



THE PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACTS OF RACISM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK BRAZILIAN ADOLESCENTS: DIALOGUES BASED ON VIGOTSKI'S HISTORICAL-CULTURAL CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this study is to analyze the psychosocial implications of racism in the development of black Brazilian adolescents, with the aim of contributing to the construction of theoretical and practical foundations for the work of the cultural-historical clinical psychologist.

Theoretical Framework: This study is based on the Historical-Cultural Psychology of L. S. Vigotski, a Soviet psychologist, and more specifically on the problematizations of Historical-Cultural Clinical Psychology, as well as on discussions and research into Ethnic-Racial Studies.

Method: This is an exploratory study and, more specifically, it was constructed using a Narrative Literature Review, using theoretical and bibliographical references and the research experience in cultural-historical clinical psychology of the Laboratory for the Study of Subjectivity and Mental Health (LADES-UECE) to reflect on the bases for the work of the cultural-historical clinical psychologist with black adolescents.

Results and Discussion: The results show that the experience of racism has profound psychosocial impacts on the psychic dynamics of black adolescents, with three main consequences for the formation of their personality: 1) dysfunctionalization of the cognition-affect unit; 2) disarticulation in the psychological function of concept formation; and, finally, 3) disorganization in the psychic activity of black adolescents. In addition, the results point to the weakness in the training of the cultural-historical clinical psychologist in terms of understanding what racism is, what its impacts are on the psychic development of the black individual, as well as the ability to manage these impacts.

Research Implications: The practical and theoretical implications of this research are that it provides fundamental directions for the work of the cultural-historical clinical psychologist, both on a theoretical level - addressing the construction of clinical reasoning in a psychological approach without much systematization in Brazil - and on a practical level - signaling intervention and management strategies in the face of psychological problems faced by black people in Brazil, especially black adolescents.

Originality/Value: In an original and unprecedented way, this study contributes to the literature in the field of historical-cultural clinical psychology, which is at the beginning of its construction in Brazil. Furthermore, from an ethical-political point of view, the study calls for cultural-historical clinical psychologists to carry out clinical practice in accordance with the philosophical-epistemological foundations of Vygotsky's psychology.

Keywords: Black Adolescents, Development, Historical-Cultural Clinical Psychology, Racism.

OS IMPACTOS PSICOSSOCIAIS DO RACISMO NO DESENVOLVIMENTO DO ADOLESCENTE NEGRO BRASILEIRO: DIÁLOGOS A PARTIR DA PSICOLOGIA CLÍNICA HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL DE VIGOTSKI

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo é analisar as implicações psicossociais do racismo no desenvolvimento do adolescente negro brasileiro, com o intuito de contribuir para a construção dos fundamentos teórico-práticos de atuação do psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural.

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Referencial Teórico: Este estudo está fundamentado na Psicologia Histórico-Cultural de L. S. Vigotski, psicólogo soviético, e mais especificamente nas problematizações da Psicologia clínica Histórico-Cultural, assim como nas discussões e pesquisas dos Estudos Étnico-Raciais.

Método: Trata-se de um estudo de caráter exploratório e, de modo mais específico, construído com o uso da Revisão Narrativa de Literatura, assim foram utilizados referências teórico-bibliográficas e a experiência de pesquisa em psicologia clínica histórico-cultural do Laboratório de Estudos da Subjetividade e Saúde Mental (LADES-UECE) para refletir sobre as bases de atuação do psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural com adolescentes negros.

Resultados e Discussão: Os resultados discutem que a vivência de racismo tem impactos psicossociais profundos na dinâmica psíquica do adolescente negro, havendo três principais consequências para a formação de sua personalidade, a saber: 1) a disfuncionalização da unidade cognição-afeto; 2) a desarticulação na função psicológica formação de conceitos; e, por fim, 3) a desorganização na atividade psíquica do adolescente negro. Ademais, os resultados apontam para a fragilidade na formação do psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural quanto à compreensão do que é o racismo, de quais os seus impactos no desenvolvimento psíquico do indivíduo negro, bem como da capacidade de manejo de tais impactos.

Implicações da Pesquisa: As implicações práticas e teóricas desta pesquisa são fornecem direções fundamentais para a atuação do psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural, tanto a nível teórico – abordando a construção do raciocínio clínico em uma abordagem psicológica sem muita sistematização no Brasil –, como também a nível prático – sinalizando estratégias de intervenção e manejo frente aos problemas psicológicos enfrentados por pessoas negras no Brasil, sobretudo adolescentes negros.

Originalidade/Valor: De forma original e inédita, este estudo contribui para com a literatura no campo da psicologia clínica histórico-cultural, que está no início de sua construção no Brasil. Ademais, do ponto de vista ético-político, o estudo conclama que psicólogos clínicos histórico-culturais realizem uma prática clínica em conformidade com os bases filosófico-epistemológicas da Psicologia de Vigotski.

Palavras-chave: Adolescentes Negros, Desenvolvimento, Psicologia Clínica Histórico-Cultural, Racismo.

LOS IMPACTOS PSICOSOCIALES DEL RACISMO EN EL DESARROLLO DE LOS ADOLESCENTES NEGROS BRASILEÑOS: DIÁLOGOS A PARTIR DE LA PSICOLOGÍA CLÍNICA HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL DE VIGOTSKI

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo de este estudio es analizar las implicaciones psicosociales del racismo en el desarrollo de los adolescentes negros brasileños, con el fin de contribuir a la construcción de fundamentos teóricos y prácticos para el trabajo del psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural.

Marco Teórico: Este estudio se basa en la Psicología Histórico-Cultural de L. S. Vigotski, psicólogo soviético, y más específicamente en las problematizaciones de la Psicología Clínica Histórico-Cultural, así como en las discusiones e investigaciones de los Estudios Étnico-Raciales.

Método: Se trata de un estudio exploratorio y, más específicamente, fue construido a partir de una Revisión Narrativa de la Literatura, utilizando referencias teóricas y bibliográficas y la experiencia de investigación en psicología clínica histórico-cultural del Laboratorio de Estudios de Subjetividad y Salud Mental (LADES-UECE) para reflexionar sobre las bases del trabajo del psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural con adolescentes negros.

Resultados y Discusión: Los resultados muestran que la vivencia del racismo tiene profundos impactos psicosociales en la dinámica psíquica de los adolescentes negros, con tres consecuencias principales para la formación de su personalidad: 1) disfuncionalización de la unidad cognición-afecto; 2) desarticulación en la función psicológica de formación de conceptos; y, finalmente, 3) desorganización en la actividad psíquica de los adolescentes negros. Además, los resultados apuntan a la debilidad en la formación del psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural en cuanto a la comprensión de qué es el racismo, cuáles son sus impactos en el desarrollo psíquico del individuo negro, así como la capacidad de gestionar estos impactos.

Implicaciones de la investigación: Las implicaciones prácticas y teóricas de esta investigación son que proporciona orientaciones fundamentales para el trabajo del psicólogo clínico histórico-cultural, tanto a nivel



teórico - abordando la construcción del razonamiento clínico en un abordaje psicológico sin mucha sistematización en Brasil - como a nivel práctico - señalando estrategias de intervención y gestión frente a los problemas psicológicos enfrentados por la población negra en Brasil, especialmente los adolescentes negros.

Originalidad/Valor: De forma original e inédita, este estudio contribuye a la literatura en el campo de la psicología clínica histórico-cultural, que se encuentra en el inicio de su construcción en Brasil. Además, desde el punto de vista ético-político, el estudio hace un llamado a los psicólogos clínicos histórico-culturales a realizar una práctica clínica de acuerdo con los fundamentos filosófico-epistemológicos de la psicología de Vygotsky.

Palabras clave: Adolescentes Negros, Desarrollo, Psicología Clínica Histórico-Cultural, Racismo.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Racism is a psychosocial process with significant implications for the Brazilian black population (Almeida, 2019). Studies show that the consequences range from the material level to the psychological level, constituting obstacles in the process of social, financial, physical and psychologist development of the black population (Pereira, Galoni & Ribas, 2023). In this scenario, black adolescents appear, by the developmental factor, as a risk group, who are all the more exposed to police violence and to the consequences of racism violence in their psychic development, after all are still going through sensitive moments of psychological, social and neuropsychological development (Carvalho, 2015).

Historical-Cultural Psychology, in interface with the field of clinical practice, has significant contributions to work with the black teenager, who revives the refutations of racism in his personality, in his superior psychological functions and in the organisation of his psychic activity, after all the bases of Vigotski's Psychology are intimately committed to social transformation and the destruction of social iniquities (Oliveira Neto, Moura Júnior, Lima & Eloi, 2023). However, at the same time, in spite of the above, the fragility in the formation of historical-cultural clinical psychologists is denounced as to what racism is, its consequences and how to handle its hits in the psychological clinic, which justifies the urgency and originality of this study. In this scenario, this study aims to analyse the psychosocial implications of racism in the psychic development of the Brazilian black teenager.

2 THEORETICAL FRAME

Racism is an experience of deep psychological pain for those who are traversed by it.



Contemporary studies indicate that racism is a disruptive and disruptive experience that produces various psychological effects, including reduced coping to deal with stressful contextual elements; low self-esteem; increased exposure to risky sexual conduct; higher incidence of anxious and depressive disorders; and greater manifestation of self-harm and suicide behaviours (Avelar, 2019; Pereira, Galoni & Ribas, 2023; Williams & Priest, 2015).

Racism is a system of domination and exploitation of non-white populations by white people, involving everything from action in cognitive-emotional mechanisms (dominance) to practices of extraction of the goods and riches of a people (exploitation) (Almeida, 2019). Its central goal is to ensure that, within an unequal society, white people continue to hold more wealth, being the benchmark of beauty, civility and morality, besides having more access to dignified living conditions, such as education, work opportunities and health, to name a few (Ribeiro, 2019).

He has a social history, though. It is not an abstract phenomenon/reality, so depending on the processes of violence committed by the white population in a given context and historical time, it tends to manifest itself in different ways, which connect with its grammar. In the case of Brazil, for example, racism took the form of processes of enslavement of the black population, which caused the dismantling of their lives at various levels, and of policies of whitening which, to clarify the skin tone of the Brazilian population, financed the coming of poor Europeans during the colonial period and after (Lara, 2010; Reginaldo, 2018).

Still when it comes to the Brazilian context, it is correct to say that the main victims of racism are the people who are part of the black community. After all, when we examine important reports on the question, we discovered that the black population, besides experiencing material damage in a greater proportion than their white peers, also constitutes a risk group for the development of mental disorders and risk conduct (Ecker, Mello & Pereira, 2023; Santos, 2018). This reality is not the fruit of chance; rather, it is related to the psychosocial processes that the black population underwent during the colonial period and still goes through contemporaneity, under many shades (Belonia, 2019; Carvalho, 2021; Santos, 2022).

Within this scenario, we cannot fail to point out that one of the most vulnerable public of the population is adolescents. In the process of development, still understanding the grammar of racism and its effects, they have not yet built up a cognitive-emotional and conductive repertoire to face the daily pitfalls of racism. Thus, it is not uncommon to come across news reports showing the murder of black teenagers by white police officers or even their early incarceration, while their white peers attend schools, date and plan their future (Carvalho, 2015; Pereira, 2021; Torres, Oliveira & Torres, 2018; Waiselfisz, 2017).



In this support of understanding, we use the Historical-Cultural Psychology of Lev Semenovitch Vygotsky in order to understand the relationship between the social history of racism and the development of black people in Brazil, here more specifically adolescents. Vygotsky's psychology is a complete and complex psychological system that understands that we human beings are determined - or rather constituted - by culture. In this sense, historical determinations, such as structural racism, are a platform for our development processes. Following this equation, in an active relationship with social reality, we internalise the mediating components present in the medium, which can be health enhancers or disease enhancers, the latter in which the implications of racism in the development of black adolescents fit (Lima, 2020; Lima & Oliveira Neto, 2023; Silva, 2020; Vygotski, 2004).

This study has an exploratory nature and uses literature review strategies to weave an urgent dialogue between Historical-Cultural Psychology - here, more specifically, the Historical-Cultural Clinic - and the specific development processes through which black Brazilian adolescents pass. We hope to contribute with the construction of theoretical foundations in the practice of clinical historical-cultural psychologists who work with the black population and, more specifically, with black adolescents. Then we come to the methodological and structural aspects of the text.

3 METHODOLOGY

This trial is an exploratory study. According to Martins, Santos & Colosso (2013), exploratory studies aim to make the first approximations about a reality or research object, justified by the absence of theoretical and/or empirical productions on a subject or field. In the case of the Historic-Cultural Clinic, few studies exist at the moment, in spite of noticing significant effort by groups in Brazil for its strengthening. The situation becomes even more worrying when we focus our attention on specific contributions from the Vygotskian clinic about rape processes and socially and historically designed oppressions, such as racism.

In addition to this exploratory study, we used a specific research methodological strategy, namely: the narrative review of literature. Gonçalves & Nascimento (2015) explains that, within the review tools, the narrative literature review is the one through which the researcher accesses the texts, references and research he knows and which he appropriated throughout his studies to formulate, generally, theoretical problems. This approach of review is connected with the personal path of the researcher's studies, not with the objective of exhausting all the existing literature on a theme starting from the markers of exclusion and inclusion.



Rather, it reveals the qualitative trajectory of the researcher when appropriating a theme.

In this scenario, the objective of this study is to analyse the psychosocial implications of racism in the development of the Brazilian black adolescent, and this from the theoretical benchmark provided by the clinical Historical-Cultural Psychology of L. S. Vigotski. To do so, it is divided into three moments/topics: 1) the first of them is entitled "Impacts of racism on the cognition-affection unity of black adolescents", in which we discuss how the experience of racism tends to be disruptive of the relationship that establishes between cognition and affection from the beginning of psychic development; 2) the second of them, "The process of forming concepts in the development of the black adolescent", in which we address how the superior psychological functions of black adolescents develop qualitatively different from those of a white adolescent; and, finally, 3) the third, "Effects of racism on the activity of the black adolescent", in which we explain how mediation The systematic racism in the psyche of black teenagers causes the whole structure of psychic activity to be altered.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 THE IMPACT OF RACISM ON THE COGNITION-AFFECTION UNIT OF BLACK ADOLESCENTS

In Historical-Cultural Psychology, from its foundations, there is a proposal for overcoming the classical binomies of psychology: body x mind, subjectivity x objectivity, reason x emotion etc. The Soviet author stressed these points of reflection at various moments of his work, since the integration between each of these aspects is at the basis of his understanding of human psychism and development. Corroborating with the said, in his famous text "The historical meaning of the crisis of psychology", Vygotsky (2004b) warns us that, if these binomies were not overcome, we would not be able to create a concrete psychological science, starting from Historical-Dialectical Materialism.

Focussing more specifically on how Vygotsky psychology understands the relationship between cognition and affection, we must remember that Vygotsky understood them as instances that constitute one another, that is, as aspects that integrate the psychic life, that draw its functioning and that are present in each other (Vygotsky, 1999a). Unlike traditional psychological theories about the development of intellect and emotions, Historical-Cultural Psychology does not understand that they are separate lines of development and that they only



intersect in moments of psychological disorganisation. Instead, Vygotsky (2008) proposes that there are no cognitive aspects other than emotional ones and vice versa.

To this idea Vygotsky gives the name of cognition-affection unity: as we develop, our psyche recruits mechanisms that are sometimes more cognitive, sometimes more emotional, to deal with the challenges that are posed in the relationship of the human with the environment and with culture, so that there is an emotional basis for each cognition process and an intellectual basis for each emotional process. However, let us not confuse this perspective with a mere influence of emotions on cognition and vice versa. We are actually dealing with a relationship of inseparability - every text has a subtext, and every subtext has a text (Vygotsky, 2008).

When we think about the experience of human development, at certain periods of our development we go through moments that Vygotsky calls crises. According to the author, crises are periods in which our psyche reorganises itself to deal with the increasingly complex challenges posed in our relationship with concrete and material reality, changing our needs and motives, as well as our activity and way of dealing with the environment (Vygotski, 2006a). From this perspective, Glozman (2014) explains that, depending on the period of development, there is a greater focus on strengthening emotional aspects and, in others, cognitive elements - one giving way to the other throughout constructed learning.

If we go through periods of crisis with good management and access to health mediators, we tend to have a qualitatively more satisfactory development, while, when we do not have psychic resources and health mediators, we tend to have a despotentialised and, in some scenarios, pathological development (Vargas, 2012). This will vary according to the interaction of biological aspects (phylogenetics), ontogenetic learning processes (ontogenesis) and the type of socio-historical heritage (sociogenesis) that passes through us (Leontiev, 1978b). From this perspective, depending on how the levels of conduct articulate, the cognition-affection unit may undergo qualitative changes, whether healthy or pathological.

This background of understanding is fundamental when we talk about the development of the black adolescent in its relationship with racism, after all studies indicate that the emotional life of the black population is directly affected by the social and daily experiences of racism (Damasceno & Zanello, 2018; Silva, 2004; Silva, 2018; Silva & Chai, 2018; Tavares, 2017; Tavares & Kuratani, 2019). In this sense, it is enough for us to consider: if the basis of development of black adolescents is qualitatively different from that of white adolescents because of racism, affecting their development naturally, it is expected that the relationship of



emotions with psychic development will take place differently as well, including with regard to the relationship between cognition and affection.

Prospects of ethno-racial studies point out that all the affective-emotional unity of black people is affected by racial stress, reducing the capacity of the black population to develop psychic resources necessary to deal with a series of emotional needs, such as: recognising their emotions; naming the affective-emotional processes; making adequate emotional readings of the places where they are; and even regulating themselves in the midst of the most varied stress situations such as maintaining friendships and marital relationships, developing strategies to deal with bosses and co-workers, and avoiding disruptive conduct against racism (Berry, Tobón & Njoroge, 2021; Paradies, Ben, Denson, Priest, Pieterse & Gee, 2015; Pieterse, Todd, Neville & Carter, 2012; Okazaki, 2009; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000).

This reality denounces us that the split in the cognition-affection unit in black adolescents is based on a qualitatively unsatisfactory development of the affective higher psychological functions (emotions, creativity and imagination), which necessarily impacts on their relationship with the more cognitive higher psychological functions (language, thinking, memory, perception, conceptual formation etc.). If one of the elements that constitute the cognition-affection unit has significant deficits, there is a greater probability that there will be a malfunction of the unit, which fulfils as a function the regulation of psychic life.

In this scenario, while white adolescents are opportunized to have a healthy psychic development - and this means not determined by the deleterious effects of racism previously described -, black adolescents, in their developmental experience, grow up with a significant level of psychic disorganisation, which can manifest itself in a multitude of clinical problems, from those who are closest to problems of conduct (low self-esteem, risky sexual behaviour, emotional isolation, school bullying) to those who appear in the form of some mental, common (anxiety disorders and mood disorders) or unusual (schizophrenia and other psychoses) disorder (Sousa, Rabelo & Tense) avares, 2021).

For Historical-Cultural Clinical Psychology, it is necessary that intervention processes be organised with black adolescents so that they have access to healthy mediators about their colour, mediators that go from enriching positive black references to developing coping to deal with racially stressful situations on the street, in school or in a supermarket. We have already signalled at another time (Oliveira Neto, Moura Júnior, Lima & Eloi, 2022) that it is a question of the intentional promotion of healthy internalisation processes, with which the human being, here in this case the black adolescent, can oppose the racist learning that mark his development and psyche.



The recognition of the problem of the deregulation of cognition-affection unity in black adolescents and the need to mediate interventions that enable our functioning and coping paths, is the first step to promote psychic health for this audience. However, in order to move forward, we need to reflect on how this dysregulation of the cognition-affection unit reverberates in more specific processes, such as the psychological function of the formation of concepts.

4.2 THE PROCESS OF FORMING CONCEPTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLACK ADOLESCENT

Backed by Leontiev (1978b), we have previously signalled that human psyche, from a historical-cultural viewpoint, is identified as the subjective image of objective reality, that is, we appropriate the world as we perform our intentional activity in our relationship with it, making it an internal image. We also understand that this psyche is composed of mechanisms that Vygotsky (2021) called superior psychological functions, which can, in turn, be defined as the psychic resources from which we internalise social relations.

To understand these assumptions and concepts is to understand that, depending on access to healthy mediators throughout our development, our superior psychological functions may present themselves at more or less skilled levels (Luria, 2008). We also saw that, in the case of black adolescents, the basis of the psyche, which is the cognition-affection unit, to which the superior psychological functions are integrated, is deregulated by the social experience of racism, making these individuals more vulnerable to psychic illness. In this sense, it is that we are now launching a more specific look at the development of the superior psychological functions in black adolescents, more specifically the formation of concepts.

For Vygotsky, human development takes place in two moments: first, it is interpsychological, that is, it is outside of us, in the field of social relations; and, afterwards, it is intrapsychological, within us, appropriate and meaningful in our relationship with the environment. This development operation was named by the Soviet author as the General Development Law. It so happens that this development occurs in our activity, that is, in our intentional psychic movement in the face of reality, creating a dialectical relationship between human being and world (Leontiev, 1978a). This is the scenario of the development of higher psychological functions, including the formation of concepts, which, at this moment, is our object of analysis.

Elkonin (2012), in systematising the proposal of the historical-cultural development of Vygotsky, explains that during adolescence we experienced one of the already mentioned



periods of crisis. This is the 13-year-old crisis, which begins around that age and extends to the middle age of 17. During this period, in addition to all the phylogenetic transformations through which the adolescent undergoes, this individual lives profound contradictions, namely: he possesses more physical autonomy when compared to the period of previous development, giving him the ability to carry out more complex tasks, but he is still very connected with the figure of the parents or other caregivers, still depending on them in their financial, moral, school life etc.

Vygotsky (2006a) teaches that, during this period of crisis, in order to deal with the new contradictions and with the new needs interposed to us in the relationship with the cultural, our psyche is little by little giving way to a new way of functioning, which we call the main or dominant activity. Dominant activity concerns the main form of conduct that we use in a given period of development to transform the world, meet our needs and perform our conduct. Although our conduct consists of a multitude of activities, actions and operations, the dominant activity will be the one that will govern most of our behaviour.

In the case of adolescence, of the 13-year crisis, the main activity is intimate-personal communication. According to Martins, Abrantes & Facci (2020), intimate-personal communication concerns the need to recognise oneself in someone similar to me, that is, someone with interests, tastes and affinities equal or at least similar to ours. Thus, at this moment of life, the adolescent seeks individuals with whom he can strengthen his notion of self, after all, when realising that the other has needs similar to ours, we feel validated and belonging. For this reason, it is not uncommon for adolescents to behave in a gregarious way, after all they seek to distance themselves from the adult world in order to better draw their personality contours.

Understanding how adolescents internalise the world is fundamental for us to situate the psychological function and formation of concepts. According to Vygotsky (1931), in adolescence, concepts are the superior psychological function that most presents growth in its development curve and complexification. The author describes that, before this moment in life, we organised the world using a simpler concept, which he calls spontaneous concepts; these are spontaneous because they are not appropriate in formal learning scenarios and therefore do not carry in themselves more refined mechanisms such as abstraction, generalisation and synthesis capacity - all of these mechanisms described by Vygotsky when dealing with the relationship between thought and language in his book "The Construction of Thought and Language".

In the development process, however, the psychological function of conceptual formation reaches a new level of quality: spontaneous concepts become, in the dialectical and



concrete relationship with life, scientific concepts, allowing us to organise life and our relations from another point of view. Contemporary studies show how adolescence is a period of important biopsychosocial transformations, ranging from changes in sexual development with menarche-semenarche, the beginning of sexual life and recognition of psychosexual identity to broader aspects, such as professional orientation, strengthening the notion of self and experimentation with new behaviours and behaviours (Fogaça, Tatmatsu, Comodo, Del Prette & Del Prette, 2019; Lourenço & Queiroz, 2010; Oliveira, 2006; Pratta & Santos, 2000007; Senna & Desna Sen, 2012).

In the case of the black adolescent, the concrete source for the formation of concepts, besides all the stressors to which an adolescent may be exposed, is racism. Thus, the way this individual formulates fundamental concepts for life such as self-image, self-esteem, dignity, affectivity, ethics, family, community is pierced by the deregulatory experience of racism (Faro & Pereira, 2011; Mata & Pelisoli, 2016). It turns out that concepts are the basis for how we relate to the world and how we do our business. To understand it in a more illustrated way, it is enough for us to think about the psychosocial impacts of racism on the concept of self-love: the black person learns, in his experience of development, that he is unworthy of the affection of the other, which usually contributes, for example, to the entry and permanence of abusive sexual-loving relationships from adolescence onwards.

In the meantime, Vygotsky's Historical-Cultural Clinical Psychology seeks to act in the mobilisation of higher psychological functions, among them the formation of concepts. We have already shared at another time (Oliveira Neto, Lima, Melo, Clarindo & Oliveira, 2022) some interventions created by us that act in enabling new causal connections in the psychic development of the individual and mediate other perspectives of advancement in the psychological function formation of concepts, as is the case of the concept cards instrument, created in our research processes in the Laboratory of Subjectivity and Mental Health Studies (LADES), of the State University of Ceará (UECE).



4.3 EFFECTS OF RACISM ON THE ORGANISATION OF THE ACTIVITY OF BLACK ADOLESCENTS

The idea of activity is widespread within Historical-Cultural Psychology, however we note a difficulty in understanding the concepts associated with it and its significance for clinical Historical-Cultural Psychology. In general, activity derives from the concept of work coined by Karl Marx. The philosopher defines work as any action of transformation perpetrated by the human being towards the world, so that, by transforming the world, the world also transforms the human, thus building an active and dialectical relationship (Marx, 2015a; 2015b).

In this support of influence, activity resembles work, however it is more connected to the universe of the psychic, while work is related to actions of transformation in general. According to Leontiev (1978a), activity is always an intentional psychic process, which, in the search for the satisfaction of our needs, guides us in the direction of an object, that is, it is a teleological movement, with purpose and intention in our consciousness.

Our discussion needs to move toward understanding that our activity is configured in a framework of needs and reasons. Anchored in Leontiev (1978b), we signal that our conduct and behaviour are caused/determined by a volitional-motivational basis, which, in our relationship with the world and with our learning experiences, configures certain interests. So what we intentionally think about or do is the result of a process of intentional building.

Generally speaking, through our activity, we become human - or as Marx would prefer (2015b), we become humanised. We extract and internalise from our experience of transformation of reality that which is characteristically human: language, interpersonal, culture etc. However, there are scenarios in which, because of the exploitation and alienation of labour - both these processes and the foundations of capital and capitalism - our activity becomes sick, potentiating the production of pathological senses about oneself and reality (Mészáros, 2015).

When this situation sets itself as the standard for our personalisation processes, the hierarchy of human needs and the structure of human activity tends to move from being a producer of health to being connected with the most diverse scenarios of illness. Zeigarnik (1979) deepens the discussion when he shows us the qualitative changes that are put in our development when in scenarios that do not potentialise the production of health senses, besides making it difficult to maintain a healthy activity. The author also says that, just as we learn to develop in a healthy way under ideal concrete conditions, we also learn to develop in a



pathological way if the situation of development is marked by mediating elements of illness, such as racism, for example.

Racism has a structural character, that is, it is the basis for thinking about how human beings basically everywhere in the world have developed and developed, after all, it is enough to look at the history and assess the atrocities committed by the white population with the black population and verify that the echoes of their practices of extermination, exploitation and use can still be heard (Almeida, 2019). Corroborating with the structural dimension of racism, Fernandes (2021) points out that thinking about work processes in Brazil necessarily means thinking about the suffering of the black population during enslavement, after all the Brazilian case of work is the case of slave labour.

This discussion is of fundamental importance when we think about the development situation of the black adolescent, because, if our activity is also determined historically, racism is identified as one of the main mediating elements for the production of the volitive-motivational base that sustains the psychic activity of these individuals. In this sense, for example, while white teenagers, on their way to their homes after school, are guided by the need to eat or satisfy their hunger, the same activity in black teenagers - going home - will be connected with the need for survival, after all, within a model of racist society, being a black person and being on the street can be enough for you to be murdered by the police who "confuse" the black teenager with a minor offender (Alves, 2022; Oliveira, France, Silva, Rodrigues, Ziesemer, Feijó & Furtado, 2021; Souza & Mussi) (2)

The scenario points to the fact that black adolescents prematurely develop needs and survival reasons that white adolescents do not have to deal with. Black people, from their earliest childhood, are socialised like each other, being exposed to racial stress systematically and on a daily basis, leading them to believe very little in their transformative potential over the world (Benedict, 2022). In addition, in a historical-cultural look, Luria (2017) teaches us that brain/neuropsychological development also takes place in a concrete way, in life. This means, for example, that there is no way of disassociating anxious and hyper-vigilant synaptic patterns present in black people from the systematic experiences of racism they experience.

From this base, the Clinical Historical-Cultural Psychology has very important contributions to the construction of conditions for coping with the psychosocial impacts of racism in the activity of the black adolescent. In the foreground, the therapeutic relationship needs to inaugurate a new type of bond between clinical psychologist and patient, one that mediates affirmation, safety and recognition of oneself for the black adolescent, and here we are faced with a major problem, namely: the lack of training and training of psychologists and



clinical historical-cultural psychologists as to the management of racism in psychic development (Mancebo, 2018; Scorsolini-Comin, 2015).

Psychology - and we do not exclude historical-cultural psychology from it - is historically white. Even though, because of its Marxist foundations, historical-cultural psychology brings a basic awareness that racism is a social iniquity and a tool for maintaining capitalism, most professionals in the historical-cultural area do not know how to mediate affirmative interventions and create, through the therapeutic scenario, an afrocentric locus, that is, a place from which the black adolescent sees himself through the eyes of his own people and ancestry. Furthermore, it is also not difficult to find psychologists and clinical psychologists of historical-cultural background who, being immersed in the socio-historical determinations of whiteness and racism, do the exact opposite indicated by Vygotsky: they act for and from the hegemonic human, the heterosexual white man and woman (Vygotsky, 2000).

The clinical psychologist historical-cultural needs to think intentionally and strategically to, in the construction of the singular therapeutic project of the black adolescent, insert other forms of activity that question the reified forms of conduct taught by racism, some examples are: the stereotype of aggressiveness and subservience, historically perpetuated by whites for blacks (Silva, Oliveira & Senra, 2023). The perspective is that clinical reasoning, intervention instruments and management resources serve us to mediate plurality in the activity of the black adolescent, making more diverse his actions in the execution of his activity in the world - that is, the stages that make up the global activity - and of his operations - that is, the ways chosen to carry out the activity, the way it is done. Thus, the clinical historical-cultural psychologist will construct a therapeutic walk with the black adolescent capable of counteracting the psychosocial impacts of racism in its development.

5 CONCLUSION

Racism is a experience of deep psychological pain, which leaves indelible marks on the development of those it passes through. It has a social history, which, in order to maintain social inequality between whites and blacks, is maintained and updated intentionally. In this context, the development of black people deserves qualitative attention, after all, for Historical-Cultural Psychology, development is socially determined and, in the case of the developmental processes of the black population, racism is an element mediating illness that only presents itself there, needing understanding and understanding to build our clinical interventions.



Our psyche is about articulation and integration between cognitive and affective processes, so that cognition regulates affect, and affection regulates cognition — that's the basis of our development. In the case of the development of the black population, in this study more specifically of black adolescents, racism promotes a split between cognition and affection, harming the many mechanisms of regulation of psychic life, making this period of crisis of development more difficult to traverse. And, if we consider all the situations of social vulnerability to which black adolescents are exposed in Brazil, this experience makes them more slaughterable and disposable.

In addition, during the development of black adolescents, their superior psychological functions also become more complex and transform themselves in qualitatively different ways. After all, the Historical-Cultural Psychology that our psyche, which is the articulation of all higher psychological functions, is the subjective image of objective reality. Thus, there is no way that a psyche based on personalisation via the mediation of racism is the same as that of white people. In this sense, psychological functions such as the formation of concepts are charged with meanings and senses of despoiling the personality of the black adolescent, such as low self-esteem, non-deserving, self-hatred, etc.

Finally, we point to the fact that the experience of racism changes entirely the configuration of the psychic activity of the black adolescent. In his relationship with the racist milieu, the black adolescent usually attributes negative senses to his activity and appropriates depotentiating meanings about himself. This game promotes inversion in the hierarchy of needs and motives, making the activity of the black teenager in the world orientated by pathological motives, which can produce mental illness.

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