

## **Crianças, moradoras de Ceilândia-DF, na pandemia de Covid-19: diálogos sobre infâncias**

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### **Resumo**

Este artigo insere-se no campo dos estudos da(s) infância(s) e tem como objetivo compreender as vivências de crianças ceilandenses durante a primeira onda da pandemia de Covid-19, contexto eivado pelas restrições nos espaços de convivência coletiva. Por meio de uma investigação de caráter qualitativo, foram ouvidas crianças moradoras de Ceilândia, Região Administrativa do Distrito Federal, nos meses de outubro e novembro de 2020. As crianças produziram desenhos que foram analisados conjuntamente com as crianças e, posteriormente, de forma teórica com as demais Researcher:s. Considerou-se como referencial os aportes teóricos da Sociologia da Infância em articulação com os da Geografia da Infância. As crianças, durante a primeira onda da pandemia, construíram uma cartografia marcada por restrições espaciais, concentrando grande parte do tempo em casa, e apontaram para os jogos eletrônicos como sua principal atividade lúdica. As análises indicaram que as crianças desenvolveram compreensão crítica e posicionamento ético diante das restrições.

**Palavras-chave:** Desenho. Espaço. Estudos da infância.

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## **Resident children of Ceilândia-DF in the Covid-19 pandemic: dialogues about childhood**

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### **Abstract**

This article is part of the field of childhood studies and aims to understand the experiences of Ceilandense children during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, a context with restrictions in collective living spaces. Through a qualitative investigation, children who live in Ceilândia, an Administrative Region in the Federal District, were heard in the months of October and November 2020. The children produced drawings that were firstly analyzed together with the children and, later, theoretically with the other researchers. The theoretical contributions of the Sociology of Childhood, alongside the Geography of Childhood, were considered as reference. The children, during the first wave of the pandemic, built a cartography marked by spatial restrictions, concentrating much of their time at home, pointed out that electronic games were their main recreational activity. The analyses indicated that the children developed a critical understanding and ethical positioning in the face of the restrictions.

**Keywords:** Childhood Studies. Drawing. Space.

## **Niños, residentes de Ceilândia-DF, en la pandemia de la Covid-19: diálogos sobre la infancia**

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### **Resumen**

Artículo se enmarca en el campo de los estudios de la infancia y tiene como objetivo comprender las vivencias de los niños ceilandenses durante la primera ola de la pandemia de Covid-19, contexto abrumado por restricciones en los espacios de convivencia colectiva. Es una investigación cualitativa. Niños que viven en Ceilândia, Región Administrativa del Distrito Federal, fueron escuchados en los meses de octubre y noviembre de 2020. Los niños produjeron dibujos que fueron analizados en conjunto con los niños y teóricamente con las otras investigadoras. Se consideran como referentes teóricos la Sociología y la Geografía de la Infancia. Los niños, durante la primera ola de la pandemia, construyeron una cartografía marcada por restricciones espaciales, concentrando gran parte de su tiempo en casa, y señalaron que los juegos electrónicos eran su principal actividad recreativa. Los análisis indicaron que los niños desarrollaron una comprensión crítica y un posicionamiento ético ante las restricciones.

**Palabras clave:** Diseño. Espacio. Estudios de la Infancia.

## Introduction

This article falls within the field of childhood studies and aims to understand the experiences of children from Ceilândia during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, a context marked by restrictions in communal spaces. Since early 2020, children worldwide have experienced disruptions in their daily lives and access to public spaces they once frequented (UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, 2020). Before February of that year, in Brazil, “the pandemic appeared as a media phenomenon, situated as ‘distant’ from the Brazilian scenario” (RIGUE; OLIARI; STURZA, 2021, p. 23). However, in March, public health and safety measures imposed during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic impacted Brazilian realities, including that of the Federal District-DF. By Decree No. 40,509, dated March 11, 2020, the suspension of in-person classes in the Federal District was mandated, initially intended to last five days. However, with the worsening of the pandemic situation, the suspension of classes extended throughout the 2020 school year. Thus, schools, parks, and other communal spaces previously frequented by children became inaccessible to them.

Such government actions aimed to contain the transmission of the Covid-19 virus to protect people’s lives. This historic moment for the global population produced conditions that affected how childhoods were experienced. In this context, we chose the following guiding question for this exploratory study: how did a group of five children aged between four and ten years, living in Ceilândia-DF, experience and understand the disruptions in their daily lives due to the pandemic during the first wave of infections? We emphasize that listening to children, in their multiple languages, is a right ensured by international norms and needs to be reflected in academic research as well (BARBOSA, 2020; BUSS-SIMÃO; LESSA, 2020; COLL DELGADO; CASTELLI, 2020; FRANCISCHINI, 2020). Moreover, hearing their perspectives on childhood during the pandemic is essential to identify threats to the rights of this generational group and contributes to informing public policy planning, particularly those ensuring rights such as health and education.

This article is organized into five sections followed by the final considerations. The first part presents a discussion on the impacts of the pandemic on children's daily lives through a dialogue with research that has explored the theme of childhood and the pandemic. Next, we provide a theoretical analysis based on the Sociology and Geography of Childhood to reflect on the relationships between the concepts of childhood and children, and the role of the environment in childhood experiences.

Subsequently, we present a brief characterization of Ceilândia as an Administrative Region (RA) of the Federal District (DF), highlighting its importance in academic productions, the formation of a local identity, and the struggle for citizenship-related rights.

Following this, we address methodological aspects related to the research, pointing out the relevance of drawings and oral narratives as expressions of children during the pandemic context, emphasizing the particularities of conducting academic research in a marginal context (MORAIS; WIGGERS, 2021). In the next section, we analyze the expressions of the children participating in the research and aim to examine their drawings and oral narratives about their childhood experiences in the context of pandemic restrictions, while also seeking to “find the relationship between the child and the environment” (PRESTES; TUNES, 2018, p. 77). Finally, we present some concluding considerations that highlight the reflections expressed by the children through their drawings and oral narratives.

## **Dialogues on the Pandemic Context of the First Wave and Childhood Daily Lives**

During the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, social distancing and confinement were some of the main measures to curb the spread of the virus. Based on public health policies aimed at protecting people and containing the virus's dissemination, children's daily lives and access to interaction spaces were significantly altered. Consequently, during this period of increased restriction, childhood experiences were shaped by these circumstances, prompting reflections on how children understood this disruption to the "normal" course of their lives.

Researchers in the field of childhood studies, responding urgently and emergently, launched special issues to map how children were affected by the pandemic. In this context, Special Issues No. 22 and No. 23 of the journal *Zero-a-Seis* (2020; 2021) and collections from the journals *NUPEART* (2020) and *Linhas Críticas* (2020) compiled various academic works on childhood and the pandemic, discussing the impacts of this marginal context on childhood. The studies addressed relevant topics such as the interruption of in-person school activities, difficulties in accessing technological resources, the social invisibility of children in pandemic public policies, conditions of vulnerability, and violations of their rights. They presented childhood experiences in different social contexts, considering ethnic singularities. For this debate, scholars sought to listen to various subjects, such as

Resident children of Ceilândia-DF in the Covid-19 pandemic: dialogues about childhood mothers, grandmothers, educators, and local leaders, to understand the context in which children were involved. However, among the 39 works in these special issues, only eight articles, representing 20.5%, discuss data derived from listening to and recording children's own speech. Most of this small subset aimed to listen to and analyze the contexts of Black, Indigenous, Quilombola, and rural children from the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) during the pandemic. These publications highlighted the difficulties these children faced in having their rights met, revealing the state's omission in implementing public policies for the protection and defense of children's lives during the first wave of Covid-19 in the Brazilian context.

In the field of childhood studies, researchers understand childhood as a permanent structure in society, constituted by cultural, historical, geographical, economic, and political dimensions (QVORTRUP, 2005; CORSARO, 2011). Prestes and Tunes (2018, p. 79) note that the way each child experiences a given event is unique and can only be understood in the relationship between the child and the environment, considering that “any given situation will influence the child in different ways depending on how they perceive its meaning and significance.” Thus, there is a need to understand how children experienced the social distancing context during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, listening to them to grasp how these experiences were configured in the lives of children who lived through childhood in this pandemic context and what meanings and significances were attributed to these events.

## **Connections Between the Sociology of Childhood and the Geography of Childhood**

According to Prout (2010), the Sociology of Childhood was established through dichotomies rooted in modern sociology, initially aimed at creating a space for childhood within sociological discourse and addressing the growing complexity and ambiguity of childhood as a contemporary and unstable phenomenon. Voltarelli (2011), referring to the new childhood paradigm proposed by James and Prout (1990), notes that “children can and should be studied for their own rights” (VOLTARELLI, 2011, p. 180). Based on the need for dialogue between different fields, this article proposes an interdisciplinary dialogue between the new Sociology of Childhood and the Geography of Childhood. According to Lopes and Fernandes (2021, p. 55), the Geography of Childhood demonstrates “the impossibility of discussing childhoods without identifying the intertwining with

issues of space production, places, and territories, as well as children's rights to territories.” In this context, this disciplinary field has the task of “unveiling all the complexity” (LOPES, 2008, p. 80) of childhood, as well as the cultural production of children. The Sociology of Childhood employs Corsaro's (2011) concept of the global web, while the Geography of Childhood reveals the child's place as both a producer and product of the historical, social, and geographical contexts in which they are situated.

Thus, the first field mentioned, the Sociology of Childhood, values understanding childhood from the experiences of the children themselves. The second field, the Geography of Childhood, considers the importance of the environment in children's experiences, especially in light of the changes brought about by the pandemic context. The removal of children from public spaces during the first wave of contagion became necessary for public health reasons; however, it undermined the exercise of important rights, as “public space promotes visibility, confrontations, and tensions among different generational groups” and compels “multiple perspectives” on childhoods and children's rights (TREVISAN, 2020, p. 143).

It is important to highlight that the visibility of issues related to children, as well as the perception, understanding, and valuing of childhood, became possible due to societal changes (UNITED NATIONS, 1989; NOGUEIRA; BRANDÃO, 2020). In this sense, research in the Sociology of Childhood has contributed to understanding the child as a constructor of their own childhood and as an active being in the production of culture, knowledge, and identity (CORSARO, 2011; JAMES; JENKS; PROUT, 1998; SARMENTO, 2003; 2004). It has also argued that children are active in the construction of culture, considering that this process is not an imitation of the adult world but rather the result of a creative apprehension in which, through their peer cultures<sup>4</sup>, they appropriate information from the adult world to meet their own interests (CORSARO, 2011). Moreover, it is conceived that children, along with adults and their peers, engage in the “use, refinement, and transformation of cultural resources in which they are embedded” (CORSARO; ROSIER, 2019, p. 2).

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<sup>4</sup>Peer culture is a stable set of activities and routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with others” (CORSARO, 2011, p. 128).

Thus, the present study, grounded in the principles of Childhood Sociology, recognizes the creative and critical appropriation of information by children from their context, moving away from the view that they merely reproduce what society presents as social norms and identifying them as creators of new ways of living and understanding the world. In our interpretation, by representing everyday experiences, children may attribute meanings different from those conventionally established as sociocultural norms.

On the other hand, the Geography of Childhood advocates understanding children as agents who produce the space they occupy and are capable of assigning meanings to their spatialities, constructing places, landscapes, and territories (LOPES, 2008). From this perspective, the Geography of Childhood constitutes a broad space of negotiation that involves the production of children's cultures, spaces designated for children, institutions, territorialities, and maps created by children (AITKEN, 2019; FERNANDES; LOPES, 2018; HOLLOWAY; VALENTINE, 2000; LOPES; FERNANDES, 2021; MELGAREJO, 2018; VASCONCELLOS; LOPES, 2006).

Aitken (2019), in outlining a panorama of children's geography, argues that the concept of a child is currently permeated by the recognition of their plurality and their continuous shaping of spaces. Thus, the Geography of Childhood has focused on studies of children's living spaces to defend and recognize that their experiences are woven through social, political, historical, and moral spheres, and are also ethically characterized. Consequently, in the production of children's cultures, there is a relationship that provides the material substrate for existence (VASCONCELLOS; LOPES, 2006), and this process brings to light, alongside the idea of children's cultures, the existence of children's territorialities. Therefore, there is a connection between the experience of childhood and the context, and "the influence of the environment on the child's development [...] will also be measured by the level of understanding, awareness, and attribution of meaning to what happens within it" (PRESTES; TUNES, 2018, p. 79).

Discussing the concept of childhood, Qvortrup (2005) presents two aspects that he considers important for characterizing childhood in modernity: domestication (*Verhäuslichung*) and insularity (*Verinselung*). He emphasizes that both are related to space and children's experiences, as they give adults the power to define places for/from children based on the justification of keeping them safe. Thus, it is possible to argue that children's experiences in space are influenced by their environment, including adults' conceptions and interpretations of childhoods and children. Adults have established and assessed, according to their concepts, whether a certain space is suitable for children or not.



However, as previously noted, it is possible to recognize that, despite these "limitations," children creatively appropriate these places and, through the relationships established in their peer cultures, can construct and create meanings for the use, experience, and interpretation of these spaces/territories.

The articulation between studies in the Sociology of Childhood and those in the Geography of Childhood becomes necessary to understand children's experiences during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and their experiences in this context, marked by restrictions on communal spaces. The reason for this is that childhoods, as an object of study, require "greater interdisciplinarity between fields of knowledge" (TREVISAN, 2020, p. 143).

From this perspective, it is necessary to admit that children, through multiple languages, need to be heard and respected as a condition for understanding how they organize and constitute their senses of childhood and experience in the spaces they frequent (FERREIRA; FIORESE, 2021), particularly during the pandemic period. "These new restrictions on the bodily dimension of children [...] present a major challenge to face, which is at the same time an urgency for new research" (BUSS-SIMÃO; LESSA, 2020, p. 1440). According to Sarmento and Pinto (1997), listening to what children say about themselves allows us to uncover a social reality unknown to adults, which emerges from children's interpretations of their worlds and can reveal social phenomena that the adult perspective leaves in the shadows or obscures entirely.

According to Melgarejo (2018), children, through intergenerational relationships, produce appropriations and multiple constructions/creations configured in topoi-places — "childhood zones of experience." He argues that it is imperative to listen to children to understand how these zones of childhood experience are produced and how they relate to their childhood experiences. Aitken (2019) advocates that children's subjectivities are enigmatic, plural, and relational and that there are multiple ways to understand childhoods, as they are variable and emergent, needing to be understood and analyzed based on social, political, historical, and geographical aspects.

Considering the influence of these aspects on the relationship that children establish with space, Lopes (2018) argues that,

[...] every child is a child of a specific place. Correspondingly, for each child in that place, there is also a child's place, a social space designated by the adult world [...].

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At the same time, every child is a child in certain places within the place, as the same adult world allocates different parts of physical space for the realization of their childhood (LOPES, 2018, p. 24).

Thus, it is important to emphasize that it is in these spaces that children's experiences within their peer cultures are formed, allowing them to collectively use, think about, negotiate, create, share, and interpret their culture and space in diverse and particular ways, according to their perspectives. The establishment of childhood cultures occurs through "the children's ability to systematically construct ways of meaning and intentional action that are distinct from adult modes of meaning and action" (SARMENTO, 2003, p. 53-54).

### **Ceilândia-DF: Academic Production, Identity, and Struggle**

As "every child is a child of a place" (LOPES, 2018, p. 24), it becomes necessary to understand a bit about Ceilândia, a territory politically designated as an Administrative Region<sup>5</sup> (RA) of the Federal District. Understanding how Ceilândia-DF's space was constituted is essential for this article as it highlights the struggles for rights and reveals the significant social inequalities and historically constructed actions in this area.

In 1969, the Federal District had a population of 500,000, of which 79,128 lived in informal settlements without access to basic rights. That same year, the Federal District established the Committee for the Eradication of Slums, and in 1971, the Eradication of Invasions Campaign (CEI). Also in March 1971, the first 20 families were settled in Ceilândia. The name of this territory was chosen by the government using the initials "CEI" from the Eradication of Invasions Campaign and the suffix "-lândia," derived from English. It was only in 1971 that the first bus line began operating in the area, which was created without public facilities such as hospitals, water and sewage services, schools, and recreational spaces (GOVERNO DO DISTRITO FEDERAL, 2016). The choice of this name for the territory reflects the disregard for the local population's input, as it ignored the residents' relationship with the place and named it using elements foreign to their lived experience.

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<sup>5</sup>The Organic Law of the Federal District (BRASÍLIA, 1993, art. 10), aiming at administrative decentralization, established that the Federal District would be organized into 33 administrative regions. Thus, Ceilândia is one of the regions that make up the Federal District.

According to the Secretariat of the Federal District, Ceilândia was created by “Law No. 49, of October 25, 1989, and became the 9th Administrative Region (RA) by Decree No. 11,921, of October 25, 1989” (GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT, 2021). From the official inauguration of this settlement in 1971 until its designation as an RA, the population waited 18 years. When Ceilândia was designated as an RA of the Federal District, it and its residents gained more rights, including having their own administration within the Federal District. From 1971 to 2020, the year when the data for this research were collected, Ceilândia’s residents faced challenges in accessing public services and developed their own culture and history, making it the largest RA in the Federal District by population, with over 400,000 inhabitants (GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT, 2018).

Part of these achievements in rights is related to academic productions about this RA. The database of the University of Brasília (2022) records 493 scientific works that include the word “Ceilândia” in their titles between 2000 and 2022. These academic works include 358 dissertations, 100 theses, 24 articles, and 11 works of various genres. These texts document the cultural richness of a people who began to occupy a territory but were even denied the right to choose the name of the region. In this context, giving visibility to the children of Ceilândia-DF through research strengthens the fight for rights.

This is the territory of development for this exploratory research, which took place during October and November 2020, a time when the pandemic was unfolding as a reality throughout the school year. As the RA with the largest population, it is noteworthy that Ceilândia had the highest number of reported COVID-19 cases and deaths in the Federal District (BRASÍLIA, 2021).

In this challenging scenario, the research made efforts to document, during the pandemic, the cultures of childhood “that convey specifically child-like ways of understanding, representing, and symbolizing the world” (SARMENTO, 2004, p. 22). Listening to what children say is to recognize their importance in society and acknowledge that they have unique and diverse ways of understanding and intervening in their context (FERNANDES; MIRANDA; QUINTÃNS, 2018). Additionally, it involves considering that their experiences may indicate paths and solutions for dealing with the adversities and limitations that the world currently imposes.

## **Paths of Research**

Taking into account the theoretical elements discussed, the study is characterized as a qualitative investigation. The methodology prioritized listening to the children, highlighting the interpretations they constructed of their experiences in the pandemic context. Accordingly, in October 2020, ten children from the same community as one of the researchers were invited to participate in the study. They and their respective guardians were informed by phone about the nature of the research and asked about their availability. However, due to social isolation and families' concerns about preventing COVID-19 transmission, not all accepted the invitation, resulting in contact with only five children.

Thus, we listened to five children who consented to participate in the research, three girls and two boys, aged between 4 and 10 years, all residents of Ceilândia-DF. Most of the children (60%) attend public educational institutions. At the time of the research, all were engaged in remote learning, with activities and classes conducted in a digital environment. The children reported having access to the internet, computers, cell phones, television, and Netflix streaming. Regarding the family context, it was found that seven of the ten guardians had completed higher education, including four mothers and three fathers. The remaining guardians had completed high school.

Safety and adherence to bio sanitary protocols were strictly observed, ensuring that meetings were individual and held in well-ventilated locations. Before the data collection meetings, safety protocols were reviewed to ensure the research process was as safe as possible. All wore masks, hand sanitizer was readily available for use as needed, and a distance of two meters was maintained between the child and one of the researchers during the activity.

During the in-person meeting, we explained again to the children the purpose of the study and asked them to choose a name (pseudonym) that represented them in the context of the research, in order to preserve their identity (Table 1).

**Table 1** – Pseudonyms of Research Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Dates of the Meetings
Mel	4 years old	11/21/2020
Jasmine	7 years old	11/21/2020
Sabrina	8 years old	11/23/2020
Alex	6 years old	11/23/2020
Gabriel	10 years old	11/28/2020

Source: Research *Corpus*, 2020.

After that, we provided the children with A4-sized office paper, pencils, erasers, colored pencils, colored markers, and a ruler and asked them to create drawings based on some questions. We also informed them that we would discuss their illustrations. During the individual conversation with each child, we asked them to create three drawings: 1) the place where they were spending the most time during the pandemic; 2) from the first drawing, specify a particular environment where they spent more time during the pandemic; 3) the place they missed most during the pandemic.

As the children were working on their drawings, we began the conversation with questions about their experiences during the pandemic. Thus, the children were drawing and talking at the same time. This strategy proved effective, as the dialogues proceeded smoothly and the children expressed the meanings derived from their experiences during the pandemic period. During the drawing process, a peculiar difference was noted: the girls showed a concern for coloring their drawings, whereas the boys only covered the outlines of their drawings with markers and did not want to color them. Consequently, the girls took longer to complete their activity than the boys.

Considering drawing as a "spokesperson for the children's universe" (GOLDBERG; FROTA, 2017, p. 173), we conversed with them about their experiences, information, and understandings about the pandemic. We recognized that "their works result from personal research, interaction with other children, and the social and cultural surroundings they are exposed to and simultaneously build" (GOBBI, 2012, p. 137). The choice of drawing as a communicative tool was also based on the consideration that children, when drawing, seek to concretize their existence visually and materially

Resident children of Ceilândia-DF in the Covid-19 pandemic: dialogues about childhood (DERDYK, 2010) in this pandemic context. Additionally, drawing “integrates thought and imagination, potentially expressing the children's culture of a time and place” (WIGGERS; SOARES, 2019, p. 318).

As previously mentioned, this study recognizes children as competent social actors, which we reaffirm by questioning them about their own contributions, interpretations, and participation in social, cultural, and economic life within their context. Thus, establishing a conversation with the creators of the drawings proved to be highly important for interpreting and understanding what the children thought about their pandemic experiences.

The interplay between graphic and verbal language provided insight into the mental processes undertaken by the children. Therefore, drawing and talking are languages that interact, potentially aiding in the understanding of the context lived and experienced by the child. In other words, drawing and talking are ways of interpreting that experience, where a verbal comment from the drawing's author extends their action. In this sense, the verbal interpretation that the child provides about their own drawing can reveal what is going on in their mind and heart. It is an exposure and revelation of intimacy (DERDYK, 2010, p. 50-51). Thus, conversations with the children based on their drawings allowed for open dialogue and provided them with a communicative repertoire to express their experiences orally and with greater freedom.

## **What Children from Ceilândia-DF Tell About the Covid-19 Pandemic**

A partir das informações transmitidas pelas crianças por intermédio de uma combinação de desenhos e falas, buscamos compreender as vivências de crianças sobre a Covid-19 e suas experiências no contexto da pandemia, principalmente nos aspectos relacionados à imposição de afastamento social e à restrição aos espaços de convivência coletiva. Todo esse contexto pandêmico marcou as infâncias, pois “a experiência das crianças é cultural e, portanto, só pode ser compreendida em contexto” (NASCIMENTO; VOLTARELLI, 2021, p. 22).

Thus, when asked about what the pandemic was, the responses from the children participating in the study indicated a unique understanding of the context. The construction of these meanings about the pandemic by the children relates to the knowledge they have built on the subject. Even though they all lived in Ceilândia-DF during the pandemic, which somewhat homogenizes the

environment of the children surveyed, each child approached this context differently, as experiences and meaning-making are unique processes. The pandemic and the sanitary restrictions were constitutive elements of these children's environment, and therefore, it is necessary to understand that each one "interprets the context in different ways" (PRESTES; TUNES, 2018, p. 79).

Thus, this categorical lens termed "experiences" (PRESTES; TUNES, 2018) is used to build connections between the meanings constructed by Sabrina and Gabriel, the children participating in this research:

It's like a crisis, and you have to stay at home, you can't go out, you have to wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, and wash your hands well" (SABRINA, 8 years old, 2020)

It's a disease. It's a disease that kills and is dangerous... that kills a lot of people. You have to wear a mask, keep your distance, and wait for the disease to end (GABRIEL, 10 years old, 2020).

The children's statements about the pandemic revealed that they had access to information disseminated by the media, health organizations, research institutes, as well as from their own families. The dialogues indicated that they understood the implications of the pandemic on their daily lives and spaces. Most importantly, they comprehended the severity of the virus for people's health and the measures that needed to be taken to avoid contamination and prevent the spread of the virus.

The meanings that Sabrina and Gabriel assigned to the pandemic context reveal a geography of care experienced by these two children, as "practices of care and education in childhood are social practices, cultural events, forged as human heritage [...] and are closely linked to times and spaces" (LOPES; FERNANDES, 2021, p. 50). By listing a series of sanitary precautions, Gabriel and Sabrina, like other participants in the study, residents of Ceilândia, one of the most affected regions of the Federal District, demonstrated their appropriation of a cultural heritage built by humanity during the pandemic. Their statements reflected scientific knowledge and recommendations from international and national health organizations and underscored a high value of human rights: the protection of life.

The meanings constructed by Sabrina and Gabriel geographically and historically situate them and allow these children to have a conscious perspective and understand that humanity is undergoing "a crisis," "a disease that kills," and therefore, it is necessary to modify daily life with a series of

Resident children of Ceilândia-DF in the Covid-19 pandemic: dialogues about childhood measures. This particular awareness impacts the social realm, hence the need to stay at home and follow the adopted norms for the common good.

According to the methodology of this study, the children were invited to draw the place where they spent the most time during the first wave of the pandemic, as well as to specify an environment where they had spent more time. All the children referred to their homes, as we can see in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

**Figura 1** – Drawing of Jasmine's House and Room (7 years old)



Source: Research *Corpus*, 2020.

**Researcher:** What was the place where you spent the most time during the pandemic?

**Jasmine (7 years old):** At home... I get bored because I couldn't go to my friend's house.

**Researcher:** In the house, which place did you spend the most time?

**Jasmine (7 years old):** My room, but I also go to my mom's room and the living [...].



**Figura 2** – Drawing of Gabriel's House and Living Room (10 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

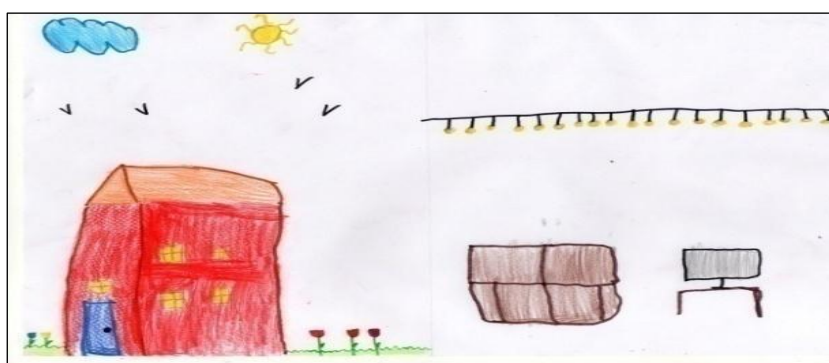
**Researcher:** What was the place where you spent the most time during the pandemic?

**Gabriel (10 years):** At home, because there is no other place to stay. There is no other place where I can stay... on the street.

**Researcher:** And at home, which place did you spend the most time in?

**Gabriel (10 years old):** In the living room... playing FreeFire.

**Figura 3** – Drawing of Sabrina's house and bedroom (8 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

**Researcher:** At home, which place did you spend the most time in?

**Sabrina (8 years old):** My room, because I really like lying down. I also like being in my room because it has many toys... my dog also likes to lie on my bed, so I play with her.

**Researcher:** Did you like staying at home?

**Sabrina (8 years old):** Yes, because sometimes you can do a lot of fun activities too.

The children's responses showed an understanding of the need to stay at home but also mentioned other places they wished to visit: "my friend's house," as mentioned by Jasmine, and for Gabriel, "the street." The home environments where the children enjoy spending time reveal a common theme of interaction, whether with other people in the household, such as in the living room (one of the spaces people move through), mentioned by Jasmine and Gabriel, or with a pet, as in Sabrina's case, who prefers her room because she plays with her dog. These responses suggest that the children are relatively accustomed to having their spaces restricted and often being confined to their own homes. This phenomenon aligns with what Qvortrup (2005, p. 81, emphasis in the original) described as "processes of domestication and insularity" in the conceptual and experiential framework of adults regarding childhood experience in modernity, where children's spaces have been determined by adults under the justification of keeping them safe. Such "protection" can frequently be confused with control.

However, in the pandemic context, staying at home emerged, according to Gabriel and Sabrina's comments, as a necessary attitude for protecting life. The children sought alternatives to cope with the lack of interaction, creating a mapping of environments that allowed for digital interactions through games and environments of movement or even the company of a pet. This search for interaction during confinement is revealed through the participants' comments and drawings, indicating that contact with others was a need for the children in this study.

Confirming through drawings that the children had spent their days at home is not surprising, but it is crucial to document this, as there is academic value in understanding the meanings children constructed during the pandemic. The children expressed a restricted yet differentiated mapping; they understood that each room has a function within the home; they demonstrated the ability to differentiate spaces even with reduced mobility due to social distancing; and indicated that the places in the home where they spent the most time varied between the bedroom and the living room. Additionally, the comments highlight what the children did during this period of confinement, showing how they experienced these spaces. It is also noted that the home was represented as a pleasant place with opportunities for various activities, such as playing with toys, reading, and caring for pets, though there were few options for physical activities.

Among the most frequently cited activities during conversations with the children were the use of mobile games and apps (FreeFire, TikTok, Roblox, and Among Us), as well as other audiovisual resources such as broadcast TV and Netflix. Electronic games were unanimously mentioned as the most common pastime during the first wave of the pandemic, often being cited by participants as the only recreational activity they engaged in throughout the day. The environments depicted in the drawings namely, their own rooms and the living room showed that most activities were carried out individually. However, the children indicated that through some online games, they were still able to maintain contact with their peers and thus create a peer culture.

Electronic games, like traditional games (pretend play, imitation, approach-avoidance games, cooperative and competitive games, etc.), also "represent spaces of choice and challenge for children, and offer experiences that evoke feelings of euphoria and frustration," as explained by Anjos and Mercado (2020, p. 17). The authors also emphasize that it is crucial for adults to become partners and interlocutors with children in the use of technologies so that they can use these resources safely and benefit from their potential.

Regarding the drawings of places the children missed the most, school (Figures 4, 5, and 6) and the street (Figures 7 and 8) were identified as the spaces that most evoked feelings of longing.

**Figura 4** – Drawing of Sabrina's school (8 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

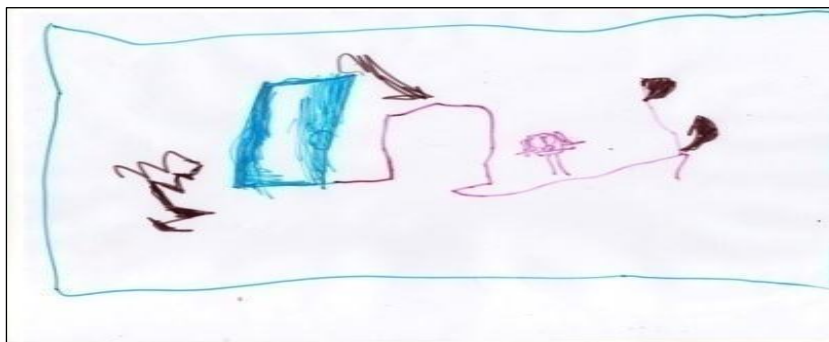
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**Figura 5** – Drawing of Jasmine's school (7 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

**Figura 6** – Drawing of Mel's school (daycare) (4 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

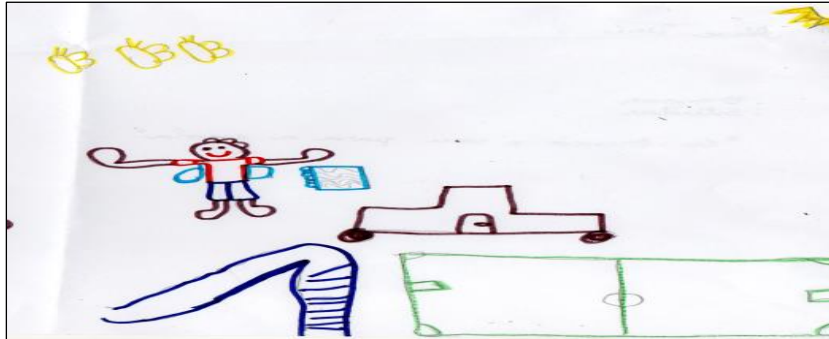
**Researcher:** What place would you like to return to once the pandemic is over?

**Mel (4 anos):** Uhhh[...], to my little school [...].

**Researcher:** Explain your drawing to me.

**Mel (4 Years old):** Here is where we used to play... the playground, the slide, the tree, the sand

**Figura 7** – The street for Alex (6 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

**Figura 8** – The street for Gabriel (10 years old)



Source: Research Corpus, 2020.

When asked why she misses school, Jasmine says:

[...] because I have my friends there, because I can play with them on the playground, but only during recess, although sometimes the teacher lets us play, like when you're copying on the board during the last class, if you finish, you can go to the back and play something. We can talk without bothering others" (JASMINE, 7 years old).

Mel also highlights enjoyable activities from the daycare that she is unable to experience during the pandemic, such as "playing with dolls, drawing, the playground, having lunch, and our dinner was gelatin." It is important to note the relevance of activities done with peers at school. The description of games and interactions gives the impression that school is a place of fun, interaction, and joy.

The fact that school is mentioned as the place they miss indicates that this location has become, for these children, one of play, interaction, safety, and freedom. Lopes (2008, p. 77) emphasizes

Resident children of Ceilândia-DF in the Covid-19 pandemic: dialogues about childhood children's ability to "subvert the pre-set schemes and structures, materializing their presence in various social groups they are part of." Thus, children appropriate the school space, with all its rules and routines, and use it to build new logics of control and dominance, aiming to provide themselves with interactive experiences that bring pleasure and satisfaction. From this perspective, Corsaro (2011) highlights the agency of children, noting that through play, they seek to exert control over their lives.

Memories of playing in the streets were recorded by Alex and Gabriel (Figures 7 and 8), suggesting they frequently accessed this space before the pandemic. In common, these children depicted in their drawings that they miss sharing playtime with peers in the street social space. Alex reinforces this desire by saying, "I really want to play with my friends," and Gabriel adds, "because there I can play," reaffirming their longing to return to activities in this space. Thus, it is possible to infer that in different contexts, "besides individual differences, children distribute themselves in the social structure according to social class, ethnicity, gender, and culture" (Sarmiento; Pinto, 1997, p. 22).

Therefore, based on the investigation data, it is possible to consider that school and street are children's territories constituted from social constructs and children's subjectivities. These locations then represent a privileged stage of peer culture and interaction possibilities.

Finally, another noteworthy aspect was the children's perception of their involvement in decisions regarding social confinement during the pandemic. The following excerpts provide a glimpse into their experiences:

**Researcher:** What do you think about people not asking what you want to do during the pandemic?

**Jasmine (7 years old):** I don't find it strange. I think it's just the way they want it. If they ask me, that's fine, but if they don't want to, that's okay too.

**Researcher:** Did you agree with the decision to stay at home during the pandemic?

**Sabrina (8 years old):** Yes, because these are the rules here in the world, so...

**Researcher:** Do you think they should have listened to your opinion?

**Gabriel (10 years old):** No, because it was already obvious that we couldn't go out on the streets. Since when the disease was in China.

In these excerpts, it is evident that Gabriel and Sabrina understand that the decision for social confinement extends beyond their immediate family, impacting everyone in the pursuit of prevention and social well-being. They also demonstrate an awareness of the historical and social context of the moment experienced by humanity and reveal relationships shaped by the geography of care developed during the pandemic experiences. Gabriel highlights the global scope of the decision for social distancing by referencing an international geographic element, "Since when the disease was in China," to justify the cause-and-effect relationship for social isolation and confinement at home. Sabrina's understanding, "they are the rules here and in the world," further supports her grasp of the imposed bio sanitary norms. In the context of pandemic rules, the children show historical, political, social, and scientific awareness, agreeing with the protective measures for life.

## **Final considerations**

The children's experiences, expressed through their drawings and words, reveal that, although they faced restrictions on visiting spaces they usually frequented, they were able to recognize and identify potential in the environments that remained available to them, seeking opportunities for interaction with others and with pets. They also understand the importance and necessity of these restrictions as a means of protecting themselves, their families, and the community, reflecting a clear and strong geography of care experienced during the first wave of the pandemic.

The children's experiences indicate a connection to the scientific heritage of humanity, as the necessity to stay home was understood through humanitarian values. However, despite this understanding, the obligation to remain isolated and the restriction on visiting other places were met with resignation, primarily due to the inability to interact with their peers. They revealed that, during this isolation period at home, they spent their time engaging in activities mediated by technological resources (TV and cell phones) because they could not maintain direct contact with their classmates.

Another noteworthy aspect is how much the children value play and spaces that allow interaction with peers, even when these locations impose conditions, rules, and limitations for such interactions, as is the case with schools. In this context, we can assert that the children make it clear that, even under such conditions, they creatively appropriate these spaces and create their peer

Resident children of Ceilândia-DF in the Covid-19 pandemic: dialogues about childhood cultures, often subverting adult-centric conceptions of space. These transgressions are shared and valued in interactions with other children.

We observe that the recognition of children as social actors, active in the construction of culture, knowledge, identity, and as agents producing space, still lacks acknowledgment within the researched sociocultural context. Although this recognition has not yet been effectively established, the children demonstrated that they have opinions and know how to position themselves regarding social facts that involve them, thus understanding the seriousness of the pandemic situation.

The experiences during the pandemic provided the interviewed children with an understanding of complex concepts such as adherence to social norms and scientific knowledge as ways to protect human life. As noted in the body of the article, listening to the children from Ceilândia-DF fits into a growing context of academic productions about this place, which strengthens the historical achievements of rights for this population.

By listening to the children, this article contributes to enriching research on this Administrative Region of the Federal District (DF), specifically regarding the children from this area in the context of the pandemic. We understand and recognize children as social actors and active participants in the construction of culture, knowledge, and identity (CORSARO, 2011), as well as “agents who produce space by creating and attributing meanings to their spatial experiences, constructing places, territories, and landscapes” (LOPES, 2008, p. 68). Additionally, we reaffirm the understanding that children “creatively appropriate information from the adult world to produce their own peer cultures” and form their opinions (CORSARO, 2011, p. 53).

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