

ANALYSIS OF THE PRESS AS A RESEARCH SOURCE FOR THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION

ANÁLISE DA IMPRENSA COMO FONTE DE PESQUISA PARA A HISTÓRIA DA EDUCAÇÃO

ANÁLISIS DE LA PRENSA COMO FUENTE DE INVESTIGACIÓN PARA LA HISTÓRIA DE LA EDUCACIÓN

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ABSTRACT: Studies on history of education that uses the press as a primary or secondary source is increasing significantly and contributed greatly to an understanding that the historical processes are mediated and are part of a totality. Using other sources other than specifically of those of the school context assists to the comprehension of the permanency and ruptures of current educational processes, because it points out to debates and the resonance of the same social context, giving subsidies to the understanding of social, political, economic and cultural relations. Having as theoretical presupposition the historical materialism, this article aims to present a proposal for the analysis of the press as a source for the history of education. For this purpose, firstly notes will be taken about the press as a research source and then a proposition for the analysis of the press. It is important to emphasize that there's no ready recipe, each researcher makes his own way and choices, there is no right or wrong, only choices, so we don't fall in a reductive determinism or don't be strict in the practices or representations in itself or for itself.

KEYWORDS: History of education. Source. Press.

RESUMO: Os estudos em história da educação que utilizam a imprensa como fonte primária ou secundária vêm aumentando significativamente e contribuído sobremaneira para a compreensão de que os processos históricos são mediados e fazem parte de uma totalidade. Utilizar-se de outras fontes que não especificamente as do contexto escolar auxilia na apreensão das permanências e rupturas dos processos educacionais atuais, pois apontam os debates e a ressonância dos mesmos do contexto social, dando subsídios para o entendimento das relações sociais, políticas, econômicas e culturais. Tendo como pressuposto teórico o materialismo histórico, o presente artigo tem por objetivo apresentar uma proposta de análise da imprensa como fonte de pesquisa para a história da educação. Para tanto, primeiramente serão feitos apontamentos sobre a imprensa como fonte de pesquisa e na

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sequência uma proposição para a análise da imprensa. É importante salientar que não se tem nenhuma receita pronta, cada pesquisador faz o seu caminho e suas escolhas, não existe certo ou errado, apenas escolhas, para não cairmos em um determinismo reducionista ou engessarmos nas práticas ou representações em si mesmo ou para si.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *História da educação. Fonte. Imprensa.*

RESUMEN: *Los estudios en historia de la educación que utilizan la prensa como fuente primaria o secundaria vienen aumentando significativamente y contribuido sobremanera para la comprensión que los procesos históricos son mediados y forman parte de una totalidad. El uso de otras fuentes que no específicamente las del contexto escolar, auxilian en la aprehensión de las permanencias y rupturas de los procesos educativos actuales, pues apuntan los debates y la resonancia de los mismos del contexto social, dando subsidios para el entendimiento de las relaciones sociales, políticas, económicas y culturales. Con el supuesto teórico del materialismo histórico, el presente artículo tiene por objetivo presentar una propuesta de análisis de la prensa como fuente de investigación para la historia de la educación. Para ello, primero se harán apuntes sobre la prensa como fuentes de investigación y en la secuencia una propuesta para el análisis de la prensa. Es importante resaltar que no se tiene ninguna receta lista, cada investigador hace su camino y sus elecciones, no hay el cierto o equivocado, sólo elecciones, para no caer en un determinismo reducionista o enyesarnos en las prácticas o representaciones en sí mismo o para sí.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Historia de la educación. Fuente. Prensa.*

Introduction

Studies in the history of education that use the press as a primary or secondary source have been significantly increasing and have contributed greatly to the understanding that historical processes are mediated and are part of a whole.

Using sources other than those specifically related to the school context helps in apprehending the permanences and disruptions of the current educational processes, as they point to the debates and their resonance in the social context, providing subsidies for the understanding of social, political, economic and cultural relations.

In this sense, this article aims to present a proposal for analysis of the press as a research source for the history of education. For this purpose, first notes will be made about the press as a research source and then a proposal for its analysis. It is important to note that this proposal is not plastered and linear, but a way to assist in research using the press as a source of research.

Sources for Studies on the History of Education

Understanding the historical processes that permeate education and the contradictions that constitute these processes is not limited to positivist explanations of causes and effects, but to the possibility of verifying the mediations present in their entirety. In this sense, yes, it is possible to analyze the way in which the relationships between the subjects are established, permeated by the production relationships, and education is a reflection of these relationships.

Thus, for the study of the history of education, it is essential to verify the economic, social, cultural and political issues in the context, which influence each other, and especially the ideology that maintains them, directing the institutions that are part of society, such as, for example, the school.

Place where the teaching process materializes, or rather, non-material work (SAVIANI, 2012, p. 12) and its product, the school is the field in excellence for historical research. The study of school institutions has been characterized as promising, since it has numerous sources that allow empirical research: from pedagogical materials to its architecture, in addition to the narratives used mainly from the perspective of Cultural History.

In this empirical knowledge production process, the theoretical and methodological positioning of the researcher is paramount, that is, “[...] the lookout point from which he looks and this gives him his reach and his limit. Higher theoretical points of view make it possible to look at more distant horizons” (SANFELICE, 2005, p. 85, our translation). Regardless of the theoretical contribution, it is essential to strengthen research in the history of education, in order to demonstrate that studies that deal with subjects, whatever the area, are historical studies, since praxis is a historical production.

Currently, in addition to the analysis of school culture with its specific sources - environments and practices, formalized instruction -, there is prominence in research using other sources that are not directly related to the educational process, depending on the object of study, but which are tangent to it, expanding the field of research, overcoming Cartesian approaches and formal logic, pushing for new methodological procedures.

Field of theoretical and methodological discussions, these researches have been constituted in environments that go beyond the walls of institutionalized spaces, that is, using other forms of sources, as well as new ways of inquiring about them, causing the concept of document to be re-signified.

The richness of the dialogue between sources and theories is, therefore, the possibility of not only problematizing both, changing the representations we have not only of them, but also of historical research itself. It is evident that such representations are not just creations of the spirit, but products of the mentality of a certain time, of certain social categories and certain groups. (NUNES; CARVALHO, 1993, p. 32, our translation).

To deal with sources is to consider that there is no hierarchy among the material that will compose the research, or better, that there are sources that suppose greater credibility, or that, for research in education, the sources must necessarily be from the school context. Given the above, it is necessary to reflect on the term source, which presupposes several meanings. First, the source³ comes from the Latin *fontis*, which means water source, fountain (CUNHA, 1986, p. 364, our translation). Discussing the terms that make up its meaning, source as wellspring, it reports as origin, cause and foundation. As a foundation, it is characteristic of what supports the information, opinion, study, "[...] the starting point of the historiographical construction that is the reconstruction, in the plane of knowledge, of the studied historical object" (SAVIANI, 2004, p. 05, our translation).

If the term source is considered to be an origin, research in the history of education that uses specific sources in the school context would be more appropriate to the reflections of assertive and conclusive considerations. Thus, the school universe alone would deal with the problems that education still has today. However, if education is considered as part of a totality, which is also a totality and a reflection of the production model, going beyond school walls makes it possible to verify the contradictions that involve society and thus an extension of what is a source for the history of education, as well as "[...] preparing the ground for a vigorous empirical critique that constitutes new problems, new objects, new approaches" (NUNES; CARVALHO, 1993, p. 30, our translation).

In this sense, we highlight the use of the mainstream press, such as magazines and newspapers, both daily and pedagogical ones, a field in which the complexity of conflicts, political projects and worldviews can be analyzed:

[...] the press, linked to education, constitutes a "documentary *corpus*" of innumerable dimensions, as it consolidates itself as a testimony of pedagogical methods and conceptions of a certain period. As well as the moral, political and social ideology itself, enabling historians of education to provide richer analyzes of educational discourses (CARVALHO; ARAÚJO; GONÇALVES NETO, 2002, p. 72, our translation).

³ In Portuguese, the word for source, regarding information, study etc. is *fonte*, which is translated directly into fountain, so the Latin term referred is directly related to *fonte*/fountain, not source which would be originated in the Latin word *surgere*.

Field for new perspectives for the analysis of historical processes, at the same time a tenuous field for a paradox - defender of public opinion and real facts and biased expression of an ideology - on the aegis of impartiality, the press is the possibility of “[...] visualize more diversified horizons, as well as multiple approaches in relation to these issues related to the educational field” (CARVALHO; ARAÚJO; NETO, 2002, p. 74, our translation). The study of this source requires an effective reflection that the material expressed in the press is multidetermined, which requires care to not only consider it as a vehicle of ideas, a reflection of the economic infrastructure, but also as the possibility of a denunciation space and field conflict.

Press as a research source

Imagining a certain reality for research, a geographer might be interested in the energy of foods that move between the different components of the biosphere, a mathematician, in the dynamics of equations, an economist, perhaps, in the area of public policy evaluation, and so on. What we want to mark is that reality is not only what is known, because reality is dynamic, perverse, unjust and unequal. And in scientific research with the press, we need to think that everything is beyond our eyes, in the unity of diversity (MARX, 2003), so a scientific work is continuous, whose movement needs to be reconstructed by the historian.

In order to point out a research proposal with the press, it is essential that the researcher realizes the State of Knowledge, considered here the study of theses and dissertations that use the press as a primary source.

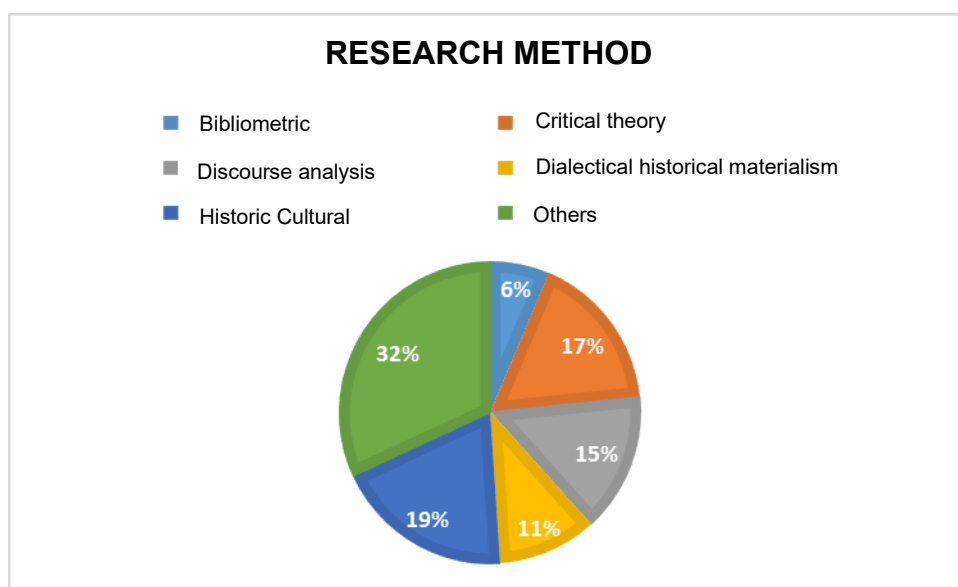
The State of Knowledge (or state of the art) is a type of research that aims to deepen academic production on a particular theme. This form of investigation provides a parameter on the amount of research carried out and, through this analysis, there is the acceptance of the object, the convergences and divergences, the theoretical assumptions and the gaps, as well as the innovations in the area and the permanences (NASCIMENTO; ZANLORENZI, 2017, p. 18)

As a possibility, the researcher can conduct a survey at the Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (BDTD, Portuguese initials) and analyze the research in relation to his proposal, as well as observe the potential and weaknesses, which may indicate a path for his own work. For example, from the indexers: *revista* (journal), *história da educação* (history of education), in the theoretical framework from 2007 to 2017, it was found that in this period there are forty-seven (47) researches between theses and dissertations, of several postgraduate

programs in education, which deal with the history of education with educational magazines as sources. With this sketch, it is observed that the use of the press has grown significantly, but the works in the history of education that are dedicated to studying educational magazines are still in limited numbers.

Analyzing the research method of the research presented above, it was observed that a large part has Cultural History as a theoretical basis, as shown in figure 1 below:

Figure 1 - Chart with research methods



Source: Devised by the authors

In addition to the number of surveys that use the journals as a source, the methodological contribution is also information that should be given due attention. A weakness that arose from this verification is that a percentage of researches that do not position themselves in relation to the method, and only present the methodological procedure in relation to the treatment of the source. All research work should contribute to the problematization of society in its various fields, but describing the fact without due attention to the multideterminations of the object being researched is characterized only as an illustration, thus contributing to the maintenance of the status quo, since there is not questions about reality.

Taking as a parameter the research that uses the press, the researcher then proceeds to study the source that will be used. The importance of studying the material in order to not only know it in its objective aspects points to the understanding that this source is inserted in a society, but the result of the way men also produce their lives, given that “What they are coincides, therefore, with their production, both with what they produce, as well as with the

way they produce. What individuals are, therefore, depends on the material conditions of their production” (MARX; ENGELS, 2007, p. 87, our translation).

Another issue that is important is the periodization of the study, and for this the state of knowledge may collaborate so that it is possible to understand the historical period, whether the research has been worked on or not and how to approach it. The researcher may study more recent periods or not, the important thing is to be in line with the assumption adopted in the research.

In this sense, the researcher must understand that his object is inserted in a historical context and that it must be analyzed, mainly because it presents itself in a chaotic (synchronous) way, or better, “[...] captured in a chaotic vision, that is, there is no clarity as to how it is constituted. It therefore appears in the form of a confused whole, therefore, as a problem that needs to be solved” (SAVIANI, 2007, p. 16, our translation).

It is necessary to contextualize the journal in its historical aspects with the analysis of the context in which it was produced, that is, the social, economic and political issues in the period of its publication. Regardless of whether it was a local newspaper, of great circulation, or a specific periodical, such as the educational one, it is essential to understand the relationships that permeated this society in the totality of relations that determine it, be they of economic, social, cultural level, and in its contradictions and mediations. Knowledge of the current model of production or the period of the research demonstrates how relations in society are organized. However, the apprehension that “[...] reality does not make itself known immediately is paramount. Because it is complex, intricate, it has multiple faces [...]” (IANNI, 2011, p. 397, our translation). In view of this, the source must be considered as historical and should not be based on its apparent aspects, its immediacy, but rather question and analyze where this object is composed. Furthermore, it is necessary to historicize the researched object and articulate the particularities with the totality and the movement learned from this dialectical relationship.

The need for rationality in the analysis of this material is highlighted. Therefore, “[...] empirical observation has to prove, in each particular case, empirically and without any kind of mystification or speculation, the connection between the social and political structure and the production” (MARX; ENGELS, 2007, p. 93, our translation). Therefore, considering the historical aspects, the researcher will then check the formal and material aspects of the journal. In this sense, the following notes stand out: origin of the newspaper (place of publication; date of foundation); newspaper owners and directors (political-ideological ties); proposal (the main theme proposal, the positioning of the editorial, the prominent themes,

main campaigns taken over by the newspaper); editorial staff (editorialist and columnists; links with the purpose of the journal) (ZICMAN, 1985).

After this study, afterwards, the researcher points out the formal aspects of the researched source, that is, name (element of recognition and identification of the newspaper), quality of the newspaper, format, number of pages, typography: size, type of printing, illustrations (photos, drawings, caricatures, graphics, etc.), composition (organization and distribution of columns and sections: layout of texts, titles and illustrations within the pages of the newspaper), title system (titles, sub-titles of the articles and articles), which indicate the journal's interest, its purpose and objectives. Then, the financial aspects are investigated: circulation, which points out the relevance of the newspaper; donations; subscriptions and individual sales; advertising; diffusion advertising: sales and distribution system, price: establish relationships with cost-of-living, average salary and number of pages in the newspaper, recipients, "letter to the reader" section. These indications are especially identifiers for the reading public and for the resonance of the debates conveyed in the printed material (ZICMAN, 1985).

For this verification, there are authors who research the press and propose the journal's life cycle, however, it is necessary the extreme care of the researcher and that it goes beyond this analysis, so that it is not summarized only in the exhaustive descriptions of the source, which provide only an analysis of the object's surface. It is essential to problematize it with articulated reflections, which implies "[...] that the researcher faces the fact, always interrogating the fact about all aspects, about all perspectives" (IANNI, 2011, p. 397, our translation).

The study should check the frequency of the discussion on the topic at the source; number of times it appears; location of the theme within the pages of the newspaper; section or column of the newspaper in which it appears; highlight given; type of dedicated article (editorial, reportage, interview, chronicle, etc.). It is valid, at this moment of the research, the use of tables and other resources for an overview of the theme, as well as assisting in the analysis, mainly, in the writing of the work that will use excerpts from the source. The absence of the theme is also the object of questioning, as it may be implicit in a subtle and ideological way.

In view of the above, the next phase is the moment when the researcher will need to position himself when it comes to the research method, that is, the lookout point where he will analyze his object and the theme studied in the relevant articles found and selected among the consulted copies. It is worth noting that it is necessary for the researcher to be clear about the

research object, which may not necessarily be the newspaper, but the theme that is the objective of the study and which is often not explicit, but between the lines of the articles. Therefore, the importance of historical contextualization as a contribution to understand the relations of production.

It is necessary for the researcher to be aware that this source expresses the point of view of those who produce it, which means that it can be biased and/or be compromised. The researcher must then seek, from that point, to expand his appreciation beyond the formal aspects, as there is no dispute between right and wrong, but the search for the unveiling of the present ideologies and the form of persuasion used to influence socially.

When it comes to research on education, educational journals constitute “[...] a 'documentary corpus' of innumerable dimensions, as it consolidates itself as a testimony of pedagogical methods and concepts from a certain period” (CARVALHO; ARAÚJO; NETO, 2002, p. 72, authors' highlights, our translation). The educational ideas conveyed in these forms are an expression of the historical context in an immediate way and the underlying interests, given that it is determined by the production model. The pedagogical reflections that compose this material are very close to the events, like any other press, verified in the debated themes and in their resonance in the social context, a fact that makes it possible to glimpse, in a predominant way, the interests and influences recorded in its sheets, directed to education, expression of political, social, cultural and economic factors. (ZANLORENZI; NASCIMENTO, 2013).

Research involving the press and educational aspects presupposes to understand that it circulates in society linked to a broader movement of society, which can be observed in the transmission of theories and methodologies and in the resonance and acceptance of the expressed repertoire. “Knowing the story through the press presupposes working with a rigorous method, an appropriate treatment of the source and theoretical reflection” (CAPELATO, 1988, p. 23, our translation).

The analysis implies recovering history, with the intention not only of unraveling the past, but with the intention of collaborating in the understanding of current educational processes, as

The knowledge that educational historiography should produce consists of reconstructing, through the appropriate conceptual tools (categories), the real relationships that characterize education as a concrete phenomenon, that is, as a 'rich totality of relations and numerous determinations' (MARX *apud* SAVIANI, 2007, p. 3, author' highlights, our translation).

Finally, so that the study is not only included in the descriptive analysis and as a conclusion, the following points are perceived, and that can be considered as preponderant to advance in the historical-educational knowledge and which the researcher must be aware of in the movements of the express investigation, through concrete relationships and specific paths, specific to the object being studied:

- The ideology present in the historical context and, consequently, a deepening especially when pedagogical methods and orientations are disseminated as a way of universalization and homogeneity, through the precept of equality;
- The method of analysis, in order to verify the contradictions existing in the period of the study, in order not to incur the error of a descriptive analysis with shallow and precipitated observations and conclusions of only the apparent, without more complex and articulated reflections (NASCIMENTO; ZANLORENZI, 2017).

When working with the press and education, it is immediately inserted in a significant part of a certain historical context, present in a complex totality, often unfair and mainly contradictory and that, for this reason, there is no ready recipe. Each researcher makes his own way and his choices, there is no right or wrong, only choices, so that we do not fall into a reductionist determinism or plague the institutions, practices or representations in himself or for himself.

Final considerations

When working with scientific research, it is necessary to aim at the defense of history, which is nothing more than man's ability to understand how the world came to be as it is today, through what paths humanity can and must advance, and for that it is the historian, mainly, who works with the press.

The text presented is not exhausted in this discussion, as indicating a proposal cannot lead to determinism and formality, although there must be a method, with clear methodological procedures, that points out the path that the researcher must follow.

The purpose of presenting a proposal for analysis of the press was intended to assist researchers who intend to use it as a source of research, mainly to strengthen research in the history of education and point out the movement between permanence and change in all fields.

Knowing and reflecting on this process is essential, mainly to recognize the multidetermination that involves human action, and in addition to the explanations of causes and effects, to apprehend the movement of totality and its temporal unfolding. Furthermore, that man is the result of material conditions depending on the historical, cultural, social, economic and political context.

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