

ARTICLE

WHAT HAVE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS MADE OF WHAT THE PANDEMIC HAS DONE TO THEM?¹

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses how children and adolescents lived the covid-19 pandemic as a generational experience, seeking to understand their interpretations of the social interactions reconfigured by the social distancing measures adopted to combat the disease. Data were obtained from two studies conducted with children and adolescents aged 8 to 14 years, residing in 33 cities from the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte and 27 administrative regions of the Federal District. Both studies adopted a mixed methodology, collecting census data using questionnaires, broadened by open questions. The analysis points to a concern with inter and intragenerational solidarity, and shows that children and adolescents reject dichotomies, especially those that separate adults and children, and express their criticism about the context and the political and individual actions resulting from it.

Keywords: generation, children, adolescents, sociology of childhood, sociology of youth.

O QUE CRIANÇAS E ADOLESCENTES FIZERAM DAQUILO QUE A PANDEMIA FEZ COM ELES E ELAS?

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RESUMO: Este artigo, que aborda como crianças e adolescentes viveram a pandemia de covid-19 como experiência geracional, objetiva compreender como agiram diante da reconfiguração da ordem das interações sociais decorrente do isolamento social como medida para conter o avanço da doença, buscando conhecer as interpretações de crianças e adolescentes a partir de suas posições geracionais. As discussões têm como base dados de pesquisas com crianças e adolescentes de 8 a 14 anos, residentes em 33 municípios da Região Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte e em 27 Regiões Administrativas do Distrito Federal. Ambas as pesquisas adotaram perspectiva metodológica mista, com métodos qualitativos e quantitativos, com adoção de questionários, como instrumentos de coleta de dados censitários, ampliados com questões e observações abertas. Como síntese indicam-se as preocupações com a dimensão da solidariedade inter e intrageracional. Observa-se ainda que crianças e adolescentes rompem com dicotomias, especialmente aquelas que separam adultos e crianças e expressam sua crítica ao contexto e às ações políticas e individuais dele decorrentes.

Palavras-chave: geração, crianças, adolescentes, sociologia da infância, sociologia da juventude.

¿QUÉ HICIERON LOS NIÑOS Y ADOLESCENTES ANTE LO QUE LES HIZO LA PANDEMIA?

RESUMEN: Este artículo aborda cómo los niños y adolescentes vivieron la pandemia de la covid-19 como una experiencia generacional. Tiene como objetivo comprender cómo actuaron frente a la reconfiguración del orden de las interacciones sociales resultantes del aislamiento social como medida para contener la progresión de la enfermedad. Se busca conocer las interpretaciones de niños, niñas y adolescentes desde sus posiciones generacionales. Las discusiones se basan en datos de investigación con niños y adolescentes de 8 a 14 años, residentes en 33 municipios de la Región Metropolitana de Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais y en 27 Regiones Administrativas del Distrito Federal, en Brasil. Ambas investigaciones adoptaron una perspectiva metodológica mixta, con métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos, con la adopción de cuestionarios, como instrumentos de recolección de datos censales, ampliados con preguntas abiertas y observaciones. A modo de síntesis, se señalan preocupaciones con la dimensión de la solidaridad inter e intrageneracional. También se observa que los niños y adolescentes rompen con las dicotomías, especialmente aquellas que separan a los adultos y los niños y expresan su crítica al contexto y las acciones políticas e individuales derivadas de él.

Palabras clave: generación, niños, adolescentes, sociología de la infancia, sociología de la juventud.

INTRODUCTION

This article addresses how children and adolescents experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as a generational experience. The aim is to understand how they acted in the face of the reconfiguration of the order of social interactions during social isolation as a measure to contain the spread of the disease. The discussions are based on data from research with children and adolescents aged 8 to 14, from 33

municipalities in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH) and in 27 of the Administrative Regions of the Federal District (DF), carried out in 2020.

We sought to understand, in the context of social isolation, the experiences that intertwined, in an indelible way, the daily lives of children, adolescents, adults, and elderly people who experienced the pandemic context. Despite the different ways in which children and adolescents were treated, sometimes as spreaders of the virus, as potential victims of the consequences and political, social, and economic effects of the pandemic, they were little heard, especially about their needs, learning and new subjectivities that the pandemic provoked.

Initially, the pandemic period is contextualized, with a brief bibliographic inventory of research with children and adolescents in Brazil and other countries. Then, childhood and adolescence are approached from a generational perspective, in an adult-centric context. Finally, to answer the question proposed in this article - what did children and adolescents make of what the pandemic did to them? -, the results of two surveys carried out in 2020 are presented, based on the links between consonant aspects about i- the experiences of children and adolescents in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; ii – fears and sadness; iii- joy; and iv- the dimension of inter and intragenerational solidarity. The final considerations present clues about the interpretations constructed by children and adolescents, as well as the generational positions arising from the pandemic context.

WHAT WARNING DOES THE VIRUS MAKE?

On December 31, 2019, the first information about cases of pneumonia was released in the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, in the Republic of China. These cases were then confirmed to be a new type of coronavirus, which had not yet been identified in humans. As there are other types of coronavirus, this one became known as the new coronavirus and was named SARS-CoV-2, which is responsible for causing Covid-19 syndrome. Given the geographic expansion of the virus, which quickly reached Europe and the United States, covid-19 was characterized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, becoming the first pandemic of the 21st century. By February 2023, there have been more than 754,018,841 confirmed cases worldwide, with 6,817,478 deaths reported to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022). In Brazil, between February 2020, when we had the first confirmed case, until the beginning of February 2023 (the time of writing this article), there were 36,837,943 confirmed cases and approximately 697,200 deaths reported to the WHO (WHO Coronavirus [COVID- 19]) Dashboard, 2023).

The virus revealed the sad reality experienced on a planetary level, accumulation, with precarious work, which leads to brutal inequality. The OXFAM report from January 2021 entitled “The inequality virus” brings, among other information, the worsening of inequalities and the overaccumulation of wealth in the hands of a few billionaires, in a context of precarious labor relations, reduced social investments and dismantling of the State. Rao and Fischer's (2021) warning about the politicization of the pandemic stands out, with attacks against science, public health, and the spread of false news, which made it difficult to combat the pandemic. The denialist discourse and attitudes harmed the availability of resources to combat the spread of the virus, leading to the discredit of measures considered effective: social distancing, mass immunization, use of masks, and hand hygiene, among others, which resulted in the prolongation of the pandemic, as well as the increase in the number of deaths and people with significant side effects.

In a country like Brazil, with a continental dimension and enormous social inequality, the impact of the pandemic is still being quantified and discussed. The right to education appears to be yet another victim of this pandemic, as it has been eloquently affected. In compliance with the guidelines on social isolation coming from scientific institutions, on March 18, 2020, the National Education Council (CNE-*Conselho Nacional de Educação*) presented an opinion authorizing the “reorganization of the School Calendar and the possibility of calculating non-face-to-face activities to fulfill the workload annual schedule, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic” (BRASIL, 2020). The long period of closure of schools, especially public ones, as well as the helplessness of a significant part of the population in the face of new demands for monitoring teaching remotely, revealed a scenario of disorganization in the educational system. Some studies already published state that countries like Brazil are at risk of “regressing two decades in the access of boys and girls to education”. UNICEF research, published in April 2021, presents figures on the effect of the pandemic on Brazilian education. The study points out that around 1.5 million children and adolescents (6 to 17 years old) did not attend school in the 2020 academic year and around 3.7 million enrolled did not have access, that is, 5.1 million “had the right to education denied.”

Research previously released, in August 2020, by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Regional Education Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO) warns about the need “to safeguard financing as a fundamental priority to protect national educational systems from exacerbating inequalities in access to education and learning crises” (CEPAL-UNESCO, 2020, p. 17, our translation). This study highlighted – a few months after the official closure of schools – reflections by experts that signaled the possibility of a rapid increase in social disparities.

In a statement released in January 2021, UNESCO reported that the number of people affected by the partial or total closure of school units exceeds 50% of the world's school population, which corresponds to 1.6 billion students in more than 190 countries.

Despite the importance of these studies and the gaps in information supported by research, especially those that employ longitudinal methodologies (Bartholo; Koslinski; Costa; Barcellos, 2020) for monitoring educational processes, from the first years of access to formal education, something seems to require special attention: the need to expand investigations that include listening to children and adolescents, recognizing them as reflective agents.

Through a bibliographic inventory, we sought to access works that listened to children and adolescents with theoretical-methodological perspectives of recognizing these individuals as participants in society, whose experiences and interpretations are relevant to understanding social phenomena. Research carried out in the context of social isolation discusses the challenges of accessing subjects through distance communication resources, while analyzing the experiences of children and adolescents with technologies (Alvaro *et al.*, 2021; Silva *et al.*, 2021; Laguna *et al.*, 2021; Lara *et al.*, 2021). Guizzo, Marcello, and Müller (2020) focused on the relationships of children and families with technologies, discussing daily transformations resulting from the pandemic context.

The research also problematizes the impact of the conditions imposed on children by the pandemic, given the low social recognition that they are a group heavily affected by the health and social crisis. In this sense, the concern with the conditions of development and well-being of children and adolescents, focusing on their feelings (Alvaro *et al.*, 2021; Marques *et al.*, 2022), has been affirmed by researchers, including in the possible persistence of its consequences after social isolation (Milani *et al.*, 2022; Rocha, 2021; Matos, 2022).

In Mexico, research coordinated by the Organization MELEL XOJOBAL A.C. (2020) *¿Cómo viven las niñas, niños y adolescentes de San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas la pandemia del Coronavirus?* accesses children's expressions. Also noteworthy are the efforts made by the *Children's Geography Magazine*, which brought together researchers from different locations and published a special issue on the topic: *Childhood; COVID-19; inequality; transnational studies; children's geographies* (Cortes-Morales, 2021), which provides a transnational overview of the issue, at the same time as it calls for the development of collaborative work between researchers in the field of childhood studies.

The situation of suspension of school activities for such a long time permeates all analyses of the situation of children and adolescents. This is a situation that had no precedent that could help in the search for solutions to maintain the rights of children and adolescents to education. Furthermore, as different organizations dedicated to childhood have reported, the losses are greater the longer the time away from school, which can result in school dropout, and loss of learning opportunities, in addition to other factors such as food insecurity and gaps in protection against violence to children and adolescents.

From this framework, the discussion on the power of the voice of children and adolescents in this context is proposed, without this meaning of romanticization or attribution of autonomy to these subjects, incompatible with their development processes. This is a generational group whose dependence on adults, especially from an economic point of view, socially legitimizes their subalternity. Children, adolescents, and young people, although deeply affected by the most diverse crises, are rarely heard by policymakers. It is hoped that the advancement of research with children and adolescents will also contribute to the political struggle for the participation of these subjects in social life, especially in decisions that concern them.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS FACING THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE ORDER OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Without failing to recognize the importance of macrosocial analyses that problematize political and economic aspects, we understand that the reconfiguration of the order of social interactions caused by this event is a phenomenon of academic and social relevance. It is expected to elucidate aspects of the experiences of the child and adolescent population in the context of social isolation due to the pandemic. An approach is proposed that understands children and adolescents in the relational context with different age groups in whose social experiences and generational position play a determining role.

Initial studies on generations started from a biological view of differences to later formulate a historical-social view of generational dynamics. While the first view presented a quantitative perspective, concerned with the duration of a generation until its succession in social life, in the second, both from a historical-romantic perspective and from Mannheim's (1993) sociological approach, the object of analysis is the experience of generational groups. Therefore, the idea of generation is taken as a category for understanding human existence, designating groups that share common experiences and live under the same historical influences (Feixa; Leccardi, 2010). According to Weller (2010), the concept of a generation has been mobilized in sociological analyses alongside the categories of class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Weller (2010) refers to the concept of generations formulated by Mannheim (1993), highlighting that it incorporates Dilthey's (2010) qualitative concept of time, indicating the idea of a generation composed of individuals who live contemporaneously, subject to the same cultural influences and political-social situations.

Although, since Durkheim (2007), sociology has focused on childhood as a generation, through the discussion of cultural transmission processes carried out by adults, childhood, and children, as objects “in themselves”, it only emerged at the end of the 20th century XX, especially from the 1980s onwards (Prout, 2010; Sarmiento, 2008). From that moment on, we observed the construction of a new paradigm in social studies on children and childhood (James; Prout, 1997). The literature that emerges there confronts knowledge about childhood, especially from certain perspectives of developmental psychology, deconstructing the stage-based and provisional view of childhood life, according to which the fullness of human life would be reserved for adulthood. The assumption of childhood as a social construction (Heywood, 2004) and the recognition that children are not passive agents of unidirectional adult-child socialization are reinforced². A relevant aspect of this reordering refers to the apprehension of non-essentialized children and childhood, socially and historically situated and, therefore, crossed by other social markers, such as class, gender, race, territory, and age subgroups. In this process that mixes social changes, especially through the recognition of rights and the epistemological turn, with the recognition of children as full social subjects, it is reaffirmed that not only they and childhood are legitimate objects of sociological thought, but they are also necessary for the knowledge of societies in a globalized way (Sarmiento, 2005).

In this movement, in contemporary studies on childhood, a double entry is observed: on the one hand, the structural dimension of childhood in societies (Qvortrup, 2010) and, on the other, through the interpretative approach to children's social action, the identification and analysis of their ways of participation in social life to have effects on the organization of groups and institutions in intra and intergenerational relationships.

Their place in the generational structure impacts all dimensions of economic and social life, whether in the present, through transformations and continuations in the organization of family life, in social policies, in the formation of a market for products and consumption aimed at children; whether in its meaning as a future citizen responsible for balancing the labor market, the structure of social security (Alanen, 2010), among other aspects. Thus, in this paradigm, childhood is constructed as a social category necessary for understanding the social life and experience of younger people.

For the discussion proposed in this article, it is also considered important to problematize what the well-being of younger generations consists of since the sociological discussion in this regard was based on adult needs. When focusing on the European context, to discuss the contributions of childhood studies to child well-being, Lena Alanen (2010), problematizing the categories that guide them in sociological thought, indicates that it is necessary for not only multilateral organizations to offer subsidies on the topic. In the case of children, literature does not offer tools for thinking about well-being, thus, she argues that studies on the topic need to meet studies on childhood so that the perspective of children and childhood is recognized.

The assumption of childhood as a generational category in sociological thought is also supported by the recognition of the existence of a socially subordinate group due to its age condition. It

² Socialization is the process by which individuals learn the norms, values, behaviors and social roles of a given society or social group. It is a lifelong process that involves the internalization of social rules and expectations through significant individuals in groups, family, friends, educational and cultural institutions, in addition to the media. Thus, socialization is an ongoing process by which individuals learn the language, norms, social roles, and shared meanings in a society. In turn, sociability, which is related to social interaction processes, involves communication skills, collaboration, sharing experiences and establishing social ties.

is, therefore, in the relational condition with other age classes that one can grasp the childhood condition marked by economic dependence through which subalternity is socially legitimized (Sarmiento, 2008). The childhood group is crossed by inequalities and contradictions, whether on a diachronic or synchronic level (Sarmiento, 2008). This perspective conceives childhood as “a social condition that is simultaneously homogeneous, as a social category, due to relationships with other generational categories, and heterogeneous, due to being crossed by other social categories” (Sarmiento, 2008, p. 23), which requires the interpretative and structural dimensions (Qvortrup, 2010) in its apprehension.

Dialoguing with Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, Prout (2010) argues that, rather than seeking to describe how childhood and children can be studied on a large scale (structural dimension), we should seek to understand how children, in the contexts of relationships and the materiality of life, construct situations that reach a large scale. Thus, since children are in networks with other actors and situations, it is assumed that such networks can happen at a certain moment and then get lost along the way or stabilize and reach a large scale. He states that what matters is trying to discover “which network produces a particular form of childhood or child” (Prout, 2010, p. 742).

The author mobilizes the approach to the relationship between generations, developed by Lena Alanen (2010), in which generation can be defined as “a system of relationships in which the positions of children and adults are produced” (Prout, 2010, p. 745). For him, this perspective “is concerned with the “excluded third”, as it stops seeing childhood as an essentialized category and sees it as something that is produced within a set of relationships” (Prout, 2010, p. 745). However, from his perspective, it is still an approach that leads to the conception of generation as a closed structure, which would explain phenomena, instead of being something that must be explained. Thus, through dialogue with Latour's actor-network theory, he proposes that generation be approached as a generational process, seeking to investigate the plurality and scope of generational orders.

From this perspective, children and adolescents must be apprehended considering their point of view on generational processes and relationships, as well as the plurality internal to childhood, a function for which the idea of relationships between peers (Corsaro, 2014) does not prove to be sufficient, as it does not cover internal differences: institutional, family, friendship and relationships between children of different ages. Each of these aspects can and should be understood considering the different relationships since they make up an interrelated set that constitutes them in the tangle of information, interactions, affections, vocabularies, and performances.

In this article, we address the experiences of boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 14. Thus, according to the framework established by the Child and Adolescent Statute (*ECA-Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente*), subjects in early adolescence are also covered. The apprehension and discussion of these subjects' experiences are based on a historical and social conception of their generational condition, going beyond the mere categorization of age groups through biological and chronological criteria. In the sociological field, the youth category has an established body of studies, in which references to adolescence appear to a lesser extent. However, it is understood that both the discussion about childhood, which within the framework of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) covers subjects up to the age of 18, and the discussions about youth involve the social group of adolescents.

As ages do not have a universal character, the notions of childhood, youth, and adult life are the result of history and vary according to human formations. Although it is common to link the ideas of psychological immaturity and irresponsibility to the youth category, especially in the ages

corresponding to adolescence, it is argued here that the most appropriate would be to “understand youth as a variable complexity, which is distinguished by its many ways of existing in different times and social spaces” (Carrano, 2000, p. 1). In this sense, the presence of an age range that encompasses different ages demands two interconnected analytical movements: neither childhood is seen as restricted to the character of a phase of development towards the fullness of adulthood, nor is adolescence presented as a kind of transition to the subsequent phase (Carrano, 2000). They are social and historical subjects who simultaneously experience common situations in a complex relational context that involves inter and intra-generational interactions, as well as with the materiality of life, the political context, and communication processes, among many other aspects of social life.

From this perspective, we will seek to understand the processes experienced by children and adolescents in the context of the health and social crisis due to the pandemic. More specifically, we seek to answer, through research data that listened to these individuals, what children and adolescents made of what the pandemic did to them, what interpretations they constructed, based on their generational positions, and, at the same time, how they allow us to understand the generational process as an open space that encompasses a diversity of experiences and subjects. Adopting the perspective of a generational process (Prout, 2010), we discuss how the positions of children and adolescents are produced in the concreteness of an unprecedented context in the social experience of the generations that live together, considering the materiality of life, the subjectivation processes, and the political context.

THE RESEARCH IN QUESTION: TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

The following analyses are the results of researches³ carried out in 2020, in the initial period of the pandemic⁴. As previously announced, the links between them allowed a joint analysis of their results, with a view to theoretical-methodological convergence and objectives. As will be discussed below, both studies adopted a mixed methodological perspective, with qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach allows the adoption of census data collection instruments that can be expanded with open questions and observations, enabling statistical analyses accompanied by textual analyses, among others (Creswell, 2010).

The emergency that emerged for the Brazilian population in March 2020 mobilized efforts to mitigate its effects and to understand its consequences for different segments of the population. In academic research, different groups mobilized to carry out investigations into the phenomenon of the pandemic. It was about building a “sociology of urgency” and a “confined sociology” (Muñoz; Pascual; Crespo, 2020b), as researchers and those being researched found themselves in social isolation. As mentioned by Muñoz, Pascual, and Crespo (2020b), the context required setting into motion the sociological imagination, as taught by Wright Mills (1972). The research carried out by these authors in Spain⁵ was one of the first that listened to children and adolescents, using distance communication

³ <http://repositoriocovid19.unb.br/repositorio-projetos/geografia-do-confinamento-como-vivem-as-criancas-e-jovens-em-tempos-de-isolamento-e-distanciamento-social-por-ocasio-da-pandemia-de-covid-19>; <https://www.infanciaemtemposdepandemia.com.br/publicacoes/>. The research was approved by the Ethics Committees in Research from the universities where they were developed.

⁴ We are grateful for the support of the Fundação Universidade de Brasília and the Federal University of Minas Gerais for projects related to research on covid-19.

⁵ In addition to this research, two other studies were found in the same period: one, carried out in Scotland: Scotland (link: <https://www.surveygizmo.eu/s3/90226515/HowAreYouDoing>) and another that included the Brazilian reality and focused family relationships during the pandemic in European countries and Latin America (link:

resources, with results published in 2020. Inspired by it and to understand the conditions in which children and adolescents experienced the pandemic context in Brazilian reality, the researchs whose data are analyzed here was developed.

One of the studies, *Childhood in times of pandemic: experiences of children in Greater Belo Horizonte (Infância em tempos de pandemia: experiências de crianças da Grande Belo Horizonte)*, coordinated by Silva; Luz; Diniz (2020), was developed in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH)⁶. The objective of the research was to understand, from the perspective of children aged 8 to 12, how they were experiencing the covid-19 pandemic. Two axes of analysis were established: 1- analyze the routines, social relationships, and experiences of children in the context of the covid-19 pandemic and 2 - analyze children's reports focusing on the emotions and feelings aroused throughout the covid pandemic -19. The research interviewed 2021 children aged 8 to 12 years old using a form with general information about the research composed of open and closed questions. Given the impossibility of face-to-face contact with the children, the form was available online, from June 11 to July 15, 2020⁷, using email, WhatsApp application, and the research page on the internet⁸. This instrument had 21 questions distributed in three blocks preceded by the presentation of the research with a section addressed to those responsible, with an Informed Consent Form (ICF), adapted to the online format. Continuing filling out was conditional on this first positive response. In this case, the questionnaire opened the Informed Assent Form (IAF) to be answered by the child. Furthermore, there were guidelines for the questionnaire to be answered by the child, who could or could not count on support from their guardian, if desired or necessary.

In the 1st block, there were questions of characterization and identification of children; in the 2nd block, there was an approach to children's activities, concerns, and family relationships in the context of a pandemic and, in the 3rd block, there were open questions for children to express their feelings and emotions. At the end of the questionnaire, the child was asked to evaluate the instrument, followed by a question about their availability for an interview. On the last page, there was an acknowledgment for the child and notice of the possibility of sending drawings, audio, or other materials that they considered interesting to share with the team.

The urgency and the lack of sources that would allow the composition of an intentional sample that could be accessed by remote communication resources meant that the “snowball” technique was used. The research had the collaboration of education and social development departments in Belo Horizonte and 32 municipalities in the metropolitan region⁹, teachers from public schools, and actors from organizations and social movements who shared the questionnaire and provided useful information for access to the greatest number of children.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0NNCIW_bwO40FK7sS-PbozuluUD6zTMvyVP9j-0Vp_UVwNg/viewform).

⁶ This project was coordinated by professors Isabel de Oliveira e Silva, Iza Rodrigues da Luz and professor Levindo Diniz Carvalho.

⁷ From August to November 2020, 33 children were interviewed among the respondents who were available for this form of participation. In this article, we only work with questionnaire data.

⁸ <https://www.infanciaemtemposdepandemia.com.br>. On this page, in addition to making the questionnaire available, tabs for interacting with the public were opened, through which different productions from children that became part of the research collection were received.

⁹ The Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte has 34 municipalities. The municipality of Itatiaiuçu-MG did not return any questionnaire. Thus, the research covered 33 municipalities.

The survey returned 2,300 questionnaires, with 2,021 responses validated. Content analysis methods and statistical methods (Creswell, 2010) were used, depending on the nature of the information. In this article, data relating to children's interpretations of their experiences during the period of social isolation due to the Covid-19 pandemic are analyzed, therefore prioritizing content analyses.

The other research whose data makes up the analysis corpus of this article is *Confined Childhood: how do children live in times of COVID-19 in the Federal District?* coordinated by Fernandes¹⁰ (2020). This is also a research with a mixed approach, with quantitative and qualitative aspects (Creswell, 2010).

The questionnaire had 65 items, of which 11 were open, allowing participants to put their expressions, and 54 were closed items, allowing participants to select the best option, according to their perception. There were five blocks with closed questions and one block with open questions: first, the agreement of the child and guardians to participate in the research was requested, then a brief explanation of the objective of the questionnaire, followed by the other blocks of questions: 1. characterization of participants; 2. perception of the rights of children and adolescents; 3. sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables; 4. impacts of the pandemic in the areas of education, health, as well as experiences considered as rape or violence; 5. concerns related to economic and family issues; 6. daily activities carried out during social isolation; 7. satisfaction with different spheres of life; 8. open questions about emotions, in dialogue with the SMAT methodology¹¹. Finally, a question about something they wanted to say spontaneously and another about the difficulty in filling out the questionnaire. At the end, an acknowledgment for the children, whether they agreed to participate or not.

The questionnaire aimed to capture structural, emotional, and relational issues and the expectations and desires of children and adolescents who were willing to participate in the research, using open questions – about dreams (to reveal their projections for the future and their desires), fears (fears and insecurities), joy (aspects of life that allow them to obtain strength and tranquility) and sadness (facts that generate anguish and emotional instability) – as well as questions referring to the sociodemographic variables and characterization of the participants. A significant part of the questionnaire asked participants about the impacts of the pandemic in different areas of daily life: education, health, issues of violence, negligence, social impacts of COVID-19 (hunger and unemployment), and socio-emotional impacts.

Participants were contacted via an online form via the WhatsApp messaging application with voluntary participation. The form follows the model developed by Muñoz; Pascual; and Crespo (2020a), originally in Spanish, translated and adapted to the Brazilian reality and Portuguese. The initial sample consisted of 492 children and adolescents aged 10 to 14 years, with 18 questionnaires excluded because they did not agree with the terms of responsibility and participation, the first item of the questionnaire. The final sample was 474 valid respondents.

INTERTWELTING LOOKS AND PERSPECTIVES

¹⁰The research project with information about participants is available at: <https://gpsgrupodepesquisa.wixsite.com/acervo/infanciasconfinadas>.

¹¹ Methodology developed by Martínez Muñoz et al. (2011) which assumes that it is essential to listen to children and young people to understand their feelings, such as dreams, fears, joy and sadness. Applied since 2011 in participatory diagnoses, it was readapted for remote application in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

The link between the two studies lies, in addition to the methodology and common dialogue with other investigations, in the objective of understanding the experiences and feelings of children and adolescents. As research with common inspiration, objectives, and methodology, with similarities in the questions presented to those surveyed, their results are not only similar but, in most cases, coincident.

Thus, as a methodological strategy for joint analysis of the results, we constituted a single corpus with the common elements related to the object of this article through collaborative work between research groups, expanding the territorial scope of the participating subjects.

We will show a discussion of the data selected to answer the question that guides us in this article: what did children and adolescents make of what the pandemic did to them?

What did children and adolescents make of what the pandemic did to them?

The phrase that opens this topic, of Sartrean existentialist inspiration, evokes the dimension of agency in achieving one's freedom. It inspires the conduct of this article and refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's statement that what is essential is not what was made of man, but rather what he made of what was made of him. In the book "Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr", Sartre (2002) explores the life and work of French writer Jean Genet, who was raised in foster homes and correctional institutions before becoming a writer known for his controversial and subversive works. The formulation summarizes the idea that a person's life is not only determined by their history or external factors but rather by how they choose to respond to these circumstances and create their meaning and purpose in life.

Sartre (2002) emphasizes the importance of context, individual freedom, and responsibility for our choices. This formulation is generally applied to life, referring to an individual's ability to respond and act with reflexivity, action, and self-determination in the face of the circumstances and influences that shape their existence throughout their biography. However, this does not mean that the idea is irrelevant or invalid in a shorter period. Even over a short period, each person faces decisions, challenges, and opportunities that can influence their life and sense of self. The field research that led to this article found evidence, even within the limited time of the Covid-19 pandemic, that children and adolescents revealed the ability to make decisions, reflect, and act autonomously within the limitations of their life contexts.

With this in mind, we discuss the results of the two surveys considering their similarities which, as explained above, reside in the objectives of the investigations and the methodology, with small differences in the issues of the instruments used to listen online to those surveyed. In addition to these small differences in the instrument, the age groups also presented different ranges, with the research carried out in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH) aimed at children aged 8 to 12, and the one carried out in the Federal District (DF), aimed at children and adolescents aged 10 to 14. In this article, the results relating to common questionnaire questions are discussed, bringing some specific aspects of one or another survey when relevant, which is explained. Therefore, we focus on the results obtained from listening to children and adolescents aged between 8 and 14 years old. Regarding the aspects analyzed, the following items are discussed, and covered in both investigations: experiences of children and adolescents aged 8 to 14, residing in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH) and the Federal District (DF); Fears and Sadness; Joy; Inter and intragenerational solidarity.

In each of the items, data relating to the two research fields – RMBH and DF – are discussed together. What interests us, within the limits of this article, is to highlight the points of view of children

and adolescents according to the axes indicated above, without worrying about frequencies and statistical representation. This is an extensive universe of respondents, with a total of 2,513 participants, aged between 8 and 14 years old. The discussion will be presented indicating the consistent points of view in the two research. The results not only converge with each other but also converge with results from other research, which allows us to make some inferences about a point of view constituted in the generational process (Prout, 2010). Thus, they reveal interpretations and feelings forged in the context of relationships within age groups and between different groups. It is also considered that this is an open process, understood in this analysis because of the interactions between the research provocations, the face-to-face and virtual interactions during the researched period, and the stories of these participants in their families and with their peers in different institutional and non-institutional contexts.

Experiences of children and adolescents aged 8 to 14 living in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH) and the Federal District (DF)

The research was carried out in 2020 when in-person school activities were suspended. The results revealed that, in general, children and adolescents were busy carrying out various activities in the context of social isolation¹².

In the case of children living in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (RMBH), they were asked about their experiences, indicating the following activities: “games on the computer, cell phone or tablet, alone or with friends”; “I play sports, dance or do physical activity”; “I read books or magazines that are not mandatory at school”; “I do school activities”; “I watch cartoons, films or series”; “I talk to other children on WhatsApp or the computer”; “I talk to other adults on WhatsApp or the computer”; “I help with household chores.” The proposed alternatives were: “never”; “a few days”; “every day” and “every day several times a day” (Research at RMBH).

Children and adolescents from the Federal District (DF) responded to the following questionnaire items: “In the last week, how often did you do the following things?”: “Play on the computer, cell phone, or video games?” “Watch TV?”; “Play sports, dance or do some physical exercise at home?”; “Read books for pleasure (that are not school assignments)?”; “Do schoolwork?”; “Do activities that give you pleasure, such as painting, drawing, playing an instrument or others that you enjoy?”; “Do you get upset with a child because you want to use the computer, cell phone, or tablet?”; “Chat on the phone with people who don’t live with you?”; “Participate in household chores, such as washing dishes, sweeping and tidying the house?”; “Go out to an open yard, balcony, or patio where you can see the sky?” The alternatives were: “nothing”; “very little”; “almost every day” and “several times a day” (Research in DF), obtaining the results described below.

Children and adolescent respondents from RMBH and DF revealed that most of their time was dedicated to activities involving electronic devices. We observed that 76% of children surveyed in RMBH responded that they watched TV (cartoons, films, or series) every day and several times, and 65.8% of children and adolescents responding from DF reported doing so almost every day and several times a day. Games on the computer, cell phone, or tablet showed the following results: 62% and 75.5%

¹² When translating the questionnaire to adapt it to the Brazilian reality, for the DF research, the word confinement was maintained. Santos et al., (2021), however, warn us that this is physical isolation, as children and adolescents maintained intense social relationships through applications and social networks. The children and adolescents participating in the research, inspired by the questionnaire, adopted the word confinement as a synonym for social/physical isolation.

of those surveyed in RMBH and DF, respectively, said they carried out this activity every day/almost every day (DF) and every day several times. We highlight these frequencies that indicate the impact of the pandemic in terms of the use of screens and virtual activities. It is also observed that school activities also used virtual support and that most children and adolescents surveyed in both contexts indicated that this was one of the activities they carried out most frequently: In 69% and 83.3% of participating children from RMBH and DF, respectively, they performed it every day/almost every day and several times a day.

Regarding physical activity, research in both contexts asked how often children and adolescents practiced sports, danced, or did physical activity. In this item, a relevant difference was observed between the RMBH participants and those surveyed in the DF: 21% and 43.5% respectively responded that they performed physical activities every day/almost every day and several times a day. Even though the research carried out in DF found a higher percentage than in RMBH, more than 50% of the subjects surveyed declared that they did not perform or performed very little physical activity. This is relevant information regarding physical and mental health whose repercussions possibly extend into the post-social isolation period (ROCHA, 2021).

Another relevant piece of information concerns carrying out non-mandatory reading at school, a question to which 25.9% of the DF participants responded that they carried out this activity almost every day and several times a day and 20.7% of the children surveyed at RMBH responded affirmatively to this question. In this aspect, almost 80% of RMBH participants revealed that they were not reading for pleasure and 34% of those surveyed in DF indicated that they did not read for pleasure, while 40.5% read very little, and only 8% read every day.

On the one hand, the availability of electronic devices, especially cell phones with internet access, enabled actions and interactions in the virtual universe, which were sources of satisfaction and learning. However, they show the restriction of activities in large spaces, opportunities for movement, and coexistence with other children and adolescents in public spaces. This data is even more relevant when, among the children participating in the RMBH, 42.6% did not share the house with other children and 41.2% shared the house with just one child.

Among children and adolescents in the DF, more than half (56.3%) of the participants enjoyed open places where they could look at the sky, with 30.4% enjoying this moment several times a day.

Regarding activities carried out at home, in both contexts, 41% of children participating in the RMBH revealed that they carried out household tasks every day, while 40% did so every few days. Among the children and adolescents surveyed in the Federal District, 53.4% revealed that this was an activity carried out every day, which reveals that, in both contexts, domestic tasks were the experience of approximately half of the children.

Children and adolescents sought to build situations of well-being. Among those surveyed in the DF, more than half reported having carried out activities that gave them pleasure, and only 13.3% reported that they had not carried out activities that gave them satisfaction. In both contexts, the data revealed that children and adolescents created situations for interactions of different types. They mentioned conversations over the phone (DF), WhatsApp, or computer (RMBH), several times a day, with people who did not live with them.

The RMBH children were also asked whether they had conversations with adults at home and whether they had company during meals, which was answered affirmatively by 90.3% and 80.3%, respectively. This is relevant data since the presence of adults, children, and adolescents at home all day

has brought new opportunities for coexistence for most people who were able/wanted to comply with social isolation. With the suspension of in-person school activities, the experience of changing intra- and intergenerational relationships that affected a significant portion of the population stands out. However, although it reveals that most of them had the presence and interaction with adults, some children did not count on this presence to talk or share mealtimes, 9.7% and 19.7%, that is 196 and 398, respectively, in a universe of 2021 children aged 8 to 12 years. Within the scope of the DF, when asked about their proximity to trusted adults and the care they provided to children and adolescents, 39% of respondents completely agreed and 39% agreed, which indicates 78% of responses that trusted adults met care demands. In this dimension of welcoming the need for children and adolescents to be listened to by responsible adults, 43% completely agreed with the statement that they could talk to them about their concerns, while 32.1% agreed. Many children said they were satisfied with their family life (over 90%) and most children (approximately 80%) were satisfied and happy with their friendships.

The analysis of the open responses and some frequencies brought up in this topic indicates that, in their daily experiences, children were subjected to a generational order (Alanen, 2009) in which they had no choice: online classes and restrictions on socializing with friends and family, resulting from political and family decisions made by adults. However, children revealed a process of reframing the home environment in which interactions with adults and friends through WhatsApp sustained sociability.

It is worth highlighting the low presence of reading and physical activities. This aspect, from the point of view of generational processes (Prout, 2010), reveals that neither families nor educational, cultural, and sporting policies have been able to provide the development of taste and habit, as well as the material conditions for reading, for which social isolation would not be an impediment. In the case of physical activities, although social isolation has restricted the possibilities of visiting other spaces, no alternatives have been created to meet this need.

Fears and sadness

As expected, research also focused on the possible negative effects of the context of isolation on children and adolescents with questions about fears and sadness – whether they experienced them and what they were. If there were situations that provided joy, anxieties were present, with repercussions for well-being. In many cases, they did not find channels of expression, which can result in even greater suffering in the face of uncertainties and changes in their routines.

The answers indicated the experience of situations of fear and sadness, with rare exceptions of subjects who answered “no” to this question. Their manifestations revealed knowledge and interpretations about what was happening. The fear of family members becoming ill stood out, which was associated with the possibility of being left alone if that family member was the father or mother: “Yes. I’m afraid of someone in my family contracting the virus”; “I’m scared of dying” (Research at RMBH). Also in DF, there was concern about the health of their parents, grandparents, and family members: “I fear that my family will die”; “my fear is catching covid or someone in my family” (Research in DF). In the research coordinated by Muñoz, Pascual, and Crespo (2020a), the most cited words in the fear category were “family”, “coronavirus” and “death”, in that order, explaining that Spanish children were also very worried about losing their family members for the coronavirus.

Both children from RMBH and children and adolescents from DF, in some cases, generally indicated a fear of death. They also demonstrated that the collective dimension of the crisis affected them,

mentioning their sadness at knowing that many deaths were occurring, through phrases like these: “Yes, the deaths, the mourning of families. The number of infected people has been growing”; “News on television, number of daily deaths” (Research at RMBH).

Children and adolescents began to live with news of an increase in the number of infected people and deaths. Referring to Ferigato (2020), Marques et al. (2022, p. 129) observe the fact that death “invests with new meanings, no longer being just a symbolic issue, associated with the understanding of life, to become a real issue, a threat to its existence and alien existence.”

In the two contexts researched (RMBH and DF), the results indicated the fear that parents would become unemployed, and that people would not comply with isolation measures, which was associated with the fear that the pandemic would “never end” and of “never being able to leave the house again”. The situation of uncertainty and insecurity that the pandemic brought was felt as a reality in which they participated. Daily situations were changed and they were aware that the end of the situation could not be clearly seen and how far its consequences would reach: “(...) I am also afraid of not being able to deliver some school work and having to repeat a year”; “Yes (...), I should spend a lot of time studying at home because it’s a little difficult for me” (Research at RMBH). Alongside these elements, the lack of social contact appeared as one of the main reasons for sadness in the two contexts researched.

Among the children and adolescents surveyed in DF, many reported that isolation generated a feeling of “prison” with reflections of anxiety and boredom, perceived in the statements: “Being confined leaves me in a prison”. “The worst thing about confinement is anxiety.” “What makes me sad is just boredom! I don’t have a cell phone and it makes me sad not to be able to talk to my friends and listen to music” (Research in DF).

Children and adolescents expressed that not being free to move around in public spaces caused sadness. It is important to highlight that the environments mentioned were those of the house in which they lived, related to confinement; the school showed in the homesickness they felt; and the use of technological devices to maintain ties and social meetings virtually.

Their manifestations were related to subjective impacts, as they were expressed as sadness and fear. There were manifestations of acute suffering, such as fear of abandonment, being alone, and even of the world ending: “Fear of being alone, losing someone, people getting tired of living with me, the countless nightmares I’ve been having”; “Fear of the world ending”, including mention that it could be the end of humanity (Research at RMBH). Based on these manifestations and that the biggest dream of the children and adolescents surveyed in the Federal District was the end of the pandemic, we can say that this phenomenon had significant subjective impacts, demanding attention to aspects of mental suffering.

In the DF survey, when analyzing the results referring to the main sadnesses faced with confinement, another highlight was the word “friend”. Similarly, in Martínez Muñoz et al. (2020a), “friends” was also the most common word in the definitions of sadness for children, followed by “people” and “leaving”. In other words, while sociability is the main reason for joy, the impossibility of sociability becomes the main reason for sadness.

Joys

Joy and dreams were problematized as a fundamental dimension of human experience, in a context of radical change in everyday life (Guizzo; Marcello; Müller, 2020). The idea of child well-being,

Playing, playing and talking with friends; and staying with the family are among the main joys cited by children and adolescents interviewed in DF during the period of isolation. Strategies for interactions with friends were video conferences, cell phone conversations with friends or WhatsApp messages, and online games. The word cloud highlights the words friend and family. We observed that the joy highlighted sociability, whether with close friends or family and playing. Once again, the family was one of the most recurrent mentions in the responses, highlighting its importance, whether as security, presence, and/or concern.

Also in this aspect, the sharing of meanings by children from different contexts is observed. The research by Alvaro et al. (2021) points out that the proximity to family and pets allowed the feeling of happiness to emerge. Furthermore, when approaching their routine, the subjects researched highlighted peace of mind when eating without rushing and having more time to play. Similarly, research carried out in Spain (Martínez Muñoz et al., 2020a) identified that the main reason for children's sadness was separation from their extended family, followed by the risks of coronavirus and separation from friends. The main joy was the increased time with family at home. The most common word for joy was “family”, followed by “play” and “friends”, also highlighting the importance of social relationships and play in children's emotions as a shared experience of children and adolescents from different social contexts.

Different social conditions resulted in different conditions for complying with social isolation. Cortés-Morales et al. (2021) observed that children who stayed with parents who were working at home highlighted the happiness of being closer to their families, while children whose families worked in professions/situations that remained in face-to-face work revealed concern for their close ones. Daniel Becker (2022), in a preface to the work “Pandemic childhoods, school and mental health” (Matos, 2022), draws attention to the fact that, long before the covid-19 pandemic, children were already subject to countless causes of physical and emotional suffering. He highlights the social inequality of Brazilian society, in which children's rights have never been fully guaranteed, which has been aggravated by the setbacks experienced in politics in recent years. One of the aspects he highlights refers to the fact that children from all social classes “have little contact with their parents (some almost institutionalized for periods of 12 hours a day or more), either because they are subjected to exhausting working conditions, hours in transport and accumulation of tasks or because they prefer to deal with other personal issues” (Becker, 2022, p. 7).

Next, he adds that children live in violent cities that are hostile to their presence and, therefore, “they are walled in their homes and exiled from their essential territory, nature, and the outdoors” (Becker, 2022, p. 7). This aspect has been problematized by scholars in the field of childhood, especially in discussions about childhood and the city (Carvalho; Bizotto, 2022) or childhood and nature (Tiriba; Vollger; Pereira, 2021), with emphasis on the effects of the multiple inequalities that affect. The discussion of the physical and emotional health of children and adolescents has become a concern in analyses of childhood and the pandemic (Alvaro et al., 2021) and research that has listened to them can play the role of extrapolating the pandemic, illuminating generational processes (Prout, 2010) in the context of social relations (Alanen, 2010) through which children and adolescents are constituted. Recovering the central question of this article, what did children and adolescents do with what the pandemic did to them? perhaps a possible answer is that they showed us their needs to be with their family, to play, to be in our spaces outside the house, for walking and social interaction. This generation

expresses, in the context of a pandemic that generated highly intense toxic stress (Becker, 2022, p. 8), the mistakes of our society far beyond the health and social emergency.

Inter and intragenerational solidarity

Children and adolescents understood that the health and social emergency constituted a collective problem, expressing, for example, sadness at “people's ignorance and lack of awareness, [lack of] use of masks and isolation” (Research at RMBH). They were attentive to the news or had information about what was broadcast. The two surveys revealed that most children and adolescents recognized the importance of measures to contain the spread of the disease, particularly the suspension of face-to-face classes.

Exposure to contradictions and conflicts surrounding social phenomena and, specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic shows that intergenerational relationships, whether in their immediate environment or through what is accessed in different media, are a relevant aspect of the experiences of children and adolescents. Both the dissemination of denialist positions and the defense of isolation measures for the good of all are part of this complex flow of information and emotions mobilized in the face of an unprecedented and serious issue for everyone's lives. The surveys revealed that recognition of the seriousness of the situation, as well as adherence to protective measures, prevailed among children and adolescents. Regarding this recognition, the presence of intragenerational solidarity was observed, with the expression of concerns for other children and intergenerational, especially in elderly people. Expressions of concern for the elderly were primarily related to family members, both fathers and mothers and grandparents.

The consequences of the economic aspects of the crisis also did not escape the perception of children and adolescents: “I am very afraid of running out of food and someone in my family catching the disease”; “Yes, my family will not be able to give us anything to eat, as they are all unemployed”; “(Sad) the deaths caused by covid-19, which broke many families (...)”. “Being homeless because we live on rent, running out of food and getting sick” (Research at RMBH).

Children and adolescents participating in the research carried out in DF had varied concerns regarding their families' financial lives during social isolation. Approximately 48% of children were worried about the possibility of their family becoming impoverished, while almost 30% said they were not worried about this possibility. Those who declared they had already suffered impoverishment in their family accounted for 25.4% of them. Regarding unemployment, 56% of children were worried that someone in their family would lose their job and 20.3% were already experiencing this situation. The research was carried out remotely, in a context of a “sociology of urgency”. Therefore, as previously announced, it was not possible to define intentional samples to stratify respondents by socioeconomic level. However, the concerns expressed above are linked to living conditions that, possibly, at the time of the research, were seen as being on the verge of worsening precariousness or were already impoverished in the face of the social crisis.

There was also concern about the consequences of the crisis on the poorest population, highlighting the perception of social inequalities. These statements illustrate this concern: “How the homeless will be and if everything will return to normal”; “It makes me sad to see people in need” (Research at RMBH). Also, “this pandemic is like a relief for some people and a strangulation for others, whether due to injustice, desires, goals...”. Some with political content: “that the government MUST

help citizens instead of saying it's just a 'little flu'; "everyone needs jobs and needs TV and computers" (Research in DF).

The examples above show the attention of children and adolescents to the consequences of the crisis that go beyond their immediate reality. The mention of people and groups who live in situations of greater vulnerability indicates the presence of political references about the pandemic context, which reveals a reflective process built in different interactions, whether with the media or with adults or other children and adolescents. In this direction, there was a solidarity that was not only intergenerational but also marked by the perception of inequalities as a social and political phenomenon. Also in this aspect, research in other contexts coincides with this (Muñoz; Pascual; Crespo, 2020a), indicating that the pandemic and its consequences constitute a generational experience of contemporary times (Feixa; Leccardi, 2010; Weller, 2010), that is, they generate common meanings for this population.

In this reflective process, the crisis, with changes in social relations and everyday experiences, provided (also) children and adolescents with the opportunity to think about the values and meanings of their experiences, as in these sentences written by a child and a teenager from DF: "But I learned to value every detail more, the hugs will now be longer, the conversations longer and the love more intense, and that my life will no longer be based solely on social networks"; "I think that during this quarantine I discovered other versions of myself in addition to having matured a lot, it was a moment of reflection". Even the situation of participating in the research seems to have been experienced as an opportunity for reflection and, especially, for expressing one's points of view. Participation in the research, alongside statements such as "great research", or even the significant number of children from RMBH who were available to be interviewed in the second stage of the research (740 respondents) seem to indicate that they seek spaces for participation and are willing and content, built in different relationships, to share with other actors and institutions.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The construction of a comprehensive and information-qualified corpus of data proved to be a significant resource for expanding understanding of the points of view of children and adolescents, deepened by dialogue with research and reflections prepared in the context of a sociology of urgency. The research discussed here is broad and addresses different aspects. Within the limits of this article, we sought, through the generation category, to analyze the experiences of children and adolescents. In this section, the intention is not so much to review the reported factual aspects or feelings, but rather to attempt to interpret the experience of the generational process in the situation of social emergency and its possible derivations for other contexts.

It is reaffirmed here that children and adolescents can act and make decisions in their family and social environment. From this perspective, the article points out that schools, families, and public administrators recognize the abilities of children and adolescents as active agents in their lives in an ethical-political attitude of denial of the perspective that sees them as passive beings who only respond to the environment around them. Thus, it is about recognizing the ability of children and adolescents to make choices, to make decisions, and to engage in actions that affect the world around them.

Looking at social life through the generation category proved to be useful in that the views of young generations on the crisis experienced by everyone can illuminate aspects of general living

conditions and, especially, on the social place of children and adolescents whose effective participation in decisions that affect them is still very precarious.

Thus, the situation of exceptionality allowed us to understand this aspect of the experience of children and adolescents but also to extrapolate it. As a conclusion, we highlight some aspects related to the condition and generational process that involve relationships within and between age groups.

The meanings of family life for children and adolescents emerged as a relevant element that goes beyond the dimension of *stricto sensu* protection and care. Faced with the exceptional nature of social isolation, these subjects experienced the playful dimension in their relationships with adults, as well as sharing obligations with maintaining the house over an extended period. The research subjects expressed their perception of living conditions in a society that absorbs the time of adults, children, and adolescents with work and school activities, limiting coexistence perceived as a significant factor of well-being. The apprehension and recognition of their points of view call into question the model of capitalist society, in which everyday relationships of care and play are secondary.

Children and adolescents follow the circulation of information, paying attention to different media, interactions with adults and between adults, and being exposed to the conflicts and contradictions that social phenomena contain. In the specific case of the pandemic, its politicization and ideologization, discussed in the introduction to this article, did not escape them. This reveals that children are subjects who are interested in the political dimension, at the same time it reveals the inability of our adult-centric society to incorporate their points of view for cultural enrichment and recognition of them as full social subjects.

Children and adolescents revealed that friendship and a sense of solidarity are part of the experience of time in childhood and adolescence, with experiences and feelings built into the concreteness of life. Friendships are woven into daily life that involve circulation in public spaces in general, in which the school routine is a fundamental part of sociability and whose absence contributed to giving visibility to its meaning.

The sense of solidarity, also identified in other research, has interpersonal dimensions, but also collective ones, which expand to the perception of class and power inequalities, as they have shown capable of reflecting on the different consequences depending on the social condition. Regarding power, the perception that government actions can favor or disadvantage the well-being of the population was evidenced through criticism of how public authorities in Brazil handled the health crisis.

Children and adolescents showed that the restrictions imposed to control the pandemic strongly affected them, changing their routines, social relationships, and activities and that the context of the pandemic caused discomfort such as loneliness, anxiety, boredom, sadness, and fears, including the fear of illness and death, of oneself and loved ones. Although emergencies occur frequently, our society is not prepared to consider the needs and views of its different age groups.

The pandemic was configured as an unprecedented event and not territorially delimited. However, we also do not have knowledge and practices built in other emergencies, such as in cases of mining tailings dam collapses, floods, and landslides, among others, which equally affect families and people of all ages. By this, we mean that the failure to consider the points of view of children and adolescents in everyday social life is possibly one of the impediments for society to consider them in emergencies, as channels and forms of communication and effective participation that can be mobilized in emergencies. This observation applies both to the processes of construction of sociological knowledge

and to the political processes of social participation in decisions and actions to support social well-being and guarantee rights.

Considering the generational position, children and adolescents break with dichotomies, especially those that separate adults and children and express their criticism of the context and political and individual actions. At the same time, they are formed by witnessing different positions of adults, sometimes antagonistic, as in the case of denialists and supporters of a scientific and institutional vision in facing the crisis.

A broad set of research will also be needed on the social experiences that were forged in the context of the covid-19 pandemic to gain greater clarity on its effects on the generation that was born or that lived part of early childhood, childhood, and adolescence marked by fear, insecurity, uncertainties and contradictions of the health and social crisis. But it seems possible to affirm that an event with such spatial and temporal scope and intensity of individual and collective experiences integrates the generational process of children and adolescents and, therefore, needs to be among the variables for understanding the history of these groups and society.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors and the author declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.