

DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPACE

DIVERSIDADE E DIFERENÇA: REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS NO ESPAÇO EDUCACIONAL

DIVERSIDAD Y DIFERENCIA: REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES EN EL ESPACIO EDUCATIVO

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ABSTRACT: This article is a narrative review, and its objective was to identify the panorama of national academic production relevant to the themes of diversity and difference from the perspective of the Theory of Social Representations in the field of Education. Academic and scientific literature have published several studies that investigate these social phenomena. In this direction, we seek to deepen the theme by conducting research in the bases of articles and indexed journals, such as the Portal of Journals of CAPES and SCIELO, relating to the years 2010 to 2018. Throughout the text, after the descriptive analysis of the works, we proceeded to a qualitative interpretation of the works. The results indicated that the number of studies dealing with diversity and difference in the educational space is incipient and, when presented, they are crossed by the phenomenon of inclusion of people with disabilities or address the issue of sexual and racial diversity. In this sense, diversity and difference do not suit everyone, as they only include certain categories and leave out the others. It was possible to notice that these themes are still delicate in the context of Education. The issue of diversity and difference in education suggests a discussion about the various processes of social exclusion and the school's participation in these processes.

KEYWORDS: Social Representations. Diversity. Difference. Education.

RESUMO: *Este artigo é uma revisão narrativa, e seu objetivo foi identificar o panorama da produção acadêmica nacional pertinente aos temas diversidade e diferença na perspectiva da Teoria das Representações Sociais no campo da Educação. A literatura acadêmica e a científica têm publicado diversos estudos que investigam esses fenômenos sociais. Nessa direção, procuramos aprofundar a temática realizando pesquisas nas bases de artigos e periódicos indexados, como o Portal de Periódicos da CAPES e SCIELO, relativos aos anos de 2010 a 2018. No decorrer do texto, depois de feita a análise descritiva dos trabalhos, procedeu-se a uma interpretação qualitativa dos trabalhos. Os resultados indicaram que o número de estudos que tratam da diversidade e da diferença no espaço educacional é incipiente e, quando se apresentam, são atravessados pelo fenômeno da inclusão de pessoas*

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com deficiência ou abordam a questão da diversidade sexual e racial. Nesse sentido, a diversidade e a diferença não atendem a todos, pois só incluem determinadas categorias e deixam de fora as demais. Foi possível perceber que esses temas ainda são delicados no contexto da Educação. A questão da diversidade e da diferença na educação sugere uma discussão acerca dos vários processos de exclusão social e a participação da escola nesses processos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Representações Sociais. Diversidade. Diferença. Educação.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo es una revisión narrativa, y su objetivo fue identificar el panorama de la producción académica nacional relevante a los temas de diversidad y diferencia desde la perspectiva de la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales en el campo de la Educación. La literatura académica y científica ha publicado varios estudios que investigan estos fenómenos sociales. En esta dirección, buscamos profundizar el tema mediante la realización de investigaciones en las bases de artículos y revistas indexadas, como el Portal de Revistas de CAPES y SCIELO, correspondientes a los años 2010 a 2018. A lo largo del texto, luego del análisis descriptivo de las obras, se procedió a una interpretación cualitativa de las obras. Los resultados indicaron que el número de estudios que abordan la diversidad y la diferencia en el espacio educativo es incipiente y, cuando se presentan, están atravesados por el fenómeno de la inclusión de personas con discapacidad o abordan el tema de la diversidad sexual y racial. En este sentido, la diversidad y la diferencia no les conviene a todos, ya que solo incluyen determinadas categorías y dejan fuera las demás. Se pudo notar que estos temas aún son delicados en el contexto de la Educación. El tema de la diversidad y la diferencia en la educación sugiere una discusión sobre los diversos procesos de exclusión social y la participación de la escuela en estos procesos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Representaciones sociales. Diversidad. Diferencia. Educación.*

Introduction

Contemporary society has considerably expanded discourses about diversity and difference. There are several discussions surrounding these themes, mainly in the educational environment. How are the terms diversity and difference being represented in the contemporary debate on education and its public policies? What are the conceptions and meanings attributed to the terms diversity and difference in the discourses that involve the educational environment? What are the similarities and contrasts in the use of the terms diversity and difference and their theoretical concepts?

According to Morin (1973), diversity and variety of individuals have always existed. It is a natural phenomenon, established by the evolution of one species over another, through which society feeds and creates and recreates its statutes, models and levels, and even the social classes, in which hierarchies are established.

In this way, society organizes its social roles and determines those who will belong to a certain social stratum and those who will be excluded from it. For that to happen, it demarcates the deviant, the strange, the different and the marginal, that is, all those that need to be marked by its seal. Difference takes on innumerable meanings, each one according to the power relations present in the situation, which is why it is necessary to name and categorize it, as only then can we include it in an acceptable perspective. It is important to say that, when categorizing objects or people, we impute unusual or unfamiliar labels and identities, which bring out stigmatizing and excluding actions (ROCHA; RANGEL, 2016).

Talking about difference makes us think about the meaning that we can give to this term through inequality, in which the difference can be attributed to the unequal distribution of resources in society. On the other hand, we can study the difference in a particular context, which involves specific categories, such as gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, among others. In a third way, we seek to explain the difference from theoretical conceptions. Regardless of the choice, they all converge on a problem that manifests itself in the context of society: Who are the different ones? Where are they? How should we deal with them?

This questioning is consistent with a unifying discourse, in which convergences would be celebrated, equated and contemplated. Would there be, then, an attempt to homogenize the subjects or would we go in the opposite direction of this view?

It is worth mentioning that this study, in the first place, responds to our concerns, as a way of reflecting on our thinking about diversity and difference. The questions above are the result of our questioning and are part of an effort we make to understand the discourses that guide these themes.

In this sense, this essay aims to identify, through a narrative review, the panorama of national academic production relevant to the themes of diversity and difference in the educational space, in the light of the Theory of Social Representations.

Theoretical foundation

The Social Representations Theory proposes a relationship that is simultaneously individual and social, which goes beyond the dichotomy between the individual and society. It is exactly at this point that he reflects on the indivisibility between the individual and society in the production of social representations. This construction comes from socio-cognitive and affective relationships. In this sense, social representation is a relatively

autonomous psychological structure, belonging to a society, in which there is no rupture between the individual and the social (CATÃO; COUTINHO, 2003).

Moscovici (1978, p. 05, our translation) understands social representation as practical knowledge, a theory of common sense: “It is a modality of knowledge from the perspective of the individual that gives meaning to social practices and seeks to understand the meanings that people have attributed to a social object”. It is important to emphasize that social representation is practical knowledge, a theory of common sense, which does not disregard the different forms of knowledge produced and mobilized by society.

For the author, social representation contemplates the coexistence of two classes of thought: consensual universes and reified universes (SÁ, 2004). The former lead us to knowledge coming from the masses, from the people, rather, from common sense; the second refer us to specialized knowledge, to logical and hierarchical objectives arising from science. Therefore, thought is processed from two universes: science and common sense.

Both universes are characteristic of our culture. So that we can understand these concepts, we bring this thought by Moscovici (2015, p. 50-51, author’s highlights, our translation):

In a **consensual universe**, society is seen as a group of people who are equal and free, each able to speak on behalf of the group and under its auspices. In this way it is assumed that no member has exclusive competence, but each can acquire all competence that is required by the circumstances. In this respect, each one acts as a responsible "amateur", or as a "curious observer" in the "fashionable phrases" and platitudes of the last century. Mostly in public meeting places, these amateur politicians, doctors, educators, astronomers etc. can be found expressing opinions, revealing their views and building the law [...]. The rules of this art maintain a whole complex of ambiguities and conventions, without which social life could not exist.

On the other side,

[...] in a **reified universe**, society is seen as a system of different roles and classes, whose members are unequal. Only the competence acquired determines their degree of participation according to merit, their right to work as a doctor, as a psychologist, as a tradesman, or to abstain from those they "have no competence in the matter". Changing roles and the ability to step into someone else's shoes are many ways to acquire competence or to isolate yourself, to be different. We are confronted, therefore, within the system, as pre-established organizations, each with its own rules and regulations (MOSCOVICI, 2015, p. 51-52, author’s highlights, our translation).

Thus, we can understand, in view of the aforementioned considerations, that we are facing two universes: one, in which everyone has the possibility to speak freely, to express

opinions, and has the authority to speak about a certain subject; and another, in which the hierarchy of knowledge is widely disseminated, and knowledge is institutionalized and legitimized in the constant search for consolidating the truth.

Scientific knowledge is based on the systematization and verification of facts. Common sense knowledge is not systematic, it relies on collective memory and consensus, and the thinking that comes from it is reasonable, rational and sensitive. In this sense, the important thing to be emphasized is that both scientific and common-sense thinking are based on reason (MOSCOVICI, 2015).

The deepening of studies that involve common sense allows us to extract the thought of a group and culminate in the symbolic expression itself, creating sufficient resources to study everyday life. Thus, representation is an organized set of information, attitudes and beliefs that an individual or a group elaborates regarding an object, a situation, a concept and other individuals or groups, therefore, a subjective and social view of reality (ABRIC, 2000).

Extending this understanding, Coutinho (2001) emphasizes that all phenomena that emerge from the social context are symbolically invested, because they receive names and meanings that evaluate, explain and give them meaning. Therefore, when talking about diversity and difference, we are referring to something that is part of our daily life and that receives meaning from the context in which it is inserted.

In this logic, Jodelet (2001, p. 26, our translation) deepens the concept by saying:

Social representation is a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, with a practical objective, and which contributes to the construction of a reality common to a social group. They are systems of interpretations that govern the subject's relationships with the world, in the sense that they guide and organize behaviors and social communications, assuming the form of a common language.

Social representation is a practical knowledge that links a subject to an object, with certain elements and relationships; it is always a representation of something (object) and someone (subject). It has a relationship of symbolization (replacing it) and interpretation (which gives it meanings) with its object, which makes representation a construction and expression of the subject (JODELET, 2001).

When we refer to the concept of social representation and its relationship with diversity and difference, we emphasize the symbolic aspect that these terms present, which considers the construction of a social (symbolic) emphasis parallel to the scientific construction. In this sense, we understand that social structures and their interactions are endowed with meanings, in which theories, doctrines and beliefs that surround the subjects

are sheltered and that individuals use to elaborate their responses, while contributing to build and reconstruct a common reality.

Social representations are like systems of interpretation that govern our relationship with the world and with others and guide and organize our behavior. They are linked to broader systems of thought (ideological or cultural) and to a state of scientific knowledge, as well as to the social condition and sphere of private and affective experience of individuals (JODELET, 2001).

Thus, we understand that the actions and speeches produced by individuals are dynamic and change throughout their lives, according to their experiences. Thus, the emergence of social representations is evidenced, which reflect the social, economic and cultural conditions in which collectives live and contemplate the conditions of existence of social actors. It is in the content of these speeches that we intend to analyze the panorama of studies that surround the relationship between diversity and difference in the light of social representations.

Method

It is a qualitative study of narrative review, indicated to study and discuss the state of the art of a subject. For Elias *et al.* (2012) and Rother (2007), narrative review is a method through which authors can analyze and interpret articles in a more comprehensive and critical way from a theoretical or contextual perspective.

Rother (2007) also draws attention to the need to stick to quality sources that ensure a deep and reliable analysis of information. This justifies our choice of research sources in databases of articles and journals: CAPES Journal Portal (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel) and SCIELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online).

The inclusion criteria were articles published in Brazil, from 2010 to 2018, whose theoretical framework portrayed the themes of diversity and difference in the educational environment, having as theoretical support the Theory of Social Representations. Thus, the following descriptors were applied: social representations, diversity and difference; social representations and diversity; social representations and difference. The inclusion criterion for publications was that they presented the terms 'diversity' and 'difference' in the title, keywords or abstract. Articles that did not meet the proposed inclusion criteria, in addition to theses and dissertations, were excluded.

After making the initial selection, we proceeded to read the titles and abstracts and, later, the complete reading of the texts. As an analysis axis, we verified the study objectives, the methodology used, the research subjects, the results and discussions.

Results and discussion

In the area of Education, the study of social representations has found a fertile field for carrying out various research. To draw up a mapping of academic and scientific production in the national scenario on this object of study, we chose to cross the thematic axes that guide this work – social representations, diversity and difference; social representations and diversity; social representations and difference. In the search for articles to compose the study, we found 34 articles on social representations, of which 24 were excluded because they were related to the terms diversity and/or difference.

After carefully reading the articles, we found nine that approached our object of study, however, we did not identify any that associated the three categories together. Regarding the methodological aspect, we performed a descriptive analysis of the works and subsequent interpretation, in order to understand the possible approaches and specificities of each article, highlighting its objectives, the theoretical support of Theory of social representations - TRS, the methodology used, the research subjects, results and discussions.

First, we present the study by Zucchetti (2011), entitled *A inclusão escolar vista sob a ótica de professores da escola básica* (School inclusion seen from the perspective of elementary school teachers). The objective of this article was to present the results of an inter-institutional research that dealt with the discourses of elementary school teachers in Vale do Sinos, Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre/RS, about school inclusion. Fifty teachers of Basic Education from public and private schools who were undergoing academic formation in teaching degree courses participated in the research. The instruments used to collect the data were the interview and the questionnaire, sent electronically. Regarding the methodological approach, the research was presented as qualitative.

The results showed that the foundations of inclusive education are aimed only at subjects with special educational needs. The other socially disadvantaged categories are not part of the inclusive education agenda. Inclusion is still thought of as something eminently for the disabled. Therefore, in the current pedagogical discourse, the term inclusion is 'glued' to people with disabilities (ORRU, 2009). So, it is worth asking: Are there any other categories to include besides people with disabilities? We could say yes.

We need, however, to broaden our view to other categories that are excluded from society – the poorest, the blacks, the indigenous, those living in rural areas, the marginalized, the homeless people, homosexuals, transvestites and transsexuals – that is, all those whose differences, in some way, whether personal, social, economic or political, are on the margins of society (ORRU, 2009).

Regarding the discourses of teachers who bring out their social imagination, we noticed some discomfort on their part, with regard to differences and inclusion, which are treated as visible social phenomena at school. It must be understood that social representations are the way in which individuals think and interpret their daily lives, a set of images, accompanied by a reference system that allows the individual to interpret their life, give meaning to it and share this interpretation with their environment social (COUTINHO, 2005).

In the context of social representations, the work stands out in an attempt to capture reality and the movement arising from it. It was possible to perceive, in the teachers' speech, an outburst, a silent request for help in relation to the new demands of the school, which suggests the need to think about the school in its broadest sense, with an eye towards a culture of belonging, where inclusive education actually takes place. According to Jodelet (2001, p. 26, our translation),

[...] social representation is a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, with a practical objective, and which contributes to the construction of a reality common to a social group. They are systems of interpretations that govern the subject's relationships with the world, in the sense that they guide and organize behaviors and social communications, assuming the form of a common language.

In *Diversidade sexual na escola: uma análise das representações sociais de educadores/as* (Sexual diversity at school: an analysis of the social representations of educators), Souza *et al.* (2014) bring up a study on the representations of educators about sexual diversity that influence the (de)construction of prejudiced and discriminatory attitudes that are manifested in the school institution and cause various other types of homophobic violence throughout society.

The main objective of this study was to analyze the social representations of Basic Education educators about sexual diversity. It was qualitative research, in which the thematic categorical content analysis method was used. The instruments used were: interviews and semi-structured questionnaires carried out with seven elementary school teachers. The results indicated that the educators' representations are anchored in socially imposed beliefs, norms

and stereotypes about sexual diversity that, due to lack of knowledge and other issues such as religious influence, impede the search for (in)-formation, and this generates subtle or overt prejudices, which contributes to the maintenance of homophobic practices in the school environment.

It is important to say that social representations, as part of the social imaginary, are loaded with ideas, values and beliefs that are articulated and organized in specific and singular ways in search of meanings and senses. We understand that social structures and their interactions are endowed with meanings, in which theories, doctrines and beliefs that surround the subjects are sheltered and that individuals use to elaborate their responses, while contributing to build and reconstruct a common reality.

Therefore, when unveiling the educators' conceptions and experiences about sexual diversity, we understand that it is necessary to promote initial and continuing education courses that constantly provide accurate and updated (in)-formation on these topics.

With a similar focus, the study by Neves et al. (2015), entitled *Representações sociais de professores sobre diversidade sexual em uma escola paraense* (Social representations of teachers about sexual diversity in a school in Pará), aimed to identify and analyze the social representations of teachers about sexual diversity considering the Central Core Theory. Regarding the methodology, the research considered the qualitative and quantitative attributes to determine the central and peripheral elements of a representation. Data collection, in which 50 teachers from a public school participated, was carried out using the Free Word Association Technique. Data were analyzed from the table of four houses built by the EVOC2003 software: central, intermediate, contrast and peripheral.

The analyzes indicated that the subjects present a representational structure that contemplates sexual diversity determined by the cognitions: 'Respect and Freedom', which are the central elements; 'Homosexuality, Sexual Option and Prejudice', the intermediaries; Acceptance, Human Rights, Family and Equality, those in contrast; and Bisexual, Different, Heterosexual, Types of Sexual Acts and Transsexual, the peripherals.

The data indicated that there are two groups of teachers in different conditions and that most teachers have a great deal of prejudice, stereotype and a reductionist view of human sexuality. A small part looks at the other with respect, although there are not many subsidies to support this representation. The second group is more tolerant of sexual diversity, which means that their view of sexual diversity is under construction.

Regarding prejudice, Jodelet (2006) alerts us to prejudice as an attitude that inherently contains a tendency to action, in which we can find discrimination, marginalization and

segregation. In other words, prejudice is not isolated, but added to other actions, as harmful and harmful as it is. To understand these concepts, let's look at the quote:

Indeed, exclusion always leads to a specific organization of interpersonal or intergroup relationships, in some material or symbolic way, through which it is translated; in the case of segregation, through a distance, the maintenance of a topological distance; in the case of marginalization, by keeping the individual apart from the group, from an institution or from the social body; in the case of discrimination, through closure to certain assets or resources, certain roles or status, or through differential or negative closure. As a result of a structural or conjunctural state of the social organization, it will inaugurate a type of social relationship (JODELET, 2006, p. 53, our translation).

We can say that the first group of teachers brings a vision of sexuality added to various material and symbolic factors, thought of from the social context in which they are inserted. Jedelet (1989) clarifies that the social intervenes in the individual formation of representations in several ways: through the context in which people are located, the community that is established between them, the cultural matrix, the values linked to the participation of subjects in groups with specific interests and position.

Silva's (2015) study, *As representações sociais acerca da criança negra na educação infantil e os mecanismos de discriminação* (Social representations about black children in early childhood education and mechanisms of discrimination), entered the space of diversity in the sense of racial prejudice. This is a reflection based on research on the social representations of black children in Child Education and the mechanisms of racial discrimination that exist in this institution. The focus of this study was to understand the way in which black children are represented in Early Childhood Education.

Therefore, the author analyzed how educators address the issue of ethnic-racial diversity in their pedagogical practice and how they resolve the possible conflicts arising from this diversity, aiming to provoke in the reader a critical reflection on racial relations and its implications in school and dismiss the social and pedagogical practices the elements brought by the myth of racial democracy and the ideal of whitening. During the field research, she made a survey of all the books that the daycare had – 450 – of which approximately 30% had representations of people, however, only 10% represented black people.

Regarding the methodology, the research suggests a qualitative approach, having as a data collection instrument an interview with the educators of a municipal day care center in the interior of São Paulo. The interview questions were: Why did you choose these books? What is the importance you see in working on these books you have chosen?

As for the results, none of the educators mentioned the fact that they chose books thinking about the ethnic-racial diversity they may or may not present, which shows that the diversity of representations of people is not a criterion for choosing the books they use. This finding is clear in the analysis of the books chosen by the educators, because, of the total number of books they chose, which presented representations of people, only 13.7% had illustrations by black people.

The representations built about the black segment and the black child, identified in the educators' discourse, reinforce the myth of racial democracy and the whitening ideal, demonstrating that education professionals do not understand the dynamics of racism in our society. For this reason, they reproduce it in the school context.

Regarding the results, negative representations about black children were identified, which denote the figure of black people as the different one, the dark one, which causes curiosity. Thus, the lack of representation or under-representation of blacks in pedagogical resources and their negative social representation by some educators are shared daily between children and adults, who are inserted in the daycare context, preventing other positive representations about the black segment are built.

These negative representations are based on racial prejudice, which generates a perverse action and triggers a series of painful stimuli, as it removes the subject's possibility of recognition and identity. This question leads us to the mechanisms of formation of social representations. We are referring to the process of objectification and anchoring (MOSCOVICI, 1978).

In this case, objectification is associated with the materialization of concepts, their image and the formation of the figurative nucleus of representations. Anchoring is associated with the insertion and consolidation of representations in social thinking, which influences the sense that new concepts or new information are more or less likely to be accepted because they are "anchored" in representations already consolidated by the solidity or support of their cores (MOSCOVICI, 1978).

Still focusing on the sphere of sexual diversity, Rocha and Rangel (2016), in their research *A Diversidade Sexual permeada pela Teoria das Representações Sociais: uma revisão narrativa* (Sexual Diversity permeated by the Theory of Social Representations: a narrative review), contemplates us with a narrative review whose objective was to analyze the issue of sexual diversity mediated by Theory of Social Representations. The authors traced an overview of the academic production alluding to the theme and apprehended similarities and singularities in the investigations of different authors.

The literature search pertinent to the subject took place in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) database, in the period delimited between 2000 and 2015, in articles produced in Brazil. The integrative analysis of research showed that representations are rooted in negative meanings. The descriptors used were the following: social representations and sexual diversity; social and homosexual representations; social representations and homosexuality. Regarding the methodology, the study was presented as qualitative, making a synthetic descriptive analysis of the articles and subsequent interpretation.

In the studies, two approaches stand out: the problematization of prejudice and the nature of homosexuality. As for the singularities, the rarity of investigations in the school domain is a highlight. And as the studies were insufficient and scarce, the deepening of investigations spreads as a fertile path to overcome and deconstruct practices impregnated with intolerance and repudiation of non-hegemonic standards.

Talking about sexual diversity implies entering a field of various meanings, surrounded by a social, political, educational and cultural context, based on various prejudices and exclusions. Perhaps this explains the rarity of investigations of an educational nature. Regarding the problematization of prejudice, we highlight the thought of Bobbio (2002, p. 103, our translation), who asserts that prejudice is generated by:

[...] an opinion or a set of opinions, sometimes even a complete doctrine, which is accepted uncritically and passively by tradition, custom or an authority from whom we accept orders without discussion: uncritically and passively, in the to the extent that we accept it without verifying it, out of inertia, respect or fear, and we accept it without verifying it, out of inertia, respect or fear, and we accept it with such force that it resists any rational refutation. [...] Therefore, it is correctly said that prejudice belongs to the non-rational sphere, to the set of beliefs that are not born of reasoning and escape any refutation based on reasoning.

In the case of homosexuality, it is rejected by society in general. A demonstration of this are the negative social representations about it. The study results emphasize social representations rooted in negative meanings. In this context, we can understand that the ideas evoked and shared by a social group provide the development of knowledge shared by all, which suggests the understanding of the group based on the sum of its ideas. This corroborates the thought of Moscovici (2003, p. 52, our translation) that social representations: “[...] restore collective consciousness and give it shape, explaining the objectives and events in such a way that they become accessible to anyone that coincides with our immediate interests”.

Souza et al. (2017) carried out qualitative research, called *Representações de docentes acerca da diversidade sexual e homofobia* (Teacher representations about sexual diversity and homophobia), which aimed to analyze the social representations of educators from Elementary School and High School on sexual diversity and homophobia. The research, with a qualitative approach, was carried out in two public schools in the municipality of Sergipe Simão Dias. The choice of this field of research was due to the scarcity of studies on this subject in Sergipe. A non-probabilistic convenience sampling was carried out with seven teachers from Elementary School (6th to 9th grades) and 10 (ten) from High School. Data collection was carried out through a questionnaire with open and closed questions, which is configured as a quantitative and qualitative research.

In the questionnaire, graphic images referring to non-heterosexual sexual and gender identities (gay and lesbian couple, a transvestite and a transsexual woman) were inserted in order to accurately understand the representations of the teachers about the sexual diversity. The use of images enables a clear understanding of the representations of the teachers, as, in accordance with the Social Representations Theory itself, it makes the object of study more concrete and reveals the conceptions, beliefs and pre-judgments regarding the illustrated sexual and gender identities (SILVA JÚNIOR, 2010).

The results obtained showed that the representations of educators are anchored in social standards about sexual diversity, which generate subtle prejudices and contribute to spreading homophobia in the school environment.

According to Jodelet (2001), anchoring is a process of rooting in the thought system to which we attribute meanings and the instrumentalization of knowledge, which explains how new information is integrated and transformed in the set of socially established knowledge and in the network of meanings. socially constructed to interpret the real.

Regarding the issue of homophobia in the school environment, Louro (2010) emphasizes that the school has difficulty dealing with those who, in some way, are outside the norm, he even argues that the school can present itself as a cruel space for segregation, homophobia and violence.

Morgado et al. (2017), in their study, *As representações sociais da deficiência (RSD) podem ter amplo impacto na efetiva inclusão nas aulas de Educação Física* (The Social Representations of Disability (SRD) can have a broad impact on the effective inclusion in Physical Education classes), aimed to investigate the SRD by Physical Education students and assess its impact on the participation of students with disabilities in activities pedagogical proposals.

The study, of a descriptive, qualitative and exploratory nature, had the participation of 29 students from the State Education Network in the municipalities of Itaguaí and Seropédica - RJ, of both genders, with an average age of 19.55 years (SD=5, 05), with or without the manifestation of a disability and who practiced Physical Education classes. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed in full and analyzed using the content analysis technique. Three categories emerged: (1) SRD: theoretical models; (2) SRD: concepts and values; (3) social representations and participation in Physical Education classes. Each was discussed along with suggestions for future studies. It is concluded that most SRD were based on the medical model, with stigmatizing and excluding characteristics, and can have a strong impact on the participation of students with disabilities in Physical Education classes, which makes it essential to develop interventions that focus on this issue. and contribute to effecting inclusion.

It is important to highlight that medical knowledge is present in school discourses. A proof of this are the discretions, classifications, diagnoses and treatments to which the subjects are submitted. Medical knowledge is presented in reports and explanations about the subject's non-learning (LOCKMANN; TRAVERSINI, 2011). It is worth reflecting on the ways in which social representations manifest themselves. According to Minayo (1994, p. 108, our translation),

[...] social representations are manifested in words, feelings and behaviors and are institutionalized, therefore, they can and should be analyzed based on the understanding of social structures and behaviors. Its privileged mediation, however, is language, taken as a form of knowledge and social interaction.

Oliveira (2017), in the work: *Representações sociais sobre educação inclusiva e o ato de ensinar na diversidade: a personalidade do professor em cena* (Social representations on inclusive education and the act of teaching in diversity: the teacher's personality on the scene), brings a systemic literature review, with the aim of discussing how the social representations of teachers operate, based on the idea that human constitution is the result of multiple appropriations of cultural signs and characterized by psychic development and self-control of conduct in the collective context.

From this perspective, work was understood as the decisive factor in the process of humanization of the psyche and is directly related to historical products and mediation processes that act in the development of concepts that will form representations of the phenomena that surround us. Social representations portray a system of thought marked by

the inseparability between the social and the individual, which merge through the process of semiotic and instrumental mediation. Teachers are also subjected to this structure of thought formation, therefore, their representations act directly in the pedagogical act, intertwining theoretical knowledge and their emotional equipment, which is not always conscious.

With regard to diversity, Rangel (2011, p. 15, our translation) defines it as a “set of manifestations in the plural world” and “a set of differences that are expressed in the contours of each manifestation in the plural world”. In this sense, the focus of diversity is imbricated in the context of different meanings and in the various expressions of difference.

Considering the discussions about the inseparability of the individual and the social in the formation of thought, it should be emphasized that social representations imprint a dynamic of characterization, interpretation and delimitation of social actions and practices, which explains the intersection between knowledge and emotions. For Jodelet (2001, p. 17-22, our translation), the representations:

[...] guide us in the way of jointly naming and defining the different aspects of daily reality, in the way of interpreting these aspects, making decisions and, eventually, taking a decisive stance towards them, “therefore”, [...] guide and organize behavior and social communications.

Thus, representations are part of an active process in the construction of the identity of a social group, which underlies the conduct and behavior of the group, guiding its actions, judgments and group identity (ALVES, 2019).

The study by Paulino, Coutinho and Costa (2018), entitled *Apreendendo a inclusão social sob o olhar das representações sociais* (Understanding social inclusion from the perspective of social representations), aimed to apprehend the social representations (SR) about social inclusion developed by people with visual impairments.

The data survey was carried out through a questionnaire with 30 people aged between 18 and 69 years, contacted in two public institutions, who answered a psycho-sociological questionnaire and an in-depth interview. As for nature, the research is descriptive, field and qualitative. Data were processed by SPSS 19.0 and Alceste and analyzed using descriptive statistics and lexical analysis.

The results showed that the SR on the social inclusion of people with visual impairment were objectified through the expressions: inadequate physical school environment, difficulty in urban accessibility, educational staff unprepared to deal with diversity, distance between laws and their applicability, and ignorance of social rights. At this

point, our gaze turns to the results found, in particular, to the generating processes of social representations, that is, anchoring and subjectivation.

According to Moscovici (2003), anchoring is a process that seeks to anchor strange ideas and reduce them to common categories and images and place them in a familiar context, better said, make familiar what is strange. Subjectivation consists in transforming something abstract into almost concrete, that is, transforming what is in the mind into something that exists in the physical world.

That is, anchored in the inclusion/exclusion dialectic evidenced in the multifaceted aspects of this process, we notice, in the statements, that the participants are aware of the importance of education in the process of inclusion in society, as it provides access to the labor market, to the leisure and the achievement of citizenship.

Anchoring is a mechanism that classifies and names something, which makes it possible for this object to be inserted into a field of approximation and acceptance of the new, based on a previous reference. For Moscovici (2003, p. 66, our translation), “by naming something, we free it from a disturbing anonymity, to endow it with a genealogy and to include it in a complex of specific words, to locate it, in fact, in the identity matrix of a culture”.

Final considerations

This study focused on the panorama of national academic production relevant to the themes of diversity and difference, from the perspective of the theory of social representations, in the field of Education.

Regarding methodological trends, most of the studies are descriptive, fieldwork, and quantitative in nature. Another relevant point was the use of combinations of collection procedures, which provide depth in data analysis. Regarding the profile of the participants, it was possible to see that most studies dealt with teachers inserted in Basic Education, however, we found some works that had students in their audience.

Based on the analyzes carried out, we can infer that there is a significant number of articles that involve the theme of diversity, however, we cannot say the same in relation to the theme of difference. It is noteworthy, therefore, that studies that address diversity bring some ambivalence in relation to the use of the term. This ambiguity is due to the fact that at any given time the diverse is linked to some characteristic of the subject, whether ethnic, racial, sexual, bodily and/or cultural. Other times, talking about diversity is an attempt to reduce the

difference, which trivializes its expressiveness or suggests thinking of it as the opposite of equality.

Still based on the collected data, it is up to us to reflect that the theme of diversity is very present in the pedagogical discourse, especially when it comes associated with the acceptance and appreciation of diversity. However, it is important to remember that the banner of diversity is raised as we recognize and welcome the other. But what else are we referring to?

The logic of diversity in the articles allows us to state that the elements present in the speeches bring conflicting representations, because, while the need to welcome and accept the diverse increases, the educational environment translates into prejudiced and discriminatory, which contributes to excluding people who do not fit into socially accepted standards.

Furthermore, this study points to the need for further research in this field, involving more teachers, students and educators from other areas of knowledge who are interested in the theme of diversity and difference. As is typical of scientific research, there are some limitations found in this study, such as the expansion of samples, that is, the use of other databases, which can support further studies.

In conclusion, the importance of the Social Representations Theory – SRT is highlighted, as it is a theory that presents conceptual tools capable of analyzing various angles of reality. Its contribution is undeniable to go through the demands that involve social issues, without losing sight that social representations allow us to grasp the history of the way it is being built, as it evolves with the changes that intervene in cultural models, in relationships social, in the circumstances that affect the contexts in which they develop, in the agents that build them and their insertion in a network of social and intersubjective bonds.

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