

Performance and adaptation of poor children to school: the research pattern of CRPE-SP^I

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Abstract

This article examines how *Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais de São Paulo* (CRPE-SP – Sao Paulo Regional Center for Educational Research) addressed the issues of performance and adaptation of poor children to school. It focuses on the years 1956-1963 and devotes special attention to the expressions of Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira on the subject. The central argument is that the transformation of Sao Paulo city into a great metropolis became the articulating theme with which both authors investigated the performance and adaptation of school-age children, especially those identified as suburban^{III}. A new urban culture challenged the school structure and, based on the legacy of Antonio Candido and Florestan Fernandes, such questions were investigated with a new pattern of research, which became the mark of CRPE-SP at that time. This new research pattern paved the way for new analytical resources to be mobilized to study the intelligence of children at school. The shortcomings of biological parameters for understanding the phenomenon of failure and its significant numbers were demonstrated. In addition to a new anthropological understanding about the interaction between the school culture and ways of living of the urban fringes, the research pattern established enriched the repertoire of sociological analyzes of the expansion in the number of school places in Sao Paulo city. For that sociology of education which then renewed, the strongly exclusionary nature of school failure was demonstrated in a masterly manner.

I- This article is based on a research project called “*A criança pobre na economia das trocas incompletas: as formas sociais do tempo escolar nos velhos e novos urbanismos*” (The poor child in the incomplete exchange economy: the social forms of school time in the old and new urbanisms), funded by *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (CNPq - National Council for Scientific and Technological Development).

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III- Translator's note: In Brazil, the meanings of the words suburbs and suburban are negative.

Keywords

Poor children – urban culture, schooling – research pattern, intellectuals.

Desempenho e adaptação da criança pobre à escola: o padrão de pesquisa do CRPE-SP

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Resumo

Este artigo analisa como o Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais de São Paulo (CRPE-SP) abordou os temas desempenho e adaptação da criança pobre à escola. O foco incide sobre os anos 1956-1963 e dedica especial atenção às manifestações de Dante Moreira Leite e de Luiz Pereira a respeito do assunto. O argumento central é o de que a transformação da cidade de São Paulo em grande metrópole tornou-se o tema articulador com o qual ambos os autores pesquisaram o desempenho e a adaptação de crianças em idade escolar, especialmente aquelas identificadas como suburbanas. Uma nova cultura urbana desafiava a estrutura da escola e, com base no legado de Antonio Candido e de Florestan Fernandes, tais questões foram investigadas com um novo padrão de pesquisa, que se tornou marca do CRPE-SP naquele momento. Esse novo padrão de pesquisa abriu espaço para que novos recursos analíticos fossem mobilizados para o estudo da inteligência da criança em situação escolar. Foram demonstradas as insuficiências dos parâmetros biológicos para a compreensão do fenômeno da reprovação, que tinha números expressivos. Para além de uma nova compreensão antropológica a respeito da interação entre a cultura escolar e os modos de viver das periferias urbanas, o padrão de pesquisa estabelecido enriqueceu o repertório de análises sociológicas sobre a expansão do número de vagas escolares na cidade de São Paulo. Para aquela sociologia da educação que então se renovava, o caráter fortemente excludente da reprovação escolar foi demonstrado de forma magistral.

Palavras-chave

Crianças pobres – Cultura urbana – Escolarização – Padrão de pesquisa – Intelectuais.

I- Este artigo se baseia no projeto de pesquisa denominado "A criança pobre na economia das trocas incompletas: as formas sociais do tempo escolar nos velhos e novos urbanismos", financiado pelo Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq)

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Introduction

Beisiegel (2013) has very recently published an important statement about the early days of research in sociology of education at Universidade de São Paulo. In this memorial, the author revisits his experience as a former student and then professor of Sociology of Education at the same institution and adds information about his experience at Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais de São Paulo (SP-CRPE - Sao Paulo Regional Center for Educational Research)¹.

In the process of forming its own sociological vocabulary, he mentions the importance of the book *Sociologia educacional* (Educational Sociology), by Fernando de Azevedo, but recognizes that the contributions of Florestan Fernandes and Antonio Candido were the densest starting points for defining the research in sociology of education in Brazil.

Two essays produced by Antonio Candido, one published as an offprint of *Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais* (Brazilian Center for Educational Research) – “School’s structure” (1956)² – and another published in the journal *Pesquisa e Planejamento*, of Sao Paulo Regional Center for Educational Research – “The differences between rural and urban areas and their meaning for education” (1957)³ – are relevant examples of that new way of understanding the school and school life.

Candido proposed the development of a specific sociological approach to the school reality, stressing the complexity of the internal social life in each school. In his view, such a procedure would lead the observer to perceive and report what was unique about each school compared to the others (CANDIDO, 1956, p.1-2).

1- CRPE-SP was created by the same Decree n. 38.460 of December, 28, 1956 which created, in Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian Center for Educational Research, CBPE, on the initiative of Teixeira. It was associated with Universidade de São Paulo on May 22nd, 1956.

2- Translator’s note: The title in Portuguese is *A estrutura da escola*. The original titles of articles in this paragraph are mentioned in footnotes to increase readability.

3- Translator’s note: The title in Portuguese is *As diferenças entre o campo e a cidade e o seu significado para a educação*.

In the opinion of Beisiegel (2013), Luiz Pereira is the exemplary inheritor of this legacy. He became not only responsible for producing seminal texts which became classic, but also a unique expression of the consolidation of the implied excellence of the pattern received.

In this article, I agree with the historical interpretation and the central argument of the author. I also seek to add a name so as to approach the richness of this memorial of studies on childhood, which have resorted to the history of educational research to understand a little of their own course (FREITAS; ZANINETTI, 2012).

Within the studies on children and childhood in Brazil, it has become critical to understand the contexts in which certain patterns of research were defined. Sao Paulo Regional Center for Educational Research (CRPE-SP) is a very important chapter in that history.

The argument presented here is based on a research project that used the documentation of CRPE-SP and, therefore, acquired familiarity with the intellectual territory traversed by Beisiegel. While the author recalled the pattern formation and indicated the foundations of the Brazilian educational sociology, here I intend to point out some implications of such *pattern* of studying the approach between school and poor children.

In my opinion, those intellectual influences pointed the way, and the way of walking of those influenced by them, in turn, suffered the impact of the specificity of some themes that CRPE-SP stimulated as central to educational research. In this sense, it is also necessary to remember that CRPE-SP was a regional offshoot of a large-scale project, which was the Brazilian Center for Educational Research (CBPE), headquartered in Rio de Janeiro.

At CRPE-SP, a virtuous connection was established, linking solid research procedures with fertile and innovative themes. This scenario favored the production of important studies on children’s adaptation to school and vice versa.

As Beisiegel indicates, in fact, we can recognize in Luiz Pereira the excellence of

the pattern that was established, but, in the perspective of this article, it is also necessary to add the name of Dante Moreira Leite so as to understand the excellence of the pattern established when innovative parameters met themes related to the universe of the tensions established between the school and the children from urban fringes.

Within these tensions, both authors presented critical issues for the renewal of studies on children's intelligence and the settings in which the permeability of the school to the children of the outskirts appeared to be greatly reduced.

The importance of the urbanization issue in that context

In the course of the twentieth century, Brazil experienced an intense urbanization process. In the 1950s, the peasant population was still larger than the urban population. There were approximately 33 million people in the countryside and approximately 19 million in cities (DÉAK; SCHIEFFER, 2004, p. 11).

Even so, in the mid-twentieth century, there was no doubt that the "granite stability" of the large rural country, an expression by Oliveira Vianna which impressed Gilberto Freyre, was decomposing (FREYRE, 1958).

The country was becoming urbanized and, in some cases, as in São Paulo, growth was accelerating. Such process would result, as we know, in one of the most significant examples of the transition from the condition of *small town*, experienced until the nineteenth century, to that of metropolis, a global example of urban concentration with very impressive numbers which multiplied exponentially over the course of the second half of the twentieth century.

The expansion of school places was in the heart of the challenges raised by the growing urbanization we experienced. Both as a subject and as a problem, the school proved to be in the essence of the production of what Williams calls "urban culture" (WILLIAMS, 1983; 1995).

But to think like Williams, we must recognize that the school disseminated in the course of the twentieth century cannot be understood only as an urban fact. It should be understood also and especially as a factor of what was configured as *the urban* among us. We are challenged to think about the spread of schools in Brazil as *a datum of authorship*, i.e., we are called to recognize that it was also with schools that we made the cities that we made.

Schools and cities proved to be components of a reciprocal configuration (FREITAS; BICCAS, 2009). In Republican Brazil, one cannot understand the school without addressing the city. This is a very relevant datum for what I intend to discuss in this article.

In the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s, the tremendous growth of the cities and the consequent production of mass schooling occupied a prominent place in the debate between intellectuals who competed to influence what, within CBPE of Rio de Janeiro and CRPE-SP, became a unique territory of dispute: the profile of educational research. Many records present in the remaining documentation of these institutions allow us to find, in the expressions of their protagonists, representations of the school as an *urban problem* and representations of the city as a *school problem* (FREITAS, 2001; 2005).

In that context, to do educational research was to do social research (MENDONÇA; BRANDÃO, 1997). So much so that the main form of dissemination of the activities of CBPE, *Revista Educação e Ciências Sociais* (Education and Social Sciences Journal), stated numerous times that the *meaning* of educational research *was no other* but doing social research.

Both at CBPE and at CRPE-SP, educational research *derived* from social research and in the midst of this *derivation* there were intense discussions about the pattern of research to be consolidated. These discussions permeated the definition of the relevance of subjects, objects and impacted mostly on the perspectives to adopt.

The debates about the perspectives to adopt marked the projects focused on the issue of school integration into the city. In increasing numbers, in the complex diversity of such integration, there was an aspect that challenged the stability of topics and methods.

The fact that a given topic was stabilized in the research agenda meant that previous steps of the intellectual debate had been won. For many of those intellectuals, what added interpretative difficulties to that diversity was the perception that the transition from the rural to the urban was inevitable.

In this sense, to use the jargon of CBPE, the transition from the rural to the urban meant that each city could be understood as a cultural observation *laboratory*. And the production of meaning about what and how to observe was in dispute (XAVIER, 2000).

This situation gave the adjective suburban a special condition. In that context, *suburban* culture was a symbolic place where there remained characters of a time that *was yet to be dissolved* in the encounter with the city. The outskirts of large cities were somehow seized with representations of the encounter between the urban rationality and the rural rusticity, and the second was condemned to dissolve in the expansion of the first.

The issue of the complex diversity of the country became inseparable from the concerns of those intellectuals about what they termed “old and new urbanisms” (PEREIRA, 1959). The reference to *old and new urbanisms* was recreated every time they stressed the importance of adopting appropriate patterns of research to ensure that emerging urban realities were *known closely* when converted into an object of research.

CBPE and CRPE-SP were institutional spaces that encouraged sociological and anthropological research among educational researchers. This allowed evaluating the survival of *archaic socializations* (the so-called old urbanisms) and understanding the school’s solvent impact on the way of living of large

cities (new urbanisms). Both research centers specialized in education and sought to ensure a standard of scientificity based mainly on the descriptive authority of case studies.

In the institutional universe of both CBPE and CRPE-SP, case studies arose as a pattern deemed necessary for the uniqueness of educational research to be recognized and affirmed within a scenario in which the intellectual struggles intensified and gained national repercussions. Case studies became a research pattern among those who passed by both centers and, in the midst of these events, the relation between the city and the school was addressed using various meanings of the word *adaptation*.

Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to elucidate how Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira, who acted at CRPE-SP, understood the subjects of the performance and adaptation of the children called *suburban* to the school which reached the outskirts.

CRPE-SP produced an approach that was both the regional dimension of research at Department of Educational Research and Social Research of CBPE of Rio de Janeiro and the dimension of asserting its own research pattern. The richness of the documentation preserved⁴ allows registering some unique aspects of a scene that became an indispensable chapter to a historical sociology of children’s adaptation to school in Brazil.

Tensions in the spread of schools

The *spread of schools across metropolises*, a typical expression of CBPE newsletters, led to the production of surveys, essays and projects regarding the experience of childhood in contexts of urban land expansion.

4- CBPE’s documentation has been preserved by *Programa de Estudos e Documentação Educação e Sociedade* (Program of Research and Documentation Education and Society), Faculdade de Educação, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. CRPE-SP’s documentation has been preserved by *Centro de Memória da Educação* (Center of Education Memory), Faculdade de Educação, Universidade de São Paulo.

Poor children were new characters in the new school buildings, which foreshadowed a time when school education also became a conquest of the edges, the fringes of cities that were about to experience an intense urban demographic explosion.

The history of CBPE and CRPE-SP offers a special angle for the study of the history of Brazilian education, especially with regard to the *impact* of the presence of poor children in urban school environments.

In the 1950s and 1960s, it was possible to identify a clash between those who availed themselves of repertoires of evaluation and measurement of children's intelligence, using parameters considered valid since the 1920s, and those who claimed that, if the school was to include new population profiles, its assessment tools should also be renewed so that they were not converted into tools of expulsion of poor children from school areas.

Antonio Candido was the one who called attention to the presence of "rustic intelligences" in cities, alluding to the "clash of mentalities" that was in progress (CANDIDO, 1957).

From the beginning, CBPE's project mobilized Brazilian and foreign intellectuals with methodological and thematic affinities. But these affinities constantly unraveled in the situations that required defining of the research object to be outlined as *a common interest*. Such affinities were fragile and vulnerable to the demands for political alignment.

At CRPE-SP, urban studies gave rise to a unique novelty related to schooling. The irradiation of school practices in the midst of the process that made the urban fabric increase greatly provided those debates with new interpretations of the theme of children's adaptation to school.

This theme had already been present since at least the late nineteenth century, in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo cities. But the inflection that CBPE and CRPE-SP brought to the issue concerns the perception developed in both places that "the school was being moved"

(PEREIRA, 1967) and that, therefore, the very theme of adaptation should be thought in light of this significant difference.

The classrooms set up in peripheral or provincial locations became representations of settings in which those intellectuals imagined to be witnessing the "dilution of the past" in practices of modernizing rationalization (KLINEBERG, 1956; PEREIRA, 1967).

Therefore, the discussion about children's adaptation to school was not similar to the discussions of the early twentieth century or the 1920s, which was replete with educational reforms. The theme was reinterpreted and that enabled those intellectuals to commit to a research object permeated by the interest in deciphering the *modus operandi* of the school, seeing it from the inside, as Antonio Candido had advocated since 1956.

Thus, especially in São Paulo, CRPE-SP converted each classroom cataloged in their records into a social analysis laboratory doing, in its own way, what CBPE did in a broader sense in the so-called *laboratory cities* (XAVIER, 2000).

Whereas at CBPE *laboratory cities* were still considered archaic places which had not been touched yet by the dynamics seen as modern, at CRPE-SP, the classrooms of public schools were seen as places that still retained the tensions between the rural and the urban (AZANHA, 1959).

Such tensions were considered visible and measurable, as long as it was possible to investigate the set of responses that each child could provide to the school stimuli which started being part of everyday life.

Studies on the body and the intellect of children, with the separation between body and intellectual conformation, were taken as part of the process of deciphering the effects of the way of life on the possibilities of learning.

Analyzing the documentation preserved at CRPE-SP allows realizing that, in relation to this issue, the pattern of research echoed the presence of Florestan Fernandes in the political and intellectual geography, which the fact that

the regional research center had been allocated at Universidade de São Paulo marked.

Florestan was one of the intellectuals who insisted that the studies on childhood should outweigh the studies on children and their learning difficulties. That is, CRPE-SP received constant stimuli from his interventions for the analyses of the way of life to prevail over performance analyses. His familiarity with the issue did not spring from educational interests (FERNANDES, 1963).

From 1942 to 1959, Florestan Fernandes investigated and published studies on folklore and social changes in Sao Paulo city. Such studies were gathered into a book which has been a reference since the early 1960s (FERNANDES, 1961; 2004).

It is important to note the effort of Florestan Fernandes to restore the importance of folklore for the sociological understanding of the social changes that were taking place in Sao Paulo city. The author's analysis of the "culture of folk, which was disintegrating, and the civilized culture, which was emerging and expanding" bequeathed a rich and unique material on the cultural structure of the Brazilian urban life (FERNANDES, 2004, p.11), especially with regard to a link which had been little studied theretofore: the one between culture, childhood and cities. This triad resurfaced strongly at CRPE-SP by the hands of Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira.

The body and the intelligence of children were focused with anthropological and sociological lenses, both in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. In that context, sociology, anthropology and ethnographic techniques were often mobilized from the set of knowledge identified as necessary to reveal the effects of schooling on the body and the intellect of children.

Therefore, it was recognized that increasing the school population also meant bringing to the "territory of homogeneity and of the rituals of simultaneous work" (FREITAS, 2011; 2013) children whose personal and social particularities destabilized two basic

assumptions of school education: 1) *classes organized by age* in 2) *annual grades*.

The consolidation of the graded school and its multiplication throughout the country in the first half of the twentieth century was a process permeated by the presence of intellectuals who drew on measurements, tests and measures with which they detected a greater or lesser presence of *signs of abnormality* among the children coming to school (MONARCHA, 1992; 1997; 2001; 2005; 2008a; 2008b).

At CBPE and CRPE-SP, the period of the spread of the Republican public school in Brazil was identified as a *phase*, a typical word of the 1950s, in which, at the same time, models were consolidated and there was a reaction to the arrival of an increasing number of children at school.

Such reaction came into question again from 1957 onwards due to the acceleration in the expansion of public school places in Sao Paulo city. It was about understanding the incorporation into school of children from desert, peripheral, suburban locations who, therefore, undermined the homogenizing foundations of the graded school.

To use again the expression that Antonio Candido constructed at CRPE-SP, one might ask: what is the degree of (in)compatibility between "rural and urban mentalities" at the encounter that, of course, the school would inevitably provide? (CANDIDO, 1957).

In Rio de Janeiro, in the documents cataloged by CBPE, one realizes that the investigations on the *expectations* were repeatedly organized⁵. One of the most commonly found representations of what cities had to offer beyond wage labor was the description of the urban world as a place that offers "government schools for free" (FREITAS; BICCAS, 2009).

5- An example of text which echoed the always present initiative to study *expectations* is the essay "A antropologia social e o sistema educacional" (Social anthropology and the educational system), which Fred Eggan published in Issue 10 of *Revista Educação e Ciências Sociais* in 1959, which was one of the main tools for the dissemination of the research conducted at CBPE. Another example can be found in Séguin, 1959.

The school and the city gradually became reciprocal references. A few decades after 1930, the public school became a complex *urban character* with almost no familiarity with the rural ballast of the Brazilian culture. The course to make the country predominantly urban proved to be at a point of no return, even though, at that time, researchers from both centers had different figures from the ones we have today. As Lima (1999) taught us, Brazil was still *a large hinterland*.

Human displacement has always provoked perplexity. The impact of schooling on these “people of the root” (HUTCHINSON, 1957, 37) was a permanent issue in the most fertile years of CBPE and CRPE-SP. But in the process we kept “on the alert” (LEITE, 1992) a kind of generalized aversion to those who moved from the many hinterlands to the outskirts of large cities.

In those outskirts, the school was a conquered right, but its sociopolitical value was depreciated. After the impact of the school, studies of social mobility are among the most expressive in the Departments of Social Research of CBPE and CRPE-SP, quantitatively and qualitatively (FERNANDES, 1963; HAVIGHURSTa, 1957; PEARSE, 1957).

The expansion of the public school was moving toward the outskirts in a paradoxical and ambiguous way. I mention paradox and ambiguity because, while the expansion of access indicated victories inherent to the democratization in the occupation of the places where the goods of the school culture are shared, a number of social subordinations restricted the scope of this political gain.

This restriction on the quality of the gain occurred in that expansion was often socially assimilated as a conquered right, but it was also perceived as the acquisition of a poor service offered to people considered often indiscriminately the poor who live in precarious situations and who, therefore, have no intellect, just stomach.

The fact is that the expansion in the number of places that had been underway since

the 1930s was leading children and young people not to the palatial premises devised by the first Republicans, as one had dreamed in the early twentieth century, but to facilities planned for the number-student, the student primarily counted as a budget item.

This process, in the way it occurred, left in the near past a model teacher, a model school building and a certain ordering present in the projects of school distribution in cities, especially the large ones. This situation did not go unnoticed by Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira and the lessons of both Antonio Candido and Florestan Fernandes resonated in them.

The history of the expansion of public schools in Brazil was accompanied by the production of *prescriptions* about what to do with poor children and adolescents. In the 1950s, the basic concepts used to address this issue were *assimilation* and *adaptation* (LOPES, 1959). But at CRPE-SP the use of the concept of *adaptation* prevailed over that of *assimilation*.

At CBPE, illiteracy was mentioned as a key player in the diagnostics which made explicit the causes of our social backwardness. At CRPE-SP, representations of the anachronism of our educational structures revolved around the notion of backwardness. No sooner had such structures reached the outskirts than they were already considered incompatible with “the human kind who settled there” (LEITE, 1959; PEREIRA, 1959; GOUVEIA, 1957; MOREIRA, 1957).

At CBPE, metaphors alluding to the roots favored studies on the areas around schools. Such studies were based primarily on community studies. At CRPE-SP, there were new studies on *breaking the cultural patterns* that schooled children introduced in the routine of suburban families, which favored the use of the category *rationalization of attitudes* (BASTIDE, 1971; LAMBERT, 1973; FREITAS, 2005).

In the course of the twentieth century, the issue of homogeneity (or the lack of it) became strategic in the moments in which debates about the equalization of opportunities influenced guidelines for the organization of the school, its

evaluations, its openness to the circulation of methods and its use of pedagogical strategies.

The institutional plan of the 1950s and 1960s was not the same as the one of 1929, which allowed Lourenço Filho to develop his *Testes para verificação da maturidade para a escrita* (1929 – Verification tests of maturity for writing). While Lourenço Filho's goal was to consolidate criteria for organizing homogeneous classes, i.e., to solidify the foundations of the graded school in Brazil, at CBPE and CRPEs, the very notion of homogeneity began to be questioned. Specifically at CRPE-SP, this foundation started to be very relativized.

When originally planned for the central regions of large cities, in the dawn of the Republic, the school was seen as a *centripetal force* needed to attract to its domains the children who should be civilized along the lines of an educational civilization.

The gradual arrival of the institution at the outskirts of large cities often made it hostage to political platforms which proposed that public schools act as a *centrifugal force*, able to limit the *crudity* of the outskirts to its own territory (MOREIRA, 1957).

The themes community and suburbs were mobilized to justify the development of many projects aimed at verifying the impact of the arrival of school education on those who, as a rule, came to be seen as people who were not prepared for the rigidity of school routines.

In Rio de Janeiro, the expression *children from communities* became almost jargon, a complement necessary to describe students from certain places of the cities. The discussions related to the possible adaptation of the school to local realities allowed researchers to question whether the school that reached the edges, the fringes of cities, was still the same institution and whether it was able to “produce the same effects” (CBPE, 1955). In São Paulo, the term that became widespread was *children from the outskirts* (FERNANDES, 1963).

It should be remembered that the very concept of community, suburb, and outskirts

received the decisive contribution of CBPE, through the specific studies of João Roberto Moreira (1957), and of CRPE-SP, through the also specific studies of Luiz Pereira (1959; 1967).

To use language familiar to the researchers from CRPE-SP, it seemed to them to be possible to observe the school among the so-called *internal hinterlands* of large cities, in their border places, in which the modern of the urban grammar had not fixed yet and the archaic of the *rural residues* had not fully dissolved yet (FREITAS, 2001).

Such situations stimulated expedients of application of scales to verify maturity and family vocabulary, in addition to other expedients to stagger individual and collective difficulties. But it was precisely in these conditions that the pattern assumed by Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira in Sao Paulo made a difference.

The pattern of analysis and its impact on evaluation

The school places were expanding and the so-called cultural diversifying of the strata that experienced the approximation to the school world caused, within the intellectual debate, fluctuations in the meaning given to *the art of measuring intelligence*. It was a time of doubt: how to understand the encounter of what was called the developed culture with city practices still impregnated with rusticity?

The challenge presented by *the student who does not learn* mobilized the most diverse analytical resources in the name of clarifying the dramas of the intellect subjected to adverse conditions. Intelligence became an empty word in the way of discussing academic performance proposed by the actors of CBPE and CRPE-SP. The centrifugal movement of school places did not distribute everything it could and did not collect from those children what it could collect.

At CRPE-SP, Dante Moreira Leite, who always doubted the reach of the proposals for performance analysis overly focused on measurement, ensured room for new studies

on *intelligence and academic performance*. This opened up a time and institutional space in which representations of abnormality found more rejection than supporters.

CBPE and CRPE-SP reacted to a specific process of expansion of school numbers. The idea that this process revealed a certain *lack of adaptation* to school on the part of poor children encouraged researchers of both research centers to question the universality of the internal structures of the Brazilian public school.

The difference in Moreira Leite's approach can be summarized as follows. In the late 1950s, the division of educational studies and research of CRPE-SP proposed to establish programs to check *scales of education* with the purpose of "assessing the quantum of schooling students brought with them, without being too attached to evaluations from zero to ten" (CRPESP, 1959, p.131-132).

Such scales of schooling were meant to provide teachers with mentoring so that the cultural level of each family could be learned. In São Paulo, the *scales of education* were so to speak celebrated as if they represented the end point for the studies of intelligence that still used concepts and methodologies inherited from a certain pedagogical anthropology which had genealogical connections with the criminal anthropology of the nineteenth century.

From 1958 on, Dante Moreira Leite began to insist that CBPE's program include the assessment of the economic sense that school failure acquired in the Brazilian society (LEITE, 1959; p. 15), considering failure in the way it happened, above all, as an instrument of social exclusion.

But it would not be right to restrict this new perception only to the domains of CRPE-SP. In Rio de Janeiro, this exchange of signals can be seen in numerous studies claiming a *specific and necessary ethnography* to study the schooling of children from *favelas*, without the metric excesses of the measurements of intelligence (CONSORTE, 1956; 1959).

Both at CBPE and at CRPE-SP, research started being driven by a dynamic that even

had a motto: *one only gets to know the school if one looks closely*. As Dante Moreira Leite in São Paulo had called attention to the problem of student failure, Consorte, in Rio de Janeiro, found that failure numbers were higher among poor children in general and children from *favelas* in particular. In one of the schools examined by the anthropologist, 42% of the children enrolled in the first grade were repeaters.

Given the supposed dichotomy between adapting children to school or adapting the school to children, adapting the school to the community or adapting the community to the school, new research patterns were presented as necessary.

The configuration of this field, with the meaning that Bourdieu (2000) gives to the word, allows realizing that, with regard to studies on children's intelligence, a new argumentative authority was present and the motto that made possible the expression of those young researchers was the "cultural anatomy" (CRUZ, 1961) of the outskirts of large cities, i.e., the schooling of children classified as *suburban* until then.

For these new interpreters, the repertoires of evaluation and measurement of children's intelligence had little or nothing to say to those who populated the *new hinterlands*, suburban locations where public schools and urban expansion exchanged their incompleteness.

Constantly published newsletters reinforced the use of the slogan *each school is unique*, which meant a group understanding of the school unit as a sociological and anthropological unit (EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS, 1956, p. 20). However, whereas the internal components of each school suggested different processes of observation and differentiation, the differences between the country and the city remained *in the background* as more complex references.

Luiz Pereira assimilated the guidance of Henri Lefebvre, whom he knew while reading Antonio Candido. He agreed that the most visible inequalities of urban realities raised in modernity

were the inequalities between men and women, between the rich and the poor and between city dwellers and peasants (CANDIDO 1957, p. 53).

It was developed a research pattern tuned to what in that context was defined as a basic duality of the Brazilian society. In our social guts, there was an entrenched difference between agrarian and urban mentalities.

The new demographic profile that began structuring large cities promoted intense acceleration in the pace of life. Ongoing research encountered children who had lost a reference of habitats and acquired a new existential space.

What strongly impacted that generation of intellectuals was the perception that micro towns with rural mentality survived inside and next to the urban areas, which were not effectively a whole with urban mentality (CANDIDO, 1957, p. 59-60).

Dante Moreira Leite intervened in many debates taking as a starting point Antonio Candido's argument:

As the beginning of the industrial civilization disrupts the traditional family and traditional forms of child protection (such as godfathering), [it is] necessary to create institutions which replace them. It is understood, therefore, that the school should cease to be an institution devoted exclusively to intellectual training and should start to play a much broader function of adjusting children's social life (LEITE, 1959, p.16).

In this case, the use of patterns among authors revolved around the theme adaptation, both of the school to children and of children to the school.

Florestan Fernandes was actively involved in the design of centers in almost all stages, from planning to fulfillment. His moment of greatest engagement in the Brazilian Center for Educational Research was in the early stage, when he was appointed discussant of the initial document, written by Otto Klineberg.

In Sao Paulo Regional Center, his work was more intense in the first administration, Fernando de Azevedo's one, from 1956 to 1961. Soon after, he continued as a collaborator in the management of Laertes Ramos de Carvalho. More than a collaborator, Florestan was a constant analyst of the course taken by community studies. In preparing the guidelines of the Brazilian Center for Educational Research and planning the work of the Divisions of Research, Florestan expressed a point of agreement in relation to the basis document, synthesized by José Mário Pires Azanha as follows:

The main idea of this document was that the Centers should be organized with the goal of developing a cultural map of Brazil and an educational map [...]. The fundamental idea was that we lacked systematically organized knowledge about Brazil; although hundreds, thousands of studies done over centuries of the country's existence were available, we had not been concerned with a work of synthesis - which was able to give us... a cultural and an educational map of Brazil. Prof. Klineberg's idea is that the making of these maps would be the starting point for an effort to decentralize the Brazilian educational solutions; [...] but he thought that an effort of decentralization might be superficial and even useless if it did not take into account the strong characteristics of cultural, social and educational differentiation which we had (AZANHA, 1959, p. 27).

Luiz Pereira was responsible for the production of the most significant examples of adoption of the pattern inspired in the parameters arising in Candido's and Florestan's many interventions. By his side, at CRPE-SP, there was intellectual effervescence. While researchers linked to CRPE-SP produced research into reading and writing in the schools of the state capital, administrative issues at schools, fatigue among students in Sao Paulo

city, the relation between secondary school and socioeconomic structure, some schools were chosen to be study laboratories. In this case, the units chosen allowed the observation of the scales of schooling mentioned before.

Luiz Pereira led the project *Rendimento e deficiência do ensino primário* (Performance and deficiencies in primary education) (CRPESP, 1959). This study allowed the author to deal in his own way with the metaphor of two Brazils, the image of the country whose legal framework does not correspond to the actual everyday plots. For Luiz Pereira, inhomogeneity hindered the use of rational planning in educational debates, showing that Florestan Fernandes had also invited them to read Karl Mannheim. Luiz Pereira admitted that:

[...] the lower layers of the city communities live in a not entirely urban style. Migration contingents come to join them, and remain bearers of many complexes of the rustic culture, continuing to live *the rural in the city* (PEREIRA, 1959, p. 1, emphasis added).

That generation tried to understand the impact of schooling on social life and, at the same time, it sought to highlight the ways in which *rustic mentalities* represented a permanent counterpoint to the rationalization typical of the urban mentality. According to Luiz Pereira:

The analysis of this cultural content of teaching-learning activity shows that the such content is part of the cultural heritage of not lower socio-economic strata in the city and shows the close connection of this cultural content with an urban lifestyle, mostly led by such strata. The transmission of this content, therefore, implies the communication of an urban style of social, cultural and economic life. Thus, the subgroup of primary education works in rural and semi-rural communities as a disintegrating agency of a non-urban

lifestyle and, at the same time, as an agency of urbanization (PEREIRA, 1959, p. 1).

What effects should one expect from the association between the urban school and the rural mentality?

[...] the urbanizing function of this association looms large and is carried out in several specific ways: integration of Brazilians in a national community based on urban culture; [...] disintegration of *estamentalismo* and other fractions of the social structure of rustic communities [...]. (PEREIRA, 1959, p. 1).

The research pattern acquired by Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira found in the themes performance and adaptation of poor children to school the opportunity to highlight that the intellectuals of CRPE-SP were also protagonists.

As a research object, the children in question were addressed in the midst of interpretations which are still examples of great relevance to the study of the complex relation which subsists in our society between urban culture and school culture. It was produced a renewed interpretation of the place of law which every child was entitled to in the *national community*.

Final thoughts

In November 1961, the director of CRPE-SP, Laerte Ramos de Carvalho, promoted the merger of the Departments of Social Research and Educational Research. Simultaneously, conditions were articulated for the education major of Universidade de São Paulo (USP) to be transferred to the University City campus, specifically to the facilities of CRPE-SP, which took place in 1962.

That same year, UNESCO and Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos (INEP - National Institute of Pedagogical Studies) issued a joint document in which

they expressed that CRPE-SP was the most appropriate place for the training of researchers in education (ZUBINZKY, 1975). A certain internationalization of CRPE-SP occurred from 1963 on, thanks to the presence of researchers from the University of Chicago interested in research the socio-economic structure and secondary education.

The illuminated directions of Antonio Candido and Florestan Fernandes materialized in writings which, from the earliest versions, proved destined to occupy a prominent place in the history of the Brazilian education.

The writings of Dante Moreira Leite and Luiz Pereira can be recognized as the densest expression of the pattern of CRPE-SP, which was reflected in a unique form of investigation into the performance and adaptation of poor children to school. This unique pattern of research sought to show that children's intelligence and the vicissitudes of their arrival and stay in school are issues that cannot be reduced to performance verification and measurement. In an exemplary manner, such writings showed that the issue was deeply related to the construction of the country as a whole, for everyone.

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