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In this paper we will analyze Piaget's studies on the development of morality focusing on the notion of justice, since this notion is constituted as the regulating dimension of social exchanges. Piaget's hypothesis is the following: the fundamental source of the evolution of morality is found in children's actions and interactions involving relations of solidarity and equality, as opposed to explanations that postulate its origin in authority and in relations of competition or competition. Our study will take into account the early theoretical works as well as their later empirical research on moral development in children. We will highlight the importance and originality of the indicated hypothesis in his theory of morality and in his body of work as a whole.

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In this paper we will analyze Piaget's studies on the development of morality focusing on the notion of justice, since this notion is constituted as the regulating dimension of social exchanges. Piaget's hypothesis is the following: the fundamental source of the evolution of morality is found in children's actions and interactions involving relations of solidarity and equality, as opposed to explanations that postulate its origin in authority and in relations of competition or competition. Our study will take into account the early theoretical works as well as their later empirical research on moral development in children. We will highlight the importance and originality of the indicated hypothesis in his theory of morality and in his body of work as a whole.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of solidarity and equality in Piaget's theory of morality. The morality of goodness, far from seeking its origin in the action of authority and in relations of competition, rests its source in relations of solidarity among equals. This scientific fact becomes fundamental for the construction of an education and a pedagogy committed to the intellectual and moral activity of the student.

Although Piaget wrote little about moral life - there is only one book (1994) and some articles (1927, 1930, 1931, 1934, 1998a, 1998b) - we cannot deny the enormous importance of morality in his work. Although the elaboration of a theory of morality is an unfinished project, as some commentators claim, the works he left on this subject show originality and coherence with his theoretical and epistemological system.

Authors, like Freitag (1990, 1991, 1992), try to evidence Piaget's intention to formulate a theory of morals and knowledge. Authors like Ducret (1984), Vonèche (1992), Vidal (1994), Freitas (2003) recognize that this goal was already outlined in his youth work: in the autobiographical essay "Recherche" (1918).

According to Ducret (1984) and Lia Freitas (2003), Piaget, in this essay, intends to formulate a theory of morality based on certain fundamental biological and philosophical convictions. These convictions are related to the systemic and dynamic conception of the organization of life and knowledge. Systemic, in the sense of the relationships between the parts and the whole, at all levels and spheres of this organization; dynamic, in the sense of understanding the differentiation and integration between real and ideal equilibria. Real balances are unstable and tend toward an ideal or stable balance. In this way, the development of moral feelings, as well as knowledge, should be explained as a function of this movement.

It is in the perspective outlined above that Piaget proposes to treat morality in its specific nature,

but in coherence with his theory of knowledge. In this way, to found a theory of morals, the author will seek the roots of moral feelings in values opposed to utilitarianism and amoralism, such as altruism and solidarity.

For Piaget, the moral of goodness should have altruism and solidarity as its initial and final substrate, for it develops initially from the sensory-motor affective schemas and continues to develop, reconstructing itself, at the later levels of consciousness. "It will be neither utilitarianism nor amoralism nor a science of manners, in the strict sense of the word, but a morality of altruism corresponding to the highest aspirations of human consciousness" (Piaget, 1918, p. 174).

The theory of moral development, like the theory of the development of knowledge, must take into account the distinction between the real and the ideal equilibrium. Only in this way will it avoid reducing morality to the existent and thus justifying egoism and utilitarianism; only in this way can it reach the essential aspect of moral truth: the possibility of self-denial that exists in the individual.

Piaget insists, from the beginning, that the possibility of self-denial can only occur by virtue of another element related to the development process: the awareness of forces that tend toward equilibrium. In this way, for him, moral obligation is conceivable as the awareness of the forces that make the organization tend toward equilibrium. Thus, good is constituted as a form of equilibrium of moral feelings and evil as forms of unbalance of these individual and collective feelings. Freitas (2003, p.56) states: "There is unbalance both if individual interests predominate over those of solidarity, and if the sovereignty of solidarity takes away the authority of individuals".

Therefore, for Piaget, the tendency to the ideal balance in the individual is incompatible with both individual selfishness and the loss of individual identity.

In this work, aiming to rescue Piaget's theory of morality, we will show that, coherent with his initial objectives, the scientific research he carried out on moral life postulates that it is the solidary

and egalitarian relations between individuals that constitute the sources of the moral good, which have been extended to the level of consciousness and to more complex social exchanges. In this sense, we will dwell both on the initial and final states, and on the processes of formation of the moral notion of justice, considered by this author (1994, p. 157) as an immanent dimension or law of equilibrium of social interactions. The development of the notion of justice stands out in full autonomy when solidarity among children grows.

Relationships of solidarity and equality are also sources of the development of other moral notions in the child. Thus, the evolved notion of lying (as well as stealing) means taking into account the psychological motives or intentions of the transgressor, that is, understanding that the seriousness of the lie is not to judge only the transgression itself, according to socially pre-established rules, but rather, understanding the seriousness of the act of betraying another's trust, mutual trust. The discovery of the seriousness of the fault requires learning to put oneself in the other's situation, requires detachment from the interest of the self, requires freeing oneself from adult pressure, which imposes crystallized rules, and to act and discern taking into account the respect for the dignity of the other.

The importance of solidarity and equality becomes clearer and more evident in explaining the notion of justice, especially distributive justice, which is identified with the feeling of egalitarianism and which, in turn, influences the development of retributive justice.

II. STUDIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOTION OF JUSTICE

Piaget's studies on the development of the notion of justice take into account the two ways of expressing justice: retributive justice and distributive justice. The first refers to justice that demands proportionality in sanctions for transgressions of moral rules; the second, to the requirement of equal treatment between people.

Retributive justice is initiated by primary notions of sanction centered on the "atonement" of the fault. This is because the child judges the rule in itself, in its external manifestation, and in function of absolute obedience to the adult's authority. Therefore, for younger children, the expiatory sanction is fair as long as it takes into account the proportionality between the fault and the sanction, because it is only about calming authority and restoring the broken unilateral respect link. For older children, the sanction should serve not to restore the link with authority, but rather the link of solidarity and reciprocity among group members. Thus, a sanction will be just to the extent that the rule breaker restores the balance of the relationship of mutual respect and trust, that is, of solidarity.

Retributive justice, in its most evolved form, consists in understanding sanctions as a function of the psychological conditions and reciprocity of human actions, and not simply of obedience to socially pre-established rules or those established by authority.

In the elementary form of distributive justice, children subordinate the feeling of equality to the order given by the adult. Thus, in cases where there is conflict between the feeling of equal justice and the order of authority, younger children lean toward obedience to the latter: what is established by authority should be complied with, even though he is unfair to his classmate. In cases where there is no conflict with authority, the demand for equality is spontaneous on the part of the young child.

When the notion of distributive justice evolves, in situations of conflict between the adult's order and the feeling of equality, research shows the existence of confusion on the part of the child between the idea of justice and obedience to authority. In its most evolved form, this notion demands equal and equitable treatment between people, regardless of the order received from authority or the established law. This form of justice results from a freely consented inner will, where awareness of the rule is autonomous and independent of the outer will (of authority).

What is the explanation for the change or transformation of retributive justice and distributive justice? Does retributive justice transform independently of the evolution of egalitarianism and solidarity?

Piaget's studies show that the change or evolution of retributive justice effectively follows the advances in distributive justice. The awareness of the need to sanction a fault by reestablishing the "solidarity link" obeys the advances in feelings of equality and solidarity among equals. When these feelings are affirmed, the expiatory sanction is attenuated and reciprocal sanctions are affirmed.

To prove this hypothesis, Piaget carries out experimental studies in which he puts the feeling of justice and the order of authority into conflict.

The data reveal that more evolved children, when faced with the conflict between justice and authority, appeal not to authority, but to equality. Even many of them, when defending egalitarianism, justify competition or concurrence, which could lead one to think that the development of justice would derive from competitive relations and not from solidarity.

However, as we will have the opportunity to observe later on, such a possibility is only apparent and is not supported by the experimental data.

Piaget's main hypothesis on the origins of the morality of autonomous justice is the following: the fundamental source of the evolution of the notions of justice - of the notion of distributive and retributive justice - is found in the relations of solidarity and equality and not in competition and concurrence. Similarly, the origin of the notion of justice is not to be found in the commandments of adult authority, but in the actions and reactions among children, among equals, which, by provoking conflicts, make it possible to become aware of the laws of equality and solidarity.

III. PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS OF EVOLUTION OF RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Retributive justice is characterized as that justice which requires proportionality in the

administration of sanctions. This form of justice, in the first years of a child's life, obeys the commands of adult coercion and the phenomenon of infantile egocentrism. Thus, the young child judges that the one who has transgressed the rules should be subjected to an expiatory action to erase the fault, that is, should be subjected to a rigorous punishment and suffering to reestablish respect for the rule. This form of justice, in older children, is overcome when sanctions are based on other relations: those that reestablish the bond of solidarity among equals. Thus, for these children, the transgressor does not have to pay for his guilt with an arbitrary and unmotivated punishment, but by an action that restores the damage committed or allows him to observe the consequences of the act. This second form of sanction is called "sanction by reciprocity".

The explanation of the origin of expiatory justice follows two factors: the coercive relations of the adult over the child, and the child's unilateral feeling of respect for parents and authorities. On the one hand, adults, even the most liberal ones, in order to establish the basic rules of hygiene, safety, health, etc. establish the rules as duties to be fulfilled; on the other hand, children observe adults as the source of all power and mystery, to which they submit unconsciously and immediately. The sanctions that parents establish are considered fair and necessary insofar as they are proportional to the faults committed. In this way, they learn to judge that those who are disobedient and transgressors, such as those who lie, steal and commit mischief, should be punished rigorously, without taking into account their intentions and motives.

But to what does this form of judgment evolve? Why, when faced with the same disobedience and transgression actions, are older children tolerant and only demand sanctions that restore the bond of mutual trust or solidarity?

Piaget's research shows that expiatory sanctions seem to decrease with age, and this to the extent that cooperation overcomes adult coercion. Cooperation makes it possible to take into account the feelings and perspectives of others, of the partners with whom one enters into conflict.

This led the author to address the positive effects of cooperation in the field of justice, conducting studies that pose conflicts between distributive or egalitarian justice and retributive justice.

To this end, he conjectures that egalitarian ideas are imposed as a function of cooperation and constitute a form of justice that, without being in contradiction with the evolved forms of retributive justice, opposes the primitive forms of sanction and ends up making equality take precedence over retribution whenever there is conflict between them.

To illustrate, we will relate a story in which "A mother had two daughters, one obedient, the other disobedient. She liked the one who obeyed better and gave her the biggest pieces of candy. What do you think of that?" (1994, p.201).

The results show that young children make retributive justice predominate over equality:

It was fair. The other was disobedient. - But was it fair to give more to one than the other? - Yes, she (the disobedient one) should always do as she is told. Here is an example of a child for whom equality should take precedence over retributive justice: "It was fair - why? - She should give equally to both of them. - why? - ... - Was it fair what mother did? - No, she had to give the candy to both of them. - To the disobedient one too? - Yes - why? - If we didn't give it to her, that wouldn't be fair. (p. 201-202).

The opposition of the two types of response is clearly observed. For the small ones, the need for sanction prevails to such an extent that the question of equality does not arise. For the older ones, distributive justice takes precedence over retribution. The attitudes are different: the former do not seek to understand the psychological context and are insensitive to the human nuances of the problem. In contrast, the greater ones defend the right to equality and show a more subtle moral understanding and seek to understand the situation inwardly; possibly under the influence of experiences made about themselves or observed in their surroundings.

For the author, it could be said, then, that sanction prevails in the early years, and equality (distributive justice) eventually wins out over it in the course of mental development.

In view of this, the following question is necessary: To what, then, is the evolution of distributive justice, which seeks equality, due?

The expiatory sanction has its origin in adult coercion, for, from the earliest age, children's conduct is sanctioned by the adult. Does distributive justice also originate from the same source - adult authority - because, with entry into traditional schooling, sanctioning progressively and systematically prevails?

This question is fundamental, and entails another, on whose solution further research will depend: Could it be that egalitarianism derives from the child's respect for the adult, because there are parents who are very scrupulous in matters of justice and who inculcate in their children a lively care for equality? But is it also possible that, far from resulting from direct pressure from parents and teachers, the idea of equality develops essentially through the reaction of children to each other, and sometimes even at the expense of adults?

Choosing these two explanatory possibilities will depend on further studies, although the previous facts speak in favor of the second solution. Thus, the following research should focus on the analysis of distributive justice or egalitarianism among individuals.

IV. PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS IN THE EVOLUTION OF DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

To take a closer look at distributive justice, Piaget conducts some important studies. These studies are devoted to analyzing the conflicts between the feeling of justice and authority and those referred to the analysis of justice among children.

Conflict between the feeling of justice and authority

To carry out the conflict analysis, the author conducts a first study and poses the following question: what will happen when children are told stories that put the need for equality in clash with

the fact of authority? Will the children examined give reason to the adult, out of respect for authority, or will they defend equality, out of respect for an inner ideal of mutual respect, even if this is in opposition to authority?

Piaget (1994, p. 210) refers to stories that were told to more than a hundred children between the ages of six and 12. After a quantitative analysis, the qualitative analysis was performed. The qualitative analysis shows what the child means and whether he or she reflects knowledgeably.

The results of this study show that the younger children lean towards authority and find the adult's order very fair; while the older ones lean towards equality and find the order described in the story unfair.

The younger children, the first type, do not distinguish fairness and order from obedience. A second type of children find the order unjust and yet consider that the order of obedience should take precedence over justice. These children claim that it is not fair what their mother tells them to do, but it is fair to obey. Both forms of response can be considered included in the same stage (first stage) to the extent that in both, obedience to authority prevails.

A third group of children (second stage) finds the order unjust and prefers equality to obedience. Finally, a fourth group (third stage) finds the order unjust, but does not find passive obedience obligatory, preferring to accept the mandate out of complacency rather than revolt.

What is the law of evolution of these responses?

Children in the first stage are unable to claim equality because the feeling of unilateral respect is so strong that it poses an obstacle to the free development of equality. This shows that reciprocity among children cannot be ordered by authority; imposed from outside, it will lead only to a calculation of interests and the rule would be subordinate to authority and therefore constitute as a rule outside consciousness. This would be contrary to the moral autonomy of justice, which makes sense only when the rule is superior to authority. Therefore, we can characterize this first

stage by the absence of the notion of distributive justice, since it implies a certain autonomy and freedom from adult authority.

During the second stage, egalitarianism develops and prevails over any other consideration. At this point, distributive justice opposes, in case of conflict with authority, obedience, sanction, and even more subtle reasons such as complacency and equity. Only during the third stage, simple egalitarianism gives way before the more refined notion of justice, which can be called equity. This notion defines equality according to the particular situation in which individuals find themselves, far from the imperatives of obedience to authority.

A second study (1994, p. 217-218) also highlights the conflicts between the feeling of egalitarian justice and the respect for authority, but now referring to a specific school situation, such as "cheating". This study meets the problem posed in relation to the competition versus solidarity alternative.

For Piaget, "cheating" derives from the traditional educational model centered on the "class" and on the individual and isolated work of the students. Students, instead of working in groups and researching cooperating with each other, are led to act in isolation and compete with each other. Thus, when competition prevails, each one tries to capture the teacher's benevolence, without worrying about the neighbour who has difficulty and tries to "cheat".

The problem that arises is how the child understands the meaning of "cheating" and why he condemns it: Why is it forbidden and why is it contrary to equality among children?

The question put to the children is: "Why shouldn't one copy from one's classmate?"

The answers were classified in three groups: In the 1st group: It is forbidden: "it's a villain", "it's a cheat", "a lie", "they punish us", etc. The ultimate reason for these children is always the prohibition made by the adult. In the second group, on the other hand, equality prevails: "it causes harm to the schoolmate", "we steal from him". This type of answers predominates in children between 10 and

12 years old. The third group simply repeats the moral lesson heard on the occasion of a "cheating": "it doesn't help to learn". Statements approving of "cheating" for reasons of solidarity are rare. The author highlights only one child for whom solidarity prevails over the desire for competition. However, he points out that many may have thought the same thing, without having dared to say it.

The responses from the second group are those with the highest percentage in the 10-12 age group, and the predominant arguments refer to equality for competition. These data could lead one to think that, in the answers appealing to equality, competition rather than solidarity underlies. In other words, the source of distributive justice is competition and not solidarity.

Examples of such arguments (1994, p. 218)

THE (nine years and seven months old): 'You should look out for yourself. It is not fair that they have the same grade. You should look for yourself'.

WILD (nine years and four months old) "It's stealing your work. - What if the teacher doesn't know? - It's villainising because of the neighbour. - Why? - The neighbour could get (a good grade) and you take away her place".

For the author, this would only be an appearance, because in reality equality grows with solidarity.

To prove this hypothesis, he carries out a study of the phenomenon of "snitching", where the conflict between adult authority and the need for justice is most clearly manifested.

The question to which the proposed stories refer is the following: Is it right to break solidarity between children for the benefit of adult authority? Is it necessary, in the case of whistle-blowing, to obey the adult or to respect the law of solidarity?

Piaget (1994, p. 219) proposes a story where the father, before leaving on a trip, asks the well-behaved and obedient son to look at the behaviour of his brother who often did foolish

things. The father left and the brother did some foolishness. When the father returned, he asked the other to tell him everything. What should he do?

The result shows that the vast majority of children think that they should tell their father everything. It is fair to tell the father.

Example of children who defend whistle-blowing:

SCHMO (Six years old): "I should say that he (the other) was bad. He should say what the other one did. The father had told him to. - The boy replied to his father: 'ask my brother yourself. I don't want to say it. Was it nice, or not, to answer like that? - It was not kind because the father had told him to (1994, p. 219)

Contrary to this group, most children above the age of eight think that nothing should be said, and some even prefer lying to betraying a sibling.

Example of children who are against telling lies:

FAL (eight years old) Should he tell? - No, because it's snitching. - But his father had asked him. - He should say nothing, say that he had been kind. - Would it be better not to say anything, not to answer, or to say that he had been kind? - To say that he had been kind (1994, p. 220).

For the author, the results of this study, even more than the previous ones, show the opposition of the two morals: that of authority and that of egalitarian solidarity.

There are two mechanisms in these judgments: on the one hand, there is the law, the authority: once we ask to snitch, it is fair to snitch. On the other hand, there is solidarity among children: it is not necessary to betray a friend in favour of the adult or the law.

The second attitude, which occurs in adults, is so firm in some that it leads the individual to justify lying as a means of defending others.

These data would be showing, then, that distributive or egalitarian justice develops at the expense of submission to authority and in close correlation with practice and awareness of solidarity among equals. Furthermore, they show that it does not derive from the habits of competition, but from the relations of reciprocity and solidarity between equals.

The child who is guided by justice prefers to suffer the consequences of his solidary action rather than betray or harm his colleague by guaranteeing the benevolence of authority. This is why, in children's terminology, this second type of children or adolescents are called "flatterer", "bootlicker", "the one who snitches", "clinging to mother's skirt", etc. The first type is called "elegant", "contrary to the saint", who will have to settle accounts with the established authority, but who embodies solidarity and equity among children.

Justice among children

It is important to note that the demand for equality among children is a spontaneous trait of theirs when the law of adult authority does not intervene.

In the case of retributive justice among children, it is observed that reciprocity asserts itself progressively with age; in the case of distributive justice, reciprocity manifests itself earlier.

Children from a very early age spontaneously strike back at the blows of other small children, but in the face of adult law, they back off in their actions and judgements. They come to believe that it is not legitimate to strike back, because it seems villainous to them because it is forbidden by adult law. As they evolve morally, they consider this attitude of defence just, because it rescues the law of reciprocity and equilibrium.

Piaget notes that those who do not want to strike back are, above all, submissive children, who count on the adult to defend them and who are more concerned with respecting orders received than with making justice and equality reign by the means proper to childhood society. As for the children who strike back, it is a matter of

re-establishing equality and justice and not brutal revenge. One must give back exactly what one has received and not invent some sort of arbitrary sanction.

In the research on the acts of cheating a colleague, we observe answers that move from justifications based on authority to others that appeal directly to solidarity and egalitarianism (distributive justice)

On the acts of "cheating" in the game, faced with the question "why one should not cheat," the little ones reply that "cheating" is "villainous" because it infringes adult orders and that it should be banned by severe punishment. For the older ones, for whom the rule is the product of relationships of mutual respect, "cheating" is reproved in the name of reasons that appeal to solidarity and the egalitarianism that stems from it.

Examples of the second type (p.231)

WI (ten years old): "It's not fair: it's cheating others. - why do you have to be fair in the game? - to be honest when you grow up". (response out of solidarity)

THEV (ten years old): "It is a villainous action. - why? - She acted badly. She shouldn't do that. - What if she lost? - It was better to lose than to cheat. - What if she cheated and still lost? - She would have been punished (by the fact itself). It was not fair for her to win. - Why shouldn't one cheat? - Because those who bluff are dirty guys." (response out of solidarity)

MER (nine and six months old) "It is not fair. - Why? The others don't do it: one must not do it anymore." (response out of equality)

A research that directly affects equality among children - distributive justice - clearly shows the spontaneous attitude of children when facing conflict situations. The need for equality is observed from a very early age and is affirmed with age when relationships and conflicts take place between children, without adult intervention. In fact, when faced with stories where conflict with authority is avoided and only questions of equality between peers are raised, all

the children examined affirm the moral need for equality.

Story I: Some boys play ball together in the yard. When the ball leaves the game and goes rolling in the street, one of the boys goes, on his own, to fetch it several times. The next few times, he is only asked to fetch it. What do you think about this?

Story II: Some boys were sitting on the grass to eat snack. Each of them had a bagel, which he had put beside him to eat after the cornbread. A dog sneaked up behind one of the boys and took the bagel from him. What was to be done? (1994, p. 232)

In the first story, all the children say that it is not fair that the same colleague always works for the group. In the second one, they also all agree that it is necessary that each one gives a piece of bagel to the victim in order to re-establish the equality between all of them.

This attitude highlights the fundamental fact, already foreseen in the questions on retaliation and informality, that the origin of distributive justice is found, far from the action of the adult on the child, in the actions of equality and reciprocity between children.

What emerges from this data is that the feeling of equality between children, outside of adult intervention, is spontaneous, and not transmitted by the adult. Its source is the practice of reciprocal and solidarity relations between equals and not competition or competition.

V. SOLIDARITY AS THE INITIAL SOURCE AND FINAL STATE OF MORAL LIFE AND THE ROLE OF AWARENESS

Piaget (1994) observes that there are two individual feelings that are observed from the earliest age of the child. On the one hand, jealousy, which is already expressed in an 8 to 12 month old baby when he sees another child on his mother's knees or when we take away a toy to give to another. In the face of this, he reacts with violent feelings of anger. On the other hand, he

shows gestures of sympathy, reactions of altruism and sharing, when he puts his toys in the hands of others or shares them.

These actions take place alternately and often with whimsical reactions of selfishness and sympathy. They can, however, serve as instruments that limit the abuse of others and of oneself. However, this does not mean that egalitarianism can be a form of instinct or a finished product of the individual alone; for true equality and the authentic need for reciprocity to exist, a collective rule is necessary, a *sui generis* product of collective life. Therefore, equality and reciprocity are schemes constructed in social life.

...it is necessary that, from the actions and reactions of individuals one upon the other, the consciousness of a necessary equilibrium is born, obliging and limiting, at the same time, the alter and the ego. This ideal equilibrium, glimpsed at the occasion of each dispute and each pacification, supposes, naturally, a long reciprocal education of the children, one on the other (1994, p.239).

The transit between primitive reactions and the ideal equilibrium could occur without major problems, but unfortunately this takes place in a long interval of time, where the child needs to overcome many internal and external difficulties, mainly in relation to the coercion of authority. Adult authority, even if it is in accordance with justice, promotes the feeling of duty that contradicts - short-circuits - equality and solidarity, which constitute the essence of freely consented justice. It is this form of relation - with authority - that makes it difficult to become aware of the actions of reciprocity and elementary solidarity among the children themselves.

Piaget's research, reported in the previous items, evidences that it is exactly the progress of cooperation and mutual respect - between children and those adults who are willing to establish this form of relation - that promotes the sense of justice, from the awareness of the first forms of sympathetic relations, altruism and sharing.

In Piaget's thesis, autonomous morality or the morality of good is not the result of social transmission, but rather the result of progressive awareness of the small child's initial actions of compassion and altruism, which reorganise themselves into systems of reversible composition, on the level of consciousness and representation. Following Claparède's path, Piaget (1994, p.) states that the awareness reverses the order of appearance of the notions: what is first in the order of practical action is last in the order of consciousness. The notion of the good which appears, in general, posterior to the notion of duty, possibly constitutes the product of the last awareness of what is the first condition of autonomous moral life: the need for reciprocal affection.

In other words, if solidarity begins and affirms itself in the first years of the child's moral life, it also becomes evident in the final stages of the development of the notion of distributive and retributive justice, when the obstacles imposed by adult coercion and infantile egocentrism are overcome, until they reach the need for the consciousness of the good as an a priori form.

According to Piaget, in the notion of retribution or sanction, it seems that there would be no a priori or properly rational element. This is because the ideas of "sanction by reciprocity" seem to derive from the ideas of equality and solidarity (egalitarianism). Similarly, to the extent that notions of egalitarianism increase, the notion of sanction - even by reciprocity - diminishes, until they become dispensable in autonomous personalities.

Distributive justice is a clear and evident form of a priori in moral feeling, when it reaches a form of rational (logical-mathematical) equilibrium.

For Piaget (1994), distributive justice, as observed in the previous items, can be reduced to the notions of equality or equity. Thus, for epistemology, such concepts could not fail to be a priori, if one understands a priori not as an innate idea, but, yes, as an ideal form towards which reason tends, as it goes on purifying itself. "Reciprocity imposes itself, in effect, on practical

reason, as logical principles impose themselves, morally, on theoretical reason" (1994, p. 238).

From the psychological point of view, where the explanation is of a causal nature, the a priori norm is a form of equilibrium towards which the phenomena of human behaviour tend. In this mode of causal explanation, which is not simply reflexive, the notion of reciprocity and solidarity does not contradict the a priori aspect of this final equilibrium.

Thus, psychogenetic research on morality, with children, seems to confirm Piaget's initial assumptions that the theory of morality should have as its initial and final substratum altruism and solidarity, and that autonomous morality is a form of ideal equilibrium to which human development tends.

These results lead to the need to stress the enormous importance of the mechanism of awareness and reflexive abstraction in the formation and (causal) explanation of the moral good. Pedagogical practice and theory would have everything to gain from this way of thinking and from these scientific results.

VI. "ORGANIC" SOLIDARITY IN CHILDREN'S SOCIETIES AND THE EVOLUTION OF JUSTICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL LIFE

The participation of the child in communities of "organic" solidarity, in children's society, contributes decisively to the progress of egalitarianism. It is in this form of societal organization where the most favorable opportunities for awareness of actions lived, of conflicts experienced occur, and thus make it possible to achieve greater cognitive, moral and affective equilibrium.

It is in democratically organised social life that the progress of solidarity goes hand in hand with egalitarianism. This solidarity presents a specific character in the evolution of children's society, which is configured as "organic solidarity".

Contrary to the society of the little ones, the society of the older ones ceases to be amorphous and constitutes an organic whole, with laws and regulations that establish limits and mutual agreements. If in the environment in which the little ones participate there is a kind of submission to the elders, in that of the older ones everything is prohibited which compromises the existence of the feeling of the group and of solidarity among its members. Lying, cheating and betraying are therefore forbidden. If the little ones are dominated by the sense of authority, the older ones demand, in a more intense way, equality and solidarity. In this group environment, discussion and the exchange of points of view are strengthened to guarantee commitments and agreements.

We see that the link between egalitarianism and solidarity is a general psychological phenomenon, which does not depend only on political factors, as it may appear in adult society. There are, then, in the child as in the adult, two psychological types of social equilibrium: a type based on the coercion of age, which excludes equality like "organic" solidarity, but which channels, without excluding, individual egocentrism, and a type based on cooperation, resting on equality and solidarity. (P. 240, emphasis added)

It is clear that a society as "organic solidarity" is not given to individuals and is not easy to build collectively. The "democratic schools" bear witness to this, for they, by constituting differentiated experiences of education on the planet, show the ideal of a solidary teaching-learning community where individual and social balance is possible.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

1. Piaget's hypothesis on the moral development of children, particularly of the notions of justice, is valid: the development of these notions is produced in function of the advance of the notions of equality and solidarity. Their evolution is not, therefore, the product of transmission, nor of competition or competition between equals. Competition can

intervene in collective and cooperative work, but it is subordinate to solidarity. Competition, subordinated to authority and pre-established laws, promotes the calculation of interests, contrary to solidarity and reciprocity, and therefore opposed to the autonomous morality of good.

2. Egalitarian justice originates in the action and reaction between children and the awareness of these actions. It is in the relationships between children, one with the other, that the awareness of the laws of equality and the need for balanced reciprocal relationships is produced.
3. But it is also possible that, far from resulting from direct pressure from parents or teachers, the idea of equality develops essentially through the reaction of children on each other, and sometimes even at the adult's expense. It is quite frequent that the injustice suffered makes one become aware of the laws of equality. We hardly see, in any case, how such a notion would assume any reality for the child before he has relations with his fellows, in the family and at school. The child's simple relationship with the adult does not involve any equality. Now, arising from the contact of children with each other, egalitarianism must at least develop with the progress of cooperation among children (1994, p. 209).
4. Everything indicates that the transformation of retributive justice, the passage from the expiatory sanction to the sanction by reciprocity, obeys the influence of the development of distributive justice or egalitarianism. This is evident when older children appeal to the "solidarity link" when judging the sanctions imposed by authority.
5. Young children's actions of compassion and altruism constitute primary sources of autonomous moral development. These actions and ideas are reaffirmed when the child overcomes the coercion imposed by authority, and overcomes the egocentrism that imprisons him/her in the perspective of the self. In these cases, the initial solidarity is prolonged, reconstructed, in the more finished forms of distributive and retributive justice. Therefore, for Piaget, the theory of morality

should have altruism and solidarity as its initial and final substratum.

6. The transformation from initial solidarity and reciprocity actions to more rational forms of justice obeys the law of conscious awareness and not to factors of cultural and social transmission, as common sense commonly thinks. It is precisely in this process that social relations between equals, such as community and "organic" forms of societal organisation, become decisive. In this perspective, dialogue and cooperation achieve their full meaning.
7. The development of moral notions and particularly the notion of justice is not the result of an exclusively individual construction; it requires, for its development, relations between two or more individuals, who submit to freely accepted rules of coexistence. These interactions promote development when subjects consider themselves, in fact and in law, as equals. In this sense, the privileged place for the development of these interactions are the organic societies, where children and adolescents can be free and assume the consequences of their actions.
8. Organic societies show the existence of an inseparable relationship between societal development and individual development. There are, in fact, alternative societies or communities collectively built where human relations are guided by practices of solidarity ("Just Societies", "Democratic Schools", etc.), which point to the real possibility of the ideal balance.

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