OTHER THEMES

High School Students' Emotion and Perception on the Privilege Walk

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ABSTRACT – High School Students' Emotion and Perception on the Privilege Walk. The social debate at school is essential for an integral, critical and emancipatory education. However, motivating students is essential to address social issues in a dialogic way, reducing resistance to debate. Based on Grada Kilomba's reflection, from a psychological point of view on such resistances, this paper adopted the Privilege Walk (PW) as a strategy to approach the debate on social inequality at school. The following were investigated: self-perception of students' social position, PW's emotional dimensions, sincerity in PW and PW's impacts on students' perception about social inequality. Final position in PW correlated with social self-perception. The magnitude of the differences and the related factors empathically triggered important social perceptions and considerations.
Keywords: **Privilege Walk. Social Inequality. School. Meaningful Learning. Emotional Dimensions.**

RESUMO – Emoção e Percepção de Estudantes de Ensino Médio na Caminhada do Privilégio. O debate social na escola é indispensável para uma educação integral, crítica e emancipadora. No entanto, sensibilizar os estudantes é essencial para abordar questões sociais de forma dialógica, diminuindo as resistências ao debate. A partir da reflexão de Grada Kilomba, do ponto de vista psíquico, sobre tais resistências, o trabalho adotou a Caminhada do Privilégio (PW) como estratégia de aproximação ao debate da desigualdade social na escola. Foram investigados: auto percepção da posição social dos estudantes, dimensões emocionais da PW, sinceridade na PW e impactos da PW na percepção dos estudantes sobre a desigualdade social. A posição final na PW se correlacionou com a auto percepção social. A magnitude das diferenças e os fatores relacionados desencadearam, de forma empática, percepções e reflexões sociais importantes.
Palavras-chave: **Caminhada do Privilégio. Desigualdade Social. Escola. Aprendizagem Significativa. Dimensões Emocionais.**

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Introduction

The Mask, by Grada Kilomba (2016), analyzes the racial issue considering the construction of subjectivities in colonial dynamics. Kilomba uses psychoanalytic categories to understand the difficulty in recognizing privileges by white subject and the defenses of black subjects, in the face of suffering, in power relations that are perpetuated until current days.

Kilomba (2016) uses the Flanders mask – adjusted inside and outside the mouth to prevent the black person from eating during the harvest, and also as a form of punishment, coercion and, consequently, silencing and social control – to point out defense mechanisms of the white person's ego. In these mechanisms, the one who took land, enslaved human beings, forcing them to work, and took hold of the result of such work, not only refuses such negative practices, but also projects them on the other, his/her negative, building the other's image as a threatening, savage, inhuman and violent thief.

> This fact [the oppressor becomes the oppressed and the oppressed, the tyrant] is based on processes in which split parts of the psyche are projected outwards, creating the so-called 'Other', always as the antagonist of the 'self' [...] only one part of the ego - the 'good' part... - is seen and experienced as 'self', as ' I' and the rest - the bad, rejected and malevolent part - is projected on the 'Other' and portrayed as something external. The other, then, becomes the mental representation of what the white person is afraid to recognize in himself/herself, in this case: the violent thief, the indolent and malicious bandit (Kilomba, 2016, p. 174. Free Portuguese-English translation).

The silencing of the black subject ensures that only the dominator's narrative circulates freely, while divergent perspectives are controlled. In this sense, legitimate speakers are constructed and there follows the establishment of the association of the white to positive and the black to negative (Kilomba, 2016). The silencing allows the white subject to have "positive feelings about himself/herself" (Kilomba, 2016, p. 174) and forces the black subject to "develop a relationship with himself through the alienating presence of the other white" (Kilomba, 2016, 175). Thus, the relationship between racialized subjects stems from the hegemonic representations constructed about the self and the other.

From this perspective, there is a splitting of the white ego and the projection of his/her repressed negative part on the Other. Only the positive part is accepted by the white person as a self, and the coercive imposition of silence on the black person prevents the white person from being forced to hear from the Other things that are repressed, removed from consciousness. The fear of disclosure leads ego defense mechanisms to act as barriers that make it difficult to expose secrets (Kilomba, 2016).

The first mechanism would be the white person's *refusal* to see himself/herself as an aggressor and the consequent projection of this

image on the *Other*. Kilomba mentions the example of the white person who says that black people themselves are racists. On the other hand, the black person, in order to "reduce emotional shock and sadness", might say that he/she has never experienced racism, says Kilomba (2016, p. 178)

The second mechanism would be *guilt*, which Kilomba defines as an emotion resulting from a conflict for having done what he/she should not or for failing to do what he/she should. This mechanism involves the fear of exposure and the consequences of the act. The author states that rationalizations are common subterfuges in response to guilt. She cites the example of the person who says that it was the other who "misunderstood" him/her and that he/she "does not see black people and white people, just people" (2016, p. 179). Once these two barriers are overcome, *shame* comes, which results from putting his/her preconceptions into perspective, generating conflict: "The white subject realizes that the black people's perception about whiteness can be different from his/her own perception of himself/herself, to the extent that whiteness is seen as a privileged identity" (Kilomba, 2016, p. 179).

Shame is followed by the *recognition* of the white privilege and the existence of racism, and it consists of a passage "from fantasy to reality" that leads to the need for *redressing* and the individual is impelled to act (Kilomba, 2016).

Kilomba states (2016) that some of the defense mechanisms, added to the fact that identity groups and different classes experience different situations and also different protective reactions, explain the difficulty in establishing an effective dialogic process in the classroom in which painful processes are present. The trauma of the black subject can result in situations in which he/she rejects the existence of racism, since he/she, being black, does not identify himself/herself with the fanciful stereotype created. The white subject's refusal generates resistance to recognize his/her racism or the existence of racism and racial privileges. Additionally, when the black subject talks about his/her suffering, he/she is not always heard due to defense mechanisms.

This perspective of understanding the resistance to the debate of socially painful and sensitive topics, based on their unconscious processes, applies not only to the racial issue, but also to issues of gender, sexual orientation, class, among other oppressive relationships. Thus, strategies that facilitate the approach of topics related to social relations are crucial for the debate, which affects and implies the subjects and their preconceptions, to take place in an empathic and welcoming manner. Meaningful learning strategies involve students and their experiences in the teaching-learning process and are widely used to arouse interest in the topic under discussion. The Privilege Walk seems to be an interesting strategy for debating sensitive topics, since it reveals differences that are independent of the individual merit.

The liberal, hegemonic discourse enunciates individual freedom to pursue interests and considers success as a result of a combination of effort and foresight. When discrimination is also conceived individu-

ally, it hides the institutions and social dynamics that operate to perpetuate prejudice. Thus, according to Kilomba (2016), subjects think of conquering or failing individually and learn to love or hate their traits, contributing to the silencing and sustaining the domination. The Privilege Walk exposes the secrets, which are absent in language, by means of people's spatial disposition. The magnitude of inequality and some social determinants involved are then visually perceived, opening up to the need to symbolize what happened, therefore, to speaking and listening.

The Privilege Walk – privilege hereby understood as the establishment of advantages to one group from the expropriation of the other group – aims to stimulate the perception of differences between individuals' course of life s with statements that do not concern the subject's personal merit, but that impact his/her life positively or negatively. Participants start side by side. Each statement is read. Positive points are reversed in forward steps, while negative points are represented by backward steps. In this trans-subjective experience, individuals perform the steps, highlighting the different paths, opportunities and difficulties (Loiola *et al.*, 2019).

Significant trans-subjective experiences are potentially transformative and should integrate teaching-learning processes (Macedo; Silva, 2019). The Privilege Walk has been carried out by educators, student groups, companies and activists to generate empathy among people and work on topics such as racism, chauvinism, homophobia, privileges, among others. The dynamic rescues memories and leads to important reflections on society, social structure and inequality (Young, 2006) from a relational bodily experience that makes privileges – individual, identity and class – concrete and related to their life paths, similarities and differences.

Irby-Shasanmi, Oberlin and Saunders (2012) used the Privilege Walk to discuss health inequities. The students, before the Walk, pointed out biological and behavioral factors as the main causes of diseases, despite the fact that social determinants of health are the axis that guides the discussions in public health. After the activity, they realized the importance of social issues in health. Magana (2017) carried out the conceptual debate on privilege before the Walk and analyzed the participants' perceptions after it was carried out. In the follow-up, carried out a week after the activity, she observed that the dynamics had generated important behavioral changes in the participants, as follows: greater awareness and identification of privileges and biased actions and willingness to act in relation to such issues. Ngoasheng and Gachaco (2017) used the Privilege Walk to build a path of dialogue in an undergraduate Political Reporting discipline, in which students were resistant to scientific data debated in class, especially when related to inequality between different non-white groups. The students blamed the teacher for her determination to put the black people apart and they refused to debate intersectionality. However, by means of the position of bodies in space, the Privilege Walk exposed precisely the intersection-

ality that the teacher tried to debate, the combination of oppressions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Therefore, the Privilege Walk opened the debate for discussion by reducing resistance and awakening interest in understanding the causes of the disposition of bodies, the bodies that were affected by the dynamics.

The present study approached the work by Loiola *et al.* (2019) and moved away from the other studies cited: First, because it did not start by conceptualizing privilege or any other term; Second, because it established that the mediator would not introduce identity issues, either before or after the Walk; Third, stemming from the statements by Loiola *et al.* (2019), who had already removed such questions from most of Young's (2006) original statements. The purpose of these modifications was to reduce resistance and prioritize participants' perceptions. Loiola *et al.* (2019) observed that gender, sexual orientation and economic status were themes brought up and debated by students based on the weirdness of the geographical position of the bodies. Nevertheless, they reported that the issue of racism was considered taboo, and it was interdicted. Additionally, we adopted the sincerity scale (Loiola *et al.*, 2019) and improved the scale to assess the position that the participant would expect to occupy in the Walk, used by Loiola *et al.* (2019), transforming discrete data (Likert scale with 3 options) into continuous data (10-cm ruler). The present work also used instruments not adopted in the previous works mentioned in order to understand how the volunteers perceived themselves among opposite attributes (positive/negative) and to assess emotional dimensions related to the Walk, since it is a delicate activity.

The present study aimed at understanding how the participants evaluate the Privilege Walk activity; observing the emotions and perceptions triggered in the dynamics and analyzing its potential to reduce resistance to the debate of sensitive topics; and encouraging dialogue on social issues in which individuals are involved.

Materials and Methods

This case study was carried out with a second year high school class of a public institution of excellence, located in the West Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro – Brazil. This school presents socioeconomic diversity as a result of the implementation of public policies of economic and racial quota. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee and followed the guidelines and regulatory standards of the National Health Council for research involving human beings. The collections were made on a single day, in three stages.

In the first stage, in a questionnaire applied, the individual should mark what position he/she would be in if he/she participated in an activity that compared his/her life course with that of his/her colleagues. The proposal was to take steps forward in the case of having access to goods, services and rights in society and backwards in the case of not having that access. The estimate should be marked on a 10-cm ruler.

The beginning of the ruler indicated the first place and the end, the last place. The volunteers also completed the Social Comparison Scale -SCS (Allan; Gilbert, 1995) which seeks to measure the subject's perception of his/her social position. In the SCS, the incomplete sentence "In relationships with others, I feel..." is followed by 11 contradictory constructs: inferior/superior; incompetent/more competent; uncaring/more caring; rejected/accepted; different/same; no talent/most talented; weaker/stronger; insecure/safer; undesirable/most desirable; unattractive/more attractive and misfit/fit. For each item, the person marks, on a 10-point Likert scale, the number that best corresponds to how he/she perceives himself/herself in relationships with others. Figure 1 is the most unfavorable perception of himself/herself whereas figure 10 is the most favorable.

In the second stage, the Privilege Walk was carried out, and for the students, it was named "Walk" in order to avoid resistance to the debate, observed by Loiola *et al.* (2019), which might result from the use of the term "privilege". The Walk was introduced as follows:

> We will develop an activity aimed at realizing who we are, who is around us, and to make our differences and realities more visible. We called this activity the Walk. Position yourself on the center line and hold hands with the teammates next to you. You will hold hands as long as possible, but you can let go when you can no longer maintain contact. We will bring questions about different realities. If you have already experienced this reality, run the command, taking a step forward or backward as prompted. If the hypothesis does not correspond to your reality, stay in place, do not move (Free Portuguese-English translation).

The Walk involved 50 statements, which appear in the Supplementary Document[1], adapted from Loiola *et al.* (2019) to meet the objectives of this research. The questions deal with topics related to physical and symbolic violence by means of statements about safety, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, way of being, romantic relationship, family, housing, financial support/lack of support, education, health, culture, among others. The statements were read by a researcher and, at the same time, projected on the wall, ensuring that the students followed them. Only six of them directly addressed race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and social status, so that the subjectivities in relation to the themes were not restricted to such issues and that the different issues of the different groups could appear, allowing the debate between the realities of these groups.

In the final stage, post-Walk, the Self-assessment Manikin – SAM was applied (Bradley; Lang, 2007). The SAM is an affective classification system that allows the self-recording of three dimensions related to emotions: valence (pleasure), arousal (alert) and dominance. There are 3 scales, each with 5 expressive puppets interspersed in empty spaces. In the pleasure dimension, the scale presents images of a body that varies from a smiling expression at one end (extremely pleasant) to a frowning

expression (extremely unpleasant) at the other end, with a neutral expression in the center. For the alert dimension, the puppet ranges from a wide-eyed and energized abdominal region expression (very agitated) to a sleepy, calm, peaceful expression (no activation) and, in the center of the scale, there is a neutral expression. In the dominance dimension, the puppet varies from a large figure, indicating that the individual is in control of the situation (control), to a small representation, indicating that the individual felt controlled by the situation (no control). The participant can mark both the expressive puppet and the empty spaces, totaling 9 response options for each of the three dimensions. The sincerity scale was also applied (Loiola *et al.*, 2019), a scale from 0 to 10 in which the student should record how sincere he/she was on the Walk and justify if he/she had not been totally honest.

Finally, in an organized conversation circle, the central question was "What did you think, feel or perceive while participating in the Walk?" A previous script was not used, as the triggering question opens up several possibilities. The conversation circle was mediated by one of the researchers in order to understand more accurately the questions that allowed double interpretation. Mediation also ensured the transitions of the debate from feelings to perception and to thoughts/memories and vice versa. Another researcher was responsible for recording and a third one for observing and recording the movements and time in the dynamics. Emotions and perceptions and associated thoughts could be expressed in the conversation circle or in writing, if people did not feel comfortable to speak up.

Descriptive quantitative statistical analysis was carried out for the SAM (mean and standard deviation) and for the sincerity scale (frequency distribution), and inferential (Spearman correlation test) to observe the correlation between the SCS and the position estimated by the participants, before carrying out the Walk. The conversation circle was recorded and transcribed, the units of analysis were selected and subcategories were created from two main categories – feelings and perceptions, allowing the capture and debate of the elements that emerged from the totality of the material. The discussion of qualitative and quantitative results was based on Grada Kilomba's paradigm (2016).

Results

Out of eighteen students, four agreed to participate in the Walk, but not in the research and their data were not considered. Fourteen students participated in the survey. The identity of the students was preserved and, in that text, a code was generated for each student. The code consists of capital letters related to the order in which volunteers were enrolled to participate in the research, followed by the letters EM.
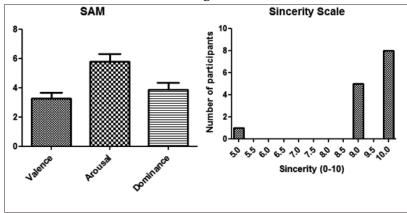
The students arrived at the dynamics site brought by the class teacher. The research team sought, from the institution, the necessary instruments to start the activity (longer extension cable and a suitable place for the projection of the Walk statements). Two researchers ap-

plied the pre-Walk questionnaire, while the team attempted to resolve the technical complications that were delaying the start of the Walk. The initial waiting period made the students a bit impatient. Once the obstacles were resolved, the students were instructed to position themselves in a line, holding hands with the colleagues next to them, ready for the Walk. Standardized instructions were made available and the discomfort of waiting apparently disappeared.

In the first statement, two students, whose parents worked at night, weekends or two jobs to support their family, took steps backwards. The second statement was "if you can walk around the world without being afraid of sexual harassment, take a step forward". For that sentence, the only four men took steps forward. At each statement, from the first to the last, the participants looked at each other. As the bodies moved apart, keeping the contact of the hands became difficult and the students began to express some discomfort. Scratching the head and putting their hands over the mouth, holding the chin were acts observed in the boys. Some students tried to regain hand contact when they approached their colleagues again. Some stretched their bodies to avoid losing contact, while others let go of their hands, but they looked at each other. Some smiled and exchanged comments. They offered each other comfort, easing the tension of the activity. Smiles seeking to comfort colleagues were followed by more closed expressions. Sometimes a deep breath was caught. Some remained the full time with a closed facial expression, but they did not fail to receive a smile or a worried look from a colleague. Towards the end of the Walk, many of the students who were ahead began to look back more often. Only one of them avoided looking back, keeping a more closed expression, arms crossed and, sometimes, passing the hand over the face. The logical time of the Walk was longer than the 11 minutes it took to be completed.

After the last statement, there followed the instruction "These are your final positions". At this moment, all the students positioned in front turned their faces and bodies to look at the position of the others, looking at both sides and in various directions. Those in the middle looked back and forth, all looked at one another in the faces, some lowered their heads, and tears ran down some faces. Two men occupied the most advanced positions, followed by women and men, mostly white or with lighter skin color. Behind those were white homosexual women and black women. A black woman occupied the last position. They embraced, at first in pairs and alternately, consoling those whose emotion could not be contained and overflowed through their bodies. Afterwards, the movement took place in larger groups until the entire class hugged one another. After completing this moment, the SAM and the sincerity scale were applied and, later, the debate began, mediated by one of the researchers, in the form of a conversation circle.The SAM made it possible to grade the subjective perception of the following emotional dimensions of the activity: valence, arousal and dominance (Figure 1a). The group of participants responded with a low score in the pleasure dimension, a high score in the arousal dimension and a low

score in the dominance dimension, indicating that the students were emotionally affected by the activity, due to the inequality between their paths.

The results of the Sincerity Scale (Figure 1b) showed that the majority were totally sincere in their steps on the Walk. Those who said they had not been completely honest felt shame, difficulty in expressing themselves and difficulty in "coming out in public". Such results are similar to those obtained by Loiola *et al.* (2019).

Figure 1 – Evaluation of dimensions of Valence, Arousal and Dominance (a) and Sincerity (b) of the participants during the Privilege Walk
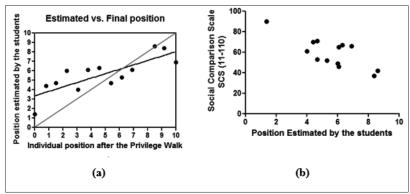

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The following reference values were considered for the interpretation of SAM valence results: non-negative ≥5, negative <5 (Huang *et al.*, 2015). Our results with the SAM (valence 3.29; arousal 5.79 and dominance 3.86) indicate that the activity triggered emotions of negative valence, arousal and low control by the participants. Fernández *et al.* (2012) used negative video clips (grief and sadness) that caused less arousal (4.9 and 5.4) and greater dominance (6.1 and 5.5) than the Walk, which may indicate that being actively involved "in the scene" results in more arousal and less control over the situation. The qualitative reports, presented later, show that the sensations were negative and intense, but they showed that the participants considered the Walk an important experience.

Before carrying out the Walk, the participants estimated, on a 10-cm scale, the position they would be in if their life paths were compared. Most of them considered it would be in the middle, a position between 3 and 7 on the 10-cm ruler. As 14 people participated in the study, normalization was performed, allowing the comparison of scales of the same size (Figure 2a). In other words, zero cm would be the position of the participant who was in front, the second position would correspond to 0.769 cm, the third to 1.538 cm and so on. The 14th participant would

be 10 cm on the ruler (Y axis of Figure 2a). The linear regression line is shown in black only to indicate the direction of the points' alignment (Figure 2a). The data of the participant who ranked 11th in the Walk are not represented, as he/she did not estimate his/her position nor responded to the Social Comparison Scale.

Figure 2 – Position estimated by each participant before the Privilege Walk and his/her final position after the Walk (a). Estimated position for each participant and his/her score on the Social Comparison Scale (b)

Source: Authors' elaboration.

If the estimate given by the participants before the Walk corresponded to the position assumed after the Walk, the points would correspond to the same value on the X and Y axes and would adopt a diagonal alignment at an angle of 45° (represented in Figure 2a by the gray line that crosses the graph).

So, it is observed that, in general, the participants who were ahead in the Walk (smaller values on the X axis) underestimated their positions. They estimated that they would be further behind than they actually were (which can be seen in Figure 2a by the number of points above the gray line on the Y axis). Conversely, participants who were behind (higher values on the X axis) generally estimated that they would be ahead (indicated by points below the gray line on the Y axis). However, their estimates are closer to the gray line. These results suggest that less privileged people are more aware of their social position and that less vulnerable people consider themselves less privileged than they are.

Students in general, but especially those at the front, tended to think they would generally be in the middle. In figure 2b it is possible to observe the largest cluster of points in the middle of the X axis. There is, however, a moderate inverse correlation ($R = -0.59$; $p = 0.03$) between the position estimated by the students and the results of the Social Comparison Scale, which assesses the individual's self-perception in relation to society (Figure 2b). The data show that the lower the SCS value (the more negative the self-perception is), the higher the estimated position (the further back the individual expects to be).

Chart 1 presents some representative speeches that emerged during the dynamics centered on the perceptions and emotions triggered by the Walk.

Chart 1 – Representative utterances on the main issues addressed by the students

Perceptions	Utterances
Difference between people (perceived by the distance between them at the end of the Walk)	
Distance as a concrete representation of inequalities	"I expected... to stay a little way behind, but not so far at the end, right?) I discovered that the differences are much greater than I imagined..." (OIEM).
	"I was expecting there was going to be a difference, but I thought that difference was going to be, say, little, you know? Everyone was going to be, say, inside the same square. [...] I expected differences, but not so many of them" (DEZEM).
Differences are not directly visible or addressed in everyday school life	"[interesting] the fact that we all come to school every day, spend six hours, five hours a day and we realize that there are differences, say, incompatibilities like that, in each one's life, you know?" (NOVEM).
	"[...] although we study at a school where we try to go through the same situations, we are not the same and we never talk openly about the differences we go through, you can even talk about something, but we see that there are many things that we have never discussed with people and there are many things that we do not know either" (DEZEM).
Identification of painful experiences (Process facilitated by the Walk)	
Experiences can be common and real	"[...] it's not something you see on television, something that happens to others. It happens to you and to the people around you too" (QUAEM4).
Lack of communication about experiences	"we guys are not used to communicating, we are not ready to be completely honest about our experiences [...]" (OIEM).
Effects of using the 3rd person to debate sensitive topics	
Distance from the themes	"We discuss... the LGBT population suffers, but we don't talk, I suffer..." (CINEM). "We don't talk about our personal inequality, we talk about statistical inequality [...]" (OIEM).
	"[...] then it goes like this: oh, because the blacks, the gays... it sounds like something abstract, like something that is not happening, it sounds like a superior entity is in action, it does not sound like something real [...]" (NOVEM).
Impersonality of the speech can make identification difficult	"In fact, it is a speech that we learn to do properly, you know, not criticizing the way it is worked at school; when we are going to write an essay, the teacher usually says: Ah, you can't, ok, don't be subjective, you have to use a language that suits everyone, and in fact sometimes this happens [...] but there are lots of people, you know, who may end up by identifying themselves when you are telling you own experience [...]" (NOVEM).

Meritocracy and effort are not the only success factors	
Family influence	"Not merit... you know, you got it because you tried hard for it, but thanks to your parents, you got this place" (ONZEM).
Opposition between merit and privilege	"That which she [ONZEM] spoke about meritocracy, in my opinion, is privilege. That thing about getting something because of a friend" (DEZEM)
Opposition between equality and meritocracy	"[...] it is hard to talk about meritocracy considering that there is no equality in our society" (QUAEM).
Unequal opportunities	
Inequalities in the access to opportunities	"[...] even the chances, whatever, even for an ordinary job, a salesgirl for a black girl and for a white girl, is very different [...]" (OIEM).
	"And it's unfair to compare this person to someone who could afford good quality studies all his/her life [...]" (NOVEM).
Factors responsible for unequal opportunities	
Need to support the family [during adolescence]	"[...] some people interrupt their studies to work and this is unfair because sometimes these people need to support the family" (NOVEM).
Social and family context	"[it is not] the same social situation, the same family life, all this has influences [...]" (QUAEM).
Physical traits, hegemonic standard of beauty and racism	[...] people talk, ah, but now it's the fashion, right, it's fashion to wear black. Okay, but we know that she won't be considered pretty enough, she won't have the looks to work in that store many times[...] simply because she's black and she'll be unemployed and people will tell her that if she had tried harder, if she had gone to more stores, she could have gotten a job" (OIEM)

"Want you to follow a standard of beauty, right?" (DOZEM) |
| | "You have to put on make up to thin your nose" (ONZEM).

"if you are black, you have to have your hair stretched, you have to wear make-up, because, you know, you are not "pretty,", so you have to make up (DOZEM). |
| **Main themes that emerged**

(related to the Walk statements) | |
Bullying, prejudice and racism	"[...] the speaking part, you have already been bullied, or teased for some characteristic that you cannot change" (OIEM).
Sexual Harassment	"the question about going out on the street without fear" (SEISEM).
Intersectionality: race, gender and sexual orientation	"There were several, you know, let me tell you, you know, because we are women and because I am not straight and I am a woman and [OIEM] because I am black and a woman, and something private about my father, for some reasons I haven't talked to him until today and it touched me a lot, that's why I started crying because I saw [OIEM] going backward and [DECEM] going forward. "Because I know them so well, I know why [DECEM] was ahead and [OIEM] was back there and it is very painful to think about it, very painful" (DOZEM).
Interruption of studies and the need to work	"I think the questions that they talked about, you know, like working and if you have already interrupted your studies... to work" (NOVEM).

Heteronormativity and family conflict	"There was a day when I got stressed and I said: 'Look, if you don't want to accept it, okay, I'll still be your daughter [...], I'll still be not straight and you'll have to accept me'. Because I was still the same and I thought it was wrong to hide it because I always told my mother everything. I went to her and said: 'Mom, look, I like girls, I like gays...' And she just said: 'No, but you can't like that'. And I was afraid to question that... But she is my mother, got it? She is the person who has to accept me. If she won't accept me, who will? [...] I got depressed because of things related to that, I take medicines, but, you know? I just thought: who am I going to talk to? To my shrink? Someone who has no connection with me? [...] It's very good to talk to someone who has no connection with you, because he/she won't judge you, but, hey, why can't you talk to your mother? [...] today she accepts me, but I know that there are cases and cases [...], for example, she [points to her colleague], you know... they are suffering a lot because of that, a lot, and they are totally different families and I cannot come and talk, but you have to tell your mother [...]" (DOZEM).
The Effects of the Walk on emotions	
Shock	"But when we actually see what happened now, it's totally different, there's no way you can hide from others, it's each one's sincerity and it's always shocking when you see how unequal it really is" (QUAEM).
Painful when talking	"[...] we talk about inequality out there, but about what you experienced specifically, it's sometimes a little more painful to talk about, I think..." (OIEM).
Discomfort and insecurity	"[...] it's a matter of discomfort, insecurity, because when people around you seem privileged, they seem to be much superior to you, I don't know" (OIEM).
Protection strategies	
Diminish not to hurt	"Because no matter how much we know that all this inequality is there, we prefer, you know,... kind of diminishing it not to hurt us so much [...]" (QUAEM).
Disguising inequalities Whoever did not experience it will feel sorry	"The person, sort of trying to hide it generates a great discomfort when you start to talk about all of them, assume all your inequalities, all your fears, and since that person did not experience that, and I don't know. He/she's going to look at you and, you know, feel sorry, huh?" (OIEM).

Source: Author's Elaboration.

Discussion

By controlling people's mouth, Kilomba (2016) discusses who can speak, what can be said and the consequences of speaking. Although it is focused on the racial issue and colonialism, the author's analysis can be extended to other relations of domination. The control of mouths refers not only to prohibition and punishment, but also to the credit or discredit given to the one who speaks: to the characteristics of one's body, one's attitude and clothing, origin, profession, place of work, gender, sexual orientation, titles, etc. The volunteers' statements about the need for black women to change their physical characteristics to enter the world of work, mentioning the use of make-up to thin the nose and to straighten their hair follow that logics. The students also mentioned the influence of prejudice on the probability of getting a job, considering that the construction of the collective imaginary of the good/beau-

tiful and the bad/ugly reduces black women's chances. The positive aspect is left for those who have the power to speak.

The meritocratic discourse attributes to the socially successful people the qualities related to effort, work, self-care and precaution. Stemming from the assumptions that all the people have the same opportunities, and that the people who make efforts shall succeed, without questioning whether such assumptions are valid in our society, the meritocratic logic acts to silence. Such logic controls people's voices in two ways.

First, by relating positive qualities to success, successful people – whether or not they have such qualities – sustain a positive relationship with themselves and are not exposed to the secrets that their success takes place in a context of unfair competition, where most are unable to develop their potential and are left behind because they exhibit bodily and social marks (place of residence, school, etc.) associated with the negative features. Family support and a better economic condition were factors highlighted by the participants as features related to their better performance on the Walk. The identification of these factors as the main ones indicates a perspective linked to meritocracy, therefore, to economic success, and the notion of privileges (class, gender, race and sexual orientation) are repressed. The unfairness of the comparison between a person who studies and works and another one who only studies was the topic of a debate.

Influence networks are also related to success, and merit is not necessarily involved. This aspect was stated in the debate from the observation of steps forward in the statement that referred to the intervention of the individual's contact network or individual's parents in the positive outcome related to a job/favor. The relationship between family conflict and heteronormativity was pointed out, placing the second as a trigger for the first. The meritocratic logic fallacy in social dynamics was exposed, the factors pointed out were not on the horizon of the most privileged and they become aware of the advantage they have.

Kilomba (2016) analyzes that privilege means power, but it also means alarm and, therefore, it generates a conflict that has shame as a result. The next steps mentioned in Kilomba's text are recognition and redressing. During the Walk, students positioned forward were uncomfortable. In the conversation circle, they heard more than they spoke and agreed with their colleagues. Kilomba (2016, p. 179) gives us clues that the resistances may have been reduced with the dynamics:

> Shame is therefore closely connected to the sense of perception. It is provoked by experiences that question our preconceptions about ourselves and force us to see ourselves through the eyes of others, helping us to recognize the discrepancy between other people's perception of us and our own perception. of ourselves: 'Who am I? How do others perceive me? And what do I represent to them?' (Free Portuguese-English translation).

The second aspect in the control of mouths by meritocratic discourse is the stigma of failure. The male, white, rich, heterosexual individual from the global north imposes himself on everyone. On the one hand, the positive feelings of the privileged towards himself and the projection of negative traits on the other prevent secrets from being exposed and guarantee that they won't be heard if they are uttered, because the speaker has no merit. On the other hand, in addition to the deserver's stereotype, the stereotype of the loser is also materialized. The symbols of the deserver and the loser are incorporated and impose silence, as identified by Zizek (2014, p. 67):

> [...] the 'being' of blacks (or whites, or whoever) is a social and symbolic being. When they are treated as inferior, this treatment makes them truly inferior in the realm of their symbolic social identity. In other words, white racist ideology has a performative efficacy. It is not simply an interpretation of what black people are, but an interpretation that determines the very being and social existence of the interpreted subjects (Free Portuguese-English translation).

When they see themselves through the colonizer's gaze, "the black subjects become not only the 'Other' [...], but the mental representation of what the *white* subjects do not want to look like", generating what Fanon (1967) characterizes as a classic trauma (Kilomba, 2016, p. 175):

> [...] in racism the [black] individual is surgically removed and violently separated from whatever identity he/she may actually have [...] a classic trauma [...] that deprives the individual of his/her own connection with society unconsciously conceived as white (Fanon, 1967 *apud* Kilomba, 2016, p. 176. Free Portuguese-English translation).

This perspective of trauma and refusal as well, as a defense mechanism, are present in OIEM's statement, about the effort to avoid "assuming his/her fears" so that the other who does not live this reality does not feel "sorry", and in QUAEM's words by stating that inequalities are "self-repressed" as a form of "protection".

In this process of seeing oneself through the eyes of the other, the centrality of the meritocratic discourse refers to the notion of incapacity, which appears when the feeling of compassion is triggered by QUAEM, and it operates in the silencing of voices against social injustice. From this perspective, the relationship of domination and the very functioning of the system in the reproduction of social inequalities are veiled. Conversely, it is the understanding of social dynamics as unfair that opens the question to the denounce and directs the action aimed at redressing.

The quantitative results of the Social Comparison Scale relate to this trauma category. We have observed (Figure 2b) that the way individuals perceive themselves is related to their social positions; individuals look at one another through the dominator's eyes. However, the estimated position (Figure 2a) revealed that the subjects consider

themselves less unequal than they really are, revealing the other side of this perverse dynamic: this huge inequality and its determinants are hidden, silence operates. This quantitative information is corroborated by reports that indicate surprise with the size of the differences. Student QUAEM says that when "we actually see" it is not possible to "hide". The figure of the mask was chosen by Kilomba (2016) as a metaphor for the secret that cannot be revealed. QUAEM observes that the Walk has made the masks drop.

The magnitude of social inequalities was made explicit by the Walk, breaking the silence, exposing the secret. The surprise when realizing the distance between people from the same school field strongly marked the dynamics. Among human senses, Aristoteles (2002) considers vision the most important, because it provides the greatest amount of information about the environment (shape, color, distance, disposition, etc.) at once. We understand that the Walk triggers the memory from different types of effects, triggered by the distance between the bodies and by the characteristics that unite or differentiate the subjects who are ahead or behind. Considering that the perceptions of the body in the present depend on past experiences (Bergson, 1999), the Walk plays the role, described by Bergson, in bringing memories to the surface, displacing perceptions whose signs subjects retain (Bergson, 1999). Pollak (1989) emphasizes the relationship between memory and affection and highlights that some moments favor the emergence of submerged memories. Thus, this dynamic of bodies presenting spatial intersectionality triggered, among colleagues, a debate centered on the determinants of inequality and on the intersectionality, especially the intercrossing of race-gender and social class-gender.

The words used by the volunteers in relation to the triggered emotions refer to suffering: indignation, pain, insecurity and discomfort. Evaluated with the use of the SAM scale, emotions were negative, made the subjects internally agitated and they felt emotionally dominated by the dynamics. However, despite the sensitive nature of the activity, participants were engaged in the Walk, as observed by the Sincerity Scale (Figure 1b). In addition, despite the negative emotions, the students' statements indicate that participating in the activity was positive. Thus, these results suggest that there was not only a decrease in resistance, but also a desire for awareness.

The emotions triggered on the Walk were associated with the perception of differences in position due to gender, economic status, sexual orientation, race and family support. Such factors and not the statements themselves determined greater or lesser social suffering, more or fewer opportunities, in other words, traumas and privileges. The debate moderator, at one point, asked what topic most of the questions were about and DOZEM answered that it was about stereotypes. Later on, the mediator provoked her by bringing to the discussion that only 6 questions directly triggered the stereotype, that is, the words gender, sexual orientation and race were written in the sentences and ONZEM's answer was: "They were not direct, because the word was not written

there, but it's written in the type of person you are, the stereotype is already written on your face, you are what you demonstrate, there is no need to be written".

TREZEM stated that although these factors were not explicit, they were the ones that influenced family and social relationships and determined most people's steps. DOZEM completes: "even if you weren't talking, you've already reached that point, because it's exactly what they [the family] don't support".

The statements suggest that the negative affections generated are not linked to privileges or the absence of the fundamental rights (expressed in their speeches), but (1) to the magnitude of inequality, (2) to the perception of the fallacy about merit discourse, (3) when they see themselves, as individuals, affected by structural social issues to which they were more distantly related, as something external, (4) when they realize that physical and social marks determine their existence and (5) when they realize they were deprived of knowing the primary causes of their condition. This set of indicators suggests that silencing operates even when the categories that structure domination (race, gender, sexual orientation, social class) are known. It also indicates that structural social problems can be treated by individuals as private experiences only. That year, the students were studying racism. However, the questions they raised point out that the identification of the self with the object studied is not something given.

The school was brought to the center of the debate by the students. The participant CINEM understands that the school addresses social inequality by means of statistics, far from individual lives, not bringing individual experiences and suffering into the debate. For NOVEM, the school approaches the issues in a methodical way, without dialogue with the students' real lives. NOVEM exemplifies saying that in essays, students are instructed not to talk about their subjectivities, about specific cases. Opposite to this approach, our results indicate that the identification process is central. If identification does not occur, the subjects can look at the one who has the same identity traits as theirs as "the other". It is exactly the process of identification, by means of characteristics, life stories and shared experiences that contributes to the unveiling of the fact that the subjects are inserted in the dynamics and are part of the statistics studied.

We feel that for this topic it is important to understand that, although the idea of the 'other', as a group, is linked to negative symbols, which are assimilated by the ones who are part of it, individuals obviously do not see themselves represented by negative stereotypes (lazy, thief, etc.). Thus, saying, for example, that the prison population is mostly black does not imply an immediate feeling of social injustice. Kilomba (2016) understands that the black subjects relate to themselves through this image, built by the white subject, who over-determines them, but in which black subjects do not recognize themselves. That situation shatters the self; it is a trauma and it triggers defense mechanisms such as refusal.

Paulo Freire emphasizes "the role of emotions, feelings, desires" for a "liberating educational practice" (2014, p. 54). The students' notes converge to this Freirean sense of moving from the abstract to the concrete, to making the bridge between the third and first person. Another important issue highlighted by DEZEM is the non-debate of differences: "we try to go through everything the same way; we are not the same". This idea points out to the urgency of sharing different experiences and life stories in pedagogical strategies.

Participants demonstrated that they found reality strange and recognized the existence of fundamental issues to be addressed more effectively. However, the recognition process was not linked to themselves; students were not actively involved. By projecting the responsibility for the effective approach of social issues only on the school, they stopped seeing themselves as an active part of this process. In this case, there seems to be a resistance to the recognition of this individual responsibility. Students sought explanations about themselves only outside themselves, although in psychoanalysis the involvement of the individual is the central issue. Although we know that public recognition is difficult and we hope that the activity will trigger this process, our data do not point in that direction. On the other hand, changes in individual attitudes were observed by Magana (2017) weeks after the Walk. Such finding conveys the same meaning as conceived by Paulo Freire (2014, p. 44) who understands that "the awareness of the world, which enables self-consciousness, makes the immutability of the world unfeasible", making the subject capable of intervening and not just adapting to it.

One aspect is fundamental to us: as it is not an elite school, discrepancies were observed among working-class children. Thus, strategies that make it possible to identify the issues that bring them together and put them apart and the categories involved in the unfair social dynamics are central. The Walk facilitated this process, but it is crucial to understand that this hierarchy resulting from the intersectionality of the dynamics of domination divides them. Building horizons of desire for justice is necessary by enunciating the silenced, giving name and body to what is invisible and deconstructing the idea of the "other", which sustains perverse social dynamics. Developing common desires that unite them is also necessary, aiming at uniting forces and struggles and overcoming social injustice in all its forms.

In designing this case study, we adapted the statements by Loiola *et al.* (2019), who had already removed identity categories from most questions, categories used centrally in the studies by Irby-Shasanmi *et al.* (2012), Magana (2017) and Young (2006). We even considered removing or modifying the six questions, but we didn't. Such concern considered that if we activated the identity marks of minorities, we would restrict displacement to people from certain groups. Thus, there would be the possibility of interpretation, by the participants, that the steps would be related to the identity bias of the statements. In the case of non-triggering, everyone who thought they would have gone through a certain experience/reality could move.

Not triggering stereotypes would also allow different memories and reasons to lead members of different identity groups along. Debating the issues behind the steps would expose different perceptions of the world and different realities, enlightening the debate. The results suggest that these six questions can be suppressed or modified. They also suggest that there is no need to talk about privileges or expose privileged categories before the Walk. That solution avoids resistance by triggering the ego's defense mechanisms. Our results show that the discussion of such categories came from the group itself and we are sure that bringing data from methodologically rigorous studies after the sensitization may be more interesting, since the students went through an intense body experience and are experiencing the need to give meaning to these perceptions.

The students insisted on taking pictures after this remarkable moment, recording it not only on a photographic image, but certainly as a sensitive image in memory.

Final considerations

Addressing social inequality in a society that considers individual action as the responsible factor for success or failure is not an easy task. Because of the segregation of social spaces, the reality of the other is unknown, and, because performance results are exclusively attributed to the individual, it is not understood as an experience of a certain social group, but as a specific condition. Federal educational institutions are spaces where diversity meets and coexists in a more interactive and horizontal way. It is a fertile field to address the issue of social inequality from the perspective of emancipatory education and transformation of social reality. However,

> Exchanges between bodies – socialized in the Eurocentric, patriarchal, racist, therefore excluding and stigmatizing ideal – in the educational space can be difficult and painful, if empathy, listening and dialogue lose place to accusations, aggressions and generate more trauma, especially among already historically disadvantaged groups (Macedo; Silva, 2019, p. 348, Free Portuguese-English translation).

The Privilege Walk exposed the differences from the participants' life experiences, allowing them to infer the issues and factors involved and their weight in the social structure. Moreover, it inserted individuals into their contexts, favoring the subject's involvement with the social issues studied at school. Also, by providing social beings with another perspective of reality observation, it aimed at the emancipation and engagement of subjects in the transformation of social reality.

When people address sensitive topics, it is natural they protect themselves and educational strategies that reduce resistance to debate are necessary (Macedo; Silva, 2019). For that purpose, some precautions were taken. The first was the decision not to have an introductory debate on social inequality or privilege. The second was to avoid state-

ments that directly refer to race, gender, class and sexual orientation, following what was proposed by Loiola *et al.* (2019). The debate showed that these fundamental, structural issues were addressed from the others, and it was possible to exclude or modify the six remaining statements. The results indicate that although the activity triggered negative emotions, participating in it was considered positive by the students.

The present study inserted some tools in relation to the previous ones: (1) the Estimated Position Ruler, which allowed observing the difference between the expected and the actual performance; (2) the Social Comparison Scale, which made it possible to observe the relationship between self-image and position on the Walk; and (3) the SAM, to assess the emotional effects of the Walk. Unfortunately, there is no way to compare the results obtained with the outcome of other studies involving the Privilege Walk. Such a comparison would make it possible to observe whether avoiding directly triggering identity categories or not debating concepts in advance are strategies with more positive effects in this dynamic that affects subjects significantly. We believe so, for two reasons: (1) triggering the stereotype deliberately exposes minority groups (Macedo; Silva, 2019) and (2) not triggering it allows hegemonic groups to move backwards not necessarily for the same reasons, which can generate important debate on the dissimilar experiences of different groups and on the different memories triggered by the statements.

The participants considered the dynamics important, and they even asked the school to make such discussions take place. The Walk was a trans-subjective experience that generated perceptions, identifications, reflections and significant exchanges, making it possible to look at society and education more critically. However, as an educational strategy, it is necessary to think about how to avoid projective defensive mechanisms, since students had no commitment to think of themselves as agents in unfair social dynamics. A stimulus for that purpose becomes unavoidable[2].

Notes

1 *Supplementary document: privilege walk sentences*: 1. If your parents work at night, on the weekends, or have two jobs to support your family, take a step backward; 2. If you can walk around the world without being afraid of sexual harassment, take a step forward; 3. If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without being afraid of being bullied or injured, take a step forward; 4. If you are not free to come and go or to work because of illness or mental/physical disability, take a step backward; 5. If you came from a family environment that supported you in your choices, take a step forward; 6. If you've ever had to change your accent or your gestures, the way you speak or move in order to gain credibility, take a step backward; 7. If you were ever ashamed of your clothes or your house while you grew up, take a step backward; 8. If you can make mistakes without having your behavior attributed to your gender or race, take a step forward; 9. If you can legally marry the person you love, step forward; 10. If you feel you had adequate access to healthy food while you grew up, take a

step forward; 11. If you have ever thought you'd be hired on a job thanks to your skills and qualifications, take a step forward; 12. If you would never think twice about calling the police when trouble happened, take a step forward; 13. If you can see a doctor whenever you need it, take a step forward; 14. If you have ever been the only person of your gender/race/social status/sexual orientation in a classroom or workplace, take a step backward; 15. If you needed a scholarship to pay for your studies, take a step backward; 16. If you had to work during your school years, take a step backward; 17. If you're comfortable walking home alone, take a step forward; 18. If you've ever traveled abroad, take a step forward; 19. If you've ever felt belittled by seeing your racial group, sexual orientation, gender, religion or disability inappropriately represented in the media, take a step backward; 20. If you felt confident that your parents could give you financial support if you were going through difficulties, take a step forward; 21. If you've ever been bullied or laughed at due to something you couldn't change, take a step backward; 22. If you had more than 50 books in the house you grew up in, take a step forward; 23. If you studied the culture or history of your ancestors in elementary school, take a step forward; 24. If your parents or guardians attended college, take a step forward; 25. If you've already taken a family trip, take a step forward; 26. If you can buy new clothes or go out to dinner whenever you want, take a step forward; 27. If you've already gotten a job because you're someone's friend or family member, take a step forward; 28. If either of your parents was once involuntarily unemployed, take a step backward; 29. If you've ever been uncomfortable because of a joke, word, or phrase related to your race, gender, appearance, religion, or sexual orientation, but felt unsure to face the situation, take a step backward; 30. If you had access to good quality education throughout your childhood and adolescence, take a step forward; 31. If there were theaters and museums near your home where you grew up, take a step forward; 32. If you've never been to the movies, take a step backward; 33. If you've never been to theaters and museums, take a step backward; 34. If you lived where public transport made it difficult for you to reach the places you wanted to go to, take a step backward; 35. If you can walk around in whatever clothes you choose without being annoyed, step forward; 36. If you've ever been blamed for having suffered an act of violence, take a step backward; 37. If you've ever felt insecure inside your home, take a step backward; 38. If you've not eaten or not gone to school because you had no money, take a step backward; 39. If there was someone in your house hired to take care of the household chores, take a step forward; 40. If you've already been forced to drop out of school, take a step backward; 41. If you've never felt uncomfortable to talk about what you think, about your belief, gender, race, sexual orientation, social status, take a step forward; 42. If you have ever been subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment, take a step backward; 43. If you've ever felt embarrassed about having your privacy exposed, take a step backward; 44. If you've ever been afraid of losing your home, take a step backward; 45. If you've ever had a room in the house all to yourself, take a step forward; 46. When you were a child, if your parents or guardians needed to leave you alone at home, without adult supervision, take a step backward; 47. If people have ever walked away from you out of fear, or if you've been followed by private security guards at business establishments, take a step backward; 48. If your father actively participated in your upbringing, take a step forward; 49. If you've suffered because of alcohol or other drug abuse in your family, take a step backward; 50. If you had a safe and comfortable childhood, take a step forward.

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