

The school's structure: a multidimensional perspective

"School civilizes men, providing them with new environments and forming in them new habits of life in society. School humanizes by awakening the consciousness and leads men to higher forms of thinking and feeling. As an instrument of nationalization, the public school outlines the physical and moral area of its homeland and, by uniting the individuals in increasingly larger groups, the school dictates to the people their rights and duties as citizens."

Helena Antipoff

Writing an editorial is always a challenge. Selecting articles to be included in the issue of an academic journal turns out to be a provocative exercise for those in charge of this task. It was no different in this case. A variety of texts were selected which, at first sight, seemed unrelated. The heading above, however, made the endeavor easier. Present in one of the articles in this issue, the comments recorded here translate with clarity the connection between the texts here collected. Its author, Helena Antipoff, was an educator who lived and worked in Brazil in the last century, and has left a series of teachings in which she values the learning of learners, including the democratic principles of autonomy and cooperation.

On the other hand, a careful reading of the reflections, in the perspective of Antipoff's precepts, allowed us to see that all articles also deal with the complex nature of school. This is not a novelty. For long, we have been aware of how abundant are the relations that are woven within the wall of this institution. Antônio Candido, in his classical text *A estrutura da escola* (The structure of the school), first published in the 1950's, had already drawn our attention to such reality.

As an instance instituted by society, the school has an internal organization that mirrors the outside world. There we find adults and children, the conviviality between sexes, among religious beliefs, and power configurations, in addition to the differences of behavior between the most resistant or the most disciplined, which reveals a tense and diversified network of interactions. These clusters, in themselves and in the whole, are responsible for the clash of different interests and projects. There we find experiences of sociability among peers (SIMMEL, 2014), confrontations or partnerships are established which may go far beyond the walls of each institution.

One of the tasks of Education and therefore of its disciplinary fields is to cope with these disputes based on a pedagogical work that is sensitive to such complexity (CANDIDO, 1978). Naturally, school is not limited to its instructional mission, since in addition, as a space where human relations are established, it comprehends and articulates multiple dimensions.

In a time when the Education area is systematically affected by controversial public policies, including the recent proposal to change the curriculum of secondary school¹,

¹- About this, see the paper - Reforma do Ensino Médio - MP 746/1016i (*High-school reform*). Paper written by a commission of professors from the School of Education at UFMG, as a summary for discussion with students, teachers, school managers and whoever might be interested in the subject. Belo Horizonte, December, 2016.

one must be alert about the multiple aspects that organize school life. In times when there is advocacy for the cause of the so-called *Escola sem Partido*² (school without political parties) it is necessary to pay attention to the diversions interested in reducing the school ambience to a mere transmitter of knowledge. There is nothing more alienating and notably incorrect.

In attempting to demonstrate the tenuous yet abundant frontiers between the dimensions that make up the structure of the schools, which disqualify shallow thoughts about the pedagogical practices, this edition of the journal *Educação e Pesquisa* (education and research) envisages a series of timely reflections. A great deal of the articles result from qualitative investigations, case reports, discourse analysis, surveys and interventions onto the subfields of Education, as they simultaneously point to the macro and micro perspectives.

We should also highlight the importance that all articles attribute to the element of discourse, either oral or written, as well as to testimonies, representations or analyses that corroborate the opinion that school not only conveys the cultural heritage but mainly the school produces and constructs what is new.

Thus, even though still recent, Graduate Studies in Education have demonstrated that. In a period of 40 years it was possible to build a scope of knowledge that yielded strategies to improve or support decisions that involve a remarkable amount of professionals and their students. It is within this wide and fruitful spectrum that we can find the reflections published in this issue.

The article *A pós-graduação e a pesquisa sobre/na educação básica: relações e proposições* (Graduate studies and research about/in basic education: relations and propositions) against what had been disclosed in the 2011-2020 National Graduate Plan, brings a report about the large amount of research materials that is at the disposal of the authorities. Notwithstanding, the authors warn that such consolidate knowledge has been systematically disqualified. Thus, analyzing the academic production of Education Graduate programs turns out to be crucial both for the studies on educational policies, and for its operationalization. It must be said, then, that the federal government agenda in PNPG 2011-2020 does not utilize and does not acknowledge what has been produced in this field, which sadly legitimates interventions taken from the outside inwards or from top to bottom to the detriment of educational sectors and actors.

Drawing attention to the problems that Education in Brazil may undergo in the next few years, the article *Tecnologías de gobierno en la formación de profesionales de la salud en una universidad tradicional* (Government technologies in health professionals' training in a traditional university) describes the experience of a technical rationality implemented in higher-education Health courses in Chile. Such practice, supported by a formation based on competences, seems to de-characterize the professor who

2- Draft bill that is in the phase of proceedings, which seeks to control what teachers say in the classroom, in order to ensure the neutrality of school contents.

succeeds in teaching in a citizen and republican perspective. The emphasis in the aspects of governability based on efficiency, closely related to the processes of globalization of the capital, to the market logics and to the competitiveness are strategies which little by little move forward in this context, previously seen under the view of more individualized human relations.

In another strand and problematizing the reflection above, the article *Conocimiento pedagógico: explorando nuevas aproximaciones* (Pedagogical knowledge: exploring new approaches) provides thinking over the Program for the Strengthening of Teacher Basic Training in Chile, by examining the qualities required from teachers for the formation of individuals qualified for complex thinking, with capacity to act in contexts of diversity and in situations of economic and social vulnerability. Encompassing several aspects, the program bets on the complexification of the pedagogical thinking, allowing it to be open to unclear value-biased situations, as is the case in schools, with the purpose of orienting towards the amalgam of experiences taking place in them.

Following the same line of reasoning, *Atividades de monitoria: uma possibilidade para o desenvolvimento da sala de aula* (Monitoring activities: a possibility for classroom development) and *Estratégias de intervenção do serviço social nas políticas de escolarização: uma análise contemporânea* (Strategies for social work intervention in schooling policies: a contemporary analysis) are articles that dialogue with one another. The former makes room for a discussion about the collaborative work among students and professor in teaching and learning process, while the later, based on a multidisciplinary view of these very processes, certifies the advancement of the investigations in which one highlights the positive aspects of an education based on the interaction of and reflection by the individuals from the educational community. More specifically, the later article reveals the prime instrument for the intervention in schooling policies dedicated to a genuine struggle against the inequalities in academic performance. A collaborative environment and well-conducted diagnose of the learning difficulties among sectors damaged by high rates of social vulnerability convey solidity to the educative model open to debate and to the singular needs of each space time.

The reflections contained in *(Des)vinculações de Planos Municipais de Educação metropolitanos com outros instrumentos de gestão local da educação* ((Dis)association between metropolitan Municipal Education Plans and other tools of local educational management) and in *Sentidos de política e/de gestão nas pesquisas sobre a escola* (Policy and management meanings in the research about schools) contribute to this discussion shedding light upon the fragilities that may affect educational institutions. According to the authors, the opinion that education plans and projects on the local level would be enough to reach an effective management is nothing but false diagnostics. For them, PME's (local educational plans) should build ongoing partnerships with the Education Development Plans, with the Political-Pedagogical Plans of each school, and with the Budget legislation. That is, elements that would form a picture that is closer to the reality of the Brazilian schools in the perspective of qualified management. Working with data from the Greater Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area, the authors revealed a clear tendency

of low intermunicipal cooperation, a practice far away from the educational challenges that imply joint management and connected with the surrounding cities. The article *Sentidos de política e/de gestão nas pesquisas sobre a escola* resumes the idea of how complex the school daily routine is and the enormous challenges brought by the highly heterogeneous and diversified experiences taking place in a school. For the authors, the absence of public educational policies dealing with particularities and the actions of the individuals involved in each school context adds to the reproduction of inequalities. In short, such discussion becomes fruitful because it highlights everyday practices as the creation of multiple individuals and the multidimensional nature of the school challenges.

By all means, the structure of the school includes affections and emotions, mirrors social pathologies, reproduces disparities and, as such, it is urgent to pay attention to the multidisciplinary efforts of investigation that have been made. An example of that is found in the interview with Professor Pierre Delion, whose title is *Tratar e educar o autismo: cenário político atual* (Treat and educate autism: a current political scene) conducted by professors Maria Cristina Machado Kupfer and Rinaldo Voltolini, dealing with the intradisciplinary relations and focusing on medicine, psychology, and pedagogy in a modelling fashion. It brings up a practice developed by groups of professionals who have been thinking over autism, in an effort to provide the school community with less invasive choices. A highlight of the interview is in this portion: “if, on one hand, we can notice, in our present context, a tendency by the pedagogical milieu of taking the direction of the medical-psychological logic that is allegedly dominant in the specific case of the work with autistic children, on the other hand, it is curious to learn the reflections by a doctor going in the opposite direction and stressing the importance of not missing the educative nature of the approach toward these children.”

In tune with such concerns, the articles *A medicalização da educação: implicações para a constituição do sujeito/aprendiz* (The medicalization of education: implications for the constitution of the subject/learner) and *Las emociones en el profesorado: el afecto y el enfado como recursos para el disciplinamiento* (Teachers' emotions: affection and anger as resources for disciplining) take a careful look at the cases of Autism Spectrum Disorders and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as part of today's condition, which may as such be treated without the use of drugs. Courageous enough to escape from the usual consensuses, they focus on more human strategies, with enhanced interaction between pedagogy and psychology, in a genuine effort to attentively listen to the pain and difficulties on the ground of human coexistence.

Problems associated with academic performance and learning difficulties can be reviewed through combined efforts by the school community involving teachers, students and families, including other agents, as one can see in the articles above, which no doubt also happen in the public policies for textbooks, a situation portrayed by the article *Dificuldades de aprendizagem nos manuais e materiais didáticos em Portugal* (Learning difficulties in textbooks and didactic materials in Portugal).

Likewise, the article *O encontro reflexivo como possibilidade de intervenção clínica em instituição educacional e grupo comunitário* (The reflective encounter as a possibility for clinical intervention in educational institutions and community groups) corroborates the capacity of listening to and rethinking the relations and partnerships that can be established among education agents: parents, teachers, students, and public educational managers.

But that is not all. There is still the opportunity of introducing other debates dealing with the complex structure of the schools. For example, the papers addressing gender and sexuality talk about how much recent studies have provided a solid background of knowledge. It is remarkable to see the fast pace that this identity markers, *sex and gender*, have been rocketing and taking higher importance in the field of public management and in the debate about school and family violence.

The article *Sobre a legitimação do campo do gênero na ANPEd* (About the Legitimation of Gender Studies in the ANPEd) comes in handy by confirming the perception mentioned above. It is a successful work that quantifies and qualifies the reflections conducted in Anped from 2000 through 2011, clearly showing the state of the art in these studies. As the authors argue, this field of investigation has increased and grown stronger but it still, they say, lacks legitimacy.

A small set of three articles, namely: *Inclusão de mulheres camponesas na universidade: entre sonhos, desafios e lutas* (Inclusion of peasant women in university: among dreams, challenges and struggles); *Escola do campo: relação entre conhecimentos, saberes e culturas* (Countryside School: Relationship between Skills, Knowledge and Cultures), and finally *Escrita e leitura de diários na formação de professores para escolas rurais em Minas Gerais (1948-1974)* (Writing and reading diaries in the education of teachers for the rural schools of Minas Gerais (1948-1974)), address the education in rural areas where teachers were the subjects of investigation. These studies indicate practices and processes of female empowerment as a result of university research.

In a more specific fashion, the article *Disidências sexuais en el sistema escolar chileno: represión e invisibilización* (Sexual dissidence in the Chilean school system: repression and invisibility) draws attention to and supports educational correctional procedures in spaces still full of prejudices and conservatism. The experiences of discrimination, bullying and homophobia are painful marks that result in most cases in school drop-out, repressed identities or violence. As Antonio Candido would put it, there would be necessary to develop pedagogical practices capable of ensuring the balance of tensions among the various actors so that such differences would not turn into inequalities.

If as a consequence of reading these papers, we have sought to exemplify the complex, multidimensional, plural, and tense nature of the school ambience, one could not neglect the existence of the religious issues in the educational environment. Either in a rural school or in the teacher education courses located in great urban areas,

there is the powerful and undeniable presence of religion in the institutional daily life. To address this set of problems, the article *Religião, formação docente e socialização de gênero* (Religion, teacher training and gender socialization) shows how religious belief permeates the life of school actors and is strong enough to orientate behaviors that compete with the scientific and secular knowledge yielded by the academia. Such study urges new and more comprehensive in-depth approach in this area of research.

Finally, it must be said that this editorial had the purpose of taking note of the multiple dimensions that the school structure allows both the researcher and the public manager to see. Teacher education, both basic and ongoing training, conflicts between the several social clusters acting within the school, pedagogical projects confronting one another and which have been gradually taking the lead, school management, cooperation between the school and extra-school communities, affections and social pathologies, academic inequalities were the topics addressed in these 17 reflections, emphasizing the complexity of the current educational institutions.

By all means, this is no news for scholars in the area. However, it is worthwhile to didactically repeat it, because it comes to our help in the discursive struggle between those who preach for a merely instructional education and those who fight for a citizen and republican school. A place for the creation and production of the new. A space of respect for the differences and at the same time guided by the appreciation of freedom and equal rights for everyone.

Enjoy your reading.

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