

To reproduce or to transform? Analysis of the teacher's role in maintaining/ deconstructing of stigma at school¹

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Abstract

This work was carried out in a model school of the public high school in the outlying areas of Fortaleza (CE) and discusses how the existing social classes differences between teachers and students condition the teachers' social representations about their pupil, contributing to make the school a space of dispute between reproduction and social mobility. In exploratory observations held at the Class Council at the end of the 2012 school year, the researchers noted the frequent issuance of disqualifying judgments by teachers in upholding the disapproval of unsuccessful students in relation to mastery of skills and/ or disciplinary requirements. In many of these statements, instead of pedagogical criteria, judgments based on social class markers predominated. Thus, in order to investigate the hypothesis that there is a stigmatizing view of teachers in relation to their students, as part of the social construction process of the school as a reproductive space of inequalities, six teachers were interviewed, and the researchers found the predominance of two styles of thought, typified as cordial and humanistic. The construction of stigmatizing representations is characteristic of the cordial type (in the Buarquian sense), unlike the humanistic type, which adopts positions that are more critical. In this way, the polarization between these perspectives indicates the role of the teacher in the school as an agent that can contribute to changing or maintaining order.

Keywords

Public school – Social representation – Stigmatization – Social reproduction – Social transformation.

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1678-4634201844173362>

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Introduction

The objective of this work is to understand to what extent the representations constructed by the teachers about their students condition their teaching practices, in order to understand how pedagogical and extra-pedagogical elements are articulated in the process of teaching and learning. During the research, we realized that there was not a complete correspondence between the information provided in interviews and the practices of some interviewees observed in the meetings of the Council of Class⁶, also in their everyday interactions in the teachers' room. This contrast is more evident among teachers who explicitly used extra-pedagogical elements to evaluate students during the Class Council, since, on the one hand, the speeches were built on a more formal and elementary basis, supposedly legitimized on purely pedagogical bases and, on the other hand, at the time of the evaluation, teachers judged students with a certain *cordiality*.

The notion of *cordiality* is used from the meaning of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1997), whose concept would refer to the exact and strictly etymological sense of the word, serving to express the strangeness in relation to formalism and to social convention, such as the aversion to rituals and hierarchies instituted on a formal basis - a behavior that ideally should predominate in the bureaucratic regime, making prevail in its place the sphere of the intimate, the familiar, the private, that is, the overlap of the private sphere on the public sphere (HOLANDA, 1997).

One striking feature of this cordial trait presented by teachers is expressed precisely in the overvaluation of experiential knowledge to the detriment of other types of teacher knowledge, insofar as other knowledge has a more formal dimension, whereas the knowledge built in the experience would be more informal (TARDIF, 2010).

It is important to highlight that, according to Tardif (2010, p. 17), "the relations between teachers and knowledge are never strictly cognitive relations: they are relations mediated by the work that provides principles to face and solve daily situations". In this sense, observing the professional activities of teachers, subjects of our research, we confirm that the teaching knowledge is composed of different forms of knowledge mobilized in the exercise of teaching. Among these ways of knowing, are:

[...] curricular knowledge, which comes from school programs and textbooks; disciplinary knowledge, the content from the subjects taught at school; the knowledge of vocational training acquired during initial or continuing training; the experiential knowledge derived from the professional practice and, finally, the cultural knowledge inherited from their life trajectory and belonging to a particular culture, shared to a greater or lesser degree with the students. (TARDIF, 2010, p. 297).

It is because of this complexity of teaching knowledge that "a teacher who is immersed in the action, in the classroom, does not think, as affirmed by the positivist

6- At the end of the school year, the teachers of each class meet to discuss each student's case, considering performance, behavior, participation and even family relationships to decide if the student should be disapproved or if he or she will receive a new chance to passing grade.

model of thought, as a scientist, an engineer or a logician” (TARDIF, 2010, p. 272). Thus, in the exercise of the teaching profession, class prejudices can be mobilized with different knowledge and not only with experience. However, it is possible to argue, based on the reports of the subjects of our research, that class prejudices can manifest along with all teaching knowledge, but especially (not exclusively) with cultural and experiential knowledge.

It is precisely in the mobilization of this cultural knowledge and experiences in spaces of coexistence between teachers - during break times, in informal conversations, while sharing personal experiences or telling anecdotes about their daily professional life - that this cordial trait is corroborated, finding in this sharing the mutual recognition that makes possible its reiteration in the classroom.

It is in this context that the element of cordiality enables value judgments, prejudices and stigmatizing perceptions about students are tacitly and legitimately incorporated among teachers. According to Goffman (2012), stigma is translated into social relationships that *mark* individuals in some way that makes them *inadequate* to relate to other subjects. In relation to class prejudice, stigma comes directly linked to the origins and cultural patterns of working-class people, that is, their behaviors, ways of dressing, skin color, place of residence, profession, in short, everything that can serve to *mark* them negatively in the interpersonal relationship, defining a deteriorated *social identity*. From this definition, a *barrier* can exclude people stigmatized from harmonious social relations, propitious to respect their socio-cultural differences.

Considering Tardif (2010), in his reflections on the production of teacher knowledge and through the field research, we perceive as elements supposedly foreign to the body of formal knowledge related to teaching that they make up the experiential knowledge of these teachers, guiding their pedagogical practices based on stigmatizing value judgments and prejudiced opinions regarding to the students. We affirm that a relevant part of the teaching knowledge acquisition, especially experiential knowledge, is constructed in school, which would be intrinsically a space for structural reproduction of social class relations, as discussed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1975).

In this way, the teaching knowledge and the teacher *habitus* would be impregnated with the cultural arbitrary corresponding to the representations and practices of the dominant classes. Then, the acquisition of this cultural arbitrary converted into teaching knowledge that would provide the construction of conceptions about the stigmatizing students. As teachers have legitimate pedagogical authority for the exercise of their work, these stigmatizing conceptions about students would end up being accepted and *naturalized* by the school community, grounding the understanding about the teaching and learning process, especially regarding the evaluation.

Based on the analysis of the construction of these stigmatizing representations, we identified in the majority of the researched faculty a characteristically cordial trait in their *modus operandi*, since their pedagogical actions would be more clearly permeated by a worldview tied to informality and excessive appreciation of practice's knowledge, to the detriment of the more formal knowledge derived from academic formation, for example. However, a minority of the research participants demonstrated that they try to orient

their teaching practice based on political and pedagogical principles linked to humanistic values, presenting a foundation of their world visions and their professional activities more connected to a set of formal and legally systematized doctrines, in contrast to the informality that underlies the actions of the majority group.

In this sense, the polarization between these perspectives indicates the role of the teacher in the school as an agent that can contribute to the change within the order or to its strict maintenance. As a strict maintenance agent, we highlight the cases investigated in which the extensive tacit adherence to extra-pedagogical evaluation criteria favours the reproduction of prejudices that refer to social class markers, converting the social construction of stigmas into evaluation criteria that are concealed as valid in school. Considering teachers as agents of a potential change within the order, the most outstanding are the cases in which teachers seek to act based on humanistic principles, emphasizing the critical formation of the student in view of the exercise of citizenship.

The school studied has 60 teachers, most of whom participated in the research through field observations, although six were interviewed. These teachers belonged to three areas of knowledge - Languages and Codes, Human Sciences and Natural Science, which provided an expanded view of how teachers trained in diverse areas understand their performance in the school environment. For the construction of the data that were a reference for this article, we chose the triangulation between two methodological strategies: the individual interviews, with the use of a question guide topic (GASKELL, 2012); and floating observations.

According to Goldman (1995), rather than the *participant observation* of traditional ethnology, characterized by *direct and continuous observation*, in complex societies, the floating observation predominates, similar to the floating listening of the psychoanalyst. For Denzin and Lincoln (2006), triangulation understood as the multiple uses of methods for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, is the privileged medium for the simultaneous exposure of multiple realities, not constituting a validation strategy, although it is a means of guaranteeing the quality of qualitative research. In fact, triangulation is an alternative to the notion of validity of quantitative research, which provides rigour, complexity, and depth to research. Thus, the combination of information of a different nature, obtained by each of the methodological strategies used, gave us a more accurate understanding of the reality investigated in comparison to the use of a single strategy.

The investigated school universe: a school designed to be a model and promote changes

The institution investigated is recognized by its school community as different in relation to the other schools that integrate the state public network of Ceará. During the interviews, the teachers' statements about the distinctive character of the school were recurrent, mainly due to its good infrastructure, its staff of qualified professionals and a student body *more interested* in the studies. This satisfaction expressed by teachers coincides, to a certain extent, with the reproduction of the guidelines that guided the creation of the school in question. The research institution was created in 1998, along

with 28 other schools of the same standard, during the third term of Tasso Jereissati as governor of the state of Ceará⁷ – characterized by the political stabilization of the so-called *Government of Changes*, with the intention of serving as a model throughout the state, since it is born with the ideals of the new and modern educational standard. The conception of educational policy that underpinned the project and the implementation of the school was also aligned with the changes that occurred with this social segment at the national level.

The approval of LDB⁸ and the creation of FUNDEF⁹, in 1996, it caused significant changes in education policy, with regard to the responsibilities of the federal government, states and municipalities.¹⁰ In addition, there was a favourable international context that elected education for the organization necessary for the development of nations, under the socio-economic imperative of the “Education for All” Project (MOTA, 2005). With the new educational legislation, there was the municipalisation of elementary education, made financially via federal resources of FUNDEF. This measure made the high school management to stay under state responsibility. In this sense, the state government initiated a series of actions that aimed to qualify the high school provided by the public network. Among these initiatives was the creation of new schools that would meet the demands of the new educational legislation.

However, only this historically constructed idea does not explain the differentiated character attributed to the school studied. Therefore, another element that places this unit of education among the best in the state is its position in the ranking of public schools in the National High School Examination (ENEM).¹¹ The index takes into account the participation and performance of the high school students of the state network in the ENEM¹² between the years of 2009 and 2011. In the information cited, the school studied appears among the 50 most successful. It is also considered that the state has almost 700 units of secondary education, of which 5% to 6% have entered the list of the top 50 in the ENEM.

Therefore, it is a school conceived in a context of transformations in public education policies in Brazil, which characterized it as a *model* to be extended to other public educational institutions in Ceará. However, the reforms in the educational field that led to the creation of the set of 29 model schools did not allow the expansion of this pattern to a larger number of schools, making them a kind of *oasis*. Consequently, this governmental initiative has led to a disparity in the quality of teaching, rather than contributing to the improvement of the quality of the education system as a whole. Thus,

7- From 1998 to 2002, 29 schools were built in this pattern. Available in: <http://portal.seduc.ce.gov.br/images/arquivos/escolas_2008.pdf>. Access in: 23 jun. 2009.

8- Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB).

9- Fund for Development and Maintenance of Basic Education and Teaching Values (FUNDEF).

10- Both LDB and FUNDEF are the result of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which maintained the obligation of teaching for children, as well as the 1967 Constitution, but with a differential: the State became responsible for its offer and universalization.

11- IPECE's report nº 54, February of 2013. Ceará State Institute of Economic Research (IPECE). Available in: <http://www.ipece.ce.gov.br/publicacoes/ipece-informe/ipece_informe_54_26_fevereiro_2013.pdf>. Access in: 29 jul. 2013.

12- The National High School Examination is held annually. Its main objectives are: to serve as a parameter to select students for higher education and to establish ranking among schools, as a form of accountability.

the image of excellence of the researched school was created because of the restructuring of educational policies and strengthened by the position occupied in the ranking of public schools. Thus, the pride expressed by the professionals interviewed when working in a *differentiated school* is based on a fundamental inequality of opportunities regarding access to quality education established by the structure of the educational system itself in Ceará.¹³

The construction of knowledge and teaching practice in the model school

To think about the relationship between social inequality and class prejudice in the context of the stigmatization of students of the popular classes from the outlying districts of Fortaleza (CE), we opted for the approach on how teacher knowledge is constructed in order to understand how teachers work together with students from the working classes. Tardif (2010) has made interesting questions about teacher knowledge: are they social or individual? Do they come from social processes, and so the individual does not participate in its construction? Or do they originate in the organism, in the individual, and thus are they separated from social processes? They seem to be naive questions, but we do not do them at any moment because we naturalize the idea that the knowledge of the teacher comes only from a school-developed formation, from which all knowledge and all teaching work would have come.

Tardif (2010) shows us that the teaching knowledge does not come only from the academic and academic formation of the teacher. This comprehension is the result of transactions between what they are and what they do, considering their culture, their socialization and their experience. In this way, the teaching knowledge would come from several sources, namely: disciplinary, curricular, professional, cultural and experiential. The first three types of knowledge can be considered formal, since they come from institutional sources, such as the university, the education department, the education councils, etc. The penultimate one, however, concerns the set of beliefs, values, norms and practices in which the socialization process unfolds. And the latter is related to professional experience. Then, because of its origins, teacher knowledge can be defined as pluralistic. In the case of the teachers of the investigated school, it was very clear in their interviews that there is an appreciation of the experiential knowledge to the detriment of the other forms of knowledge:

For me, I say, it was the school that formed me. Right? We study Pedagogy, Structure of Elementary and Middle School, Didactics, but, in my humble opinion, we only truly learn [to teach] when we enter the classroom and begin to experience this in practice. (Teacher Heitor).¹⁴

13- Haguette, Pessoa and Vidal (2016) unravel this scenario of inequality between schools in the state public education system of Ceará.

14- In this text, the names of the teachers interviewed were replaced by fictitious names, with the purpose of safeguarding the psychic and moral integrity of the research interlocutors.

In fact, the training being offered [...] at the university is very far from our reality [at school].
(Teacher Vladimir).

Analyzing the teachers' reports, we can see that the professional and disciplinary knowledge are undervalued to the detriment of the experiential ones¹⁵. In addition, it is noted that the practice of these professionals has a special value for each. Perhaps this undervaluation is due to the fact that they are not the professionals responsible for the construction of formal knowledge, which is a function of scientists and researchers. On the other hand, the valorization of the experiential knowledge can be related to the fact that they are created by the *teachers by profession* and manipulated by them. The experiential knowledge is not formally systematized in a theoretical body of its own, since they are practical knowledge formed daily by teachers themselves, serving as the basis for the construction of social representations¹⁶ (MOSCOVICI, 2003; LENOIR, 1996) which provide them with the means to interpret, understand and guide their practice, with the teaching *culture in action* (TARDIF, 2010).

In this way, the teaching proficiency aggregates both formal and informal knowledge, providing that these professionals relinquish formal knowledge, created and promoted in the public sphere related to teacher training, at the same time they use informality, which can be developed in the private sphere of the individual, carrying traces of the cordiality already highlighted in the discussion with Holanda (1997).

The fact that experiential knowledge is related to teaching practice does not mean that they are completely subjective and come from the private sphere. With this, each experience and individual perception about knowledge develops from interdependent relations between the strata of a social group, that is, "human thought is not motivated by a contemplative impulse, since it requires an unconscious volitional and emotional subterranean current that assures in group life a continuous orientation towards knowledge" (MANNHEIM, 1972, p. 58). This conception ends up showing us the strength of the collective unconscious as the irrational foundation of rational knowledge.

Based on the Brazilian cultural context and on the contact with other more experienced teachers¹⁷ in moments of interaction in school, we realize that the teacher can inculcate prejudices and stigmas and reproduce them in the school environment. This is likely to occur mainly through the exchange of information about students, tips on how to organize and discipline classes in the classroom, and tips and tricks on lesson preparation, assessment and teaching materials (TARDIF, 2010). It is important to

15- All teachers interviewed reported the deficiency of university education for the teaching profession, in some way extolling the daily teaching practice, which makes them construct the knowledge of experience.

16- We use the concept of social representations to emphasize that teacher knowledges can be conventionalized, locating them in a given category, placing them as a model determined by the social group in question. Moreover, such representations are prescriptive, that is, they are imposed, transmitted, and are the product of a sequence of elaborations and changes that occur in the course of time, resulting from successive generations (MOSCOVICI, 2003). In this sense, representations depend on factors that are in the midst of the diversity existing among human societies. This is the importance of considering memory and history, because *social constructions* are also historical and composed of certain specificities that constitute a collective memory (LENOIR, 1996).

17- According to Tardif (2010), the experiential knowledge, with respect to the teaching practice, are developed mainly in the first five years of profession.

consider that the so-called private sphere of the individual is formed from his contact with the outside, internalizing the society in a unique way. It is in this way that Holanda (1997) conceives the concept of cordiality, that is, from the contact of the man with the society that privileges friendly contacts and knowledge. Thus, the *private* seems to oppose formality more than to informality, which results from a socially elaborate behaviour that is not at all in relation to social relations oriented in a ritual, hierarchical and legal way, characteristic of what is *public*.

In the course of the investigation, we found that the teachers' room constitutes a space of sociability quite conducive to the elaboration of the experiential type of knowledge since it is where teachers and employees share some events related to their professional day to day. In this way, we began to make more systematic observations in this place in order to obtain elements that could subsidize our investigation, allowing us information to be triangulated with the interviews and observations in the Class Council. With the research, it was possible to verify that teachers orient their teaching practice based on a classification system of students and that it would be possible to typify these teachers according to the way in which they guide their actions in function of this current classification system.

Representations about the ideal student and types of teaching practice

The modernizing ideal that served as the basis for the construction of a set of model schools in Ceará during the late 1990s, instead of promoting an improvement in the educational system as a whole, eventually contributed to the creation of some *oases*, as we have said, in the middle of a *desert* without quality. However, in addition to the inequalities promoted by the system itself among the different schools in the public network, there are other, more subtle mechanisms that contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities within the same school, even though there is a formal existence of equal conditions between students. The acquisition of different formal and experiential knowledge by teachers is one of the elements in this process, as these forms of knowledge are imbued with certain worldviews that contribute to reinforcing social inequalities.

Considering the research that gave rise to this article, we identified that the teachers with whom we interact also internalized prejudices and stigmas that are common in our society and that are reproduced by the daily socialization that educates us beyond the school. This is how we can perceive in interviews and observations in the field that some teachers create an ideal student model, so let's see:

We have the ideal student, that student who really has a very good formation, structured, with values and principles, and who even comes to the school open to... With the objective of learning and participating in the learning process. This is the ideal student, perfect, if everyone were like this, every teacher would be satisfied. (Teacher Vladimir).

It is noticed that the teacher conceives the profile of the *ideal student*, orienting his practice in him, disregarding the relations of power based on the social inequality

considering that they are parts of the school since the school is the society as well. But how is this *student ideal* produced?

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1975), there is a fundamental relationship between the educational system and the structure of relations with social classes, in that all pedagogical action is a disguised form of symbolic violence. Still, according to the authors, symbolic violence is the process of insinuating a cultural arbitrary. The notion of cultural arbitrary refers to the fact that the set of practices and values that integrate the cultural expressions characteristic of a given class are arbitrary for other social classes, insofar as it does not concern their social context of origin, therefore, an uprooted expression, strange and unfamiliar to their way of life.

In this sense, the creation of an *ideal student model* originates from classification criteria created by the school community that refer to tacit conventions about the characteristics pertinent to *the good student*, as opposed to *the bad student*. The existence of this ideal student model is explicitly perceptible in the teachers' interviews, although the reasons for such a model are not so explicit. Thus, invested with their pedagogical authorities, teachers list reasons related to the criteria pertinent to *good* disciplinary conduct and to the adequate development of the teaching-learning process to qualify an individual as a *good* or *bad* student, indirectly reiterating what is at stake: incorporation of the cultural arbitrary that the school aims to inculcate implicitly. Students who are closest to the practices, behaviours and values corresponding to this arbitrary would be regarded as good students, while those who disagree with this arbitrary would be framed as bad students. Thus, *the bad students* would become the privileged target of stigmatizing conceptions on the part of the teachers, due to their *deviant* character in relation to the classification criteria adopted slyly about the *good student* or *ideal student*.¹⁸

The construction of this *ideal model* of students is undertaken and reiterated daily in the spaces of coexistence between teachers in the school and in the classroom. In living spaces such as the teachers' room, narratives circulate about the professional and personal experiences of teachers and administrative agents that serve as a mainstay for the continuous elaboration and acquisition of experiential knowledge. This context makes possible an informal systematization of pedagogical and extra-pedagogical values that underlie the categorization of students in *good* or *bad*, constructing a legitimating discourse on the validity of these categories as an evaluation criterion, as expressed in the meetings of the Class Council, for example. By converting these criteria of classification into a legitimate procedure, although not explicitly assumed, the school dilemma is posed as a reproducer of the current social order, inasmuch as the *misfit* students are doomed to school failure and, therefore, difficulties in their chances of socially advancing.

Based on this reflection about the classification of students by teachers, it would be possible to propose the construction of a typology of teachers based on their attitudes toward different types of students. They could be appointed *cordial* teachers who are resigned to recognize an ideal type of student and guide their conduct in order to privilege

18- The very existence of good and bad students, according to the teachers' criteria, relativizes the notion of symbolic violence in the school environment, since a significant number of students, regardless of interest, seem to oppose the cultural arbitrary propagated by the school. In such cases, violence may take other forms.

only those who approach that ideal. On the other hand, they would be identified as *humanists* those who seek to guide their teaching practice in order to try to stimulate their students to approach this ideal.¹⁹ However, in both cases, the reproduction of the social order is reiterated in different ways, due to the profound difficulties of rupturing, within the school, with the dominant cultural arbitrary. In the case of the *cordial modus operandi*, their pedagogical action would be inherently exclusionary, in that the *deviant* students tend to school failure. On the part of the *humanists*, their pedagogical action would potentially contribute to increasing the chances of their students being included at a higher level within the order since their preoccupation with those who have greater difficulty in inculcating the cultural arbitrary causes them to receive a stimulus extra to better perform their learning activities.

Thinking from the above, we understand how teachers of the school studied act in the school environment by applying the distinction between students who call them ideals and students who do not approach this model, even opposing the ideal formulation of their teachers, which is why they can be qualified as *subjects who do not want to do anything of life, vagabonds, marginal with no future*. Under a biased view of students, these qualifications condemn them to school failure. In an informal conversation with us, a teacher sets out his opinion about the condition of student success in school:

That's what I always say: education is a matter of "wanting". If I say, "Take this cell phone" [and reach out to the researcher as if offering him a cell phone], and you respond, "Why do I want this cell phone if I do not know how to use it?". "But if I give you the cell phone, in 30 minutes you'll know how to make it work, that is, "just want". (Teacher Ronaldo).

With this, we understand that the teacher blames the students for not learning or poor learning, not considering other factors that can influence this, as we could understand in the discussion with Bourdieu and Passeron (1975). These factors are neglected and the responsibility for the low grades becomes exclusive to the student because he *does not want* to study. In this inclusive logic of discrimination, the teacher and the school separate students who have good performance and behaviour²⁰ from those who do not have them; these are generally defined as *vagabonds* and *without a future* in moments reserved for teachers, as we observed in the school space, especially in the teachers' room.

Social classification of students, evaluation and reproductive education

Among the group of teachers that we classify as *cordial*, we perceive that the sharing of experiential knowledge contributes to the reproduction of prejudices and stigmata. This

19 - Here it is important to point out that both the *cordial* and *humanistic* meanings, both attributed to the teachers being researched, are conceived as *styles of thought* (MANNHEIM, 1986); that is, they originate in a given time and space, producing different modes of patterns and categories of thought.

20 - Still according to Professor Ronaldo, the ideal type of student represents "from 20% to 25%" of the total, the minority of those who are present in this public school.

was because we had the opportunity to make observations in the school environment that showed us this, namely: during the School Class Council, a student had been disapproved in almost all subjects after the regular assessments, but passed in several in the recovery at the end of the school year, except in four. In the meantime, three teachers of these disciplines approved him during the Council, that is to say, he ended up being rejected only in one discipline, which gave him second chance - another evaluation of recovery - to seek to be approved for the following series. At the height of the discussion about this case, involving all the teachers in that student's class, a teacher commented: "I'm going to approve of him, he's nice". Another said, "I do not approve of it, because he wrote in the proof of recovery the following: 'I am reaping what I have planted.'" That's when a third teacher verbalized: "At least he's aware! Are you going to approve the [another student] that is a 'no future'?!".

We have seen that teachers externalize their practical knowledge from the moment they carry out assessments about the students at official moments among their peers, as is the case with the Class Council. Therefore, we understand that the teachers exposed in their speeches their experiential knowledge, which were loaded with prejudices and stigmas inculcated from their experiences in the family, religion, school and non-school education, professional experience, in short, experience in cultural context of their society that made them naturalize and reproduce what they learned as *right* and *good*. Moreover, it can be seen how the abandonment of the formal evaluation standards and the adoption of cordial patterns occur, causing the teachers to make evaluations about the student in a private sphere, in which they take into account extra-pedagogical factors to the detriment of a public sphere, in that pedagogical factors should prevail.

Initially, one says that he will approve the student for being *good*, which can be questioned in the following way: the students of the less favored classes do not need to apprehend the school knowledge, it is enough only that they behave, which will guarantee that they are not tomorrow's *marginal* or who are not the ones who are angry at their jobs. Regarding the third, it is understood that the student must be approved for being aware of his condition, which does not happen with another pupil who, perhaps due to his behavior and performance, is a *no-future* in a society where dominant values - thought and propagated by the ruling classes through ideological devices such as radio and TV stations, print media, websites and school - are ruthless with people who behave inappropriately.

In this sense, we question the extent to which the social relations related to the school contribute to the reproduction or deconstruction of prejudices and stigmas based on social inequality, leading several youngsters from the middle school in Ceará to a real picture of social vulnerability and social inclusion perverse, precarious and marginal (MARTINS, 1997, 2002). Research has revealed that the answer lies in an irony, in the paradox between reproduction and rupture with class prejudice and the stigmatization of poor students, since, as we understand the occurrence of reproduction, examples of deconstruction of prejudiced and stigmatizing behaviour also exist. As mentioned earlier, in the discussion with Tardif (2010), the experiential knowledge of the teacher *comes* from personal and collective experiences. Therefore, their experiences can contribute both

to the naturalization of prejudices and to criticism of them. It is in this way that we understand that some teachers classified as *humanists* contribute to the deconstruction of prejudices and stigmas in the school environment. These aspects can be demonstrated with teacher Paula's speech:

The teacher knowing how to deal with the class, the class will respect you, [...] you have to talk so that you have an exchange and an understanding, let's say. Because both are adding, learning and teaching. So there has to be that dialogue, right? When you open up to this dialogue, students will feel important, not just conducted, but when they [think], "Oh, my opinion is worth it"; "Ah, cool, I give my opinion and the teacher listens, changes his opinion even, talking to me." So he feels in the gear too and things start to flow better in the room when we also give not only duties but also give rights to them, they have a voice. (Teacher Paula).

The teacher Paula considers the school as an environment of mutual learning where students should not only obey orders but also participate in decisions and enjoy rights. The experience of her life brings some explanations about her behaviour: she was a student at the school where she teaches today, besides living for almost all her life in the same neighbourhood of the school, which is located in the outskirts of Fortaleza. It turns out that the teacher Paula comes from the same social class as her students, lives with them on a daily basis and, for this reason, can get an in-depth view about them, and not *superficial*, in the case of other teachers who define stereotypes as a reality, humiliating and rejecting students as a consequence of their definition of the *situation* (THOMAS, 1923, 2002). Here is a phenomenon to be explained with Thomas's classic Theorem: "If men define a situation as real, it will be real in their consequences" (THOMAS; THOMAS, 1928, p. 571-572).

Unlike what Professor Ronaldo had reported, when he said that learning is a matter of *wanting*, teacher Flavio points out that the contribution of students to his class depends mainly on him:

[The students] contribute [to my work] being disciplined, they also contribute, if we don't encourage them to, I don't know, a lot of work, organize themselves in a group, guide them... I think that goes a lot, too, sometimes the teacher, you know, that of them being interested in a certain thing and wanting something with that discipline or that school year. I think it has a lot to do with this question of the teacher, I think the question is a little more directed to us too, even more in the public school. (Teacher Flávio).

Flávio seems to understand and want to overcome the traditional teaching model present in most schools today, noting that the teacher should seek to encourage students. This became clearer when asked if he works with this type of student (who contributes to his work) and he answered: "I try, as much as possible, whether it's bringing new issues or going through a job that is not just a copy." Once again, Flavio avoids holding the student responsible for his behaviour and (dis)interest, emphasizing that the teacher's performance is decisive. For what reason does this teacher think in this way?

Like Paula, Flavio was born and lived in the neighbourhood where he teaches. During his undergraduate course, he participated in political representation entities such as the Academic Center and the Central Directory of Students. He is currently involved in a youth movement to defend the rights of young people and other oppressed and marginalized social groups. This may help us explain why this teacher sees his students from a *different perspective* since these types of social movements usually have the idea of thinking about opportunities for young people, not criminalizing them, and organizing them in the struggle by rights. The professor himself emphasizes that these movements are important for his professional performance since he began to perceive reality with greater criticality and seeks to transmit this to his students:

Of course, the movements influenced me to present a bit of this critical history and such. I do not go there trying to dogmatize someone and such. [...] And in the classroom, just in that sense, [...] to form this critical thing also in them, [...] always contextualized. Anyway, I am not to "ideologize" no one; although I have an ideology. (Teacher Flávio).

In Paula and Flávio's cases, their experiential knowledge - their experience - contributed to a critical view of reality, the cultural context in which they live, understanding the preconceptions and stigmas that are present as forms of domination that must be deconstructed; and not reproduced. However, we understand that the overvaluation of experiential knowledge to the detriment of formal knowledge can strengthen social prejudices and stigmas, given that this knowledge is based on scientific discussions that can lead to estrangement and denaturalization of social inequality and its harmful effect on citizenship. In addition, this comprehension is based on practical knowledge of the reality that surrounds us and the source for interpretations, understandings, orientations (TARDIF, 2010) and problem-solving for professional teaching practice, as well as transferring the evaluation of professionals about their students from the public to the private sphere. That is, just as they can contribute to the demystification of class prejudice, as Paula and Flávio do, can deepen it, a perceived effect on other professionals through interviews and observations.

Ironies of school and teaching practice: change and maintaining social order for the knowledge and practices of teachers by profession

The research that led to this article confirmed the hypothesis launched initially, namely: that there is, at least in the studied school institution, a stigmatizing view of teachers towards their students that integrates the social construction process of school as a space breeding of prejudices and inequalities.

The confirmation of the research hypothesis brings a demystifying understanding of the school as a solution to the most diverse social problems, an idea that is widely present in the common sense and the academic common sense, although studies by authors such as Bourdieu and Passeron (1975) point to the reproduction of class domination at school, which perpetuates political, social and economic inequality: a tremendous social problem.

In contrast to the ideal school model, it is clear that the production and reproduction of stigmas, based on class preconceptions, occur in a top school, which integrates a reference education proposal to meet the requirements of the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB- Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional) 9,394, from December 10, 1996, according to which school education in Brazil must take place with an idea of freedom and human solidarity, with the fundamental objective of forming for the “world of work”, for the “Social practice” and the “exercise of citizenship”.

Even with legal, scientific and pedagogical guidelines, the teachers participating in the research overestimated the knowledge of experience to the detriment of other teaching knowledge (TARDIF, 2010). From the speeches of the interlocutors, we realized that their university education, in undergraduate courses, did not interfere substantially to deconstruct this knowledge and guide them to criticism of their teaching practice. Our interlocutors have shown that they are guided mainly by experiential knowledge dissociated from pedagogical understanding with which they should prepare for teaching in line with the practice of teaching activities in the school, such as the internships and other activities to be developed in the school space and in their social environment. Nevertheless, there are also teachers from the same social universe of their students - including, studied in the same school where they are currently teachers - and that relativized the same class prejudices that influence the actions of most of the participants of the research, criticizing the stigmatization of students.

Without disregarding the existence of teachers who relativize cultural and experiential knowledge, such comprehension seems to work extremely well in maintaining teachers' prejudiced definitions of students, school, and themselves. It was precisely the verification of the cultural and experiential knowledge present in the conduct of teachers that allowed us to identify the existence of class prejudices from which they produce and reproduce stigmas about the socially marked characteristics of students.

In addition to the class prejudice and the consequent stigmatization of students from the economically disadvantaged classes, the generalized way in which the *deterioration of the students' social identity* occurs has attracted our attention, given that they are teachers of diverse areas that manifest prejudiced views and behaviours in relation to students. This fact removes the common-sense view that teachers in the humanities area would be more critical because of their academic background, which would lead them to relativize prejudices, providing a more comprehensive and contextualized teaching practice for the sociocultural reality in which they work.

In any case, the perception of the existence of two styles of thought among the teachers, *the cordial* and *the humanist* contributed to the identification of the paradox that, on the one hand, shows the school as an institution capable of developing an inclusive educational process for the citizenship protected by the State and for the sphere of consumption, given the possibility of social mobility; and, on the other, reveals the school as a trap that, through judgments based on class social markers, reserves to its students a form of social exclusion. Thinking with Martins (1997, 2002), this social exclusion is, in fact, an inclusion in a capitalist society that distances the human individual from dignity and leaves him at the mercy of his own fate. In other words, the school, seen as

a great panacea by broad and learned common sense, contradictorily, can be a portal to precarious, marginal and perverse inclusion.

Thus, the research carried out in a model public high school in the outskirts of Fortaleza (CE) showed how the social class differences between teachers and students condition the teachers' social representations about their pupils, contributing to make the studied school much more a space of dispute between the reproduction of class domination and social mobility, than of *human emancipation*, a category used by Karl Marx (1993). For the author, *human emancipation* would only be possible from the rupture with the capitalist state and its mechanisms of control, legal order and religion. Without this, superficial and limited *political emancipation* will continue to reduce the "man, on the one hand, to a member of civil society, an independent and selfish individual and, on the other hand, a citizen, the moral person" (MARX, 1993, p. 63, author's italics). Thus, *human emancipation* does not take place, and the individual remains politically and ideologically attached to the sustaining structures of capitalist society.

To overcome the antagonism that marks these two forms of emancipation discussed by Marx (1993), we can think of a dialectical relation between them. In this direction, teachers, as regents of the school educational process, in the classroom and outside, have a role at least influential among the youngsters of high school, and can contribute to the *political emancipation* is effective and to expand the possibilities of *human emancipation* through teaching work. With this realization, democracy and social justice would be strengthened and the path to social transformation so desired for *human emancipation* could be paved with access to civil, political and social rights. These three sets of rights, fundamental for *political emancipation*, constitute the liberal idea of *full citizenship* (MARSHALL, 1967).

According to the understanding of sociologist Thomas Humphrey Marshall (1967), there is an articulation between citizenship and social class explaining the tensions between citizenship and capitalism. For Marshall (1967), the expansion of the constitutive rights of citizenship is a result of the development of capitalism regardless of social struggles. If it is the liberal conception that grounds the citizenship present in the Federal Constitution of 1988 and in LDB 9.394/ 96, what to say when the social space of the school is not even recognized from the liberal idea of citizenship of Marshall? What happens when prejudices are reproduced by teachers about their students? The so-called *social exclusion* or precarious inclusion (MARTINS, 1997, 2002) becomes even more marginal and perverse, social mobility gains a powerful obstacle and the revolutionary category of *human emancipation* that, as defined by Marx (1993), continues to shine between the stars.

Starting from our research, we risk to affirm that the school and its agents are part of the historical context that allows us to understand why stigmas were elaborated on the poor, black, indigenous students and residents of the peripheries of the cities, opening the way to a more critical approach that perceives school education as a social process replete with contradictions that must be sociologically identified, analyzed and understood. In taking the critical perspective of the social sciences as a starting point, our practical intention is to provide a contribution to reflection on school and teacher education, so that we have more empirical-analytical subsidies for the construction of a school that

surpasses the differences of class and combat all forms of prejudice and inequality arising from the authoritarian and hierarchical process through which we had the social, cultural and historical construction of Brazil.

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Received on: 12.12.2016

Reviews on: 04.04.2017

Approved on: 23.05.2017

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