

POLICIES OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses contemporary school processes in order to understand the practices of socialisation and cultural transmission as socially produced processes. For that purpose, we start by reviewing the literature concerning studies about curriculum policies in Latin America. We identified two tendencies relating to the constitution of school knowledge. Articles published in five Brazilian journals over the past decade were then reviewed giving rise to 'maps of the literature'. A predominance of three perspectives was observed: policies of organisation of school knowledge; school practices; and curriculum epistemologies. After examination of the selected articles, it was found that they present significant theoretical consistency, but still few empirical studies.

KNOWLEDGE • CURRICULUM • EDUCATIONAL POLICIES • LITERATURE
REVIEW

WE START THIS TEXT by drawing on reflections by Jurjo Torres Santomé (2006), one of the major contemporary experts of curriculum. In his reflections he proposed to return to the school historic functions, both to keep and distribute historically-produced knowledge, and to introduce democratic processes. However, facing these challenges he suggests a double condition: recovering the cultural and pedagogic leadership for the teacher and centrality of knowledge in school processes. So in this approach it was necessary to renew school as an intentional space where subjects access the cultural legacy of the society in which they shape themselves and are shaped (SANTOMÉ, 2006).

To follow these political engagements, particularly concerning public education, we have to question contemporary conditions shaping curricular policies, and how knowledge is shaped. These questions can be explained by the assumption that scholarly knowledge is understood as a 'social historic artefact affected by changes and fluctuations rather than as fixed atemporal reality' (NÓVOA, 2001, p. 145), as education is a social practice. School curriculums and teachers' practices are then articulated to political artefacts for the modern state to act while it interacts with social and economic conditions in its historic moment (SILVA; SILVA, 2012).

While examining contemporary social theories we have found a number of diagnoses that give contemporary times notions of a 'knowledge society' (DRUCKER, 1993), 'information society' (CASTELLS, 2002) or 'cognitive capitalism' (CORSANI, 2003). In tune with these

approaches we highlight the perspective that knowledge has become a key issue for social life and economic production today.

We have also observed a quite strong critique of knowledge reliability (BURKE, 2003). Derived from particular philosophic tendencies, a set of new theoretical perspectives emerge to shape the 'invented' or 'created' feature of knowledge.

Following Peter Burke's historiographical narrative (2003) when he proposes the social history of knowledge, we cannot suppose that this is the first time societies assign centrality to this issue. For him 'merchandising of information is as old as capitalism' (BURKE, 2003, p. 11), once innovation or social progress through knowledge is typical of the very Modernity. So when we suggest to study contemporary ways of knowledge, it is not relevant to consider that we are addressing original historic or sociologic viewpoints. Following Burke's explanation, one of the methodologic paths for this understanding would be sociology of knowledge, a theoretical field that goes back to the early 21st century, and that is particularly found in Émile Durkheim. It is in the thought of this sociologist that we find the early references of education as a social elaboration.

Studies of teaching practices, such as Durkheim's (1978), suggest centrality for the social feature of education. Unlike abstract ideals of a human nature's features, typical of 17th-to-early 20th century pedagogies, he suggested that the definition for formative processes is invented in relationships among different individuals in conditions of their time. This means to consider that for him every society had its own education system, which may be used to define it as much as its moral, political and religious organisation (DURKHEIM, 1978). Durkheimian approach suggests that the possibility for us to think of universal education systems does not exist, once education, its methods and content will be the product for social contingencies of its time.

From this perspective the ways of organising school systems are associated to particular social systems, once under this focus necessary skills for life in society are conveyed in intentional systematic processes. As the French sociologist explains, these skills 'cannot be passed on from one generation to another by heredity. It is through education that this passing occurs' (DURKHEIM, 1978, p. 84). Under this point of view, it is possible to recognise that pedagogical ideals are social productions. 'Education consists of a methodical socialization of the young generation' (DURKHEIM, 1978, p. 82). In a hurried reading we could infer from this author that society has a role of domination over individuals through educative practices. However, Durkheim explains:

We can now clear up a question the previous excerpt suggests. If individuals, as we have shown, act upon their social needs, it seems that society imposes unbearable tyranny over men. In fact, they are themselves interested in this submission, because through education the fresh being the collective action builds in everyone of us represents the best that is in the human, what is really human in us (1978, p. 44-45)

When in this introduction we refer to Émile Durkheim's thought, we seek to underline a way of reading that will mark this paper, that is: a sociological piece of reading of the production of scholarly knowledge. From Durkheim, the sociology of education introduces important tools to understand schools; above all we are interested in the concept of education as a methodical socialization the cultural transmission produces on the young generations. It is worth noting that in this thought concepts of socialisation and cultural transmission are not positioned as static structures or structures derived from a mainstream thought, but rather as socially constructed processes.

Upon the conditions shown above, we aim to introduce a literature review about scholarly knowledge policies.¹ For this investigation we have considered articles in five major education magazines in Brazil from 2002 to 2012. Thus, we organised this paper in three sections. In the first section we provided a systematisation of debates and investigative perspectives in studies about scholarly knowledge in Latin America. In the second section we described methodological assumptions and investigative proceedings guiding this study. Finally we examined the three prevailing tendencies concerning scholarly knowledge policies emerging from our investigation.

SCHOLARLY KNOWLEDGE IN LATIN AMERICA: DEBATES AND INVESTIGATIVE PERSPECTIVES

To map the reviewing about school constitution, we will take some pedagogic texts in Latin America in this section. The aim for this first mapping will be taking the referred debate in the Latin American intellectual production, aiming to characterise scholarly knowledge different meanings emerging in analysis productions and systematisations of the referred field. To begin this process, we will consider the path Argentinean researcher Silvia Finocchio (2010) has taken in a review of studies in Latin America. She found out that one of least worked subjects in the last decade was scholarly knowledge. Thus, her thematic mapping suggests some analytic tendencies for this context, that are: i) the discord of school towards post-colonial discourses, digital revolution and sentimentalist cultures; ii) the need

¹ This paper comes from the research project called 'Políticas de ampliação da jornada escolar para o Ensino Médio no Rio Grande do Sul: um estudo sobre o conhecimento escolar' ('Policies of the constitution of school knowledge in educational research in Brazil: a piece of study of the scholarly knowledge'), which has been financed by CNPq.

to study further the modes of production and circulation of scholarly knowledge; iii) the scattering of regional tendencies due to the theoretical and political hybridity.

In the Mexican context we have found a strong preoccupation with issues of equity and quality of education given to the population (ALCÁNTARA, 2008). Over the last three decades, national administration guided by international organisations' agenda have made significant reforms in the education system, with the aim to improve the situation in the country and the possibility to take education as a tool for social justice. From the second half of the 1980s, with national programmes of education, the Mexico widened the decentralisation of the school process administration, leading to the modernisation of the country (ALCÁNTARA, 2008). Thus in Carlos Salina (1988-1994) administration, new education policies are intensified, focusing on five major orientations: 'extending the coverage and distribution of the offer; improving the quality, pertinence and relevance; integrating in cycles; decentring the administration; and improving the teachers' conditions' (ALCÁNTARA, 2008, p. 153). In the search for quality, the curriculum is one of the privileged goals, especially with an extra measure seeking to 'reformulate contents and plans to improve quality' (ALCÁNTARA, 2008, p. 154).

Thus, a political discourse was seeking centralise concepts of equity, quality and pertinence in education. Even in later administrations, such as Vicente Fox's (2000-2006), with other political connotation, they have kept the compromise with these aspects. In their changes of contents and teaching material, Mexican programmes emphasised on writing and reading, mathematics and problem solution, history, geography and civism and health care and environment (ALCÁNTARA, 2008). For Alcántara, education policies, strongly influenced by neoliberal assumptions, 'has shown its ineffectiveness to change important things in the last quarter of the century' (2008, p. 147).

From this perspective, in Chilean education we have observed important reflections about approaches between public schooling policies and neoliberalism (VALENZUELA; LABARRERA; RODRÍGUEZ, 2008). With the advent of neoliberal policies in the Chilean government, from the presence of the military in the power in 1973, a process of resignifying of the State role began, so that it assumed a subsidiary role, 'in which [it] gives up being direct responsible for schools in the country' (VALENZUELA; LABARRERA; RODRÍGUEZ, 2008, p. 132). The change in the orbit of action of the State had effects in processes of reshaping of the national curriculum, and in decentralisation of education policies. We have found in the Chilean case from 1980 on sub vented private schools, 'supported by the State,

but owned and administered by private companies or foundations' (VALENZUELA; LABARRERA; RODRÍGUEZ, 2008, p. 133). Between continuities and ruptures in the 1990s, with the return to democracy, there is a 'new education policy, which is based on two key principles: quality and equity' (VALENZUELA; LABARRERA; RODRÍGUEZ, 2008, p. 136). With the education reform in this period, one can observe school curriculum guidance to form flexible subjects able to adapt to change and innovation. For this object, the search to improve results in international evaluation programmes is intensified.

About education in Argentina, when establishing a study of contemporary times, Pablo Pineau (2003) points out that the key concepts of school in his country are still based on Domingo Sarmiento's writings. For him, this thinking reads the school from two different perspectives, being marked by dualising reading. On the one side, the writer observes a kind of pessimist reading understanding the external world as a 'barbarism space', a space the school has permanently to fight against.

For Pineau in this way 'the logic of modern school working in Argentina opposes the school as a powerful and self-praised machine of educative production faced by the desert-barbarism-crises on the outside' (2003, p. 115). The researcher shapes a kind of reasoning that chooses to review this form of thought, an approach that helps to search for alternatives for school as an institution in its country. Apart from a resignifying of the school social role, which involves recognising the social world's significance and its own institutional limits, Pineau depicts that the Argentinian school 'must be strengthened as a particular space for transmitting culture' (PINEAU, 2003, p. 117). Even if it is no new idea, the researcher suggests that in social, political and economic crisis times, it is resignified, once it is not a Messianic school culture we are speaking of. However, it is 'a place where more or less stable pleasurable activities are developed in association with the culture and mere imagination of a better world' (PINEAU, 2003, p. 117).

Still concerning the Argentinian context, Dussel (2003) depicts that today arguments that school is a place able to receive individuals from different social classes, that it can protect them and provide possibilities for the future, have relevance again. For catastrophist debates about social institutions, among which school is, she recommends an optimistic stance. In its conception this stance would extrapolate discourses 'fitting to reality', allowing 'thinking about ways of intervention producing changes in the situation we are' (DUSSEL, 2003, p. 23). From this perspective, speaking about crisis in the Argentinian education would involve re-politicising school and the very crisis.

Drawing to poststructuralist theories, Dussel proposes new connections for relations between education and politics. Based on Jacques Rancière's thought, Inés Dussel suggests that 'politics is what allows us to see in the outcast other than a victim who must be treated by prison or philanthropy, but we should rather give him/her a place as for a peer in this act of shaping the society' (DUSSEL, 2003, p. 24). From the possibility to escape from repressive or philanthropic approaches comes a perspective that 'there is a particularity in the cultural transmission supporting and distinguishing education' (DUSSEL, 2003, p. 25). In other words, her analytics makes us think that to politicise education, we have to meet the particularity in this process – the cultural transmission. Dussel still notices that school in our time should not give up teaching, improving scholar subjects' knowledge and prepare them for the task of renewing the world.

In Brazil, like we have seen in the Latin American context, some investigations also stressed on cultural transmission-focused schooling policies. In this setting, we have highlighted Moreira's recent studies (2010) analytically privileging school knowledge issue. He has critiqued particular alternative curriculum proposals that, according to his reading, give 'an exaggerated emphasis to the student's cultural experience' (p. 202). According to this conception, curriculum policies open to a set of contemporary cultural manifestations, community knowledge and students' subjective experiences may become a problem. If all this is essential, it is however not sufficient' (MOREIRA, 2010, p. 202).

The proposal to revitalise the debate on school knowledge does not involve recognising it as ideal neutral entity or a product from the power vertical actions. In tune with this argument, the definition of basic knowledge to be taught would be a collective construction, escaping 'from polarisation between top-down strategies for change and the pure spontaneity in schools' (MOREIRA, 2010, p. 203). Finally, from this perspective, quality education is the one guaranteeing relevant school knowledge (MOREIRA, 2009).

As we have addressed on this section, investigative debates and perspectives concerning school knowledge in Latin America provide two complementary perspectives: on the one hand, we have seen the improving of neoliberal-inspired reforms proclaiming a curriculum focus on notions of equity and quality and formation of flexible innovating subjects; on the other hand, downplaying of processes of cultural transmission in schooling contemporary policies is evident, allowing in particular contexts school knowledge to be downplayed in school curriculums. With this initial diagnosis, we will depict our investigative procedures to conduct the literature review in this study.

THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING THE LITERATURE REVIEW: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Taking the current state of the Latin American context, as we have developed in the prior section, in this one we will provide procedures guiding our review. To develop it, we will try to map the key analytical tendencies shaping studies of school knowledge policies in Brazil. So our study has sought the following goals: a) reviewing the academic production about the subject in major Brazilian journals; b) relating our investigative approach with highly respectable studies in the area; c) supporting new studies and research in the Brazilian educational context. These objectives allowed us to apply a relatively comprehensive approach about production in this field. The relevance for this review comes from the significance of this procedure to become familiar with the area we wish to work on, once ‘the meeting of new insights must be based on already available knowledge’ (FLICK, 2013, p. 42).

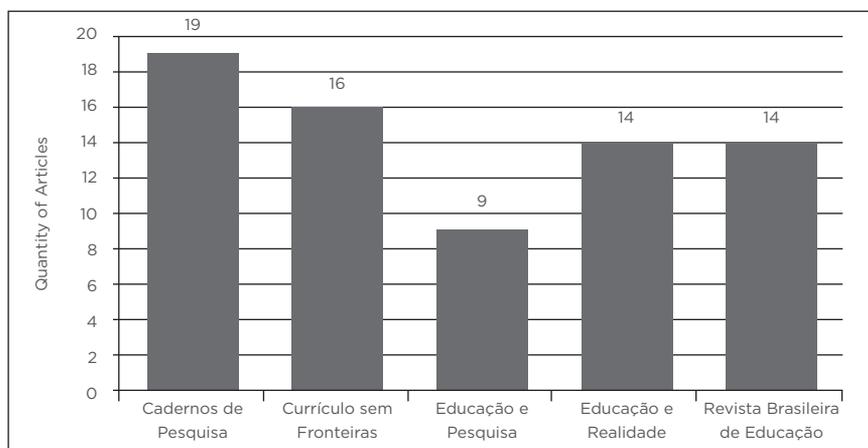
As a strategy for organising the literature, we have drawn Creswell (2010) *literature maps*. For him these maps are useful tools to provide information for novice researchers, as a form of literature overview to refer to collective pieces of research or for publication of papers in journals. These tools allow to have a comprehensive overview of literature, and a panorama of relevant research works in a particular field.

This map is a visual summary of the research that has been conducted by others, and it is typically represented in a figure. Maps are organized in different ways. One could be a hierarchical structure, with a top-down presentation of the literature, ending at the bottom with the proposed study. Another might be similar to a flowchart in which the reader understands the literature as unfolding from left to right with the farthest right-hand section advancing a proposed study. A third model might be a series of circles, with each circle representing a body of literature and the intersection of the circles the place in which the future research is indicated. (CRESWELL, 2010, p. 61-62)

Elaboration and organisation of ‘literature maps’ (CRESWELL, 2010) was shaped with theoretical studies published in selected magazines. We understand that theoretical literature includes ‘works on concepts, definitions and theories used in a field of investigation’ (FLICK, 2013, p. 45). In this sense, we intend to work with issues concerning key theories and theoretical fields used in investigations, methodological approaches emerging in these studies and especially tendencies guiding the shaping of the theme in the field.

To select materials we applied two overriding strategies. First we have examined studies about syntheses or general approaches about research produced in the area. In the second strategy, we have searched for articles in domestic journals in the field of education (CRESWELL, 2010). For the literature review, we have considered articles published in the following journals: *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Currículo sem Fronteiras*, *Educação e Pesquisa*, *Educação e Realidade* e *Revista Brasileira de Educação*. We have chosen these journals because of their relevance in the educational field and the concentration of articles about subjects concerning the objectives of our investigation.

GRAPH 1
QUANTITY OF ARTICLES EXAMINED IN EVERY JOURNAL



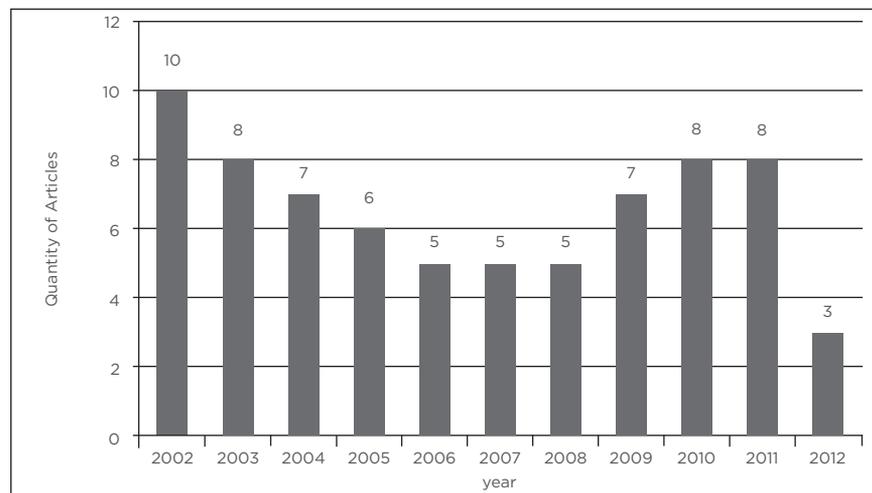
Source: Authors' writing.

As we have seen, for the study of school knowledge in schooling policies the Brazilian State used, we have conducted a review of the literature to check the key tendencies of investigation in field studies. For this, we have considered that the school knowledge, as for Santos (1995, p. 27), 'has peculiar features that distinguish it from other forms of knowledge'. From this perspective, we understand that this form of knowledge comes from relations between schools and the social and economic context shaping it. In this sense, we recognise that 'understanding the process of production of this knowledge improves the knowledge of the teaching practice and avoids simplifications based on the issue of content vs. method' (SANTOS, 1995, p. 27). So we began our study with a widened conception of this concept, which allowed us to select articles with different theoretical conceptions and different investigative details.

For this we made two empirical recortes: a) a temporal recorte, in which we chose articles from 2002 to 2012; b) a conceptual recorte, in which we took the following keywords as depicting what would be examined: curriculum, school knowledge, school content, school

disciplines and school knowledge policies. The use of both criteria allowed us to select the material to be analysed, which totalised 72 articles (Graph 2).

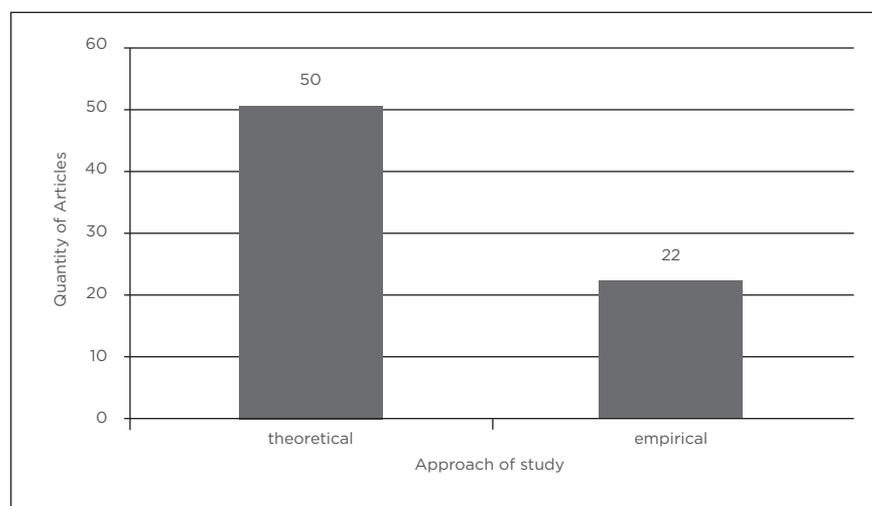
GRAPH 2
TEMPORAL DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED ARTICLES



Source: Authors' writing.

We soon can observe that, along the examined period studies of school knowledge were reduced in their editorial space, even entering the last decade with intense productivity². We have observed, however, that an increase in articles about the subject at the late examined period. Along the examined texts, we have found predominance of theoretical studies, coming closer to what the authors have shown (Graph 3).

GRAPH 3
NUMBER OF ARTICLES ACCORDING TO THE INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH



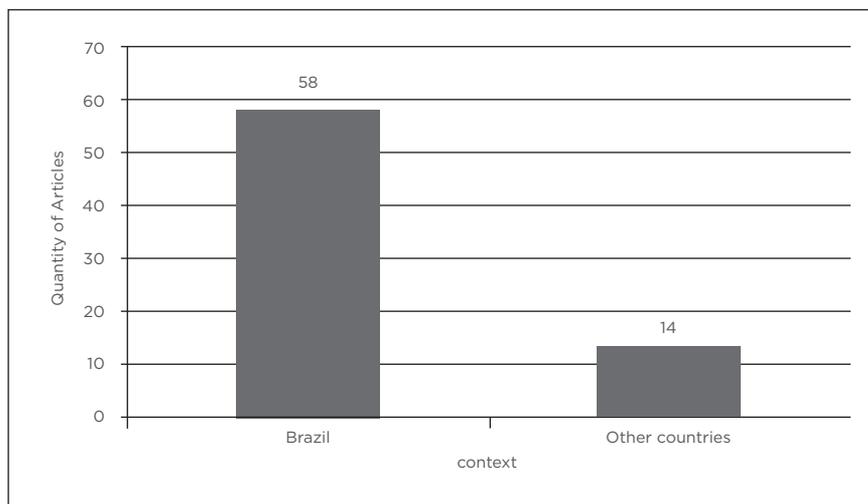
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We have collected only three articles because of the end of the first stage of the investigation in 2012.

Source: Authors' writing.

Concerning the context for production of analysed studies, we have observed preponderance of research works in Brazil (Graph 4). Obviously these data suggest no kind of endogeny in the production of studies, once much of the study has as its analytic scope tendencies that are developed elsewhere. As for most referred authors, we can cite Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Ernesto Laclau, Michael Apple, Michael Young, Thomas Popkewitz, Bernard Charlot, José Augusto Pacheco, Ivor Goodson, Paulo Freire, José Carlos Libâneo, Antonio Flavio Moreira, Alfredo Veiga-Neto, Tomaz Tadeu da Silva, Alice Lopes, Elizabeth Macedo, among others.

GRAPH 4
NUMBER OF ARTICLES ACCORDING TO THE CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION OF THE STUDY



Source: Authors' writing.

After having seen the academic production in five of the major scientific journals in the Brazilian educational field and having selected 72 articles published over the last decade, we have observed that studies of school knowledge, in their wide and diverse investigative approaches, provide an significant theoretical consistency. Among many possibilities of analysis, we have noticed the existence of three major analytic emphases: policies for organising the school knowledge, school practices and curriculum epistemologies. We will examine and look further literature maps for every tendency in the following section.

POLICIES, PRACTICES AND EPISTEMOLOGIES: MAJOR TENDENCIES

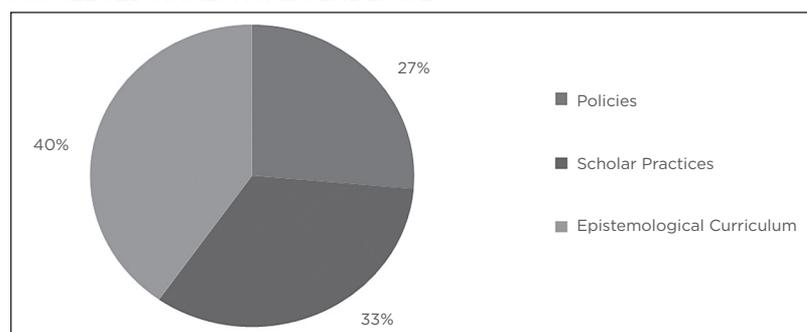
Understanding the ways of shaping the school knowledge as we are producing it suggests widening fields of problematisation beyond contexts that are strictly linked to schools. In this sense, we understand

the importance of problematising schooling practices by cultural conditions enabling them to emerge. For Forquin (1993), from this perspective, ‘the contemporary pedagogical thought cannot avoid reflecting about the issue of culture and cultural elements for different kinds of educative options, or else it will fall into shallowness’ (p. 10). The perspective of this theoretical stance about the education field involves widening the intervention sphere, once it includes from individuals’ socialising processes to schooling formal processes. In tune with these formative spaces, we can position the need to transmit some type of content, once ‘the educative undertaking is the responsibility of having to transmit and perpetuate the human existence taken as culture’ (FORQUIN, 1993, p. 13). Or even, the school always transmit some culture.

Positioning education from a cultural perspective does not mean supposing culture as a stable permanent structure. For example Pérez Gómez (2011, p. 12) suggests widening this interpretation up to a more plural approach, in which the school could be understood as ‘crossing of cultures causing tensions, opening, restrictions, contrasts in the meaning making’. This perspective can also be read in Sacristán’s definition (2013, p. 10), in the opening of an important collection, when he defines curriculum as ‘cultural content education centres try to disseminate in those they visit, and effects this content provokes in their receptors’. In the sense the Spanish researcher proposed, cultural contents are central in what we call curriculum, as from his perspective ‘the school “without cultural contents” is a fiction, an empty, unreal and irresponsible proposal’ (SACRISTÁN, 2013, p. 10). In other words, cultural contents, in its multidimensionality, are logic conditions for the teaching organisation and so for school curriculums.

Considering the plural conditions shaping this constitution, when we review the literature we observe a concentration of three major analytic tendencies that are linked to political, didactic and epistemological senses (Graph 5).

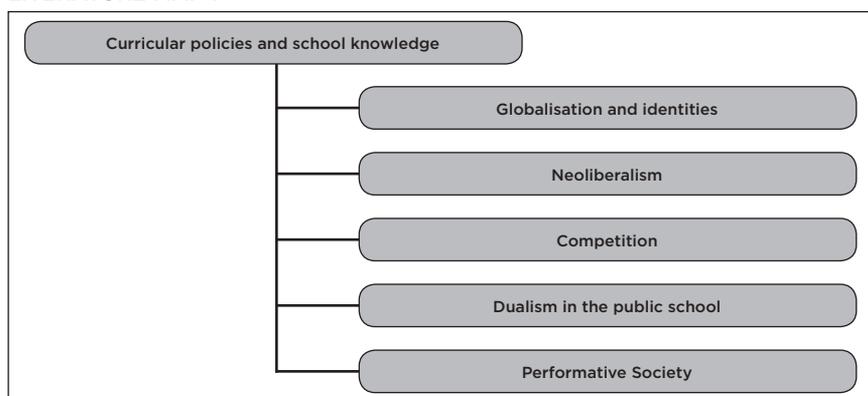
GRAPH 5
PRIVILEGED ANALYTICAL TENDENCIES



Source: Authors’ writing.

In the first depicted tendency we have considered research about democratisation, school justice, competition, market and regulation, globalisation, school policies and identities, knowledge economy, knowledge, epistemic cultures, education policies, neoliberalism, conservative alliance, market, state, reform, neoliberalism, power and control, educational markers, management, learning/knowledge society, governmentality, ideology, teaching, competence, qualification, performance, performativity, school reform, human capital theory, citizenship, institutional programme, disciplines and curriculum guide as policies of production of school knowledge (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
LITERATURE MAP 1



From this perspective, we have highlighted Pacheco & Pereira's approach (2007) as they have written about globalisation and identity in the school, understanding that this one promotes cultural homogenisation, as it is presented as the milieu in which this occurs, as school acts on and relates to diversity and individuals' identity. On another stance, Apple (2002) states that 'education is a space for conflict and compromise'. The compromise is with education, development, school knowledge and student learning. According to his arguments, conflicts occur exactly in these actions, in content choosing, in power and ideology that may be hidden in curriculums.

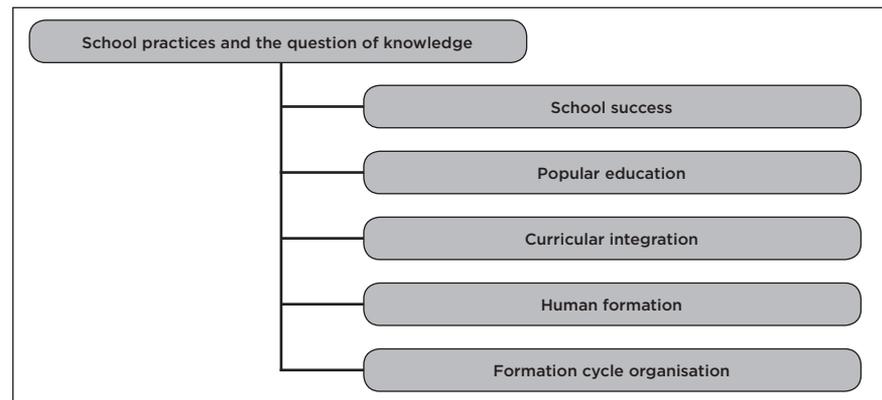
Still concerning curricular policies, this perspective may be strengthened by Santomé (2004), who shows how systems of evaluation of education, surrounded by merchandising processes, control the collective memory. Nevertheless, reflecting about education objectives and roles in Brazil, Libâneo (2012) discusses the fact that school live in a dualism, as the poor's formation is turned to social welcoming and citizenship, while the elite schools are centred in technologic learning and improvement for the future.

Thus allowing reflection about what Ball (2010) calls performativity, that is, the strategy for political action that makes

subjects to think and reflect about themselves in an active enterprising way. Aiming at these aspects in shaping the school knowledge, we have noticed a particular directing for this process to occur in a flexible and reflexive way, articulating formative processes to contemporary capitalism economic and political demands.

As school practices and pedagogic mediations, second tendency, we have considered research works that were thematising the teaching work, inclusion and school success, evaluation, cycle school, selection and differentiation, curricular integration, experience and learning, collaborative learning, teacher education, mother tongue education, knowledge building in childhood, textbooks, cultural identity, cultural tools, didactics, student performance, conceptions of learning, access and permanence, teaching transposition, relation with knowledge, interdisciplinarity, school quality, and human formation. In this tendency, we have observed strong theoretical diversification, as we will show (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2
LITERATURE MAP 2



Questioning about the school success, Perrenoud (2003) argues that to act correctly in tune with criteria involving the school success, there is a great need to stick to the curriculum and their roles. For the researcher, this is one of the papers in which norms, forms and goals are established to conduct the school process to the possible ‘success’. For this the author shows that the curriculum must be based on teaching and learning, as thus the curriculum evaluation will underlie the school success.

From another perspective Beane (2003) shows also that the traditional discipline-divided curriculum is still a dominant form, as it is turned to conceptions derived from an idealisation of the young for the academic world. In his approach, he points out that the curriculum should be turned to the student’s real life so that s/he can understand his/her world. This is why Beane suggests the conception of curriculum

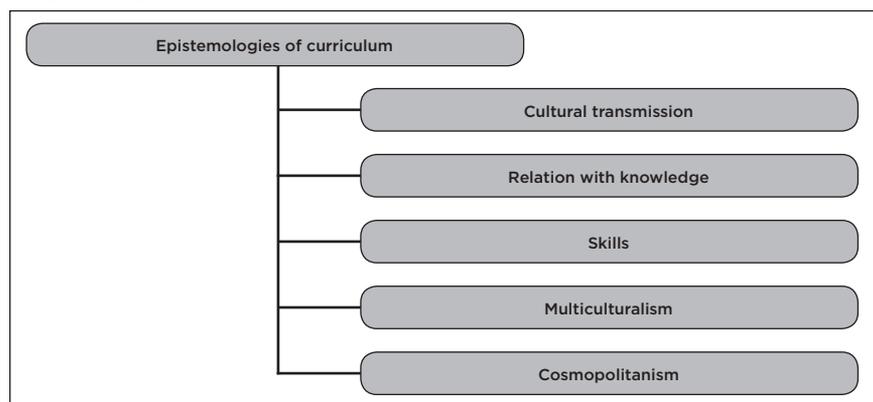
integration, in which knowledge would come from generating centres in a context, going beyond ‘understanding themselves and their world’ (2003, p. 94). Thus we would break the hegemony of power involving knowledge found in the curriculum, knowledge that favours particular social classes.

Increasing the theoretical variety, Saviani & Duarte (2010) begin with a Marxist metaphysic perspective to analyse the current human formation. First they defend the idea that education is communication among men, who are historically-formed subjects from a historical and ontological perspective (recommending the work-based human formation). Under this tendency, we have observed the preference for studying school forms, showing the care for the educational treatment for knowledge to be taught in school.

We have called the third tendency as epistemologies of the curriculum. We have used this characterisation because of the subjects that were presented, that is, multiculturalism, sociology of curriculum, internationalisation, education theories, competence and performance, research and postgraduate programmes, cultural transmission, school and citizenship, theory and method, difference, school knowledge, humanism, contemporary consciousness, universality of culture, Marxist pedagogy, school failure, inequity, thinking and knowing, pedagogy of the concept, cosmopolitan subject, educational salvation, and interdisciplinarity. Finally, we consider different ways to explain derived from different human sciences designed to underlie processes of shaping the school knowledge as epistemologies of the curriculum.

Underlining these issues of the epistemology of curriculum, Dussel (2009) points out that the school is undergoing a legitimacy crisis as it is no longer only a space for cultural transmission and socialisation, but rather had to face fresh resources for knowledge transmission. For her, the challenge now is transmitting culture so that it enables acquiring the past knowledge and facilitates the individual living in the society, building a non-individualist common culture, displaying the subjects’ culture and learning with the other (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3
LITERATURE MAP 3



As for relations with knowledge, access and permanence in school, and inequalities belonging to contemporary times, Rochex (2006) positions school knowledge as a production for the decontextualisation, recontextualisation, estrangement, and redescription within what belongs to students' experience. The relation with knowledge should be seen in a historical, social and cultural context, different for every individual but to be shared.

In another sense, Moreira e Candau (2003) reflect on the role of teaching courses of providing an adequate formation for future teachers, favouring work with the multiculturalism so as to empower individuals. Teachers' roles would be problematising relations of power where they are embedded, avoiding embarrassment and bias. As a social environment, the school should suggest cultural hybridism, expanding the students' vision, promoting reflection about biases in classroom, recognition of differences and collaborative action, not only to change contents, but rather the view of education. In this sense, we have seen prevalence of historic, sociologic or philosophic studies over knowledge to be taught in school. At the same time, we have found emphasis on critical studies problematising social places of the school and of knowledge.

FINAL REMARKS

Throughout this paper, we have sought to describe paths for the production of a research work aiming to make a literature review of works published in Brazil about the shaping of school knowledge over the last decade. Analysing the area of sociology of education and recognising education as a formative process designed to future generations, we have developed a critical approach of contemporary school processes, particularly outlining an understanding of socialising practices and cultural transmission as socially-produced processes.

To draw this perspective, we began reviewing studies of curriculum policies in Latin America, identifying two major theoretical and political tendencies: on the one hand, the strengthening of education policies focused on quality and equality, aiming to an innovation- and flexibility-centred school formation; and on the other hand, the reduction of space for school knowledge in new curriculum policies, usually downplaying processes of cultural transmission.

With this diagnosis, we have triggered an investigative process of reviewing literature about school knowledge in five Brazilian journals over the last decade. For the organisation of the process, we have methodologically preferred 'literature maps' by Creswell (2010). When we produced them, we have observed the prevalence of major investigative tendencies about school knowledge in magazines in our country: a) policies for organising school knowledge; b) school practices; c) epistemologies of curriculum. After examining 72 articles we have observed that studies of school knowledge have provided significant theoretical consistence in their wide varied ways of approach, while there are still few empirical studies.

Finally we have highlighted the political and pedagogical relevance of further studies of policies for shaping the school knowledge. Understanding different political strategies making this, at the same time as we diagnose multiple possibilities for pedagogical intervention in the basic education, it is presented in our reading as a task and a challenge. We have experienced a time when political and economic works on quality in the public school tend to reduce it to quantitative and productive aspects, which challenges us to examine schooling practices in other analytical configurations. Perhaps an alternative would be to renew the school as a democratic arena so as to promote students' access and permanence, focusing on the selection of socially-relevant school knowledge.

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