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INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective The issue of the relationship between socio-education and formal education within the socio-educational system is highly 'controversial'. Arroyo (2014) argues that there is an idea more devastating than the concept of marginalisation, exclusion, and inequality: the idea of a dividing line in society, with those on this side enjoying all rights, and those on the other side, where there is only non-existence, invisibility and the absence of dialogue (Arroyo, 2014, p. 49). Adolescents deprived of their liberty find themselves on the other side of that line; for much of society, they do not exist.

This Systematic review questions are the following ones: What are the perspectives of adolescents and young people in juvenile detention, as well as the management staff and teachers at these institutions, regarding the teaching practices adopted by formal education within socio-educational facilities?

In this framework, it aims to: identify, characterise, and compare the scientific studies that have been conducted on the teaching practices employed in formal education for adolescents and young people in detention, and to systematise their contributions towards improving educational policies and strengthening the relationship between adolescents and young people in detention and their schooling.

Data from this survey showed that, in 2023, there were 11,556 adolescents and young people separated from their families and under State guardianship, serving socio-educational measures involving restriction and deprivation of liberty. Although this number remains significant, it represents a decrease of nearly 50% compared to data from the survey dated November 30, 2017, which indicated a total of 24,803 adolescents and young people in the Socio-Educational System (SINASE, 2024, p. 9).

In the National Survey of SINASE 2023, the state of Pernambuco ranks fourth in terms of the largest number of adolescents and young people institutionalized in the Socio-Educational System,

with 554 adolescents distributed across 25 institutions: Socio-Educational Service Centers (CASE), Provisional Socio-Educational Service Centers (CENIP), and Semi-Liberty Socio-Educational Service Centers (CASEM) (Brazil, 2023, p. 22). The same survey states that “one of the principles guiding school provision within socio-educational measures is that schooling is a strategy for full social inclusion, articulated with the reconstruction of life projects and the guarantee of rights” (Brazil, 2023, p. 28).

Rationale The Socio-Educational System is defined as the set of actions, guidelines, and principles aimed at providing services to adolescents and young people between 12 and 18 years of age who have committed acts classified as crimes or criminal misdemeanors (Brazil, 1990). This terminology emerged with the enactment of the Statute of the Child and the Adolescent (ECA), within the context of the country’s re-democratization, representing a rupture with earlier models of a purely punitive nature. Grounded in the doctrine of comprehensive protection and in the principles of Human Rights, the Socio-Educational System came to recognize adolescents and young people as subjects of rights, in a particular condition of development, guiding interventions that seek not only accountability for committed acts but, above all, the guarantee of rights, the promotion of human dignity, social inclusion, and the construction of life trajectories grounded in citizenship, especially for those living in contexts of socioeconomic vulnerability.

Within the scope of this new conception oriented toward care, protection, respect, and the guarantee of rights of adolescents and young people involved in the Socio-Educational System and deprived of liberty, the effective realization of the right to formal education stands out as a central element of public policies directed at this population. To ensure the realization of this right, State Departments of Education have organized themselves according to their local contexts, thereby supporting teaching teams responsible for providing schooling within the geographical territory of the Socio-Educational Service Centers, thus ensuring access to formal education.

However, the simultaneous action of two State Secretariats, responsible for distinct public policies that intersect, even though they are directed at the same subjects and operate within the same institutional space, has contributed to imprecise understandings of the concepts of education mobilized in this context. This overlap of responsibilities highlights the need for conceptual delimitation, particularly with regard to the different

modalities of education present in the daily life of the Socio-Educational System.

To theoretically situate the present study, which focuses on actions related to formal education, it is necessary to clarify the distinctions among formal, informal, and non-formal education. This conceptual differentiation is essential for delimiting the object of analysis of the research and for avoiding interpretative misunderstandings that may compromise the understanding of the educational practices developed within the Socio-Educational System.

To this end, the conceptions proposed by Gohn (2006) are adopted, according to which formal education is that developed within school institutions, with curricular contents previously defined and regulated by law. It is a process conducted by teachers with specific training, within regulated and certifying institutions organized in accordance with national guidelines, in which teaching and learning are structured around legally prescribed curricular contents.

Informal education, in turn, refers to learning constructed throughout individuals’ socialization processes, in spaces such as the family, the neighborhood, the church, and social groups, and is permeated by values, cultures, senses of belonging, and inherited affectivities (Gohn, 2006).

Non-formal education is characterized by learning processes based on the sharing of experiences, developed primarily through collective actions and in spaces that accompany individuals’ life trajectories. These processes are not organized by grades, age groups, or previously prescribed contents, although they involve intentional interactions (Gohn, 2006).

Another relevant aspect for distinguishing among these educational conceptions concerns the methodologies that underpin them, as highlighted by the same author. In formal education, methodologies are generally planned according to the content established by legislation. In non-formal education, methodologies emerge from the cultures of individuals and groups, constructed from problematizations of everyday life and from recognized themes.

Condition being studied To provide a better understanding of the scope of this research, the following section sets out the context surrounding adolescents and young people in conflict with the law and their outcomes following their apprehension.

Adolescents and young people who commit offences, as defined by the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), are referred to the competent judicial authorities, where they undergo an initial hearing. Based on this assessment, the

judicial authority may order the adolescent's release or the application of a socio-educational measure. In cases where a measure is applied, the adolescent remains in the custody of the State and is placed under the care of the socio-educational system.

The Socio-Educational System comprises a set of actions, guidelines and principles aimed at supporting adolescents and young people aged between twelve and under eighteen who have committed acts classified as crimes or criminal offences (Brazil, 1990). This terminology emerged with the enactment of the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (ECA), in the context of the country's redemocratisation, representing a break with previous models of a purely punitive nature. Based on the doctrine of comprehensive protection and the principles of human rights, the Socio-Educational System now recognises adolescents and young people as rights-holders in a unique stage of development, guiding interventions aimed not only at holding them accountable for their actions, but to promote dignity, social inclusion and a life path with opportunities, special for those one who are economically vulnerable.

METHODS

Search strategy The search in electronic databases took place from December 2025 to February 2026 in the B-on database using the boolean operators AND/OR and the construction of the following query: "«Educational Policies AND/OR Pedagogical Practices in the context of youth and adolescent incarceration»." The initial theoretical universe consisted of 2,030 titles, to which the following inclusion filters were applied: (i) Texts available online in full text; (ii) Texts published between 2015 and 2025; (iii) Texts peer-reviewed. The first screening resulted in 95 articles. Considering this sample too extensive for the abstract reading phase, the research team decided to apply the following criteria: (i) Texts written solely in Portuguese; (ii) Texts that had at least one keyword from the research in the title or keywords; and finally (iii) texts of conceptual research, literature reviews, and direct research work, resulting in 63 eligible texts. Education has a broad meaning and within the socio-educational system, it is used as an umbrella to anchor all actions developed with adolescents and young people under socio-educational measures. Given this conceptual constraint, the studies were analyzed according to the following questions to be answered by reading the title and abstract: I- Does the text address the pedagogical practices of formal education in incarceration? II- Does it address formal education in incarceration? III-

Does it address non-formal or informal education in incarceration? IV- Does it address other themes within incarceration? V- Does it address educational policies for incarceration? VI- Are there duplicate articles? VII- Are there articles that deviate from the topic? With this division, it was observed that: Two (2) titles presented concepts related to pedagogical practices in incarceration; nine (9) had references to education in incarceration in the title or abstract; five (5) aimed at non-formal or informal education; twelve (12) addressed other themes within incarceration; none (0) articles referred to educational policies in the context of incarceration; four (4) were duplicates, and thirty-one (31) texts were unrelated to the topic. After the complete reading of the texts and their systematization, the final sample consisted of 9 texts.

Participant or population Young people in incarceration who are integrated into the non-formal education system. They are serving a restrictive sentence of liberty, and non-formal education is provided within educational centers and in prison.

Intervention The theoretical sampling revealed the following characteristics: regarding technical procedures, each study employed different data collection techniques. The closest similarities are observed in three studies that used semi-structured interviews, drawing on diverse data sources. These differences may influence the results, as each type of study analyzes the phenomenon from a distinct perspective, thereby affecting the interpretation and understanding of the data. Considering the predominance of qualitative studies and the near absence of standardized quantitative data sufficient to conduct a statistical meta-analysis, a narrative synthesis was adopted as the primary method for analyzing the findings in this study.

With regard to the participants, significant diversity is observed: four (4) studies involved adolescents and young people deprived of liberty; two (2) focused on teachers; two (2) analyzed theses and dissertations; and one (1) examined scientific articles. Given this diversity of study subjects, it is concluded that the outcomes are not directly comparable.

In relation to the fields of knowledge, some overlap is identified across the studies. A closer examination indicates that all nine studies are situated within the field of education; two are associated with public policy, although they do not directly address this topic; two belong to psychology; one to law; one to educational technology; and one to applied linguistics. In this

context, as the studies were developed across different fields of knowledge and employ distinct methodological and theoretical approaches, the investigation is enriched by this diversity. However, this same characteristic also limits the comparative and systematic analysis of the results.

Comparator Not applicable.

Study designs to be included Qualitative Studies Interviews: In-depth interviews with young people, educators, and staff to gather personal experiences and perceptions. Focus Groups: Discussions that explore collective views on the impact of non-formal education in incarceration settings.

Eligibility criteria Not Applicable.

Information sources Not Applicable in this moment of the research.

Main outcome(s) It was observed that the items regarding methodological designs and participants show significantly different results across the studies. Three (3) studies utilized semi-structured interviews; five (5) are qualitative studies followed by another approach, such as: qualitative (applied, bibliographic in nature, exploratory, documentary, or analytical-reflective); one (1) is a quantitative cross-sectional comparative study; one (1) is a state-of-the-art study; one (1) is a systematic review; and one (1) uses a mixed-methods approach. There are few quantitative studies compared to a larger number of qualitative ones. Study participants also vary: four (4) involve adolescents and young people deprived of liberty; two (2) focus on teachers; two (2) analyze theses and dissertations; and one (1) examines scientific articles. There is also diversity among the subjects studied. Given these observations, it is concluded that the study outcomes are not comparable."

Additional outcome(s) The systematic analysis of the literature reveals the presence of structural tensions between the educational purposes of schools and the norms of control and discipline that organize the socio-educational system. The studies indicate that such tensions do not constitute isolated situations; rather, they are a constitutive element of everyday school life, directly impacting the organization of pedagogical work and the effective realization of the right to education. The interruption of school activities due to institutional demands, as well as the restriction of access to schooling as a disciplinary measure, emerge as naturalized practices, demonstrating the subordination of formal education to the

organization of the socio-educational system. In this context, a school grounded in humanizing principles and in a pedagogical commitment to the transformation of subjects faces difficulties in asserting its educational specificity.

It is also noteworthy that several studies, drawing on teachers' perspectives, emphasize the importance of schools—or school units located within socio-educational settings—developing their own pedagogical-political projects, grounded in the lived experiences of all those involved in the schooling of young people deprived of liberty. It is possible that, through the establishment of principles, goals, and objectives arising from this population, the school may be able to assert its autonomy within this space.

Furthermore, teachers highlight the need for specific training to work in socio-educational and prison education settings. Beginning with initial teacher education, higher education institutions should prepare educators to work with students deprived of liberty. This concern should also guide those responsible for education in these environments, who should provide continuing or in-service training, equipping teachers for professional practice in contexts that require them to “unlearn” conventional teaching approaches in order to relearn how to teach within these settings.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis The protocol was implemented by the principal investigator together with two additional researchers who supervised the processes of data extraction and theoretical sample selection. Only articles published in indexed, peer-reviewed journals were considered, and each extracted sample was assessed through a blinded review by a third researcher.

At this stage, the criteria from the following checklist were taken into account: ****Research Question**** – Are the objective and research question clearly defined (e.g., using the PICOS format or a similar framework)? ****Search Strategy**** – Are the databases consulted, the keywords, and the search strings explicitly described and replicable? ****Study Selection**** – Are the inclusion and exclusion criteria clearly defined, and was the selection conducted by pairs of reviewers (two reviewers) in order to minimize bias? ****Quality Assessment**** – Was a formal tool applied to assess the risk of bias and the methodological quality of each included study? ****Data Extraction and Synthesis**** – Were the data extracted reliably and synthesized appropriately (either narratively or through meta-analysis)? ****PRISMA Guidelines**** – Was a PRISMA flow diagram included to demonstrate the process of identification, screening, and inclusion of articles?

Following affirmative responses to all these questions, the procedure was considered methodologically sound.

Strategy of data synthesis Not applicable.

Subgroup analysis Not applicable.

Sensitivity analysis Not applicable.

Language restriction Yes. The studies must be in Portuguese.

Country(ies) involved Portugal and Brasil.

Keywords Educational policies; Adolescents and young people; Deprivation of liberty.

Dissemination plans To be transformed into a public paper.

Contributions of each author

Author 1 - Maria de Lourdes Paz - Responsible for the research and the draft of the manuscript.

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