# Social Construction of Childhood Through Images and Photographs: An Entrance to Education*

*⸢English Version⸣*

Construcción social de la infancia
a través de imágenes y fotografías: una entrada a la educación

Construção social da infância
através de imagens e fotografias: uma entrada para a educação

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## Abstract

**Objective**: to identify the interests and orientations of studies on visual representations and the production of childhood images through cultural objects, with special emphasis on photography, which have become sources of information in the fields of history, cultural studies and education. **Methodology**: a qualitative documentary review, that focusses on the studies of

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society and culture of Latin America and Spain during the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, with some allusions to works located in the pre-Hispanic world. **Results:** childhood was found to be a matter of interdisciplinary interest, for example, for health sciences, especially neurology, pediatrics, epidemiology. There were also found works on childhood from the human sciences, social sciences, education and the arts; In the last four areas of knowledge, in addition to a marked interest of studies in the perception of images of boys and girls, there is a preoccupation with children's representations in education through images. **Conclusion**: from a balance of the results of the studies addressed, opportunities for research on the social construction of children in education with visual sources are identified.

**Keywords:** Childhood; Education; Images; Photography.

## Resumen

**Objetivo**: identificar los intereses y orientaciones de los estudios sobre las representaciones visuales y la producción de imágenes de infancia a través de objetos culturales, con especial acento en la fotografía, que se han constituido en fuentes de información en los campos de la historia, los estudios culturales y la educación. **Metodología**: revisión documental de corte cualitativo, cuyo foco de observación se encuentra en los estudios de la sociedad y la cultura de América Latina y España durante los siglos XIX y XXI, con algunas alusiones a trabajos situados en el mundo prehispánico. **Resultados**: se encontró que la infancia es un asunto de interés interdisciplinar, por ejemplo, para las ciencias de la salud, especialmente la neurología, pediatría, epidemiología. También se hallaron trabajos sobre la infancia desde las ciencias humanas, ciencias sociales, la educación y las artes; en las últimas cuatro áreas de conocimiento, además de un marcado interés de los estudios en la percepción de imágenes de los niños y las niñas, predomina la inquietud por las representaciones de la infancia en la educación a través de imágenes. **Conclusión**: a partir de un balance de los resultados de los estudios abordados se identifican oportunidades para investigaciones sobre la construcción social de la infancia en educación con fuentes visuales.

**Palabras-clave:** Infancia; Educación; Imágenes; Fotografía.

## Resumo

**Objetivo:** identificar os interesses e orientações dos estudos sobre representações visuais e produção de imagens da infância por meio de objetos culturais, com ênfase especial na fotografia, os quais se tornaram fontes de informação nos campos da história, estudos culturais e educação. **Metodologia**: revisão documental qualitativa, cujo foco está nos estudos da sociedade e cultura da América Latina e da Espanha durante os séculos XIX e XXI, com algumas alusões a obras localizadas no mundo pré-hispânico. **Resultados**: a infância foi considerada uma questão de interesse interdisciplinar, por exemplo, para as ciências da saúde, especialmente neurologia, pediatria, epidemiologia. Também houve trabalhos sobre a infância nas ciências humanas, ciências sociais, educação e artes; Nas quatro últimas áreas do conhecimento, além de um interesse acentuado dos estudos na percepção de imagens de meninos e meninas, há uma preocupação com as representações das crianças na educação por meio das imagens. **Conclusão**: a partir do balanço dos resultados dos estudos abordados, são identificadas oportunidades de pesquisa sobre a construção social da infância na educação com fontes visuais.

**Palavras-chave:** Infância; Educação; Imagens; Fotografia.

## Introduction

Childhood is a social construction that is the product of a set of speeches, narratives and prescriptions that generate representations and practices of children in the context of specific socio-cultural contexts (Jenkis, 1982; James and Prout, 1997; Corsaro, 1997; Gaitán, 2006). And, as a social construction, childhood is transformed and with it, the practices in its environment.

These transformations are recorded in objects of culture that then inform about knowledge and things that are difficult to access by other means (Burke, 2006; De Certeau, 1996). For example, the modern sentiment on childhood (Ariès, 1987) was unveiled from the observation and monitoring of cultural products that made visible how a picture of the non-adult population was painted in society; with this, the practices with children were transformed and their changes were registered in objects of culture that have been and are being analyzed to identify trends, saturations and gaps in childhood representations.

The analysis and monitoring of diverse cultural objects has allowed us to determine, from both varied alternate narratives to and official discourses, the ways in which childhood has been named, represented, addressed and treated. In this way, artefacts such as literature, toys, painting and photography have become a source of information for the production of knowledge regarding childhood.

Therefore, in the present documentary review study, the analysis of works on the ways in which childhood has been present in the Spanish and Latin American context, with emphasis on photographic image and studies on the role of the images in the visual context in and of education.

## Methodology

In this work the documentary review is recognized as a research methodology that implies an analytical documentary recovery and systematization, to account for the scientific and academic production and the knowledge accumulated around a subject (Marín and Restrepo, 2002). Its complexity lies in the permanent classification, organization and categorization of data to articulate the variety in production. For this review process, at first, a bibliometric analysis work was implemented, with statistical tools and search engines of the indexed databases Science Direct and Scopus[1],based on the keyword combinations

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1. These databases were consulted first, because they are the largest, for the quality they guarantee in their publications and because they allow access to abstracts, keywords and reference list of articles when they do not allow redirecting to magazines or publishers or when the works do not have Open Access.

"childhood and cultural objects" "childhood and images"; "Childhood and pho-tography" and "childhood, photography and education" (terms in English and Spanish to have a wide range of documents).This allowed to identify 3 elements as starting points:

a) Trends by areas, sub-areas and themes
b) Periods of time where there were peaks and falls in the volume of studies with word combinations according to areas, sub-areas and topics
c) Countries and institutions interested in studies on childhood, images, photographs and education.

Also, as part of this first search moment, reference lists of the articles in these databases were analyzed to recognize the epistemological and methodolo-gical orientations of the works.

Then, a second search was carried out: systematization and analysis of documents from three axes began: 1) childhood images; 2) representations of childhood and 3) photographs of childhood in the context of education. Then, the focus turned to on the works produced from and in relation to Latin America and Spain published in the last 4 decades, we were interested in a wide period of studies that spanned from the mid-19th century to the 21st century. At this time, other databases and digital documentary sources such as ProQuest, Dial-net and Redaly c were reviewed. At this stage, work was also included in the field of communication and cultural management, doctoral theses located in digital repositories books, reviews and scientific articles.

The documents found were codified, systematized and analyzed based on matrices in which they were investigated by: a) general data about the work: area, sub-areas, date of publication; b) author (s), institutional affiliation; c) pla-ce and time: study period, region / country of interest; d) institution / space involved in the study; e) media-representations-mediations-objects; f) objectives of the study; g) theoretical and methodological references; and h) results and conclusions.

Through this matrix, an observation directed towards categorization was made possible .Here, various ideas were identified as important factors for analy-sis and organization: *Cultural objects-representations-mediations-media* and, accor-ding to the volume of work in each of its kind, the scope of *the objectives*, *the theoretical and methodological referents*, were analyzed to filter the most relevant works according to the quality of these items, mainly determined by the fulfill-ment of objectives.

In this process, several papers were discarded, and a third moment of re-vision, systematization and analysis was carried out, which was advanced ac-

cording to whether the *results and conclusions* factor, *and* the subcategory could be reached. In this third moment, the review was complemented by the direct search in library catalogs for consultation of digital and printed books, as well as publications on cultural, art and temporary exhibitions in museums related to children, photography and school .With this last search, the sub-categories and , with it, the categories of the documentary review were nurtured .

As progress and analysis were made in the systematization throughout the three moments, the categories and subcategories that guide and structure the results presented here emerged.

# Results

This study found that childhood is a topic of interdisciplinary interest, especially within the health sciences notably, neurology, pediatrics, and epidemiology. To a lesser extent, there are works on childhood from the human sciences, social sciences, education and the arts; in these last four areas of knowledge, among academic studies, in addition to having a marked interest in the perception of images of children, there was a preoccupation with children's representations in the education of children through of pictures.

It was also found that there is a recent interest in the production of new knowledge about childhood and images (image production, use of images and / or image perception) in the last 3 decades. Moreover, in the topics and images of childhood there is a wide production of knowledge mainly from the United Kingdom, Australia and North America; from Latin America they are present in these databases, mainly, works in the field of arts and social sciences.

The other results of this study are presented below by categories and subcategories:

## Images and Representations of Boys and Girls Through Literature, Games, Toys and Painting: Construction of Subjectivities

Childhood has been the object of production and reproduction of a multiplicity of visual or narrated images, through a variety of cultural objects used and appropriate in everyday life. These objects, together with the official and institutional speeches of each society and age, have narrated what has meant, what should be and should be done with the boys and girls according to a marked interest in shaping the subjectivity of the children and girls associated with

the political and economic project. In this way, cultural objects are not only carriers of information about the conceptions of childhood but also of the practices that have taken place with and towards children.

In the approach to childhood and its representations, two studies are relevant for the understanding of modern childhood in Western culture, which is developed within the framework of the needs and feelings of specific societies. These studies are the works of De Maus (1982) and Ariès (1987). De Maus traced the history of childhood from the ancient world through textual and pictorial sources and revealed that in certain cultures it has been sought to reproduce the model of ideal boys and girls and in doing so, the child's body has been subjected to abuse and pain.

For his part, Ariès (1987), focused his interest in art and visual representations of the child in the Old Regime, finding that for years children went unnoticed and only until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries occupied their own place in society, a phenomenon associated with the awakening of an increased "sense of family". This author also explored artifacts such as costumes, school supplies and toys, to analyze how the transformation in the ways of representing children permeated different aspects of society in which the presence of childhood was reaffirmed.

In the Latin American context, artefacts such as rock painting and pre-Hispanic iconography have allowed us to understand contemporary practices with Latin American children. Ardren and Hutson (2006) and Baxter (2008), explored the presence and experiences of pre-Hispanic childhood in Mesoamerican societies and, at the same time, expose and propose different methods for the archaeological approach in material culture. Likewise, in ethnohistory and in the sociological, historiographic and even social and cultural history fields, Díaz-Barriga (2012, 2013), Rodríguez (2007) and Ares-Queija (2007) interested in this period of time and in the colonial era, focus their interest on Mexican and Peruvian children and include in their work reflections on practices with children from their iconographic representations.

In line with these possibilities of studies through visual objects, the review presented here, without departing from the interest in the image, includes the transit through cultural objects from which the social construction of childhood could be traced in different eras and societies. It begins with the results about the production of studies that explore the image of childhood narrated through literature, then moves to children's representations and constructions through games and toys and, subsequently, the results of the works that address the image of childhood are presented.

**Images of Childhood in Literature: Between Ideals and Realities**

In this documentary review, it was possible to demonstrate a marked interest in investigating through stories, letters and other Latin American literary productions, the ways in which a collective image of childhood has been created and how the figure of the child has been recreated in these societies. Some researchers have been in charge of reviewing literary works, flagship works and other works in the shadows of Latin American literature, to characterize and analyze changes and transformations in the imaginaries of childhood and in the ways of perceiving children. In the same way, it is possible to know, from the studies of these narratives, about the place that these children occupy according to the perceptions of their nation.

In the field of contemporary Latin American literature, childhood is present in two ways: as the subject to whom the work is directed and as a character. In each case, the images that allow the reader to access of what it means to be a boy or a girl, or what childhood means in a society have been outlined based on social and cultural patterns. For example, Londoño and Londoño (2012) illustrate the trajectories of Colombian children's literature and their developments in terms of graphic and narrative, which account for changes in the representation of children between the end of the 19th century and the first part 20th century The recreation of the fantastic and wonderful character positioned Colombian children as reading subjects, capable of enjoying literary aesthetics while being molded through fables and rhymes, within the framework of social and cultural precepts of the time.

On the image recreated in Colombian literature, Robledo (2007) finds a transformation in the conception of boys and girls between 1920 and 1930 - transformation accompanied by the process of modernization of the country - from the presence of children's characters living in the streets , abandoned, despised by society, abused. In the author's opinion, these childhood images talk, in turn, of independent boys and girls, even emancipated from the impositions of adult men, because in the midst of their tragic circumstances they have the opportunity to make their decisions and challenge their luck.

In relation to the adult-centric look at childhood and its experiences, there is Donoso's work (2007) on the work Cartucho de Nellie Campobello - a piece of literature that recreates violence during the Mexican revolution - where it identifies the presence from a look at a "doubly marginal" childhood, since it is the story of a girl who tells from her memory a mental, intimate image, an oral-portrait, a text-image of the memory . In this work, he addresses the link

between verbality and visuality achieved through the child's voice, so that the narration is completed and an image is made in the reader's mind:

> In general, each story in Campobello's text is structured from the figure of a character, the anecdote that is narrated is minimal and the child's voice neutralizes the moral burden of the events narrated. All these characteristics conspire towards a verbal act that is linked to visuality. More than narration there is exposure. More than actions there is presentation of facts (Donoso, 2007, p. 2).

In the Chilean case, the analysis of the country's literary production during the first half of the 20th century stands out in the work of Amaro and Arecheta (2014) who found that the Chilean children's experience has been represented in three very different orientations: children and ideal citizen, or the representation of "we" in the society in the process of modernization; *the children of hunger*, which deals with children in precarious conditions that leave the ideal childhood model and must survive; *the childhood in the shadows,* which accounts for the experiences of childhood that, from the intimate sphere of the family, mainly, and according to gender roles, expresses criticism of the contemporary social order. These three perspectives addressed in the narrative account of transformations not only in the outlook on childhood but in the trajectory of their experiences made into a story.

Likewise, the works of Guerrero-Valenzuela (2010), who contributes to the understanding of the different ways of experiencing childhood, while it is a marginal representation in a world governed by adults, located in the planes of memory and language, crossed by the nostalgia of a silent legacy to which the word must be returned; but nevertheless:

> Childhood may well be the secret that is necessary to decipher or interpret in search of a meaning for an often precarious and incomplete present, scrambled and in crisis. Understood as inheritance, childhood is part of a discontinuous, abstract, unbeatable and changing genealogy according to the operations of memory, whose fluctuations are always unstable and fragile, not linear or exact. Represented since adulthood, it is a knowledge that fails to the extent that it does not accumulate knowledge be built upon, but upon acquiring it places it under suspicion. However, from that operation, the certainty of its impossibility is obtained, understood as a promise that is feasible to renew, precisely, through its breach (Guerrero-Valenzuela, 2010, p. 7).

Through Latin American literature an image of polarized childhood is revealed: on the one hand, there is the portrait of the longed-for childhood, idealized, representing the potential adult society and embodying the memory of lived and / or longed-for childhood; and, on the other, it presents an image of unwanted, lacking, battered childhood, which should not be present, but that sneaks into the narrative. However, it is important to point out how, through literature, Latin America has represented and verbalized the disagreement with institutions and regimes of power through the figure of militant children or agents in contexts of social conflict, either coming from revolution or from their feelings in private life.

### Childhood in Toys and Games: Building the Childhood Image of Obedience and Consumption

Games and toys are a symbol of children's experience and constitute an object of study addressed in different disciplines and fields of knowledge (anthropology, philosophy, history of culture, psychology and art), which recognize in them socio-cultural constructs that give account of childhood history and personal and collective childhood memory. In turn, they have been recognized as the imprint left by children in different societies and that account for the evolution of humanity and its creative capacity (Benjamin, 1987, 1989; Ridao and Montenegro, 2014).

In the Latin American context, there are studies aimed at understanding the relationship between games and toys with the social, political and cultural framework. In this regard, Londoño and Londoño (2012) analyze the songs, children's rounds and toys of Colombian children, between the mid-nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, to highlight the close relationship between these objects and strategies of docilization of the child's body.

In the field of education and pedagogy in Colombia, Cárdenas (2012) problematizes the apparent natural association between childhood, games and toys in order to reveal the ways in which, in the mid-twentieth century, these objects were implemented inside and outside the schools for the correction, production and reproduction of subjectivities in children, in accordance with the ideal of citizen.

Cárdenas finds in the Colombian society from 1930 to 1960 an assessment - supported by disciplinary knowledge - to children's toys for the control of the physical, intellectual, affective and moral state of the infantile population and, to the toy, as a means for the formation of fathers and mothers of the modern family. Thus, games and toys can be identified as the cultural artifacts of the

time that contributed to the incorporation of models to see, name and intervene in childhood.

Games and toys were not only incorporated into the school to shape subjectivities, but they came to Latin American homes to forge other useful subjects to society and the economy of countries in the process of modernization: boys and girls as consuming subjects.

The work of Sosenski (2012) is found in the field of cultural and social history, on child consumption and toys in Mexico between the 50s and 60s of the twentieth century, period in which the toy was assigned care and education functions which led to child consumption characterized by: a) circulation through different media of information, communicating the toy as a provider of happiness; b) plastic and importation as intrinsic values of the toy; c) concern about the use of war toys; d) the reproduction of gender roles. In this process, it is evidenced through different media, how an image of children was built presenting them as empowered agents in a society on the way to development and urbanization, economic growth and modernization, all for the persuasion of consumption.

Finally, Duek (2012) places games and toys at the intersection between culture (integrating their conditioning and possibilities there), the social and the educational trajectory of those who play and the history in which this practice takes place.

Now, studies on the relationship between childhood, culture, games and toys show that the objects created for the enjoyment of children are not alien to specific interests of production of subjectivities inside and outside the social institutions of childhood as they are, in this case, the family, community and school. Therefore, images of childhood were put into circulation that narrated the need to shape the character of children through the uses they gave to artifacts of culture for recreation. In the same way, the visualization of children as subjects of consumption, the focus of the recreation and entertainment industry, was reproduced in the periods covered by the study.

Therefore, while the literature narrated a childhood in tension between the ideal citizen and the unwanted citizen (the one in a precarious situation), the experiences of children who were agents of structural changes were also recorded even when they were under adult-centered regimes. That is to say, the images of childhood that are reflected in children's games and toys are those of useful future citizens for the consumer-driven industries through the games and toys the images of childhood are those of future citizens useful for the consumer industries that are produced by objects from schools and the production of consumer subjects by objects in the safety of homes and the community.

## Images of Childhood in Painting: Boys and Girls in the Visual Landscape

Unlike previous cultural objects, painting, as a visual aesthetic proposal, introduces a more direct, tangible and apprehensive representation of childhood into the cultural landscape; that is, as the focus of multiple interpretations from the use of frames of knowledge, beliefs and experiences of the spectators. The documentary review highlights three research papers that seek to analyze the relationships that weaves the community with two types of iconic paintings in culture.

The works of Jiménez (2012) and Cardona-Quitián (2014) take as a reference the image of the *Divine Child Jesus*, a piece of religious art representative of Bogotan culture and analyze the mobilization of individual and collective practices of a whole city. The researchers find in this image a representation of the nature, purity and divinity of childhood that, despite its transformations and updates, would continue to be present in different works of art and cultural creations to account for a way of experiencing childhood (Cardona-Quitián, 2014).

On the other hand, in relation to Argentine folk art, Carli (2011a) finds an over-representation of childhood in art. He takes as reference the work of Antonio Berni and his character *Juanito Laguna*, and highlights in this character the child-symbol of Argentine childhood of the mid-twentieth century, an image capable of transmitting a collective memory of childhood. In turn, it reveals the neglect of historiography towards these types of works to understand the children's experience of a precarious life, achieved in the work in question.

Undoubtedly, the art form of painting has allowed for a greater understanding of the presence of childhood in the pictures and landscapes of everyday life in society. Through literature, games and toys, the image of childhood must be discovered, but through painting, the child's image seems to be given, delivered to the spectators, to be admired but also to invoke practices based on the image-receptor relationship. But this receiver is not passive. Through painting, childhood becomes a symbol of a collective feeling and communal (religious or memory) practices.

## Childhood in Photography: Need and Memory

In the review, photography is identified as a potential object for addressing the social construction of childhood. The photographs contain features of the

context of their creation and fulfill specific functions and uses; they are accessible images (Riego, 1999), collectively perceived (Burck, 2009) that, according to the viewer, can mobilize collective practices for social change (Zubero, 2016). Thus, based on studies that address the relationship between childhood and photography, two uses are identified to take into account:

### a) Childhood Photography and Social Recognition.

Initially, the content of the photographs was closely associated with the compositions explored in the art of painting. The tradition of the portrait would continue through the photography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, the first photographs of boys and girls were portraits. However, a marked difference between the painted and photographed portrait would lie in the accessibility to the self-image that the members of the different social classes would have (Del Castillo-Troncoso, 2006, 2007).

In addition, since the emergence of this technology, during the first three parts of the twentieth century, it is difficult to dissociate children's photography from adults, either because they are present as part of the composition, or because the child imitates the adult's world (Irrigation, 1999 ).This is evidenced in the studio photographs where children were dressed in adult attire and embodied scenes such as 'the smoking boy', 'the aviator boy', 'the military boy' or the girl as a society or religious lady, among others (Irrigation, 1999; Villegas , 2012). Another common scenario for the representation of childhood from an adult perspective was family photography from the 19th and 20th centuries. As the observations of Riego (1999) reveal, the children fit into a family hierarchy headed by the parent and occupy a secondary place in the representation.

It was not until the second half of the 20th century, when children gained their own domain and were represented as children in their own right, and not as small adults. However, before that happened, childhood photography fulfilled a social function: the portrait of the child was related to the possibility of family recognition in an image of themselves giving status to those who were represented there. Although photography was not as expensive and exclusive as the painted portrait, it was an object that talked about the economic means, the possibilities of the family, as well as the value and recognition to be recorded (Del Castillo-Troncoso, 2007). Finally, the studio photographs only allowed social classes to be rigged thanks to makeup, costumes, light effects and touch-ups (Ortiz, 2006; Villegas, 2012; Alonso-Riveiro, 2015).

Similarly, it was found that Childhood photography is closely related to the memory of itself, with the evocation of one's own experience. Benjamin (2004) warned about the experience of childhood by admiring the photograph of a

child who is already an adult or who is no longer there and, currently, different investigations reveal various forms of the memory of the experience lived in or with childhood through photography (Villegas, 2012).

A common use of photography during the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries was that of postmortem photographs that, according to Borrás (2010), "evoke forms of iconographic representation, established rituals, personal motivations, specific links, cultural practices that form part of the social construction of grief and memory" (p.111). While the death of children was quite common due to epidemics, hygiene problems, physical punishment, body hardening practices, etc., this type of photography was a way of preserving in the family material memory, a trace of the child that had been and was no more:

> The photograph of the child who is going to disappear forever, makes his presence perennial and becomes part of the family memory that is stored in an album. A graphic book that will occupy a central place in the family room, as Walter Benjamin recalled in one of his texts, and that will sometimes be opened to contemplate those who share the family's social bond (Riego, 1999, p. 5).

Another experience of memory through childhood photography is found in the contexts of armed conflicts and war. Alonso-Riveiro (2015) works with Spanish family photographs, produced during the first part of the Franco regime; in these photographs, he identifies and describes anachronisms with the pretense of representing and (re) building the broken family unity that the war left due to the exile or the death of relatives and loved ones. In this work, the author finds that the Spanish family iconography distanced itself from the rest of Europe with the purpose of fixing, through fiction, the image of a complete, happy family, united despite the war. There is evidence of the use of resources such as photomontage, to include absent members and who would never be present again.

The socialization of photographs that capture scenes of natural or man-made disasters where human suffering and pain is reflected, imprints ways of viewing, dimensioning and remembering the scope of the events and these memories are reinforced when children are present. Studies carried out by Van-Leeuwen and Worski (2002) and Maciá-Barber (2013), analyze the role of photography to legitimize war and realize how the presence of children as victims and witnesses of war has become a requirement to arouse emotions in the spectators.

Both studies are interested in the Israeli conflict. For example, Maciá-Barber (2013), shows how war photography not only uses childhood to generate visual impression on spectators, but also the way in which children are exposed

through mass media to get the audience to remember the armed conflict. However, the abundance of horrific photographic material can lead to the desensitizing and loss of consciousness of these events because they become common images.

Each era dictates certain rules about how to view photography, and rules about the contents of the images. The memory of childhood through photography changes slowly from one century to another, so, if at the beginning of the twentieth century the memory of a serious and disciplined childhood was promoted, the child of the middle and end of the century will be remembered as smiling, cheerful and independent (Villegas, 2012). In contexts of catastrophes or permanent conflicts, where the dynamics of daily life are altered, photography is a tool for an ontological purpose rather than for aesthetic enjoyment; to remember, re-build and get closer to the experiences of others.

**b) Transformation of Childhood Imaginary Through Photography.**

Through the observation of photography and photographic practice in Latin America, it is possible to identify changes in childhood imaginary according to their representations in different political and social contexts. In this regard, Villegas (2012) analyzes the Colombian department of Antioquia and finds a close relationship between the ways of portraying children and the circulating images of the *Divine Jesus Child*, an idealized notion of childhood in terms of religiosity and holiness, a fact that in the author's opinion is due to a fanaticism imprinted onto society.

Along the same lines, is the work of Del Castillo-Troncoso (2006; 2007), who reveals important aspects of the social and political construction of Mexican children during the revolution. This researcher worked with the photographs of boys and girls that circulated in newspapers, illustrated magazines and other serials between 1880 and 1920 in Mexico, and traced the transition from an idealized and fragile conception of childhood to the representations of children as active members in the political and armed struggle. This Mexican childhood, with its particular characteristics and needs, in the contexts of poverty and with the capacity to get involved and take part in political and social matters, is the childhood that is invisible in the portraits of elite families (Del Castillo-Troncoso, 2007).

Other works that reveal a change in conceptions and practices with Latin American children are those of Muñoz and Pachón (1988; 1991; 1996; 2002) aimed at becoming aware of the situation of Bogota's children between 1900 and 1988, through serial publications produced and put into circulation in the

capital city. In these works, the photographs of the children illustrate in stark or idealized ways - according to the context and theme of the publications - the different situations that Bogotan children had experienced. There they find that in the middle of the century, the concept of childhood went from being a polarized reference between the demonic and the divine, to the recognition of their qualities and emotions, so that the ideas of the beginning of the century about innate sin and virtue were replaced by the notions of character, will and personality: a development that came to the city in conjunction with new discourses of pedagogy, psychology and sociology.

**c) Social and Pedagogical Function of Photography.**

After a journey through the ways in which, through different cultural objects, an image of childhood, specifically a photographic image, has been created, recreated and circulated, the interest turns to focused on reflections and research on the role of photography in relationship with education and/or pedagogy and communication.

Firstly, there are works in the field of education history (Sanchidrián, 2011; Villa, 2015; Comas and Sureda, 2016; Soto and Pérez, 2017) aimed at locating photography as an element that has closely accompanied the details of its materiality, architecture and uses of the spaces, the particularities of the teachers, the children's own characteristics (De Freitas, 2015), as well as the practices, routines, rituals and events in the school institutions around the educational scenarios that capture, represent, make visible or sometimes hide, fulfilling a documental function of the school that operates within history as a testimony (Soto and Pérez, 2017).

Whether visible or not, the photographic image as a historical-educational source allows us to expand the research questions and overcome the descriptive works of the school settings and start questioning the experiences within them, to other eras closer to the present, other spaces apart from those of the educational system and make use of the evocative potential and the emotional component of the photographs exploring iconographic narratives, the subjective experiences of those who access the images and provoke memories of their schools, their childhood, their games, even if they are not the ones who appear the photos (Sanchidrián, 2011).

Another trend in this group of studies, is in the scenario of school materials and education heritage that complicates as well as enriches the research field of history and education of a nation, forcing to create new pedagogical scenarios due to the dissemination of the findings (Viñao-Frago, 2012). Additionally, the school photography is approached as an element that contributes

to the configuration of collective memories, once the photographs are made public, that is, since they circulate in the community thus involving old and new students and reinforcing the support for educational projects within the schools (Comas and Sureda, 2016).

In another field of research, we can identify works around the representation and identity of the subjects of education through photography. Thus, is Carli's work (2011b) on the memories of Argentina's social crisis in the late twentieth century, where he takes as a reference of his analysis, among several photographs, the image of an infant with an apron of the public school, to reveal that the framing of the white apron and the disengagement of the child's head are related to the anonymity and hidden poverty of children attending Argentine schools. In relation to teachers, there is the thesis of Peñaloza (2015), who questions, from a corpus of photographs from the *archive of the Gabriela Mistral Education Museum in Santiago de Chile*, produced between 1880 and 1920, the configuration of the teaching identity in relation to the Chilean school community. There, the author recognizes overlapping teaching identities within the framework of a homogeneous citizenship construction project, for which the photographic image was a strategic tool to fix this identity in the records of school life.

The panorama of the relationship between image and school extends to image studies. The contemporary concern about the image and education in the school space is found in the works of Dussel (2006, 2009), who approaches the school as a stage for the formation of visual culture, understood as "a set of visual discourses that build positions and are enrolled in social practices, closely associated with the institutions that grant us the "right to look" (Dussel, 2009, p. 181).

Dussel, observes and questions the type of images (still and moving) that circulate in the educational space, the knowledge that these images contain and the effects they produce, and identify the presence of certain visual regimes, a technology of the gaze (technology in the Foucauldian sense), with power over the ways in which we have been taught to see, so in the school setting the researcher considers two questions: What effects does an image produce? and How to educate the gaze?. Pointing out that this questioning implies thinking about the effects of images on the subjects who view them, in the context of a specific visual culture, without losing sight of the fact that the image is a social practice (2006) and returning to Sontag, (2003), in the image it is also possible to build a "we".

Then, thinking about the teacher's gaze on training, and their didactic and pedagogical practices with their future students, Ball-llatinas, (2011) is located in the context of the training of trainers, to present from these coordinates the

scope of the pedagogy of the gaze. Thus, he affirms that with it, he seeks to teach to look at reality so that it is perceived, so he proposes 3 ways of seeing: a) the empathic gaze, related to Sontag's other gaze (2003). It is the look that implies recognizing oneself in the other; b) the critical look or the questioning look; c) the eco-look, or the visualization of the earth, of life, to preserve it.

The pedagogy of the gaze also questions the function of the images. In this regard, there is the thesis of Kritki and Andrea (2014) who take photography as an element of symbolic construction of society and give it a critical and social function, as well as responsibility in the gaze formation. For the authors, the photographic image "must be understood as a system of visual, multicultural writing, with layers of densities, interpretations and symbolic readings, is the act of seeing of our current society" (Kritki and Andrea, 2014, p.61).

For the authors Kritki and Andrea (2014), the photographic image "must be understood as a system of visual, multicultural writing, with layers of densities, interpretations and symbolic readings, is the act of seeing of our current society" (p.61). In the Chilean case, it has been used in the constitution of social, cultural and identity patterns, and with this, it has been configured in an element of domestication of the gaze, whereby it finds the need to train audiences through the pedagogy of the look as a visuality teaching system.

Concern about the effects of the image is common in the work of education or pedagogy of the gaze. And this same concern is shared by Zubero (2016), who alludes to the interpellant nature of the images, and with it, to the transit of a contemplative action to the realization of an active knowledge, to the execution of an action. This author draws on photographs that narrate the pain of others, but abandons the discussion of the content of the image instead, focusing his concern on what happens within the viewer and what they do, after contemplating an image of the "other ". He warns that the problem is not in the dissemination of the pain of others, but in the power that exists in the viewer to react to it. He identifies the need for an education of the gaze, supported by an ethical sentiment.

## Conclusions

In the West, childhood has been represented through different cultural objects that evoke sensitive aspects of being a boy or girl in different eras and contexts. These records constitute objects created for a specific purpose, use or display rules. The investigations that have overseen the analysis of these objects,

reveal the construction of regimes of the gaze on childhood and the infantile world that have influenced the ways of seeing, naming and treating children.

Among the diversity of objects carrying knowledge, cultural practices and a visual memory of childhood in the West, there are pictorial, literary works, different types of textual narratives, costumes, recreation artifacts and moving, fixed, analog and digital images. All these objects are traceable over time and can be challenged to understand the construction of discourses on childhood.

In visual objects, either with narrated or explicit images, the childhood that escapes the social ideals of what a boy or a girl should be is represented, and the care, admiration and protection instruments that should be available to them. In alternate portraits of official childhood discourses, the search for stories, narratives and prescriptions of the different ways of traveling through childhood in a culture or observation period is richer.

Photography has been valued in historiographic studies to reveal aspects of the lives of children difficult to access through documental sources. The images are used as complementary sources. The call to find an observation of childhood from other sources of information is constant, although there are few works that can be traced in this regard.

Childhood photographs are produced and reproduced in two types of institutions: the family and the school. Besides these, children are photographed to wake the viewer up by transmitting their pain and discomfort. A good number of studies of the image of childhood that have been referenced in this text allude to, the various ways in which the marginality of childhood is represented, when these images are produced from the adult world.

Childhood has been used visually as evidence of fragility and subsistence. As for subsistence, it has been treated as a mandatory component to be able to talk about the configuration of a family and to cover the need to position it; this could be seen in the works about family photographs during the Spanish civil wars. Evidence of fragility is the presence of children in war when it is sought to narrate the magnitude of armed conflicts.

The Latin American academic interest in the relationship between childhood and photography has increased in the last three decades, but the childhood of interest in these studies has not been contemporary childhood. It was not possible to document studies that resorted to photographs to account for the social construction of contemporary childhood, even though photographs of boys and girls circulate in daily life.

At the time of searches for studies, analysis and research of this type of objects for the understanding, construction and reconstruction of childhood, especially in the field of education and information, are scarce, at least in the Latin American context. However, it is concluded that photography has begun

to be valued as an instrument to understand the scenarios and school practices that include teachers and managers, as well as children; It is also recognized as a cultural object because these photographs constitute an important place in the historical and educational heritage of different societies. Even so, the volume of work is small despite being an institution that produces photographs of children.

Outside of school, but still in the field of education, photography has also been a training object through which the ways of traveling in a society or culture are narrated, aimed at children and adult audiences; this is the case of museums and alternative educational settings.

Finally, it is important to highlight the remarkable role of photography in the social construction of childhood and school, because although the vast majority of the population has experienced both, in adult life and away from school, the knowledge about what is happening with one (childhood) and with the other (school), is achieved largely through the encounter with the images that circulate and from which it is possible to recreate the discourses and realities that include them.

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