

### Views on education and school: subjects, spaces, times

In this volume, *Education and Research* offers the reader a set of 14 articles, followed by an interview with Professor Max Butlen, from Université de Cergy-Pontoise, France. Sequenced in four blocks, they bring research on the history of education, on the effort to understand the youth views on school, society and their future, on the field of statistics and, finally, on contemporary contingencies of capitalism and its consequences for education.

In the first block, four articles often reminded me of a passage from the book *Invisible Cities*, by Italo Calvino. In the book, the Venetian traveler Marco Polo tells Kublai Kahn, head of the Mongol empire for which he worked, about the towns where he passed, in a description that, much more than physical aspects, considers the ways of life of the inhabitants and their relationship with space. At one point in the text, when the emperor asks Polo about the reason for so many trips, he says, “Elsewhere is a negative mirror. The traveler recognizes the little that is his, discovering the much he had not had and will never have” (CALVINO, 2010 [1974], p. 25)<sup>1</sup>. In a way, this is what the first set of articles in this volume of *Education and Research* provides readers with: an opportunity, through similarities and differences, of recognizing themselves through spatial, temporal, social alterity in negative mirrors. By addressing the history of topics such as the university, the differences between teaching in rural areas and in cities, professional practice under authoritarian or democratic regimes, the relationship between school and identity, and gender and generation issues, the articles enable readers to identify spatiotemporal changes and thus to recognize the historicity of their existence too.

In the first of these articles, Thiago Borges de Aguiar and David Costa da Silva analyze the relation between religion, national language and education, interwoven in the study of the founding of the University of Prague in 1348, and of its nationalization years later, showing the prominent role that institution played in the dissemination of a sense of Czech unit. By overcoming the limits of classical historiography, which has traditionally located the emergence of nationalism in the modern age, with the establishment of absolute national monarchies, “National identity in fifteenth century Bohemia and the formation of a Czech *paideia*” allows us to think about the theme of nations from earlier times and beyond the centrality of the state in their articulation. It also identifies the central role that language plays in the construction of a sense of belonging to a group and, in this specific case, besides language, the role played by religion, recovering a long tradition of struggle for the affirmation of otherness, of which John Huss is one of the most famous exponents. For the Czechs at the University of Prague, language, religion,

**1-** The references in this editorial are those that I used when writing it. The authors mentioned to indicate the theoretical dialogues in the articles have not been referenced here.

and education were fundamental for an educational Paideia to be consummated. To prove this hypothesis, the authors used a wide set of documents from the twelfth to the nineteenth century related to the founding of the university and its nationalization, literature about the Czech founding myths and collections of legends from the twelfth century to the nineteenth century. Along the way, they promote the recognition of different academic traditions and invite reflection on our own tradition.

The following article – “*Zeitgeist* or German spirit: ethnohistory of Germanness and the establishment of schools in Santa Catarina” – addresses a more recent period and closer space, and investigates the intertwining of language, religion and education which has maintained a German spirit in that state. Its author, Ademir Valdir dos Santos, explores a wide range of sources – travel accounts, newspapers, reports, legislative texts, textbooks and a school notebook – to discuss the consolidation and permanence of Germanness until today in that state. The author also points out the transformation of that feeling over time, by showing how the appearance of school in those areas colonized by German immigrants was heavily linked to their Lutheran ideas and to the place of education in such ideas. In the process, he emphasizes how schooling in Santa Catarina occurred largely due to autonomous initiatives of the immigrants themselves, by the creation of schools, the use of their own teaching material, the choice of teachers and everyday practices that reinforced a Germanic identity in the region. For the author, not even the blows suffered during the first decades of the republican period, which culminated with the closing of these schools and the prohibition to use the German language under the government Vargas, were enough to supplant this *Zeitgeist*, which is still quite strong, at least in some more traditional locations. Thus, the text extends the knowledge about the history of education in Brazilian Empire and in the early days of the Republic, showing actions that, although punctual, did not fit either within the state initiatives or the traditional Catholic education, which is better known among us.

Terciane Angela Luchese and Luciane Sgarbi Grazziotin also focused on communities marked by immigration, but they did so from the standpoint of teaching experiences. Traditions, spaces and times, however, are different from those of the previous article. The authors analyze the memories of lay teachers who worked in isolated rural schools, in Italian immigrant communities of Rio Grande do Sul state, particularly in Serra Gaucha region, from 1930 to 1950. To do this, they cover from the time when such teachers were students until when they entered teaching, showing a marked diversity of educational processes, ways of entering teaching and daily practices at school. The article, entitled “Memories of lay teachers who worked in rural education in the region of Italian immigration in Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil (1930-1950)”, also enables us to recognize the leading role of the community in the creation of teacher identity; several of the teachers interviewed emphasize, with some nostalgia, the prominent place they occupied in the Italian rural communities and the many ways the recognition of the profession was manifested, including various and constant gifts, participation

in the private lives of students and their families, and collaborations to school. However, these memories also reveal the shortage faced by students and teachers, which is evidenced by the lack of teaching materials, the precariousness of school infrastructure and the excessive activities to which the teachers were subjected. The time frame established by the authors puts in tension the discourse of nationalization of education and that of its expansion and, on the other hand, the many school practices that existed on the margins of these initiatives.

The last article of this block also uses memories of teachers. It seeks the intersections between personal biographies and broader social events. The text “Social mothers in the villages: women schoolteachers during the National Catholicism period in Spain” takes as its starting point the memories of two generations of teachers of Spanish rural primary schools of two generations, one trained before and another after the Civil War. The article seeks to understand the impact of such violent event on the teaching practice and the way the Francoist ideology interfered in the construction of teacher identity. It also evidences the effects of the long Franco dictatorship on female teachers. Its author, Sansoles San Román Gago, from Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, takes autobiographical texts as sources, emphasizing gender and generation to understand the place given to women in Spain under Franco. Throughout the article, one notices that the time of teacher education influences subsequent choices, for example, of teaching methods. However, in spite of the differences, the text exposes the impact of a long dictatorship, with strong religious influence, in shaping for women a place marked by submission.

What do students think about school and education? And what do they think about the relationship between school, education, and their future? What do they want for their school careers and lives? What values do they share? These questions have guided the second set of articles in this issue. These texts turn to student perspectives, not always adequately examined in comparison to the approaches focused on teachers and on legislative or curricular aspects. In addition to their specificities, these articles help to understand how the youth category has been historically constructed and how it is present in contemporary world, permeated by contradictory images that sometimes present young people as hopeful future, and sometimes perceive them as a threat. Contrary to such generalizations, these studies argue for the importance of non-linear and generic approaches; approaches that consider, *inter alia*, temporal dimensions of gender and class involved in the representations of the youth (LEVI; SCHMITT, 1996).

In the first text, “Being someone in life: a study on rural youth and their *life projects*” Juarez Dayrell and Maria Zenaide Alves analyze the dreams and expectations of a group of young people from São Geraldo da Piedade city, Minas Gerais state, Brazil, who live in rural areas. The objective of this article is to propose a typology of *life projects*, conceived on the basis of intersections of personal biographies and *fields of possibilities*. Attentive to the discourse of the young people interviewed, the authors warn about a certain reductionist view that directly links *life projects* to *professional future*, a dimension which, although present, does not exclude

other wills and hopes. From the set of documents, the article proposes some more general categories in which these youth *life projects* can be ordered: *projects of mimetic form*, which have a reference seen as positive and whom the respondent wants to follow, an example of someone who can be taken as a model. The second category – *hypomaniacs* – is characterized by excessive optimism and little regard of the field of actual possibilities faced by the group. Besides these two, there are: what is defined in the text as a *strategic project*, established at the intersection between the will and the possibility; *projects of refusal*, which arise from the denial of close well-known experiences; and finally, the category of *project outsiders*, which consists of young people who, hopelessly stuck in the present and its urgency, have little energy to think about the future. The authors dialogue with Jean-Claude Boutinet, Nilson José Machado, and Gilberto Velho, among others.

Nelson Pedro da Silva turns his attention to the values identified as the most relevant for a group of students from the first year of a psychology undergraduate course at a public university in Sao Paulo state. Taking as one of his main references Yves de La Taille's work and what he calls "psychology of virtues", Silva seeks to verify what values guide the conduct of those students, and examine such values in three broad categories: public values (moral values linked to the dimension of living), private values (related to harmony in life and personal relationships) and values related to glory (e.g., beauty, physical strength and financial success). The author points out that other studies have also sought to identify and analyze these values, but his has a different approach: students were invited to answer a questionnaire that inquired not about themselves but about what they thought was most important in their friends, a decision based on the premise that what we see in the other is also in us. The findings point to the prevalence of private over public life, to individualistic behavior and, according to the author, to a certain "utilitarian ethics", centered on the self and the satisfaction of one's needs, which results in large part from the relationship between capitalism and personality, as studied by historian Richard Sennett (1977). Beyond the insight it gives on a specific group of future psychologists, "Values prioritized by psychology undergraduates of a public university", on the one hand, compels us to think about how changes in the world of work, in consumption and in institutions affect our personal and social values. And, on the other hand, it makes us reflect on the social value of cooperation, which results from the failure of our individual resources, but also from "the skill of understanding and responding to one another to act together" (SENNETT, 2011).

Relations between youth, education and work are also present in "Expectations of young people from public secondary education about study and work", an article by Davisson Charles Cangassu and Daniel Arias Vasquez on the findings of research with young secondary students from public schools of the metropolitan area of Sao Paulo city. The authors worked on data from surveys with more than 1,300 students, seeking to understand what these students think about their future, the role of study in their projects and the difficulties to fulfill their plans. The theoretical discussion

is centered on classical authors of philosophy and sociology of education, such as Althusser, Bourdieu, Passeron, Baudelot, and Establet. Initially, the text raises the hypothesis that, in the near future, these students, pressured by economic needs, would opt for work at the expense of education. However, tabulating and reading the data obtained, the authors noticed that most students intend to continue their education and have high expectations that higher education will provide them with entry into the labor market in more favorable conditions. On the other hand, despite this desire and intention, such young people also think that the need to balance school and work is their biggest obstacle to continue studying and succeed. Thus, on the one hand, they indicate significant changes due to the expansion of education for the working classes; and, on the other, they point out that this belonging – and the social inequality that constitutes it – are still obstacles to the full realization of youth projects.

We close this block with an article by María Paula Pierella, “The university professor’s authority: a study focused on language arts students’ accounts”, on the data obtained through semi-structured interviews with graduate students about to graduate from Facultad de Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Argentina. The text seeks to understand what these students see as teaching authority and think about university experiences in broader dimensions than education *sensu stricto*. The author notes that student responses have a common point: the criticism of authority when grounded exclusively on institutionally hierarchized positions. Neither do students accept forms of authority based on personal power, which they vehemently reject. On the other hand, they suggest a wide range of reasons why they recognize the authority of a professor and take it as legitimate. In this range, students highlight mutual respect, the professor’s generosity in everyday classes, the mastery of his or her field of knowledge, the practice of disinterested research, academic recognition and certain personality traits. The article invites us, therefore, to think about both the traditions of teaching authority that university has nurtured throughout its history and about its contemporary challenges.

The following three articles deal with the subject of statistics and its relations with the field of education. They help to understand how statistics have become, especially since the 1930s, an authoritative instrument in Brazil, founded on the belief that statistical data reveal neutrally and objectively information capable of guiding different public policies (GIL, 2012, p. 524). The establishment of Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE – Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) in 1934 reinforced this view. Along the way, educational statistics have been pioneers, seen as capable of providing scientificity and rationality to public policy, especially since the government Vargas (CALDEIRA-MACHADO; BICCAS; FARIA FILHO, 2013).

The first two texts have historical approaches that dialogue intensely because of their choice of place – Universidade de São Paulo –, their characters – especially Professor Milton Rodrigues –, and also because they historicize how statistics was transformed from a fundamental aid for the analysis of national education and constitutive element

of teacher education to an autonomous disciplinary field. In this process, the articles reveal the links between public education policy, curriculum and power relations between the subjects. They also share the same theoretical framework, with a strong dialogue with the propositions of Ivor Goodson and his contributions to a social and cultural history of the curriculum, evident in the effort to unravel the social determinants that influence the selection of contents to be taught at different historical times. Thus, using different frames, the two articles help to understand the links between knowledge and power, both by investigating subjects directly involved in these relationships, and by analyzing curricular changes and the contexts in which such changes were processed (JAEHN; FERREIRA, 2012).

In “From educational statistics to statistics: from professional practices to an academic disciplinary field”, Martha Raíssa Iane Santana da Silva and Wagner Rodrigues Valente investigate how statistical practices gradually underwent an academic transformation and became a scientific discipline, taking as main theme the role of professor Milton Rodrigues at Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo, from 1930 to 1960. Based on institutional documentation, they suggest that this professor was responsible for a shift: statistical knowledge, which before was related and subsidiary to other fields – education, psychology, sociology –, became an autonomous field of research.

Following, in “The statistics discipline in the pedagogy course at USP: a historical approach”, Viviane Lovatti Ferreira and Laurizete Ferragut Passos focus on the history of the discipline at Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo, from 1939, date of its creation, to the 1990s, when a new curriculum excluded it. The authors use a diverse set of sources, which include educational legislation, pedagogy curricula at different times, course syllabi, teaching materials and also the memories of different generations of teachers who graduated from Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo, which inform about the role of educational statistics in their training.

A more contemporary issue is discussed in the last article of this block: the teaching of statistics and teacher education for that subject in Chile. This is the theme of “Pedagogical content knowledge of Statistics among primary teachers”, written by Soledad Estrella, Raimundo Olfos and Arturo Mena-Lorca, from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. The authors have addressed, inter alia, the issues of the statistical content to be taught, the knowledge necessary to teach such content and the actual learning by students. Research data were obtained through a questionnaire answered by 85 Chilean primary school teachers and also questionnaires answered by their students. The very analysis uses statistics and concludes, in agreement with other studies, not only that teachers have little knowledge of statistics and of how to teach it, but also that students show meager results, due to their great difficulty to produce and read statistics in their various possibilities of presentation – tables, graphs etc. As a final proposal, the authors highlight that teacher education should operate with this type of information in three dimensions: the understanding of the formulation of the variables of

a statistical survey; the reading of the data collected; and the harder work of extrapolating the description of figures and turning to its qualitative analysis.

The final three articles in this issue address the relations between education, work in contemporary world, and new technologies. In the first one, “The dual system in the German vocational training: school and enterprise”, Jesús Alemán Falcón, from Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, analyzes the dual model of vocational training adopted in some regions of Germany, which consists of a partnership between public schools and private initiative to offer training that meets the needs of qualified labor by companies since secondary education. According to the author, such partnership is responsible for Germany’s economic strength. After analyzing legislation and interviewing tutors of that professional education, school principals and entrepreneurs, he argues for the importance of practical preparation of the workforce by companies, not only to meet market demands, but also to provide students with a way forward. Along the way, the author also gives an insight into the German education system since primary school.

The concern with the vocational training is also the theme chosen by Raquel de Castro Almeida and Miguel Chaves in “Entrepreneurship as an aim of the European Union policy for higher education”. According to the authors, the task of awakening an *entrepreneurial spirit* in students has become a public policy guideline throughout Europe, promoting curricular and management changes in various universities. Questioning the concept of entrepreneurship and working with theoretical contributions of the sociology of education, the authors analyze the emergence of these guidelines in a context of transformation of contemporary capitalism – intensification of markedly liberal economic policies and the reduction in state participation in the economic sphere, and adoption of labor legislation that is tougher and more perverse for workers. The authors use programmatic texts and evaluation reports produced by the European Commission, the body that represents the interests of European Union countries, as sources to think about the relations between the emergence of such practices geared to entrepreneurial education in higher education and the harsh reality of the employment crisis and the flexibilization of labor relations, questioning about the success or otherwise of this initiative in terms of the employability of graduates.

Michelle Prazeres Cunha studies the relationship between education and new technologies in contemporary times, casting a critical eye on the discourses – so in vogue – on improving the quality of teaching and vocational training grounded in advocacy of digital device use. The title of the text – “HD company, monitor student: Microsoft and the construction of the belief in technologies” is quite informative about the researcher’s goals, who, from a documentary body of Microsoft corporate reports, seeks to know how the company operates in the field of education. The article shows the central role of education in Microsoft’s expansionist platform and its defense of the inclusion of technologies – education equipment, products, and software –, as well as its actions in public networks and private educational institutions. Avoiding both an absolute refusal of new

technologies and a laudatory view of their use, the text provides a careful view of the economic and political dimensions involved in this relationship.

The last three articles cited point to what Richard Sennett (1998) called “flexible capitalism” and its consequences for workers: it demands that they be agile, fond of rapid changes, that they ask little of laws or rely little on them; that they be entrepreneurs of themselves, that they seek constant professional training, that they know and master all the new technologies, hoping fragily for an employability which is in itself transient. And in this direction, these articles also invite us to think about other ways of addressing the relations between education and work, which are guided by more fraternal, solidary and cooperative commitments<sup>2</sup>.

We close this issue with a precious interview with French professor Max Butlen, PhD in Educational Sciences from Sorbonne and researcher at Université de Cergy-Pontoise. His dialogue with Belmira Bueno and Neide Rezende, both from Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo, reveals how generously he shares knowledge, the seriousness of his research on contemporary teacher education and on reading, as well as his openness to the new and the other.

The researcher analyzes the models – instances, institutions, practices – adopted in France for the education of teachers of primary and secondary schools, tells his own history – since boyhood in French public school –, and comments on some results of using these models; he also addresses the issues of reading and libraries, especially school libraries, and the evaluation of student reading skills.

Prof. Butlen was a consultant to the Brazilian Ministry of Education in the 1990s and still has intense contacts with various Brazilian universities. His familiarity with Brazil favors compared approaches not only to teacher education for early childhood, primary and secondary education, but also to reading and the reading practices of students. Butlen rejects the very common idea that students are, as a rule, inefficient and uninterested in reading, and even discusses the historicity of this practice and its supports. On the other hand, he reaffirms the importance of school for students from the lower classes and the opportunities of social mobility and cultural education it can offer.

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**2-** Among the articles in this issue of *Education and Research*, four have also been published in English, in the online version of the journal: “Memories of lay teachers who worked in rural education in the region of Italian immigration in Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil”, “The university professor’s authority: a study focused on language arts students’ accounts”, “The statistics discipline in the pedagogy course at USP: a historical approach”, “Pedagogical knowledge of Statistics content in primary teachers”.



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**Artigos / Articles**



