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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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CURRICULUM, POWER AND IDEOLOGY: A REFLECTION OF EDUCATIONAL REALITY

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ABSTRACT

This work contributes with some reflections on the interferences of the educational curriculum and its complexity in the reality of the students, as well as the practices of teachers in the construction of curricular proposals that meet the needs of the reality of the members of the school community. We will analyze how ideological means of reproduction and repression act together and dynamically in the curriculum for coercion with consent performed by the State to meet class interests. This text also proposes a debate both from the philosophical point of view, in which we seek to reflect studies of human relations in the community and from the sociological point of view, in which we will dialogue on the tensions of class struggle and its influences on the curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION

The educational curriculum has long been the subject of scientific analysis from the perspectives of its experiences in public schools and how that process has historically contributed to the transformation of education and to confront the power relations in society. In an interpretation that we have about the school and its educational character, we sought elements that would allow us to understand the importance of the curriculum and its reflexive construction as a contribution to the awakening of social practices in the spaces of coexistence common to the students. For such analysis, we seek to identify the elements that conceive the curriculum as an ideological reproduction device, and in which properties it is ideologically structured.

CURRICULUM AND IDEOLOGY

The curriculum is an ideological representation, present in the educational process, conditioned by the ethical and moral formation of social subjects and the political, cultural and economic conditions, resulting from the subject's prior ideation about the reality he lives.

This process is materialized in the multiple teaching and learning practices provided by the spaces of coexistence present in our society. The materialization of the educational curriculum's intentionalities appears first as a strategy of the State and its allies that use educational spaces and teaching and learning practices to submit young people to a minimum qualification of their criticality and an excess workforce with the basic knowledge that meets the needs of economic sectors. For Mészáros (2008, p.42) "education institutions had to be adapted over time according to the changing reproductive determinations of the capital system. Analyzing the educational curriculum, we must be aware that even if it is forged from the power relations of the capital, it resigns itself in the practices of educators revealing to us their social context. In this way education becomes a dimension of the reality of the groups that make up society, bringing the conflicts that exist in society to be discussed in the classroom from different perspectives. From this point of view, we understand that the curriculum is neither static nor neutral; it represents the dispute of interests and can be critical by fighting the model of education structured in a mechanistic

practice that does not meet the real needs of the working class. On the other hand, there is state control in defending more classic and sectarian political actions that act in favor of sectors that control the means of production and consequently interfere in policies aimed at the population that needs essential public services such as security, health, education, and others. The curriculum is inherent to the process of formal education, but it is not the assumption of the dimension of the student's knowledge to which I can make the awareness emerge through the constant reflection of the subject on the reality of his appropriation. This conception is very close to the thought of Lessa and Tonet (2008, p. 50) of how the process of formation should be carried out by reflecting on reality:

In short, consciousness must reflect reality to be able to produce adequate knowledge. Therefore, when investigating reality, it is of the utmost importance that the conscience can build an idea that reflects reality in the most faithful way possible. However, this faithfulness of the reflection is conditioned by the needs and the objectives that guide the research. The reflection can never be a photographic, mechanical reflection of reality. It is always a construction of consciousness, an activity of hers. Such activity is the appropriation of the properties of reality according to the needs and objectives of the moment. In addition, with these needs and objectives arising throughout history, the whole reflection of the real is historically conditioned.

It is the responsibility of the educator to create didactic conditions that allow the educator to reflect constantly on the whole journey that he must follow to understand the reality in which he is inserted so that he may interact with other realities, conceptions of the world and be capable of transforming them dialectically through an individual and collective reflection of reality whenever necessary. On this proposal Lessa and Tonet (2008, p. 50-51) still argue that:

[...] both reality and subjectivity are always evolving, absolute knowledge of reality is impossible. Knowledge is an activity of the consciousness that, through the construction of the idea, reflects the qualities of reality. On the other hand, it is a historical process. A reality and a consciousness, both in movement, can never result in absolute, fixed, immutable knowledge. Therefore, the reflection of consciousness is a constant process of bringing ideas closer to reality in constant evolution.

In the teaching and learning process, a didactic articulation is perceived, built on reflexive argumentative restructuring, which composes a pre-ideation of a vision of the singular reality from the ideological point of view of the subjects involved (students and teachers). It is visible in this articulation the mutual composition of ideas and exemplification of reality that can contribute to the formation of consciousness. For Gramsci (2000, p. 50), the formation of consciousness is an activity proper to humans and "there is no human activity from which all intellectual intervention can be excluded. Awareness arises from a need for the transformation of matter and imposes new knowledge, which is objective in the dialectic process of the productive forces, the transformation of matter by the development of knowledge and intellectual complexity, through the curriculum. Education is a complex process, involving multiple capacities, practical and

theoretical, objective and subjective interpreted in different ways by different subjects who live in the same reality or in different realities that go beyond a simplistic and loaded with prejudice. The curriculum presents a multidimensional posture that is added to the conceptions of the professor, who is also a social individual, and who has adapted to the educational system for the academic craft and its economic maintenance of survival, that is, to be a professor is a job, with responsibilities and charges like any other job. However, the result of our work is the knowledge acquired by the student throughout the process, and on this path, there are many variants to reach the result, which will never be concrete from learning, but rather abstract and ideological according to the requirements of the historical moment. Education is unique to each subject, the educator has the responsibility to materialize knowledge to contextualize learning with the individual reality of each being, taking into consideration aspects of daily life that contribute to the creation of the world. The importance of this process shows us that teaching and learning need a broad approach, which challenges the subject to seek new knowledge and to mature as Freire shows us:

No one can know for me any more than I can know for the student. What I can and what I must do is in the progressive perspective in which I find myself teaching you certain content challenging you to learn in your practice, subject capable of knowing. My role as a progressive teacher is not only to teach mathematics or biology but by dealing with the subject that is on one side the object of my teaching, on the other the learning of the student, helps to recognize him as the architect of his cognoscitive practice. (FREIRE, 1996, p.140).

Due to its banking and normative dimension, imposed by the demands of the State in meeting the demands of the means of production with urgency, formal and public education is vetoed with a theoretical knowledge with practical and dialectical applications that allow students to constantly analyze reality. Freire warns us of the danger of a theory without practice:

In this sense, it can be said that it is so wrong to separate practice from theory, thinking from action, language from ideology, as to separate teaching from content calling the learner to make himself subject during the process of learning. From a progressive perspective, what I must do is to experience the dynamic unity between teaching content and teaching what it is and how to learn. It is by teaching mathematics that I also teach how to learn and how to teach, how to exercise the epistemological curiosity indispensable to the production of knowledge. (FREIRE, 1996, p. 141)

In the interpretation of the educator's affirmative, we can infer that theory/practice enables the transformation of the human being through his knowledge and practical intercession in reality, with changes in the formation of consciousness through the production of knowledge. In this same line of reasoning, we realize that it is praxis, the attitude of transforming nature and society, which transform the human being. These theories integrate so that we can conclude that consciousness is formed with knowledge and that the human being acquires by transforming nature and society according to his needs. In the process of teaching and learning, the educator needs to lead the students to understand the

complexities that the human being has in relation to nature and society. This perception awakens the consciousness and multidimensions of knowledge, produced by the connection of theory/practice, promoting a constant dialectic action, conducting experimentation of new knowledge put into practice.

It is important to emphasize that any discussion around the curriculum should be contextualized in the multiple realities of the school and its members so that all can be met according to their needs for knowledge and their moral and social practices.

CURRICULUM AND THE IDEOLOGICAL REPRODUCTION APPARATUS

The ideological reproduction apparatuses manifest themselves in the class struggle and bring together clear and hidden strategies and mechanisms, from the interest of power and control of society that materializes in the formation of the individual by public and private institutions, with the objective of social control in the function of a servile attitude. It is evident that the reproduction of the capitalist system takes place in various spaces such as schools, churches, unions, and cooperatives and for its efficiency and greater reach mass media are used and the tools that some of these media provide through the Internet such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, YouTube and many other applications. In the communication and information models of social networks are produced and shared millions of daily information around the world, however much of this information is questionable as to its veracity; this information is called Fake News produced by the brown press.

Ideology is an important tool of the State and all the institutions of the superstructure of power for social control and formation processes through the vehicles of written and audiovisual communication, such as newspapers, magazines, part didactic books, radio, TV and information, and communication technologies. These ideological reproduction devices make use of coercion through consent through perceptive, efficient and lasting means in the social control of the individual, because they act for the process of alienation, promoting disinterest in issues relevant to the whole society. Another form of State action to maintain control is through force, the use of violence for repression of the working class through the structure of the army, the police, and the judiciary, which are in charge of the demands of the government to maintain order and control according to its interests. Reflecting on the complex aspects of the educational process, we observe the intervention of the ideological apparatuses in the dimension of alienation of the subject, aiming at control in social relations through exclusion.

This happens in the school curriculum and in the multiple dimensions implicit in the learning process, which follow the curriculum through subversion to ideological control by breaking the norms of social behavior (ethical and moral values), institutionalized and published by the family, church, schools, unions, and media and which are corrupted by concessions of the sophist speech, which preach the false idea of democratic social freedom through intellectual repression.

According to Freitag (1980), the process of repression of ideological apparatuses is closely linked to the conduct of education through the means of production and the maintenance of capitalism and education for work alienated to work class domination with the ideas of the dominant class.

This domination, according to the author, does not occur directly, through the explicit application of violence as in the repressive apparatus of the State, but in a disguised, indirect, ideological way, through the curriculum and its dimensions. In this way, the apparatus of ideological reproduction and repression finds in the school and curriculum an important ally of the capitalist means of production for the ideological reproduction of the dominant class for the formation of the false idea of freedom and acceptance of its condition of exploitation as a natural thing:

[...] the school fulfills the basic function of reproducing the material and social relations of production. It ensures that the workforce is reproduced, transmitting the necessary qualifications and expertise to the world of work: and at the same time makes individuals subject to the class structure. To this end, it inculcates the forms of justification, legitimation, and disguise of differences and class conflict. It thus also acts at the level and through ideology (FREITAG, 1980, p. 27).

Althusser (1985) shares Freitag's (1980) ideas that the school favors social formation and subjects individuals to the dominant ideology to guarantee the surplus maintenance of the labor force, in addition to guaranteeing submission to the rules of order within the regime of exploitation and repression of the state. Althusser also argues that the school acts in complacency to other models of domination that aim at the devaluation of knowledge and popular culture. The school fulfills, therefore, its technical function of preparing for the labor market, with minimal training and leading scientific knowledge to the fatality of industrial capital control:

Now, what do you learn at school? You might go significantly further in your studies, but in any case, you learn to read, write, count, - therefore some techniques, and much more, including elements (which may be rudimentary or rather in-depth) of 'scientific culture' or 'literary' directly usable in different places of production (one instruction for workers, another for technicians, a third for engineers, another for senior staff, etc.). One, therefore, learns 'practical knowledge' (des 'savoirs - faire'). But at the same time as teaching these techniques and knowledge, the School also teaches the 'rules' of good morals, that is, the behavior that every agent of the division of labor must observe, according to the place he or she is destined to occupy: rules of morality, of civic and professional conscience, which means exactly rules of respect for the technical social division of labor, for the rules of the order established by class domination. It also teaches 'good speaking', 'writing well', which means exactly (for future capitalists and their servants) to 'send well', that is, (ideal solution) to 'speak well' to workers, etc. (ALTHUSSER, 1970, p. 21).

According to Althusser's thought, we can conclude that the school as an ideological apparatus at the service of the state, ensures the relationship of exploitation of the proletariat's labor force at low cost according to the principles of capitalism, which sees in a large amount of surplus labor the opportunity to increase its profits by exploiting the labor force of the worker. He, in turn, cannot find a solution to this problem or is simply so alienated that instead of revolting against the system he is grateful that he is not unemployed, thus becoming conditioned, marginalized and oppressed from his condition of life and work.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Education is liberating, and it is the school that, through its dialectics, makes it possible a real condition of liberation through knowledge, and it is the school that has as its main role to objective values that contribute to its revolutionary character, motivating practices that awaken the best in human beings. The educational experiences of the curriculum need to be discussed and its construction needs to be collected with the participation of all members who occupy the school space. If the curriculum is not a social construction activity, it will imply the fragmentation of knowledge as well as of consciousness; as such, it has already been effected in labor relations. Taking into account these aspects, we can conclude that the curriculum is neither neutral nor static, it is fragmented. And it is the school that carries all the ideological burden imposed by the State and materialized in the privilege to dominant sectors that manifest themselves through the government institutions or by the ideological reproduction apparatus.

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