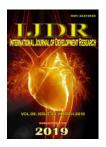


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## **ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TEACHING / LEARNING OF SOCIOLOGY IN SECONDARY SCHOOL: REPRESENTATIONS OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF A STATE SCHOOL OF CAMPO GRANDE- MS, BRAZIL

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# **ABSTRACT**

The insertion of the discipline of sociology in secondary School and the expectations and realities related to its role as instrument of social transformation within the Brazilian education are of great importance. This manuscript aims to analyze the conceptions of the professors of the area of sociology regarding the relevance of the discipline in secondary school and the citizen training of its students. In addition, the presented manuscript seeks to identify the difficulties of the sociology teacher in the teaching / learning of the discipline of Sociology in secondary school; to verify in loco and with the students their representations regarding the discipline of Sociology;, and also to analyze the representations of the students in relation to the sociology as a discipline and as a social science The methodology used in the preparation of the manuscript was the bibliographic and documentary analysis as interviews etc. It is a classic method of Social Sciences that aims to establish a personal contact of the researcher with the object of investigation. The method adopted for collecting the data related to the study object contemplates the use of methodological tools from both Sociology and Anthropology. Thus, we used the investigative tools often used when conducting qualitative research, such as structured, semi-structured and free interviews - when the interviewee / interlocutor is led to spontaneously express his / her ideas. It is concluded that sociology still needs an identity in Brazil's secondary education, given that it is still confused with philosophy and history with respect to its specificities.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this study was to answer the questions related to the effectiveness of teaching sociology in secondary school, trying to understand the true role of this discipline in the formation of critical awareness within the Brazilian public school. Another important issue is the investigation of the teachers 'representations regarding their discipline, as well as students' perceptions about sociology and possible contributions to their formation as critical citizens. Studies have already been carried out in other regions of the country, showing worrying indexes regarding the role of the discipline in secondary education in Brazil (MACHADO, 1987; MORAES, 2011). In view of the foregoing, it is necessary to verify if the conclusions emanated by previous researches have resonance in the teaching of sociology in the public schools of Mato Grosso do Sul, taking as reference the state school Emigdio Campos Widal. The choice of the school in question was due to its reputation as one of the best schools in Campo Grande, Brazil.

### Sociology in Secundary School: Expectations and reality

Historically, the insertion of Sociology into the curricula of Brazilian schools is intrinsically associated with the emergence and propagation of Positivism in Brazil during the nineteenth century. However, such insertion and permanence of this discipline in secondary school curricula did not occur in an uninterrupted manner, alternating its presence in several periods of the history of the Brazilian education, since it has been marked by opposing categories such as inclusion and exclusion (CARVALHO, 2015). In 1980, at the height of the process of democratization of Brazilian society, it strengthened the view that education would be the mechanism par excellence of social transformation and act as a sort of attenuating agent of social inequalities. In this way, Sociology came to be understood as one of the tools at the service of the possibility of critical reflection on society, its transformations and contradictions. On June 2, 2008, Law 11,684 was amended to amend art. 36 of Law No. 9,394 of December 20, 1996, which established the guidelines and bases of national education to include Philosophy and Sociology as compulsory subjects in secondary school curricula in Brazilian schools. In this perspective, it was inserted in the Brazilian secondary school curriculum as a compulsory subject (OLIVEIRA, 2015). But from that time until the present day, what has been verified in relation to the real possibility of Sociology playing this role in the scope of the Brazilian education system? Apart from an employment opportunity for professionals in the field, what actually represents the teaching of Sociology in schools in the country? Does sociology help students understand sociocultural reality and its complex dialectic? Questions that can only be answered if one investigates the conceptions on the subject of those who are given the task of presenting scientific knowledge about society - the teachers who teach the discipline. It is important, above all, to understand the conceptions of these professionals as to the importance of Sociology in secondary school and in the training of its students.

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, due to the consensus that there is a close correlation between the teaching of Sociology and the formation of a critical citizen, the question arises that guides this study, that is, how this connection between Sociology and critical formation has been understood by teachers, as in the vision of these professionals has been conducted this critical training for citizenship. There are other issues to be discussed despite the curricular obligation, is that the discipline of Sociology occupy a very limited space with regard to the hours taught, being limited to only one class per week usually in the third grade, fifty minutes. In addition another complicating factor besides reduced working hours is that the discipline has been given sometimes by professionals

without specific training in Sociology, who take the discipline to complement their workload and increase your salary (HANDFAS; TEIXEIRA, 2007; IBGE, 2015). In the face of such outstanding circumstances, a situation marked by contradiction arises. That is, on the one hand a certain appreciation of sociological knowledge through legal instruments that recognize their relevance and seek to ensure their presence in the training of young people, and on the other one, professionals in the field are placed in the face of uncertainty, since there are still have effectively guaranteed their place in the labor market (MARTINS, WEBER, 2010). The teaching and learning of Sociology in secondary school in Brazilian schools is a very problematic issue, specifically for teachers and students involved in the dynamics of the process. There are many problems, ranging from overworked teachers to the lack of perspective on the meaning and purpose of Sociology in secondary School. The students do not understand the content and consider the sociology discipline unnecessary because "it does not fall into the Enem" (National evaluation exam, students can use their scores to be admitted to a university), which leads to a devaluation and consequent contempt for the discipline, thus precluding the discussions and the possibility of sociological reflection in the classroom. (MOTTA, 2012).

Disregard and disinterest for the discipline of Sociology as a school discipline in secondary School can be traced to its purely abstract content, seemingly distant from the students' reality. Another problem to be addressed is the question of the identity of the discipline in front of others, such as History and Philosophy, which often present students with the same content discussed in Sociology classes. Thus, the sociology teacher tries to prepare his classes taking into account the contents already worked by the other teachers (HANDFAS, 2009; HONORATO, 2009). Sociology has its method of approach and its object of investigation historically delimited, defining this tributary of the theoretical efforts of sociologists like Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Max (QUINTANEIRO, BARBOSA, OLIVEIRA, 2002; ARON, 2008). His nineteenth-century science status, however, was predominantly due to Durkheim and his theories on social fact and the rules of sociological method, respectively linked in the works of the Division of Social Service (1893) and Les Règles de la Méthode Sociologique (1895) (SELL, 2013). There are method comparative, functional, formal or systematic, comprehensive, statistical and monographic methods may be listed. The quintessential object of sociology, roughly speaking, is society and its numerous sociocultural transformations. However, because of its essentially theoretical and abstract nature, its discourse can not be intelligible to secondary school students (ALVEZ, COSTA, 2006; MOTTA, 2012). According to Sarandy (2004), the sciences are marked by the conceptual boundaries that they elaborate to distinguish themselves, borders that must, in the opinion of the author, be outdated. In the specific case of Sociology, it is necessary to understand its peculiarity in the field of knowledge, which is the basic difference between it and the other disciplines. In other words, what does Sociology offer in terms of knowledge / knowledge that other disciplines can not offer? It is in this sense that the discipline needs to build its difference, that is, to affirm an identity as a contribution to secondary School. Sarandy (2004) believes that Sociology has to develop critical thinking in the student, without disregarding the other disciplines and all the contribution they have to the training of students.

This is because the knowledge base, interdisciplinarily articulated, collaborates with the approximation and consequent understanding of the student with his reality, as well as with the many and diverse socio-cultural realities existing in his surroundings. Thus, for this author: "It is precisely in this movement of detachment from the gaze on our own reality and of approximation on other realities that we develop an understanding of another level and criticism." (SARANDY, 2004, p. 1). For the author on the screen, Sociology has an enormous potential of human formation, believing that it is capable of fighting individualism demonstrating the need of the collective. But how to work in the classroom the discipline of Sociology? Addressing the classics and their language often characterized hermeticism? Or relate the discipline to the sociocultural reality of learners? Indeed, trying to get students to read classical sociological texts would not help much, given the acknowledged hatred of most students over reading (HANDFAS, TEIXEIRA, 2007). What remains then is to try to fit the sociological explanation to concrete reality, which leads the discussion to the field of journalistic analysis of facts rather than sociological (MOTTA, 2012). Thus, there is an urgent need to find a middle ground, in which, as suggested by Meksenas (1995), there is an interrelation between theoretical knowledge and social reality concretely lived. But this is not the easiest task, given the current conjuncture of education in the country.

The classroom teacher works with themes that go against social prejudices, and internalized by the students through their families, groups of friends and the media in general. In this way, the activity of teachers becomes more tiring, given the short time he has in class to solve the stereotypes that populate the social imaginary of the Brazilian people. In this sense, Bourdieu (1997, p. 22) states that "sociology, like all sciences, has the function of unveiling hidden things; in doing so, it can contribute to minimizing the symbolic violence that is exercised in social relations and, in particular, in the media relations of communication." If one thinks of secondary education from the NCPs (National Curricular Parameters) and NCBs (National Curricular Guidelines) through the logic of the official recontextualization of the state, one can see that these instruments "represent different power groups, political projects, origins in the contextualization fields, contents, categories, visions of society, school, teaching and sociology. So, we will identify the similarities and differences" (CASÃO; QUINTEIRO, 2015, p. 225). In a brief analysis of the eight years of the PSDB government (Brazilian Social Democratic Party), Casão and Quinteiro (2015) suggest that the educational policy adopted for Brazil has been tempered by deregulation, with ideological orientation from the World Bank. In this way, there was an appropriation of the concept of 'competences', giving it a pragmatic conception of knowledge in a way that served the interests of neoliberal politics. In this assertion, we can see the many difficulties on the subject in question as the lack of tradition, experience and research on the teaching of Sociology, specifically in secondary school; there is a lack of adequate didactic material for young people and adolescents; and also the absence of alternative and effective methodologies in the teaching of this discipline (LIMA, 2012). In this context, one fact stands out, as observed by Casão and Quinteiro (2007: 229), both the research and studies coming from Sociology and the knowledge produced by it "[...] do not assure their offer as a discipline, after all, his 'interdisciplinary treatment' certainly among the existing

disciplines such as History and Geography would not require the need for a further discipline, Sociology."In this sense, the speech of a secondary school student about the discipline is emblematic: I do not know why we have this discipline, you know. We already see the same things in other subjects, such as philosophy and history. Then it gets repeated, right? So we do not really care [for the content studied], we just want to take notes." Thus, as students' disdain for discipline is found to be commonplace in the discourses between them, but in the classroom, when asked about the importance of sociology, they produce politically correct speeches, so to speak, "It is important for us to understand society, how does it work?", answers a student when asked about the relevance of sociology to society.

On the other hand, none of the interviewees wants to become a sociologist or professor of Sociology. The reasons are well-known as the lack of social prestige in relation to teaching, especially in secondary School, and the unattractive remuneration. Particularly in view of the future prospects of young students who always dreaming of jobs with high salaries that can give them a lifestyle that includes the material and immaterial goods fetishized by the current consumer society. As can be seen in the speech of one of the students:

"I have nothing against, do you understand me? But I want a profession to make money, and teacher everyone knows they do not get those things, right? I'd rather be a doctor or an engineer, but a teacher would not. It does not make sense to study others and earn less. Another thing: it's a profession that nobody cares about, you know. I mean, it's not that you do not care, that nobody cares. It's not like a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, you know? "[Interviewee I - 3rd secondary school].

For teachers, this type of opinion is due to the reality in which students live:

"This is a reflection of our Brazilian society; students are just being honest about their expectations for the future. But they do so without understanding why they do so, without understanding that they are influenced by the social structure from which they originate. For them, they are correct, after all they look for careers that can fulfill their aspirations, whether they are related to success or even to the acquisition of consumer goods "[Interviewee 1 - sociology teacher in secondary school].

With regard to the question on the choice of sociologist's profession, one interlocutor gave the following answer:

"I think sociological discourse, just like the philosophical one, only resonates in the realm of academia. There [the university] the people enters the course because it has, or thinks it has, some affinity with the universe of sociology, then, when this affinity is established, they dedicate themselves, and those who discovered that it was not what they wanted, change of course. Here at school, there is none of it. So the students do not care much about the content, they do the basics to pass "[Interviewed 1 - sociology teacher in secondary school].

The teacher believes that Sociology as a discipline in secondary school still has much to contribute to Brazilian education, despite the various problems faced by teachers in the country.

"I think we have to play our part, which is to teach. I believe there is still room for us to work on the training of these students. I know that the influences they suffer from the surrounding reality is overwhelming, but that is precisely what makes our activity so challenging. If a student does not understand a certain topic, we explain once more, and again until he understands, we need to awaken in this generation the sensitivity to the current themes, to help develop in them the critical sense. This is our role and we are able to fulfill it, in spite of everything "[Interviewee 1 - teacher of sociology in secondary school].

However, such a development mentioned by the above interlocutor will not happen quickly, since it is necessary that the discipline has a greater autonomy and a greater number of classes, so that it consolidates itself within the scope of Brazilian education and thus can fulfill this role. Not as a panacea to all the problems inherent in social ills and the human condition, as some people think, but as an instrument that facilitates the understanding and interpretation of the social reality in which young people are inserted. Perhaps, with this understanding of the genesis of social relations, they may think of alternatives and ways of intervening in this reality in a conscious way. Regarding education, Florestan Fernandes believed that among the functions of Sociology, the following stand out: "to provide students with instruments of objective analysis of social reality. [...] stimulate critical thinking and intellectual vigilance. [...] soften conflicts between individuals" (FERNANDES, 1977, p.108). It is necessary, however, to pay attention to the fact that Sociology as a compulsory subject in high schools should not be the only one responsible for forming the critical student for the exercise of citizenship. All disciplines, or rather, all representatives of the various school subjects have this obligation. A chemistry teacher, for example, who is faced with a situation of prejudice in the classroom must, instead, intervene positively, trying to solve prejudiced stereotypes and / or misconceptions about social reality.

In the teachers' discourse it is perceived the competition of external factors to the classroom in the formation of the students. Factors that weigh more than the content taught in class, this comes from the family, friends and media contents. Before the student enters the school, they already have acquired knowledge of his social experience, which is often characterized by misconceptions about some aspects, which makes the task of the teacher more difficult. From the reports of the students of secondary school, it is observed that there is still much to conquer with regard to their effective participation in Brazilian education, specifically in the themes that concern the construction of citizens aware of their sociopolitical and critical role in society. Students are trapped by socio-cultural influences from family life, from groups of friends and from the surrounding reality, which can be seen in their views on the role of sociology in education. They can not understand sociological discourse, as many have said, since they do not see differences between it and the discourses derived from philosophy and history. A problem posed by Sociology, given that it has not - yet - succeeded in erecting for itself, within the scope of secondary school education, its own identity, distinct from the others in relation to its sphere of activity. In this way, teachers are forced to adapt their classes to the reality they find in schools. The contents are taught, but not in the way the teacher intends to teach it, since they have to make adaptations in order to achieve their pedagogical goals

minimally. The sociological theories are not discussed, since there is no time for students to read in depth the sociological literature, not all of them, but the most significant ones. The teacher has 2 hours a week to transmit the content of the course, especially the content previously elaborated and constant in the grid, therefore, is not free to work in a deeper way the themes in question in the manuals coming from higher instances. In view of the above, it was noted that the role of sociology teacher is hampered in forming critical citizens and aware of their condition in the social organization in which they live, because they do not have enough time to present and discuss important issues in the area; material resources are scarce; there is a lack of interest in the discipline on the part of the students, among other problems related to the teaching / learning of Sociology in schools in Brazil. The insertion or reinsertion as of 2008 of Sociology in secondary school was done in a disorderly, even unthinking way with respect to its role and real reach of its contributions to the formation of the individuals of the new generations. Faced with the scenario of flagrant precariousness and absences that delineates the situation of Sociology in High School in Brazil, marked notably by an insufficient number of weekly classes, by the inexistence or precarious existence of didactic material, the domain of knowledge produced by Sociology is very far from what the texts of the LDB and the PCN propose in which it is to collaborate in the investigative process and understanding of the social reality and its contingencies.

#### **Final Considerations**

Sociology as a discipline in secondary education must undergo a transformation over the years, from such transformations can achieve its objectives, or at least the objectives to which it was urged to account for LDB and NCPs. However, it depends on the political will to discuss in depth what type of education Brazil wants to offer to the new generations, a technical education in which technicians or an education committed to the training of students with a critical sense, conscious of their responsibilities and duties towards the company from which they originate. In this manuscript it was verified that there is no concern of the political or economic elites in regard to education in Brazil. Throughout the history of the country, there have been constant cuts in financial resources and structural neglect with the socio-political and critical formation of the citizens. In fact, this is a strategy of the power-holders to perpetuate their positions and privileges, after all, a people not well educated with respect to their rights and ignorant of the mechanisms of domination that govern it is much easier to lead and dominate. The representations of the teacher and of the students of the state school analyzed in this study showed the difficulties of the teaching of Sociology in the Brazilian high school. It was found that the hours of sociology are low in the classroom, as we find that the students are disinterested in the contents of the discipline, since for some students the contents are the same as other subjects, such as philosophy and history. It was observed that there is a lack of identity to students and therefore, unable to reveal their role in learning.

The trend is that the situation will remain the same for many years, at least until education in Brazil is taken seriously and committed to the training of citizens, rather than the formation of mere technicist automata with competence for build bridges and plan rockets, but unable to perceive the political-ideological game of domination that subjects them. We believe that the study presented here reached the proposed objectives,

given that from the representations of teachers and students it was possible to draw a profile of the current teaching / learning situation of Sociology in secondary school in Mato Grosso do Sul schools, Brazil.

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