood;
- 6) Condition of dignity of work and salary of the Brazilian education workers and professionals, which have been systematically devalued.

Many resistances are needed so that "a BNCC does not erase what is extraordinary in children and in the daily life of Brazilian kindergartens and preschools" (ANJOS; SANTOS, 2016, p. 6).

[...] we defend the idea that children's education should be guided by a perspective in which experiments prevail, the creation of possible new ones, thoughts, starting from make-believe and games, something impossible to be encapsulated, universalized and sold as a commodity. (ABRAMOWICZ; CRUZ; MORUZZI, 2016, p. 52).

That is, in dark and backward times, we advocate an emancipatory pedagogy from birth, which makes possible conflicts, transformations, singularities, differences, the unusual, the free to think, create, recreate and resist.

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