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PANORAMA OF PEDAGOGY IN BRAZIL: SCIENCE, COURSE AND PROFESSION¹

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ABSTRACT: After completing eighty-three years of existence in Brazil, Pedagogy stands out among the undergraduate courses with the highest number of students in the country. Despite its contribution over all these decades concerning the training of educators and studies related to education in general, its historical trajectory is marked by intense disputes around its training purposes. Based on the understanding that the definition of the profile of graduates of a higher education course must be traced in dialogue with the epistemological nature of the scientific areas that configure it and the demands of the social and educational field, this article sought to analyze aspects of the course's historical trajectory at the interface with the production of pedagogical knowledge in the country. From this perspective, it begins with a conceptual discussion about education as a social phenomenon and Pedagogy as a science that has it as an object of study. This study also analyzed the course's historical trajectory and pedagogical thinking in Brazil and problematizes the (dis)place of Pedagogy in the scenario of Brazilian graduate studies.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Pedagogue, Science of Education, Theory of Education.

PANORAMA DA PEDAGOGIA NO BRASIL: CIÊNCIA, CURSO E PROFISSÃO

RESUMO: O curso de Pedagogia, ao completar oitenta e três anos de existência no Brasil, desponta entre os cursos de graduação com o maior número de matrículas no país. Em que pese a sua contribuição

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ao longo de todas essas décadas no que se refere à formação de educadores/as e aos estudos relacionados à educação de modo geral, sua trajetória histórica é marcada por intensas disputas em torno de suas finalidades formativas. A partir do entendimento de que a definição do perfil de egressos/as de um curso superior deve ser traçada no diálogo com a natureza epistemológica das áreas científicas que o configuram e com as demandas do campo social e educacional, o presente artigo tem por objetivo analisar aspectos sobre a trajetória histórica do curso na interface com a produção do conhecimento pedagógico no país. Nessa perspectiva, inicia-se com uma discussão conceitual sobre a educação, como fenômeno social, e a Pedagogia como ciência que a tem como objeto de estudo. Prossegue analisando a trajetória histórica do curso e do pensamento pedagógico no Brasil, e finaliza problematizando o (des)lugar da Pedagogia no cenário da pós-graduação brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia, Pedagogo, Ciência da Educação, Teoria da Educação.

PANORAMA DE LA PEDAGOGÍA EN BRASIL: CIENCIA, CARRERA Y PROFESIÓN

RESUMEN: La carrera de Pedagogía, después de cumplir ochenta y tres años de existencia en Brasil, se destaca entre las carreras de grado con mayor número de matrículas en el país. A pesar de su aporte durante todas estas décadas en lo que se refiere a la formación de educadores/as y estudios relacionados con la educación en general, su trayectoria histórica está marcada por intensas disputas en torno a sus fines formativos. Partiendo del entendimiento de que la definición del perfil del/de la egresado/a de una carrera de educación superior debe trazarse en diálogo con la naturaleza epistemológica de las áreas científicas que la configuran y con las exigencias del campo social y educativo, este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar aspectos de la trayectoria histórica del curso en la interfaz con la producción de conocimiento pedagógico en el país. Desde esta perspectiva, se inicia con una discusión conceptual sobre la educación, como fenómeno social, y la Pedagogía como ciencia que la tiene como objeto de estudio. Continúa analizando la trayectoria histórica de la carrera y del pensamiento pedagógico en Brasil, y finaliza problematizando el (des)lugar de la Pedagogía en el escenario del posgrado brasileño.

Palabras clave: Pedagogía, Pedagogo, Ciencia de la Educación, Teoría de la Educación.

INTRODUCTION

The complexity that involves the Pedagogy course in Brazil is expressed in issues related to the historical path of the construction of its academic expression, which has been marked by indefinitions and recurrent identity crisis, the fragility of the relation assumed with its theoretical field of reference, Pedagogy itself as science, and to the pressures — more and more expressive — of hegemonic ideologies in capitalist society. Under these complex factors of context and theoretical-conceptual understanding, the course has gone through eight decades of accumulating challenges to constitute itself as a locus of education for school and non-school educational processes and producing knowledge about the educational phenomenon. A critical approach around these challenges requires considerations guided by the analysis of the historicity of the course in the dialectical movement between challenges and possibilities that give meaning and relevance to its existence and maintenance in the Brazilian academic context. This also includes the study of its relations with the pedagogical theories and synthesis of propositions that guide the ways of thinking and doing in education.

Based on these assumptions, this article examines the panorama of Pedagogy in Brazil by focusing on tensions in the demarcation of its place(s) as science, course, and profession. As a science, Pedagogy is crossed by epistemological dilemmas that affect how pedagogical knowledge is produced and its social uses. Pedagogy as a course imposes plural demands for the formation of the school and non-school educators in the context of intensifying the market agenda in defining its purposes. Nonetheless, as a profession, its status is weakened by representations that restrict it to the sphere of teaching in children's education and the early years of elementary education and, even more, to the skills of executing prescriptions regulated by management bodies of school institutions.

In its triple constitution, Pedagogy is configured as a knowledge and practice necessary to humanize the subject in the permanent search for the transformation of the social conditions of its individual and collective existence. Enlarging the pedagogical sense beyond the instructional and assume the complexity of the course of Pedagogy in the face of the pluralization of educative practices inside and outside the schools and beyond the classroom and preserving formative purposes opposed to the neoliberal reductionism are alternatives to reposition Pedagogy in Brazil.

This text deflates reflections about the relations between pedagogical thought and the formation in the Pedagogy course by taking as basis epistemological, formative, and professional considerations that mark the problematic of Pedagogy in Brazil. This dilemma involves defining the formative purposes and the curricular organization of this course, and recognizing the status of Pedagogy as a field of reference for knowledge production and education in the context of the post-graduation in Education.

EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

As a specific activity developed among human beings, education has purposes that unfold in the socialization of the subject in the pre-existing cultural context and its subjective constitution as a subject that is individually built in the relations with others collectively. Just as education can operate in the direction of social conservation, it can also institute possibilities of transforming society based on the critique of pre-existing structures and dynamics.

Paulo Freire reported that “one cannot look at education as anything other than a human doing [...] that occurs in time and space, among men and with each other” (1997, p. 1). We understand that the educational processes are responsible for developing capacities in the subjects so that, from this dialogical relationship with others, they can transform the conditions of individual and collective existence, reflecting the social determinants that produce situations of dehumanization. Hence, education as a social practice of humanization must be conceived in its relations with such determinants to overcome them.

As a science, Pedagogy assumes the founding principle of studying the educational practice in its contexts and multiple determinations to equip the subjects, education professionals, including

teachers and educators, in the perspective of promoting a humanizing education. This means that the object of pedagogical science is education that manifests itself in different modalities and contexts. In order to understand it and intervene in it, Pedagogy builds its object in dialog with other sciences that also focus on the complexity of the human being, orienting itself to the investigation of the purposes, knowledge, methods, subjects, and educational contexts, as well as its own investigative procedures.

Thus, the object of Pedagogy is education as a process of formation of the human condition. Its theoretical approach seeks to conceive it in its concrete dimension and historicity by considering the contradictions in which it is inserted. Given its praxis character, it is constituted as a field of socially engaged theoretical production since pedagogical knowledge manifests an explanatory dimension and also a propositional one, articulating itself to the work of educators, re-signifying itself from the dialectics between thought and action. For educators, Pedagogy must provide analytical perspectives on the complexity of education as a practice that is historically, socially, culturally, and institutionally contextualized, understanding themselves as professionals in school and non-school spaces whose action demands the permanent exercise of criticizing the material conditions that impose themselves to their professional exercise and how, through these same conditions, the denial of an emancipating and humanizing education is (re)produced.

We understand science as a product of human action, and, therefore, historical. According to Sánchez Gamboa (1989), as an always provisional construction, scientific production operates the mediation between man and nature, a form developed in the active relationship between the subject and the object in which the human being, as subject, conveys theory and practice. In this sense, we explain Pedagogy as a science of education (which emerges from practice) and education, as a dialectical unit that enables praxis as transforming action.

From a critical-dialectical perspective, Pedagogy, as a science, is organized around the educational praxis since this process articulates theory and practice, thought and action, as dimensions mutually implied in a project of social transformation guided by civilizing purposes. In social-educational practices, the different and even opposite directions of meaning that education takes are expressed. Thus, according to Freire

Education is only truly humanist if, instead of reinforcing the myths with which it intends to keep man dehumanized, it strives towards the unveiling of reality. Education is only truly humanist if, instead of reinforcing the myths with which it intends to keep man dehumanized, it strives towards the unveiling of reality. If, on the contrary, education emphasizes myths and leads to the adaptation of man to reality, it cannot hide its dehumanizing character (1997, p.11).

Inserted in the superstructure of society, education, as a social practice, is multiplication determined by economic, political, and social factors according to the historical contexts. Like other institutions, it participates in the reproduction process of the dominant ideology. Nevertheless, through a dialectical approach, Pedagogy can identify the contradictions existing in society and create conditions to overcome what operates as a mechanism of dehumanization and marginalization of the subject.

As a science, Pedagogy relies on a critical-dialectical logic to analyze educational practices, highlighting conditions that contradict the human right to learn and (trans)form individually and collectively. The epistemological status of Pedagogy derives, therefore, from its commitment to transforming educational practices as an intentional human action, unlike other sciences that restrict themselves to explaining dimensions that are constitutive to it. Authors such as Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik (1983), Paulo Freire (1987), Dermeval Saviani (2012), and Celestino Alves da Silva Junior (2017) take this epistemological and political position in understanding the founding aspect of Pedagogy.

It is up to the Pedagogy courses, based on pedagogical theories, to provide students with the problematization of the educational process and its determinants, contradictions, and possibilities. For this, research is a structuring formative element that allows scientific study as the foundation of a transforming praxis. It is from the demand of analyzing to intervene and transform the educational practice that Pedagogy discusses and mobilizes different knowledge, in addition to producing the pedagogical knowledge necessary to structure the intervention processes through which the praxis is exercised inside and outside the schools.

PEDAGOGY IN BRAZIL: BETWEEN THE EMERGENCE OF PEDAGOGICAL THOUGHT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PEDAGOGY COURSE

The educational problem in Brazil began with the arrival of religious Jesuits in 1549 to evangelize and indoctrinate indigenous people according to the civilizing values of the Portuguese colonizers. Initially, the Jesuits were inserted in the villages, and later, they set up seminaries to train priests and colleges based on the *Ratio Studiorum*, created in 1599 by the Society of Jesus. It is a meticulous manual of functions for the principals and teachers and school organization and administration with prescriptions about the curriculum, workload, texts, teaching methodology, evaluation, awards, and promotion in the Jesuit colleges. Without mentioning the term “pedagogy,” the manual became known as the genuine expression of “Jesuit pedagogy,” or “traditional Catholic pedagogy,” which was predominant in the country until the mid-twentieth century.

In 1759, the new minister of the Portuguese Crown, Marquis of Pombal, expelled the Jesuits from the country as part of his project to modernize the administration of the kingdom and its colonies in order to increase the revenues obtained through commercial exploitation since “Jesuit education was not opportune, as it aimed to serve the interests of faith” (SILVA *et al.*, 2018, p. 637). Inspired by Enlightenment doctrines, Pombal instituted the model of isolated royal classes of first letters and letters and humanities, fragmented and dispersed, in place of the system more or less unified by the Jesuits, which was based on the seriation of studies.

In the Pombaline period, “other religious orders that already missioned in Brazil — Benedictines, Carmelites, Franciscans, and Mercedarians — were finding a place, at different times, in managing colleges and schools” (KLEIN, 2016, p. 10), in place of the Jesuits who returned in 1832. The Jesuit and other Catholic schools were precursors of the identity formation of Brazilian teachers. At first, missionaries incorporated laypeople as they took on the formation of students from outside their seminaries.

The goal of the schools was the formation of the student “in virtues and letters, or faith and science” (KLEIN, 2012, p.149), which was shaping the basis for the teaching formation in scientific and theoretical knowledge to which added the practical, methodological, moral, and mystical precepts defined in the *Ratio*; the teaching work was constituted more as an apostolate than as a paid activity.

In the early nineteenth century, in the period of the movements for institutionalized independence in 1822, Brazil began to have “schools of first letters” (or primary instruction) under the responsibility of the public authorities, which tended to adopt teacher training according to the European model of creating Normal Schools. The first, in 1835, was followed by others that prevailed as exclusive bodies until 1971, when Law no. 5692/71 extinguished them with the transfer to the then-created high school course as one of the possible professional qualifications at the secondary level (*HEM - Habilitação Específica para o Magistério* [Specific Qualification for Teaching]). With the Law of Directives and Bases of the National Education of 1996, the formation of teachers to act in the initial years of schooling started to be recommended at the superior level. In 2006, the promulgation of the National Curricular Directives of the Pedagogy sanctioned this course as the one responsible for training these teachers. Thus, the Pedagogy course, created in 1939, which already trained teachers for the Normal Schools and HEM, among other functions, started to directly train teachers for children’s education and the early years of elementary school, as we will see below.

The Normal School, in its beginnings, was attended only by men due to the strong identification of the teaching activity exercised until then by members of the religious clergy. The presence of women in the school throughout the twentieth century intensified in the 1930s, when the number of primary schools gradually increased, driven by profound political, economic, and social transformations in the country. With the international economic crisis, society, based on the agrarian-rural model, became industrialized and urbanized, accelerating industrial capitalism and new forms of production. The formation of urban centers, in turn, demanded a minimum schooling of the population, either in order to compete in the labor market or to survive in the city, a space of more complex social dynamics than in the countryside, or because of the possibility that a minimum schooling opened up for

autonomous work (or not) in commercial activities. It is essential to highlight that in the wake of this process, there will be large flows of European immigrants, especially Italians, Germans, and people from Eastern countries, notably Japanese, who, bringing from their cultures the importance of schooling, started to demand it. These aspects drove the Brazilian State to organize, for the first time and in a unique and centralized way, education in the country with the Organic Laws of Education (1942–1946).

In this process, it is worth mentioning the role played by the intellectuals gathered in the Pioneers of New Education Movement (1932). They, starting in the 1930s, defended the expansion of public, free, and secular basic education for the entire population, opposing, therefore, the predominance of the Catholic Church, inspired by movements that had been taking place in European countries and the United States of America.

One last aspect to consider in this period was World War II. Until then, Brazil imported everything, including college-level teachers; the war economy forced the country to train its professionals. Symptomatically, one of the first Brazilian universities (University of São Paulo), founded in 1934, gathered the then Faculties of Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Law, which dated from the previous century, and created the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters (FFCL), “which, in the conception of its founders, assumed the character of *alma mater* of the university,” according to Saviani, (2012, p. 21), and “was linked to the fundamental objective of creating this university, which was the formation of a ruling elite based on scientific knowledge.” (ditto, p. 24).

Decree no. 1190/1939, when organizing the National Faculty of Philosophy in the country, structured it into four sections: Philosophy, Sciences, Letters, and Pedagogy, also adding that of Didactics, considered a special section, according to Saviani (2012). The first three sections each had a course. The fourth, Pedagogy and Didactics, started to offer a course called “Pedagogy.” At the University of São Paulo (USP), the Education Section disappeared, and a fourth section, called “Pedagogy,” was added to the School of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters. Thus, “the Pedagogy Course would be in charge of preparing the professionals capable of the new legal demands established by the decree, while the Didactics Course would be in charge of forming the graduates, that is, to give the bachelors the pedagogical, technical, and professionalizing formation,” according to Bontempi Jr (2011, p. 199). Thus, in 1939, the Pedagogy course of USP was created, incorporating the Pedagogical Institute of São Paulo, then originated from its Normal School, created in 1846.

The Science section was intended to train teachers for what was then Secondary Education for the exact and natural science subjects (physics, mathematics, chemistry, and natural sciences). The Language section was for literature, philosophy, geography, history, and modern languages courses. When it absorbed the Institute of Education, it started to include the Pedagogy section as a department that offered a bachelor course in Pedagogy to form “technicians in education” (without it being clear what would constitute this professional), to which would be added the licentiate degree with the special Didactics section to form teachers for Normal Education. The degree would also be offered to the other bachelors from the other sections of the FFCL.

Thus, the teacher education courses in the country were configured in the 3+1 model, with three years of bachelor’s degree and 1 of licentiate. Different from the others, the bachelor’s degree in Pedagogy did not focus on the scientific studies of its area (education and teaching), and it was identified as a teacher training course for the teaching profession. This configuration explains, in part, the fragility of Pedagogy as an epistemological, theoretical, scientific, and professional field in the country.

The Pedagogy courses created in 1939 underwent some curricular alterations in 1962. At that time, a tendency that the Pedagogy course should assume the formation of primary teachers at a superior level (what would happen in 2006) and the formation of specialists at the post-graduate level was already outlined. The Opinion no. 251/1962, authored by Valnir Chagas, made small curricular alterations keeping the professional indefiniteness: the course would form teachers for the Normal School, in addition to history, geography, and mathematics (absent from its curriculum) for the Secondary School.

The Pedagogy course would follow this model until the approval of the Resolution of the Federal Council of Education n. 02/1969, based on Opinion no. 252/1969, authored by Counselor Valnir Chagas, that tried to equate the problems that studies and research, especially those carried out in the scope of INEP, pointed out: absence of clarity of professional focus, formation of teachers for secondary

school subjects that were absent in the formation, and an elitist curriculum distant from the reality of the elementary school for which they would form in the normal school, among other weaknesses.

Moreover, it was stated that the profession in education “is one and, by nature, not only admits but also demands different ‘modalities’ of training from a common base” (BRASIL, 1969, p.106), Resolution no. 02/1969 instituted the Pedagogy course as the formation of the pedagogue, with a common base and another diversified in qualifications: the one of Teaching (to train teachers of normal education) and the ones of Educational Orientation, School Administration, School Supervision, School Inspection (to train specialists). With the Teaching degree being compulsory and the others optional, the course started to train both teachers and specialists. It could be said that this structure was an attempt to overcome the generalist character of the course. However, Saviani (2012, p. 44) believed that “neither the functions corresponding to the ‘specialists’ were well characterized,” as admitted by Valnir Chagas, who elaborated it, “nor could it be considered as constituted a labor market demanding those professionals” (ditto).

Interestingly, in this course called Pedagogy, it was not sought “to give the scientific basis to the pedagogical practice, as it occurred in the first moment with the INEP and, in the second moment, with the schools of application, experimental classes and vocational gymnasiums” (SAVIANI, 2012, p. 53). The academic space with theoretical and scientific studies of Pedagogy would be left to the post-graduation in Education in the view of Councilor Valnir Chagas, which, in fact, did not occur.

The Law of Directives and Bases of the National Education promulgated in 1996 (BRASIL, 1996) did not substantiate Resolution n.o 02/1969, maintaining the “national common base” without explaining the meaning and the content of the Pedagogy to structure and support the qualifications that were maintained. The debates raised for these results “kept the educational field oxygenated and had positive reflexes in the academic space of the Pedagogy” (SAVIANI, 2012, p.37).

In the period under analysis, it is worth noting, according to Pimenta (2012), that the academic production in the area of Education was significantly boosted with the creation, in 1968, of graduate courses in the area. Some Programs significantly contributed to the critical analysis of Brazilian education, privileging a Marxist and Gramscian referential in the analysis of educational problems and schooling in Brazil and configuring a space of resistance to the military dictatorship. Dermeval Saviani provided a significant contribution to this, who was then the coordinator of the Graduate Program in Philosophy of Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUCSP), when he developed, in his book *Escola e Democracia* (SAVIANI, 1983), a critical analysis of the pedagogical tendencies in Brazil (Traditional; Scholasticism; Technicism; Criticism; etc.), which was expanded in the work *História das Idéias Pedagógicas no Brasil* (SAVIANI, 2007). Widely studied in the country (editions in 2021: the first work in the 44th; the second in the 6th), these are works that compose and systematize Pedagogy as a theoretical and epistemological field in the country.

By incorporating the contributions of several disciplines that dealt with education, such as Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, and Economy, contradictorily, graduate studies moved away from Pedagogy as a science of and for the educational practice. These aspects ended up evidencing the fragility of Pedagogy in its courses, in addition to a crisis of professional identity.

Initiated in the 1990s, the intense and heated debates around the identity of Pedagogy, the course of Pedagogy, and the profession of pedagogue continued into the new century to overcome the weaknesses of Resolution no. 02/1969 aggravated by the LDB of 1996, having in the horizon the formulation of new directives. Two groups of educators opposed themselves: the one that defended Pedagogy as a proper theoretical-scientific field and the course to form pedagogues to insert themselves professionally in the social spaces of the educational praxis; and the group of those that defended Pedagogy as a graduation course to form teachers for the early childhood education, mainly, and for the educational management in the systems and institutions of Basic Education. The first group, made up of education researchers, understands Pedagogy as the basis for the education of the pedagogue, including for the exercise of teaching. For the members of the second group, gathered in the educators’ movement, which became the National Association of Education Professionals (ANFOPE), teaching is the basis for the education of the pedagogue. This proposition ended up being the majority in the configuration of the new course of Pedagogy instituted by Resolution no. 02 of 2006 (BRASIL, 2006), having the teaching

as a base and the course as graduation to form, primarily, teachers for the early childhood education and the educational management in the schools.

Opposed to this perspective, the group of researchers, according to Saviani, was concerned in “understanding the identity and specificity of Pedagogy both by the epistemological aspect, that is, by its theoretical-scientific character, and by the practical-organizational aspect, that is, by its character as a course destined to the formation of educators” (2012, p. 53), pedagogues and teachers. Opposing the weakening of the course and its (almost) reduction to the formation of teachers, his research was published in books that count with countless editions, according to Saviani (2012): *Pedagogy, science of Education?* (PIMENTA, 1996), which reached the 6th edition in 2011; *Pedagogy and pedagogues, for what?* (LIBÁNEO, 1998), which reached the 16th edition in 2018; *Pedagogy and pedagogues: paths and perspectives* (PIMENTA, 2002), which reached the 3rd edition in 2015 ; and *Pedagogy as science of Education* (FRANCO, 2003), which reached the 2nd edition in 2015.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE PEDAGOGY COURSE NOWADAYS

Pedagogy is the course with the largest number of students in Brazilian higher education. Since the promulgation of its National Curricular Guidelines (DCN) in 2006, it has been characterized as a Licenciatura degree, a course for the formation of teachers to act in the initial stages of Basic Education: Child Education and Initial Years of Elementary Education. In addition to focusing on the exercise of teaching in these stages of education, the course is also linked to the training of educational managers to work in school management and pedagogical coordination, among other areas of the education systems, as well as the training of pedagogues to work in non-school educational spaces (SEVERO, 2018). Nevertheless, what explains the great demand for this course has been accessing the teaching profession in the initial stages of schooling, which demands numerous teachers.

Hence, the Pedagogy course had a vertiginous expansion, figuring, at least since 2011, among the three most sought-after courses of higher education. In 2020, it reached first place in the number of enrollments and entrants and graduates in the country, according to the last Census of Higher Education (INEP, 2022). The total number of enrolled students in 2020 was 816,427, of which only 118,930 (14.5%) were in public universities.

In fact, the expansion of openings occurred in the private sector, linked to neoliberal educational policies, and in an extremely precarious way. In this sector, the course has 697,497 enrollments. The percentage of these enrollments in all courses of Pedagogy in the country initially evidences the predominance of the modality of Distance Education offered by Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) of private character. Most of them belong to economic conglomerates called private capital institutions that are part of the financial system and operate education as a commodity and consumer good; therefore, they are also called private financial institutions. In general, they make it difficult for researchers to analyze the educational quality they offer. Thus, the number of 697,497 enrollments is also impressive because of the lack of data on the quality of the courses offered in the distance learning modality. However, studies conducted in face-to-face Pedagogy courses offered by these institutions bring unequivocal evidence of their weaknesses (PIMENTA *et al.*, 2019; KASSIS, 2021), allowing us to conclude that the precariousness is greater in distance-learning courses.

The domain of the private initiative in the offer of the enrollments of the Pedagogy course, according to the data above, points to the biggest challenge in the area of formation of teachers in Brazil: the fragility of the initial formation for the performance in early childhood education. The privately funded higher Education Institutions (for-profit institutions), responsible for the training of most teachers in Brazil, offer, in general, very poor conditions for the teaching activities of the teacher educators, as well as for the learning of the future teachers of these stages of Basic Education in its several modalities. In these institutions, classrooms with more than a hundred students, face-to-face courses with most of the classes at a distance, a teacher/trainer to teach numerous subjects of areas of knowledge of which they are not a specialist, etc., are common (KASSIS, 2021). On the other hand, the predominant profile of those entering the Pedagogy course in private financial institutions can be characterized by the majority presence of women of different age groups, many living in conditions of social vulnerability and

with an extremely precarious school history (KASSIS, 2021). Nonetheless, suppose the social and cultural condition of the students that attend the Pedagogy course in the financing institutions reveals the necessity of a pedagogical project that considers their difficulties. Contrarily, it occurs that, beyond not implementing institutional initiatives that minimize the unfavorable conditions of these students, they still aggravate their academic performance when denying the minimum necessary conditions for their professional formation.

It is worth remembering that structural elitism marks the history of education in Brazil. Only at the turn of the current century was the universalization of the Elementary School and a consequent expansion of High School, which allowed access to Higher Education by social segments that had never attended it before. Hence the demand for more economically accessible courses, as is the case of the Pedagogy course. In this sense, it is also crucial to consider that the option of the Federal Government at the time of the military dictatorship was to expand private Higher Education to contain the expansion of public universities and, at the same time, to serve the economic sectors interested in increasing their profits with education. Since then, Higher Education in Brazil has been growing in a fast and uncontrolled pace in favor of private financial institutions, to the detriment of public universities, with the exception only of the period of the Workers' Party governments, which effectively invested in the expansion of vacancies in these already existing universities and with the creation of new public universities from 2003 to 2016.

Once the selection to ingress in public Higher Education is much more competitive in the function of the quality offered, the students of low income and low schooling end up entering private education, composing the profile described above of most of the students of the courses of Pedagogy in the country. Thus, the combination of students in more unfavorable conditions entering educational institutions little committed to the quality of the courses evidences one of the biggest challenges in training teachers, as affirmed previously.

Pedagogy course: training pedagogues or teachers?

Besides this problematic predominance of the private financial sector in the area of teacher education in Brazil, we can add the incongruences of the current National Curricular Guidelines (DCN) of the Pedagogy course (BRASIL, 2006) that, as previously analyzed, are centrally directed to the formation of teachers for Early Childhood Education and the Initial Years of Elementary Education (PIMENTA *et al.*, 2014). However, although teacher training is central to the course, it is not exclusive. The DCNs also provide for graduates of these courses to work in the area of school management and non-school educational spaces. With the pulverization of the course purposes, the training of the polyvalent teacher competes with the workload destined for educational management and other areas of action foreseen in the DCN.

Nonetheless, the studies about the Pedagogy courses have evidenced that the formation of the Infantil Education teacher and the Beginning Years of Basic Education is deficient, especially in what refers to the domain of the teaching contents of the different disciplinary areas (LIBÂNEO, 2010; PIMENTA *et al.*, 2014). Hence the need for the formation of these teachers to have better conditions to, in addition to ensuring the aforementioned mastery of the school contents of the first stages of Basic Education, also improve the formation processes of the polyvalent teacher in at least two important aspects. The first one refers to the challenge of guaranteeing an interdisciplinary formation to the future teacher, whose fundamental characteristic is precisely the exercise of polyvalent teaching. The other aspect is related to the need for greater investment by the courses in the training of Early Childhood Education teacher, since the training of the teacher of the Initial Years of Primary Education absorbs most of the workload of the courses so Early Childhood Education ends up having a residual curricular treatment (PIMENTA *et al.*, 2014).

In what refers to the specific formation of the pedagogue to act in educational management, either in the educational systems or other institutions and educational spaces, the seriousness of the current Pedagogy course is even greater. The referred area ended up assuming an almost marginal space in the current DCN of the Pedagogy course. In the pedagogical projects of the courses, what should be

specifically treated as an area of study and action of the pedagogue ended up being reduced to one or another discipline. In other words, the specific knowledge needed to act in the different functions occupied by educational managers, such as school management, pedagogical coordination, and teaching supervision in the school environment, as well as the knowledge of pedagogues who work in the health area, in the judicial system, in higher education, in different non-governmental organizations, etc., are not contemplated in the current pedagogical projects, and, at best, appear pulverized in a generic discipline called “educational management” (PIMENTA *et al.*, 2014; SEVERO, 2018).

Thus, the incongruities of the DCN of the Pedagogy course of 2006 — previously denounced by some researchers of the area at the time of its formulation — ended up being confirmed after fifteen years of its implementation: while a licentiate degree cannot adequately form the polyvalent teacher, and as a practical Pedagogy course does not even guarantee the curricular space necessary to form the professional who acts in the area of educational management, research, and pedagogical practice in non-schooling spaces.

THE FRAGILITY OF PEDAGOGY WITHIN GRADUATE PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATIONAL STUDIES IN BRAZIL

In Brazil, the term predominantly used to designate the field of specialized educational studies is Education, unlike other international contexts, such as Spanish, Italian, and German, for example, in which the term Pedagogy predominates. Education is the term officially adopted by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), an agency that promotes the production of scientific knowledge in the country, and by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel Training (CAPES), an agency under the Ministry of Education which, among other duties, regulates graduate studies in the *stricto sensu* area and responsible for evaluating existing programs and authorizing the creation of new ones. These two organisms concentrate in the country most of the regulatory actions of research practices and training of researchers, having significant influence in the production of the institutional discourse about the fields of knowledge.

Specifically in the educational field, since 1978, when it was created, the National Association of Research and Post-Graduation in Education (ANPED) has acted as a representative entity of the community linked to post-graduation programs structured in two modalities: academic programs aimed at the production of scientific knowledge that feeds and expands the conceptual and methodological field of Education through the training of researchers, and the professional programs, regulated since 1995 (FISCHER, 2005), responsible for the training of professionals who, from applied research, develop knowledge and skills associated with a particular field of work. According to the CAPES Education Area Report, in 2019, 184 Graduate Programs in Education were in operation in the country, which offered 133 Academic Master’s courses, 88 Academic Doctoral courses, 48 Professional Master’s courses, and 01 Professional Doctoral courses (CAPES, 2019).

Compared to Latin American countries, Brazil has the largest offer of graduate programs in Education, although internally discrepant, given the concentration of programs/courses in the Southeast-South axis. A systematic search for information in the institutional websites of Graduate Programs (GP) identified that according to the information made available, only two of the 184 Programs Pedagogy appear as a field of knowledge associated with their research lines. They are the GP in Education of the Universidade Federal do Ceará and the Universidade Federal da Bahia. In the first, there is a research line entitled “History and Memory of Education,” which foresees studies about the historical trajectory of Pedagogy, and, in the second, there is the line “Languages, Subjectivations and Pedagogical Praxis,” which points out the accomplishment of researches about politics, society, and individual from readings of Pedagogy and other fields of knowledge. Indeed, these data do not indicate that research on Pedagogy is not occurring, but that, in the institutional discourse aligned to the agencies above, it is not linked to an organic sense of a field of knowledge.

Under the same tendency, ANPED, composed of 23 Working Groups (WG) that congregate researchers in the debate of themes that demarcate, throughout the time, specialized academic territories, has not turned, in a particular way, to reflections about Pedagogy as a specific field of knowledge, except,

tangentially, in the WG 4, of Didactics. This configures a minimally curious situation in the Brazilian case: the discussion about Pedagogy as a field depends on Didactics, one of its disciplines. It manifests, in this sense, an inverted relation in which the discipline, as a unit belonging to the field, therefore more specialized, leads, even if in a residual way, the discussion about its wider field.

Indeed, the data on the research lines of the GP and the ANPED WG are not prominent determinants that the epistemological discussion of Pedagogy has no place in the agenda of specialized academic production, but they signal that, in its specificity as a field of knowledge, the theme is neglected or obstructed, especially by the understanding that Education would consist in itself another field distinct from Pedagogy. The area document of CAPES points out that Education has a strongly interdisciplinary nature while “[...] articulates different fields of knowledge around its object” (CAPES, 2019, p. 8). What would Pedagogy consist of, in this sense? In an “object” or “theme” of Education? Again, we are faced with a paradoxical situation: the practical phenomenon, which is education, becomes a field, and the field that historically is dedicated to the study of education in its practical manifestation, Pedagogy, is subsumed as a theme or, worse, an appendix in the discussion about the purposes and mediations in the educational field, referring only to the instrumental or methodological character of knowledge applied to practices.

As we have argued in this text, Pedagogy has an interdisciplinary dimension that emerges from the clarity of the multidimensionality of its object. However, in the way the WG of ANPED and the institutional tradition of the GP in Education operate, what is evident as a characteristic of the investigative treatment around the educational phenomenon is the dismissal of Pedagogy as a field in the name of multidisciplinary since among these WG and, not rarely, among research lines of the GP, the culture of niche is updated, which explains the little permeability of the knowledge produced in concrete contexts of the educational practice. The absence of Pedagogy as a reference to think about the praxeological dimension of research not only about education but for education — in the sense of linking it to the challenges that are situated in the concrete plane of the educational praxis, thus worrying about the transformation of meanings and practical mediations that materialize in such plane — is still justified by the argument of the interdisciplinary nature of the field. However, the multidisciplinary tendency predominates in institutional cultures.

As Touriñan López and Saez Alonso (2012) pointed out, Pedagogy is the disciplinary field involved in the complex task of articulating the relationship between the knowledge produced in what is traditionally classified as Education Sciences from the multi-referentiality that the educational practice expresses. We understand that, for this purpose, Pedagogy constitutes a specific domain since, in a complex perspective, this articulation surpasses the simple multidisciplinary juxtaposition of the variety of knowledge available about education. The pedagogical domain is structured by the praxeological synthesis (SCHMIED-KOWARZIK, 1989), which results in a specialized knowledge of, by and for the relationship between theory and educational practice. This turns Pedagogy into a mediating and reconstructive science that mobilizes through research, and not through a mere application, different knowledge to produce that particular to it: the pedagogical as a dialectical manifestation of educational thinking and doing. In this sense, the interdisciplinary argument legitimizes Pedagogy and not the contrary.

The multidisciplinary tradition, in turn, tends to reify academic territories so that research and the formative processes in them often reinforce the distance between theory and practice, undermining the construction of a field that takes education as an object of specific scientific knowledge organized around pedagogical problems. It is common to come across applied research in sociology, philosophy, history, etc., classified as educational but strongly linked to the epistemes and methods of the parent areas, not resulting in the production of pedagogical knowledge. By assuming the need to overcome the applicationist model of the relationship between theory and practice, we identify that, even under the dominance of the multidisciplinary tradition, there are significant productions on Pedagogy as a field of knowledge developed within the Brazilian GPs.

In order to deduce, from the examination of theses and dissertations defended in GP in the area of Education in Brazil, the meaning attributed to Pedagogy as a disciplinary field of scientific knowledge production, a mapping was developed in the Bank of Theses and Dissertations of CAPES.

The search retrieved research developed in the period from 1989 to 2019. The search descriptors and the respective quantities of productions retrieved were: Pedagogy/title (6,585 records), Pedagogy/Theory-title (105 records), Pedagogy/discipline-title (89 records), Pedagogy/field-title (121 records), Pedagogy/Science-title (184 records). After reading the titles, abstracts, and summaries of this set, we constituted a corpus of 26 productions dedicated to the theme, 10 of which resulted from masters' and 16 from doctoral research.

The 26 productions were selected according to the parameter that the research had focused on discussions about the identity character of Pedagogy as a field of knowledge. In this set, 15 productions referred to research about the Pedagogy course. Such research referred to Pedagogy as a field of knowledge to problematize the formative purposes and curricular organization of the Pedagogy courses. The other 11 productions focused properly on the study of pedagogical knowledge from a historiographical perspective and the study of the professional performance of pedagogues. Among those, 8 productions delimited reflections about the scientific character of Pedagogy, 3 of which were linked to the post-critical approach, 2 to the historical-dialectical materialism, 2 to Habermas' critical theory, and 1 to the complexity theory.

It is worth mentioning that the 6,585 works that brought the word Pedagogy in its title revealed the profusion of its use. Adjectivized, the word Pedagogy produces a lexical and semantic dispersion proper of a discursive context of absence or denial of its specific meaning. With this, we can point out that, in the academic debate, Pedagogy appears as a vague, slippery, an almost banal idea whose use dispenses conceptual justifications around what makes it different from education, human formation, or cultural socialization, terms with which it is recurrently confused. In other words, adjectivation overrides what is substantial.

It was possible to observe the tendency that the debate about the disciplinary field of Pedagogy has been fundamentally tied to the search for the understanding of the specificity of the Pedagogy course under the permanence of historical tensions. We evidenced the recurrence of some Brazilian authors mobilized in the conceptual treatment that gives Pedagogy the recognition of science, notably José Carlos Libâneo, Selma Garrido Pimenta, Maria Amélia Santoro Franco, and Dermeval Saviani. Thus, if this indicates the incidence and valorization of the national production, it also indicates a limited flow of dialogues with international authors who, in different contexts, are systematically dedicated to the defense of the thesis of Pedagogy as science.

As for the methodological character, the research is divided into 5 theoretical studies, 2 historiographical studies, 6 curricular studies, 2 documental studies, and 9 empirical studies that also encompassed stages of bibliographic or documental mapping. Except in the studies referenced in post-critical theories, whose approach acted in the sense of deconstructing/problematising the disciplinary/scientific condition of Pedagogy to conceptualize it as a cultural device associated to different spaces-time of educational experiences in the framework of (inter)subjectivities, the other authors are concerned in justifying the scientific status of Pedagogy as a condition for the recognition of its academic complexity. However, we notice gaps in the structuring of arguments due to the little articulation with the debate that the Philosophy of Science and Epistemology contribute about models of scientificity, practical science, inter/transdisciplinarity and, lastly, about the method, aspects treated by the Theory of Education as a discipline of Pedagogy. It becomes necessary, therefore, a more rigorous examination of the epistemological bases of Pedagogy and the consolidation of the Theory of Education as a structuring discipline of the GP of the field.

The dynamics of Brazilian post-graduation stimulate the formation and academic production associated with the collaborative work of research groups. In order to produce one more indicator of the situation of Pedagogy in the post-graduation area, a categorized search was made in the Directory of Research Groups of Brazil, linked to CNPq, with the descriptor Pedagogy as title and as a line of research. The search retrieved 274 records of groups. However, the term Pedagogy manifests itself, once again, as a device of dispersion, especially in the areas of Arts, Physical Education, and Health, in which the term is used as a synonym for Didactics or teaching methodology with more frequency. In the groups registered in the Education area, the adjectival use of Pedagogy coincides with the emergence of relatively

consolidated conceptual tools, such as Cultural Pedagogies, Decolonial Pedagogies (more recent), Childhood Pedagogies, Critical-Historical Pedagogy, Freirian Pedagogy, and University Pedagogy.

The data point to the need for discussions that lead to the recognition of Pedagogy as a field of reference for research that intends to fertilize the educational praxis beyond the applicationist/multidisciplinary scheme that denies the complexity of the relationship between theory and practice and, therefore, tends to build a colonizing knowledge that does little to collaborate with the awareness of educators in their work processes. The formation of educator-researchers in graduate studies may be driven towards a critical and propositional reading of the concrete reality when it is based on the understanding of Pedagogy as a mediating science engaged in producing the viable unpublished of which Freire (1987) spoke about.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The problematization of the theoretical field of Pedagogy in its nexus with the formation of professionals and researchers in the historical movement of its courses in Brazil has evidenced its weaknesses. The near absence of the theoretical and epistemological field of Pedagogy as a theoretical-practical-practical science of emancipatory human formation leaves its courses as an open field to the interests of neoliberal ideologies that transformed education into merchandise, as illustrated by the Resolution of CNE no. 02/2019.

Initially, with contributions from Schmied-Kowarzick (1974) and Paulo Freire (1997), we explain our understanding of Pedagogy as a dialectic science that has the relationship between theory and practice as constitutive. As a social and human science, Pedagogy theoretically studies the education practiced in society in its various institutions, including the school. Dialectical pedagogy critically analyzes, through critical-dialectical scientific research, the educational and pedagogical practices that deny emancipation by preventing the human right to education. It then turns to practice, proposing educational and pedagogical praxis transformations. In this condition, Pedagogy “faces as its conscious task that of being a practical science of and for educational praxis” (SCHMIED-KOWARZICK, 1974, p. 10). The cited author reminds us that the relationship between theory and practice is conflictive, giving rise to proposals for practices often of opposing interests. Thus, we agree with the denomination of Pedagogy as a dialectic science. That is, it has the practice as the intentionality of its study (theoretical-scientific) to return to it, proposing transformations to the praxis so that it can be emancipatory and humanizing (FREIRE, 1997).

Based on this understanding, we searched the origins of education in our country since the arrival of the Portuguese colonizers in 1500, the advances and retreats in the education of the Brazilian people in constitution until the public schooling that started in the late nineteenth century. In the middle of the 19th century, the concern for training teachers arose with the creation of the “Escolas Normais” (normal schools). These schools were the forerunners of the Pedagogy course, which would be created in 1939. Until then, in this long period, the word “Pedagogy” is referred to as a term, not a field of study or professional activity.

The teachers’ formation courses were configured in the 3+1 model, three years of baccalaureate and 1 of licentiate. The bachelor degree in Pedagogy, differently from the others, did not focus on the scientific studies of its area (education and teaching), being identified as a training course for teachers for the teaching profession (bachelor’s degree) and technicians in education, without any correspondence for the performance of these professionals. This configuration explains, in part, the fragility of Pedagogy as a theoretical, scientific, and professional epistemological field in the country.

The brief historical immersion that we carried out evidence new fragilities in the subsequent legislations that, since the 1960s, sought to overcome the generalist formation configured in the courses of Pedagogy. Resolution no. 02/1969 institutes the Pedagogy course as the formation of the pedagogue with a common base and another diversified in qualifications: the Teaching, to form teachers of the normal education; and the Educational Orientation, School Administration, School Supervision, School Inspection, to form specialists. With Teaching as compulsory and the others as optional, the course

started to form teachers and specialists, without adapting to the specificities of each one of these educational dimensions in counterpoint to the criticism around its generalist character.

Curiously, in this course called Pedagogy, Pedagogy was not studied as a field of knowledge historically produced to understand the theoretical and scientific basis of pedagogical practices, located in their contexts configured by capitalism. The study of the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic pedagogical trends in Brazilian education undertaken by Dermeval Saviani and collaborators in the 1980s, despite the turnaround they made possible by having critical dialectics as epistemological assumptions for the study of educational phenomena in their praxis, did not fertilize the studies of Pedagogical Science in Pedagogy courses because, simply, these courses did not study Pedagogy and its disciplinary field. Unlike other sciences that investigate education, Pedagogical Science has the dialectic between theory and practice as constitutive. This fragility accentuated the professional identity crisis and provoked national discussions about the possible configurations for the Pedagogy course in Brazil, characterizing two distinct groups: the one that defends Pedagogy as a science and the course as a locus of formation of pedagogues for different professional practices; and the one that defends the course centralized in the formation of teachers for the initial stages of Basic Education.

Unlike the first, which argues about the theoretical and epistemological field of Pedagogy as the basis for forming education professionals, the second group defends teaching as the basis for such formation. This group gained political-ideological hegemony and space in the CNE in the formulation of the DCN no. 02/2006. In the undergraduate courses in Pedagogy guided by these Directives, the historical-theoretical-practical-practical field of Pedagogy is not studied. Once more, the fragility of Pedagogy in its courses was/is evidenced. This gap could also be observed in graduate courses in Education, as demonstrated by the low quantity of theses and dissertations on the theoretical field of Pedagogy and the limited number of research lines and groups linked to the Programs that are systematically dedicated to this focus. We emphasize that Pedagogy does not appear in the CNPq's tree of knowledge. The incidence of the paradigm of the Sciences of Education in this scope is an explanatory factor of the discontinuity that Pedagogy experiences in the Brazilian academic field, which is revealed in the rupture between the graduation course and the corresponding post-graduation area. In the face of this, one can question which is the institutional sphere of specialized/advanced studies on Pedagogy? The data throughout the text show that graduate studies in Education have not been configured in this place, which implies the weakening of the specific debate on pedagogical theory and research. Educational research's theoretical and methodological configurations need to be adjusted according to the need to reflect and act in the contexts of praxis. In this sense, pedagogical research is directed to the practice, guided by the purpose of producing theories capable of nurturing the reflection and action of educators, serving as an instrument for an intentional praxis pedagogically founded since it seeks to unveil the practices and intervene in them critically and creatively.

As we have already explained in other studies (PINTO, 2018; MOREIRA; PIMENTA, 2021; SEVERO, 2018), we understand that the current DCN of the Pedagogy course must be reviewed and updated, as indicated by the issues analyzed in this article and the paths we propose to strengthen Pedagogy as a theoretical field of critical-dialectical epistemological basis, a field for the formation of educators and as a professional field.

We suggest that this movement of revision and proposition of new DCN, in addition to congregating the associations and academic entities of the area, considers the results of studies developed about the Pedagogy course, as well as analyses of eventual experiences developed by public universities that in the two last decades sought to overcome in their pedagogical-curricular projects of the Pedagogy courses the limits and problems of the DCN of 2006, aiming to form the professional pedagogue to act in the school education in all its instances and in the not school education, demanded other social institutions that also are configured with purposes and educative actions (praxis).

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