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RESEARCH ON TEACHING WORK: “WHAT PRECISELY IS AT THE HEART OF TEACHING?”

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Abstract: The article focuses on reflecting on the socio-historical process of development of the teaching profession with the aim of analyzing teaching work in its constituent dimensions, identifying the actors involved and the conditions under which they carried out their activities. Using dialectical historical materialism as a theoretical basis, we seek to understand the historical configuration of teaching as a professional occupation, and therefore the path already taken by several scholars in this field, in order to advance in this direction.

Keywords: Teaching Profession; Teaching Work; Socio-historical configuration of Teaching;

INTRODUCTION

As we begin this discussion, it is important to highlight some considerations about the category of work and teaching work. Work is a process that occurs between man and nature, by modifying nature, man modifies his own nature at the same time. Unlike animals, in order to survive, man began to subjugate nature, adapting it to his needs in order to benefit from it. Second (MARX 2003)

First of all, work is a process in which man and nature participate, a process in which the human being, with his own action, drives, regulates and controls his material exchange with nature. He faces nature as one of his forces. It sets in motion the natural forces of its body – arms and legs, head and hands – in order to appropriate nature's resources, giving them a useful form for human life. Acting this way on external nature and modifying it, at the same time it modifies its own nature. It develops the dormant potentialities within it and submits the play of natural forces to its control. This is not about instinctive, animal forms of work, the historical distance between their condition and that of primitive man with his still instinctive form of work is immense. We presuppose work in an exclusively human

form. (MARX 2003, p.211)

Work is a human activity essential to survival, through which man transforms nature and is transformed by it, where he produces and reproduces his existence. It can be inferred that it is production that forms man's being, this production is carried out through work, since from the moment man began to produce his own means of existence he transforms both himself and nature at the same time.

However, this relationship has been changing throughout the transformations in societies. Capitalism alienated the worker, separating him from the means of production, converting these into private property of the capitalists, and the labor force became a commodity to be sold to the capitalist.

Understanding the conceptualization of work from the perspective of dialectical historical materialism, it is possible to think about the consequences of this broad view of work for the work carried out by the teacher. It is from this perspective that Azzi (2000) draws elements to understand teaching work. According to the author,

To teach starts to be seen as work following its professionalization, which still presents a series of social, economic, political and cultural limitations. Historical synthesis of the evolution of teaching, the construction of the concept of teaching work demands an analysis of the teacher's activity, which transforms along with the development of society, and consequently, the capitalist mode of production. (AZZI 2000, page: 40)

Azzi (2003) weaves his analyzes showing that teaching work has something in common with what is carried out by other workers, by other workers, who are also forced to sell their labor power in order to survive, that is, firstly, the teacher He is a worker like others, subject to the general logic of market functioning and, as such, carries out a specific activity. However, if there is something common, there

is also something specific. What differentiates the teacher's work from other workers is not just the final product or the place where it is carried out, but the entire work process. She says,

This differentiation is observed in two main aspects. One refers to the characteristics assumed by the elements of the work process (human activity and the means of production) and the way they are combined in teaching, an activity developed in a unique institution, where the main object of work – the student – is also subject and has its function shared with other objects: school knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. (Azzi 2003, p.41)

According to Azzi (2003), teaching work is understood as social practice. While this presents, on the one hand, contradictions and conflict of interests, on the other it offers a wide range of possibilities, is risky and, at the same time, precarious, pressed by time, by the lack of distance, by complexity. It is an expression of pedagogical knowledge, and this, at the same time, is the foundation and product of the teaching activity that takes place in the school context, or outside it, in historically constructed social institutions. This understanding highlights the creative and complex dimension of pedagogical praxis:

In which theory and practice are determined, generating together with the subject object of this process – the student – a knowledge specific to teaching activity which, when incorporated into that which exercises its action on a given object aiming at its transformation, also transforms this subject – in this case, the teacher, who enriches himself during the process. (AZZI 2003, p.47)

Taking this conception of teaching work as the guiding thread of these discussions, this article aims to reflect on the socio-historical process of development of the teaching profession with the aim of analyzing teaching work in its constitutive

dimensions, identifying its actors involved and the conditions in which who carried out their activities. Using dialectical historical materialism as a theoretical basis, we seek to understand the historical configuration of teaching as a professional occupation, and therefore the path already taken by several scholars in this field, in order to advance in this direction.

One of the pioneering works that deserves to be highlighted is Costa's doctoral thesis (1995), in which the author seeks to understand the conditions for the constitution of teaching professionalism, having as one of her main theoretical contributions and analyzes the research of the renowned Portuguese Antônio Nóvoa.

Since teaching work is work carried out under certain circumstances, it will produce determinations in the subject who carries it out. Therefore, to carry out this discussion, I assume the socio-historical perspective of investigating teaching as work.

Villela (2007) points out that it is essential to examine the historical-social conformation of teaching work, understanding the constituent elements of the structuring of the school system. Thus, it analyzes that the process of professionalization of teachers in Brazil begins with the arrival of royal teachers, but that its regulation through state determinations took effect with the General Education Law of 1827.

The General Education Law of October 15, 1827 was the first law that organized the education of the Brazilian National State, demonstrating its centralizing character, establishing, from teachers' salaries, the form of mutual teaching and did not allow provinces to create schools, they could only indicate their number and location, thus, "from that 'statute', a process of homogenization, unification and hierarchization began in relation to the diversified initiatives that characterized the previous phase" (Villela 2007, p.100). The 1827

Law addressed little or nothing about issues relating to teacher training and development. Subsequently, with the promulgation of the Additional Act of 1834, responsibility for training its existing staff was transferred to the provinces.

The State assumed responsibility for ordering and regulating the teaching profession. It now has primacy in defining the rules, norms, work discipline and school logic. The education of its citizens is strategic, because by defining it, the Nation-State also guaranteed its maintenance.

Thus, from the end of the 18th century onwards, “it is not permitted to teach without a license or authorization from the State”, which was also concerned with establishing criteria to regulate selection, promotion, retirement and even teacher training and improvement. This fact occurred with the creation of normal schools such as the schools in the “Province of Minas Gerais (1835), Rio de Janeiro (1835), Bahia (1836) São Paulo (1846), among the first” (Vilella 2007, p104).

The first school to begin its activities in the 1930s, according to Vilella (2007) was that of Niterói, being one of the most important teacher training institutions exerting influence on decisions in the educational sphere, “functioning as a laboratory of practices that they were extended to the entire country due to the supremacy that politicians from Rio de Janeiro exercised at a national level and whose bases they found in Niterói (Vilella 2007, page: 105)”. This political group, represented by members of the most important families in the empire, became known as saquarema.

In the 19th century, normal schools constituted the central place for the production and reproduction of the body of knowledge, the old schoolmaster was replaced by the new primary school teacher. A different example of the normal school was the one designed by Caetano de Campos, in São Paulo, as Vilella states:

The grandeur of its construction and the contours of its pedagogical proposal would forever be associated with a certain importance of primary teacher training, announced at the end of the 19th century, and which would reach its golden moments until the middle of the following century. To this end, teachers already had their ‘palace’, a sign of a time of more careful professionalization (VILLELLA, 2007, p.119).

This way, the Normal Schools represented an important achievement for the teaching profession, an important milestone, as it guaranteed a dedicated space for the training of teachers, responsible for defining the knowledge and ways of doing things for future teachers,

The Normal Schools are at the origin of a profound change, a true sociological mutation, in the primary teaching staff. Under his action, the miserable and poorly educated teachers of the beginning of the 19th century gave way to professionals trained and prepared for teaching. (VILLELLA, 2000, p.101)

The spread of Normal Schools in Brazil occurred in a context of appropriation and application of Enlightenment thought in the educational field, such as, for example, the emphasis placed on instruction as a means to enable man to reach the highest level of civilization and his full moral development. As the period was also socially characterized by the occurrence of violence and crime, the education of the population began to be understood as a means of maintaining order and social control.

The concern with the moral formation of the population can also be seen in one of the requirements necessary for entry into normal school: having good morality, that is, having good morals and good education. The morigation was attested by a document signed by the provincial judge.

At the end of the 19th century, under liberal and republican inspiration, some

changes occurred in the national situation, from a political, social and economic point of view, which stimulated the need for education. The intensification of the processes of industrialization, urbanization and immigration, among others, result in a greater demand by the population for public education, although with investment still very limited in the period. Villela (2005, p.106) translates this idea very well in the following excerpt:

Brazil, in the second half of the 19th century, went through profound structural transformations that had repercussions on the social fabric. As a result of the Euzébio de Queirós Law, capital previously invested in the lucrative slave trade began to diversify its applications, favoring the financing of works that made communications viable, such as the construction of railways, steam navigation, telegraph cables, public lighting, changes that redefined perceptions of time and space, formed new habits in the population, stimulated a variety of services and, consequently, increased the demand for education.

The expansion of the national school system since the second half of the 20th century has been a product, in a certain sense, of the promise of the school as an integrating entity. These transformations are characterized by the consolidation of capitalism, with industrialization and consequently with urbanization. Domestic and religious education were no longer enough, schooling became necessary.

TEACHING BECOMES A WOMAN'S JOB

An important aspect in the socio-historical understanding of teaching work is the feminization of the work of teaching. Throughout Brazil, teaching became a mostly female profession between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th

century. What factors or reasons explain the so-called feminization of teaching? According to analyzes by Villela (2000),

In the space of five decades, an almost exclusively male profession would become primarily female, and the professional training made possible by these schools would play a fundamental role in women's struggle for access to dignified and paid work (VILLELA, 2000, p 119).

In addition to this aspect addressed by Villela (2000), other explanations can be sought, such as those guided by Peixoto (2005), produced within the scope of research and discussions of the History of Education and Gender Research Project, developed at GEPHE, on the history of feminization of teaching in Brazil. In it, the authors take stock of the research carried out on the feminization of teaching, seeking to "understand the process of feminization of primary teaching, highlighting the need to understand the reasons that led to the growth in the number of women in this profession" (PEIXOTO 2005, page: 53).

From the choice of 41 publications from different regions of the country, the authors identified that teaching became predominantly female between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, showing that the publications analyzed more affirm feminization than demonstrate it, they are analyzes debtors of international publications by Apple and Nóvoa, do not focus on the male presence in the period analyzed and list 4 interdependent axes to explain the feminization of teaching in Brazil. Although the quote is long, it becomes relevant in the analyzes highlighted for the discussion:

1.0 Axis: Changes in the structure of occupation and the labor market, which would have created new and better job opportunities for men. Attention is drawn to relations with capitalism, urbanization,

factory work, work organization. There is also a strong link with patriarchy in the reproduction of the conditions of possibility for the continuation of women's subordinate status.

2.0 Axis: Increase in the schooling process, with an increase in the number of schools and, above all, the enrollment of girls. There are those who draw attention to changes in the organization of school work and the circulation of new pedagogical models. The special relationship here would be with the constitution of National States and, in this case, with moral education as part of the civic training of citizens. We observe the publication of laws that favor the entry and presence of women in teaching or that establish the need for exclusive dedication to teaching, a dedication that, it is assumed, men could not or would not be willing to undertake

3.0 Axis: Changes in 'mentalities' / 'representations', which brought the teaching profession closer to what had long been produced and considered as a female occupation: the home, the house, the children. Normal schools and doctors would have contributed greatly to this (production and circulation of 'new' representations). The relationships would be, above all, with educational and medical thought, the new representations about women, children and pedagogical action. There is a relationship, not always made explicit, with the emerging psychology, the decrease in the age of students, and the growing female presence in the classroom

4.0 Axis: Female protagonism in occupations in an emerging job market. For poor women, it meant earning our daily bread; for women who had better financial conditions, the possibility of an activity outside the home (private) domain. For both, the possibility of combining work at home with teaching (PEIXOTO, 2005, p. 55).

The entry of women into the job market and more specifically into teaching occurs in parallel and under the influence of

various social, economic and political transformations that were taking place in the country. According to Louro (1989), women's participation in the public sphere and in the market of job was not an easy task, as it presupposed a reorganization of conventional discourses, aiming to adapt them to the new reality and needs. And this phenomenon cannot be accepted as if it were 'natural', as something given.

The author calls into question the tradition of research carried out in the field of education, which traditionally did not take into consideration, the material and concrete conditions in which education takes place in a society riddled with contradictions. These are contradictions of class, sex, race, age, and suggest that the category of gender analysis is fundamental to understanding the configuration of the history of the teaching profession:

This activity was not always carried out in the same way or by the same subjects. It was not primarily exercised by women (but by men) nor by women themselves (in terms of class origin). Therefore, if the subjects are different and the way work is organized as well, we undoubtedly need to better understand this reality and, with the help of history, critically analyze it. (LOURO, 1989. p.32).

Important questions help us understand the process of feminization of teaching. Brazilian society at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of the Catholic Church, had a very closed opinion about the place of women in society and this place covered aspects relating to the husband, children, home, in short, "domestic" tasks., of a private scope.

The process of insertion of women into the teaching profession occurs basically because it was a profession that first opened space for women without them being disapproved by society, in addition to the fact

that this profession, according to patriarchal representations in force in Brazilian society, is associated with motherhood. "Women were in a certain way driven towards it due to the argument constructed and reaffirmed within the logic of patriarchy, in its modern version, of associating the educational task with motherhood." (COSTA 1995, p.160).

At that time, women were not motivated to work outside the home, so women's entry into teaching did not happen peacefully, as there were debates against women's work outside the home and also regarding their ability to educate children.

The possibility of professionalization for women expanded through Normal Schools, a place where, in addition to teaching, they continued to learn about home affairs, receiving training to be good wives and good mothers. A conservative and sexist perspective, if we look at it from the current perspective; however, at the time, this training space, by having such characteristics, was consolidated as a space, already widely accepted by society, for professionalization for women. Men are given the right to access any level of training so that they can quickly and legitimately climb to the highest position, as for women, they can only occupy the positions left by men, those that required less education.

According to Louro (1989), linked to the teaching-domesticity relationship, there is another relationship: teaching-vocation, that is, teaching is practically a priesthood, assuming a "donation", a certain "disregard for salary", a since this is not the only source of family income.

As men seek more lucrative roles and jobs than those provided by teaching, they abandon teaching. Poor remuneration for men perceived as responsible for covering family maintenance expenses cannot be accepted as natural. A different situation when it comes to women since women's remuneration, lower

than men's, is understood as complementary to their family support, seen as working "just for their pins" (COSTA, 1995, p. 176).

Despite resistance, the entry of women produced other processes of change in the organization of paid female work. Another factor examined by Costa (1995) and which seems important to us for understanding the feminization of the teaching profession is the increasing control of the State over schools, which makes,

To teach became increasingly regulated, standardized and less autonomous, leading to the separation of men who saw teaching as flexibility and informality that allowed them to combine it with other occupations. This is yet another fact that reinforces what is conventionally said about women that they are more subject and accustomed to control, women have adapted more easily to the new characteristics of the occupation. (COSTA, 1995 p. 162)

Enguita (1991), referring to this issue, highlights that feminization not only coincides with the process of controlling teaching work but also favors it. For this author, the phenomenon of feminization had at least three consequences: the first was to make school a less sexist space; the second refers to the school's relationship with the world of work, the implications of which alter the relationship between teachers and social classes; and the third deals with the relationship between feminization and the proletarianization process. For the author, feminization "has contributed to proletarianization or has hindered the professionalization of the teaching sector". (ENGUITA 1991, p.43).

DOES TEACHING WORK BECOME FEMININE AND PROLETARIANIZED?

Starting from the premise of teaching work understood from a class perspective, it is necessary to analyze it based on the theoretical framework that postulates the constituent elements of the thesis of the proletarianization of teaching work.

The thesis of the proletarianization of teaching work understood as an interpretative theory of this work has been used when it comes to inquiring about the nature and specificities of teaching work and gained greater visibility and acceptance among Brazilian researchers in the 80s and 90s.

The theoretical basis of the proletarianization thesis and the body of this theory are anchored in Karl Marx's analyzes of work in the capitalist mode of production and Braverman's use of the same Marxian categories to examine changes in work in the context of the 20th century. The starting point in this discussion was a work presented by Ozga; Law, in 1981, at the International Conference on the Sociology of Education, when the authors explained the thesis that teachers as a professional category are subject to a process of proletarianization and tend to be assimilated by the working class.

That teachers, as a professional group, find themselves in a process of proletarianization similar to the process of proletarianization that salaried workers in the factory industry suffered in capitalist society, in the capitalist mode of production.

Thus, workers in capitalist society have gone through an intensified process of proletarianization and this proletarianization does not only occur from the perspective of work, as salaried workers, but as workers who no longer control their own work. However, they revised this article a few years later, admitting that they had made a "naive and

romantic assessment of the class position of teachers" and studied the teaching profession in relation to the use of technology, pointing out alternatives for investigating teaching work:

In 1981 we presented a paper at the Westhill International Conference on Sociology of Education [...], which was a discussion on the topic of professionalism and the proletarianization of teaching. This article is in part a critique of that, based on a belated recognition of the importance of gender in the analysis of teaching work, and also makes use of more recent historical and comparative research. This article places emphasis on the social construction of qualification and argues in favor of the study of 'teaching work', that is, in favor of the study of the teaching work process. (OZGA; LAWN, 1991, p. 140).

In the analyzes carried out in the text published in Brazil in 1991, the authors highlight the need for a greater understanding of changes in the work process in schools, and say that:

Proletarianization, as we argued at the time, following Braverman (1974), is the process that results when the worker is deprived of the ability to simultaneously plan and execute work, that is, the separation between conception and the division of execution into separate, controllable, simple parts. This process disqualifies the worker, and results in the erosion of autonomy in the workplace, the breakdown of relationships between workers and employers, the decline of trade skills, and the increase in administrative controls. As a consequence of all these factors, proletarianization can act to eliminate contradictory or ambivalent class locations by exposing antagonistic relations of production to the workforce. (OZGA; LAW 1991, p.143)

The authors start from the understanding that from the two large classes that make up the capitalist mode of production, the proletariat as a class lost control of its work

and this work began to be thought, controlled, at the pace and from a technical point of view by other people, being emptied from the point of view of their autonomy.

According to the authors' analyses, teachers as a professional body were not completely located in the condition or group of the working class, nor were they completely located in the condition of liberal professionals, who autonomously and self-regulated their own work. Due to this position of class ambivalence, considering the process of wage impoverishment that this group of workers suffered, in addition to the accentuated process of separation between conception and execution, the authors highlight the following conclusion:

Our previous use of the proletarianization thesis, borrowed from Braverman, seems to us to now need to be revised. While it is of interest to raise questions based on a precise, structural analysis of class location, there is little time to be wasted on such arcane pursuits, in the face of a government willing to discard decades of negotiated or managed consensus to produce policies, each of which refining previous versions, which take teachers firmly back to their past. We need to understand that, in response, political and social alliances involving teachers dissolve or struggle to emerge and that employment relationships are in part determined by union membership. The need to understand class relations as a lived experience, subject to historical change, rather than as an analytical category, could not be clearer.

The study of teaching work must remain at the center of research in this area. Like other forms of work, teaching must appropriately be aided by a thorough study of its practices, struggles, experiences and lived contradictions. Such an approach could range from studies of workplace relations or the politics of qualifications control to national and local political decisions involving organized teachers and their arguments about

the nature of their craft. Most importantly, this study must be historical, recognizing the movement of teachers into and out of teaching, and the change in schools, local authorities and central and local education policies. The idea of proletarianization as inexorable, leading teachers into a particular class relationship, has to be deconstructed and recognized not just as an economic issue, but a political issue, and not as inevitable, but as contested. (OZGA; LAW 1991, p.154)

Based on these analyses, several studies have incorporated these discussions and the category of proletarianization into analyzes of teaching work, particularly seeking to clarify the relationship in more detail: the school as an institution inserted in capitalist relations. After all, is the teacher's work carried out under capitalist conditions configured as capitalist work similar to the work of a factory worker?

Ozga; Law (1991), honestly and humbly recognize that they built their analyzes on a naive, romantic view of the position of social class, from a historical perspective, for not understanding the various transformations and modifications of the movement that this class, as a dynamic grouping, suffers throughout different historical contexts and for understanding more than that, that the teacher, although immersed in this capitalist dynamic, carries out work with specificity, with a nature different from that of the factory worker.

It is different because the factory worker has a clear separation between the execution and the final result of his work. When it comes to teaching work, one cannot envisage such an immediate, objective separation between this worker and the result of this work. When the worker finishes assembling the complete car, that product is foreign to him, although he has assembled a part, but the end result is an object that he has no control over, given

in an objectified, materially distanced way. When talking about the teacher, as a worker, what would be the product of his work, can we objectively establish this distance?

Based on the observation that the nature of this work is different, since students' learning constitutes a fundamental part of the work of teaching and this process operates with human beings and between human beings, therefore, the basis of the work of teaching is the process of training the other, the humanization of the other, so the operations happen reciprocally between teacher and student. The teacher learns to be a teacher, develops his experience in the relationship with the student, in the relationship with others. Not only learning the profession, but its own humanization, the very experience of values. This happens at work, for the sake of work. Therefore, this absolute distance becomes impossible, separating the exercise of this work and its result.

The authors Pucci; Oliveira; Sguissard (1991) also use these categories of analysis when carrying out research with teachers and show a very interesting understanding in the use of the concept of proletarianization, although the conception they present about the ambiguity of teachers' class is the aspect, say, problematic of their analyses. The questions they point out are quite interesting, in particular the caveat that teachers need to think in terms of class, even if they are not Marxists:

To think and act politically, and in terms of class struggle, fighting for the renewal of the educational project, for the articulation of their struggles with the workers' struggles, these are some paths that education workers are and need to continue building. (PUCCI; OLIVEIRA; SGUISSARD, 1991 p.108)

Another interesting aspect of Ozga's analysis; Law turns to the call to examine in more detail the extent and nature of proletarianization in teaching work, since the central question that must be revisited is

what "precisely lies at the heart of teaching work" (1991, page: 47), what constitutes the specificity of the work of teaching. By looking at what is specific to teaching work, it is possible to understand at what level proletarianization is taking place, both in terms of the extent of proletarianization and in terms of the nature of proletarianization.

In addition to the category emphasized by Ozga; Lawn (1991), one cannot fail to mention a perspective that is equally widely discussed and adopted in Brazil, disseminated based on the analyzes of Enguita (1991): the one that considered teaching a semi-profession, placing teaching in an unstable situation between professionalization and proletarianization. The author understood the first term in the sense of a "social and occupational position, of insertion in a specific type of social relations of production and work process" (ENGUITA, p. 41), through which there would be no external regulation of work. Likewise, with the term proletarianization he wanted to emphasize a "process by which a group of workers loses, more or less successively, control over their means of production, the objective of their work and the organization of their activity." (ENGUITA, p. 46).

Semi-professions, then, would share attributes of both professionals and proletarians. Teachers, falling into this category, would not be identical to proletarians, but they would not fully satisfy the typical characteristics of liberal professionals: competence, vocation, self-regulation and license, independence.

CONCLUSION

It is necessary to consider the understanding of the nature of teaching work duly immersed in the dynamics of the transformations that are happening at school and consequently how educational policies are modifying and transforming the school and thus understanding what is happening in

the teacher's work.

In addition to these questions, understand at what level the separation between execution and conception is happening, at what level the erosion of teaching autonomy is happening, at what aspects the removal of curricular control from the hands of the teacher and its transfer to specialists or to a sphere outside the school.

We need to look back at what is at the heart of teaching work. This is important because it leads the analyzes back to the socio-historical perspective in order to understand how and in what way the changes that are happening at school interfere, alter, modify, shape, determine or not the teacher's work.

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