

ARTICLE

BNCC OF GEOGRAPHY FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE CONTRADICTIONS FOR A DECOLONIAL AND ANTI-RACIST GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION¹

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ABSTRACT: This article debates the educational policies in Brazil considering how changes in the education curriculum have direct implications for teaching practices and the social transformations of Brazilian reality. The objective is to analyze the limits of the Common National Curricular Base – BNCC (the new Brazilian education system) for the promotion of a decolonial and anti-racist education. For this, the document was subjected to an analysis of the contents and references associated with the ethnic-racial issues presented in its introductory text and, in particular, in the descriptors of skills and competences oriented to the subject Geography in Elementary School. The analysis made it possible to identify a set of contradictions and a series of structural and conjunctural setbacks that do not guarantee the development of a decolonial and anti-racist education. Some of these results reiterate that the BNCC was produced as part of the actions of conservative social agents in Brazilian society, therefore, it demonstrates low possibilities of promoting an emancipatory education.

Keywords: elementary education, transforming education, geographic education, curriculum

BNCC DE GEOGRAFIA DO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL E AS CONTRADIÇÕES PARA UMA EDUCAÇÃO DECOLONIAL E ANTIRRACISTA

RESUMO: Este artigo estimula o debate sobre as políticas educacionais no Brasil considerando, sobretudo, como as alterações do currículo escolar oferecem implicações diretas para a formação docente e a transformação social da realidade brasileira. O objetivo é desenvolver uma análise sobre as contradições da Base Nacional Curricular Comum – BNCC para a promoção de uma educação geográfica decolonial e antirracista. Para isso, o documento foi submetido a uma análise dos conteúdos e referenciais associados às questões étnico-raciais apresentados no seu texto introdutório e, nos descritores de habilidades e

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competências orientados para a disciplina Geografia no Ensino Fundamental. A análise possibilitou a identificação de um conjunto de contradições e uma série de retrocessos estruturais e conjunturais que não garantem o desenvolvimento de uma duração decolonial e antirracista a partir da geografia. Alguns desses resultados reiteram que a BNCC foi produzida como parte das ações de agentes sociais conservadores da sociedade brasileira, portanto, demonstra baixas possibilidades de promoção de uma educação transformadora e emancipatória.

Palavras-chave: sistema educacional, ensino fundamental, educação geográfica, currículo.

BNCC DE GEOGRAFÍA PARA LA EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA Y LAS CONTRADICCIONES PARA UNA EDUCACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA DECOLONIAL Y ANTIRRACISTA

RESUMEN: Este artículo debate las políticas educativas en Brasil considerando cómo los cambios en el currículo educativo tienen implicaciones directas para las prácticas docentes y las transformaciones sociales de la realidad brasileña. El objetivo es analizar los límites de la Base Curricular Nacional Común – BNCC (nuevo sistema educativo brasileño) para la promoción de una educación decolonial y antirracista. Para ello, el documento fue sometido a un análisis de los contenidos y referencias asociadas a las cuestiones étnico-raciales presentadas en su texto introductorio y, en particular, en los descriptores de habilidades y competencias orientadas a la asignatura Geografía en la Enseñanza Fundamental. El análisis permitió identificar un conjunto de contradicciones y una serie de retrocesos estructurales y coyunturales que no garantizan el desarrollo de una educación decolonial y antirracista. Algunos de estos resultados reiteran que el BNCC fue producido como parte de las acciones de los agentes sociales conservadores en la sociedad brasileña, por lo tanto, demuestra bajas posibilidades de promover una educación emancipadora.

Palabras clave: : educación primaria, educación transformadora, educación geográfica, currículo

INTRODUCTION

Educational policies and systems also need to always be subjected to critical analysis and interpretations, so that they can indicate both the implications for curricular adequacy and academic training spaces, and above all, evaluate the impacts on everyday school life and the possibilities for transforming the society.

In Brazil, this moment is underway, being represented by the recent elaboration and implementation of the Common National Curricular Base – BNCC (*Base Nacional Curricular Comum*) in 2018. In general terms, the BNCC is the document that defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning that all students must develop throughout the stages and modalities of Basic Education, following the provisions of the National Education Plan – PNE (Brazil, 2014).

The Brazilian reality has an important variety of educational institutions, and in moments like this, social movements to defend education summarily question the possibilities of access to the right to quality education to which a large part of the population has not, historically, had access.

The arguments used to explain these difficulties range from formal justifications of education systems – guided by discourses on the country's continental extension, to the conditions implied by regional and environmental diversity, ethnic and racial plurality, and identities in the national territory.

From this perspective, the most conservative arguments discuss these issues as exceptionalities, that is, considering them to be an exacerbated concern for the future of generations, and that overcoming historical problems is always a process of becoming. It is no surprise that the problems of education are

always relativized in contemporary times, and the most radical debate is suppressed, as it supposedly does not offer alternative paths to history in the present.

Notably contrary to democratic principles, these arguments are largely claimed by hegemonic education agents as the main obstacles to the construction of public policies at the national level, but they also form a kind of alibi to legitimize and maintain development projects for an unequal society, unfair and undemocratic.

Therefore, despite more conservative ideals, the discussion of the education process in the country can be based on opening up these questions and expanding the range of possibilities for problematizing these positions and inconsistencies, considering, the implementation of a new education process that considers the ethnic and racial diversity of Brazilian socio-spatial formation.

For example, Federal Laws 10.639/03 (Brazil, 2003) and 11.645/08 (Brazil, 2008), which made the teaching of Afro-Brazilian, African, and indigenous history and culture mandatory, have placed at the center of the debate, the politicization of school content, still classic and traditional, to guide pedagogical practices that encourage the fight against ethnic-racial and gender discrimination in Brazil.

In this scope, this article stimulates this debate based on: what is the national project drawn up from the new BNCC for Brazil? How can its content stimulate processes of transformation in Brazilian society, especially in the fight against racism and colonial culture?

Thus, the objective is to evaluate the content relating to the Geography subject in Elementary School, pointing out its contradictions for a decolonial and anti-racist geographic education.

For this purpose, the text was divided into four parts. The first discusses the processes used to analyze the BNCC based on the treatment of content and competence descriptors. Next, historical aspects of the organization of the policy and the conflicting conditions of its formulation are presented, and then, the analysis of the contents presented in the thematic units and their relationship with the principles for anti-racist and decolonial geographic education. The text ends with final considerations.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of the contents relating to the Geography subject in Elementary Education of the new BNCC was developed based on the analysis of the treatment of ethnic-racial issues in the document, to identify the levels of contribution to a decolonial and anti-racist geographic education, and systematization of historical aspects that help to contextualize the scope, agents involved in the formulation, elaboration and implementation of this document in Brazil as a whole.

Thus, the content analyzed referred to the thematic units presented for the Geography discipline of fundamental cycles I and II (initial years and final years), listed in the content and competence descriptors.

In the document, each thematic unit is designated by an alphanumeric code, as an identifier of the education level, for example, the acronym EF means the unit related to Elementary Education, and EM for Secondary Education. After identifying the grade, the code presents the discipline's acronym, in this case, Geography (GEO), with the last structure representing the order of skill by school grade.

There is no problem in assigning alphanumeric codes to indicate thematic units. But its importance for the analysis included the valorization of a detailed division of themes and concepts, which indicate not only the composition of the curriculum but above all, the logical character of separate levels of the teaching process.

In this sense, the analysis started from the organization of content prescriptions in the five thematic units for this level of Education: 1) the subject and his place in the world; 2) connection and scales; 3) the world of work; 4) forms of representation and spatial thinking; 5) nature, environment and quality of life. At BNCC, these units are subdivided into objects of knowledge (content) and multiplied into a diversity of specific skills distributed for each grade.

Competence descriptors designate the coherence of the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures) and skills (practical, cognitive, and socio-emotional), which can direct attitudes and values to resolve complex demands of everyday life, the full exercise of citizenship, and the world of work. This

character was essential to extract, from the document, the degree of complexity in understanding the contents and the definition of objects of knowledge and skills that should guarantee the continuity and progression of learning from the initial years to the end of elementary school.

All these parameters were used separately to develop assessments on the conceptual, formative, and pedagogical elements that involve the limits, possibilities, setbacks and advances and, mainly, the contradictions of the BNCC for anti-racist and decolonial education, considering the adherence to the recommendations presented in Federal Laws 10,639/03 and 11,645/08, the coherence for a democratic and citizen management of education in the country (Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education or Law nº 9,394/1996), in addition to theoretical and methodological contributions from scholars who are dedicated to ethnic-racial debate, anti-racism and decoloniality.

INTRODUCTORY SCREENING: THE INITIAL CONTRADICTIONS OF THE BNCC

The construction of a national curriculum occurs based on an asymmetric network of power relations. In this case, the curriculum, transformed in fact into a field of dispute, is the central instrument that must be used to guarantee the permanence of a certain social order, while it also serves to legitimize certain worldviews and make others invisible (ARROYO, 2011).

Through the school curriculum, different agents and social subjects, with different visions of education and political perspectives, can come into conflict and negotiate their conceptions and models of society, intentionally defining the contents and themes that are essential for the formation of a representative subject of this project (political dimension), as well as deliberating on the operational and didactic forms that should be implemented to develop it (pedagogical dimension). Therefore, the construction of a national curriculum always occurs through various tensions, and, with the BNCC, the contradiction arose from political and ideological conflicts in the understanding of society projects.

In Brazil, the requirement for a common curricular base for basic education initially appears in Article 210 of the Federal Constitution (1988) and, subsequently, in Article 26 of Law No. 9,394/96 – *Law of Guidelines and Bases of Brazilian Education (Lei das Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Brasileira)*, which establishes that the elementary and secondary education curricula

[...] they must have a common national base, to be complemented, in each education system and school establishment, by a diversified part, required by the regional and local characteristics of society, culture, economy, and clients. (Brazil, 1996).

The guideline reveals a national concern with education in the country, and this first Common Curricular Base was partially met and reduced to just a reference for basic education with the so-called *National Curricular Parameters – PCNs (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais)* (Brazil, 1997, 1998, 2000), which were not admitted as a legal obligation.

The greatest impact of this plan, without a doubt, occurred mainly in the possibility of defining the fundamental contents necessary for school curricula, especially those that have some direction for national assessments of Elementary and Secondary Education, such as Prova Brasil, the National Assessment System of Basic Education (SAEB- *Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Básica*), the National Secondary Education Examination (ENEM- *Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio*) and, more recently, the National Education Plan Law No. 13,005/2014 (Brazil, 2014).

The first version of BNCC - Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education was published in June 2015, during President Dilma Rousseff's second term. This document was initially prepared by education specialists and then delivered for the appreciation of society, when it had more than 12 million contributions prepared by public consultation and education agents and professionals, through the National Education Forum (FNE- *Fórum Nacional de Educação*).

The 2015 BNCC was a document constructed under the principles of democratic participation and supported the reformulation of the second document, giving rise to the version published in May 2016. However, with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, in 2016, President Michel Temer's administration deliberately replaced the second version of the document with a third, presented in March 2017 – the so-called new BNCC.

Despite severe criticism, especially regarding the lack of popular participation and public discussion of the document, the new BNCC was approved, reinforcing the fragmentation of education into two documents: Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education in November 2017 and Secondary Education in 2018.

In general, the BNCC has a normative character and contemplates not only what can be taught and learned in educational institutions, but above all, how the country conceives its training principles for the development of education for future generations and as a component of public policies and the nation project.

It is important to consider it as the result of a coup, provoked by the conservative forces of Brazilian society and used, in the educational sector, to create a national curriculum that would corroborate the maintenance of a liberal, elitist, conservative, anti-democratic, and racist. This project becomes evident when some arguments are put forward.

Firstly, the continuity of the democratic process developed and contemplated in previous versions was not guaranteed. Popular participation in the so-called “third version” was very low, as its organization resulted only from regional conferences, which meant that decisions were concentrated exclusively in a few cities. For example, in the North Region, the conference took place in the city of Manaus-AM, in the Northeast, in Recife-PE, in the South, in Florianópolis-SC, in the Southeast, in São Paulo-SP and, in the Center-West, in Brasília-DF.

Secondly, because it was hastily approved by a notably neoliberal government, the representation in the curriculum makes more explicit the interests of conservative sectors or business groups in Brazilian society, such as the economic groups of *Fundação Lemann*, *Fundação Airton Senna*, *Fundação Itaú Social* (*Movimento pela Base Nacional Comum*) and *Todos pela Educação*, who opposed the curriculum proposed since its first version, but who, in the Temer government, found open ways to propose and dictate the curriculum organized based on skills and abilities that met the uncritical and conformist aspirations of an education aimed only at the world of work.

It is recognized that the BNCC is emphatic and repetitive in the debate about guaranteeing equal learning rights, overcoming the radically disciplinary fragmentation of knowledge and encouraging its application in real life, about the importance of context in giving meaning to what is learned and about the student's leading role in their learning and the construction of their life project.

This vision has helped in the way the document was and has been used by various agents producing books and teaching materials. In this regard, the new curriculum meets the publishing market's demand to develop a unique pedagogical proposal for the entire national territory, which facilitates the standardization and homogenization of content that is distant from the concrete school reality, which does not meet the arguments about diversity, autonomy and emancipatory formation, on the contrary, reduce them to a highly idealistic and seductive discourse, to a hasty and uncritical reading.

To guarantee a notably conservative and liberal curriculum, the BNCC also breaks with the procedural and continuous development of education, as there was an almost absolute separation between Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education and Secondary Education, in two documents constructed at different times.

Regarding theoretical inconsistencies, in the Introduction, it is clear that the document does not present the fundamental concepts and definitions of the educational process, such as what is meant by education, curriculum, and assessment in terms of a base considered common. This contradiction is also observed in the set of skills, which, to a large extent, values the term “diversity”, without presenting its conception, since the concept can indicate different meanings, in theoretical terms, of content and pedagogical practice.

Furthermore, all these processes are overvalued exclusively by the pedagogy of skills, widely criticized since the 90s in Brazil. In general, this pedagogical approach openly defends an education aimed at meeting the demands of the job market in a neoliberal economy, which both boils down to the logic of an exclusive training process in know-how and also greatly strengthens the principles of meritocracy, while reducing the possibilities of critical citizenship training (GIROTO, 2017).

In addition to the structural contradictions, the BNCC also presents some formal mistakes. For example, at the end of the 15-page introductory text, there is a division of the teaching steps by curricular component with more than 500 pages, hundreds of tables, and long lists of skills, each preceded by a

descriptor composed of eight digits, between letters and numbers, to facilitate the preparation of national test items. In a careful reading, the prescriptive nature of the BNCC contradicts the concepts presented in the introduction (interdisciplinary curriculum concepts) and corroborates the classic pedagogy (content-based and fragmented), which has always existed in Brazilian basic education curricula.

Another exclusion of the BNCC was the removal of the concepts of gender identity and sexual diversity, due to pressure from the so-called “Bible board” of Congress (a group of Christian politicians with a reactionary bias) on the Temer government, justified by the ideals of “maintenance of the values of the traditional Brazilian family” (composed of father, mother and their children), which, in logic, serves more the representation and maintenance of patriarchy and coloniality, than the real situation of the Brazilian family.

However, a significant portion, the families in Brazil has been showing an important diversification, observed both in the growth of families made up of single mothers and fathers (or solo), divorced couples who unite their families, children who are raised by their grandparents, and even coparental families or families formed by same-sex couples (IBGE, 2015).

This contradiction impedes processes of reflection on inequities in geographic space, since colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism are the three main systems of oppression in the modern world (SANTOS, 2019).

The question, therefore, expands when thinking about the impacts of these contradictions on a decolonial and anti-racist geographic education. Is it possible to have meaningful learning and understand the complexities of the reality of a diverse and intercultural society just by operating the concept of social class? How can a national curriculum, after so many advances in dialogues about intersectionality, repeat a reading of the world that is blind to the presence of LGBTQI+ people and non-gendered geographic spaces?

Therefore, the desire for a school curriculum that can transgress the commonplace that ignores asymmetric impacts of power, about the regimes of representation and authorization of speech of subordinated subjects (DINIZ; & MOURA, 2020), such a proposal was not addressed in the new national curriculum. Unfortunately, the current BNCC is unable to break the Western and heteronormative canons of the meaning of the world, it does not question the invisible knowledge and the processes of power control that have, as a strategy, domination based on conceptions of race, gender, and class.

The BNCC also focuses on composing a curriculum based on the logic of perpetuating the dominance of national hegemonic power, linked to the interests of global capitalism, to reduce ethnic-racial and gender conflicts and implement the efficiency of the neoliberal State in the production of geographic space

From this perspective, the punctuated suppressions suggest heteropatriarchal and conservative positions, arising from a reactionary interference that profoundly affects a more critical and plural reading of the world. The conservative and liberal orientation produces a picture of concealment and disregard of the reality of Brazil, evidenced, above all, in the Eurocentric colonizing discourse, based on the continuity of capitalist development as a one-way street for the entire society.

Due to these aspects, the BNCC implementation process has been marked by many questions, especially from education professionals who refuse to implement this new curriculum and try to produce various emergency pedagogies that can guarantee pedagogical insurgencies based on political and epistemic disobedience to the curriculum. national.

GEOGRAPHY AT BNCC? LIMITS OF DECOLONIAL AND ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION

At BNCC, Geography, as an elementary school subject, is presented as a curricular component of the Human Sciences area, being contextualized based on the development of geographic reasoning, which must be activated considering seven principles: analogy, connection, differentiation, distribution, extension, location and order.

In the document, this subject is essential for students to be able to answer some questions about themselves, people, and objects: Where are you located? Why is it located? How is it distributed? What are the socio-spatial characteristics? These questions mobilize children and adolescents to think about

the location of objects and people, allowing them to understand their place in the world (BRASIL, 2018, p. 367).

But it must be recognized that these questions can contemplate content anchored in decolonial pedagogies and, therefore, suggest opening up other issues to, firstly, question the meaning of these locations in the world, much more than knowing where it is located or where it is. In this aspect, we consider that decolonial pedagogies, according to Walsh (2009), are crucial for developing methodologies produced in a context of insurgent practices of struggles and resistance against modernity/coloniality and that enable subaltern ways of being, thinking, knowing, feeling, existing and living outside the colonial pattern of power, knowledge and being, established from the 16th century onwards when some European countries invaded America. Such pedagogies essentially question the epistemes of Modernity generated by colonialism.

Maldonado Torres (2007) and Quijano (2009) explain that colonialism is the result of a process of territorial occupation of domination and economic, military, legal, and administrative exploitation that begins in 1492, being a landmark of the historical period called Modernity (1453- 1789), driven by the economic and political system of exploitation, commercial and mercantile capitalism.

The combination of Modernity, Colonialism, and Capitalism was fundamental for the subjection and dehumanization of indigenous and African people, domination centered on a social organization based on the ideology of the existence of superior and inferior races. This ideology, as shown by Cesaire (1978) and Mbembe (2018), justifies speeches of invasion, genocide, violence, and spoliation and, at the same time, reified the black and indigenous body, subjecting them first to dehumanization followed by enslavement.

Even after the process of political independence of the former colonies, control remained continuous, through the coloniality of power (a system of domination that became global after the invasion of America). Quijano (2009) characterizes it as an ideological, social, political, and economic system of control of power combined with coloniality of being (objectification of others by destroying their identity, memory, knowledge, culture, and language) and coloniality of knowledge (erases other forms of knowledge production that are not European, not recognizing the intellectual legacy of subaltern peoples in colonized territories). These three forms of coloniality act together to subalternize and make racialized bodies invisible, including constructing their subjectivity.

Regarding the consequences of coloniality, Santos (2009) highlights the continuous production of epistemicide, which would be the erasure of knowledge produced by people subordinated by colonialism, or the replacement of local knowledge with alien knowledge. Unfortunately, the genocide of these epistemes is present in school curricula, when the knowledge, presence (before and after 1500), struggles, religions, ways of life, and experiences of indigenous and black people are made invisible in favor of senses of Eurocentric, white, colonial, rational and neoliberal world. By acting in this way, the school activates the production of legitimizing mechanisms (educational practices) of the coloniality of power, being, and knowledge.

An education that aims to be critical and emancipatory needs to present curricula from a decolonial perspective, which guarantees possibilities for resisting, emancipating, humanizing, and rising among peoples historically subalternized and dehumanized by coloniality, as Farias & Faleiros (2010) and Araújo (2010) present to us, and that conceive decoloniality as a paradigm that breaks with colonial, Eurocentric, modern/rationalist conceptions of the world, considering Eurocentric knowledge as another and not just the only and hegemonic sense of thinking about the world.

The incorporation of decolonial curricula involves a production of content prescription based on political-epistemic disobedience, theoretical and practical resistance to the one that preaches modernity/coloniality (Mignolo, 2008), with the potential to generate an education for freedom, as defended by Freire (1987), constituting a movement of contradiction, questioning and overcoming.

Given this contextualization, the research began with the investigation of the introductory text of the BNCC – Geography Elementary School (*Geografia Ensino Fundamental*) (Brazil, 2018, p.359-366), the competencies, thematic units, objects of knowledge and skills for elementary education (p.366- 394).

With critical reading, we sought to understand the contextualization of the production of space and its relationship with the colonization process, as well as the activation of emancipatory thinking for anti-racist education, understanding that such approaches are fundamental for the critical and reflective

problematization of training socio-spatial areas of Brazil (object of knowledge in the fourth and seventh years), Latin America and Africa (object of knowledge in the eighth year), Europe, Oceania and Asia (object of knowledge in the ninth year).

In the presentation of the discipline, there is, in the first paragraph, the following recommendation:

At the same time, geographic education contributes to the formation of the concept of identity, expressed in different ways: in the perceptive understanding of the landscape, which gains meaning as, when observing it, the experience of individuals and the community is noted; in relationships with the places we live; in the customs that rescue our social memory; in cultural identity; and in the awareness that we are subjects of history, distinct from each other and, therefore, convinced of our differences. (Brasil, 2018, p.359)

Given the concern with a critical reflection of social memory and the conviction that we are different, it was expected that the objects of knowledge and skills would mobilize for the subsequent discussion, the contextualization of colonization, to demarcate in which period of the history of the modern world, has humanity come to be recognized as fragmented between “us” and “others”? Fanon (2005), Quijano (2009), Santos (2009), and Mbembe (2018) present fundamental discussions about this demarcation of difference: who demarcated it? Is this difference defined only by cultural bias or by the conception of the existence of superior and inferior races, according to Quijano (2009)?

Unfortunately, it is observed that this contextualization, which would be crucial for understanding the difference, does not appear in this text extract or anywhere in the entire document. Therefore, it is believed that the absence of this debate prevents School Geography from guaranteeing students an emancipatory awareness of history and the reasons why “we are different”.

Following the pages, there is an intense concern with generating critical and reflective knowledge about the production of space, a fact visible in the presentation of the principles to awaken geographic reasoning, “stimulate geographic thinking to represent and interpret the world...” and understand the “impacts of territorial distribution on geopolitical disputes and socioeconomic inequalities of the population in different urban and rural contexts” (Brasil, 2018, p.360; 361).

Among the thematic units, especially in the first, “The subject and his place in the world”, the focus should be on the notions of belonging and identity as a strategy for understanding “citizens who are products of societies located in a given time and space, but also producers from these same societies, with cultures and their norms” (Brasil, 2018, p.362). Following the same steps, the third specific competence of elementary education determines:

To develop autonomy and a critical sense for understanding and applying geographic reasoning in the analysis of human occupation and production of space, involving the principles of analogy, connection, differentiation, distribution, extension, location, and order (BRASIL, 2018, p.366)

Thus, the excerpts above are marked by an uncomfortable absence, for minimally adequate analysis, of the production of critical knowledge that makes up the desired geographic reasoning, as there is no approach to how colonial logic was a founding geographic action to define the production of space in colonized countries. Therefore, how can we reflect on the production of space in its entirety critically and reflectively without triggering knowledge that can make visible the actions of the colonial military, economic, and political enterprise in the configuration of spatial arrangements?

Still analyzing the document, another concern that appears in the initial text, aimed at reflecting on the objects of knowledge for Elementary School I, are the asymmetrical power relations and their impacts on the production of space:

In this final phase of Elementary School [...] initial years at increasing levels of complexity of conceptual understanding regarding the production of space. To this end, students need to expand their knowledge about the use of space in different geographic situations governed by historically established norms and laws, understanding the transformation of space into used territory – a space for concrete action and unequal power relations. (BRASIL, 2018, p. 381)

How can we contextualize such relationships without presenting the impacts of the colonial experience on the formation of power relations generated by the economic, political, cultural, and social heritage of colonialism and its impacts on spatiality?

The objects of knowledge and skills aimed at the first, second, third, and sixth grades (Geography) indicate as content the understanding of places, landscapes, and living communities, with an emphasis on the contextualization of how natural phenomena linked to action human resources can produce unequal uses of space.

Therefore, it was expected that, by giving notoriety to content related to the understanding of the organization of the space closest to the child or adolescent, the BNCC could present some ability capable of problematizing coloniality as an action that produces the configuration of places and landscapes of experience, in a country that was under the dictates of colonial power for 322 years.

Producing decolonial geography that can reveal unequal power relations, in educational practices with children and adolescents, involves questioning the knowledge, struggles, experiences, and invisible cosmologies that generated processes of domination present in the lived space. Unfortunately, this is not what is perceived and, finally, it is clear that the absence is uncomfortable, and the invisibilization of the colonial system as a producer of space continues.

In the fifth year, the objects of knowledge and skills are directed to the federative units (States) where each school is located, and, in the fourth and seventh years, to the territorial formation of Brazil:

Students are expected to understand and relate the possible connections between the physical-natural components and the multiple scales of analysis, as well as understand the socio-spatial process of Brazil's territorial formation and analyze the transformations in Brazilian federalism and the unequal uses of the territory. (BRASIL, 2018, p.382)

Even with these concerns regarding the analysis of the territorial formation of Brazil in the seventh year, there are still annoying absences in the subject's curriculum and, although the ability appears “(EF07GE05) Analyze facts and situations representative of the changes that occurred between the mercantilist period and the advent of capitalism”, this, as highlighted by Quijano (2009), Santos (2009) and Mbembe (2018), does not delimit the intrinsic relationship between the colonization process and the threshold of Modernity and Capitalism.

In this way, the professor does not have explicit content to think about Brazil linked to the colonial system and the implications for the production of the national territory for more than three centuries which still normalize social and production relations, now anchored in the coloniality of power.

In the eighth, the central focus is the study of America and Africa, and the document recommends: “The relationships of how occupations and territorial formations of countries occurred should be analyzed through comparisons, for example, of African countries with Latin Americans countries, inserting, in this context, the Brazilian socioeconomic process” (BRASIL, 2018, p.382). This recommendation is vague and generalist, as it does not precisely demarcate the centrality of colonization in the process of territorial formation of the two continents. Because of this, there is no skill for this series that points to a discussion that can unveil the spatial arrangements in Africa and America built by colonization.

The visibility of conflicts and tensions on continents subjugated by colonization is present in two skills (EF08GE05 and EF08GE11) and, in a movement contrary to decoloniality, still reinforces the idea of Europe as a space radiating democracy, revolution, and republic. On the contrary, former colonies are seen as territories of invisibility, immersed in social disorganization (Europe/modern/rational/civilized versus former colonies/barbaric/backward/traditional/irrational).

Furthermore, in the analysis of the skills of the eighth year, another uncomfortable presence emerges that is the centrality of the “importance” of the supervision of international organizations to manage the problems of Africa and America: “(EF08GE06) Analyze the performance of world organizations in processes of cultural and economic integration in the American and African contexts, recognizing, in their places of experience, marks of these processes”.

This ability triggers a sense of a Eurocentric world, as it presents countries on both continents as being incapable of managing their political challenges (most of them generated by colonization), requiring

external intervention. Strangely in the ninth year, when approaching Europe, the presence of international organizations does not appear.

Finally, when Europe, Asia, and Oceania are covered in the ninth year, aspects of the globalization process and its consequences are among the prescribed contents. In this series alone, the Geography BNCC seems to be concerned with the role of colonialization, primarily in describing the contents and problematizing the discussions:

Due to the study of Europe's role in economic and political dynamics, it is necessary to approach the worldview from the point of view of the West, especially European countries, since maritime and commercial expansion, consolidates the Colonial System in different regions of the world. It is equally important to address other points of view, whether that of Asian countries in their relationship with the West or that of the colonized, with emphasis on the economic and cultural role of China, Japan, India, and the Middle East. (BRASIL, 2018, p.383)

In the knowledge object, “European hegemony in the economy, politics, and culture” appears, presenting two skills to meet this object:

(EF09GE01) Critically analyze how European hegemony was exercised in various regions of the planet, notably in situations of conflict, military interventions, and/or cultural influence in different times and places and (EF09GE06) Associate the criterion for dividing the world into the West and East with the Colonial System implemented by European powers. (Brazil, 2018, p. 393).

The presence of the colonial system in the contextualization of Europe is a positive point of the BNCC of Geography, and the question is: Why did the same discussion not appear when debating the contextualization of the production of Brazilian, Latin American, and African geographic space? Furthermore, the centrality of domination and European socio-spatial organization, based on the ideology of the existence of superior and inferior races, was not activated in the two skills highlighted, which could make it difficult to create more precise content for a decolonial debate that could produce anti-racist education.

Another disturbing absence is the contextualization of gender identity, to reflect on the inequities of geographic space in the Geography subject in Elementary School. Colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism are the three main systems of oppression in the modern world (Santos, 2009). Therefore, any reading of the totality of inequities needs to focus on the consequences of these three systems in an intersectional perspective to understand the contemporary social, political, and cultural configurations of colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist thinking and acting.

When analyzing the curriculum in question, an approach to the intersection of oppressions centered on gender, race, and class was expected to reveal the actions of a Eurocentric, cisheteropatriarchal society, articulated with the processes of superexploitation of human labor, which combine to produce a geographic space with unequal power relations (a recurring concern in the text's recommendations).

However, unfortunately, this is not what is observed in the prescription of the contents, as the center of perception of inequalities in social class, with no mention of the intersection of identities and consequent oppression, as in the extract:

In Elementary School – Final Years, students are expected to understand the processes that resulted in social inequality, assuming responsibility for transforming the current reality, and basing their actions on democratic, solidarity, and justice principles. (BRASIL, 2018, p.364-365).

In the fifth year, two objects of knowledge draw attention, prescribed for the thematic unit “The subject and his place in the world”, which mentions, as content, the dialogue between ethnic-racial and ethnic-cultural differences and social inequalities (p .378) and, then, among the skills mobilized to meet this content appears “(EF05GE02) Identify ethnic-racial and ethnic-cultural differences and social inequalities between groups in different territories” (p.379). Strangely, this ability recognizes ethnic-racial and cultural differences, but surprisingly only class inequality.

In the context of the contents of the eighth year, the inopportune absence remains:

It is considered that students need to know the different conceptions of the uses of territories, having as reference different social, geopolitical, and environmental contexts, through concepts such as social class, way of life, landscape, and natural physical elements. (BRASIL, 2018, p.383).

Is it possible to understand the complexities of reality through just the concept of social class? How can a national Geography curriculum, after so many advances in dialogues about intentionalities, repeat a reading of the world marked by non-colonized, racialized, and non-gendered geographic spaces?

It is observed that the removal of any mention of gender identity in the proposal, due to extremist positions, interferes with a more critical and plural reading of the various ways of existing in the world, in addition to reinforcing the systems of oppression highlighted by Santos (2009), in the fifth country in the world in crimes of femicide and the first that kills the most LGBTQI+ people. Furthermore, the school and the subject of Geography, through its prescribed curriculum, cannot contribute anything to altering this cruel reality based on heteronormativity.

In the analysis of the list of skills on the contents of ethnic-racial relations, the indigestible and inopportune presence of positivist geography is observed, especially in Elementary School (EF04GEO01, EF04GEO06, and EF05GEO2), where the verbs describe, identify and select they trigger knowledge of mere enumeration and identification of the “types” of traditional populations that exist in geographic space. There is only one skill that differs a little from the others “recognizing the ways of life of traditional people and communities in different places” (EF3GEO03), however, although the initial verb advances in a more analytical perspective, the rest of the essay is vague and generalist, in a command that mobilizes little or almost no reflection.

Another notable and equally inopportune and inappropriate presence is observed in the skills related to the contents to comply with article 26A of the Law on Guidelines and Bases of National Education and the National Curricular Guidelines for the Education of Ethnic-racial Relations and for the Teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African History and Culture (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional e às Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Educação das Relações Étnico-Raciais e para o Ensino de História e Cultura Afro-Brasileira e Africana*) (Brazil, 2004), there is a recurring reinforcement of the simple existence of traditional communities in geographic space. It seems that to discuss anti-racist education in the Geography curriculum, it is enough to report the presence of indigenous peoples and quilombolas in the Brazilian geographic space, especially in the Elementary School curriculum.

From the first to the fifth year, there are four skills mobilized in this sense. They are: EF3GEO03, EF04GEO01, EF04GEO06 and EF05GEO2. And yet, in the seventh year of Middle School, in EF07GEO03, the identification, in geographic space, of the presence of traditional peoples is repeated.

A geography that intends to discuss the production of space, through the study of nature, places, regions, and landscapes of experience, differentiated by levels of complexity (Brasil, 2018, p.361), cannot promote a decolonial and anti-racist from the perspective of Walsh's (2009) critical interculturality by listing as a learning object only the simple description and enumeration of the existence of traditional communities in geographic space.

It is necessary to go further and unveil the concept of difference and diversity, through the prescription of content that generates a pedagogical and political practice centered on discussions of ontological subalternization, the denial of the epistemes of racialized groups, presenting them as beings of resistance and insurgency, despite suffering from dehumanization and subordination, as argued by Walsh (2009).

Another notable presence in the general BNCC of Basic Education is “respect for diversity” or “respect for difference” to mobilize the recognition of ethnic-racial groups, as well as their cultures. This reference is very recurrent throughout the document, both in the Introduction and in the specific part of each discipline. As an example, we can highlight the concept of ‘diversity’ in the sixth and eighth competencies of Basic Education (Brasil, 2018, p.9-10). Furthermore, of the seven general competencies in the area of Human Sciences for Elementary Education, the concept of difference and diversity appears again in the first and fourth (Brasil, 2018, p.361).

The BNCC of Geography was not oblivious to this speech, as, right in the presentation, it expresses that “learning Geography favors the recognition of ethnic-racial diversity and the differences of social groups, based on ethical principles (respect for diversity and combat prejudice and violence of any kind)” (Brasil, 2018, p.361). And then, this recommendation is repeated in several parts of the 36 pages of this content.

According to Walsh (2009), the discourse of recognition and respect for diversities and differences emerged in the 90s, in educational policies, about Latin American countries, as well as in notices for projects and programs financed by international organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), among others. For the author, this demand is a consequence of pressure from black and indigenous movements that dispute their participation in the design of management policies for their territories.

The concepts of diversity and cultural difference inserted in educational policies present a problem of interpretation, as the recognition of diversity and cultural difference that the BNCC presents is based on a logic that Walsh (2009) calls re(colonialization), neoliberal rationality, and multicultural policy, which does not recognize, as part of the historical construction of Latin America, the founding role of race as an instrument of social classification, domination, and control, fundamental to the development of world capitalism. Therefore, the difference imposed since the colonization process was not based on culture or just class domination, but through the vision of race, racism, and racialization of indigenous and black bodies that were subordinated and enslaved.

Therefore, the dissemination of education policies, especially in the composition of curricula that emphasize the recognition of diversity and cultural difference, occurs within a logic of continuous dominance of national hegemonic power linked to the interests of global capitalism, to reduce ethnic-racial conflicts and implement the efficiency of the neoliberal State in the management of geographic space.

The national curriculum, particularly Geography, is in line with such determinations, because, as a whole, the BNCC for this subject does not point to content that can question and problematize the transformation of the colonial, modern, Western, and Eurocentric structure, based on the coloniality of power, being and knowledge, as Quijano (2009) presents us, but managing the country's ethnic-racial pluralism to alleviate conflicts.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pedagogical practice always requires stopping, reflecting, evaluating, and criticizing. The opportune moment to develop this exercise, without a doubt, occurs when the processes of teaching, learning, and practicing education are placed as elements of development plans and public policies for education.

When analyzing the set of BNCC – Geography proposals, especially skills, it was possible to observe the inopportune presence of descriptive geography, more concerned with locating and describing the characteristics of phenomena than analyzing the materiality of their spatiality, as well as the logic and socio-spatial processes of domination, control, exclusion and marginalization in the current stage of the coloniality of power.

This argument was constructed based on skill descriptors and analyzed according to their contradictions and absences for a decolonial and anti-racist geographic education. Therefore, it was important to scale the political intervention in the construction of the national curriculum, which pushed to remove, from the proposal, mentions of gender identity and sexual diversity, in addition to its anti-democratic, neoliberal character and the reinforcement of colonialist ideas.

Therefore, this document presents major contradictions for a decolonial and anti-racist geographic education. No approach helps the teacher reveal the processes of subalternity in the construction of a country on the list of the ten most unequal in the world, marked by cruel exclusion, produced by colonialism and racism. Therefore, it is a colonial curriculum used so that the hegemonic senses of the world and domination persist in Brazilian education.

On the other hand, as the curriculum is a territory in dispute, the BNCC points out the relevance of teachers politicizing the curriculum in action, in search of a decolonial, anti-racist, liberating, and

emancipating education, one that, not being capable of, in itself, change systems of oppression, produce subjects who can question them.

So this fight will be, once again, for those who subvert the curriculum, who invent other times and other spaces to produce the right to a dignified life. These qualities, in turn, are well developed, making it possible to implement them within the scope of school and geographic education.

The historical contextualization and contradictions involved in the preparation of the document demonstrate that the place of ethnic-racial relations in the BNCC is subsidized and conceived by elitist and Eurocentric foundations. It also offers overlapping obstacles to the transformation of Brazilian society and guarantees the strengthening of racist and colonialist structures in the country's education.

In this sense, education should not be thought of as the panacea for solving all of the nation's problems, but it undoubtedly occupies a privileged place to problematize the meanings of development, colonial history, predatory environmental degradation, violent territorial conflicts and levels of socio-spatial exclusion and segregation.

In other words, educational policies and systems are a process of a highly conflictual nature, and their debate shows the transformative and fundamental character of education as a policy, which must be used as a central aspect to reveal the contradictions of agents and social movements and the conflicts of education projects as possibilities for transforming Brazilian reality, and promoting decolonial and anti-racist educational processes.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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