

MEDICALIZATION IN THE *PSICOLOGIA ESCOLAR E EDUCACIONAL* JOURNAL: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE ROLES PLAYED BY PSYCHOLOGY (2011-2020)

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ABSTRACT

The medicalization of education assumes multiple configurations and affects different audiences in school environments. This article analyzes twelve manuscripts published by the *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional* journal between 2011 and 2020. The focus was on theoretical-methodological frameworks and the most cited authors; conceptions of medicalization and the roles of Psychology in relation to medicalization. Most of the articles are written by researchers from public universities in southeastern Brazil. Distinct theoretical-methodological perspectives were identified for analyzing the phenomenon and a predominance of mentions of Brazilian researchers. Biomedical knowledge for establishing standards of normality and its forms of analysis are highlighted. The manuscripts criticize the pathologizing and segregating view that Psychology has exercised towards medicalization and suggest that university education should train professionals to act from a critical and de-medicalizing perspective. This article concludes that the theoretical-methodological frameworks used do not present major distinctions among them, serving as a critique of medicalization and indicating the need to overcome it.

Keywords: medicalization; pathologization; school and educational psychology; literature review

Medicalización en la revista *Psicología Escolar e Educacional*: perspectivas teóricas y papeles de la Psicología (2011-2020)

RESUMEN

La medicalización de la educación asume múltiples configuraciones y alcanza distintos públicos en los ambientes escolares. En este artículo se analiza doce manuscritos publicados por la revista *Psicología Escolar y Educacional* entre 2011 y 2020. Se focalizaron referenciales teórico-metodológicos y autoras/es más mencionadas/os; concepciones de medicalizaciones y papeles de la Psicología con relación a la medicalización. Gran parte de los artículos son de investigadores de universidades públicas del Sudeste brasileño. Se identifican perspectivas teórico-metodológicas distintas para análisis del fenómeno y predominio de menciones a investigadores brasileñas. Se evidencian los saberes biomédicos para establecimiento de patrones de normalidad y sus formas de análisis. Los manuscritos critican la mirada de patologización y de segregación que la Psicología ha ejercido frente a la medicalización y sugieren que la formación universitaria deba capacitar profesionales para actuar en perspectiva crítica y *desmedicalizante*. En este artículo se concluye que los referenciales teórico-metodológicos utilizados no presentan grandes distinciones entre sí, sirviendo como la crítica a la medicalización e indicando la necesidad de su superación.

Palabras-clave: medicalización; patologización; psicología escolar y educacional; revisión de literatura

Medicalização na Revista *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*: perspectivas teóricas e papéis da Psicologia (2011-2020)

RESUMO

A medicalização da educação assume múltiplas configurações e atinge distintos públicos nos ambientes escolares. Este artigo analisa doze manuscritos publicados pela revista *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional* entre 2011 e 2020. Focalizaram-se referenciais teórico-metodológicos e autoras/es mais citadas/os; concepções de medicalização e papéis

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da Psicologia em relação à medicalização. A maior parte dos artigos é de pesquisadoras de universidades públicas do Sudeste brasileiro. Identificam-se perspectivas teórico-metodológicas distintas para análise do fenômeno e predomínio de menções a pesquisadoras brasileiras. Evidenciam-se os saberes biomédicos para estabelecimento de padrões de normalidade e suas formas de análise. Os manuscritos criticam o olhar patologizante e segregatório que a Psicologia tem exercido frente à medicalização e sugerem que a formação universitária deve capacitar profissionais para atuarem em perspectiva crítica e desmedicalizante. Esse artigo conclui que os referenciais teórico-metodológicos utilizados não apresentam grandes distinções entre si, servindo como a crítica à medicalização e indicando a necessidade de sua superação.

Palavras-chave: medicalização; patologização; psicologia escolar e educacional; revisão de literatura

INTRODUCTION

Debates regarding the medicalization of life are constantly present in different knowledge domains. The medicalization processes historically assume several configurations and create new devices for practice, whereas institutions and their knowledge-power get modified in accordance with the contexts in which they happen. These reflections are often in agreement by assessing that the pathologization and normatization of everyday life are processes anchored on the health-disease duality imposed by biomedical knowledge on different realms of social life – such as education.

The first studies on medicalization started with Ivan Illich (1975) and Michel Foucault (1979) approximately 50 years ago, and discussions on medicalization in scientific-academic journals were amplified in the last few decades, especially in the early 2000s. We have productions that highlight the role played by medications and the pharmaceutical industry in the aggravation of the problem (Carvalho & Dimenstein, 2004, Rodrigues, 2003), criticisms to individualizing psychiatric practices that deemed suffering as a disease (Brant & Minayo-Gómez, 2007), in addition to the process of psychiatrization of subjectivity from the perspective of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (Martins, 2008). In these publications, it is possible to notice an amplitude of themes, theoretical-methodological references, and areas of the Psy field.

Such perspectives might result both in interdisciplinary analyses that go deeper into the debate proposed by researchers and in perilous eclecticism and superficiality of approach to such a complex phenomenon.

According to Collares and Moysés (1996, p. 75), medicalization comprehends processes of transforming “life problems” into illnesses, or disorders that are characterized by individualizing and biological perspectives. As a result of the scientific statute it is socially attributed with, Medicine takes on the responsibility to delimitate behaviors that are expected and appreciated in people. This set of knowledges and practices related to caretaking ends up generating modifications and eradications of singularities that do not meet social expectations. Based on the notion that this perspective does not apply to abstract individuals. It rather applies to the concreteness of the capitalist

production mode. It is only possible to understand medicalization and its nuances by considering cultural and socio-economic determinations, whether they are of class, race, gender, sexuality, or disabilities (Costa, 2023).

Thus, Medicine has amplified its protagonism by transforming suffering into a matter of diagnoses and treatment, a process that can be defined as the “objectivization of the subjective experience” (Illich, 1975, p. 106). By considering human experiences as things, the means by which it becomes possible to manipulate, control, diagnose, and produce knowledge becomes justifiable and defines the “authentic pains, which can be imagined or simulated” (p. 106) and obtain social recognition by producing artificial demands for health services.

At school, medicalization manifests itself in many ways, which are registered in academic literature: the excessive identification of pathologies in people’s behaviors (Kamers, 2013); the contingent of students being referred to specialized services (Santos & Toassa, 2021); the exaggerated use of medications as a public health issue (Trigueiro & Leme, 2020) and as a strategy for pharmacological, cognitive improvement (Barros & Ortega, 2011). In this sense, Luengo (2010) argues that pathologization processes affect people who are regarded as outside pre-established social standards. It is necessary to stop and discuss the health-disease duality in order to avoid the hazards of the lack of preparation for professionals when it comes to diagnoses, which often contribute to stigmatizing and segregating practices.

Regarded as a professional-scientific domain, Psychology has assumed ambivalent stances concerning these problems: on the one hand, it reinforces stigmatization and segregation of individuals by means of individualizing, pathologizing devices; on the other hand, it explicitly defies the medicalization logic. A few decades ago, School and Education Psychology, from a critical perspective, has exposed medicalization in works such as *A produção do fracasso escolar: histórias de submissão e rebeldia* (The Production of School Failure: Tales of Submission and Rebelliousness) and *Para uma crítica da razão psicométrica* (Criticism of Psychometric Reason) by Maria Helena Souza Patto (1990, 1997), and *Psicologia Escolar em busca de novos rumos* (School Psychology in Search of New Routes), by Adriana Marcondes Machado

and Marilene Proença Rebello de Souza (1997).

From the ethical point of view, understanding the roles played by psychology regarding the education medicalization phenomenon is fundamental for the formulation of democratic and non-pathologizing action plans. An investigation of the national literature also leads to a perception of the historical nature of scientific production in Psychology in the country, while benefiting the proposition of professional actions in a conscientious, contextualized manner.

In order to characterize how the medicalization of education has been approached, this article investigated the academic production published in the *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*¹ Journal, supported by the Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Escolar e Educacional - Abrapee (Brazilian Association for School and Education Psychology), between 2011 and 2020. Based on the realized analysis, the intention was to describe the theoretical-methodological references, the conceptions of medicalization, and the role attributed to Psychology regarding medicalization. It is expected that this review leads to the identification of possible transformations the debate has gone through during this period and also to the possibility to draw an outline of the current scenario of the discussed themes and help in the identification of matters relating to this phenomenon that lack further explanation.

METHOD

It is a bibliographical study that describes academic production on the medicalization of education published between 2011 and 2020. Thus, the initial year of this interval is considered a landmark for School and Education Psychology in Brazil due to a campaign named *Não à medicalização da vida - Medicalização da Educação* (No to The Medicalization of Life – Medicalization of Education), realized by the other entities, an event that highlights the relevance of the theme for Brazilian Psychology (2012). In the same year, researchers also started the activities of the *Fórum sobre medicalização da educação e da sociedade*² (Forum on

¹ This Journal is a means of professional-scientific advertising in the area. It publishes works on “basic, experimental, applied, naturalistic, ethnographic, and historical processes, theoretical articles, policy assessments, systematic research syntheses, as well as critical reviews” (Facci, Silva, & Souza, 2017, p. 22). The flow of publications has gone through recent transformations and is still ongoing.

² The activities of the forum were introduced by means of an international seminar named - *A Educação medicalizada: dislexia, TDAH e outros supostos transtornos*” (Medicalized Education: dyslexia, ADHD, and other alleged disorders), realized in São Paulo, from the 11th to the 13th of November, 2010. This event was promoted by diverse organizations such as the Grupo Interinstitucional Queixa Escolar (Interinstitutional Group), the Conselho Regional de Psicologia - 6^a região (Regional Psychology Council - 6th region), the Departamento de Pediatria da Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Universidade Estadual de Campinas (The Pediatrics Department of The

The Medicalization of Education and Society), in order to congregate entities, groups, and individuals for facing and overcoming medicalization, and to mobilize society towards a criticism of the medicalization of learning and behavior.

The choice of the journal named *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional* (School and Education Psychology) for the gathering of information was due to the following criteria: (a) it is a Brazilian publication that is exclusively dedicated to the field of School and Education Psychology; (b) it is well-known and well regarded in this area of knowledge (*Qualis A2* for Psychology and Education); (c) it has been continuously edited since 2011, at least; (d) it accumulates a significant set of publications related to this object of study.

Given the impossibility of analyzing over 450 articles published in this period, researchers realized a primary selection of articles by means of the identification of descriptors such as medicalization, psychopathologization, learning problem, learning difficulty, and school complaint in their titles and/or abstracts. This initial survey led to 43 publications. The result did not restrict itself to texts related to the investigative focus proposed here because researchers approached themes such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity or school failure without necessarily connecting them to medicalization, so researchers proceeded to a second selection based on a systematic reading of the titles and abstracts and on the identification of productions related to the theme and reached a total sum of 12 publications that composed the corpus (table 1).

These articles refer to productions from seven public universities (three state universities and four federal universities) and three private higher education institutions located in six Brazilian states. Among the selected articles, São Paulo is the stated with the largest number of publications: six articles written by researchers from the Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio Mesquita Filho and from Universidade São Judas Tadeu. The states of Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Norte have two publications each, represented by the Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, the Universidade Federal Fluminense, the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte and the Universidade Potiguar. Only one article was published in the states of Bahia (Universidade Federal da Bahia), Ceará (Centro Universitário Doutor Leão Sampaio) and Pará (Universidade Federal do Pará). Thus, there were more publications from universities in the Southeast, followed by the Northeast, the North, and the Mid-west. No article was published in the South or internationally.

Medical School in the State University of Campinas), and the Abrapee. The Forum consists of a political movement, which realizes diverse academic events, supporting discussions in seminars, social networks, youtube and other platforms (Viégas, 2021).

Table 1 - Identification of the productions by year, title, and authors.

Year	Title	Author
2012	Para uma crítica da medicalização na educação	Marisa Eugênia Melillo Meira
2014	A medicalização da educação e da resistência no presente: disciplina, biopolítica e segurança	Flávia Cristina Silveira Lemos
2014	Estágio em psicologia escolar e educacional: ruptura com a medicalização da educação	Vânia Aparecida Calado
2015	Progressão continuada e patologização da educação: um debate necessário	Lygia de Sousa Viégas
2018	Medicalização e educação: análise de processos de atendimento em queixa escolar	Mariana Dias Benedetti, Danielle Marques de Moura Bezerra, Ma. Carolina Guimarães Telles, Luís Antônio Gomes de Lima
2018	A formação inicial do pedagogo e o enfrentamento da medicalização na educação	Vânia Calado, Herculano Campos
2018	Reificação, inteligência e medicalização: formas históricas e atuais de classificação na escola	Vivian Heringer Pizzinga, Henrique Romero Vazquez
2019	A construção do conhecimento na psicologia: a legitimação na educação	Fabiola Batista Gomes Fribida, Mário Sérgio Vasconcelos
2020	Estudo sobre a prática docente frente à medicalização da aprendizagem	Erilza Faria Ribeiro, Maria Goretti Andrade Rodrigues
2020	Medicalização e patologização da educação: desafios à psicologia escolar e educacional	Ana Carla Cividanes Furlan Scarin, Marilene Proença Rebello de Souza
2020	Infância e patologização: contornos sobre a questão da não-aprendizagem	Mariana de Barros Barbosa, César Donizetti Pereira Leite
2020	Estudantes e o doping intelectual: vale tudo na busca do sucesso no vestibular?	Emília Suitberta de Oliveira Trigueiro, Maria Isabel da Silva Leme

Source: Research data.

The analyzed articles were signed by 22 different people, but some authors sign more than one article. Concerning the characterization of authorship according to the gender represented by the name written on the headers of articles, it is possible to observe the predominance of women ($n = 17$) over men ($n = 5$).

For the analysis itself, this research was inspired by an article named *Queixa escolar: uma revisão crítica da produção científica nacional*, (Dazzani, Cunha, Luttigards, Zucoloto, & Santos, 2014). Three categories were formulated by means of content related to: the theoretical-methodological references and authors who were most often mentioned; the conceptions of medicalization and the role attributed to psychology regarding these problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gathering of information regarding the medicalization of education led to the identification of trends that were present in the analyzed production, concerning the adopted theoretical-methodological references and the conceptual definition of medicalization

in the articles, as well as the roles historically attributed to psychology and its implications in the current praxis. Researchers are based on the indication that the identification of the theoretical-methodological references adopted in the articles is an important aspect when it comes to understanding the bibliographical production on the medicalization of education, according to the discussion of the following results.

Theoretical-methodological references: authors and most often mentioned works

For the analysis of the theoretical-methodological references, researchers paid attention both to explicit references to the names of authors and to the presuppositions employed to approach the phenomenon. This collection of quotations by the authors shows the predominance of references to female Brazilian researchers as well as the multiplicity of theoretical-methodological perspectives that is expressed by the diversity of authors and referenced works.

The cast of 10 authors that appear the most in the researched manuscripts is made up of Beatriz de Paula Souza (mentioned in 4 articles), Cecília Azevedo Lima

Collares (in 10), Francisco Ortega (in 3), Lygia de Sousa Viégas (in 4), Maria Aparecida Affonso Moysés (in 15, while 10 were written in collaboration with Cecília Collares), Maria Helena Souza Patto (in 6), Marilene Proença Rebello de Souza (in 6), Marisa Eugênia Melillo Meira (in 4), Michel Foucault (in 5), and Renata Guarido (in 3).

The Brazilian authors stand out regarding the most referenced works in the researched articles. Among the listed authors, eight are Brazilian researchers who have constructed trajectories of relevance in School Psychology in critical perspective³ in the country. In this sense, Cecília Collares, Maria Aparecida Moysés, Maria Helena Souza Patto and Marilene Proença has at least one of their works referenced in each analyzed article, denoting the importance of reflections for national studies regarding the medicalization of education. Out of the twelve articles, ten mentioned titles were written in collaboration between Collares and Moysés, while:

Preconceitos no cotidiano escolar: ensino e medicalização (Collares & Moysés, 1996), *Dislexia e TDAH: uma análise a partir da ciência médica* (Moysés & Collares, 2010) and *Over a century of pathologization of education* (Moysés & Collares, 2014). Six other articles reference works by Patto (*A produção do fracasso escolar: histórias de submissão e rebeldia*, originally published in 1990) and by Souza (*Retornando à patologização para justificar a não-aprendizagem escolar: a medicalização e o diagnóstico de transtornos de aprendizagem em tempos de neoliberalismo*, from 2010). In the last decades, these texts consolidated themselves as fundamental material for the discussion of medicalization in education and they are part of the formation of professionals who are dedicated to School Psychology in a critical perspective nowadays. In addition, there are references to *A biologização da vida e algumas implicações do discurso médico sobre a educação* (Guarido, 2010), *Para uma crítica da medicalização da educação* (Souza, 2007) and *Para uma crítica da medicalização da educação* (Meira, 2012). It is important to emphasize that this last article is one of the first articles on the medicalization of education published by *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*, which is a sign that this journal also became the basis for professional-

³ School Psychology in a critical perspective aims at regarding the cultural and socio-political context in which the educational/schooling process takes place: the problems presented by school complaints can be understood by means of the multiplicity of factors that lead to the inability to learn (Barbosa, 2011). This theoretical-methodological proposal unites different analysis landmarks – for example, cultural-historical psychology, social constructionism, as well as Marxist and Foucaultian interpretations in Psychology etc. School psychology in a critical perspective stands out among other psychology projects from the middle of last century by criticizing the excessively individualizing focus of psychological research and intervention in school contexts and by being especially based on social-historical psychology and on critical-historical pedagogy.

academic debate on the theme.

Concerning the indication of the theoretical-methodological references used by the authors, four articles specified their investigation perspective: Foucault's biopolitics (Lemos, 2014), the historical-cultural Psychology (Meira, 2012), constructionism / cartography (Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020) and school psychology in a critical perspective (Viégas, 2015). Most of the texts did not directly present their theoretical-methodological references (Barbosa & Leite, 2020; Benedetti, Bezerra, Telles, & Lima, 2018; Calado, 2014; Calado & Campos, 2018; Firbida & Vasconcelos, 2019; Pizzinga & Vasquez, 2018; Scarin & Souza, 2020; Trigueiro & Leme, 2020). They were grouped up in accordance with the assessment of the approached concepts and the presented list of references:

It is possible to observe that School Psychology in a Brazilian critical perspective is the most important theoretical-methodological reference approached in these productions. Although the term refers to different readings concerning educational phenomena, it describes a wide spectrum of critical positions regarding the individualization, pathologization, and medicalization of school complaints. Predominantly constituted by female researchers from Sao Paulo universities, the analyzed theoretical articles and experience reports emphasize a preoccupation to formulate psychological theories and practices that are pertinent to the national context. Given the political engagement of the authors with entities such as the Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Escolar e Educacional (Brazilian Association of School and Educational Psychology), and the Fórum sobre Medicalização da Educação e da Sociedade (Forum on the Medicalization of Education and Society), their reflections have also had repercussions on the production of guidelines and references for professional practice (Conselho Federal de Psicologia, 2019). In this category, it is also possible to insert an article in which researchers resort to the historiographic method (Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020).

Subsequently, there are productions that dialogue with Foucault's thought, and which highlight the contributions by Michel Foucault for the analysis of the medicalizing processes for life in society. The French author understands that the school outlines diverse social experiences for the one who are inserted in it, while specifying the relations between individuals and themselves and between individuals and others (Foucault, 1987). This author highlights the role played by political technologies and the means by which they became devices of biopower after the 18th century: in individual aspects, the body is simultaneously propelled and surrounded by forms of power that invest on human life and try to attach it to mechanisms that were unknown so far (Foucault, 1987). In this perspective, medicalization can be understood as the control over bodies and subjectivities that are a result of interventions

Table 2 - Relation between the theoretical references and the studied articles.

Theoretical-methodological reference	Title of the article
School Psychology in a Brazilian critical perspective	Medicalização e educação: análise dos processos de atendimento em queixa escolar
	A construção do conhecimento na Psicologia: a legitimação da medicalização
	Estágio em psicologia escolar e educacional: ruptura com a medicalização da educação
	Progressão continuada e patologização da educação: um debate necessário
	A formação inicial do pedagogo e o enfrentamento da medicalização na educação
	Reificação, inteligência e medicalização: formas históricas e atuais de classificação na escola
In dialogue with Foucault's thought	Medicalização e patologização da educação: desafios à Psicologia Escolar e Educacional
	Infância e patologização: contornos sobre a questão da não-aprendizagem
	A medicalização da educação e da resistência no presente: disciplina, biopolítica e segurança
Social constructionism and Cartography	Estudo sobre a prática docente frente à medicalização da aprendizagem
Cultural-historical Psychology	Para uma crítica da medicalização na educação

Source: Research Data

– medication-based or not – and of the preventive management of health (Lemos, 2014).

Based on Geography, the concept of cartography has been used to describe the production of “maps, where spaces have been observed and composed” (Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020, p. 2). In psychological and educational research, it is especially connected to social constructionism and the schizoanalysis proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (Alves-Mazzotti & Gewandsnajer, 1998). Used as a method for research and intervention, cartography describes the networks built by means of social and political processes, and leading to a comprehension of reality in its complexity and multiplicity of constitutive factors. Cartography draws “lines of gestures and perceptions, usual or erratic, while interconnecting and producing points of analysis and intervention” (Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020, p. 2), approaching social reality in a critical perspective. Although it assumes distinct methodological procedures, cartography can also be understood as a theoretical reference of critical perspective.

Cultural-historical Psychology's most important names are Lev Vygotsky, Alexis Leontiev, and Alexander Luria. One of the most important epistemological presuppositions of this psychology is related to the fact that the essence of any phenomenon “is not explicitly demonstrated in its sensible manifestation. It is rather present in the revelation of its mediations and its fundamental inner contradictions” (Pasqualini & Martins,

2015, p. 363). Based on the comprehension that the formation of conscious activity and human development take place by means of the relations between individuals and the environment, this perspective proposes that human life forms become possible in processes of mediation and indicates the need to understand phenomena in their process-based nature and totality. In order to do it, Cultural-historical Psychology approaches specifically human characteristics, such as the transformation of nature into culture by means of labor, the employment of instruments and the acquisition of language.

It is possible to reach the conclusion that all productions can be inserted in the collection of critical studies on the concept of medicalization, even though they assume distinct perspectives by problematizing it. It is important to emphasize that the dialogue among the diverse epistemological positions is only feasible because of the criticalness that belongs to these themes.

The concepts of medicalization and the medicalization of education

This category presents the concepts of “medicalization” and “medicalization of education” approached in the analyzed articles. The analysis strategy led to the identification of a close similarity between the concepts approached in the discourse of time outline. Once again, it is possible to recognize the importance of critical theoretical-methodological references for

the professional-academic assessment of the theme in the country.

First and foremost, it is necessary to inform that some sort of concept of medicalization was demonstrated in all studied articles. Eleven publications define it as the process of transference or reduction of characteristics and/or problems that are different from medical issues (Barbosa & Leite, 2020; Benedetti et al., 2018; Calado & Campos, 2018; Fribida & Vasconcelos, 2019; Lemos, 2014; Meira, 2012; Pizzinga & Vasquez, 2018; Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020; Scarin & Souza, 2020; Trigueiro & Leme, 2020; Viégas, 2015). Thus, medicalization is:

[...] a means to produce a simplistic rationality that is reduced to a set of social, cultural, historical, economic, subjective and political practices in order to submit them to linear relations of medical-biological, medical-psychological, and neuro-pedagogical cause and effect, in addition to other analyses of cause and effect that will result in the pathologization of deviating behaviors (Lemos, 2014, p. 486).

It is possible to notice a certain simplification in the comprehension of the processes of subjectivation and macro/microsocial relations when we adopt, in advance, biomedical explanations that a priori establish what is considered normal or pathological. We can observe a ceaseless search for answers that validate and, possibly, determine the causes for shortcomings among individuals, disregarding the very process of production of complaints and suffering that crystalize into diagnoses.

It is also important to emphasize that the definition for medicalization proposed by Collares and Moysés (1996) appears in five of the analyzed articles (Calado, 2014; Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020; Scarin & Souza, 2020; Trigueiro & Leme, 2020; Viégas, 2015). Especially regarding the medicalization of education, Calado (2014) argues that this phenomenon “aims at transforming problems in the educational system into medical conditions that medical science would be able to fix” (Moysés & Collares, 2010, citado por Calado, 2014, p. 567). Likewise, it is worthwhile to emphasize the argumentative effort by Pizzinga and Vasquez (2018) to present the concept by means of a historical perspective, while adopting variations that happen in different contexts and temporalities.

Another aspect was observed and it concerns the social control that is a result of medicalization (Barbosa & Leite, 2020; Pizzinga & Vasquez, 2018). These studies consider that there is a medicalization of everything that deviates from what is expected or determined by a certain social rule. In this sense, Pizzinga and Vasquez (2018, p. 125) argue that:

[...] the process that transforms some natural problems of life into nosologic categories results in a straitening of the field of what is considered

acceptable. [...] the amplification of medical jurisdiction regarding ordinary problems in life produces consequent rise in social control over human behavior.

In this same sense, two other productions argue that the omission of the state and the decrease in responsibility by authorities lead to more intervention of medical knowledge regarding social themes (Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2015; Viégas, 2015). In consonance with the criticisms presented by Collares and Moysés (1996), it is possible to recognize that the premise that medicalization would be the biologizing answer produced by medical knowledge for all problems of social order (Meira, 2012; Scarin & Souza, 2020). For example, Viégas (2015) understands medicalization as “[...] the transformation of collective matters, of social and political order, into individual, biological issues, in a process that exempts the instances of power from their due responsibilities, although such problems are generated and perpetuated within its inner works (Moysés & Collares, 2010, citado por Viégas, 2015, p. 154)”.

It is possible to observe the conceptual consequences and details of some works that emphasize the medical approach to psychological aspects (Benedetti et al., 2018; Calado & Campos, 2018; Lemos, 2014). Such definition is presented by means of the interpretation of any problem as belonging to the medical-psychological field or as something expressed like: “a process that involves psychological suffering and that is of social, political, and/or educational origin. It is interpreted as a problem of biological and medical origin” (Benedetti et al., 2018, p. 74). This quotation refers to the study by Meira (2012) due to its criticism against the processes of medicalization of childhood.

Finally, some articles resort to concepts of “pathologization” (Meira, 2012; Lemos, 2014; Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020) and “medicamentation” (Trigueiro & Leme, 2020) as secondary concepts in order to investigate medicalization. pathologization itself is connected to the resorting to nosologic classification in a strict sense, that is, medicalization is:

[...] the inevitable consequence of the process of pathologization of educational problems that has become a justification for the maintenance of exclusion of a large contingent of poor children who, although they stay at school for long periods, they never really internalize school contents (Meira, 2012, p. 140).

Trigueiro and Leme (2020), in addition to characterizing medicalization as a relocation of everyday problems or problems from other areas towards the medical field, add the concept of medicamentation, described as:

“Excessive use of medication for the mitigation of everyday pains”, medicamentation is related to

society's symbols of success and good performance and not always refer to the use of medication only in situations involving diseases or physical and/or mental suffering which would justify the prescription and administration of medication (Trigueiro & Leme, 2020, p. 2).

The analyzed articles emphasize different aspects of medicalization, and complement each other. They lead to a comprehension of medicalization as an extension of the medical field over different domains of human activity, and discursively consolidates itself as the only possible alternative to solve educational problems. Medicalization disregards social determinations and projects a classificatory interpretation of behavior and, depending on its intensity and on conveniences produced by medical-biologizing knowledge, gets pathologized.

The roles attributed to Psychology

The last analyzed aspect concerns the roles attributed to Psychology regarding the problems related to medicalization by means of the identification of contributions and proposals from this professional-scientific field. This analysis becomes relevant because, after the characterization of the presented theoretical-methodological references and medicalization concepts, it leads to a better comprehension of how psychology inserts itself into discussions concerning these themes. Most of the 12 publications emphasizes criticisms as well as possibilities for professional practice, and only Trigueiro and Leme (2020) do not make comments on this topic.

Eight productions criticize Psychology and its negative contributions throughout history (Barbosa & Leite, 2020; Benedetti et al., 2018; Calado, 2014; Fribida & Vasconcelos, 2019; Lemos, 2014; Pizzinga & Vasquez, 2018; Scarin & Souza, 2020; Viégas, 2015). For example, we can point at two works that criticize the practice of psychologists that perform stigmatizing actions by concentrating on students all intervention efforts, disregarding their educational context (Fribida & Vasconcelos, 2019, Viégas, 2015). This perspective is expressed in: “[...] psychology hegemonically contributed to the psychologizing analysis of school reality, often blaming and pathologizing teachers and students for the historical situation of failure of public schools” (Viégas, 2015, p. 155).

Likewise, four articles (Barbosa & Leite, 2020; Fribida & Vasconcelos, 2019; Lemos, 2014; Scarin & Souza, 2020) argue that Psychology frequently operates as a social regulator by determining behaviors and developments that can be normal or pathological, and resembling Medicine in the indication of what should be socially accepted. This position directly refers to Foucaultian analyses, according to Lemos (2014) in:

[...] an art of menaging health ad regulating life and death is inaugurated and employs knowledges

to realize this type of intervention by statistics, by geographic territories, by political economy, by demography, by social medicine, by psychology, by education, by the law and by social administration (Lemos, 2014, p. 488).

Likewise, two other articles (Benedetti et al., 2018; Pizzinga & Vasquez, 2018) retake the historical role played by Medicine in the institutionalization and consolidation of Psychology in Brazil, demonstrating the applied character of these fields of knowledge to educational problems. For example, Pizzinga and Vasquez (2018) comment that “psychology gets into school – or at least tries to take students away from school - in an attempt to normatize school performance by means of biomedical models” (p. 127).

These discussions corroborate the reports by Patto (1997) because they point at the need to analyze the historical moment that led to the constitution of “value classifications that are inherent to normative Psychology” (p. 79). In the author’s opinion, such reflection only gets concrete when we search for the perspective of class based on which Psychology was built, because it is a constitutive part of the theoretical-methodological resources that are consolidated in the area. Therefore, it is understood that criticism is – or should be – an aspect that is inherent to the professional formative process because it is evidence that “what seems natural, is social” (p. 81) and reveals the historicity and the concreteness of phenomena on which Psychology intervenes.

Three articles question the technical models of professional formation in Psychology in the country (Benedetti et al., 2018; Calado, 2014; Fribida & Vasconcelos, 2019). These authors observe that, most often, graduation courses disregard critical and ethical exercise that would lead to a rupture from stigmatizing and medicalizing practices, an aspect that becomes an important challenge for the contextualized formation and practice of school and education psychologists. According to Calado (2014), it is necessary to supplant a “professional practice that is based on an adaptationist perspective; social compromise with the construction of a democratic, quality school; the construction of a psychological praxis in order to face school complaints, and break away from medicalizing practices at educational institutions (Calado, 2014, p. 567).

In the same direction, some publications also indicate that adequate university formation will lead to the development of a Psychology that presents a questioning perspective (Fribida & Vasconcelos, 2019; Meira, 2012; Pizzinga & Vasquez, 2018; Ribeiro & Rodrigues, 2020; Scarin & Souza, 2020). In general terms, these works emphasize that professionals must construct practice approaches that do not restrict themselves to the clinical perspective, while connecting to socio-historical contexts and assessing the problem of medicalization and pathologization of education in

a critical manner. Thus, it is necessary to consider that education is something collective and problems are not solely caused by students. Rather, problems are caused by a convergence of elements in a network of relations that produce inequalities. Firbida and Vasconcelos (2019) illustrate this position in:

Given the complexity of the current situation, there is no doubt that psychologists need to engage in the fight for a Psychology that does not ignore the social and political reality of inequality, and which contextualizes individuals and considers the development of psychism as socially constituted. [...] shifting the axis of analysis from individuals to schools and the set of historical and institutional relations. In this perspective, the psychological aspect is not single-handedly analyzed (Firbida & Vasconcelos, 2019, p. 7).

This position corroborates the discussions proposed by Patto (1997) because it is evidence of the indissociability of reflection and action, that is, the whistle-blowing character and advertising nature of the professional practice of Psychology at school. In order to make it possible, it is considered of fundamental importance to appropriate the guidelines presented by the *Recomendações de práticas não-medicalizantes para profissionais e serviços de educação e saúde (Recommendations for non-medicalizing for professionals and services of health and education)* (Fórum sobre medicalização da educação e da sociedade, 2015, 2015) and in the *Referências Técnicas para a atuação de psicólogas (os) na Educação Básica (Technical References for the psychologists in Basic Education)* (Conselho Federal de Psicologia, 2019). It is understood that these documents are based on a dialogically territorialized practice and on a intersectional network. They also take into consideration the health conditioners and the determinants in the schooling process for students.

In a nutshell, it becomes evident that the recognition of the stigmatizing role played by Psychology throughout history. In order to overcome it, articles point at new perspectives for practice, based on a critical, non-pathologizing perspective, which is a fundamental element in quality, relevant education. It is observed that the texts formulate their analyses regarding the limits of the psychological theories and practices and contribute to the pathologization of individuals.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article presented significant aspects of the academic production regarding the medicalization of education in the *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional* journal between 2011 and 2020. In the analyzed articles, it was possible to observe a predominance of quotations of Brazilian authors whose theoretical-practical position is

oriented by School Psychology in a critical perspective, even though it dialogues with other authors and theoretical-methodological references. That contributed to the fact that the definition of medicalization has not changed much throughout the assessed period. In fact, it is necessary to problematize the reasons why contemporary productions on the medicalization of education presents a relative lack of originality, which corroborates theoretical positions and concepts that were produced in previous decades. Are these concepts still enough to explain the phenomenon or maybe do their use hints at a certain homogenization of intellectual production on the theme? New research works – descriptive or analytical – will be able to contribute to this reflection.

Besides that, it was possible to perceive how this Psychology has led to an overcoming of the stigmatizing, clinical perspective which is still quite present in the school context. This position is demonstrated in the *Psicologia Escolar e Educacional* Journal. That makes this journal a suitable academic means for the diffusion of the critical perspective in the Brazilian context. In this direction, it is necessary to point at its importance in the formation of professionals that are capable of providing non-medicalizing practices. Other studies might investigate the repercussion of the arguments disseminated in this journal for Brazilian bibliographic production, demonstrating the relevance on the criticism to medicalization in national production.

It is also important to emphasize that researchers identified a difference in the number of publications that present theoretical reflections (10) and professional practices (2), although this point has not been explored like the other categories, which is a major limitation in this study. It is possible to create spaces to be filled with new research works.

Finally, we wish to reiterate the need for new analysis on this phenomenon, with a background such as the process of “objectivation of the subjective experience” (Illich, 1975, p. 106), which is accelerated by medicalization and medicamentation of life. These processes demand that Psychology and other fields of knowledge to take a stand so that we can resist and criticize the treating of human experiences as things. By describing authors, theoretical-methodological references, and roles played by Psychology regarding medicalization, we hope that this study will contribute to the systematization of current School and Education Psychology and become useful in the proposition of new studies in this field.

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