



Corresponding to Author

Bruna Surdi Alves  
 E-mail: [bruna.surdi@ufsm.br](mailto:bruna.surdi@ufsm.br)  
 Universidade Federal de Santa Maria  
 CV Lattes  
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/1195129956745668>

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Review on the book "Epistemological positions in research in educational public policies in uncertain scenarios"

Resenha sobre o livro "Posicionamentos epistemológicos nas pesquisas em políticas públicas educacionais em cenários incertos"

Reseña del libro "Posiciones epistemológicas en la investigación en políticas públicas educativas en escenarios inciertos"

Bruna Surdi Alves <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0441-1512>



ALMEIDA, Maria de Lourdes Pinto de; SOUSA, José Vieira (org.). **Posicionamentos epistemológicos nas pesquisas em políticas educacionais em cenários incertos**. Campinas, SP: Mercado de Letras, 2020. ISBN: 978-65-86089-31-8. 14x21 cm. 452p.

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Almeida and Souza (2020) believe that research is as a field of dispute where different theoretical currents present arguments that support their way of analyzing reality and its contradictions. For the authors, this set of justifications is perceived in ethical and political postures and delineations, which, from start to finish, constitute relations to what is proposed to investigate. In this sense, the work "Epistemological Posture in Research on Educational Policies in Uncertain Scenarios", aims to bring a debate on the different epistemological approaches used in research on Educational Policies, in times of mismanagement by the neglect of science in the government of Jair Bolsonaro, in this first half of the 21st century, in Brazil.

Registered by the publisher Mercado de Letras in 2020, and released at the 2021 national ANPEd (National Association of Pos Graduation Studies and Research in Education), the book brings 16 chapters, prepared by researchers from different institutions in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Spain. In the initial presentation text, the organizers build an overview of each chapter with main notes. Despite not being divided into sections, it is possible to perceive similarity between the works based on the theme, proposal and methodology presented. The first main four discussions, is about the work of the philosopher Antonio Gramsci, highlighting some of his main concepts and correlation with research in educational policy.

The first text, entitled "Currentness of Gramscian thought for the analysis of educational policies" by Lara Carlette Thiengo, Cezar Luiz De Maria and Júlia Fitroni Moreira Dias, focus on nowadays application, of Gramsci's concepts in the investigation of the field of educational policies. In the following chapter, Anita Helena Schlesener presents in "The Political Theory of Antonio Gramsci and the formation of workers: a version from the *Cadernos do Cárcere*", the discussion about politics and education, through the concepts of hegemony and passive revolution and the political and cultural formation of workers. In "State and civil society in Gramsci: theoretical-methodological contributions to research in educational policy", the authors Rodrigo da Silva Pereira and Vitor Bemvindo propose to revisit Gramsci's theoretical assumptions, especially the concept of the expanded State, comprising the school, in this context, as a space for the construction of counter-hegemony and, for this same reason, in dispute. Kátia Augusta Curado Pinheiro Cordeiro da Silva, in her chapter "Educational policy from the perspective of historical-dialectical materialism in Gramsci", presents the concept of "philosophy of praxis", originated from Marx and Lenin, placing the role of education in the society transformation.

The following text, authored by Gisele Masson, "Contributions of György Lukács on political praxis: elements for an ontological analysis of educational policy" seeks to bring together the concept of political praxis by the Hungarian author Lukács and educational policy as an expression of the antagonism of classes. Also in dialogue with a prominent theorist, José Vieira de Sousa in his text "The field as a theoretical-methodological proposition for the study of Higher Education policy" presents the concept of field from Pierre Bourdieu, reflecting on the challenges and dilemmas on the education policy, with emphasis on higher education.

The following two chapters, result of research, analyze the academic productions in different contexts and with different objectives. María Verónica Leiva Guerreri and Elizabeth Donoso Osorio, researchers working in Valparaíso, Chile, and Ramón Pérez Pérez de Oviedo, Spain, present in their chapter “La epistemología e investigación sobre políticas educativas de gestión curricular em Chile. Fortalezas y debilidades” the results of a documentary and analytical-descriptive research, based on scientific works published between 1990 and 2018, in scientific journals in Latin America, indexed in the Scielo and Scopus databases. The authors emphasize the lack of epistemological depth in the works found. Additionally, they criticized the academic overproduction. Marilda Pasqual Schneider and Michele Luciana Blind de Morais, present the results of a meta-research based on twenty theses from Graduate Programs in Education in Brazil, between 1990 and 2016, which focus on the specific theme of educational policy, namely, educational evaluation and its relationship with accountability. This chapter entitled “Research in educational policy in Brazil: theoretical-epistemological characteristics”, as well as the previous one, points to the absence of epistemological position of the researchers and authors of the investigated works.

Silvio Sánchez Gamboa carries out, in his chapter, “Research in educational policies: conjuncture analyzes as new research strategies”, an analysis of balances carried out in the area of education in Brazil, in three different periods, highlighting the heuristic potential of the conjuncture analysis as a research strategy. The following text, “The relationship between structure and conjuncture in educational research: a reflection as of the field of educational policies” by Margarita Victoria Rodríguez and Silvia Helena de Brito, both professors at the Federal University of Mato Grande do Sul, takes up the theorist Antonio Gramsci from the concepts of structure and conjuncture. According to the authors, it is only possible to perceive the object and its historicity as part of a structure, and not only in a given conjuncture. In this sense, the authors propose a model of analysis able to dialectically relate structural and contingency aspects of that given reality.

The chapter “Historical-dialectical materialism and historical-critical pedagogy as a theoretical-methodological approach: contributions to educational research”, by Silvia Regina Canan, Jéssica De Marco and Maria de Lourdes Pinto de Almeida, is the result of studies and research developed through NEPPES (Nucleus of Studies and Research in Higher Education Processes), linked to GIEPES (International Group of Studies and Research in Higher Education). The authors explain the historical-dialectical materialism and the historical-critical pedagogy, based on the construction developed by Dermeval Saviani.

Yet, establishing dialogues between different concepts and theoretical assumptions, Altair Alberto Fávero and Marcio Giusi Trevisol establish an approximation between the dialectical historical method and the procedures of discourse analysis. In their text “Research and production of scientific knowledge in educational policies: a glance on the epistemological perspectives of dialectical history and Discourse Analysis”, the researchers propose an effective and careful path for investigations in the field of educational policies. It

combines the dialectical historical materialism as a method and Discourse Analysis as a procedure to be adopted, being a powerful strategy in the apprehension of the studied object.

Maria de Lourdes Pinto de Almeida and Diego Palmeira Rodrigues present subsequently the work “Epistemological standpoint in research on educational public policies: Marxism in check”, which aims to discuss Marxism as an epistemological standpoint in investigations on educational policies. The authors present a brief overview of the theoretical bases of Marxism, through authors as Triviños, Netto, Tello and Marx himself, highlighting their contribution in the field of educational policies, highlighting that the researcher must assume critical and argumentative posture in his work.

The last three chapters (except the afterword) aim to correlate different educational paradigms, epistemological approaches and highlights on historical matrices in Brazil. The first one, “The empirical-analytic paradigm on research in Education”, by José Camilo dos Santos Filho, delimitate primarily the concept of paradigm, achieving a set of four dimensions that compound the research paradigms: the metaphysical, epistemological, methodological and sociological issue. Therefore, the author presents the empirical-analytical paradigm, being considered the oldest paradigm in the history of science. Finally, examines the main internal and external criticisms. In “Epistemología relacional: ¿Qué hechos científicos logran ser relevantes?”, Carlos Francisco Mazzola aims to understand the role of institutions and people on validating scientific research in terms of relevance. The author proposes a model of relational epistemology based on articulation scenarios and validation plans.

Finally, Reinouds Lima Silva and Erlando da Silva Rêses, both researchers at the University of Brasília, present the text “Liberalism and Marxism as historical matrices for reflection on public policies in education in Brazil”. This chapter pursues to understand which “paths were constituted and oppose liberal, traditional or counter-hegemonic conceptions in studies and proposals for Brazilian education in recent times” (MAZZOLA, 2020, p. 392).

Geo Saura and Antonio Bolivar, both researchers at the University of Granada, Spain, discuss in the afterword, which closes the work, the “Neoliberalización académica”. In this work, two theoretical perspectives are presented on how neoliberal policies have produced profound changes in public services in most countries, as these being the structural perspective, based in Marx and David Harveymore recently, and a more subjective perspective of governability, based on Foucault's theoretical assumptions. The authors propose a “union” of these two views, considering that the changing and adaptive characteristic of capitalism itself requires a complementarity of theoretical resources to analyze neoliberalism or “neoliberal practices”.

In recent decades, academic production has reached unprecedented levels of overproduction, either by expanding access to Higher Education, or by the globalization of access to the online network, or even the advancement of neoliberal practices in the academic environment, as pointed out by Geo Saura and Antonio Bolivar in his afterword (2020, p.

413). One way to analyze this issue is through the Marxist concept of quality and quantity, which form a unit of opposites, as presented by Gamboa (2020, p. 215), to justify epistemological research, considering that the object studied must be understood in its different dimensions.

This work strengthens that research in general, and especially in the area of educational policy, cannot be perceived only from the quantitative perspective, as we would be reducing its condition to just one aspect of its existence. It is necessary to carry out in-depth epistemological studies, investigating the quality, intentionality and positions adopted (or not) by researchers in this field.

It is possible to perceive throughout the work, that although each text follows a distinct epistemological path, accentuating this or that concept of a certain theorist, the central and common characteristic to all is precisely the existence of a position in front of what is under investigation. In a context of advances in neoliberal practices, as well pointed out in the afterword of this work, it is necessary critical stance, not only in relation to the specific object of study, but also to the society in which they are in. As pointed out by Filho (2020, p. 370), “the attempt to isolate science from values is an unrealizable claim” considering that “the author's implicit or explicit theory, his observation of natural phenomena or social facts, his interpretation of research findings, are impregnated with their values, beliefs, culture, philosophical assumptions and ideology” (FILHO, 2020, p. 370). Science is not neutral, since it is inside in a given reality and pervade by personal and collective interests. Therefore, the urgency of ethical epistemological positions committed to scientific rigor, even if of critical nature.

In short, this work presents itself as a great contribution to the qualitative advance in educational research, considering that education, as a field of dispute in the historical process, represents, in itself, the possibility of dialogue and connections between different paradigms, assumptions and methodologies , exploring different authors, without losing the centrality of the proposed method and its epistemological position. It is worth reading!