

Gostaríamos de concluir com um desejo; o de que o campo e o interesse internacional pela descolonização, decolonialidade e população infantil e juvenil não seja uma ‘nova’ área do conhecimento, atrelada a um interesse circunstancial e retórico, eventualmente substituído e esquecido⁸. Os processos descoloniais são uma forma de vislumbrar múltiplas narrativas que foram silenciadas por muito tempo e que, esperamos, tenham o potencial de possibilitar futuros diferentes, em que a igualdade e a justiça social não sejam consideradas uma utopia.

Agradecimento

Gostaríamos de agradecer à rede *International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership* (ICCRP), apoiada pelo Conselho de Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais e Humanas do Canadá, ao possibilitar o desenvolvimento de ideias que tomaram forma nesta edição da **Revista O Social em Questão**. Vemos esta colaboração como a continuação de um diálogo sobre o tema dos direitos das crianças e da descolonização, iniciado em 2017. No atual trabalho de pesquisa internacional desta rede, estamos nos aprofundando em nossas análises, envolvendo parceiros de um grande número de países, atuando de forma intergeracional. Para mais informações, acesse www.torontomu.ca/iccrp

International perspectives on decoloniality and children's rights

This special issue of the journal **O Social em Questão** examines efforts at decolonizing the sphere of children's studies and the legacies of colonialism⁹. This has been seen through attitudes of suppressing children's rights and affecting children's well-being in a variety of ways including enslaving children and their parents, seizing their property, stamping out Indigenous cultures and practices, and carrying out genocide, among others.





Decolonization processes have been underway for decades, although the themes of colonialism, decolonization, and decoloniality have not been sufficiently explored in relation to children and young people in childhood studies and children's rights. Nonetheless there has been important developments over the past century particularly since the adoption by the United Nations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989. And with ongoing studies on decoloniality, important questions are being asked about how to better understand cultural differences with such global frameworks and processes influencing historical, political, cultural and economic realities affecting children. For example, there has been criticism of the UN-CRC's notion of universal or global childhoods as well as the definition of childhood from the area commonly known as Global North/Minority World¹⁰ that continues to dominate discourses and practices. Some examples include Faulkner and Nyamutata (2020) who ask if the CRC reflects 'a new imperialism', while works by Castro (2020); Tabak (2020); Collins, Rizzini, and Mayhew (2021); Twum-Danso, Bourdillon, Meichsner (2019) and others reflect a different understanding of the same children's rights concepts.

Critical analysis and additional approaches must be highlighted particularly from countries with varied colonial histories and legacies. This special issue will address a range of questions, issues, and realities from different countries with a particular focus on contributions from Brazil, Mexico, India, and Canada. More importantly, it counters the under-representation of researchers from the Global South in the international discourse relating to children's rights (and beyond).

A rich body of literature focusing on a variety of issues regarding colonization, decolonization and decoloniality has been produced over the past decades, particularly significant in Latin America (e.g. Ballestrin, 2017; Dussel, 2015; Grosfoguel, 2012; Manuel and Derrickson, 2017; Mignolo, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Quijano, 1997; Spivak, 1994). In fact, such production seems to be gaining increasing interest internationally related

to children's rights and childhood studies (e.g. Aufseeser, 2022; Balagopal, 2019; Cheney, 2018; Liebel, 2017; Schibotto, 2015; Twum-Danso, Castro, and Naftali, 2022). However, analysis on how these processes have impacted and still affects children and youth's lives continue to be a huge gap (Maciel and Melgarejo, 2016; McMellon and Tisdall, 2020; Neumann and Rizzini, this issue). As Lucia R. de Castro states in this issue: "The critique that has recently emerged about the system of children's rights does not address the particularity of these childhoods branded by the colonial encounter" (Castro, 2023).

Consequently, this issue of **O Social em Questão** attempts to contribute to the debate with a variety of contributions and reflect upon decolonial perspectives through different lenses.

The article *Decolonization and children's rights: an introduction* by Lucia Rabello de Castro, discusses how decolonial critique can contribute to revisit children's rights from a Global South perspective. Following on the theme of children's rights, *(Re)Imagining children's participatory rights with decolonial learning*, by Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Amy Cooper and Holly Doel-Mackaway, seeks to deconstruct the ways participatory rights have been shaped by colonizing projects and explore alternative ways of thinking and doing, by (re)imagining children's participation.

The theme of participation is also explored by two articles based on projects developed internationally involving young people from Brazil and India as co-researchers, and offer valuable insights on the challenges to decolonial practices. *Creating equitable spaces in research partnerships across Majority and Minority World* by Loretta Chan draws on the experience of engaging young people in advisory and co-researcher capacities to understand the livelihood challenges faced by young people in cities. Alicia Tauro highlights in the article entitled *Jinka Sawaal Unka Netrutva: Fronting people and communities in participatory research with young people in India*, a model of participatory research with youth from urban poor communities,



examining the critical elements that make it distinctly empowering, while challenging mainstream processes.

Ana Carolina de Sá Queiroz, author of *“It is Cabral's fault”: a proposal for subverting the colonial logic*, discusses ethnic-racial invisibility of children and youth in institutional care. An ethnic-racial approach is also applied by Tarcísio Conceição Oliveira and Rebeca Ribeiro da Silva, in the article *I came from there as a child: pluriversality and the historicity of childhood and adolescence in Brazil*. The analysis explores the Brazilian historical background of colonization and enslavement through the contributions of Afro-Brazilian literature and African philosophy. Leticia Aparecida de Góis Pereira, Luana Luiza Galoni and Grazielly Ribas de Oliveira address how racism can influence mental health of Black children who are more vulnerable to various forms of violence in the article *The impact of racism on the mental health of Black children in Brazil*.

A reflection on decoloniality based on the correlation between childhood and the natural world is the main theme of two articles. *Decoloniality and childhood: colonial heritage and children's connection to nature* by Mariana Menezes Neumann and Irene Rizzini is guided by key questions regarding the decolonization of educational concepts, contents, and practices with children. The authors discuss terminologies and practices in relation to nature that are legacies, in part, of colonial epistemologies and reflect on the importance of incorporating experiences and perceptions about nature that foster relationships of reciprocity instead of using nature as commodity. The article also analyzes critically on the experiences that reinforce the silencing of native peoples and children's knowledge and experiences, emphasizing the importance of rethinking the models of children's relationship to the natural world, considered essential for the formulation and implementation of decolonial initiatives. *Unwalling childhood: counter colonialities to reencounter life* by Lea Tiriba and Christiana Cabicieri Profice addresses the theme of children's plac-



es in Western societies as subjects of rights but under adult-centric norms that are related to the capitalist-colonialist order and the historical production of the Anthropocene. With the intention of imagining other civilizing orders, the text offers data from research carried out in schools in urban contexts and in indigenous territories.

Ilse Carolina Torres Ortega and Rebecca Danielle Strickland analyze the implementation of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program in Mexico in the article *Prison education and criminality in Mexico*. The findings reveal significant difficulties in achieving transformative learning in an environment dominated by violence, organized crime, and debilitated State institutions. They also highlight the potential and the need for socio-educational projects in prisons. In face of the devastating reality of violence in prisons in the Latin American region, this experience shows that, given the opportunity, prisoners may change, despite the dominant, colonizing perspective, that nothing is worth it doing.

Vanessa Maria de Castro and Maria Lúcia Pinto Leal present a reflection based on an ongoing experience that challenges power structures applying decolonial lenses in their essay *Observatory of the Native Peoples and their childhoods – OPOInfâncias: Indigenous and non-Indigenous praxis*. They describe the innovative construction of the Laboratory OPOInfâncias, at the University of Brasília in 2022, highlighting the importance of the participation of Indigenous people throughout the entire process of formulating and analyzing public policies, aimed at Indigenous communities. The authors also discuss staggering data on the violation of rights of Brazilian Indigenous populations, particularly young people, as well as the urgency for effective actions.

The narratives based on concrete experiences, as brought up by several authors, are rich examples of how complex it is to decolonize knowledge and practices. As Lucas da Costa Maciel and Patricia Medina Melgarejo put it: “The decolonizing experience demands tools that elicit other (very different) narratives from which the exercise of decoloniality gets reaffirmed” (2016, p.322).





An invaluable African perspective on decolonization and children's rights in practice is provided in the work of Robert Doya Nanima, University of Western Cape, and Expert on the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, an interview by Tara M. Collins. Here, Nanima highlights *inter alia* that both children's rights and decolonization need to be contextualized in specific contexts, and that locality and personal identity must be considered in our efforts concerning young people.

The publication of this special edition was particularly auspicious as it coincided with an important political transition in Brazil. The country faced many challenges in the past few years with significant impact on children, youth and their families due to its extreme right political context and the Covid-19 pandemic. Recent presidential elections, held in November 2022, reestablished the country's commitment to democratic and human rights values, including the protection of the environment. It also created for the first time in our history two new ministries with representatives of Indigenous groups and racial equality.

As we discuss these diverse aspects and dimensions of children's lives and their rights applying a decolonial lens, we are aware of the fact that there is much more to be addressed internationally and within countries. We consider this special issue as an initial but deliberate effort that aims at inviting and stimulating researchers, policy makers, and practitioners of all generations to understand the importance of decolonization in their work concerning children and youth within the broad area of childhood studies and children's rights.

We would like to conclude with a wish. A wish that the field and the international interest on decolonization, decoloniality and young people do not become a banality – a fashionable 'new' area and a rhetoric, overused; easily replaced and forgotten¹¹. Decolonial processes are a way to envision multiple narratives that were silenced for too long and we hope have the potential to enable different futures, where equality and social justice are not considered utopia.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership ([ICCRP], supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) for providing the space for the ideas to take shape in this special issue¹². We see this collaboration as the continuation of a dialogue on the topic of children's rights and decolonization that began with our earlier project in 2017. We are going deeper in our analysis of the topic in the current ICCRP international work involving partners (young and older) from a large number of countries around the world. For more information, see www.torontomu.ca/iccrp

Perspectivas internacionales sobre decolonialidad y derechos de infancia

Esta edición de la revista **O Social em Questão**, está dedicada al abordaje de los análisis teóricos y prácticas sobre decolonialidad en el campo de estudios sobre la infancia, incluyendo los legados del colonialismo con relación a la población infantil y juvenil¹³. Los países con una historia de colonización enfrentaron innumerables desafíos, entre ellos, la supresión de derechos y el comprometimiento de la calidad de vida y del bienestar de la población, incluyendo la esclavitud de niños y jóvenes de sus países, la toma de sus propiedades, el genocidio y la erradicación de las culturas y prácticas de los pueblos indígenas.

Los procesos de decolonización están en camino desde hace décadas, aun cuando los temas de colonialismo, decolonización y decolonialidad no hayan sido suficientemente explorados en relación con niños y jóvenes en las áreas de los derechos y de los estudios sobre infancia. No obstante, hubo desarrollos importantes a lo largo del siglo pasado, particularmente desde la ratificación de la Convención de los Derechos del Niño, en 1989.

Importantes cuestiones han sido analizadas en el ámbito de los estudios decoloniales, en la tentativa de comprender mejor las diferen-

