Experiences in the CEU Butantã: The acquisition of empirical knowledge about appropriation processes in childhood and adolescence[1]

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I started the journey along the golden trumpet trees flowering, over the weeks I was able to get in touch with the pink and purple trumpet trees flowering, and with the one which opens and closes the trumpet tree season, the white one (Canto dos Ipês Amarelos, Dércio Marques, fragment of the field diary of researcher Ingrid Hötte Ambrogi).

ABSTRACT. This article is part of the research "Dealing with new spaces: children and adolescents in the appropriation of the architectural complex of CEU Butantã / São Paulo", carried out over the years 2019-2020, whose objective was to investigate, from children and adolescents perspective, as they re-signified the CEU space. To carry out the research, we monitor the daily lives of children and students, recording the data considered most significant in the logbook, with descriptions and reports of situations considered common. With the analysis of the data we weave the knowledge that was built from the experiences of children and adolescents in this context.

Keywords: Childhood. Experiences. CEU Butantã.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG. Dieser Artikel gehört zu dem Forschungsprojekt (2019-2020) *Umgang mit neuen Räumen: Kinder und Jugendliche in Aneignung der architektonischen Anlage des CEU Butantã (São Paulo)*. Ziel war es, Arten und Weisen der sozialen und räumlichen Umgestaltung zu untersuchen, die Kinder und Jugendliche während der Nutzung des Bildungszentrums (CEU) realisieren. Für die Studie wurde der Alltag der Schüler teilnehmend beobachtet und anschließend protokolliert. Logbücher dienten später einer dichten Beschreibung typologischer Szenen und Interaktionen.
Die Analyse dieser Daten bzw. die abgeleiteten Erfahrungen der Kinder und Jugendlichen wurden mit Hilfe der einschlägigen Literatur kontextualisiert.

Stichwörter: Kindheit, Erlebnisse, CEU Butantã.

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Introduction

We begin the text with an excerpt from the research field diary - Dealing with new spaces: children and adolescents in the appropriation of the architectural complex of CEU Butantã (São Paulo), written by Ingrid, a teacher participating in the study. Her vision was inspiring for the writing of our article which deals with the experiences and knowledge that we have built up about how students see the CEU's space. This article aims, from the perspective of children and adolescents, students of CEU, to investigate how they reframe the CEU space.

In the first part, we discussed the concept of childhood from the perspective of childhood sociology, through the point of view of Qvortrup, Sarmento and Corsaro and the definition of experience from Vygotsky's, in a Historical-Cultural theory branch. Then, from the observations and records made in the CEU space, we present the data that were collected and, lastly, we weave the knowledge that was built from the experiences - different research participants - in this context. It is worth mentioning that the period of childhood in Brazil is determined and endorsed by Law No. 8,069, of July 13, 1990, which provides for the Statute of Children and Adolescents and specifies the age group of this period in its Art. 2 "is considered child, for the purposes of this Law, the person up to twelve years old incomplete, and adolescent one between twelve and eighteen years old" (BRASIL, 1990, np).

1. Defining concepts: childhood and experience

In the history of early childhood education, we have witnessed different conceptions that have been formed as a result of the social, political, economic and cultural movements of each stage of history. The conceptions of childhood, in their different dimensions, significantly influenced the pedagogical reference for this stage of Education. We can state, therefore, that the outline of the early childhood education history is a historical construction.

In view of this, we can say that even at a certain historical moment, in the same city, we identify different concepts of child and childhood, because, as a concept is socially constructed, built by people, we cannot point to a single view. Keeping in mind that children also, in their contexts, produce knowledge, produce cultures (MOSS, 2011).

Franklin, when discussing the existence of different types of childhood, proposes:

> childhood is not a universal experience of any fixed duration, but it is differently constructed, expressing individual differences regarding the insertion of gender, class, ethnicity and history. Different cultures, as well as individual stories, build different worlds of childhood (BOB FRANKLIN, 1995 apud SARMENTO; PINTO, 2013, n.p).

The wealth of elements made available by these diverse childhoods, lived in a unique way, by each subject through their cultures and life histories, presented potential for building learning, both by adults and by research partners, who kindly allowed the researchers to look and enter their world to capture the meaning they gave in each of their actions when building and rebuilding their experiences.

It is in the Historical-Cultural theory in which Vygotsky is one of its main representatives, that we find the term experience. It is important to note that the Historical-Cultural theory understands the human being and his humanity as products of history, built by men themselves during their existence (MELLO, 2007). Such a theory conceives human development as a historical and social construction, originated from interactional processes and real-life conditions, and it is the lived experiences that become the foundation for the construction of consciousness (DANIEL JÚNIOR, 2012).

The Historical-Cultural theory holds the idea that immersion in culture is the main factor for humanization to occur, that is, the formation of typical human qualities in the individual. For Vygotsky, cultural immersion along with individuals who enjoy the same cultural framework, will provide individuals with access to the functionality of objects, the way they behave and interact in this constituted world (GOMES et al., 2016).

This process is achieved through language, which has the role of organizing and planning thinking, enabling it to become communicable and able to build, regulate itself and the world (GOMES et al., 2016).

According to Vinha and Welcman (2010), in Vygotsky's theory, the elements that can determine the psychological development and the conscious personality of the child are those related to the experience. The term experience (in Russian perejivanie) has enormous significance for Vygotsky[6] because:

> the experience is a unit in which, on the one hand, indivisibly, the environment, what is experienced is represented - the experience is always linked to what is located outside the person - and, on the other hand, it is represented as I experience it this, that is, all the particularities of the personality and all the particularities of the environment are presented in the experience (VINHA; WELCMAN, 2010, p. 4).

For Vygotsky, experience does not concern a particularity of the individual or the social environment to which he belongs, but the link between them, constituting a unity (PRESTES, 2010). In this line of reasoning, the experience supports the idea of an individual in its entirety, which dialectically links external and internal aspects and establishes a relationship with the environment to which it belongs.

In Vygotsky's perspective at each stage of a person's life, the environment takes on different meanings, especially in the case of children due to:

> [...] the environment does not exist at all, to understand and study human development, it is necessary to know the environment in its relationship with the specificities of each individual. There is no social environment without the individual who perceives and interprets it. The social environment is a reality that involves the environment and the person is the entity (PRESTES, 2010, p. 120).

In this sense, it can be said that the permanence of certain experiences is related to the person's connection with the socio-cultural environment (PAULA, 2019).

Another vital point within the experience is the presence of the other, this is because the experience is a relationship system with the other, of interactions, enabling the emergence of dialogical relationships. It is based on dialogical relations with the other that the person builds the relationship with himself (PAULA, 2019). Remembering that every process is mediated by language.

It is worth noting that in the same environment, each person experiences a situation in a different and particular way (VINHA; WELCMAN, 2010).

The relevance of the experience in Vygotsky's understanding is essential, because it contains the idea that the experience of a given situation in the environment, what the child lived, the knowledge he acquired in the process of doing something, assigning purpose and meaning, can determine its influence on its future development (VINHA; WELCMAN, 2010).

Based on this discussion, the role of teachers and other people, who are involved in the Education of children and adolescents, is to intentionally create social situations in view of their development.

Having made these important considerations about experience, the concept of childhood is resumed, which according to Sarmento and Pinto (2013) is a social construction,

> in fact, children have always existed, since the first human being, and childhood as a social construction - for which a set of social representations and beliefs was built and for which socialization and control devices were structured which instituted it as a social category on its own - has existed since the 17th and 18th centuries (SARMENTO; PINTO, 2013, emphasis added by the author).

This statement above, supports the statement by Sarmento (2005) that childhood is historically constructed, based on a long-term process that gave it a social status.

Qvortrup (2011) corroborates the idea of childhood as a social status, by assigning it as a category that belongs to the social structure, such as youth, adult and old age. And as the author proposes, childhood is

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6. We use Vygotsky's spelling, as it has been used in the last ten years by researchers who carry out their studies on this theoretician in his original language, such as: Zoia Prestes and authors of the Veresk Magazine among others. Another spelling will only be used in bibliographic references.

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"a particular and distinct form in any social structure of society" (2011, p. 203). As a social category it is permanent, persisting regardless of how many children and adolescents enter and leave it, as it will continue to exist as a social class.

Sarmento (2013) referring specifically to the category of childhood that includes children, points out that it is composed of full-fledged social actors, concrete subjects, who even having specific characteristics related to age, need to be understood as beings who are beyond social care. This is because for that author,

> [...] children are competent and have the ability to formulate interpretations of society, others and themselves, nature, thoughts and feelings, of performing it differently and using it to deal with everything that surrounds (SARMENTO, 2005, p. 373).

In this perspective, the dialogue opens up to the perception that children are not only individuals with biopsychological specificities, but are also social beings (SARMENTO, 2005), understood as social actors "[...] social actor is attributed to human beings since Weber in his ability to interact in society and to make sense of his actions" (SARMENTO, 2013, np).

Children are also understood as co-builders of childhood and society, this is because when the child interacts with nature, with adults, with other children and with society they contribute to the formation of both childhood and society (QVORTRUP, 2011). This is because "[...] children start life as social beings inserted in a social network already defined and, through the development of communication and language in interaction with others, they build their social worlds" (CORSARO, 2002, p. 14).

For Corsaro (2002), children have diverse and creative ways of building and interpreting the world and symbolizing reality, occurring within what he calls the culture of children's peers "[...] a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with others" (CORSARO, 2003; CORSARO and EDER, 1990 *apud* CORSARO, 2011, p. 128). Thus, it is through the culture of children's peers that children try to make sense of the reality that surrounds them and their concerns, by formulating hypotheses, in dealing with the rules of the adult world imposed on them, by appropriating and creatively transforming the themes of adult life to build their own children's cultures, and also create resistance to the adult world (CORSARO, 2002, 2011).

If the childhood presented so far includes the period from child to adolescence, it is a social construction and an idea of modernity, therefore adolescence according to Bock (2004) should not be considered as a natural stage of development, not even a natural stage between childhood and adult life, it is a social construction.

Bock (2004) supported by Leontiev's studies (1978) *The man and the culture states*:

> adolescence was created by man. Social facts appear in the social relations and in the material life of men; it stands out as a social phenomenon and presents its psychological repercussions; social meaning is being constructed for these facts that are happening and, in a historical process, adolescence appears in modern, western society. Built as a social fact and as a meaning, adolescence becomes a possibility for young people (and for non-young people), a form of social identity (BOCK, 2004, p. 40).

Having built the basic pillars on the concept of childhood defended in this research, a brief characterization of CEU Butantã follows from now on with and the presentation of the experiences captured from children and adolescents in this space.

2. Knowing the context: CEU Butantã

The Unified Educational Center Professor Elizabeth Gaspar Tunala (CEU Butantã)[7] is an educational complex formed by the following educational units: CEI CEU Butantã, EMEI CEU Butantã, EJA (Youth

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7. The data for the characterization of CEU Butantã were extracted from the article in publication: Children and the appropriation of public educational spaces, produced by researchers Monica Abud Perez de Cerqueira Luz and João Clemente de Souza Neto, members of the research group GEPEPS - Study and Research Group in Social Pedagogy.

and Adult Education), EMEF CEU Butantã, ETEC of São Paulo (currently with Administration and Human Resources courses, each of which has thirty vacancies in the evening).[8]

CEU Butantã is part of the proposal to build Educational Centers (CEUs), an architectural project conceived by the team of architects from the Department of Buildings of the Municipality of São Paulo, EDIF, in the years 2001 to 2004, in the administration of Mayor Marta Suplicy.

CEUs are a grandiose and valuable project that aims to serve popular education, through Culture and Sports centers in the most vulnerable areas of the city of São Paulo. It has a sports court, theater, playground, swimming pools, library, telecentre and spaces for workshops, workshops and meetings, all accessible to the community during the week, including on weekends, with a diversified program for all ages and the use of equipment. leisure, technology and sports practices.

The area in which CEU Butantã is located is 19,078 m², with a built area of 13,246 m², located at 1700 Engenheiro Heitor Eiras Garcia, Ave., which makes it the largest CEU.

CEU Butantã has the following structure: the largest block, with the shape of an orthogonal grid, which gathers classes, cafeteria, library, computers, bakery laboratory, exhibition area and social area; the smallest volume, an elevated disk of the ground, is the nursery; and the third volume, a five-story cobblestone, brings together the theater, the covered court and the music room. The privileged, generous, welcoming and diverse space of CEU Butantã has water mines, streams and lakes, a green area with woods, park, skate park, swimming pools with sizes suitable for children and adults, sports courts, gym, dance and multipurpose room, music studio, art and sewing studios, a chess club room, an outdoor park, a school bakery, in addition to the Carlos Zara Theater (with 450 seats), the Jornalista Roberto Marinho Library and the Telecentre (multipurpose public space) and SP Cine.

The spaces most appreciated by the children are the forest, the pool and the park, they are the constant comings and goings in these spaces that build their narratives and experiences.

3. Methodological path and data collection: weaving knowledge about childhood

This research is part of the qualitative studies in the perspective of Historical-Cultural theory. This is equivalent to saying that in order to obtain an understanding of how children and adolescents re-signified the CEU Butantã space, it became necessary to know the culture that constituted that space. At the same time, the research partners were considered to be social actors, holders of voices, who had a life history with their own experiences.

This type of research enabled the researcher to take a new stance: that of leaving his position as a passive, contemplative observer and acting in the construction of dialogical relations with the research partners, with the ethical commitment to respect their individualities and without losing the connection with the collective and its context. Having constructed these important concepts, the data collection exhibition follows.

The survey data were collected over a six-month period. During this time, the researchers divided into three teams - CEI, EMEI and fundamental, articulated during the days of the week, between morning, afternoon and the whole day, to accompany the group of children, adolescents and teachers in their journeys through CEU.

Through participant observation, following rounds of conversations with teachers, with the Student Guild and visits to classrooms and spaces where these subjects lived, records were made in each researcher's field diary. Some photographs were also taken to capture and materialize the scenes collected by the researchers' attentive gaze, photos that at the same time will help memory in the rescue and in the fidelity of the information.

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8. CEI – Early Childhood Education Center (0 to 3 years and 11 months); EMEI – Municipal School of Early Childhood Education (4 to 5 years and 11 months); EMEF – Municipal Elementary School (6 to 14 years old); ETEC – State Technical School. These are the stages of organization of Education in Brazil, for children and teenagers.

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From this collected material, some clippings were made, using the narratives of children, adolescents and teachers, in situations in which they played a leading role in the appropriation of the CEU Butantá space and built their experiences.

4. Diving into the childhood of CEU Butantá: as told by children and adolescents

The chosen path, to unveil the proposed theme, consisted of holding hands with these children and adolescents in order to help us to see and understand, through their speeches, movements, looks and diverse interactions, the childhood that develops in that space. For this, it was necessary for the group to undress its adult way of dealing and understanding the world, bending the body (respectful attitude) to stand at the height of these subjects, looking at their faces and, most importantly, looking with the eyes of childhood protagonists, as Benjamin (2013) had done, he was an adult looking and narrating the experience of his own childhood in Berlin, under the boy's lens.

Episode 1

CEU's childhood is rich, charming, dynamic, instigating and full of surprises. Look, there comes a big car (it is a big wooden box adapted with wheels and supported by the teachers who push it with several babies[9] on board). There are many destinations, looking at the CEU lake that houses a beautiful heron that allows itself to be contemplated and analyzed by the children or to walk around this space collecting treasures to explore them right there or in the classroom with friends, participate in the reading (experience of reading that promotes interaction between different rooms of the Nursery or Pre-School) in the forest under pleasant shadows of some trees.

In one of these trips from the bathroom to the woods, children walking freely, accompanied by attentive looks from the teachers, build their narratives on many subjects. One little girl talked about the dog that she received for her colleague's birthday and the other wanted to know the breed, the color, the size, if it was a boy or a girl, there was a culture of children's peers developed there (CORSARO, 2002, 2011) a way of interpret the world and recreate it.

Childhood that comprises competent social beings with creative potential (VYGOTSKY, 2009) and with the power of argument, as narrated by the researcher Mônica, part of the study group, when observing the children of the Nursery. He tells that a boy in the middle of the road saw a stump in the lake and said it was a snake. The back colleague immediately countered:

_ It is a stump; it is not moving and the snake moves and stings.

There are many built relationships permeated with respect for space and time for the other, democratic negotiations, respected hierarchies, codes of conduct of the culture they know and the constitution of their humanities, as in the experience described (GOMES et al., 2016).

Walking through the generous space of the CEU some children accompanied by their teachers wanted to go to the SKATE rink, but they noticed that it was occupied by another class, the teachers do not intervene, they follow closely, the children waited for the group to leave. A boy said goodbye and said:

_ Nice! And he nodded his head for the children to come in. Once again, the culture of children's peers is perceived, in this situation of negotiation and respect as well (CORSARO, 2003; CORSARO and EDER, 1990 *apud* CORSARO, 2011, p. 128).

About five children entered, they did not have Skateboards, but they explored the track, soon a child improvised a Skateboard from a found cardboard.

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9. According to the National Common Curricular Base (2017) babies are an age group of the daycare center that comprises children from zero to one year and six months, very young children from one year and seven months to three years and eleven months. This same document presents the Pre-School with children from four years to five years and eleven months.

The appropriations by the children of the CEU's daycare take place through walking the spaces, through the materials captured from the ground, from the trees or provided by the teachers. These appropriations occur due to the multiple learning opportunities generated by the teaching proposals based on the observation of the children's actions.

Episode 2

Childhood in CEU amazes, paralyzes and mutes adults in the face of unexpected and unusual attitudes and situations of the child, such as those experienced by teachers, a team of managers and children when EMEI (Escola Municipal Educação Infantil, which includes the Pre-School) at the Thirty-Third Bienal de São Paulo in 2018. The children of EMEI who were developing a project at the school on mushrooms, were invited by the artist Antônio Balestra to be co-authors of the project, presenting mushrooms produced with clay. During the exhibition, a child runs towards the artist, kisses him and gives him a hug, the adult is paralyzed and silent. The EMEI group that accompanied the exhibition also did not react and waited for the outcome. This demonstrates the intensity with which the child lives its childhood, without fear of daring to risk hearing no (SARMENTO, 2013; CORSARO, 2002).

Episode 3

Yet another demonstration of how childhood is experienced by the children that compose it happened at the EMEI. The fact developed in the room of teacher Silvana, with little Pre-School children. The group was conducting research on dinosaurs.

On a Friday, three members of the research group, responsible for investigating the appropriation of EMEI children, arrived at teacher Silvana's reference room[10]. With a contagious joy, these little ones were soon showing their creations and making the narratives about the research findings.

A boy named Vinicius took a thick book in his hands and sat on the floor and said to one of the researchers:

_ I know everything about dinosaurs.

Soon a group of children joined him, some sitting on the floor, others lying with their hands supporting their faces, in a show of interest in sharing and listening to their friend's explanations.

A child pointed to the dinosaur and said to Vinicius:

_ Help me count ...

The other pointed to a dinosaur and said:

_ And this one?

_ Vinicius looked like an expert saying the name of the dinosaur and the actions he performed.

 And he followed his explanation:

_ This one is the brachiosaurus.

Researcher: What does he do?

_ He spits fire.

A child said pointing to the dinosaur:

_ He's strange, isn't he Vinicius? What's the name of that one?

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10. In early childhood education the term reference room is used, instead of classroom, this according to Resolution No. 5, of December 17, 2009 (*) It sets the National Curricular Guidelines for Early Childhood Education in its art. 8th item VI, p. 3.

And Vinicius answered all questions with a confidence worthy of whoever mastered the topic.

It is interesting to note that there was a mixture of respect in the relationship between the children, in the sense of understanding who was the leader in that situation. They did not deal with difficulties in this regard, they had built a culture of children's peers (CORSARO, 2002, 2011), there was complicity, they adapted the meaning of leadership in the adult world to children and dealt with it naturally, it was a serious game.

Between threads that intertwine and weave the web of the many childhoods in CEU, children from the early years of elementary school, build their childhoods from the experiences that their teachers provide and, while they are assigning meanings and senses to these experimentations become experiences. This fact is evidenced in the choices through voting on topics to be worked on, such as the study on the lake, the blue heron, the forest and its elements, subjects that are so significant and close to these children.

But as the flowering of the trumpet trees mentioned at the beginning of the article presents trumpet trees with different flower colors on their trees and with different flowering times, so it is childhood in CEU at different age groups such as those represented by the final years of elementary school, which was one of the research audiences (with children aged 12 and teenagers).

The childhood lived by the individuals that compose these age groups is apprehended by the participation in the spaces where they live, such as the swimming pool, the theater and the skate park, places that favor socialization, affection and constitute the development of subjectivity.

A very representative space for the constitution of the humanity of boys and girls and the construction of the democratic process is the Student Union.

Accompanying this journey hand in hand with these boys and girls on their walks through CEU Butantã made it possible to apprehend the constitution of the web of different childhoods in this place, each subject represented there, whole, competent and eager to learn, bringing with them their social diversity, cultural and its own way of questioning and building the world around it, showed us that it is possible to dream an educational, social, cultural and ethical project and make in Freire's words the "unprecedented viable" in the perspective of the dream, of the possible, because "The dream is a requirement, a condition that has been made permanent in the history that we make and that makes and re-makes us" (FREIRE, 1992, p. 51).

5. Some considerations

The present study sought to present the different childhoods existing in CEU Butantã and how they are signified and re-signified by their experiences in this place. When presenting the conception of different childhoods, we brought to the center of the discussion that each subject is unique and competent in the production of knowledge and culture.

It is understood that, through the experience, in the process of externalization, that children and adolescents were incorporating and producing culture in the space that surrounded them. Seeking to apprehend the meaning of the experiences of these research partners, provided the understanding that the same space offers different meanings and interpretations, depending on the age group and the relationship that these boys and girls established with him.

Another relevant point in this study is that, taking it from the perspective of the Historical-Cultural approach, it was possible to build dialogical relationships with these research partners, respecting their individualities, without losing the connection with the collective and with the context to which they were inserted.

Still, in this line of thought, the study provided the connection between researcher, research and research partners. This fact was expressed in the researcher's non-neutrality of what was observed, made explicit in the materialization of his field notes and in the photographic images, which signaled to an entire subject, impregnated with conceptions of worldview, of childhood, of education and other elements that guided his gaze, in capturing what he considered essential to understand the situation.

This study does not end with this text, but opens a possibility for further investigations to be carried out, as the theme is thought-provoking and charming: childhood.

6. Acknowledgments

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