

Indigenous Childhood: Upbringing and Schooling in Two Indigenous Communities from Argentina (Qom and Mbyá)

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Abstract : The South American anthropology has been recently focused to research with children in different contexts. In our researches with children from indigenous communities in the lowlands and highlands of South America (Qom and Mbyá), we especially considered social categories that define the different ways of being a boy and a girl. In this way, we built an approach to disrupt monolithic models of childhood. The aim of this paper is to tackle the first stage of life, demarcated from their nominal references and from the upbringing and formative experiences in which children participate. So, we will focus on the network of social relations in the period of childhood, making especial focus on language develops, religion, schooling and games. The crossing of our different thematic interests allows us to consider the complexity of knowledge and skills that come into play during the development of children. Methodologically, this text is based on an ethnographic approach, with frequent visits and periods of cohabitation, for more than a decade with Mbyá and Qom people, who lives within indigenous communities in the provinces of Chaco, Buenos Aires and Misiones, in Argentina. We made participant observation and interviews with children and their families, with the objective to include children's voices in our researches about the whole community.

Keywords : chidhood, indigenous people, schooling, upbringing

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