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EPISTEMIC UNLEARNING: REFLECTIONS ON OFFICIAL FORMAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND DECOLONIALITY

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ABSTRACT

This text aims at addressing some historical and conceptual elements that anchor the decolonial discussion in order to contribute to the debate on the dimension of the formal/official curriculum as a narrative of selected concepts. It represents part of a culture defined as valid for composing the curricula, legitimized and guided by Curriculum Theories and Policies, constructed and managed by interests that guide them in different historical moments. For this, we carried out a literature review based on authors who theoretically support these discussions. The results showed that the decolonial option is an epistemic option that also means learning to unlearn and, for that, epistemic (theoretical) disobedience is necessary. Based on the study, we assume that this disobedience must undoubtedly be part of the elaboration of curricular policies and official curricula of formal education, and may, therefore, constitute an alternative to deconstruct what was built from modernity/ coloniality.

INTRODUCTION

The present text aims to reflect on the relationship between curricular discussions and the decolonial debate, listing elements and concepts that can help to rethink less colonized curricula and practices, in the context of formal education, as well as to provoke reflection on how difficult it is relearn and/or deconstruct something that has been placed as absolute truth, historically, and sometimes legitimized by the official education system. The methodology for choosing the sources for this theoretical study consisted of choosing authors with a decolonial theoretical framework as a perspective under construction, namely: Davis (2016), Ballestrin (2013), Grosfoguel (2008, 2016), Gonzalez (1982, 1988), Bernardino-Costa (2016), Mignolo (2017, 2014, 2008), Santos & Meneses (2009), and Palermo (2018). In this context, Lander (2005) provokes us to think about the role of Social Sciences, which leads us to Freire (1978, 1987, 1999, 2003) and Walsh (2012; 2013) to discuss the relationship between politics and education, boosting the reflection that leads to a less colonized education. From this, we enter the issue of the formal curriculum as a space of power and political and ideological dispute. We evoke authors who contribute to curricular narratives from a counter-hegemonic perspective to assist in this debate, such as Moreira & Silva (2001), Sacristán, (2000), Savi (2014), Arroyo (2011), and Silva (1999).

Based on these authors and their studies, the categories that move the text are postcolonialism, modernity/coloniality, decoloniality, education and politics, formal/official curriculum, and curriculum theories and policies. The text is structured in: introduction, which precedes the other sections, in which we highlight the objective, methodology, main themes, and authors who support the study; then, we present historical and conceptual elements that anchor the decolonial perspective; in the sequence, we reflect on the dimension of the formal/official curriculum as narratives in dispute and the need to decolonize it; finally, we make the final considerations of the study.

Colonialism, Decoloniality, and Formal Education: Introductory Questions: In this section, we list some historical and conceptual elements that anchor the decolonial discussion and their relationship with the issue of official formal education curricula. Regarding colonialism and its multiple facets of domination and exploitation, Angela Davis (2016, p. 161) assumes that "perhaps the worst crime that colonialism committed in our country, and indeed committed in all former colonies, is the educational system," which is used, according to the author, to teach the colonized people to hate themselves, abandon their history, their culture, and their values, making them accept the "principles of white superiority, destroy our confidence, repress our creativity, perpetuate privileges and class differences" (Davis, 2016, p. 161). Thus, colonizers realized that if

their histories and cultures "then they would have already completed the job of keeping us under perpetual domination and exploitation" (Davis 2016, p. 161). In other words, formal education consisted of an instrument of massification and domination of souls and bodies. However, many studies have problematized the colonization process of colonial countries in recent decades, which we call decolonial studies. In this sense, we start from the understanding of Decoloniality as the "practice of opposition and intervention, which emerged at the time when the first colonial subject of the modern/colonial world system reacted against the imperial designs that began in 1492" (Bernardino-Costa & Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 17). It is the opposition to colonialism, a model in which countries in Europe exercised domination over the colonies. The authors continue to state that colonialism was the sine qua non condition for the formation not only of Europe but modernity itself. Regarding the genesis of decolonial discussions, we highlight the Subaltern Studies Group, in South Asia, led by Ranajit Guha, considered an epistemic, intellectual, and political movement that reinforced postcolonialism in the 1970s, with higher visibility in the mid-1980s. The main project of this group was to "critically analyze not only the colonial historiography of India conducted by European westerners but also the Eurocentric Indian nationalist historiography" (Grosfoguel, 2008, p.116). This project inspired the emergence of another similar group dedicated to the study of the subaltern in Latin America. The term "subaltern" has its origins in Antonio Gramsci and is "understood as a disaggregated and episodic class or group that has a historical tendency towards an always provisional unification through the obliteration of the dominant classes" (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 92-93).

However, the group dedicated to the study of the subaltern in Latin America was decomposed and, as a result, there were the first meetings of a new group, called Modernity/Coloniality (M/C), composed of Latin American intellectuals from various universities in the Americas. The group pushed for the "critical and utopian renewal of social sciences in Latin America in the 21st century: the radicalization of the postcolonial argument on the continent through the notion of the "decolonial turn" (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 89), that is, a theoretical renovation, with problematizing historical reinterpretations. This movement defends […] "the decolonial option" – epistemic, theoretical, and political – to understand and act in the world, marked by the permanence of global coloniality at different levels of personal and collective life" (Ballestrin, 2013, p. 89). In this sense, Grosfoguel (2016) claims that Western men's monopoly of knowledge and the inferiorization of others generated the production of epistemic racism/sexism, disqualifying others, as the inferiorization of "knowledge produced by men and women across the planet has endowed Western men with the epistemic privilege of defining what is true, what is reality, and what is best for others" (Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 25). Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls it epistemicide, referring to the destruction of knowledge associated with the destruction of human beings, that is, "[…] suppression of local knowledge perpetrated by alien knowledge" (Santos & Meneses, 2009, p. 10). As a result, colonized and subalternized peoples had their culture and values made invisible to the culture and values of the colonizers. Therefore, the difference between conquerors and conquered in this world-system[1] was codified based on the idea of race (Bernardino-Costa & Grosfoguel, 2016, p. 17). The Eurocentric construction "thinks and organizes the totality of time and space for all humanity from the point of view of its own experience" (Lander, 2005. p. 13) so that its historical-cultural particularities were taken as a standard of superior and universal reference and, according to the author, other ways of being, of organizing society, and knowledge, are transformed not only into different ones but into needy, archaic, primitive, traditional, pre-modern ways. Considering that modern/colonial and capitalist society is practically unsustainable and that the hardships of the colonial heritage have deeply marked us, the need to reflect on the potential of thought emerges nowadays and in Latin America in the context of a crisis of thought and ethics that guided the West, "a West colonially extended to almost all societies

in the world, 'external' to its centrality" (Palermo, 2018, p. 149). This crisis has been questioned from other places in search of a liberating praxis. Thus, over the last few decades, the decolonial perspective has advanced, first, in the midst of the social sciences and, subsequently, spreading to other areas of knowledge. The Social Sciences are relevant in terms of the search for alternatives to the exclusionary and unequal conformation of the modern world, which requires an "effort to deconstruct the universal and natural character of capitalist-liberal society" (Lander, 2005, p. 7). According to the author, it requires questioning the pretensions of objectivity and neutrality of the main instruments of naturalization and legitimation of this social order, that is, the social sciences. The author also draws attention to possible alternatives to Eurocentric-colonial thinking in Latin America. These alternatives involve the dimension of popular participation and appreciation of popular knowledge, the praxis as liberation, the rethinking of the role of the social researcher, the plurality of voices and knowledge, the dependence as resistance, and the constant review of the entire process, identified in liberation theology and liberation philosophy.[2]

In this sense, Freire (2003), together with the philosophy of liberation, proposes the inseparability of politics and education, since, according to him, education is a political action and a means of social transformation. The author was driven by peasant struggles in Latin America at the end of the 50s and beginning of the 60s, a time when the majority of the Brazilian population was illiterate and, in that context, illiterate people did not participate in political life and, therefore, Freire (2003) saw adult literacy a possibility for insertion, political participation, and liberation.

> Literacy is related to individual and class identity; it is related to the formation of citizenship. However, it is necessary to know, first, that it is not the lever of such training – reading and writing are not enough to outline the fullness of citizenship –; second, it is necessary that we make it a political act and never as a neutral thing to do (Freire, 2003, p. 30).

According to the author, literacy goes beyond reading words, it is also necessary to read reality. We can identify points that converge with postcolonial literature by observing some works by Freire (1987, 1999, 1978, and 2003), such as the oppressed and oppressor relationship, the issue of dehumanization, the problematization of reality, liberation, and emancipation of men and women, among others. According to Freire (1987, p. 16), dehumanization is not a historical vocation, but a possible distortion in history and the result of an "unfair order that generates the violence of oppressors and it the being less." To contribute to the above, we bring elements from the book "Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau", a combination of letters exchanged between Paulo Freire and Mário Cabral (Guinea-Bissau Education and Culture Commissioner at that time) and the literacy team during literacy activities in Guinea-Bissau, Africa, from which we highlight the following excerpt:

> In fact, inherited colonial education, of which one of the main objectives was the "de-Africanization" of nationals, discriminating, mediocre verbalist, could not contribute to national reconstruction since it was not constituted for this (Freire, 1978, p. 15).

In other words, colonial education masterfully fulfills the purpose for which it was created, which is to domesticate, conform, and legitimize a culture, the Eurocentric one. The author states that this colonial school is undemocratic in its objectives, from a few to a few, dissociated from reality and selective. Furthermore, he emphasizes the feeling of inferiority, the incapacity of individuals to face their own failure, reproducing the colonialist ideology, which seeks to instill in children and young people the certainty that they are inferior beings, incapable and "whose only salvation would be in becoming

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1 Division of the world into three hierarchical levels – center, periphery, and semi-periphery (Wallerstein, 1974).

2 Movement that emerged in Latin America and refers to the Post-modern, popular, feminist, youth, oppressed, condemned of the earth, condemned of the world, and history philosophy (Dussel, 1977, p. 7).

'whites' or 'blacks with a white soul'" (Freire, 1978, p. 15). The author also says:

> The history of the colonized "began" with the arrival of the colonizers, with their "civilizing" presence; the culture of the colonized, an expression of their barbaric way of understanding the world. Culture, only that of the colonizers. The colonized people's music, their rhythm, their dance, their balls, the lightness of their body movements, their creativity in general, none of this had any value (Freire, 1978, p. 15).

The author questions the civilizing and domestication process experienced by the peoples of Latin America and also discusses the culture that was considered superior and valid, that is, that of the colonizers. According to Freire (1999), the human essence is not one of domestication and, therefore, the process of domestication and domination that took place in Latin America is an ontological contradiction and an education that frees from the domesticating process that massed bodies and minds is necessary to achieve good living. Taking this as a presupposition, the author provokes us to think about possibilities of transforming this reality, affirming the need to overcome naive understanding for a critical understanding and presenting education/literacy as a possibility for it. Importantly, Paulo Freire is one of the pedagogues that guide Catherine Walsh in the search for a decolonial pedagogy, given the understanding that there is no more political practice than education (Walsh, 2017, p. 2-3). However, formal education is just one of the spaces, not the only one. Many practices and other pedagogies, in addition to official school education, also educate. Catherine Walsh (2012, p. 7) makes us reflect on the educational and pedagogical character of practices, of other pedagogies. According to the author, these practices question and challenge the unique logic of western modernity and colonial power that is still very present. These Pedagogies encourage reflection from genealogies, rationalities, knowledge, practices, and civilizing systems and different ways of life. The author goes on to say that these Pedagogies, oriented and anchored in processes and projects with intentionality, boost possibilities of being, feeling, existing, doing, thinking, and knowing differently.

The very understanding of education and pedagogical practices takes on a broader meaning than just the formal one with the imminence of other Pedagogies. In this sense, popular practices and social movements have been the protagonists of important decolonial educational practices despite the limits imposed by colonial and capitalist society. In the context of formal education, practices and official curricula seem to be intangible, which leads us to think about the whys and the interests that are at stake when choosing knowledge or culture to compose the curricula, rather than another. Thus, thinking about the elements that involve the dimension of official curricula in education as narratives produced by men and women who represent only a restricted part of human culture, given that it is not a neutral, innocent, and disinterested space for knowledge (Silva, 1999), is a challenge that encourages us to reflect on the need to decolonize them in the sense of unlearning histories, values, and cultures violently inculcated and legitimized as absolute truths, which we deal with in the sequel to this text.

Official Formal Education Curricula: Narratives in Dispute: In this section, we aim to reflect on the dimension of the formal/official curriculum as a narrative of selected concepts that represent part of a culture defined as valid to compose the curricula, legitimated and guided by Curriculum Guidelines and Policies, which are built and managed by people and interests that guide them. Based on the understanding that decolonial thinking presents itself as a way of being in the world, acting and thinking about this world (Mignolo, 2014), we propose dialogues about educational practices and the formal/official curriculum as a possibility to contribute with another way of being, acting, and thinking about the world, corroborating with Walsh (2013), who states that decoloniality is a project to be assumed and not a theory to be followed. This understanding makes us problematize several issues in the field of education with significant interferences for the construction of this new world

project. In this debate, we bring up the issue of official curricula in formal education spaces, given the constitutive processes that lead to the classification, selection, and hierarchization of knowledge and cultures considered valid and legitimate in school curricula that, from coloniality/modernity onwards, assume the colonizing raciality "of the white/civilized/Christian/heterosexual man to be imitated by the subalternized ones who can never be, at most can imitate who he is – the Eurocentered 'I'" (Silva, 2015, p. 50). For the proposed dialogue, we refer at this time to authors who talk about Curriculum Policies as guidelines for the construction of curricula in education systems. We also reflect on the characteristics present in curricular theories, as well as the curriculum as selection, classification, power, and hegemonic reproduction. "Knowledge embodied as an educational curriculum can no longer be analyzed outside the social and historical constitution" (Moreira & Silva, 2001, p. 20). The field of studies on the official curriculum in education constitutes a mined and complex space, as the curriculum is not a neutral set of knowledge that simply appears suddenly in the teacher's hand. Hence the impossibility of acting or thinking naively "about the constitutive role of knowledge organized in a curricular form and transmitted in educational institutions" (Moreira & Silva, 2001, p. 20).

Given this complexity, discussions about the theories that support and/or problematize curricular perspectives and theories have been intensified and, in this sense, Silva (1999) asserts that the curriculum reflects reality, that is, a certain valid and current cultural standard, explained by theories, i.e., "curriculum would be an object that precedes the theory, which would only enter the scene to discover it, describe it, explain it" (Silva, 1999, p. 11). However, the author indicates that the representational bias from the perspective of post-structuralism, predominant in social and cultural analysis, is precisely what makes the very concept of theory problematic, "it is impossible to separate the symbolic, linguistic description of reality – that is, the theory – from its 'reality effects'" (Silva, 1999, p. 11). Thus, the theory would not be limited to explaining or describing reality: "the theory would be irremediably involved in its production" (Silva, 1999, p. 11). In the author's terms, the post-structuralist perspective shifts the emphasis from the concept of theory to that of discourse, reflecting on the linguistic descriptions of reality, in its production, that is, "it sees the curriculum 'theories' from the notion of discourse" (Silva, 1999, p. 14), in which the difference is a linguistic and discursive process that cannot be conceived displaced "from the linguistic processes of meaning" (Silva, 1999, p. 87) nor a natural characteristic, "it is discursively produced" (Silva, 1999, p. 87). Furthermore, "the difference is always a relationship: one cannot be 'different' in an absolute way; one is different from something else, considered precisely as 'not different'" (Silva, 1999, p. 87). Thus, the difference occurs in relation to something considered not different, being, therefore, in accordance with the post-structuralist foundations, produced by the discourses.

Therefore, if curricula are discourses guided or explained by theories, then thinking about which curricular theories underlie curricula can serve to understand the implicit or explicit intentions in curricula, materialized through knowledge or the valid culture selected to compose the curricula. In this sense, the central question of curricular theories is "that of knowing what knowledge should be taught" (Silva, 1999, p. 14) and, for that, "the different theories can resort to discussions about human nature, about nature of learning, or about the nature of knowledge, culture, and society" (Silva, 1999, p. 14). However, each theory, in different historical moments, advocates each element in a different way, as

> The curriculum is always the result of a selection: the part that will constitute, precisely, the curriculum is selected from a broader universe of knowledge and awareness. Curriculum theories, having decided which knowledge should be selected, seek to justify why "this knowledge" and not "those" should be selected (Silva, 1999, p. 14).

Thus, regarding its construction, the curriculum consists of a cultural selection, it is a narrative of a small part of human history and culture,

selected by some men and women who, from their ideological perspectives and worldview, define what will be the valid knowledge to be taught in formal educational institutions. From the understanding of the curriculum as a narrative of concepts, Silva (1999) reflects on the construction of these concepts, which is something socially and culturally constructed and, therefore, imbricated in power relations. The author discusses how a given concept is defined and how it is constructed and legitimized. According to Silva (1999), the curriculum is involved in power relations, as much as curriculum theories when trying to say what curriculum should be. The author also says that the process of selecting the culture that goes into the curriculum and the act of privileging a certain type of knowledge is also an operation of power, as well as "highlight, among the multiple possibilities, that an identity or subjectivity as being the ideal is an operation of power" (Silva, 1999, p. 16). When approaching the postcolonial theory of curriculum, Silva (1999, p. 125) leads us to reflect on the connection between knowledge and power, and, according to this author, this relationship clearly appears throughout the history of colonial domination of Europe, as knowledge and awareness have been associated with the power objectives of the European powers since the beginning of colonialism. In this regard, "the epistemological and cultural dimension of the process of colonial domination is not limited only to the production of knowledge about the colonized individual and its environment" (Silva, 1999, p. 128), but also about the importance of transmitting it in another way of knowledge and, thus, the knowledge of the natives needed to be replaced by the knowledge of "civilized" peoples, expressed through religion, science, the arts, and language (Silva, 1999, p. 128). According to this author, a postcolonial theory of curriculum should focus on the analysis of the colonial legacy and, following this reflection, Silva (1999, p. 129) brings some relevant questions to the debate, namely:

> To what extent do definitions of nationality and "race" forged in the context of conquest and colonial expansion and expansion continue to predominate in the mechanisms for the formation of cultural identity and subjectivity embedded in the official curriculum? How do the narratives that constitute the core of the contemporary curriculum continue to celebrate the sovereignty of the European imperial individual? How, in these narratives, are conceptions about "race," gender, and sexuality constructed, being combined to marginalize identities that do not conform to the definitions of identity considered "normal"?

The author states that these questions must permeate discussions of a postcolonial curriculum theory, seeking to analyze contemporary forms of economic and cultural imperialism, attentive to "the apparently benign forms of representation of the Other that are everywhere in the contemporary curriculum" (Silva, 1999, p. 129). He also provokes one to think about the need to question how, for example, the so-called "commemorative dates" occur in schools, such as Black Awareness Day, International Women's Day, Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Mother's Day, among others, called by Saviani (2011) of secondary elements. In this sense, Saviani (2011) warns us about how secondary elements can easily take the place of what constitutes the school's specificity, that is, to "provide the acquisition of instruments that enable access to elaborated knowledge (science), as well as the very access to the rudiments of this knowledge" (Saviani, 2011, p. 14). Therefore, the curriculum is structured from systematized knowledge, literate culture. Thus, the first requirement is to learn to read and write, in addition to learning the language of numbers, nature, and society. Consequently, reading, writing, and telling the rudiments of natural sciences and social sciences (history and geography), are core, fundamental contents of the school and, because they seem so obvious, they can be forgotten and/or hidden (Saviani, 2011, p. 14). Therefore, Saviani (2011, p. 15) defines curriculum as being "the set of core activities developed by the school." Not everything that happens at school is the curriculum. If so, then, easily, one can distance themselves from the specificity of the school, as "the secondary can take the place of what is main" (Saviani, 2011, p. 15). We want to say that the school often focuses attention on elements that are not core to its function and end up

serving as distractors that deviate from its specificity. Saviani (2011, p. 16) warns of the need to "not lose sight of the distinction between what is primary and what is secondary" at school. However, deviating from what is its function is not always an unconscious action or is part of forgetting. Often, staying in the secondary is an intentional action. Therefore, curriculum theories play a key role in questioning what is taught, but without losing sight of the specificity of the school, that is, school education. In this context, curriculum theories are organized into traditional, critical, and post-critical. According to Silva (1999), traditional theories are scientific and disinterested. Critical theories and post-critical theories argue that "no theory is neutral, scientific, or disinterested, but it is, inevitably, involved in power relations" (Silva, 1999, p. 16). The traditional theory is more concerned with how it will teach than with what it will teach. The critical and post-critical theories, on the other hand, question, in addition to "what to teach," the "why," as stated by Silva (1999, p. 16):

> Why this knowledge and not another? What interests make this knowledge, and not another one, part of the curriculum? Why privilege one type of identity or subjectivity over another? Critical and post-critical curriculum theories are concerned with the connections between knowledge, identity, and power.

Therefore, we can see that the different curriculum theories have fundamental differences defined "by the concepts they use to conceive the 'reality'" (Silva, 1999, p. 16). Chart 1 shows the curriculum theories and their main concepts:

Chart 1: Curriculum theories and recommended concepts, according to Silva (1999)

Traditional theories	Critical theories	Post-critical theories
Teaching, learning, assessment, methodology, didactics, organization, planning, efficiency, and objectives.	Ideology, cultural and social reproduction, power, social class, capitalism, social relations of production, awareness, emancipation and liberation, hidden curriculum, and resistance.	Identity, alterity, difference, subjectivity, meaning and discourse, knowledge-power, representation, culture, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and multiculturalism.

Source: Organized by the authors based on Silva (1999, p. 17).

There is a concern with the teaching/learning dimension with methodological, didactics, organization, planning, objectives, and efficiency issues from the perspective of traditional theories. There is no concern with the power relations present in the curriculum, nor with the concepts and their meanings, nor does it consider difference and multiculturalism. The critical perspective highlights issues inherent to the power relations present in the curriculum, as well as its reproductive role. Questions about class relations, awareness, emancipation, liberation, hidden curriculum, and resistance are also addressed. On the other hand, issues such as identity, alterity, difference, subjectivity, meaning and discourse, knowledge-power, representation, culture, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and multiculturalism are present in the post-critical perspective. Thus, the traditional theory focuses on more technical questions, in the following sense: "if we have this (unquestionable?) knowledge to be transmitted, what is the best way to transmit it?" (Silva, 1999, p. 16), emphasizing the issue of organization and how to teach, without worrying about what it will teach and why it will teach that knowledge and not another. On the other hand, the critical and post-critical theories of the curriculum, in addition to "what" and "why", also question why and the interests of certain knowledge to be in the curriculum and not another, problematizing the issue of the privilege of a certain type of identity or subjectivity and not another (Silva, 1999, p. 16). Critical and post-critical theories question the traditional theory and its ideological reproduction bias, but, despite this, they have differences between them, thus constituting historical constructions related to the current context. Regarding the post-critical theory, among the elements, Silva (1999, p. 90) draws attention to the dimension of multiculturalism, which is strongly evidenced, as follows:

Multiculturalism shows that the gradient of inequality in education and curriculum is a function of other dynamics, such as gender, race, and sexuality, for example, which cannot be reduced to class dynamics. Furthermore, multiculturalism reminds us that equality cannot be achieved simply through equal access to the existing hegemonic curriculum, as in previous progressive educational claims. Achieving equality depends on substantially modifying the existing curriculum.

According to the author, inequality cannot be reduced to dynamics, as it also varies as a function of gender, race, and sexuality, for instance. He also highlights that equality is not guaranteed with the guarantee of access to the curriculum that is established, hegemonic; the existing curriculum needs to be transformed to guarantee equality, that is, it is not about access, it is about what is accessed. Therefore, curricular decisions are political decisions, materialized in Curriculum Policies that are decisive and influencing elements, as according to Sacristán (2000, p. 109):

> […] curriculum policies establish the way to select, order, and change the curriculum within the educational system, making clear the power and autonomy that different agents have over it, thus intervening in the distribution of knowledge within the school system and focusing on educational practice while presenting the curriculum to its consumers and orders its contents and codes of different types.

In short, curriculum policies are the decisions "or conditioning of the contents and practice of curriculum development based on political and administrative decision-making bodies" (Sacristán, 2000, p. 109), which establish "the rules of the curriculum system." These decisions are not naive and do not occur by forgetting, being "part of the political processes of segregation of these groups in different social, economic, political, and cultural territories" (Arroyo, 2011, p. 143). In this sense, the author says that absences in spaces recognized as producers and transmitters of "legitimate knowledge, serious, valid, objective, scientific knowledge, which are the subjects and curricular orders, are ways to keep them absent "as non-existent as social, political, cultural, and intellectual subjects" (Arroyo, 2011, p. 143). According to the author, school curricula "resist the incorporation of inquiries and living knowledge, which come from the social dynamics and the very dynamics of knowledge" (Arroyo, 2011, p. 37). In other words, curricula must be open to other knowledge, doubt, and less closed conceptions, but it requires resistance, contesting its hegemonic character, and guaranteeing students access to a diversity of cultures and knowledge. Thus, the dimension of the formal curriculum constitutes a space of tensions and political dispute, intensified, and evidenced by the arrival of "collectives dominated by common sense knowledge" (arroyo, 2011. p 41). From this, the collectives of educators who identify with the students regarding awareness, culture, class, race, from the periphery or the countryside, start to fight for "their heritage of awareness, values, aesthetics, knowledge, languages, ways of thinking about reality and thinking about oneself" (Arroyo, 2011, p 41).

These collectives, treated and seen with inferiority in intellectual and cultural history, are asserting their memories and cultures, their knowledge and values, affirming their positive presence in intellectual, cultural, artistic, and literary production" (Arroyo, 2011, p. 41) and, therefore, "political clashes about what is taught, read, and learned about the values and countervalues that schools reproduce have become the object of tense disputes at all levels of society" (Arroyo, 2011, p. 41). However, it is not about "denying the right to intellectual, cultural, ethical, and aesthetic production, but about incorporating other readings of the world, other knowledge of themselves" (Arroyo, 2011, p.42). It is about recognizing other productions "accumulated in segregated collectives that carry them to schools and dispute their recognition in curricula, in the teaching and literary material" (Arroyo, 2011, p.42). In other words, it does not mean ignoring a certain culture, but rather recognizing that there are other cultures and other epistemes accumulated by peoples

historically segregated and subordinated, which generates tensions that drive against

> the imposition of unique knowledge, of unique rationality, of a unique reading and culture, of unique processes-times to apprehend. It pushes for more positive social representations of the different. It pressures for a desacralization of curricula and curriculum guidelines and designs: desacralization that had been carried out in schools, networks, and, above all, groups of educators and students, in responsible and bold collective projects of respect and recognition of diversity (Arroyo, 2011, p.42).

Historically, the part of the culture selected to compose formal education curricula does not consider epistemic and cultural diversity but reproduces and imposes knowledge considered unique and true, acting hegemonically. Thus, if the curriculum is the result of social production, "deciding to build a curricular proposal implies, in addition to the concern with schooling, political interests that are intrinsic in its genesis" (Savi, 2014, p. 68). Thus, in a modern/colonial context, the formal curriculum is conceived from the European culture that is universalized as if it were the culture of all, the valid, legitimate, the right one, generating epistemicide (Santos & Meneses, 2009). In this sense, Gonzalez (1982) criticizes the absence, at school and in textbooks, of contributions from popular classes, women, blacks, and indigenous in our cultural and historical formation, which she claims are folklorized. The author also says that what remains is "the impression that only men, white men, socially and economically privileged, were the only ones to build this country. This triple lie is called sexism, racism, and elitism" (Gonzalez, 1982, p. 3).

Thus, as a possibility of opposing the modern/colonial model, Mignolo (2008) presents what he calls epistemic disobedience or theoretical disobedience as an alternative to deconstruct what was built from modernity/coloniality. According to Mignolo (2008, p. 290), the decolonial option is an epistemic option and "means, among other things, learning to unlearn." However, unlearning something to learn again is not a simple task and, in this sense, the official education curricula also need to be changed, as they reach practically the entire population, given the mandatory basic education. For this, these curricula need to be decolonized, also decolonizing the curricular policies that guide and build them. Proposing a curriculum that opposes these perspectives requires intercultural solutions because, according to Candau (2016, p. 10), critical interculturality is an "epistemological, ethical, and political proposal oriented towards the construction of democratic societies that articulate equality and recognition of differences cultural," proposing "alternatives to the monocultural and westernizing character dominant in most countries on the continent" (Candau, 2016, p. 10). These elements make us reflect on the selection and construction of knowledge in modern/colonial educational institutions, which permeates the policies and guidelines that guide their structure and functioning. These decisions are neither naive nor neutral and carry with them the intentions and historical marks of a colonized country. However, there is a need to rethink curricula, given their potential for social change.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This text aimed to reflect on some historical and conceptual elements that anchor the decolonial discussion, raising debate and the relationship with the formal/official curriculum dimension as a field of study. The methodology for choosing the sources for this theoretical study consisted of choosing authors with a decolonial theoretical framework, listing fundamental concepts, as well as the elements of the historical process of construction of the decolonial perspective in opposition to colonialism, a model in which European countries exercised dominion over the colonies. After identifying the genesis and its fundamental concepts, as a perspective under construction, Lander (2005) discusses the role of Social Sciences, which led us to Freire (1978, 1987, 1999, 2003) and Walsh (2012;

2013), referring to thinking about the relationship between education and politics within formal and non-formal contexts of education and, also, about the educational character of the practices, to what Walsh calls other Pedagogies. Subsequently, we address the issue of the formal curriculum as a space of power and political and ideological dispute, with the support of Moreira & Silva (2001), Sacristán, (2000), Savi (2014), Arroyo (2011), and Silva (1999). We also reflect on what Saviani (2011) defines as primary and secondary curriculum, as well as the need not to lose sight of the specificity of school education and, considering it, we turned to Silva (1999) to assist in understanding the role of traditional, critical, and post-critical theories of the curriculum. Thus, this study allowed understanding some elements of the construction of the decolonial perspective and, in this context, we problematize the need to reframe the role of Social Sciences, education, and formal/official curricula as propelling spaces for transformations of epistemes, cultures, or the reproduction of epistemes, cultures, and values prevailing in a society marked by colonization. Official Formal education curricula, as narratives of selected concepts, classified, hierarchized, and legitimated as official to be disseminated to all students, are territories of dispute, given their power to form people, thoughts, and ideologies. Therefore, our view of this field of study cannot be simplistic, nor disinterested. Thus, in the light of decolonial discussions, we can advance as construction of alternatives and possibilities of unlearning and deconstruction for the subsequent construction and reconstruction of subalternized epistemes.

Thus, considering our point of view and based on the dialogue carried out, thinking about curricula from a decolonial perspective seems to us a possibility of resistance and, for that, curricula should be proposed with people, not a curriculum of one for all; a humanized curriculum that focuses on life; a curriculum that considers the identity, cultures, and knowledge of peoples; that differences are not objects of superiority or inferiority; that does not differentiate or classify human beings on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, or sexuality; that multiculturalism is respected and critical interculturalism is a living and felt praxis in the curriculum and life. For this, construction is slow, given our context as a colonized and subaltern country, excluding a huge contingent of "different" from the processes that lead to human and citizen dignity. Therefore, the formal curriculum of school education is a sensitive space, as, in addition to not losing sight of the specificity of the school, it is still necessary to reflect on what knowledge is taught, why such knowledge and not others, and who selects it. What is left for subalterns without these reflections is disobedience and resistance since it is necessary to disobey in order to unlearn and relearn. In short, a postcolonial perspective "fundamentally demands a decolonized curriculum" (Silva, 1999, p. 130) and, to paraphrase Krenak (2019), perhaps what we have to do is find a parachute. Therefore, let us make a parachute into our spaces of action, so that, perhaps, theories are no longer just theories and become praxis.

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