

## HEGEMONY AND EMANCIPATION, REPRESENTATIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL OBJECT SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

The school, as a space for relationships or as an educational establishment for the transmission of knowledge, maintains a direct relationship with families. This study problematizes the school / family relationship in upper secondary school grades in the context of the city of Pasto - Colombia. The objective is to explore the social representations that parents of high school students have about the school. It has information of 143 people linked to public educational institutions. With the use of a questionnaire of open questions, the dimension of information and the attitude dimension of the representational content were investigated. The results show three categories: teacher performance, teaching and student performance as part of the representational content, which mediate the image of the school. These results allow us to infer that there are elements tending to the conformation of hegemonic social representations and emancipated social representations.

**Keywords:** social representation; family; school; teachers.

### Hegemonía y emancipación, elementos representacionales del objeto social colegio

#### RESUMEN

La escuela, como espacio de relaciones o como establecimiento educador por la transmisión de conocimientos, mantiene una relación directa con las familias. Este estudio problematiza la relación escuela / familia en grados escolares superiores de secundaria en el contexto de la Ciudad de Pasto - Colombia. El objetivo es explorar las representaciones sociales que sobre el colegio tienen padres y madres de familia de estudiantes de secundaria. Se cuenta con información de 143 personas vinculadas a instituciones educativas públicas. Con el uso de un cuestionario de preguntas abiertas se indagó la dimensión de información y la dimensión de actitud del contenido representacional. Los resultados muestran tres categorías: desempeño de los docentes, enseñanza y desempeño de estudiantes como parte del contenido representacional, las cuales median en la imagen del colegio. Estos resultados permiten inferir que existen elementos tendientes a la conformación de representaciones sociales hegemónicas y representaciones sociales emancipadas.

**Palabras clave:** representación social; familia; escuela; profesores.

### Hegemonia e emancipação, elementos representacionais do objeto social da escola

#### RESUMO

A escola, como espaço de relações ou como estabelecimento educador pela transmissão de conhecimentos, mantém uma relação direta com as famílias. Este estudo problematiza a relação escola / família em grau escolar - ensino médio - no contexto da Cidade de Pasto - Colômbia. O objetivo é explorar as representações sociais que a escola tem pais e mães de família de estudantes de secundária (ensino médio). Conta-se com informação de 143 pessoas vinculadas a instituições educativas públicas. Com o uso de um questionário de perguntas abertas indagou-se a dimensão de informação e a dimensão de atitude do conteúdo representacional. Os resultados mostram três categorias: desempenho dos docentes, ensino e desempenho de estudantes como parte do conteúdo representacional, as quais median na imagem da escola. Estes resultados permitem inferir que existem elementos tendentes à conformação de representações sociais hegemônicas e representações sociais emancipadas.

**Palavras-chave:** representação social; família; escola; professores.

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## INTRODUCTION

Gadotti (2003) mentions that the school arises from the social division of labor as a formal institution. The division of labor made people think about the people specialization, therefore, the school was the place where some teach and others learn. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe, the educational reform involved moving from education given within homes to education given in schools, a change at that time had to do with thinking that school was for those children whose parents did not have the intellectual and / or economic capacities and responsibility to educate them (Tyrell & Vanderstraeten, 2017). From the modern age, the school was delegated as a place of knowledge, as a space for formalization and institutionalization of teaching, as part of a formal education system (Silveira & Wagner, 2009).

Although, the school maintains an image of a primordial space for the transmission and generation of new knowledge gradually, from a socio-historical perspective it is understood as a diversified space of historical, emotional and social meanings that permeate the learning process, in other words, it is not only a place to study because in it interaction dynamics are lead to think about it, beyond a structural physical space, as a meeting space, of relationships that are the result of history and projects of its agents (Gadotti, 2007; Araújo, Pessoa, Fonseca, Albuquerque, & Almeida, 2016). It is the second mediating environment between the individual and society, fundamental in the socialization, development and learning of subjects by considering, on the one hand, new forms of interaction, behaviors, and, on the other, the transmission of culturally organized, historically constructed and systematized knowledge (Oliveira & Marinho-Araújo, 2010; Pacheco & Cia, 2015).

If the school is the second mediating environment between the individual and society, the family is the first, since in it from birth, norms, beliefs, values and roles are established in the subject that influence the development of the person and his/her subsequent decision making (Barboza-Palomino & et al., 2017; Callegaro, Wanderley, & Koller, 2015; Pacheco & Cia, 2015). In addition, the family becomes important for pedagogy due to the differentiation in the establishment of roles in the children's teaching / learning process, and implementation of alternative training spaces (Suarez & Urrego, 2014; Tyrell & Vanderstraeten, 2017).

Then it is evident that there is a common goal between family and school: the well-being of children, adolescents and young people, translated into school and academic success, which implies working together, towards the same direction (Cabello & Giró, 2016 ), because as stated by Gadotti (2007), the school "as a social institution depends on society and to transform itself, it also depends on the relationships it maintains

with other schools, with families, on learning together with them, on establishing alliances with society, with the population "(p. 10). Family and school maintain a relationship that for some can be perceived as good, cordial and fluid, while for others it can be problematic as it does not occur as expected (Martínez, 2014).

Research results show, for example, that an adequate family-school relationship benefits students in aspects such as strengthening self-esteem, security, confidence in their abilities, likewise, it favors initiative and participation in the classroom, highlighting that a good relationship improves students' academic performance (Castro-Zubizarreta & Garcia-Ruiz, 2016). And if specific issues such as Bullying are addressed, "the involvement of parents in solving problems can become a protective factor for children, reducing the possibilities of new victimizations" (Callegaro et al., 2015, p. 45), that is, both parents and teachers as protagonists of the children's training process, can generate spaces in the school and family context to promote resilience processes (Cabrera, Aya, Muñoz, Guevara, & Cano, 2016). However, there are also results that show substantial ruptures, identifying families that comply with merely administrative aspects such as enrollment, receipt of reports or going to institutional calls (Julio, Mánuel, & Navarro, 2012), and also a very low participation of parents based on their daily activities and work (Gutiérrez & Alonso, 2011).

Taking into account specifically what fathers and mothers refer to regarding school, Bustamante (2010) in his study carried out in Córdoba capital (Argentina) mentions that for these actors, school is a transcendental space in the lives of their children , giving value to its socializing status and waiting for its disciplinary function to develop, however, some see the school fragmented, which operates on the valuation they have of it based on parameters that reinforce the reproduction of inequalities. And this is complemented by what was stated by Villarroel and Sánchez (2002) who in their study in the rural sector (in Valparaíso, Chile) mention that in the first years (1 to 6 grade) both students and parents attribute to the school is of great importance, generating high educational expectations.

Results such as those presented show that studying the relationship between school and family represents an important source of information "since it allows identifying aspects or conditions that influence communication, collaboration patterns and conflicts between these two institutions (Pacheco & Cia, 2015 , p. 350), and this is reaffirmed by De Freitas (2008) when he mentions that "the investigation of the different practices, styles and behaviors of family groups in relation to the school universe has allowed a better understanding of the constitution of different school paths or forms of schooling "(p. 386).

Taking into account the above, the purpose of this study is to approach this relationship from a particular context, the city of Pasto (Colombia) and particularly with parents whose children are in upper grades of secondary school.

The study problematizes the issue from a psychosocial framework taking into account the concept of Social Representations or common sense knowledge, which is structured from the social interactions that occur and circulate within daily life through a word, a gesture or an encounter, they result from observations and analysis of these observations, from the appropriation of notions and languages, and their function is to allow subjects to position themselves in front of defined social objects by framing their behaviors (Moscovici, 1979). Representing a thing or a state is to reconstruct it, retouch it, change the text, not just repeat it or reproduce it (Moscovici, 2000). For Jodelet (2011) "this form of knowledge has a root and a practical objective: based on the experience of people, it serves as a grid for reading reality and as a guide for action in practical and daily life" (p. 134). These representations contain three dimensions: a) information, which has to do with the subject's knowledge of the object, b) attitude, which has to do with the favorable or unfavorable position that the subject has towards the object, and c) field of representation, which has to do with the organization of the previous elements establishing networks among themselves (Jodelet, 1993; Moscovici, 1979).

The consensus that exists in the elements of representation within a population group does not imply uniformity, Moscovici (1988) mentions that there are three ways in which a representation becomes social, taking into account the relationships among the members of a group: a) the hegemonic representations, shared by all the members of a structured group, but these have not been produced by them, these are implicit in the practices and are characterized by their uniformity and their coercive order; b) emancipated representations, when each subgroup creates its own and different version of those representations and shares them with the others; and c) controversial representations, which as a product of social conflicts and controversies, are not shared by society as a whole, and generate antagonistic relationships among its members since they pretend to be exclusive, are considered within contexts of opposition and struggle among groups.

Consequently, for the preparation of this text, a question was generated as to: what kind of consensus among representational elements about the school can be delineated from the expressions of parents of students of the ninth, tenth and eleventh grades of educational institutions in the urban sector and rural city of Pasto? Thus, the objective is to explore the consensus

among representational elements that parents of students of upper grades of secondary school, urban and rural, have about the school in the City of Pasto.

## METHOD

The population was taken as the fathers and mothers of families whose children, at the time of data collection (September to November 2017), were in ninth, tenth and eleventh grade, belonging to two public educational institutions in the urban sector of the Pasto city, and one from the rural sector, which were selected under the criterion of convenience since there was already preliminary contact with key actors in them, and the respective institutional authorizations were obtained.

This article shows qualitative results generated from an activity of rapprochement with the population of parents in the framework of the family school activities developed by the Educational Institutions from their work plan, and in which 167 participated people.

From the total number of participants, for the selection of the work unit, the following selection criteria was applied: being the father or mother of the children of the educational institutions, thus ruling out other types of kinship (grandparent, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, other). As a result, a definitive sample of 143 people was obtained. Of these, 126 (88%) are mothers and 17 (12%) are fathers; 20% of participants are linked to an institution in the rural sector and 80% are part of the two institutions in the urban sector.

In the institutional meetings, the objective of the research project in progress was made known, and voluntary participation in it was requested, clarifying that the data collected is anonymous, keeping the confidentiality of these. Once the verbal endorsement of the participants was received, information was collected based on the technique used by Diaz & Salamanca (2012) to address the content of social representations, encompassing the dimensions: information and attitude. The instrument consisted of formulating specific questions regarding the social object of study as follows: what do they say when they talk about school? What do you hear about the school? What do they like and dislike about school? How do they participate in school? These questions were formulated in plenary and the participants recorded their answers in writing, in the case of the urban area in a format of five free boxes, one box for each answer, and in the case of the rural area in sticky notes that were placing in a mural. These dynamics had to do with the different contexts, seeking comfort and ease for the participants.

The collected data were analyzed under a qualitative coding and categorization process and the use of the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti 8 was used. The coding was made from: what was said and heard as elements of the information category, and with like

/ dislike and participation as elements of the attitude category.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained show that the image of school for parents is projected from representational elements that have to do, on the one hand, with what has been said and heard about the school in the information dimension, and the like or dislike for the school in the attitude dimension.

In both rural and urban contexts, the information dimension is mobilized under the following sub categories: a) *teaching performance*, with textual fragments such as: *"When I talk about my son's school, they are very good things, because it has very good teachers"* (A:6), *"sometimes they don't like it because there are angry teachers"* (A:20), *"Son's high school is very good, excellent, the teachers are very good"* (U:22), *"The students say that sometimes the teachers don't listen to them"* (U: 29); b) *teaching-learning*, with textual fragments such as: *"For me the school is a good school because the students have advanced a lot in learning"* (R:12), *"there are students who say that there are teachers who in some subjects do not teach what that they should teach"* (R:2) *"when I refer to school it has always made a good impression on me because it is reaching good standards in education"* (U:13), *"That school teaching is good for our children"* (U: 16), *"my neighbors say that their children learn a lot"* (U:29); and c) *student performance*, with textual fragments such as: *"There are people who think that school is bad because some students are irresponsible, they don't take advantage of it, that's why it's bad, but that's not like that"* (R:10), *"to other people that I have heard they say that some students are very problematic"* (R:19), *"That it is a good school, it has good students"* (U:30), *"I have heard that there are some students who use psychoactive drugs and some students are very disrespectful with the teachers and the directors"* (U:39), *"It's bad, they don't demand, there is a lot of disrespect... there is a lot of young people in addiction and pregnancy problems..."* (U:40).

The aforementioned fragments suggest that the information that parents have regarding school is dynamized from the dichotomy: *good school and bad school*. When delving into this aspect, it is observed that two actors of the educational community appear as references of the social object of the school: teachers and students. Regarding the first one, what is mentioned by Gadotti (2007) about that *"the school is the place par excellence for the teacher ... we are used to claiming our teachers as if they were responsible for all the sorrows of humanity"* (p. 9), and this is reflected in the expressions of parents, teachers are a benchmark of what the school's social purpose is, they take on this actor to establish a direct relationship with it and

create an image of what he represents (school), which may be due to the fact that it is the group of teachers that is in charge of building the relationship with the family (Martinez, 2014), and becomes the central axis because the school is seen from the substantive function of transmission of knowledge and under the figure of a space for the formalization of teaching (Silveira & Wagner, 2009; Oliveira, & Marinho-Araújo, 2010; Pacheco & Cia, 2015), and this is reflected from the same institutionality:

The teaching function is that of a professional nature that implies the direct realization of the systematic teaching-learning processes, which includes the diagnosis, planning, execution and evaluation of the same processes and their results, and of other educational activities within of the institutional educational project framework of educational establishments. (Decree 1278, 2002).

From the theory of social representations, the elements presented are part of the information dimension, and reveal a content that reflects what Jodelet (2000) raised in terms of the dynamics between representation and social order, first because in these elements it is notorious the role of social interaction, fathers and mothers refer to what they hear from their children and their classmates from the daily life experienced in their relationship with the school. Second, these elements are permeated by relationships between groups and power relationships, which for this case is the institutionality, that is, institutionally there is a logic of the teaching role as a central figure, and that has been reproduced from the entire administrative apparatus that enables access and it is taken as a reference by parents. Third, the history, since the expressions reveal the two actors (teachers and students) and the substantive function on which the social object of the school has been built since its establishment as a system of socialization and training based on social division from work.

Regarding the *attitude* dimension, in the rural sector it is found that the favorable image of the school takes into account elements such as: discipline, instilling values, and complementary activities in the teaching-learning process, elements in which the figure of the teacher reappears. In the urban sector there are elements such as: discipline, teaching-learning methodologies, interaction and personal assessment between teachers and students and among groups of peers, and the issue of physical infrastructure.

On the other hand, an unfavorable image of a school has to do, in the rural sector, with elements such as: disrespect by some teachers, irresponsibility of students, irresponsibility of families, consumption of psychoactive substances, deficit in student transportation, gossip,

and facility cleaning. At the same time, in the urban sector, there are elements such as: indiscipline and the academic subject in which the figure of the teacher appears as a reference, the interaction between peers alluding to the influences on the subject of consumption of psychoactive substances and the presence of fights, also linking the issue of infrastructure with respect to security issues in the area and deterioration of the facilities.

The results corroborate what is stated by Martínez (2014) regarding that family and school maintain a relationship that for some may be perceived as good, cordial and fluid, while for others it may be problematic as it does not occur as expected. They also show that in these educational institutions the teacher is a protagonist, an issue that has been referenced in other studies (Cabello & Giró, 2016), therefore, the teacher is taken as a reference for the representation of the school, and it is also put into play the academic subject, an element that Silva and Siqueira (2017) identified as an indicator of conflict or affinity between students and teachers, and that in this particular case is transferred to that relationship between parents and teachers. These contrasts allow us to interpret that the substantive function (teaching process) delegated to the school institution and the actors in charge of it (teachers) are mainstreamed in the relationships of the entire educational community (teachers, students and parents), therefore, can be interpreted as constitutive elements of a hegemonic social representation (Moscovici, 1988), that is, they are elements that have transcended in time in other places and other spaces and that the actors through interaction have made them their own to create an image from college.

From this representational framework, the issue of the participation of parents in the school has a particular dynamic. Returning to the results, we have expressions such as: *"I participate by complying with and attending the different activities and meetings that are held at the school"* (R:15), *"going to the meetings attending when the teachers call me"* (R:2), *"I participate by joining the meetings"* (U:1), *"with compliance, when they mention us at the meeting"* (U:33). These expressions are related to the hegemonic representational elements insofar as they frame the behavior of fathers and mothers in a role that does not go beyond the group meetings that are organized institutionally, and can be interpreted as a superficial and limited relationship in formal situations (Reali & Tancredi, 2002 as cited by Oliveira & Marinho-Araújo, 2010) which may be anchored to the issue of the student trajectory of their children since it has been found in other studies that the level of participation of families is higher in the lower formative stages (Gutiérrez & Alonso, 2011), and for the particular case of the study these are students who are in the upper

grades of secondary school, with a longer academic trajectory, a particular stage of development, and a more extensive institutional bonding of their fathers and mothers.

However, this research work makes it possible to mention that although the representational elements have consensus between the rural and urban contexts, they also have nuances, or divergent elements, that characterize both. For example, in the rural sector expressions were found that refer to the issue of physical space and food, and which is closely linked to the current dynamics of the institution regarding the school feeding plan and resources allocated for infrastructure: *"A little I am concerned about the restaurant, there is very little food"* (R:14) *"Expand its facilities because there are many students and they need a recreational space"* (R:13), while in the urban sector expressions were found that refer to a connotation differentiating, which although they maintain the theme of training, give it a nuance that goes a little beyond the transmission of knowledge, such as: *"school is the recreation of life"* (U:64), *"What is the School is the second home for our children because they form as people for their good"* (U:32), *"This school gives low-income people the opportunity to be someone in life with a good performance"* (U:34).

As representations are a knowledge built from everyday life, each subject will insert elements that they decode in their interaction with the environment and their own experience regarding it. For the rural sector, the issue of physical space and food are generating important breaking points due to their own dynamics regarding the conditions generated by the context, since it is known that the issue of educational extension and the guarantee of adequate conditions for it in non-urban sectors it is more complex because aspects such as geography, school conditions and the conditions of the family itself are linked in a decisive way (Lima & Silva, 2015). In the urban sector, these elements may possibly be covered by a geographical proximity to the institutionality and the sociodemographic factor, therefore, there are other aspects that mediate the participants' discourse, considering an aspect of the time their children stay in the institution and what has the future to generate all this process in the creation and development of a better life project as a possibility of a good future.

These differentiating elements could be signs of the construction and emergence of emancipated social representations, that is, those that construct subgroups with their own and different versions of the hegemonic, and which can favor the parents' participation in the relationship family school under expressions such as *"M participation in school is to be aware of my children, their performance ... they are well presented with their uniforms and they arrive on time"* (U:10), *"teaching*

my children that the most important thing is respect to teachers, colleagues and managers” (U: 53). This is due to the fact that a different representation of the school, beyond its institutionalized role, becomes a different framework of behavior.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results presented allow us to approach the psychosocial gear that underlies the relationship between school and family, “it gives us certain interpretations, which are small theories” (Jodelet 2002, as cited by Esparza, 2003, p. 125) about the image that is created about of the school social object and that from the different contexts, realities and feelings have been developing and that allows parents to take a position with respect to said social object.

“If we assume that a social representation is a preparation for action, it is not only to the extent that it guides behavior, but above all to the extent that it remodels and reconstitutes the elements of the environment in which behavior must have place” (Moscovici, 1979, p. 32) by taking the results as representational elements it is possible to infer a framework of behaviors and communication in the subjects, hence, two representational tendencies have been inferred: hegemonic and emancipated, which can give account of the nature of stimuli that are surrounding and causing the generation of common sense knowledge of the subjects, and that in turn allows them to exchange codes to name and classify their individual and collective history with respect to the social object.

A favorable image of school can become in a framework of behaviors that enhance the school-family relationship, however, it will depend on the hegemony or emancipation built with respect to the social object, that is, the subject from that image of favorability can reproduce that institutionalized logic where the school is based on its substantive function of transmission of knowledge with a preponderance of the teaching role, or on the contrary it can, from the same favorable image, promote new forms of interaction with the social object, perhaps, taking a role less subordinate to the figure of the teacher; and similarly from an unfavorable image. This in light of the context, history and power relations that have been developing between the school and the family, elements crystallized through interactions in everyday life.

The elements found allow us to see that although there may be consensus, there are also divergences with respect to the social object, therefore, this gives rise to questioning those institutionalized logics (both in school and in the family) in which the established roles are rigid and make nuances invisible. representational, which results in a homogenization of practices, which,

although they can regulate certain aspects, can also blur the relationship between school and family. In this order of ideas, strengthening the whole issue of co-responsibility is considered relevant in an intervention process.

Finally, being an exploratory study, the results are intended to be a trigger to delve into the topic of common knowledge that fathers and mothers build on the social object of the school, since to account for the field of representation (an element that is part of the representational content), it is necessary to delve into them and make use of multiple techniques, an issue in which the present study is limited.

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