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Eds.

EDUCATION POLICY
RESEARCH
epistemological and theoretical issues

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Education Policy Research:
Epistemological and Theoretical Issues

PLATÃO

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Silvana Stremel
(Editors)

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Chapter 7 - The constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil: historical aspects, 2018, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 26(168): 1-26.

Chapter 8 - Aspects of researcher training in Education Policy field at Postgraduate level in Brazil, 2019, *Educação & Sociedade*, 40: 1-20.

Chapter 9 – Training researchers in the field of Education Policy: A discussion from the Latin American context, 2017, *Revista de la Educación Superior*, 2017, n. 183: 37-45.

Abstract

This book is organized in 9 chapters, discussing theoretical and epistemological aspects of the research on Education Policy. The first chapter, by César Tello, presents some of the main concepts/categories that have founded the studies on epistemologies of Education Policy. In particular, the author presents three elements of the focus of epistemological studies on Education Policy: epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning and epistemethodological approach. In Chapter 2, Mainardes and Tello present the three levels of approach/abstraction in Education Policy research: description, analysis and understanding. Such levels of approach/abstraction have been developed from theoretical reflections and empirical analyzes (meta-research) and have been useful for the understanding and evaluation of the production of knowledge in the field of Education Policy.

In Chapter 3, Jefferson Mainardes presents the main theoretical and methodological aspects of meta-research in Education Policy. The chapter also presents the issues that can serve to guide the epistemological analysis of research reports on Education Policy (theses, dissertations, papers, etc.). Chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with the application of concepts that have been developed by researchers in the analysis of research reports in the field of Education Policy. Chapter 5 problematizes pluralism as an epistemological perspective, inasmuch as empirical work has indicated that, in a significant part of research and publication, researchers use combined theorisation strategies (McLenann, 1996) and also additive theorisation. In the author's analysis, the strategy of combined theorization refers to the discussions of pluralism, understood as the attempt of constituting a theoretical reference from the combination of different theories or concepts

coming from various theories. Chapter 6 presents results of a meta-research on PhD Theses produced on the Programa Universidade para Todos (Prouni) – University For All Program - defended in Brazilian Postgraduate Programms in Education from 2007 to 2017.

Chapter 7, by Stremel and Mainardes, presents a synthesis of a broader research on the constitution of the field of Education Policy in Brazil.

Chapters 8 and 9 refer to the researchers' training in the field of Education Policy. In Chapter 8, Mainardes and Stremel present the main results of an exploratory study on the education of researchers in the field of Education Policy. The research was carried out by means of an online questionnaire answered by 108 doctoral students, from Research Lines related to Education Policy, from Brazilian Postgraduate Programms in Education. Based on Basil Bernstein's theory, the authors present implications and challenges for the process of the researcher formation on Education Policy. In Chapter 9, Jorge Gorostiaga presents reflections on the problem of the education of researchers for the field of Education Policy in Latin America. The author concludes the chapter presenting a possible educational model.

Keywords

Chapter 1 - The theoretical field of Education Policy: characteristics, objects of study and mediations - A Latin American perspective
Epistemethodological approach, Epistemological perspective, Epistemological positioning, Education Policy field, Objectos of Study

Chapter 2 - Research on the field of Education Policy: exploring different levels of approach and abstraction
Description, Analysis, Understanding, Sensitizing concepts, Education Policy field

Chapter 3 - Meta-research in the field of Education Policy: conceptual and methodological elements
Meta-research, Education Policy, Brazil, Combined theorization, Additive theorization

Chapter 4 - The research on Education Policy in Brazil: an analysis of the theoretical-epistemological aspects
Brazil, Education Policy research, Combined theorization, Additive theorization, Meta-research

Chapter 5 - Research in the field of Education Policy: theoretical and epistemological perspectives and the place of pluralism
Pluralism, Combined theorization, Additive theorization, Brazil, Theoretical underpinning

Chapter 6 - The Programa Universidade Para Todos in PhD Theses of the Education: themes, foundations and levels of abstraction
Prouni, Description, Analysis, Understanding, Brazil

Chapter 7 - The constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil: historical aspects
Brazil, Academic field, Bourdieu, Education Policy field, History of Education Policy

Chapter 8 - Aspects of researcher training in Education Policy field at Postgraduate level in Brazil
Researcher training, Bernstein, Education Policy field, Brazil, Postgraduate

Chapter 9 - Training researchers in the field of Education Policy: A discussion from the Latin American context
Researcher training, Education Policy field, Latin America, Training model, Public policy

List of acronyms

ABE	Brazilian Association of Education
ANDE	National Association of Education
ANPAE	National Association of Education Policy and Administration
ANPEd	National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education
CAPES	Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel
CBEs	Brazilian Conferences of Education
CBPE	Brazilian Center for Educational Research
CEDES	Center for Education and Society Studies
CNPq	National Council for Scientific and Technological Development
CRPEs	Regional Centers for Educational Research
EEPA	Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach
GT 5	Working Group 5 - State and Education Policy of the ANPEd
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IDEB	National Index of Quality of Education
INEP	National Institute for Educational Studies and Research 'Anísio Teixeira'
PAR	Plan of Articulated Actions
PDE	Educational Development Plan
PNE	National Education Plan

PPGE	Postgraduate Studies in Education
PROUNI	University for All
RBEP	Brazilian Journal of Pedagogical Studies
ReLePe	Network of Theoretical and Epistemological Studies on Education Policy
REUNI	Programme for Support to Plans for the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Introduction

Building new approaches to Education Policy Research: epistemological and theoretical issues

Jefferson Mainardes
Silvana Stremel

This book brings together texts on the theoretical-epistemological issues of Education Policy research. The texts were written by researchers interested in the critical and innovative potential of studies of a theoretical nature in the field of Education Policy. The publication of these initial Latin American productions, in English Language, aims to broaden Latin American participation in the space of international discussion on theoretical-epistemological issues of research in the field of Education Policy.

The authors are linked to the *Red de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos en Política Educativa* (ReLePe)[1], created in 2010, aiming to stimulate research on theoretical-epistemological issues that have been based on the production of knowledge in the field of Education Policy. The creation of Relepe started from the fact that in Brazil and in Latin America there is a lot of research on education policies (policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, etc.). However, the theoretical studies about research in Education Policy and the theoretical foundations of this research are still scarce.

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1   In English: Network of Theoretical and Epistemological Studies on Education Policy (www.relepe.org).

In most Latin American countries, the academic field of Education Policy covers a significant number of researchers, Research Lines in Graduate Programs in Education, Research Groups, Research Networks, as well as specialized journals and events. It is a field in constant construction and expansion (Stremel, 2016), composed of highly productive researchers who are engaged with Education Policy, both as a scientific project and a political project (Susen, 2011). The amount of research and publications in this field is quite significant in the region. However, there are still few studies that seek to analyze the theoretical-epistemological foundations that have underpinned these studies. Thus, Relepe arises with the purpose of prioritizing studies of a theoretical nature on Education Policy, with the conviction that it is possible and necessary to develop new approaches, ideas and perspectives for research on Education Policy.

In the context of Relepe, the following Research Axes were outlined:

1. Problems and limitations in the development of research in Education Policy;
2. Epistemological approaches and perspectives in Education Policy;
3. Methodologies for the analysis of Education Policies;
4. History of the field of Education Policy;
5. Research and pivotal authors of the field of Education Policy;
6. Knowledge production and decision making in an epistemological perspective;
7. Epistemology, Education Policy and Latin American reality;
8. Education Policy Teaching and education of researchers for this field.

The texts published here are articulated to these axes. It can be affirmed that the works that have been developed by researchers related to Relepe have contributed to the strengthening of the discussions on research in the field of Education Policy in Latin America. As an example, we highlight the publication of the book "*Los objetos de estudio de la política educativa: Hacia una caracterización del campo teórico*" (Tello, 2015)[2], which gathered several analyzes on the object(s) of study of Education Policy. With regard to the History of Education Policy field, the studies of Garcias Franco (2014) and Stremel (2016, 2017) on the history of the field of Education Policy in Argentina and Brazil, respectively, stand out. Another axis that has attracted the attention of several researchers is axis 8. Since the creation of Relepe, several researchers have started to develop research on the teaching and education of researchers in the field of Education Policy (Giovine, 2016; Miranda, 2016; Pronko, 2016; Gorostiaga, 2017; Mainardes, Stremel, & Rosa, 2017; Mancebo, 2017; Guimarães-Iosif, Limeira, & Santos, 2018; Mendes, 2018; Moreira & Iulianelli, 2017; Mainardes & Stremel, 2019).

In the context of Relepe, the *Revista de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos em Política Educativa*[3], published under the responsibility of Relepe, deserves a special mention, in which several researchers interested in theoretical-epistemological issues of the research in Education Policy have published their works.

This book is organized in 9 chapters. The first chapter, by César Tello, presents some of the main concepts/categories that have founded the studies on epistemologies of Education Policy. In particular, the author presents three elements of the focus of

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2   In English: The objects of study of Education Policy: Towards a characterization of the theoretical field.

3   In English: Journal of Theoretical and Epistemological Studies in Education Policy. Available on https://www.revistas2.uepg.br/index.php/retepe

epistemological studies on Education Policy: epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning and epistemethodological approach. In Chapter 2, Mainardes and Tello present the three levels of approach/abstraction in Education Policy research: description, analysis and understanding. Such levels of approach/abstraction have been developed from theoretical reflections and empirical analyzes (meta-research) and have been useful for the understanding and evaluation of the production of knowledge in the field of Education Policy.

In Chapter 3, Jefferson Mainardes presents the main theoretical and methodological aspects of meta-research in Education Policy. The chapter also presents the issues that can serve to guide the epistemological analysis of research reports on Education Policy (theses, dissertations, papers, etc.). Chapters 4, 5 and 6 deal with the application of concepts that have been developed by researchers in the analysis of research reports in the field of Education Policy. From the analysis of 140 papers published in Brazilian journals, Mainardes seeks to identify the theoretical-epistemological foundations that have been used in these studies (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 problematizes pluralism as an epistemological perspective, inasmuch as empirical work has indicated that, in a significant part of research and publication, researchers use combined theorization strategies (McLenann, 1996) and also additive theorization. In the author's analysis, the strategy of combined theorization refers to the discussions of pluralism, understood as the attempt of constituting a theoretical reference from the combination of different theories or concepts coming from various theories. Chapter 6 presents results of a meta-research on PhD Theses produced on the *Programa Universidade para Todos* (Prouni) – University For All Program - defended in Brazilian Postgraduate Programms in Education from 2007 to 2017. Based on a combination of the Focus of the

Epistemologies of Education Policy with other contributions from the field of public policies and Education Policy, this text presents a mapping of the main themes and foundations of the theses, systematizes the privileged approaches by the authors, the types of theorization and the levels of abstraction achieved. The results reveal a great variation of approaches and themes, the low use of literature and models in the field of Education Policy and, from the point of view of abstraction levels, the predominance of descriptive and analytical studies, despite the presence of a few understanding studies.

Chapter 7, by Stremel and Mainardes, presents a synthesis of a broader research on the constitution of the field of Education Policy in Brazil. Based on Pierre Bourdieu's field concept and authors who base the institutionalization of academic fields (Gómez Campo & Tenti Fanfani, 1989), the authors present the methodology developed for the research on the constitution of an academic field and the temporal demarcations of the field on Education Policy in Brazil.

Chapters 8 and 9 refer to the researchers' training in the field of Education Policy. In Chapter 8, Mainardes and Stremel present the main results of an exploratory study on the education of researchers in the field of Education Policy. The research was carried out by means of an online questionnaire answered by 108 doctoral students, from Research Lines related to Education Policy, from Brazilian Postgraduate Programms in Education. Based on Basil Bernstein's theory, the authors present implications and challenges for the process of the researcher formation on Education Policy. In Chapter 9, Jorge Gorostiaga presents reflections on the problem of the education of researchers for the field of Education Policy in Latin America. The author concludes the chapter presenting a possible educational model.

We hope that this book can contribute to the debates on research in Education Policy, particularly on its theoretical-epistemological aspects.

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Chapter 1

The theoretical field of Education Policy: characteristics, objects of study and mediations A Latin American perspective[1]

César Tello

Introduction

This chapter, of a theoretical nature, aims to introduce some conceptual reflections under development in the framework of what is referred to as the Epistemologies of Education Policy. Through the Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach (EEPA), these reflections intend to suggest a plan of analysis for the research field of Education Policy as a theoretical field, with elements that the researcher believes contribute to the meta-analytic reflection of the field.

The premises assumed on this chapter are, on the one hand, considering that Education Policy as a theoretical field is defined through the perspective and epistemological positioning of the person who interprets/characterizes it and, on the other hand, that that definition from a specified epistemological positioning responds to an episteme of epoch in terms of Foucault. What is meant by this is that there are no universal characterizations of Education Policy as a theoretical field or of its object of study. Given that the object of study of Education Policy is built in a non-neutral way, the historical development of the theoretical

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1 This paper was originally published in the *American Journal of Educational Research, 2014, 2(4): 197-203.*

field and the context in which the object of study of Education Policy is outlined, define "new" objects of study or changes the existing one by way of what Kuhn called the paradigm.

All in all, these matters will be put forward along the development of this paper, but not as isolated sections but rather as horizontal axes that allow for reflection and observation of the epistemic complexity faced by the characterization of the field, the object of study of Education Policy and knowledge production in the field.

Approach to the epistemologies of Education Policy

The Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach (EEPA), is made up of three elements: the epistemological perspective, the epistemological position and the epistemethodological approach. The "Epistemologies" category is used in plural here since there are a number of epistemological positionings and perspectives to develop and carry out Education Policy research, i.e., there are several epistemologies in Education Policy as a theoretical field. On the basis of this premise and in a relational way, it can be pointed that depending on the different epistemologies, there will be various objects of study selected for analysis.

In this chapter, just the first two elements of the EPPA are considered in order to present ideas, assuming that the Epistemological Perspective in Education Policy research means the worldview adopted by the researcher in order to carry out their inquiries; we refer to the General Theory in terms of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Examples of perspectives may include: Marxism, neo-Marxism, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Existentialism, Humanism, Positivism and Pluralism.

On the other hand, the Epistemological Positioning emerges from the Epistemological Perspective itself, or should emerge in a consistent and sound research. The Epistemological

Positioning, i.e. the substantive theory, as it is understood in this paper, relates particularly to the object of study, that is, to the theoretical strands typical of the field, considering that substantive theories are those which directly relate to the empirical and theoretical content of the research's data. This is the focal point and the ribs of the EEPA, since it is in this point that the researcher's worldview is at stake; worldview meaning "a set of presuppositions (assumptions) that we hold about the basic constitution of reality" (Sire, 2004, p. 17). That is, not only ways of reading the reality, but also ways of building it in terms of epistemological reflexivity. In this sense, the epistemological positioning becomes the researcher's political and ideological position that relies on their choice of epistemological perspective, with which research will be conducted. Among the positionings, we may find: new institutionalist, institutionalist, legal, political constructivist, complexity, eclectic, post-modern, post-modernist, hyper-globalist, skeptical, neoliberal, transformational approach, functionalist, critical, radical critical, critical-analytical, resistance theorists, critical-reproductivist, humanist, economicist, etc.

Several studies reveal that there is no researcher's "empty head"[2] and various methodological terms have been used to name this issue, for instance: "researcher's assumptions" or "meaning anticipation" (Sirvent, 1999, p. 33), among others. In short, the epistemological positionings and perspectives do not emerge from an "empty head," on the contrary, they have substance and support. The difficulty arises when the Education Policy researcher cannot name what is happening to them as epistemological perspective or positioning and tries to build their research from pseudo-neutrality, it is in that same line that they assume the object of study of Education Policy as a fossilized object.

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2   The "empty head" category is understood here as the position of a researcher who considers themselves as tabula rasa at the moment of beginning the research process.

Thus, Espina Prieto (2007) holds that object observation cannot be separated from the observing device. This assumes an object and a subject who knows it from within. That is, from our EEPA proposal, the object is not understood as a neutral entity, isolated from its context, where the researcher is not involved, but rather assumes a mutual involvement as starting point, what in terms of Elías (1993) would be "involvement with and detachment from" the object of study, and it is at that moment that the object "is selected." The isolation, construction and design of an object of study of Education Policy are carried out from an epistemological positioning. In this way, the intellectualist assumption of modern epistemology which assumes the reality as reflected in a mirror is excluded (Rorty, 1989).

That is why the epistemological assumption of reflexivity supposes the interaction between the subject, who begins their research from an epistemological positioning and perspective, and the object to be investigated, where subjectivity is understood as a constituent and builder of reality and knowledge, involved in a rhizomatic fold.

Education Policy as a theoretical field

The first conceptual clarification is provided with the objective of distinguishing studies on Education Policy (what is referred to as the theoretical field or the epistemologies of Education Policy) and Education Policies (those that refer to management, decision making and political action). Weber (1991) in "El político y el científico" (The politician and the scientist), emphatically held the clear differentiation between the "adoption of a political position" (Education Policies in plural) and the "scientific analysis of political phenomena" (Education Policy in singular).

Furthermore, it is necessary to analyze a widely used definition (at least in the West hemisphere) that relates to the Anglo-Saxon influence on the field of public policies in general, namely the politics and the policies, but, for non English-speaking individuals, these are categories, as Cox (2006) states "in which, the sense of the second term cannot be retrieved unless sectorial policies are specified" (p. 3). Therefore, confusion arises when attempting to define education policies from these categories in the regions that require a translation (this is the case for Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America; these categories can neither be translated into Portuguese, French, German or Italian).

This is not a minor issue for the ones who attempt to analyze and study the theoretical field of Education Policy, as Dror (1983, p. 33): "the absence of differentiation between 'politics' and 'policy' in a number of languages, causes a big problem in the analysis of policies development in many countries. At the same time, this missing difference shows neglected realities and assumptions in policies' analysis . . ."

In short, taking the field's history into account, it should be considered what in USA was called the "approach to the analysis of public policies" from what Lasswell called the knowledge of policy processes, arising in the postwar years in this country, with the work of the author in 1951, edited by Lerner and Lasswell in 1951 with the title: "The policy sciences: recent developments in scope and method." All in all, for theoretical-analytical purposes, it can be pointed that the use of "politics" and "policies" as used in USA and Great Britain, and some countries like France and Germany (though in these countries, the category is vague because of its translation) can cause serious difficulties if these issues are not explained and discussed in non English-speaking countries.

Besides, it is worth considering that the epistemologies of Education Policy are "nearer" to what is understood as the

"approach to the analysis of public policies" in its analytical perspective rather than in its normative definition. This is of paramount importance since it allows us to define, analyze and observe the theoretical field of Education Policy, in terms of Bonetti (2015), from an ethnocentric cultural perspective, and that analysis will be hindered in epistemological terms by a language issue.

For the purposes of the ideas rendered in this paper, the researcher defines Education Policy (in singular) as the theoretical field and the education policies (in plural) as the socio-political reality to be analyzed, inquired, investigated. That is to say, education policies are the object of study of Education Policy. In this sense, it is vital to take Ana Vitar's warning into account, when she states that: "We should not confuse political and social processes with the tools used to think about them." (Vitar, 2006, p. 26)

The field of Education Policy is defined here as a theoretical field equivalent to the academic field in terms of Bourdieu (2000), insofar as from that field, knowledge (research) is produced, knowledge circulation (academic training) is triggered and use or application of such knowledge is developed (profession as political decision making), considering that these three spaces are not necessarily consecutive.

We can think of the possibility of defining some features of the epistemologies of Education Policy, but never consider that the "theory of Education Policy" could be defined, the latter meaning an epistemological reduction, since the current epistemological arguments do not demand "demarcation" between disciplines; that rather responds to classical studies and conceptions in the epistemological field that, for instance, distinguished between: Science-Pseudoscience-Disciplines, entering in the fake path of scientism; on the contrary, in this paper, the researcher assumes,

in Wallerstein's (1999) sense, a position in favor of science and knowledge and against scientism.

It should be considered that Education Policy field internal regulations are structured in some way on the basis of their relation to other fields of study, and that is where the epistemologies of Education Policy (using a term that appears to be contradictory) in its original state are to be found, and it is said "that appears to be contradictory" because its "original state" as a field relates to its connection to complex fields. In this way, the field of Education Policy is considered as a reticular space, insofar as a field of knowledge is defined from a contemporary epistemology as the possibility of new conceptual constructions that allow for numerous and reciprocal interactions between different fields of knowledge. In terms of Gianella (2006): "The reticle has a doubly complex structure, given that in the lattice, elements that are in themselves lattices are admitted" (p. 79). Thus, we could think of Deleuze rhizome perspective to define the field of Education Policy, insofar as the fluency of any part of the rhizome can join another part, as well as more or less complex modes to understand the field.

Objects of study of Education Policy and episteme of epoch

In order to define the object of study of Education Policy, the epistemological positioning and perspective categories must be adopted in opposition to the demarcational epistemological arguments, thus, the definition of episteme of epoch in terms of Foucault is assumed, mainly as regards Education Policy as a teaching and content transmission space. In this sense, Castro (2006) explains:

It is not Foucault's intent to present the way in which the history of a given discipline turns out to be intelligible from the meaning tradition that inspired it from its founding acts, on the contrary, he aims to show that its emergence conditions respond to historical conditions of possibility that, on the one hand, are common to all or several bodies of knowledge of an epoch, and on the other hand, change from one epoch to another. Under the episteme notion, knowledge is not analyzed from its rational form perspective or objectivity, but from the point of view of the discontinuous homogeneity that governs the formation of different discourses that belong to the same epoch. (p. 4)

It is in this line of analysis that the object of study of Education Policy is defined by its episteme of epoch, understanding that the object of study of Education Policy is just a contextual and historical construction.

The episteme of epoch may be observed in the various lines adopted by different countries when studying education policies, e.g.: Great Britain's political sociology, USA's politics and policies, the most traditional French strands in Education Management and Politics studies, or the latest conceptual developments in the sociopsycoanalytical perspective on Education Policy research or what on the French strand has been called the sociology of public action or cognitive analysis, that, in a way, begins to supersede traditional studies focused on the State.

Thus, the impact of these strands on the field should be considered. In a brief historicization, as a historical outline of the field of study of Education Policy, it could be stated that the foundational milestone of political science registers in 1948: at the request of UNESCO, experts and scholars meet in Paris in order to attempt the redefinition and delimitation of its object of study. After deliberations, the famous "List of subjects and

fields of investigation" was produced under a strong influence of Anglo-Saxon thought. Although the list is just a pragmatic enumeration of subjects, sixty years after its creation, it continues to be a benchmark for the formulation of theoretical frameworks and university curricula in relation to political science, including the curricular area in current Education Policy in Pedagogy and Education Degree Courses in Latin America.

It is from this date onwards, that political science as an object of study with "scientific aspiration" begins to be developed in several Latin American universities, and almost exclusively, from a legal-institutionalist approach (Barrientos Del Monte, 2009).

As a result of the end of Second World War, welfare policies focused on issues like health and education were developed. Thus, the incipient emergence of a new way of conceiving public policies is observed in Latin America. Considering the deployment of welfare policies, governmental organizations turned to social science researchers looking for solutions to issues posed by state activities, including those related to the growth and reform of the education system, i.e., as it was stated earlier, Laswell's pragmatic perspective.

In this framework, the more political science began to develop as a field of study, the more volume and variety of subjects to study; this became a problem at the moment – which is very common in emerging fields of knowledge– since it entailed a great effort in order to set a coherent logic in a growing number of subject matters that the field should study, but that opening effort (Bourdieu, 2000) would in some way give rise to Education Policy as an incipient space emerging –from the historical-epistemological perspective of the time– as a sub-discipline of political science.

Endowed with the main characteristics of political sciences, Education Policy emerged as a theoretical field in the fifties, with a strong approach focused on law making and comparative education, in some cases. The latter lacked the current epistemological development, and basically consisted of establishing legislative comparative axes between different countries and the structure of the education system, among other subjects of linear comparison, virtually decontextualized; though it undoubtedly responded to the analytical matrix of political sciences in Latin America, with a legal-institutionalist approach.

It is in this decade (1950) that in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Colombia, among other Latin American countries, some "institutionalization" of Education Policy as a field begins to be noticed through the creation of departments of education policies. It is worth mentioning that the researcher is not referring here to the beginning of political reflections on education, given that those could be tracked back to Aristotle or Plato, but rather to the "institutionalization" process in terms of Gómez Campo & Tenti Fanfani (1989), when they explain that when some practices are detached as specific practices, by way of the creation of a subject, a degree course, a private school or a department in the university sphere, it shows a historical process and the real presence of an institutional space that allows the circulation and production of knowledge.

Education Policy as a theoretical field and its object of study: Education Policy decision making

As it was already stated, education policies constitute the object of study of Education Policy, in terms of its very own socio-educational reality in its multiple dimensions; it should be considered that various epistemic approaches generate an

object in constant construction (Galindo Cáceres, 1999). That is, the angles of analysis of the socio-educational reality allow for the theoretical field of Education Policy to be constructed from several axes that will merge into its object, for instance, the State, jurisprudence, micro-politics, political discourse, political debates, educational governance, right to education, among others. Burch (2009), opposing to the classic definition of the object of study of Education Policy as a State action, explains that supporting the traditional model of the object of study of Education Policy is getting more and more difficult since the field is becoming increasingly congested: new relationships and forms of relationships are being established in and in relation to policy. Besides, he states that "the boundaries between state, economy and civil society are being blurred" since there is a multiplicity of voices within policy conversations and new conduits through which policy discourses enter policy thinking. As Ball (2011, p. 11) puts it "Education and social policy within government, are now thought, influenced and done in many different sites and the Education Policy community is increasingly diverse and unstable" which involves a shift in the development of "relations involving mutuality and interdependence as opposed to hierarchy and independence" (Peterson, 2003, p. 1 quoted in Ball, 2011, p. 78). What is meant by this is that although there are methods of analysis of education policies focused on the State, those methods and analysis approaches cannot be the "classic" ones, given the new state configuration; it will be necessary to think of new plans of analysis applicable to the State-focused analysis. Nevertheless, as explained below, the State cannot be the center of Education Policy in terms of research, but just an element of mediation. Remember this statement is made in analytical terms for research purposes, i.e., State should be relativized in terms of research on Education Policy; meaning if Education Policy

research focuses on State, the remaining elements of political mediations that will not be investigated shall be assumed, and vice versa, if Education Policy research does not focus on State, it shall be assumed as just one element of the framework.

Bearing in mind this consideration, the common characterization of the object of study of Education Policy as a State action in relation to the education field can be questioned in some way. And therefore, in this paper, the researcher asks: What happens when the "state action" category is too vague? What happens when:

- the object of study of Education Policy constitutes itself as the way in which classes' interests are to be understood in connection with capital (neo-Marxist epistemological perspective)? or
- the state becomes a supranational state (hyper-globalist epistemological positioning)? or
- an analysis of power circulation at school is attempted (critical post-structuralist epistemological positioning)?

Whitty and Edwards (1994, p. 15) put forward the necessity of giving a definition of Education Policy assuming Jennings (1977) argument in some way by summarizing politics as the product of a decision. For this purpose, the authors state:

> . . . But to reduce Education Policy to the sum of innumerable individual decisions, even decisions seen as partly predetermined or considerably constrained, is to ignore what in some analytical traditions would be called the power relations between different parts of the system and in others how decision-makers are positioned by different discourses. (Whitty and Edwards, 1994, p. 15).

However, it is clear that the authors try to give an operative definition in terms of organization of the field, since it is necessary to "reduce" [p. 68] the sum of countless individual or collective decisions. The researcher's question here is why do the authors want to reduce?

The object of study of the Education Policy field is decision making. It is there that decisions may be observed at different levels of the education system as policy cycles in terms of Ball (1994) or complex decisions in terms of coalitions (Sabatier, 1988).

Thus, the researcher does not attempt to reduce the theoretical characterization of the object of study of Education Policy and assumes, as a conceptual approach dealing with the study of political decisions in the educational field, that there are political decisions at different levels of the education system and that those individual or joint decisions refer to the use of power. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish the angles of study of this complex and rhizomatic object of study, for instance: curricular policies, teaching policies, funding policies, etc., that can be observed through the exercise of power of the government, the labor unionists, the teachers, the technicians, etc. at the micro, meso and macro-level of the education system or in their interrelation.

It should be considered that modern State's rational approach assumed political exercise and decision as a "top down" line. However, some decision making goes far beyond government decisions; i.e. there are decisions beyond those made by the state government.

Here is the dilemma: the object of study of Education Policy should be defined for field organization purposes, or it could be pointed that its definition is not possible, unless it has an operative and strategic goal, as Whitty and Edwards have stated, setting the object of study of Education Policy as the

decisions made solely by state governments. In this paper, the researcher's position is diametrically opposed to that definition.

Whitty and Edwards (1994) thus explains that there is certain centrality in the study of education policies, from a specific epistemological positioning as the Public Choice, that according to the author "focuses on the analysis of institutional agreements, mainly the design of state institutions and legal and constitutional rules" (Deubel, 2008, p. 80). In this sense, the Advocacy Coalitions position is adopted in this paper, structure created by Paul Sabatier, that began the search of a summary of the best devices provided by top down and bottom up approaches in the implementation study, incorporating actors' roles in a better way.

Flores Crespo & Mendoza (2012) explain that though it is possible that Sabatier's theoretical referential should not be widely known in Latin America due to the authoritarian and linear state actions in the region, it constitutes a powerful analytical plan for the study of education policies where multiples actors in several levels of decision making exist; and, at this point, it is necessary to go back to the category of episteme of epoch to ask ourselves: wouldn't be our own style of state government in the Latin American region that leads researchers to focus on it?

Bowe et al. (1992) warn about the difficulty of understanding and analyzing Education Policy in a vertical way; similarly, Raab (1994) explains that the State should be understood as one more element in the complex structure of education policies. In this sense, reflecting on Sabatier's theoretical referential, Deubel (2008) states that: "the unit of analysis cannot be limited to government structure but to a <political sub-system>. This sub-system, as part of the political system, is made up of a wide variety of public and private actors, actively involved or interested in a political problem or a controversy" (p. 82).

Thus, the complex mobility of public policies is defined here in terms of swarming. This category, which lacks a clear Spanish translation, refers to bees moving in search of a place to build the honeycomb. The bees move together, and it is virtually impossible to identify their traditional hierarchy, since the search of the honeycomb building place is not restricted to the queen's decision.

In this sense, education policies as political action have multiple actors, connections, decisions, power struggles, actions, impact, implementation, etc. Considering the swarming image, the key question here is: can education policies be defined and conceptualized? Our argument is that an answer to that question will demand the writing of several encyclopedias that will never come to an end. However, in order to build an object of study, clearly artificial and from an epistemological positioning, an epistemethodological (Tello, 2012), the epistemethodological category has been defined as the methodological moment at which the researcher chooses a methodology. 'Methodological approaches' are not considered as mere instruments, whether of data collection or analysis, but rather as a "logos method," i.e., the way of thinking the logos. Then, the researcher prefers the term epistemethodology, category in which method introduction and researcher's epistemological position merge. Although the methodological approach has an epistemology, for common use distinction purposes, the latter term: epistemethodology is preferred. That is, it must be considered that methodology becomes epistemethodology insofar as this is related to the other elements: epistemological perspective and epistemological position. By itself and, for instance, for teaching purposes, it refers to methodologies alone; with greater conceptual precision, methodology could be understood in terms of methodological techniques, techniques that are many times taught as epistemologies in some cases, and

without epistemological support in some other cases. Bourdieu (2000, p. 62) is sharply sarcastic regarding this prevalence stating that it is taken as a "series of recipes or rules that ought to be respected in order not to know the object but to be acknowledged as an expert on the object." Considering this warning, it is necessary that methodology in terms of research turn into epistemethodology, insofar as it constitute a consistent element of the three elements framework that make up the EEPA.) reduction may be carried out; i.e. building an object of study to research on education policies involves acknowledging the swarming reduction and, at the same time, not being unaware -at least- of the main features of swarming and of the fact that that object will not be moving any more. It should also be noted that the analytical models for education policies analysis should not be determining factors. For instance, the attempt of answering these questions: where do education policies begin? or where do they end? is, undoubtedly, a way of assuming an epistemological positioning and perspective. From a top down or bottom up point of view, for example, this entails acknowledging the beginning and end in a pseudo-positivist vertical analysis. And if education policies could be thought of as a horizontal movement in a decisions continuum, which change step by step, gradually, from the authorities of a state government to a teacher, where decision making shows changes an more changes in the disorganized development of political action, where some include and change the others?

Thus, having made this characterization, it can be pointed that an Education Policy researcher who aims to characterize the theoretical field and its object of study will observe the theoretical field (swarming) from an epistemological positioning and an epistemological perspective, and never with an "empty head."

Some people consider education policies as a swarm, a honeycomb, located at some place, motionless, fossilized (though

the bees are working inside). On the contrary, education policies are never still. For instance, a legislative decision involves decision making, perspectives, analyses, debates among every education system actor in a spiraled development that continues as a subjective construction, an intertextual trajectory. Stephen Ball has defined education policies as text and discourse; when referring to education policies as text, the author (Ball, 1994) explains that they are the product of a sinuous and unexpected trajectory, generated in the context of different political arenas, through struggles, commitments, interpretations and recreations of public authority, that will later be decoded by the actors who, in turn, will add different meaning, making minor context adjustments in a complex way. However, in this characterization, a vertical point of view with stages is kept regarding political trajectory (policy cycles) with main and supporting actors. In the Education Policy proposal as intertextuality, as swarming, texts are in constant change in political action. It is at this point that confusion arises with respect to the political trajectory, i.e. between those that have greater or lesser power in government actions. What is meant by this is that power struggles are carried on, but not necessarily, won by those with greater power. The process is much more complex, given that the mutual implications between the actors with different power levels change the other actor's power in an intertextual and rhizomatic perspective. Deleuze & Guattari (1972) defined the rhizome as a descriptive model in which the organization of the elements do not follow hierarchical subordination lines –with a base or root from which a number of branches develop, according to the famous tree model of Porfirio–, on the contrary, in this model, any element can affect and influence any other element. In a traditional tree or hierarchical model, like policy cycles taxonomies, what is asserted about the higher level elements is

necessarily true about the subordinated elements, but not the other way around. In a rhizomatic model, any statement asserted about an element may influence the conception of the rest of the elements in the structure, regardless of its mutual position. Thus, the rhizome has no center.

In short, this paper aims to put forward the idea that education policies, in terms of political actions, make up a swarming-like rhizomatic intertextuality.

Organization and mediations of Education Policy as theoretical field

As a global approach embracing several multiplicities for the characterization of the object of study of Education Policy, the researcher dares to consider that the political aspects in terms of decision making, facts, phenomena, events and processes derived from socio-educational reality constitute the object of study of Education Policy. Thus, it is necessary to define what is understood by political aspects. The position adopted in this paper stands at the beginning of humankind, when the first hominid met another hominid, they recognized themselves, agreed, confronted, defined structure, created institutions to be ruled by, represented one another, etc. In short, it is not the policies that constitute the political aspects. But certainly, the political aspects constitute the policies. The political aspects do not entail the laws, the State, the government, the school. There, the policies may be analyzed in terms of theoretical research, but without the political aspects (which are not the school, the laws, the State) policies disappear.

In order to research on the focal point of Education Policy as a theoretical field, i.e. on the political aspects, another issue that should be addressed is that of mediations. Mediations used

to approach the political aspects may include: the school, the laws, the State, etc. That is: the political aspects in educational terms, and not the mediations, constitute the object of study of Education Policy.

From this perspective, the object of study of Education Policy as a theoretical field must be set in an episteme of epoch, which will vary along with the mediations that allow the study of political aspects, in terms of facts, phenomena, events and processes derived from socio-educational reality.

In this line of analysis, it is believed that the study of the emergence of Education Policy assumes some sort of agreement regarding what is assessed in the field: "Those that participate in the struggle, contribute to reproduce the game, contributing in a more or less comprehensive way depending on the fields, to produce the belief in the value of what is at stake" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 122). This conceptualization points out the existence of a field as a set of practices, senses, regulatory mechanisms, etc. that structure themselves around the activities developed by institutions, particularly in this paper, university institutions and the actors involved within them.

However, given the above definition, it could be argued that any study or research is political, since the "political aspects" are present in human routines. Yet, for field organizations purposes, it is necessary to state at least, in terms of episteme of epoch, that there are a number of restrictions, never fixed, but porous, that in a way, and from other fields of study, determine a space for the study of the Education Policy field, and serve as a clearly artificial tool to agree about what is talked about and studied, something that, in knowledge organization terms, becomes mandatory for naming purposes. Thus, the theoretical field of Education Policy can be organized in studies on a) teaching policies, b) education funding policies c) curricular development policies d)

government policies on education system e) education reform policies f) education assessment policies g) university policies h) studies on education micro-politics (ethnographic) i) policy and law making on education system j) compared Education Policy.

This should be understood as a mere arbitrary and organized construction carried out by the ones that make up the field as researchers.

Conclusion

One of the main contributions this paper is believed to afford relates to its contribution to the epistemological strengthening of the theoretical field, without being its aim to distinguish between science, discipline or sub-discipline, understanding that in the social field, in terms of Tenti Fanfani (2007), any disciplinary classification or division is, to a great extent, an arbitrary construction which does not assume an origin necessarily connected to the "nature of things" (p. 224).

On the contrary, the epistemological strengthening of the theoretical field takes place insofar as it assumes its multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinar complexity in the development of Education Policy research, which becomes evident in the multidimensionality of its epistemological positionings, epistemological perspectives and epistemethodological approaches with the construction of several objects of studies.

Basically being a field of the social sciences, it deploys from its own theoretical multiplicity, which does not question –from our perspective– its epistemological strength but rather places it as a solid and fertile space, given its diversity, to analyze education policies.

In short, it is believed that numerous fields of study of Education Policy as a theoretical field may emerge from this characterization.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 2

Research on the field of Education Policy: exploring different levels of approach and abstraction[1]

Jefferson Mainardes
César Tello

Introduction

This paper is a theoretical exercise that aims to explore issues related to the levels of approach and abstraction used by researchers in the field of Education Policy when presenting their research reports[2]. The development of reflections on this issue emerged as a necessary task in the context of the research on Education Policy epistemologies, which we have been developing as part of the *Red de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos en Política Educativa* (ReLePe)[3]. These studies involve the conduct of theoretical studies and empirical research that aim to understand how the researchers in this field have been working with the issues of an epistemological nature[4].

In this paper, we initially present a basic theoretical framework on the focus of Education Policy, epistemological

2   It is important to highlight that, in our view, the conduction of the research and its presentation are interrelated. Marx's formulations on investigation method and exposition method are very enlightening in relation to the distinctions between them.

3   www.relepe.org

4   In this regard, see Tello (2012), Tello & Mainardes (2015).

studies and meta-research, and then we present the three levels of approach and abstraction of research in this field: description, analysis and understanding.

We understand 'approach' as the researcher's decisions regarding the development of research and report elaboration. Abstraction levels are related to the results of the investigation as a whole. Epistemological positions assumed by the researchers are closely related to methodological approaches and influence throughout the research process, they assist in the development of research questions, the research design and the definition of data collection procedures.

The field of Education Policy is comprehensive and inclusive. Researchers use a diversity of theoretical perspectives in the development of different types of research: theoretical research, empirical research, comments or critiques. Research reports have different purposes and formats. Thus, identification of levels of approach and abstraction demand the analysis of research reports of Education Policy as a whole, through systematic reading, seeking to understand the context of the research, the theoretical framework, the objectives of the investigation, the purpose of the text, the researcher insertion level in the specific field of the Education Policy, among other aspects.

The focus of the Education Policy epistemologies and meta-research

Based on Bourdieu, Tello (2012) considers that the focus of the epistemologies of Education Policy approach (EEPA) is an analytical and conceptual scheme that can be used by the researcher him/herself to exercise reflexivity and epistemological vigilance (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 2007) as well as develop Education Policy meta-research studies.

The EEPA has three analytical components: the epistemological perspective, the epistemological position and epistemethodological focus (Tello, 2012). Assuming that EEPA is a focus with epistemological concern, that is, about the methodical and systematic knowledge produced in a scientific way, the epistemological perspective is a theoretical perspective that the researcher applies in his/her investigation process (e.g. Marxism, neo-Marxism, structuralism, post-structuralism, pluralism, etc.). The epistemological position arises from the very epistemological perspective or it should arise from it in a consistent and coherent investigation. It is the political position of the researcher. Some examples of epistemological position are: critical, critical-radical, critical and analytical, reproductivist, neo-institutionalist, legal and institutional, empiricist, neo-liberal, etc. The epistemological position can also be understood as a derivation, a variable of the epistemological perspective. The history of knowledge and sociology of science has produced, from the complexity of social reality, multiple derivations and interpretative declinations of theoretical perspectives. The epistemological position can be understood as a pendulum that moves from one extreme to another within a particular theoretical perspective. Thus, we find, for instance, as epistemological position within the epistemological perspective of post-structuralism, positions like historical institutionalism, neo-institutionalism, Lacanian post-structuralism or Latin American post-structuralism[5].

Finally, the epistemethodological focus is on how to methodically build research from a certain epistemological

5 We use the term theoretical perspective to refer to the references that the researcher uses and epistemological perspective for the analysis of the process that the researcher performs with this theoretical perspective in the research trajectory. Epistemology studies the production of knowledge, i.e. the use of theoretical perspectives.

perspective and epistemological position. No methodology is neutral and, therefore, when making its epistemological foundations explicit, the researcher must be concerned with the epistemological vigilance in his/her research (methodology, data analysis, arguments, conclusions, etc.), whose construction comes from the epistemological perspective and epistemological position. To Rawolle and Lingard (2013), an important aspect of Bourdieu's theory is his rejection of the dichotomy between theory and data and between theory and methodology. Instead, he recognizes the necessary relationship between them and the impact upon one another.

Lingard (2014) explains that Bourdieu rejects both 'theoreticism' and 'methodologism', i.e. the view that methodology refers only to data collection techniques and the view that theory is something distant from the data and the empirical reality. The term 'epistemethodology' aims to exactly express the existing articulateness between epistemological decisions and research methodology. Research characterized by consistency and internal coherence, the epistemological perspective, the epistemological position and epistemethodological focus show themselves articulated and integrated. A relevant issue in the context of Education Policy studies is that not always are such aspects explained by the researchers. In this case, they can be perceived through the systematic reading done in meta-research. In research reports and publications, it is noticeable, through meta-research, that there is not always coherence between epistemological perspective, epistemological position and epistemethodological focus. This occurs for several reasons, mainly due to the insufficient level of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance.

Bourdieu's concepts of rejection of epistemological innocence, reflexivity and the need for objectivity requires the researcher to define his/her position within the political sociology

field[6] and within the national Education Policy field (Hardy, 2009, as cited in Rawolle & Lingard, 2013). Positioning here refers to the researcher's position in relation to the object of study and the relevant academic field or related fields. To Rawolle and Lingard (2013), the position of the researcher can be defined as a position within several fields, including the field of the research object and the academic field/s in which the research is positioned. Rizvi and Lingard (2010, p. 47-48) suggest that such positions require reflexivity and consideration of the researcher's position in relation to the field and the research object, real location in terms of analysis, theoretical and methodological posture, spatial and temporal location. To Rawolle and Lingard (2013), in a certain sense, this is the reflexive application of Bourdieu's concept of 'socioanalysis' to the positioning of the researcher of policy sociology. Socioanalysis, for Bourdieu, is a way of understanding how individuals are social products and that provisions and commitments of people with practice are related to their social history, which is incorporated into their *habitus*. Socioanalysis involves providing a context to examine the relationship between the researcher's own arguments on social objects and his/her social history. This context involves a recounting of significant social events and social trajectory through different fields that are relevant to the research. Thus, socioanalysis represents a rethinking of a researcher's statement of interest and the impossibility of disinterested investigation. Bourdieu's argument here is that the recognition of that allows the realization of better research in Social Sciences (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013).

To Bourdieu, the concept of reflexivity is also central in the dissemination of the research. The rejection of epistemological innocence and recognition that every research is simultaneously empirical and theoretical as well as practical demands, according

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6   Regarding the concept of policy sociology, see Mainardes & Alferes (2014).

to Bourdieu, openness and vulnerability, true honesty in the presentation of research, whether in oral or written genre (Rawolle & Lingard, 2013).

Meta-research[7] refers to the process of taking a set of texts as an object of reflection and analysis. In the case of meta-research based on Education Policy with an epistemological focus, we seek to identify how researchers work with epistemological issues, theories or concepts that underlie their research and how they are presented in their research reports. Thus, we seek to identify a number of elements and features such as: the epistemological perspective, the epistemological positioning, epistemethodological focus, the type of research (theoretical, empirical research, comments or critique), theoretical frameworks (concepts), levels of approach and abstraction and other aspects related to the use of theories and epistemological perspectives in research on Education Policy (Tello & Mainardes, 2015).

Meta-research contributes to the expansion of knowledge produced in this field, subsidizes the reflection on the possibilities of increasing scientificity and epistemological vigilance and helps to intensify the exchange of information and critiques in reference to the production of knowledge within this field which can gradually lead to steps forward in qualitative research. The results of these researches provide important elements for understanding the development of the Education Policy field and, at the same time, allow to outline some challenges and tensions that can inspire advancements in the production of knowledge in this field.

It is important to highlight that, based on Bourdieu's theory of social fields (Bourdieu, 2003; Wacquant, 1989, 2007), Education Policy can be considered as a specific and autonomous academic field. However, in the case of Latin America, Education Policy is a new field and still in consolidation process.

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7   Initially, these authors used the term meta-analysis, which is closely related to the use of statistical methods for the elaboration of research synthesis.

Academic fields are constituted as such when they are appointed, i.e. when an institutional space is created, for example, in universities or research centers, with the creation of departments, disciplines, lines or research groups; and the creation of specialized journals, specific associations, and so on. Based on this definition, we consider that in Latin America, Education Policy as an academic field emerged after the 1940s, such is the case with Mexico; after the 1950s, Argentina, and after the end of the 1960s, Brazil[8].

Although it is a field with a significant accumulation of research on Education Policy, there are still many theoretical and epistemological aspects to be developed or looked into more thoroughly, such as: theoretical and methodological issues of research in education policies (including the elaboration of new theories, concepts and approaches to policy analysis); research into the history of the constitution of the field in different countries; reflection on their objects of study[9]; analysis of epistemological perspectives and theoretical frameworks that have been used; and so on. We argue that the consolidation of the field of Education Policy demands, among other elements, the theoretical development of the aspects previously mentioned.

Approach and abstraction levels in Education Policy research

In the context of research relating to the EEPA, the definition of some categories and classifications become necessary. One of them refers to the levels of approach and abstraction that can be identified in Education Policy research.

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8 Regarding the establishment of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil, see Stremel (2016).
9 Regarding the discussion on objects of studies of Education Policy, we point out the book organized by Tello (2015).

From the beginning, it is important to highlight that every typology or classification is arbitrary and it is related to specific purposes. Moreover, due to its arbitrary nature, the same objects can be classified in different ways[10]. Thus, the classification that we present below is a theoretical exercise on Education Policy research, with no pretension of judgements or creation of hierarchies.

The field of Education Policy in Latin America (and in other contexts) is characterized by being a comprehensive field, involving studies of a theoretical nature, policies and programs analysis, policy of education and school management, education financing, curriculum policies, education legislation, teaching work (valuation, remuneration, career, etc.). When developing their investigations, researchers use the theoretical frameworks in many different ways. In research reports, different levels of abstraction can be identified, which can range from predominantly descriptive studies to studies with a higher level of complexity and theory (undeerstanding). The following are the main characteristics of these three levels of approach and abstraction.

Description

In the case of research in Education Policy, studies that are predominantly descriptive are those that present a set of ideas (papers of theoretical or bibliographical nature) or empirical data, with little analysis of the ideas or the data presented.

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10 Thiry-Cherques (2006, p. 29) explains that: 'Although heir to the philosophy of science, Bourdieu refuses to apply classification systems to objects that he investigates (Bourdieu, 1992a: 184). He understands that any typology crystallizes a situation, that is, it tends to be arbitrary, as it dismisses the typologies that do not conform and in cases that are equivocal, i.e. cases that are not clearly distinguishable. He owes to Bachelard (1984) the idea that thinking operates as a pincer movement, which discovers, integrates and overcomes the limitations of theories in a conceptual, increasingly comprehensive composition'.

Although they may provide some theoretical foundation, they are studies with a low level of integration between theory and data. Among the descriptive studies, there are those that present a significant and relevant set of data (e.g. statistical information), which are poorly explored in the light of theoretical frameworks. There are also studies that present results of researches with few subjects or are very focused on a specific context (local). In this case, what it demonstrates is not the amount of subjects or scope of the research, but the approach style (purely descriptive).

In general, they do not have arguments or original analysis. In some cases, they are researches that are based on linear models of policy analysis (agenda formulation, implementation, evaluation), but there are also studies that are based on theories or approaches considered consistent, but are used in a precarious and incipient manner.

Descriptive studies focus on characterizing the selected object of study. In general, we observe that they meet the basic components of research in Education Policy; in other words, they comply with what Ball calls 'surface epistemology' (Ball, 2011), because there is an object of study, definition of objectives and methodology[11]. However, although they technically meet such components, they do not develop in the analysis of the political process, characterizing it superficially.

In many cases, in descriptive studies, the researcher has ideas and a priori answers, hindering a proper dialogue between the empirical data and theoretical perspectives employed in the research. In this context, the theory is 'applied' to the data with

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11 Ball (2011) also mentions the deep epistemology. To Ball, a deep epistemology involves itself with wider issues and deep assumptions of power, truth, subjectivity (Mainardes, 2015a). The explicitness of deep epistemological research involves reflections and problematizations about the theoretical assumptions employed, as well as structural discursive or economic bases that are being used to understand the object under investigation. To Ball, dealing with both epistemologies, in research, is not a re-articulation of macro and micro, but '. . . an erasure of that binary to see policy as a set of techniques, categories, objects, and subjectivities' (Mainardes, 2015a, p. 167).

templates already pre-established to the reality and to what the researcher assumes that it 'should be'.

It is important to highlight that what we call here a descriptive level differs from Clifford Geertz's concept of 'thick description'. The thick description is not simply a matter of presenting relevant details, but instead, describing the social action in a dense form based on a complex and interpretive process (Schwandt, 2015).

The result of meta-research has allowed the verification that the epistemological positioning resulting from this level of abstraction, in many cases, can be designated as 'empiricist', as there is a concern with the presentation of data, while the analysis is undeveloped.

Analysis

In predominantly analytical studies, data and ideas are worked, categorized, compared. One of the important characteristics of analytical studies is more integration between theory and data. The theories are not merely applied, because the effort of analysis results in the generation of concepts, categories, typologies, empirical generalizations. Due to a more systematic use of a theoretical process and a more comprehensive and systematic analysis, discoveries and research findings become more universal, with a higher level of generality, being able to be extended and applied to other contexts.

In general, they are studies in which researchers explicit their arguments, constructing a more unique and consistent study. In many studies of this level, the epistemological position of the researcher becomes evident in the analysis, due to being a central element during argumentation, and from the establishment of relations between theory and data and generation of theoretical elements from the data.

During the analytical Education Policy research process, the initial phase becomes more complex because there are no previous or fixed responses and, therefore, the object of study becomes more dynamic and somehow, in Bourdieu's terms (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 2007), the object is constructed as one advances in research. The construction of the object refers to the research process as a whole, including the reflection on the theoretical perspective itself, which can be taken as hypothesis (Brandão, 2002).

In meta-research, we can observe that there are different levels of analysis (more developed, less developed, etc.) and the theoretical framework is an essential element for the construction of the analytical process.

Understanding

The level of understanding is the highest and most advanced level of abstraction. This level may contain some degree of description and a significant number of analyzes, which are subsumed by understanding. They are studies that present a double dimension of the research process: explaining and understanding (the interpretive and explanatory character). They are studies that seek to address the thematics (theoretical or empirical) in a more totalizing way, exploring in depth the relationships and the determination involved in the policy under investigation or the issue that is being discussed. In general, they are studies that present greater richness and depth to the analysis, and may also serve as a basis for further research. In these studies, we can observe a strong and consistent relationship between the epistemological perspective, epistemological position and epistemethodological focus, even when the epistemological perspective is not explicitly shown. Applying the principles

of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the studies of understanding present an essential aspect in the knowledge production process: generation of theory. The generation of theory can be identified through the development of concepts, categories, typologies, explanation, or through sensitizing concepts[12], which, due to their level of generality and coherence, represent advances in the knowledge production of the field.

Susen (2011) explains that, in the philosophy of Social Sciences, the tension between these two epistemological positions (explanatory design and interpretationist design) is generally addressed in terms of the difference between the method called *Erklären* (explain) and the method called *Verstehen* (understanding). In essence, the tension between these epistemological perspectives illustrates that Bourdieu's concept of Social Science is based on two concerns: on one hand, Bourdieu refers to Social Science as an instrument through which one explains the nature of the underlying structures that determine the involvement of human actors with the world; on the other hand, Bourdieu considers Social Science as a tool to understand the nature of the specific discourses of the field through which

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12   The notion of 'sensitizing concepts' was first used by the American sociologist Herbert Blumer (1954), founder of symbolic interactionism. He created this concept to contrast with what he calls 'definitive concepts' (culture, institutions, social structure, personality, etc.). Sensitizing concepts do not involve fixed and specific procedures to identify a set of phenomena, but instead they offer a sense of reference and guidance in the approach of empirical instances. So, while the definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, the sensitizing concepts only suggest directions where to look (Blumer, 1954). It is a relevant concept in the grounded theory, as 'the sociologist should be theoretically sensitive enough to be able to conceptualize and formulate a theory from the data' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 46). Some examples of sensitizing concepts in the field of Education Policy include: Education Policy of containment and Education Policy of release (Cunha, 1975); bureaucratic-authoritarian State (O'Donnel, 1982); *Globally structured educational agenda* (Dale, 2004); hegemonic globalization and counter hegemonic globalization (Santos, 2004); the concept of symbolic analysts (Brunner & Sunkel, 1993); the theory of policy enactment (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012); concept of performative implementation (Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012), among others.

human actors interpret the world. In the first sense (explain), the task of Social Science is to uncover *the interest-laden lawfulness* of the human world. In the latter sense (understanding), the task of Social Science is to examine the meaning-laden discursiveness of the human world. Thus, from a Bourdieusian point of view, Social Sciences are confronted with the task of producing ambivalent types of knowledge both explanatory and interpretive, that is, both representational and expressional, factual and constructional, objective and subjective, descriptive and normative. The social and scientific engagement with the world requires both an explanatory and interpretive study of human reality (Susen, 2011).

When carrying out meta-research, studies classified as 'understanding' stand out among the others because they present greater analytical and theoretical density, as well as more assertive and thoughtful interpretations and explanations. In general, in these texts, the epistemological perspective and epistemological position are made explicit by the author or can be easily identified from the analyzes, arguments and conclusions.

Meta-research and levels of abstraction

As already mentioned, the meta-research contributes to the comprehension of the development of the Education Policy field and, at the same time, helps outline some challenges and tensions that can inspire breakthroughs in the production of knowledge in this field.

It is important to note that meta-research is distinct from literature and systematic review. While, in the literature review and systematic review, the aim is to synthesize the results of research on a particular subject or theme, meta-research aims to analyze research reports and Education Policy publications, aiming to

explore the theoretical and epistemological foundations or other aspects (objectives, methodology, research questions, etc.).

Meta-research has a dual dimension: 'reflective' and 'theoretical and analytical'. In its reflective dimension, it allows a mapping of what has been researched and on which theoretical perspective the research is based. In its theoretical and analytical dimension, the analysis and the conclusions of meta-research can serve as a reference for more thorough researches in the field or to build new perspectives and research approaches. To Bourdieu (2011, p. 38), when the research has as object of study the universe where the research takes place, the acquisitions that it ensures 'can be immediately reinvested in scientific work . . .'. Thus, the meta-research contributes to the expansion of knowledge produced in the field, subsidizes the reflection on the possibilities of increasing scientificity and epistemological vigilance and helps to intensify the exchange of information and critiques about the production of knowledge in the field that can gradually lead to qualitative leaps in research in this field.

A basic scheme of meta-research in Education Policy may include, among others, the following aspects: a) thematics investigated in a given period, place or form of disclosure; b) type of research: theoretical, empirical, comments or critique; c) cited authors; d) elements of the Education Policy epistemology focus: epistemological perspective, epistemological position and epistemethodological focus; e) levels of approach and abstraction; f) theoretical frameworks (concepts used throughout the text); g) scope (global, national, local, etc.). The apprehension of levels of approach and abstraction demands reading and analysis of text, seeking to understand the author's reasoning, argumentation, the use of theoretical tools, analyzes, conclusions, the dialogue with the research area, etc. The level of approach and abstraction is not something that is located in a part of the text. It is

something that can only be noticed as a whole and is strongly related to the use of the theoretical framework, data analysis (in the case of empirical research), arguments and conclusions. It is also important to highlight that the levels of approach and abstraction are not homogeneous within the same level, as there are different levels of description, analysis and understanding, some being more original, coherent and reflective than others.

Conclusion

In this paper, we presented the main features of the three levels of approach and abstraction that can be identified in studies of Education Policy. Sayer (1984), based on the critical realism, considers that the complex systems can be understood in terms of events, mechanisms and structures. Researches of description level can be understood as those that exploit events (for example, the formulation and implementation of policies or programs), with unique focuses, in particular contexts (Ball, 2011), whereas the level of analysis relates to the identification of more general 'mechanisms', regularity identification, logic of intervention identification, etc. (Dale, 2004, 2007, 2010). The level of understanding involves the identification of structures, that is, of the general conditionings of the policies (processes and structures that fit the agendas of education policies and run them)[13].

It is important to highlight that Education Policy researchers develop researches with different purposes and each report or publication has a purpose, validity and importance. What we want to argue is that, in the current level of development of Education Policy research in Latin America, it is necessary to increase the number of understanding studies. Such studies are essential to strengthening the field, as they allow advances

13   An explanation of events, mechanisms and structures can be found in Mainardes (2015b).

in knowledge about Education Policy and are studies that may provide the basis for further studies. Education Policy research requires more studies of this level to establish itself as a field that allows the comprehension of the increasingly complex political, social and educational reality phenomena.

Due to the socio-historical circumstances from decades past, education policies have focused on education and school management centered in education administration and organization of education systems, predominating the instrumental dimension of Education Policy. Somehow, the effect of 'know-how' prioritizes professionalism and interventionism instead of the dimension of theoretical and analytical reflection to understand reality. For this reason, the distinction of levels of abstraction and approach is a relevant issue in the present historical moment

We must also point out that the historical matrices, along with *epistemes* of the period, have generated linear investigation forms that historically legitimize themselves and modes of analysis and investigation in Education Policy that are merely descriptive, through the analysis of events (policies, programs) and studies aiming at problem solving (reality overcoming)[14].

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14 According to Tello (2013), studies to overcome reality are those that aim to change the reality or improve it through concrete lines or intervention and overcoming proposals with the implementation of certain policies or programs. Generally, they are researches conducted by researchers linked to national or international organizations, foundations and research institutes, hired by official agencies (Ministry of Education, Departments of Education) or independent researchers. Tello (2013) argues that the technical reports and overcoming projects of the reality should not be confused with the academic knowledge production that has other characteristics. In general, academic research aims to comprehend the reality for a possible overcoming or transformation. The studies of reality overcoming can be compared to studies designated as 'problem solving approach' (Cox, 1996; Dale & Robertson, 2012). Problem-solving theories are oriented towards maintaining the status quo; they are ahistorical and aim to make the institutions a little better through small changes within the boundaries and parameters of the problems. Cox (1996) considers the critical theory opposed to the problem-solving approach. Dale (2012) indicates the existence of three analytical models, with increasing levels of abstraction, namely: problem

Meta-research also allows to verify that the conscious and reflective use of the theory has an essential role in the setting of the level of understanding. Generally, they are studies with a high degree of integration between theory and data, with conceptual depth and generation of theory (categories, refined concepts, causal explanations, relationship establishing, etc.). In some cases, in texts of experienced researchers, the theory appears incorporated into the arguments, analysis and epistemological positioning, and it is not constituted in an isolated section. We also note that in studies of a theoretical or empirical nature that reach the level of understading, epistemological position of the researcher emerges as an essential and articulate element. It constitutes the element that seems to direct the analysis and approach of the theme.

Meta-research brings relevant contributions to the field of Education Policy, as it allows to identify trends and general standards in research and publication, as well as this, they may indicate some important referrals in researchers' education[15]. Regarding researchers' education, some referrals may be mentioned as relevant, such as: the need for theory enhancement in the education process; the study of different epistemological perspectives; discussions about the role of reflexivity, the epistemological vigilance and different possibilities of theory application. Although the field of Education Policy in Latin America is evolving by way of its continued strengthening and consolidation, it is essential to invest in innovative forms of

solving, critical perspective and explanatory perspective. This last perspective of analysis is based on the principles of critical realism.

15   Meta-research in Education Policy can also be classified as description, analysis and understanding. The meta-research that reaches the level of understanding could bring important contributions to the advancement of research in Education Policy, especially concerning theoretical and epistemological issues and theorizing strategies that can be identified in the research of this field.

research and theorizing, different ways of applying the theory in research, expansion of the conceptual discussions and break away from the repetition of orthodoxies.

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Chapter 3

Meta-research in the field of Education Policy: conceptual and methodological elements[1]

Jefferson Mainardes

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to present conceptual and methodological aspects of meta-research in the field of Education Policy. In this text, we consider meta-research (research on research) as a strategy for the systematic analysis of research in a given field or topic. Meta-research differs from the studies of literature review, state of the art, state of knowledge, systematic review, meta-analysis, meta-synthesis, among other terms that are used in literature on research methodology.

The interest in exploring this theme arose within the scope of the *Red de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos en Política Educativa* (ReLePe), created in 2010 by Brazilian and Argentinian researchers, with the objective of stimulating the studies on theoretical-epistemological frameworks of research on Education Policy[2]. After different attempts to create theoretical categories for the epistemological analysis of texts on Education Policy, Tello (2012) developed the category 'Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach' (EEPA), which covers three aspects:

epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning and epistemethodological approach.

It is a well-founded and suitable category for the analysis of texts on Education Policy (Mainardes, 2017, 2018; Tello & Mainardes, 2012, 2015b), which has been expanded with the definition of other concepts and categories, for instance, the discussions on pluralism as an epistemological perspective (Mainardes, 2018; Tello & Mainardes, 2015a) and the definition of the levels of approach/abstraction: description, analysis and understanding (Mainardes & Tello, 2016).

When developing the EEPA category, Tello (2012) pointed out that the aspects of the EEPA can be used by the researcher as epistemological surveillance[3] and can be applied in the analysis of Education Policy research (meta-research). In the initial work on the analysis of research in the field of Education Policy, in an epistemological perspective, Tello (2012) used the term meta-analysis. However, as the studies were being developed, it was concluded that the term meta-analysis was not the most appropriate, because it is a procedure that aims to aggregate results of empirical research, comparing them by means of statistical analysis. In the following section, we present the meta-research conceptualization.

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3   A concept explored by Bachelard (1977) and also by Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (2007), whose understanding is vital in epistemological studies. In general terms, it can be understood as 'self-surveillance', which consists of the ability of the scientific mind to critically analyze itself and its decision-making processes in relation to its object of study (Bachelard, 1977). Epistemological surveillance, or intellectual surveillance, or surveillance of surveillance, is the act of monitoring not only the application of the method, but the method itself. It requires that the method is put to the test, and also that one should risk, in experience, rational certainties. It also requires the analysis of obstacles that impede the development of scientific knowledge and masks the ruptures of knowledge. With this, it is a surveillance that aims to destroy the absolute method, reason and facts (Bachelard, 1977).

Meta-research conceptualization

In the same way that the prefix *meta* is used for metacognition, metalinguistics and metatheory, meta-research can be conceptualized as research on research or research that seeks to explain the research process on a topic or a specific area or field (Rosenbaum & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2006).

In literature on procedures and strategies for the development and presentation of research synthesis, there is a diversity of terms. Zhao (1991) defines the terms meta-study, metatheory, metamethod and meta-data-analysis. Finfgeld (2003) relates the terms: meta-analysis, meta-study, meta-data-analysis, metamethod, metatheory and meta-synthesis (Table 3.1). These strategies aim to examine a set of studies, with different purposes: analysis of methods, theories, results, and so on.

Table 3.1 - Metasynthesis terminology

Term	Comment
Grounded formal theory	Inductive research approach that uses findings from substantive grounded theory studies to synthesize a new grounded formal theory (Kearney, 1998a).
Meta-analysis	Term frequently used to describe the statistical combining and analysis of results from multiple quantitative research studies (Egger & Smith, 1997). Because of the term's common association with quantitative methods and data aggregation versus interpretation, its use in relationship to qualitative metasynthesis is discouraged.
Metastudy	Inductive research approach involving the analysis and interpretation of theory, methods, and research findings across qualitative studies, and the synthesis of this work to formulate new interpretations.
Meta–data analysis	Analysis and interpretation of findings across multiple qualitative research reports.
Metamethod	Analysis and interpretation of methodological applications across multiple qualitative research reports.

Term	Comment
Metatheory	Analysis and interpretation of theoretical, philosophical, and cognitive perspectives; sources and assumptions; and contexts across multiple qualitative studies (Paterson, Thorne, & Dewis, 2001).
Metasynthesis	Umbrella term referring to the synthesis of findings across multiple qualitative reports to create a new interpretation. Proposed types of metasyntheses include theory building, metastudy, grounded formal theory, theory explication, and descriptive study.

Source: Adapted from Finfgeld (2003, p. 895).

In English language literature, most authors use the terms meta-research and meta-study as synonyms, but there are authors who distinguish meta-research from meta-study, arguing that meta-research has a specific focus (tapered), whereas meta-study is broader and encompasses a variety of aspects to be identified and analyzed in the texts. In the Portuguese language, *metapesquisa* (meta-research) and *metaestudo* (meta-study) are most often used with the same meaning.

Researchers in the area of Biological Sciences and Health have defined meta-research as an evolving scientific discipline, which aims to evaluate and improve the efficiency of research practices in order to generate more reliable and useful research results. It includes the analysis of methods, ways of presenting data, reproducibility, evaluation and incentives (how to do it, report it, verify it, correct it and reward science). Interdisciplinary approaches are used to study, promote and defend a more robust science committed to human progress (Finfgeld, 2003; Ioannidis, 2018; Ioannidis, Fanelli, Dunne & Goodman, 2015).

In the case of Human and Social Sciences, meta-research can be used to carry out an evaluation of the research, identify characteristics, tendencies, weaknesses and obstacles for the development of a field or research topic. In general, it covers the analysis of theoretical-epistemological aspects, methodologies,

styles of argumentation, level of internal coherence, ethical reflexivity, and so on.

Meta-research differs from literature review, systematic review, state of the art, state of knowledge. Meta-research is discipline-oriented (area or field) and is engaged with the research advances in the discipline (area or field). The review studies (literature review, systematic review, state of knowledge, state of the art) are oriented to research projects: previous research is mainly reviewed as a preparatory phase for the realization of new research projects. It is through literature review that the research acquaints itself with the knowledge already built on the research topic and identifies possible gaps that need to be filled in new research projects. Generally, literature review works are more concerned with synthesizing the results of a set of research, giving less attention to the theoretical foundations of the revised research. In turn, Meta-research seeks to analyze the theoretical foundations of the research and their meaning in the theoretical development of the field in which the research is part.

Zhao (1991) presents a very relevant synthesis on the 'meta-study' (called here as 'meta-research') (Figure 3.1). To the author, meta-study is a broader strategy and may encompass metatheory, meta-data-analysis and metamethod, depending on the focus set for the research.
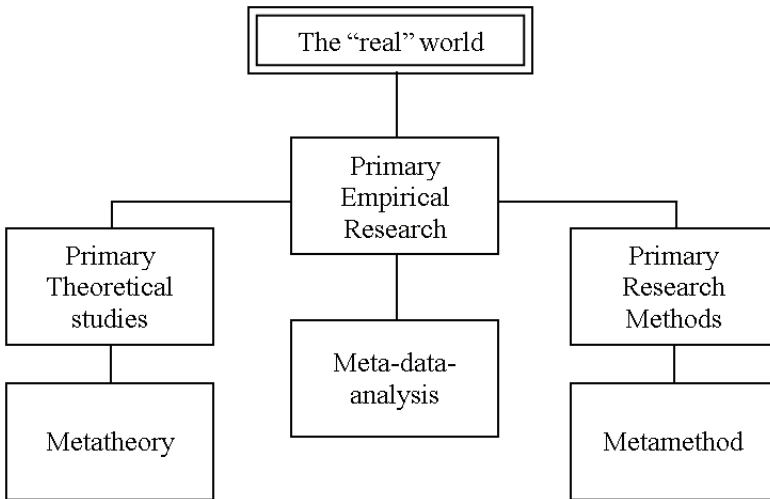
Figure 3.1 - Relationship between primary study and meta-study
Source: Zhao (1991, p. 380).

In Figure 3.1, the primary data are those that had not been collected before, that is, it is the original data collection carried out by the researcher. When the researcher analyzes a set of already completed research, he/she performs the so-called meta-data-analysis. When he/she evaluates the methods employed, he/she performs the metamethod, and, finally, when analyzing the theories employed, he/she performs metatheory.

Zhao (1991) explains that 'research on research' is carried out with the purpose of re-studying the same phenomenon that has already been studied (replication, for example) or to study the results and processes (theories, methods) of studies already carried out. The latter type designates 'meta-study', which can be considered a 'second-order study'. The first-order study analyzes a given phenomenon (real world) and the second-order study analyzes the studies already performed. Meta-study transcends or goes beyond previous studies and seeks not only

to synthesize results but also to reflect on the processes involved in previous studies, in terms of 'where we were and where we are going' (Zhao, 1991, p. 378). However, Zhao also points out that there are authors who criticize meta-studies, considering them as second-order or carried out by scientists who are unable to generate real contributions to the discipline, and, to accomplish that, they dedicate themselves to analyze the research of others. Despite this, Zhao (1991) emphasizes that meta-study is an instrument for dealing with certain disciplinary problems, and in some cases becomes inevitable.

To Zhao (1991), there are at least two conditions that require the performance of meta-study. The first involves the sudden occurrence of some fundamental changes in the conception of a discipline (area), which consequently, demands a revision of the logic of scientific research prevailing in the discipline. Thus, we need such research to re-map the cognitive status of a changing discipline. The author explains that the revolution in Modern Physics caused by Einstein's theory of relativity, for example, has triggered a huge explosion of meta-scientific studies, commonly known as the Philosophy of Science - in Natural Sciences. The second condition that requires meta-study involves the difficulties (or even failure) for a discipline to progress. There are times when a discipline seems to be going nowhere. This is because the discipline has failed to achieve the original goals set by its founders, or it has fallen behind corresponding disciplines. In this case, the researchers of this discipline become increasingly critical and begin to question their fundamentals, such as the ability to achieve their goals, the effect of their methods and the adequacy of their theories. As a result, it is likely that some researchers will venture themselves to undertake meta-study.

According to Zhao (1991), meta-study begins with examining problems encountered in the primary studies (primary data) and end with the indication of proposals to solve these problems. If the primary study is a long journey to an unknown location, meta-study often involves frequent stops for rest, route identification, review of travel plans, or even a rethinking of the final destination. And the more difficult the journey is, the more necessary the pauses will be. Thus, 'it is the problems in primary study that lead to frequent pauses for meta-study, not the pauses for meta-study that result in the problems in primary study' (Zhao, 1991, p. 381). Thus, meta-study is usually a product of crisis in the area/discipline (Zhao, 1991).

In the case of Sociology, meta-study emerged in the 1960s in a context of the collapse of the dominant sociological paradigm (Zhao, 1991; Ritzer, 1991). Regarding Education Policy, meta-research is very recent, since they began to be concluded after 2010. It can be argued that the very accumulation of research and expansion of the field of Education Policy has boosted interest in the achievement of meta-research. However, before that, there were already some questions about the non-explication of theoretical framework and the importance of carrying out studies on the framework that were being used in the field (Mainardes, 2009). Despite this, it should be noted that meta-research studies were preceded by important review studies carried out as of the late 1990s (Azevedo & Aguiar, 2001a, 2001b; Wittmann & Gracindo, 2001). These review studies were performed with the intention of mapping production, identifying trends, etc. Recent concerns have underlined the importance of analyzing the quality of research, the theoretical underpinnings, and the role of theory in research. However, these are recent initiatives that lack conceptual and deeper theoretical-epistemological reflection.

The most systematic critiques on research in the field of Education Policy are only just emerging and some points coincide with the criticisms of other Latin American countries (Mainardes, 2009). One common point that has been highlighted is that the field of Education Policy is comprehensive, in expansion and in permanent construction, and that there is a significant volume of research on education policies and still a limited number of works dealing with the theoretical-epistemological foundations of research (Mainardes, 2009, 2018). From this, we argue that investing in the analysis of the theoretical-epistemological foundations of research on Education Policy, however arduous that task is, is fundamental for the continuous maturation of the field.

The epistemological analysis in the area of Education and in the field of Education Policy

In the epistemological analysis of research in the area of Education, the contributions of Sánchez Gamboa (2008) are very relevant. In research conducted since the beginning of the 1980s, Sánchez Gamboa developed a paradigmatic scheme for the analysis of scientific production. The paradigmatic scheme includes the analysis of the dialectic relationship between question and answer. Regarding the construction of the answer, the author proposes the analysis of the following levels: technical, methodological, theoretical, epistemological (conception of causality, validation of scientific evidence and science - scientific criteria), gnosiological and ontological presuppositions (broad and complex categories, conceptions of man, education and society, conceptions of reality). This scheme was used in the epistemological analysis of production in some specific areas (Physical Education, Special Education, and so

on) Subsequently, Silva and Sánchez Gamboa (2014) presented an 'epistemological matrix' as an instrument of theoretical-philosophical analysis of the scientific production of the action sciences. This matrix is formed by **logical elements** (technical level, methodological level, theoretical level, epistemological level, gnosiological presuppositions and ontological presuppositions) and by **historical and social elements** - context elements: macro-structural, mesostructural and microssocial. The epistemological matrix shows itself as a well-founded proposal for the epistemological analysis of production in the area of Education.

In the case of the epistemological analysis of research in the field of Education Policy in Brazil, studies are still recent and are closely related to the productions of researchers linked to ReLePe. Mainardes, Stremel and Soares (2018) carried out a review of the Brazilian publications on the theoretical-epistemological aspects of the research in Education Policy and listed 123 works, distributed in the following categories: a) Productions of theoretical nature on the theoretical foundations of research on Education Policy; b) Examination of the contribution of authors for the analysis of policies, as well as the contribution of specific epistemological perspectives; c) Studies of literature review and meta-research; d) Research on the constitution of the field, scientific associations, Working Groups, Research Groups and specialized journals for the theoretical development of the area of Education Policy.

In the category 'literature review studies and meta-research in Education Policy', Mainardes, Stremel & Soares (2018) relate 26 works (e.g. Arosa, 2013, 2016; Azevedo & Aguiar, 2001a, 2001b; Mainardes, 2017; Santos & Azevedo, 2009, 2012, 2014; Silva & Jacomini, 2016; Souza, 2014; Tonieto, 2018; Wittmann & Gracindo, 2001).

Literature review studies have mapped productions of specific periods, analyzing the privileged themes, theoretical trends, and other relevant features to understand the field of Education Policy. In this set, there are relevant works of research on Education Policy between 1991 and 1997 (Wittmann & Gracindo, 2001). In the studies classified as meta-research, the studies of Arosa (2013, 2016), Souza (2014), Silva & Jacomini (2016), Tonieto (2018) and Mainardes (2017, 2018) were included.[4] These studies were classified as meta-research, since they do not aim to synthesize the results of the analyzed research, but to analyze the themes, theoretical framework, methodologies, among other aspects. Arosa (2013, 2016) and Souza (2014) analyzed research presented in GT 5 (State and Education Policy) of the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação*[5] (ANPEd); Silva & Jacomini (2016) present an analysis of theses and dissertations on Education Policies, defended from 2000 to 2010. Tonieto (2018) analyzes a set of theses defended in the period of 2010-2012. Mainardes (2017, 2018) presents the epistemological analysis of papers published in the period of 2010-2012. These papers bring important elements for the understanding of the field research, trends, characteristics, weaknesses and epistemological obstacles.

Meta-research in the context of EEPA

In this section, we present a methodological proposal for meta-research on Education Policy that was formulated within the scope of the EEPA. This proposal constitutes a flexible theoretical exercise, which can be adapted according to the purposes and theoretical framework of the research. The proposal focuses on the analysis of the theoretical-epistemological

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4 Of these studies, only Mainardes (2017, 2018) and Tonieto (2018) refer to meta-research.
5 National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education.

aspects of research, assuming a double dimension: a) reflective dimension: meta-research takes the scientific production of the field of Education Policy (sample) as the object of study, reflection and analysis, which can result in important elements for the understanding of the field research (identification of trends, strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, etc.; b) the theoretical-analytical dimension: the conclusions of meta-research can be 'reinvested in scientific work' (Bourdieu, 2011, p. 38)[6], as well as this, they contribute to increase the scientificity possibilities of the scientific community as a whole.

From the EEPA formulations, we have considered that meta-research can be developed in the following steps:

1. Definition of meta-research and sample purposes

The starting point for meta-research is the definition of its purposes and the sample, that is, the selection of a set of texts: papers, theses, dissertations or other publications. The definition of the sample varies according to the purposes of the research: the definition of a set of journals, a period of time, a specific research topic or combinations between them. Although the theoretical framework of research can be constructed and adjusted throughout the entire process, it is important that an initial theoretical framework is defined by the researcher. Sample size varies from one research project to another. For example, the study carried out by Silva & Jacomini (2016) involved the

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6   According to Bourdieu (1988, p. 15-16): 'When research comes to study the very realm within which it operates, the results which it obtains can be immediately reinvested in scientific work as instruments of reflexive knowledge of the conditions and the social limits of this work, which is one of the principal weapons of epistemological vigilance. Indeed, perhaps we can only make our knowledge of the scientific field progress by using whatever knowledge we may have available in order to discover and overcome the obstacles to science which are entailed by the fact of holding a determined position in the field'.

analysis of 851 theses and 432 dissertations (abstracts); Tonieto's research (2018) included the analysis of 27 theses (complete works); Mainardes's work (2017) involved the analysis of 140 (complete) papers.

2.   Organization and systematization of the sample

It is important that the sample texts are recorded in a spreadsheet, which can contain, among other data: complete reference, abstract, keywords and the items that will be considered in the analysis (e.g. epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning, methodological procedures, etc.).

3.   Systematic reading

The next step consists on the systematic reading of the selected texts, with the objective of identifying the essential elements of the theoretical-epistemological analysis. Among others, this scheme may include the following items:

a.   Research theme.
b.   Type of research (empirical research, theoretical, bibliographical, commentary or criticism).
c.   Epistemological perspective:

•   Does the author make an explicit epistemological perspective?
•   Is there a section for presenting the theoretical framework or it is presented throughout the analyzes?
•   Which authors are cited in the theoretical framework?
•   What are the theoretical frameworks (concepts) that appear in the text?

- Is there evidence of a combined theorization, added or lack of theorization?[7]

d. Epistemological positioning:

- Is there explicitness of a specific positioning (eg, critical, descriptive analysis, etc.)?
- How can the author's epistemological positioning be classified (critical-radical, critical, critical-reprodutivist, reformist, neoliberal, seemingly neutral, empiricist, etc.)?

e. Epistemethodological approach:

- What data collection procedures were used?
- How was the sample defined?
- Is there internal coherence (guiding thread) between objectives, theoretical reference, methodology, data analysis and conclusions?[8]
- Is there coherence between problems, objectives, hypotheses (mainly in theses and dissertations)?
- Is the analysis coherent with the theoretical-epistemological perspective (how does the author deal

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7 McLennan (1996) explains that combined explanatory strategies are legitimate and perhaps promising. In this sense, combined theorization is an effort to articulate theories or concepts derived from different theories, with the objective of composing a consistent theoretical framework to support a given analysis. Such an effort demands making theoretical choices and justifying them, which implies an exercise of reflexivity and epistemological surveillance. The notion of added theorization means the more or less random the adoption of theories, concepts, ideas of different theories and epistemological perspectives are, resulting in a set of ideas and concepts without coherence, unity and theoretical articulation. The result of the simple addition and overlap of ideas of different authors results in a failed attempt to define a theoretical framework, which can be considered fragile, disjointed and epistemologically inconsistent. Regarding the concepts of combined and added theorization, see Mainardes (2017, 2018).

8 Analysis of the level of consistency is challenging. Based on structuralist theories, we have employed specific strategies, such as the allocation of forces (+, ++, +++).

with the theory or theories he assumed as the basis for his research)?

- Is the textual configuration coherent? Is it possible to map the key points of the text?

f. Argumentation (if any):

- Are there explicit arguments (and sub-arguments)?
- Are the arguments properly based on evidence and theories?[9]
- Are there signs of originality, elaboration of new concepts or categories, new theorizations?

g. Scope: local, regional, national, international/global.
h. Level of abstraction: description, analysis, understanding (Mainardes & Tello, 2016).
i. Quotations (of highly relevant excerpts which synthesize the research).

An important aspect to be highlighted is that any typology or classification is arbitrary and related to specific purposes (Tello & Mainardes, 2015b). Moreover, due to their arbitrary nature, the same objects can be classified in different ways.

In the process of analysis, it should also be considered that meta-research is not intended to judge the works or their authors. The objective is to understand the main tendencies of the field, from the cut-off made by the researcher. Thus, the classifications used should be understood as a theoretical exercise on the Education Policy research. Classifications can lead to crystallization and the use of rigid schemes and closed categories. For this reason, we emphasize that the developed

9 Booth, Colomb and Williams (2005) explain that an argument is an assertion based on evidence, which has a foundation. In addition, arguments can (and often need to) have caveats.

classifications need to be understood as systematization attempts and analysis exercises.

Some meta-research challenges

a. The researcher interested in conducting meta-research needs to comprehend the diversity of epistemological perspectives employed in the field as well as other classifications that are adopted in Social Sciences, Political Science and Social Theory[10].

b. It is fundamental that the researcher understands that all classification is arbitrary and is linked to a specific purpose. Meta-research in the field of knowledge production in Education Policy has shown that many researchers do not make explicit their epistemological perspective. Thus, in meta-research, the researcher will need to identify the perspectives and epistemological positioning from the theoretical framework, the authors cited, styles of analysis, etc.

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10 One of the available classifications is the one presented by Losada and Casas Casas (2010). According to the authors, an approach (or theoretical perspective) 'is a powerful reflector that makes us see certain aspects of reality, but it leaves others in the dark or total darkness' (Losada & Casas Casas, 2010, p. 15). The classification proposed by the authors includes the following approaches:

a.   approaches that privilege the inner self of the human being;

b.   approaches that privilege the social environment;

c.   approaches that favor institutions;

d.   approaches that privilege the cultural environment (constructivist, culturalist, feminist);

e.   approaches that privilege the total environment (structuralist, systemic, structural-functionalist, biopolitical approach);

f.   critical macro-model: Marxist approach or contemporary critical approaches;

g.   Postmodern macromodel.

c. The purpose of meta-research is not to judge the works or authors individually, but to seek to understand how knowledge has been produced in the field (Education Policy), through a set (sample) of researchers. Such analyzes can bring relevant data of the research in the field.

d. Coherence and consistency of research and publications need to be analyzed within the epistemological perspective employed by the researcher.

e. It is fundamental that the researcher also expresses the theoretical reference and the ethical principles that guide his/her own analysis.

f. The identification of the epistemological positioning of the authors of the analyzed works is a highly complex task. Such positions need to be understood in the context (economic, historical, political and social) in which the research was carried out.

Conclusion

In this paper, we argued that meta-research in Education Policy is a relevant strategy for understanding the research situation in the field, that is, to make a diagnosis about how knowledge is produced, as well as identify characteristics, tendencies, weaknesses and obstacles for the advancement of field research. From this diagnosis, it is possible to think of collective strategies to improve research, as well as to fight for scientific policies that meet the expectations and needs of the researchers.

Due to the continuous expansion of the field of Education Policy in Brazil and Latin America, we believe that it is necessary to invest in meta-research, even if they initially have a more focused dimension (a set of theses, papers, etc.). At the same

time, it is necessary to deepen the ways of doing meta-research in the field and its theoretical foundations, since it is an area of research still underdeveloped in the field.

Finally, we emphasize that the knowledge built from meta-research has significant elements for the improvement of the field research and for the continuous improvement of the education of researchers (mainly in the Graduate Programs in Education).

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Chapter 4

The research on Education Policy in Brazil: an analysis of the theoretical-epistemological aspects[1]

Jefferson Mainardes

Introduction

In general, the authors who discuss research methodology believe that epistemology or theory of knowledge is related to the nature, sources, and limitations of knowledge. The epistemological guidelines form and determine the particular view of the researchers on the world and reality, providing them with guiding principles on which they base their research questions, theories, methods, analyses, and conclusions (Gringeri, Barusch, & Cambron, 2013). Each researcher focuses on certain paradigms that guide his work as well as the basic components of ontological knowledge production process (nature of existence), epistemology (nature of knowing), methodology (best ways to build the knowledge), and axiology (the role of values in the development of knowledge) (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Authors such as Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Anastas (2004) agree that researchers display their epistemological engagements by explaining their paradigms and research traditions, which is fundamental to rigour in qualitative research.

A choice of certain epistemological perspectives presupposes a practice of reflexivity. Reflexivity demands that researchers develop a permanent critical consciousness with regard to social aspects that are involved in the knowledge production process in their studies (Koch & Harrington, 1998). In addition, reflexivity involves a conscious and reflective use of theories as well as acknowledging potential limitations.

Gringeri, Barusch and Cambron (2013) explain that theory is another aspect of epistemology, and researchers agree that there is no research without theory. For the authors, the critical aspects of the epistemological foundations of research are as follows: reflexivity, the relationship between researchers and participants, an account of the theories underlying a study, and the conscious and integrated use of a research tradition or paradigm.

This research is in tandem with studies focused on The Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach (EEPA). This perspective is focused on establishing theoretical-epistemological frameworks that can be used in Education Policy studies.[2]

Theoretical framework

The epistemological analysis of Education Policy productions is a relatively recent area of research in Brazil (Tello & Almeida, 2013; Bello, Jacomini, & Minhoto, 2014; Diógenes, 2014; Oliveira & Palafox, 2014; Stremel, 2014; Souza, 2014; Marcon, 2016; Soares, 2016; Mainardes, 2013, 2018; Mainardes, Ferreira, & Tello, 2011; Mainardes & Tello, 2016; Tello & Mainardes, 2012, 2015a, 2015b).

The theoretical framework of this research area was established on contributions from EEPA and meta-research (Tello,

2   Johnson Jr. (2003) argues that it essential that the field itself be continuously evaluated to provide a comprehension of what is being produced and which aspects could be explored.

2012) as well as the concepts of combined and additive theorization (McLennan, 1996). This meta-research (research on the research) on a 140-article sample was based on those concepts.[3]

According to Tello (2012) based on Bourdieu's theory (2012), EEPA is an analytical-conceptual schema that may be employed by the researcher to exercise an epistemological vigilance and develop meta-research[4] studies on Education Policy. The epistemology perspective of Education Policy is formed by three analytical components: an epistemological perspective, an epistemological positioning, and an epistemic-methodological perspective. The epistemological perspective refers to the worldview that a researcher employs to guide his research. Some examples of this concept include marxism, neo-marxism, structuralism, post-structuralism, existentialism, humanism, and pluralism. The second component, the epistemological positioning, is (or should be) related to the epistemological perspective in a robust study. Epistemological positioning is linked to the field of study; it is related to the researcher's stance regarding the object of the study under investigation. Some examples of epistemological positioning are as follows: radical-critical, critical-analytical, critical-reproductivist, critical-normative, reformist, neo-institutionalist, legal, neoliberal, post-modern, etc. The epistemic-methodological perspective looks at how a study is developed methodically based on a particular epistemological perspective and an epistemological stance. It refers to the level of consistency between the different aspects of research (objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, analysis, and conclusions). No methodology is neutral. For

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3 Regarding the meta-research methodology and differences between literature review, systematic review, state of knowledge, state of the art, and meta-research, see Chapter 2 of this book.

4 Tello (2012) quotes Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron (2007) to refer to the concept of epistemological vigilance.

this reason, when a researcher is explaining his epistemological foundations, he may exercise epistemological vigilance in his research. The construction of this research stems from the epistemological perspective and positioning taken by the researcher. Joining the words 'epistemology' and 'methodology' together shows that the research methodology stems from the researcher's epistemological guidelines.[5] The epistemic-methodological perspective may be understood as the thread that links all elements of research, expanding its coherence, consistency, and rigour.

Based on Bourdieu, Rawolle and Lingard (2015) argue that the concept of reflexivity is central to the dissemination of research. Rejecting the notion of epistemological innocence and acknowledging that all research is both empirical and theoretical as well as practical, demands (as per Bourdieu), an openness and vulnerability as well as a complete honesty when presenting studies, whether in oral or written form (Rawolle & Lingard, 2015).

Rawolle and Lingard (2008), agreeing with van Zanten (2005), believe that the theoretical concepts and methodological approaches formulated by Bourdieu may contribute to research and understanding of Education Policy in the context of globalisation and the process of its 'economisation'. For those authors, the concepts of habitus, capitals, field, and practice, which are synergistically related, are relevant to research in Education Policy (Rawolle & Lingard, 2008). According to these

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5   Based on Bourdieu's thinking, Rawolle and Lingard (2015) argue that an important aspect of Bourdieu's theory is its rejection of the dichotomy between theory and data and the dichotomy between theory and methodology. Rather, he acknowledges the necessary relationship between them and their impact on one another. Rawolle and Lingard (2015) also say that Bourdieu rejects both 'methodologism' and 'theoricism' i.e., the view that the methodology refers only to the techniques of data collection and the notion that theory is something distant from data and empirical reality.

authors, Bourdieu's methodological insights, such as rejecting an epistemological innocence, the need for reflexivity, research-like fieldwork in philosophy, and the concept of viewing epistemology as a practical matter may also be useful for research on educational policies.

Ball (2011) makes a relevant theoretical contribution to epistemological studies on Education Policy. Ball (2011) mentions two epistemology types in the research process: 'deep' and 'surface' epistemology. For him, politics is a social, relational, temporal, and discursive process. A deep epistemology is related to wider, more profound issues about assumptions of power, truth, and subjectivity (Ball, 2015). Therefore, it refers to the fundamental pillars of research in ontological and epistemological terms. The 'surface' epistemology focuses on relationships between study conceptualisation, design, execution, and interpretation. They are 'relatively mundane reflections on access to data, the status of an actor's interpretation, the interviewee's validation, etc.' (Ball, 2015, p. 162). Such considerations are important, but they are not enough to tackle deep epistemology. A study involving deep epistemology aims to explain and problematize the theoretical assumptions employed as well as the discursive or deep economic-structural foundations that are being used to analyse the object under investigation. For Ball, operating with both epistemologies in research is not a macro and micro re-articulation, but 'a erasure of such binary to view politics as a set of techniques, categories, objects and subjectivities' (Ball, 2015, p. 167). According to Ball, most policy analyses have not been very theoretically sophisticated, and, in many cases, they have no theoretical basis. Furthermore, a large part of policy analysis is dominated by an implicit, undiscussed assumption of rationality, in which political processes are considered rational, orderly, and coherent. According to him, this causes distortions in the

empirical work. He takes the stance that politics is not a very rational and orderly process. Consequently, we must theoretically reflect upon the possibility of irrationality, confusion, disorder, and chaos. This also leads to questions about what counts as data, and the possibilities of what may be data. This means that we must reflect upon the ontological foundation of politics, and the relationship of politics with the way we think about how the social world works in general. (Ball, 2015, p. 162)

The concepts of combined and additive theorization (McLennan, 1996) were also relevant in the analysis of the 140 sample articles. Discussing the 'four sins of modernist theory', McLennan (1996) argues that combined explanatory strategies are legitimate and may be promising. In this sense, combined theorization is an effort to articulate theories or concepts originating from different theories with the aim of writing a robust theoretical framework to support a certain analysis. Such an effort requires making theoretical choices and justifying them, which implies an exercise of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance. The notion of additive theory relates to adopting somewhat random theories, concepts, ideas from different theories and epistemological perspectives, resulting in a set of ideas and concepts without coherence, unity, and coordination. The simplistically additive and overlapping ideas from different authors results in a failed attempt at defining a theoretical framework, which may be considered fragile, disjointed, and not very epistemologically coherent.

Methodology

This study featured an analysis of 140 Education Policy articles by Brazilian authors published between 2010 and 2012 in the following journals: *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Educação &*

Sociedade, Educação e Política em debate – EPD, Ensaio – Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação, Jornal de Políticas Educacionais - JPE, Revista Brasileira de Educação – RBE, and *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração da Educação – RBPAE*. The initial criterion for journal selection was to review only journals that were originally meant to publish articles in the field of Education Policy (*EPD*, *Ensaio*, *JPE*, and *RBPAE*). However, the following journals were later included: *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Educação & Sociedade,* and *RBE*. These journals were selected since they are well-established journals that feature articles on various areas, including Education Policy.

It is important to highlight that this study was an attempt to employ and clarify EEPA concepts and proposals of meta-research in Education Policy. In conclusion, this is a sample with possible limitations. We acknowledge that besides *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Educação & Sociedade*, and *RBE*, there were other relevant journals in the education field that also feature Education Policy articles. This study was carried out between 2013 and 2015, and the selected articles were published between 2010 and 2012. Meta-research is a procedure in which a set of productions are selected for systematic and critical examination. Consequently, meta-research differs from literature reviews, which are studies on the state of the art or knowledge. In the case of the meta-research described in this chapter, the goal was to understand how the sample article authors dealt with technical and methodological issues. The analysis is based on EEPA formulations that present relevant concepts and categories (e.g., epistemological perspective, epistemological stance, epistemological-methodological focus, approach/abstraction levels, etc.), as well as a set of questions that guide the aspects that may be considered in meta-research (Mainardes & Tello, 2016).

In the first stage of research, it was found that 646 articles were published in that period (Table 4.1). Next, the articles on Education Policy were selected, excluding articles by foreign authors, articles on other themes, and 33 articles on Education Policy by Brazilian authors that consisted of comments or criticisms (18.9% of the total of Education Policy articles). Articles featuring comments or criticism are needed and relevant in the field of Education Policy. However, since they were not actual research articles, we decided that it would not be appropriate to include them in the sample. The final sample included 140 articles—53 theoretical articles or document analysis research articles (38%) and 87 empirical research articles (62%). We decided not to include any articles dealing exclusively with educational evaluation and democratic management, and/or educational or school management. Although many assessment and management studies are related to Education Policy, we believe that the epistemological analysis of such studies would be more appropriate in another study.[6]

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6 Several reasons led to this decision: (a) this study aimed to analyse, as profoundly as possible, the theoretical responses of etiological research on Education Policy. An expanded sample would hamper achieving this aim; (b) although the research on management and educational evaluation may be related to Education Policy in general, authors come from several fields. Arguably, such research belongs to fields akin to Education Policy. Nonetheless, they have specific theoretical references (from the management and evaluation fields); (c) the number of research articles on management was enough to be analysed in a specific study on theoretical frameworks used in research management (30 articles of the full sample).

Table 4.1 - Articles included in the research sample (2010-2012)

Journal	-	Education Policy articles (Brazilian authors)	Comments or critiques	Theoretical research	Empirical research	Total articles - sample
Cadernos de Pesquisa	123	14	3	0	11	11
Educação & Sociedade	173	41	10	15	16	31
Educação e Política em debate (*)	29	11	2	1	8	9
Ensaio – Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação	105	28	0	4	24	28
Jornal de Políticas Educacionais	34	27	7	3	17	20
RBE	97	13	4	3	6	9
RBPAE	85	39	7	13	19	32
Total	646	173	33	53(38%)	87(62%)	140(100%)

* Refers only to articles of 2012 (year of creation of the journal).
Source: Author.

The second phase involved the systematic reading of articles and recording of the relevant study data in a spreadsheet: theme, the type of research (theoretical or empirical, and document analysis) authors used as foundation, epistemological perspective, epistemological stance, methodological procedures, level of approach and abstraction (description, analysis, understanding), theoretical frameworks (concepts), and range of research (international/global, national, regional, state, or local). Even though such categories were defined *a priori*, it was in the process of research that those categories/concepts were tested and reworked.

The third phase involved analysing the records in the light of the theoretical framework and the aforementioned items.

The articles addressed a large variety of education issues. The most recurrent ones were as follows: financing and collaboration regime (13 articles); analysis of specific programmes - PDE, PAR, IDEB, PROUNI, REUNI (11)[7]; expansion and regulation of higher education (10); public and private (9); assessment and regulation (7); national plan of education- PNE (7); municipal Education Policy (7); career, compensation, and teacher appreciation (5); and federalism (5). As indicated in Table 4.1, 53 articles originated from theoretical studies (38%) and 87 articles originated from empirical studies (62%).

Regarding the methodological procedures, the greater part of the empirical studies adopted mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). The most recurrent procedures were: document analysis (34 articles); analysis of statistical data such as microdata from INEP, data from IDEB, data from state or municipal student performance assessments; enrolment data; salary scales (34 articles); interviews (21 articles); questionnaires (9 articles); observation (3 articles), focus group (2 articles).

The article authors were university professors, postgraduate studies in education (PPGEs) professors, PPGE graduates, and doctoral or master's degree students. Regarding geographical distribution, the majority of authors were from the Southeast region (45.7%) and South region (25.7%). The Northeast region amounted to 17.1% of the author distribution; the Midwest region amounted to 7.9% of the author distribution; and the North region amounted to 3.6 % of the author distribution. This uneven distribution somewhat reproduces the PPGE distribution in Brazil.

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7   PDE – Educational Development Plan; PAR – Plan of Articulated Actions; IDEB – National Index of Quality of Education; PROUNI - University for All; REUNI - Programme for Support to Plans for the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities.

Regarding the scope of the studies, it was found that among the 128 articles which identified the scope of the studies (either theoretical or empirical),[8] 6 articles had an international-global focus, 62 of them had a national focus, 4 of them had a regional focus, 26 of them had a state focus, and 30 of them had a local focus. Although some studies classified as nationwide, state level, or local level showed relationships with an international/global context, such studies were the minority because only six articles focused on international/global aspects.

Data analysis

The main aim of the study was to analyse the articles from an epistemological point of view by exploring how researchers in the field have been tackling theoretical-epistemological issues in their research. According to Sánchez Gamboa (2008), elaborating a response through research involves the following levels: technical, methodological, theoretical, epistemological, gnoseological, and ontological. The epistemological level relates to the 'conception of causality, validation of the scientific evidence, and criterion of scientificity' (p. 72). The ontological level relates to the 'comprehensive and complex categories, conception of Man, education, and society, conceptions of reality (conceptions of space, time, and movement)' (p. 72). In the analyses performed, we believe that these two levels are interrelated. Identifying the epistemological perspective and the epistemological stance requires considering epistemological and ontological aspects. Identification of the epistemic-methodological perspective requires an analysis of the text in its totality to understand the internal logic of the debate, and the level of coherence between the theoretical framework, data

8   Some theoretical articles did not enable a classification in relation to the scope.

analysis, discussions, conclusions, epistemological stance, etc. This analysis is complex, and it demands that the researcher conducting the meta-research have a command of different theoretical-epistemological foundations that have been used in the field. In addition, he must practise exercising the analysis of epistemic-methodology based on the references that were employed. For example, if a study is based on critical discourse analysis (CDA), the analysis and inferences must be carried out within this perspective.

Another challenge in meta-research is related to the classifications that need to be made. In this study, research type classification systems (e.g., theoretical, empirical, and comments/critiques), epistemological perspectives and stances, and level of abstraction/approach were used. It must be pointed out that all typology or classification is arbitrary, and it is related to specific purposes. In addition, because of its arbitrary nature, the same objects can be classified in different ways. Consequently, the classifications used should be understood as a theoretical exercise in the Education Policy research. The process of classification carries some risks including crystallisations and the employment of rigid schemata and closed categories. For this reason, the classifications elaborated on must be understood as attempts at systematisation and analysis exercises.

This study employed an article sample to explore how researchers in the field have been working with epistemological questions, avoiding judgement or creation of hierarchies. Although there is an effort to develop universalising categories (concepts that may be used in other studies), the sample does not allow generalisations.

Ball (2006) proposes the urgent need for theory in research in education and researcher training. To him, the theory plays a key role in epistemological decision-making to ensure conceptual

robustness and devises a method for reflexivity to understand the social conditions of knowledge production. He also suggests that violence forms an important part of the theory. As a reflexive tool for research practice, the theory defies conservative and closed orthodoxies, parsimony, and simplicity. This is the role of theory in retaining any sense of obstinacy and social complexity.

Theoretical-Epistemological Perspectives

The sample analysis indicated that few articles showed evidence of deep epistemology. Most articles presented a brief overview of the theoretical framework with no concerns about justifying choices or problematising theories based on the data and analysis.

Among the sample articles, only five of them alluded to an epistemological perspective. Ferretti (2011) mentioned the Marxist perspective, Oliveira et al. (2010) mentioned a critical-dialectic approach, Masson (2012) mentioned a historical and dialectical materialist conception, Saldanha & Oliveira (2012) mentioned a historical and dialectical materialist conception, and Souza (2012) mentioned a historic-philosophical perspective. In some cases, authors from other epistemological perspectives are used in the analyses (e.g., Ferretti, 2011). Moreover, in three articles, the authors refer to the theoretical perspective: Machado and Aniceto (2010) mention the theory of social representations; Pereira and Velloso (2012), the theory of speech (Laclau & Mouffe); and Barreto (2010), the critical discourse analysis (CDA). In the other articles (132 in number), the theoretical or epistemological perspectives were inferred from the reading and analysis of articles because there was no such explanation by the authors themselves.[9] Table 4.2 shows the classification of 140 articles regarding the theoretical perspective.

9 The methodology employed to infer the epistemological perspective of the articles

Table 4.2 - Theoretical perspectives of the sample (2010-2012)

Categories	No.	%
Combined theorization	92	65,8
Historical and dialectical materialism	10	7,1
No evidence of theoretical foundation (absence of theorization)	8	5.8
Additive theorization	7	5.0
Neoinstitutional focus (normative institutionalism, historical institutionalism, network institutionalism)	5	3.6
Historical - sociological focus	4	2.9
Bourdieu's Theory	3	2,1
Historical-philosophical focus	2	1.4
Legal-institutional focus	2	1.4
Foucault's theory	1	0,7
Functionalist focus	1	0,7
Culturalist focus	1	0,7
Social Representation Theory	1	0,7
Critical theory	1	0,7
Critical discourse analysis (CDA)	1	0,7
Theory of discourse (Laclau & Mouffe)	1	0,7
Total	140	100

Source: Author.

In articles classified as combined theorization, the researchers searched for articulate theories, authors' contributions, and concepts from different theories, with the aim of elaborating a theoretical framework. The analysis indicated that there are

whose authors did not express it was the following: a) a systematic reading of the article to identify the authors and theoretical perspectives employed; (b) an attempt to identify the epistemological perspective of theories and authors cited with the aim of analysing the level of coherence. In this analysis, it was found that the majority of the studies employed a model of combined theory based on authors of either similar or different theoretical perspectives. Given the difficulty of identifying the epistemological perspective of the authors used, the concept of combined theorization emerged as a more coherent possibility of classification.

different levels of combined theorization. In several cases, the combination resulted in a foundation that was able to support a coherent, articulate analysis (e.g., Freitas, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Costa & Koslinski, 2011; Chaves, 2010; Susin & Peroni, 2011; Souza, 2012; Campos, 2012; Adrião; Pinheiro, 2012; Morais, 2012; Bruel & Bartholo, 2012; Santos, 2010; Augusto & Oliveira, 2011). The use of international references in some articles provided a more expanded, consistent, and differentiated theme analysis (Bruel & Bartholo, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Augusto & Oliveira, 2011). Similarly, the use of classics such as Weber, Bourdieu, and Foucault has deepened analysis and broadened argumentation (Corrêa, 2010; Souza, 2012; Martins & Lotta, 2010; Amaral & Oliveira, 2011). In some cases, the exclusive use of authors with the same theme or contemporary authors made theorization relatively fragile with consequences for analysis and discussions. Paraphrasing Ball (2006), it may be concluded that some researchers are content with what is available (in terms of theories and data) instead of what would be more significant for a more expanded and deepened analysis.

These combined theorization strategies encourage reflections upon the establishment of a robust theoretical framework to analyse policies. Firstly, this strategy may foster a consistent theoretical framework. Ball (2016) is quoted by Avelar as saying

> we cannot interpret the world or attribute meaning to the world by means of a theory or epistemological stance, since the world is persistently more complex and difficult than what one can understand with the simple use of a position, by taking a stance. (Avelar, 2016, p. 4)

Saunders (2007) explains that theoretical dependency (the recognition that all research needs a theory) does not imply

theoretical determination. According to the author, there is no reason to suggest that different theoretical perspectives can be used in common areas of conceptualisation and common criteria of empirical evidence (Saunders, 2007). However, it is important to clarify that this is not a mere juxtaposition of theories. The combination of epistemological perspectives, theories, concepts, and ideas is complex, and it requires a high level of reflexivity, some justification for the combinations performed, a theoretically informed consciousness of the epistemological perspective, and understanding of the ideas or concepts that are being combined. Therefore, it is not about a random, unconscious choice of such theories, ideas, or concepts.

Secondly, this strategy refers to a theoretical pluralism that still needs to be deepened as an epistemological perspective (Tello & Mainardes, 2015a, Mainardes, 2018). Also, the criticisms that have been made about the methodological, sociocultural, and political pluralism must be considered (e.g., McLennan, 1995; Mészáros, 2004; Tonet, no date found).

The articles included in the additive theorization category (5%) are characterized by simple aggregation of theories, concepts, or ideas from authors of different theoretical perspectives, which are neither articulated nor problematised. The category 'absence of' (5.7%) is composed of articles that do not have a theoretical framework. These are articles that present data analysis (statistical data, data collected by the author, citation of official acts, etc.) and discussions without regard for theorization. There is a very intimate relationship between the articles of these two categories (additive theorization and absence of theorization) with an empiricist epistemological stance (20 articles - 14%) and a descriptive level of approach/abstraction (21 studies - 15%).

Identifying the epistemological stance required an analysis of the article in its entirety including the theoretical perspective

adopted, analysis procedures, argumentation, conclusions, and the positioning of the researcher in relation to the object of study.

Regarding the epistemological stance, the following categories were defined: analytical (78 articles), critical-analytical (28 articles), empiricist (20 articles), critical-normative (9 articles), critical-radical (4 articles), and culturalist (1 article). The greatest number of articles (78) came under the epistemological stance category. These articles presented either data analysis or the development of a theoretical essay, duly substantiated in a theoretical framework. Nevertheless, they do not take an explicit stance regarding the policy investigated, issues approached, or data analysed. Arguably, when the author's chosen theoretical framework is more founded on research on the subject of the theme itself but not on a denser, consolidated theory, the analysis becomes more limited. Moreover, there are different levels of analysis: highly and fairly sophisticated, analyses with greater or lesser theory and data integration, and analyses with a higher or lower level of originality and argumentation.

In articles classified as critical-analytical, there is a greater effort to contextualize the policy or issue investigated. In addition, the authors seek to clarify their stance on the policy or issue (e.g., Santos, 2010; Ferretti, 2011; Trojan, 2010).

The articles classified as showing an empiricist-epistemological stance display statistical data or data research but with little analysis and very little theorization. These articles were subsequently classified as descriptive with regard to the level of approach/abstraction.

Beyond the analysis, the articles classified as critical-normative propose alternatives and solutions to the problems or weaknesses identified in the investigated policy (Moreira, 2012).

The articles classified as critical-radical present more in-depth analyses of the investigated policy, and they aim to reveal the contradictions in the policies and their consequences for social

classes and the future of society (Kuenzer, 2010; Moura, 2010; Frigotto & Ciavatta, 2011; Masson, 2012). Because they offer a broader, in-depth view, those articles may function as foundation for other studies. Such articles were also classified based on the level of comprehension, and the levels of approach/abstraction.

Sayer (1984) argues that complex systems are characterised by a variety of mechanisms, structures, and events. Private mechanisms produce effects in economic circumstances. The same mechanisms can produce different events and the same types of events can have different causes. If this structure-mechanisms-events schema is applied, the critical-radical stance aims to comprise the broadest structures, conditioning mechanisms and events. The critical-analytical and analytical stances comprise the most general mechanisms associated with the events investigated. On the other hand, the empiricist stance tends to manifest in the analysis of events and is more concerned with the singular, local aspects of specific policies.

Regarding levels of approach/abstraction, three basic categories were devised: description, analysis, and comprehension (Mainardes & Tello, 2016). In the case of the sample, the studies were classified as follows: level of analysis - 114 studies; level of description - 21 studies; level of comprehension - 5 studies. In predominantly analytical studies, the data or ideas are worked on, categorized, and compared. The theories are not merely applied because the effort at analysis results in the generation of concepts, categories, typologies, and empirical generalisations (Mainardes & Tello, 2016). The predominantly descriptive studies present a set of ideas (in theoretical or bibliographical articles) or empirical data, with little analysis of the ideas or data presented. Even though they may present some theoretical foundation, these studies show reduced theory and data integration. Among the descriptive studies, some present a significant and relevant set of

data (e.g. statistical information), which are weakly explored in the light of theoretical frameworks. Some studies present results that are based on too few subjects, or show too much focus towards a specific (local) context. In this case, what is at stake is not the number of subjects or the range of research but the style of approach (merely descriptive). The level of comprehension is the highest and most advanced level of abstraction. These studies seek to approach the theme (theoretical or empirical) in a more totalising way, and extensively explore the relations and determinations involved in the investigated policy or in the question that is being discussed. Such research presents greater richness and depth in the analyses, which may also function as a foundation for other studies. In these studies, a strong, coherent liaison between the epistemological perspective, epistemological stance, and epistemic-methodological focus was found, even when the epistemological perspective was not explicit.

Based on the meta-research, it was found that there are different levels of analysis (more developed, less developed, more concerned with the technique, or more focused on theorization based on the data). It was also found that the theoretical framework is a key element in the construction of the analytical process. Authors such as Ball (2006, 2011) and Fávero and Tonieto (2016) highlight the importance of theory in the analysis of policies, and they suggest that the absence of theory hampers a researcher's critical, creative thinking. There are cases in which the central problem is not the absence of theory but a fragile relationship between the theory adopted as foundation and the analyses conducted (low theory and data integration).

The meta-research in Education Policy and the classifications and categories that have been developed seemed relevant for the following reasons:

a. They allow a deeper understanding of the theoretical-epistemological perspectives employed in the study of Education Policy and its implications to strengthen research in this field;

b. They offer a 'description language' to refer to research in the field;

c. They enable clear identification of potential tensions and challenges in Education Policy as well as reflect upon strategies for a continued strengthening of research in the field.

Challenges for Research in the Field of Education Policy

Based on the meta-research, some challenges posed by the epistemological studies for research in Education Policy are outlined in this section.

The first challenge involves the need to expand knowledge about epistemological foundations used by researchers in the field of Education Policy. There are at least three issues related to this challenge: the possible validity of stating epistemological choices in research reports (publications), the importance of using the theories in a conscious and reflective way, and the possibilities and limitations of pluralism as an epistemological perspective.

There is no consensus or more in-depth debate on the importance of stating an epistemological perspective and epistemological stance. Based on the concepts of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance (Bourdieu, Passeron, & Chamboredon, 2007) we have considered that expressing a theoretical-epistemological view may increase the consistency of research and the coherence between theory, methodology, data analysis, and conclusions, and that it may increase rigour in research. However, the expression in itself does not guarantee that the

elements of research are aligned and coherent, and that the researcher deals with the adopted reference adequately. In cases where a combined theorization has been employed, presenting justifications for and the role of theories or concepts used in the study may be an essential aspect and may demonstrate reflexivity and epistemological vigilance. Using a conscious, reflective theoretical-epistemological perspective to guide the study and engaging with a deep epistemology in the reports and the research practice are aspects that contribute towards strengthening research in the field and increase the level of rigour and scientificity.[10]

One of the relevant findings of this research was a confirmation of something already detected in systematic productions in the Education Policy field: the employment of theoretical frameworks formed by theories, concepts, and contributions by authors of different theoretical-epistemological perspectives (combined theorization strategy). This strategy refers to epistemological pluralism, which needs to be debated and deepened. In this study, pluralism is viewed as an attempt at establishing a robust theoretical framework based on a combination of concepts from different theories that make sense and form a consistent reference. It also involves explanations and justifications for the reference established and the role of each theory in the referred composition. This does not imply the random use of ideas or concepts that characterise the so-called eclecticism or even the additive theory strategy.

The second challenge refers to the need to expand the number of comprehension studies. All studies and publications can contribute to knowledge about Education Policy in different

10 Bracken (2010) emphasises that it is important for a researcher to be aware of the ontology and epistemology underpinning his research. He also emphasises the importance of the researcher making sure that that his own ontological perceptions, epistemological instances, and methods of collection and interpretation of data are closely aligned.

ways. However, only comprehension studies effectively contribute towards strengthening research in the field. A clear theory and the conscious, reflective use of the theoretical framework are some aspects that may support comprehension studies.

The Education Policy field is relatively new [11] yet it is 'under construction' (Azevedo & Aguiar, 2001; Santos, 2008; Mainardes, 2009; Schneider, 2014; Stremel, 2016). In addition, it is an inclusive, comprehensive field. The field of Education Policy, similar to education, '[...] has no strict filtering rules and it is quite inclusive' (Manzon, 2011, p. 2). It is also a complex field since it is characterized as both a scientific project and a political project,[12] i.e., it involves a 'living border' between the academic and the political field (Hey, 2008). In addition, it involves the analysis of increasingly complex phenomena of the political, economic, social, and educational reality.

Considering the research and discussions on EEPA, arguing in favour of strengthening the field of Education Policy does not mean that the field produces fragile research. Rather, we highlight the need for a continued strengthening of research based on what has already been produced. Some aspects that could contribute to this task are presented in brief:

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11   Stremel (2016) argues that the Education Policy in Brazil emerges as specific academic field from the 1960s onwards, with studies on school administration, educational administration, and comparative education as background. The 1960s may be regarded as the beginning of the emergence of the field to the detriment of a number of aspects such as the creation of ANPAE, the implementation of Postgraduate courses in Brazil, and the more frequent use of the term 'Education Policy(ies)' in titles of Brazilian publications. A clear milestone in the field's institutionalisation process was the creation of the GT 5 - Working Group 5 of the ANPEd (Brazilian Association of Education Research, in 1986/87). As a product of historical and social conditions, since the 1990s, the field has gained greater autonomy and legitimacy through the expansion of publications on Education Policy, the creation of courses on Education Policy, lines and research groups at Postgraduate level, specialized scientific journals, and research networks, and the conducting of scientific events specific to Education Policy. The current context indicates that, in Brazil, the academic field of Education Policy is in an expansion phase, and that it is striving to consolidate itself.

12   This reflection is based on formulations by Susen (2011).

a. Pay more attention to the formation process of new and future researchers in the field, especially with greater regard to the study of epistemology in general and specific epistemologies of the Education Policy in particular. In view of how researcher training has been conducted in Brazil, it seems essential that this be one of the concerns of Postgraduate Programmes in Education, although it should not focus only on this level.

b. Emphasise, among researchers in the field, the issues related the theoretical role in research. Additionally, emphasise the importance of epistemological vigilance and reflexivity; the validity and plausibility of the expression, in the highest possible range, of the epistemological perspectives and epistemological stances that found research; and the strategies to increase the number of studies at the level of comprehension. This emphasis could be employed in the process of researcher training as well as in research development and evaluation of articles and event papers.

c. Develop more texts, with an accessible language, which focus on discussions of methodological issues, specific approaches to Education Policy, theoretical discussions that have been developed in other countries, publication of interviews with international and national renowned researchers, etc.

Conclusion

This study discussed the main data of a research study that aimed to analyse how Education Policy researchers have been tackling theoretical-epistemological questions, based on a sample.

The analysis involved aspects related to the ways of expressing epistemological perspective, theories that have been used, and ways of combining theories to establish a theoretical framework.

This chapter emphasises the need for broadening further research and discussions about the theoretical foundations of research in Education Policy. This must be achieved without neglecting space, time, and energy to analyse the current policies and the complex contexts of crisis, instability, and setbacks with which we live. One of the reasons that the field of Education Policy is highly complete in itself is because it is comprised of a scientific project and a political project. As a scientific project, it must offer consistent analyses and conclusions based on criteria of scientificity, such as objectivity, adequacy, and verifiability. As a political project, it must provide socially referenced and politically engaged analyses and conclusions based on criteria of normativity policy, such as legitimacy, effectiveness in terms of social justice, equality, and criticality.

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Chapter 5

Research in the field of Education Policy: theoretical and epistemological perspectives and the place of pluralism[1]

Jefferson Mainardes

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to analyze the theoretical and epistemological perspectives that have been used in Education Policy research in Brazil, from the systematic analysis of a sample of 140 papers written by Brazilian authors, published between 2010 and 2012, in seven journals (*Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Educação & Sociedade*, *Educação e Políticas em debate - EPD*, *Ensaio - Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação*, *Jornal de Políticas Educacionais – JPE*, *Revista Brasileira de Educação – RBE*, *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração da Educação – RBPAE*)[2]. In the definition of the corpus, the papers of foreign authors and the papers of comments and criticism were excluded. Thus, the papers selected refer to research of theoretical or empirical nature.[3]

2   Three of the journals officially use the following translation: Education & Society; *Ensaio*: Assessment and Public Policies in Education; Brazilian Journal of Education.
3   For the definition of the journals to be included in the sample, we used as criteria: a) the inclusion of journals that are considered specific in the field of Education Policy (*Educação e Política em debate – EPD*, *Ensaio – Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação*, *Jornal de Políticas Educacionais – JPE* and *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração*

The present work is part of a broader research that aims to analyze a series of aspects related to the epistemology of education policies through meta-research. The starting point for research on epistemologies of Education Policy is the fact that the field of Education Policy is constantly expanding and continually under construction. It is noted there is a substantial amount of research on education policies. However, it is observed that there are still few studies on theoretical framework that have been used in the research. Thus, the development of theoretical and epistemological studies of Education Policy can be considered extremely important and necessary for the continuous strengthening of such an academic field.

The present research is classified as a meta-research study, that is, the analysis of a set of papers that resulted from research of a theoretical or empirical nature, focusing on the analysis of the theoretical and epistemological framework that underpinned the research and other relevant theoretical and epistemological elements. The meta-research differs from studies of literature review, systematic review, state-of-the-art and state of knowledge. From our perspective, literature review is the survey and analysis of productions on a specific topic, as a stage of a research project. It aims to identify what has been researched, to synthesize the main conclusions and to identify the existing gaps. Systematic review is a more rigorous alternative than literature review, since it seeks to identify all the available evidence on a given topic, comparing them and synthesizing the results explicitly

da Educação – RBPAE); and b) highly qualified and recognized journals in the area of Education (*Cadernos de Pesquisa*, *Educação & Sociedade* and *Revista Brasileira de Educação - RBE*). We recognize that this selection has limitations. However, the intention of the research was to consider a set of Education Policy research that would approach the field in a broader way, avoiding to gather papers that dealt with very specific topics, such as education financing or other subjects, which may be object of specific epistemological analysis, in future research.

(Torgerson, 2003). State-of-the-art or state of knowledge are bibliographic research, which takes up the challenge of

> … mapping and discussing a certain academic production in different fields of knowledge, trying to respond to what aspects and dimensions have been highlighted and privileged in different times and places, in what ways and under what conditions certain master's theses, PhD Thesis, publications in journals and communications have been produced in annals of congresses and seminars. (Ferreira, 2002, p. 258).

On the one hand, it is possible to consider that the state of knowledge, in general, is a broader research, which aims to understand how a theme has been approached over the years. On the other hand, the state-of-the-art can refer to the research situation at a given moment, for example, in the last decade. In meta-research, the researcher is interested in understanding the intricacies of the research, its theoretical basis, methodological options, relationship between theory and data, procedures used in the application and/or generation of theories and so on. Thus, in meta-research, there is no intention to compare results between the research or to synthesize their contributions or conclusions, as this is usually done in the literature review. There is also no intention to verify how the research of a specific theme has evolved over time, as this is done in the state of knowledge. The results of the meta-research can contribute to the understanding of the research of a given field, in a specific spatiotemporal context, and therefore it is possible to identify the theoretical and epistemological tendencies, the gaps, the weaknesses, the strengths of the research of a given field.

Some data about the context of the papers of the sample

In the first stage of the research, it was found that the selected journals published 636 papers in the period from 2010 to 2012. Next, the selection of papers of Education Policy was done, excluding the papers of foreign authors, the papers of other topics, as well as 33 papers on Education Policy, written by Brazilian authors that constituted comments or criticisms (18.9% of the total of Education Policy papers). The final sample comprised a total of 140 papers, of which 53 were papers of a theoretical research nature or document analysis (38%) and 87 papers of empirical research (62%). One important decision was the non-inclusion of papers on democratic management and education and school management. Although many studies of these themes are related to Education Policy, we consider that the epistemological analysis of such studies would be more appropriate in other research.

The papers analyzed covered a wide variety of themes, and the most recurring ones were: financing and collaboration regime (13 papers), analysis of specific programs - PDE, PAR, IDEB, PROUNI, REUNI[4], Higher education: expansion and regulation (10), public and private (9), evaluation and regulation (7), National Education Plan – called PNE (7), municipal Education Policy (7), career, remuneration and teacher appreciation 5), federalism (5).

With regard to methodological procedures, most research of empirical nature adopted mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative). The most recurring procedures were: document analysis (34 papers), analysis of statistical data: microdata from INEP[5], data from IDEB, data from performance assessments of

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4   PDE – Educational Development Plan; PAR – Plan of Articulated Actions; IDEB – National Index of Quality of Education; PROUNI - University for All; REUNI - Programme for Support to Plans for the Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities.

5   INEP - *National Institute for Educational Studies and Research 'Anísio Teixeira'*.

state or municipal network students, enrolment data, salary scales (34 papers), interviews (21 papers), questionnaires (9), observation (3), focus group (2).

The authors of the papers were university professors, Graduate Program in Education professors or others, graduates of Graduate Program in Education, doctoral or master students. Regarding the geographical distribution, it is observed that the majority of authors were from the Southeast (45.7%) and South (25.7%). The Northeast region amounted to 17.1%, Central West 7.9% and the North region 3.6%. This unequal distribution reproduces, to a certain extent, the distribution of the Graduate Programs in Education in Brazil.

Regarding the scope of the research, the majority focused on national (62 papers), state (26) and local (30) policies. Although some of the research classified as national, state or local scope established relationships in an international/global context, the research in this category was in the minority since only six papers focused on international/global aspects.

It is important to consider that the papers of the sample were produced in a context of expansion of education policies and investment in the educational area and also in a context in which several issues were the object of public debate, such as the National Education Plan. The political, economic, social and cultural context of this expansion has not ceased to be characterized by weaknesses and contradictions, such as: opening of spaces for the participation of the private sector in the definition of education policies; use of public resources for the private sector; creation of managerial policies based on models of efficiency and effectiveness; definition of substantive policies with limited participation, and so on. In this scenario, Education Policy researchers were challenged to develop research on a wide variety of policies, with very distinguishing focuses, some of

them with potentially emancipatory character and others with a managerial point of view.

Theoretical and methodological framework

This research is based on the Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach - EEPA (Tello, 2012), on the concepts of combined theorization and additive theorization (McLenann, 1996) and on the proposal of meta-research in Education Policy (Tello & Mainardes, 2012; Mainardes & Tello, 2016).

We consider Education Policy as a theoretical field and as an academic field. As a theoretical field, Education Policy has as antecedents theories and productions of Political Science, whose emergence can be situated in the 1940s (Stremel, 2016). Education Policy, as an academic field, has been constituted, in Brazil, since the end of the 1960s, with the creation of associations (ANPAE[6], for example, in 1961); use of the term Education Policy in publications and official documents; creation of disciplines, departments, specialized journals, events, research networks, etc.[7] From our point of view, conducting research on the development of this field is essential to understand how researchers have been applying the theoretical framework and how this field has been advancing in theoretical-methodological and epistemological terms. Research on theoretical-epistemological framework can contribute significantly to the strengthening of Education Policy as a theoretical and academic field.

Tello (2012), based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory considers that the EEPA is an analytical-conceptual schema that can be used by the researcher to exercise reflexivity and epistemological vigilance, as well as to develop meta-research studies on Education Policy.

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6   ANPAE - National Association of Education Policy and Administration.
7   Regarding the constitution of Education Policy as an academic field, see Mainardes (2013), Stremel (2016) and Stremel and Mainardes (2016).

EEPA has three analytical components: the epistemological perspective, the epistemological positioning and the epistemethodological approach (Tello, 2012). The epistemological perspective is the theoretical perspective that the researcher applies in his/her investigation process (example: Marxism, Neo-Marxism, Structuralism, Post-structuralism, Pluralism, and so on). The epistemological positioning derives from the epistemological perspective itself or it should come from it, in a consistent and coherent investigation. The epistemological positioning can also be understood as the political position of the researcher. Some examples of epistemological positioning are: critical, critical-radical, critical-analytical, reproductivist, neo-institutional, juridical-institutional, empiricist, neoliberal, etc. The epistemethodological approach is the way methodological research is constructed from a certain epistemological perspective and epistemological positioning. No methodology is neutral and, for this reason, when explaining its epistemological bases, the researcher should be concerned with the epistemological vigilance in his/her research (methodology, data analysis, argumentation, conclusions, etc.), whose construction starts from the epistemological perspective and epistemological positioning. In general, the epistemethodological approach is related to the level of coherence between the theoretical framework, methodological options, analysis and conclusions. It can be analyzed in terms of the existence or not of a thread that articulates the elements of the research. It involves systematic reading and textual configuration analysis.

The concepts of combined theorization and additive theorization (McLenann, 1996) were also relevant in the analysis of the papers. McLenann (1996) explains that combined explanatory strategies are legitimate and perhaps promising. In this sense, combined theorization is an effort to articulate theories or concepts derived from different theories, with the objective of

composing a consistent theoretical framework to support a given analysis. Such an effort demands making theoretical choices and justifying them, which implies an exercise of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance. The notion of additive theorization means a kind of random adoption of theories, concepts, ideas of different theories and epistemological perspectives, resulting in a set of ideas and concepts without coherence, unity and theoretical articulation. The result of simply adding and overlapping ideas from different authors results in a failed attempt to define a theoretical framework, which can be considered fragile, disjointed and epistemologically inconsistent.

The meta-research refers to the process of taking a set of texts as an object of reflection and analysis. In the case of the meta-research based on the approach of Education Policy epistemologies, we seek to identify how researchers work with the epistemological issues, theories or concepts that underlie their research and how they are presented in their research reports. Thus, we seek to identify a series of elements and characteristics, such as: epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning, epistemethodological approach, type of research (theoretical nature, empirical research, comments or criticism), theoretical frameworks (employed concepts), the levels of approach and abstraction (description, analysis and understanding) and other aspects related to the use of epistemological theories and perspectives in Education Policy research (Tello & Mainardes, 2012, 2015b; Mainardes & Tello, 2016; Mainardes, 2017).

In the methodological sense, this research was based on the selection of Education Policy papers written by Brazilian authors published between 2010 and 2012, in 7 journals already mentioned. From the systematic reading, we sought to identify in each paper the epistemological perspective, the epistemological positioning, the level of internal coherence (epistemethodology),

theoretical frameworks, abstraction level, argumentation and the scope of research (local, national, global).

In this paper, we explore data related to the theoretical perspectives of the papers in the sample. Given that the combined theory proved to be the theoretical perspective employed in most of the works, we sought to highlight the role of this perspective and some of its limits.

Theoretical and epistemological perspectives in research in the field of Education Policy

The central objective of this research was to analyze the papers from an epistemological point of view, exploring how researchers have been dealing with theories, as well as the articulation between theory, data and analysis. Ball (2006, 2011) advocates the urgent need for theory in research in education and in the education of researchers. To the author, theory plays a central role in making epistemological decisions. Theory contributes to ensure conceptual robustness as well as to provide a method for reflexivity and for understanding the social conditions of knowledge production. He also suggests the importance of 'violence' that theory possesses as a reflective tool in research practice, its role in defying conservative and closed orthodoxies, parsimony, and simplicity. The role of theory is to maintain some sense of stubbornness and complexity of the social.

The 140 papers of the sample were classified into 16 categories (Table 5.1). It is important to note that any typology or classification is arbitrary and related to specific purposes. Moreover, by virtue of their arbitrary nature, the same objects can be classified in different ways.[8]

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8   Thiry-Cherques (2006) explains that 'Although heir to the philosophy of sciences, Bourdieu refuses to apply classificatory systems to the objects that he investigates

Table 5.1 - Theoretical perspectives of the sample (2010-2012)

Categories	No.	%
Combined theorization	92	65,8
Historical and dialectical materialism	10	7,1
No evidence of theoretical foundation (absence of theorization)	8	5.8
Additive theorization	7	5.0
Neoinstitutional focus (normative institutionalism, historical institutionalism, network institutionalism)	5	3.6
Historical - sociological focus	4	2.9
Bourdieu's Theory	3	2,1
Historical-philosophical focus	2	1.4
Legal-institutional focus	2	1.4
Foucault's theory	1	0,7
Functionalist focus	1	0,7
Culturalist focus	1	0,7
Social Representation Theory	1	0,7
Critical theory	1	0,7
Critical discourse analysis (CDA)	1	0,7
Theory of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe)	1	0,7
Total	140	100

Source: Author.

With regard to the explication of the epistemological perspective that underlies the analysis, it was verified that only five papers of the sample (3.5%) made explicit an epistemological perspective: Ferretti (2011) mentions the Marxian perspective;

(Bourdieu, 1992a: 184). He understands that every typology crystallizes a situation, that is, it tends to be arbitrary, as it discards the types that do not fit and the cases that are at the border, the cases that are not clearly distinguishable. He owes to Bachelard (1984) the idea that thought operates as a tweezer movement, which uncovers, integrates and overcomes the limitations of theories into an increasingly comprehensive conceptual composition' (Thiry-Cherques, 2006, p. 29).

Oliveira et al. (2010) mentions the critical-dialectic approach; Masson (2012) and Saldanha and Oliveira (2012) mentions the historical-dialectical materialist conception; Souza, A. L. L. (2012) mentions the historical-philosophical perspective. In some cases, authors from other epistemological perspectives are used in the analysis (e.g. Ferretti, 2011; Oliveira et al., 2010). In the other three papers, the theoretical perspective was made explicit: Machado and Aniceto (2010) mention the theory of social representations; Pereira and Velloso (2012) mention the discourse theory (Laclau and Mouffe); and Barreto (2010) mentions the critical discourse analysis (CDA). In the other 132 papers, the theoretical and epistemological perspectives were deduced from the reading and analysis of the papers, since there was no such explanation by the authors themselves.

Based on the concepts of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance[9] we have considered that the explication of the theoretical and epistemological perspective can increase the consistency of the research, the coherence between theory and analysis of data and conclusions and rigor in the research[10].

9   Lopes (2007) explains that the concept of epistemological vigilance is based on Bachelard's notion of intellectual vigilance. 'Intellectual vigilance, properly epistemological, is opposed to the simple intellectual vigilance. Simple intellectual vigilance is what awaits a definite fact, the location of a characterized fact. It is the consciousness that a subject has of the object: consciousness so clear that subject and object are clarified at the same time. In this sense, it is the attitude of an empiricist knowing subject. Epistemological vigilance, or intellectual vigilance, or surveillance of the vigilance is the act of monitoring not only the application of the method, but also the method itself. It requires that the method is put to test, but also that risks are taken, in the experience, the rational certainties. It also requires the analysis of obstacles that impede the development of scientific knowledge and masks the ruptures of knowledge. With this, it is vigilance that aims to destroy the absolute of method, reason and facts' (Bachelard, 1977 apud Lopes, 2007). It is also a concept employed by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 2007).

10   There is no consensus on the validity and importance of the epistemological perspective explication by the researcher. Bracken (2010) argues that it is important for the researcher to be aware of the ontology and epistemology underlying his/her research, as well as the researcher's need to ensure that his/her own ontological insights, epistemological instances, and data collection and interpretation methods are closely

However, the explication alone does not guarantee that the elements of the research are aligned and coherent and that the researcher effectively operates satisfactorily with the adopted framework. In the cases of the use of combined theorization, the presentation of justifications and the role of theories or concepts used in the research can be an essential aspect. Such an explication evidences the conscious and reflexive use of epistemological theory and vigilance.

With regard to the epistemological positioning, from the sample, it was possible to define the following categories: a) analytical (78 papers), critical-analytical (29 papers), empiricist (20 papers), critical-normative (9 papers), critical-radical (3 papers) and culturalist (1 paper). Papers classified as empiricist epistemological positioning are the ones that present statistical data or research data, but with little analysis and little or no theorization.[11]

Regarding the levels of approach/abstraction, it was possible to develop three basic categories: description, analysis and comprehension (Mainardes & Tello, 2016). In the case of the sample, the works were classified as follows: level of analysis: 115 works; level of description: 21; and level of understanding: 4. The predominantly descriptive studies are those that present a set of ideas (in papers of theoretical or bibliographic nature) or empirical data, with little analysis of the ideas or data presented.

aligned. Anastas (2004) and Marshall and Rossman (2006) argue for the importance of explaining the theoretical-epistemological foundations of research.

11   This set of papers refers to the metaphor of the 'gigantic white elephant, full of data, but without ideas, without substance, with useless knowledge to approach the complexity of the world' (Cansino, 2007). Cansino (2007) presents comments from Giovanni Sartori's paper (2004). In his paper, Sartori, considered one of the most important political scientists, says that political science has lost its way and walks with feet of clay, and by rigorously embracing quantitative and logical-deductive methods to demonstrate increasingly irrelevant hypotheses to understand the political process, ends up releasing itself from thought and reflection.

In predominantly analytical studies, data or ideas are worked out, categorized, compared. One of the important features of analytical studies is more integration between theory and data. Theories are not merely applied, since the effort of analysis results in the generation of concepts, categories, typologies, empirical generalizations. Due to the more systematic use of a theoretical framework and a more comprehensive and systematic analysis process, findings and conclusions of the research become more universal, with a higher level of generality, making it possible to be extended or applied to other contexts. The level of comprehension is the highest and most advanced level of abstraction. This level may contain some level of description and a significant set of analyzes, which are subsumed by comprehension. They are studies that present a double dimension of the research process: to explain and understand (the interpretative and explanatory character). They are studies that seek to approach the theme (theoretical or empirical) in a more totalizing way, exploring in depth the relationships and determinations involved in the policy investigated or in the issue being discussed. In general, they are studies that present greater richness and depth in the analyzes, and may even serve as a basis for other research. In these studies, we can observe a strong and coherent articulation between the epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning and epistemethodological approach, even when the epistemological perspective is not presented explicitly. When applying the principles of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the studies of comprehension level present an essential aspect in the process of knowledge production: the generation of theory. The generation of theory can be identified through the elaboration of concepts, categories, typologies, explanations or even sensitizing concepts[12], which, due to their level of generality and coherence, represent advances in the production of field knowledge.

12 The notion of sensitizing concepts (sensitizing concepts, provisional) was initially used by the American sociologist Herbert Blumer (1954), the founder of symbolic

Another aspect of interest was the level of research coverage. Of the 128 papers that allowed the identification of the scope of the research (theoretical or empirical)[13], it was found that six had an international-global range, 62 national, 4 regional, 26 state coverage and 30 local range.

This research confirmed the possibility of identifying the basic components of the EEPA. It could be observed that there is a close relationship between theoretical perspectives, epistemological positions and levels of abstraction. For example, papers whose authors used additive theorization or the absence of a theoretical framework ended up expressing an empiricist epistemological position and a level of descriptive abstraction. Another example is the strong relation between a critical-analytical or critical-radical epistemological position and the level of abstraction of understanding.

The meta-research in Education Policy and the classifications and categories that have been developed (combined theorization and additive theorization, levels of description, analysis and understanding; critical, critical-radical, analytical, empiricist epistemological positioning and so on) are relevant for the following reasons: a) they allow a more in-depth understanding of how the theoretical and epistemological perspectives have been employed in Education Policy research and its implications for strengthening research in this field; b) they offer a 'language of

interactionism. He created this concept to contrast what he calls 'definitive concepts' (culture, institutions, social structure, personality, etc.). Sensitizing concepts do not involve fixed and specific procedures to identify a set of phenomena, but instead they offer a sense of reference and orientation in approaching empirical instances. Thus, while definitive concepts offer prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts only suggest directions for looking (Blumer, 1954). It is a relevant concept in grounded theory, as 'the sociologist should be theoretically sensitive enough that he can conceptualize and formulate a theory from the data' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 46). Mainardes and Tello (2016) indicated examples of sensitizing concepts in Education Policy research.

13   Some papers of theoretical nature did not allow classification with regard to comprehensiveness.

description' to refer to the field research; c) they allow to identify with greater clarity the potential tensions and challenges of Education Policy research, as well as to reflect on strategies for the continuous strengthening of the field research.

Most of the papers (65.8%) fell into the category of combined theorization, indicating a tendency of the authors of the field to employ ideas (or concepts, categories, contributions) from different theoretical perspectives or from different authors. The use of historical and dialectical materialism (7.1%), strategies of additive theorization (5.0%) and other theoretical perspectives with lower incidence were also identified.

An important aspect to be highlighted is the existence of papers characterized by the absence of theoretical foundation (5.8%) and papers that used the additive theorization (5.0%). Additive theorization means the use of authors, ideas and concepts from different theoretical and epistemological perspectives, which do not configure a consistent and articulated theoretical framework.

Considering the significant number of papers classified in the category of combined theorization, we consider the analysis of this category relevant.

Combined theorization and limits of theoretical and methodological pluralism

The strategy of combined theorization was identified in 92 of the 140 papers (65.8%). The main feature of this category is the use of ideas or concepts from more than one author or from more than one theory, which configures a coherent or minimally satisfactory theoretical framework.

In most of the papers of the sample, we observed that the combined theorization resulted in a consistent and coherent

framework, providing theoretical elements for a satisfactory analysis (such as Freitas, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Costa & Koslinski, 2011; Chaves, 2010; Susin & Peroni, 2011; Souza, A. R., 2012; Campos, 2012; Adrião & Pinheiro, 2012; Morais, 2012; Bruel & Bartholo, 2012; Santos, 2010; Augusto & Oliveira, 2011).

In addition, two aspects were relevant in the composition of the theoretical framework: the use of classical authors and contemporary international references. The use of classics such as Weber, Bourdieu, Foucault (Souza, A. R., 2012; Martins & Lotta, 2010; Amaral & Oliveira, 2011) was a relevant strategy for the analytical deepening and broadening of the argumentation. The use of foreign references, in some papers, provided a broader, more consistent and differentiated analysis of the thematic (Bruel & Bartholo, 2012; Davis et al., 2011; Augusto & Oliveira, 2011).

In some cases, the use of contemporary authors or authors who research the same theme has made the theoretical framework of research relatively fragile, with consequences for analysis and discussion. It is important to state that the dialogue along with the research of the area is fundamental. However, such dialogue seems more adequate at the literature review stage. In some cases, the authors who research the same theme are used as a kind of theoretical framework. Although some of these works may actually serve as a basis for other studies, a careful analysis is necessary to identify the works that effectively have the potential for this. Paraphrasing Ball (2006), we can conclude that some researchers are satisfied with what is available (in terms of theories and data), instead of giving more significance to a more detailed and in-depth analysis.

The strong presence of the combined theorization strategy indicates that the pluralistic epistemological perspective has been widely employed in the field of Education Policy research. Despite that, there are still few publications that present

discussions about theoretical and methodological pluralism in Education Policy research.[14]

To Coutinho (1991), pluralism involves two basic dimensions: pluralism as a social and political phenomenon and pluralism in the construction of knowledge. The author also indicates that this second dimension is more complex. To him, in the field of social thought, there is not only science, but also the world of values, a set of worldviews. In this field, there cannot be a truth of a scientific kind, because what the various social actors share intersubjectively (when consensus is obtained) becomes objectivity. For example, researchers in the field of Education Policy use different theoretical and epistemological perspectives. Despite that, there are hegemonic values that can be shared by researchers, such as: the defense of democracy, of real democratization, of the right of all to education, of social justice, of equality, the need for changes in the broader economic and social context (not just in the education sector), the struggle for non-racist, non-selective, non-sexist education, among others important values. To Coutinho (1991, p. 14), hegemony refers to the 'formation of a collective will, a set of values that moves a collective subject and becomes, through their action, an objective phenomenon of social reality'. In general, these shared values can be identified in the epistemological positioning of the researcher, sometimes presented implicitly and sometimes explicitly in terms of assumptions and values that guide the analysis. It is possible to argue that some authors use pluralism with the hegemony of critical theories or at least of theories or authors who defend shared hegemonic values (democracy, democratization, equality, social justice, etc.).

14 Regarding the theoretical and political dimensions of pluralism, see Coutinho (1991). Regarding pluralism in Education Policy research, see Mainardes, Ferreira and Tello (2011), Tello and Mainardes (2015a), Mainardes and Tello (2016).

In conceptual terms, it is important to distinguish pluralism from eclecticism. What we call here pluralism, as an epistemological perspective, is the conscious and reflexive use of concepts and ideas of different theories, which are articulated to compose a theoretical framework for the research. Thus, it is not a mere juxtaposition of theories, or a random and non-conscious selection of concepts and ideas from different theories, as this would configure the strategy of 'additive theorization' (or eclecticism). Coutinho (1991, p. 13) explains that 'in the field of natural science, pluralism cannot imply eclecticism or relativism'.[15] The articulation of ideas of different theories implies justification of such choices, to present of itself, reflections in relation to the theoretical framework constructed. Eclecticism, however, means the juxtaposition of theories or ideas in a more or less random way, without much rigor and without any evidence of the recognition of the epistemological differences that underlie such ideas or theories. In general, the authors who use eclecticism do not present reflections or justifications of the theoretical choices.

An important starting point for understanding the pluralistic epistemological perspective is to consider the point of view of those who defend it, as well as those who criticize it. Authors such as Saunders (2007) and Ball (interview to Avelar, 2016), for example, explain that a single theory would hardly be able to provide all the elements necessary for analysis and that it is possible to articulate different theories. According to Ball, 'we cannot interpret the world, create meaning about the world, using a theory or epistemological position, because the world is persistently more complex and difficult than what can be

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15 To Coutinho (1991, p. 14), 'Pluralism, in the field of natural or social science, is not then synonymous with eclecticism. It is synonymous with openness to the different, respect for the position of others, considering that this position, when warning us of our mistakes and limits, and when providing suggestions, is necessary to the very development of our position and, in general, of science'.

understood by the simple use of a position, adopting a position' (Avelar, 2016, p. 4). Saunders (2007) explains that theoretical dependence (the recognition that all research requires a theory) does not imply theoretical determination. In other words, there is no reason to suggest that different theoretical perspectives cannot be used in common areas of conceptualization and in common criteria of empirical evidence (Saunders, 2007). In the discussions about pluralism, it is evident that it is possible to identify points of approximation in theories and not only aspects of incompatibility (Mainardes & Marcondes, 2009). Despite that, it should be clear that the combination of epistemological perspectives, theories, concepts and ideas are complex and demands a high level of reflexivity, some justification of the combinations made, and an awareness of the epistemological perspective that is based on theories, ideas or concepts that are being combined. It is not, therefore, about the random and little conscious choice of such theories, ideas or concepts. Theoretical composition needs, above all else, to 'make sense' as a theoretical framework for the analysis and development of conclusions.

McLennan (1995), Tonet (no date found) and Mészáros (2004) present criticisms of pluralism. To McLennan (1995), pluralism has different facets, such as: methodological pluralism, socio cultural pluralism, political pluralism. To the author, pluralism indicates, among other things: a) a convenient discouragement and relativistic acceptance that there is a set of cultural values; b) opposition to forms of cultural imperialism; c) recognition that methodological diversity is fruitful; d) it considers that there are different ways of knowing and being; e) creativity and openness to theory; f) involvement in a set of social interests and interest groups in the modern political scenario; g) the affirmation of democracy as an end in itself; h) attention to the complexities of political loyalty; i) sense that

social and political identities are chosen rather than inherited; and j) consecration of the principle of 'equal but different'. McLennan (1995) also indicates the existence of radical or moderate theoretical pluralism, as well as pluralism of 'right' and 'left'. To him, a researcher can be pluralistic in terms of ontology, epistemology, methodology, social theory, morality, politics, culture, or pluralist in only two or three of these domains (McLennan, 1995). The author points to the following criticisms of pluralism: a) pluralism can be seen as a key concept in the social sciences. As a modal concept, pluralism is an indispensable reference in scientific and social debates. However, by itself, it does not produce clear and lasting solutions to the old issues and analytical and political concerns; b) as an attitude of life and political vision, it can be understood as too tolerant, pseudo-tolerant, ostensibly humanistic and a kind of intellectually eclectic person, a type of person who has no clear opinions about anything and who does not question or does not want changes in society; hesitant when needed to employ sociological knowledge or political science in its full critical potential. Mészáros (2004) criticizes pluralism considering it as a legitimator of the dominant ideology. He also criticizes the reformist discourse that tries to divert attention from the systemic determinations to more or less random discussions about specific effects (Mészáros, 2005). To Tonet (no date found), methodological pluralism, despite being anti-dogmatic, is still a form of relativism and eclecticism, since its foundation lies in subjectivity and not in objectivity. According to him, 'in its present concrete form, it represents an entirely misleading and anti-scientific solution' (Tonet, no date found, p. 14).

Conclusion

In this work, we presented the theoretical perspectives identified in the papers of the sample, with special reference to the strategy of the combined theorization. We argued that such a strategy configures the use of pluralist epistemology in policy analysis. We indicate that a pluralist epistemological perspective is not a mere juxtaposition of theories, concepts or contributions of authors. Pluralism involves the conscious and reflexive choice of ideas from different authors, theories or epistemological perspectives, as well as the presentation of reflections and justifications for the framework constructed from different epistemological perspectives. The fundamental aspect of theoretical and methodological pluralism is that the theoretical framework constructed needs to make sense for the policy or theme under investigation and result in a consistent and coherent formulation.

From the analysis of the papers of the sample, we present the following conclusions:

a. In view of the strong tendency to use the strategy of combined theorization, it is necessary to deepen the discussions about pluralism (methodological and epistemological) and the possibilities and limits of this strategy as a basis for research in the field of Education Policy. Due to the growing complexity of the current reality (political, economic, social, cultural), we may question: Can the combined theorization be considered a strategy that allows the creation of more comprehensive and more flexible analytical models for policy analysis? Or is it a relativistic perspective for policy analysis? What are its possibilities and limits?

What is the relevance of distinguishing between the use of theoretical and epistemological perspectives and the world of values and of the set of worldviews - that can be shaped by shared values (democracy, democratization, right to education, social justice, equality, etc.)?

b. Since combined theorization has been widely used in the papers of the sample, it is important to note that there are distinct levels of combined theorization, some of which are more appropriate and coherent than others. This strategy demands a rigorous analysis of the concepts (categories, ideas, contributions) that are being combined, which demand justifications and explanations about the theoretical framework built.[16]

c. The deepening of the study of the epistemology and theories that have been used in the research emerges as a highly necessary and relevant task in the current context both in the practice of research and in the process of education of researchers.

d. The research and discussions on theoretical and epistemological framework and the epistemological studies of Education Policy contribute to the strengthening of Education Policy as a theoretical and academic field.

e. An issue that persists is related to the role and importance of the explication of the epistemological perspective or the theoretical perspective that underlies

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16   In this respect, Tonet (no date found, p. 2) says that 'what is meant by methodological pluralism? Sometimes it is understood as eclecticism, that is, the freedom to take ideas from various authors and to articulate them according to the convenience of the thinker. This is usually done without the care of rigorously checking the compatibility of different ideas and paradigms, giving rise to a patchwork, at most, cleverly woven. It is good to note that there is eclecticism from below and of a very high level'.

the research. It can be argued that the explication of the theoretical and epistemological framework can raise the level of rigor in the research. In the case of authors who articulate ideas of different authors and theories, we consider it is essential to highlight the role of each one in the theoretical framework of the research.

f. The concepts of reflexivity and epistemological vigilance (Bachelard, 1977; Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 2007) emerge as fundamental concepts both for the work of each researcher and in the meta-research in Education Policy.

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Chapter 6

The *Programa Universidade Para Todos* in PhD Theses of the Education: themes, foundations and levels of abstraction[1]

Laélia Portela Moreira

Introduction

It is common to several authors who have dealt with the constitution of the field of Education Policy, in Brazil and Latin America, in general, the reference to its complexity and the diversity of objects that have been treated under this heading in scientific events and journals. Its most recent development as a field of study has been intensified from the processes of state reconfiguration and its relations with civil society and the market, and, consequently, the educational reforms implemented in Latin America (Palamidessi, Gorostiaga, & Suasnábar, 2012). In fact, in the Region, the field of Education Policy in different countries has been slowly and differently constituted according to local circumstances, even if similarities are also found in various respects, such as, for example, to the disciplines that influenced its development in general.

In Brazil, although from the late 1960s it was possible to find terms such as "Education Policy" or "education policies" in dissertation and theses titles, until the mid-1970s, these researches were part of the studies of Education Administration,

Education Planning and Comparative Education (Mainardes & Gandin, 2013; Stremel & Mainardes, 2018). Important milestones in the structuring of this field of study were the introduction of these subjects into undergraduate curricula, the creation of the Brazilian Journal of Pedagogical Studies (*Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos* - RBEP) in 1944, and other publications and books that focused on these themes, as well as the creation of the National Association of Teachers of School Administration (*Associação Nacional de Professores de Administração Escolar* - ANPAE), in 1961, and the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Education (*Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação* - ANPEd), in 1976, in addition to the organization of Graduate programs in research lines, from 1990 (Mainardes & Gandin, 2013). It is in the last two decades, however, that the field presents significant expansion, which happens along with the consolidation of an investigation and a Graduate study system, which have decisively contributed to the development of Brazilian science and scientific production (Bittar, Bittar, & Morosini, 2012).

Regarding the quality of this production, it is possible to notice that, since the late 1990s, several authors, such as Wittmann and Gracindo (2001), Azevedo and Aguiar (2001), Silva, Scaff and Jacomini, (2010), Tello and Mainardes (2012), Mainardes (2017, 2018a), Mainardes and Tello (2016), Guimarães (2018), Krawczyck (2019), among others, developed investigations that considered different periods of this production as object, highlighting its main themes, as well as its theoretical and methodological weaknesses. The set of this production and the challenges implicitly or explicitly presented motivated the research exposed in this paper, which focused on the main epistemological characteristics of 23 PhD Theses about the University for All Program (*Programa Universidade para Todos -*

PROUNI) defended in Graduate Programs in the area of Education from 2007 to 2017, focusing on the following aspects, besides the systematization of the themes and subthemes treated in the whole of this production: analytical approach, epistemological perspectives, types of theorization and levels of abstraction. This is a meta-research[2] that took as part of the analytical-conceptual support the Education Policy Epistemology Approach combined with the contribution of authors from the field of public policy and Education Policy.

An exploration of the literature published shortly after the promulgation of the law that instituted PROUNI, in 2005[3], revealed abundant and diverse angles of analysis of the subject's treatment, primarily in critical papers, which followed, from 2007, the master's Dissertations and PhD Theses, which began to analyze the program, in order to focus especially on its implementation and management in specific Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). What did the authors of these researches essentially seek to show? From what epistemological and theoretical perspectives did they organize their investigations? What levels of abstraction have they reached in their works? These questions have guided the research, the results of which are presented in this paper, organized in three main parts, besides this introduction and the final considerations: (1) Description of

2 Mainardes (2018b) explains that meta-research can be conceptualized as research on research or even as a research that seeks to explain the research process on a specific theme or area or field. For meta-research in Education Policy, see Mainardes (2018b), Tonieto (2018), Carvalho (2019) and the review conducted by Mainardes, Stremel and Soares (2018).

3 Prouni was created by Law No. 11,096 of January 13, 2005, in the context of the then-current National Education Plan (2001-2010), with the objective of contributing to the goal of enrolling in Higher Education institutions, by 2010, at least 30% of young people aged 18-24, through scholarships in private Higher Education institutions, in exchange for the exemption of four taxes and contributions (Corporate Income Tax, Social Contribution on Net Income, Social Contribution for Social Security Financing and Contribution to the Social Integration Program) during the validity of the adhesion term.

the theoretical and methodological course of the research; (2) Distribution of the PhD Theses by administrative dependency of HEIs and their Graduate Study Programs where they were defended, in addition to their concentration by state and region; (3) Description and analysis of qualitative data according to the main issues already stated.

Epistemological, theoretical and methodological aspects of the research

The research course covered two main stages: data construction and analysis and interpretation performed from the complete reading of the PhD Theses and from the theoretical framework already mentioned:

First stage: (1) Search and storage of PhD Theses in individual files.[4] (2) Elaboration of tables and charts with the information about the dissertations related to the Graduate Study Programs in which they were defended. (3) Preparation, from reading the abstracts and metadata, of an initial table with the following information, besides the title: objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, results and conclusions. (4) Elaboration of other tables and charts in which further information were included once the full dissertation had been read. (5) Elaboration, with the use of the Simple Mind software, of an individual map for each dissertation, containing information that includes the formulation of objectives to the research results.

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4 The search for the PhD Theses, with the descriptor "PROUNI", was made in the Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (*Biblioteca Digital de Dissertações e Teses* - BDTD), and checked with the information available in the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) Dissertation Catalog and in Sucupira Platform. It began in the early months of 2018 and ended in June of the same year. Until the final list was drawn up, it was necessary to examine, in addition to the summaries and metadata of each work, the table of contents and introductions, in order to exclude the dissertations that, despite having answered the descriptor, did not treat PROUNI as their main object.

Second stage: (1) Systematization and analysis of the themes approached from the objectives, hypotheses and/or research questions stated in each PhD Thesis. (2) Preparation of categories and subsequent classification of the dissertations according to the focus and sources of research used in each dissertation. (3) Systematization and analysis of epistemological and theoretical perspectives and types of theorization of the set of dissertations according to the Education Policy Epistemology Approach elements. (4) Analysis of the abstraction levels of the set of the dissertations. In general, the procedures adopted in the research involved an inductive and deductive combination of readings and organization of information from the material read and many attempts to formulate and/or adapt already created schemes, allowing a proper reading of the material found. From an epistemological-theoretical point of view, the research encompassed a combination of the Education Policy Epistemology Approach with elements of meta-research and some contributions from the literature of the Education Policy field, more particularly with regard to the analysis and evaluation of policies and implementation studies.

As a specific contribution to the field of Education Policy, the Education Policy Epistemology Approach constitutes a conceptual-analytical scheme that has a twofold objective: to serve as an epistemological surveillance instrument for research in this field and to provide criteria and methodological guidance to researchers that intend to do meta-investigations (Moreira, 2017). This is a reflection on the research itself, which includes the ethical dimension and seeks to contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of the field. The motivation for the development of the Education Policy Epistemology Approach was the fact that the production of the field was often disordered, and although the technical and methodological procedures were

generally explicit, the same did not always occur in relation to the perspective and to the epistemological positioning of researchers (Tello & Mainardes, 2015).

The basic scheme of the Education Policy Epistemology Approach is composed of three analytical components: the epistemological perspective, the epistemological positioning and the epistemethodological approach. The *epistemological perspective* is defined as the researcher's worldview. Examples of epistemological perspectives are: "[…] Marxism, neo-Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, existentialism, humanism, positivism and pluralism" (Tello, 2012, p. 57). *The epistemological positioning* is represented by the great theoretical frameworks from which research can be carried out and is closely related to its empirical content. Examples of positionings are neoinstitutionalism, legal positioning, complexity, critical and neoliberal positioning, among others. Finally, linked to the methodological construction mode, lies the *epistemethodological approach*, which is concerned with the methodological consistency of the research and which should maintain coherence with the epistemological perspective and positioning (Tello, 2012; Tello & Mainardes, 2015; Mainardes, 2017). From an epistemological perspective aligned with pluralism, the Education Policy Epistemology Approach admits several epistemologies and the use of combined theorization, which consists of the use of several theories in the same research, provided that they allow a sufficiently solid and consistent reference framework to account for the object.

Still as part of the Education Policy Epistemology Approach and with the purpose of increasing comprehension studies in the field of Education Policy, Mainardes and Tello (2016) propose that the results of Education Policy investigations should be analyzed, considering three main levels of abstraction: description, analysis and comprehension. The

combination of the Education Policy Epistemology Approach and the observation of the abstraction levels achieved by the researchers of the field enables the identification of the way in which both epistemological issues, theories and concepts (Mainardes & Tello, 2016) that marked the whole process, with evident implications on the results, are worked.

The descriptive level (the most elementary, according to the hierarchy proposed by the authors), regardless of its relevance, since both analysis and comprehension studies do not dispense with it, presents a series of deficiencies, resulting in research that, in general, do not advance in the analysis of the political process. Among the common biases to this type of research, it is possible to point out, among others, the weak integration between theory and data, apriorism, prescriptivism, linear analyzes based on models that no longer account for the trajectory of policies, and also improper use of field models. The second level, the analytical, is characterized by aiming at "the generation of concepts, categories, typologies, empirical generalizations" (Mainardes & Tello, 2016, p. 7), making it possible to advance to theorization. The last level, the most advanced, is comprehension. At this level, which is based on descriptions and analyzes, it is finally possible to further explore "the relationships and determinations" (Mainardes & Tello, 2016, p. 7) involved in the research, which makes possible for the results to be used by other researchers, enabling the advancement of knowledge.

In the field of policy, the so-called "Implementation Studies" were one of the useful contributions to the research with the PhD Theses, which, as a whole, dealt with the materialization of the program both in the initial clashes between interest groups involved in its creation, and in the further developments in the partner HEIs. Implementation is the realization of

the policy. It is the moment that, through existing or created organs and mechanisms, policy intentions begin to turn into action (Cavalcanti, 2007). Implementation studies gained new impetus from the mid-1980s onwards, with pioneering research conducted by Pressman and Widalsky[5], which gave rise to the Top Down and Bottom up models that would be further developed (Signé, 2017).

Such models are part of the second[6] generation of implementation studies, developed from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, and sought to identify a set of factors that would contribute to the success or failure of the policy. These are classic approaches that divide policy phases into agenda, formulation, implementation and evaluation and other models were formulated later (Perez, 2010). However, for reasons related to the way PROUNI was treated in the dissertations, they were adequate to understand the initial moments of the policy (agenda and formulation), marked by questions related to funding, equal opportunities and the quality of education, as well as its developments in the partner HEIs.

The analysis of policy approaches in all the PhD Theses was based on four categories, created from the distinction between scientific knowledge production and projects for overcoming reality (Tello, 2013), policy analysis and evaluation (Cavalcanti, 2007), and policy evaluation and program policy evaluation (Figueiredo & Figueiredo, 1986). Tello (2013), when analyzed the relations that are being established between knowledge producers and decision makers in the field of Education Policy

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5   Perez (2010) highlights the 1984 edition of *Implementation*, by Pressman and Wildavsky, originally published in 1973. To this author, a "seminal study", which, although delimiting the beginning of the implementation process at the time a program is formulated, recognizes the existence of numerous obstacles to its implementation at the local level.

6   The first generation (1970-75) was especially dedicated to identifying obstacles to implementation.

in Latin America, draws attention to the necessary distinction between Research Projects, Technical Reports and Reality Overcoming Projects and argues in favor of the Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach (EEPA) as a facilitator of epistemological vigilance and reflexivity on the field's research processes. The distinction between Policy Analysis and Policy Evaluation Approaches is developed by Cavalcanti (2007), who, based on an extensive review of available Latin American literature on public and Education Policy, distinguishes these two approaches. From the contribution of Figueiredo and Figueiredo (1986), who conceive of political evaluation as a preliminary stage to policy evaluation, it is emphasized the political evaluation of the principles that underlie policies (political evaluation), in addition to concern for effectiveness, the study of how decisions are made and the achievement of goals.

Based on the conceptualization exposed, after identifying how the theme was explored in the PhD Theses, these were categorized as studies of Policy analysis, Policy evaluation, Political evaluation and some aspects of policy and Others, a category created to allocate some works that, despite having PROUNI scholarship informants, failed to address the program as their main object. In summary, the analytical work was developed based on elements of the Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach, including the types of theorization found, also encompassing the analysis of the approaches from which the different authors organized their works and the levels of abstraction achieved in them.

Presentation and analysis of results

After the survey and the definition of the final list of PhD Theses to be analyzed, the first information about the dissertations was organized through the reading of the metadata;

the abstracts with their keywords; the introductions; and also the results of the research presented in each dissertation. In addition to the final list of dissertations, tables and graphs designed to provide an overview of the distribution of dissertations by state and also by administrative dependency of the institutions were the result of the first stage.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show, respectively, the distribution of dissertations by HEI and Programs and by regions and state.

Table 6.1 - Distribution of PhD Theses by HEI and administrative dependence

Public Institutions				Private Institutions		
Federal	Dissertations	State	Dissertations	Private	Dissertations	Total
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	1	Universidade de São Paulo	1	PUC – Paraná	1	3
Universidade Federal da Bahia	1	Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita"	1	PUC – RJ	1	3
Universidade Federal do Paraná	1			PUC – RS	1	2
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco	1			PUC – SP	6	7
Universidade Federal de São Carlos	2			Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos	2	4
Universidade Federal do Ceará	1			Metodista de Piracicaba	1	2
Universidade Federal do Pará	1			Universidade Nove de Julho	1	2
Total of Federal institutions	8	Total of State institutions	2	Total of Private institutions	13	23

Source: Elaborated by the author based on research data.

As can be seen, 13 of the 23 theses were defended in private HEIs (of which the Catholic universities - Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul) stand out, followed immediately by public institutions: eight federal, distributed by the states of Pará, São Paulo, Ceará, Pernambuco, Paraná, Bahia and Rio Grande do Sul, and two State institutions, all in the state of São Paulo. Table 6.2 presents the distribution of theses by region, state and HEI.

Table 6.2 - Distribution of PhD Theses by Region, State and HEI

Region	State	HEI	Number of dissertations
South	Rio Grande do Sul	PUC-RS	1
		UFRGS	1
		Unisinos	2
	Paraná	PUC-PR	1
		UFPR	1
		Subtotal	6
Southeast	São Paulo	PUC-SP	6
		USP	1
		Uninove	1
		Metodista de Piracicaba	1
		Júlio de Mesquita	1
		UFscar	2
	Rio de Janeiro	PUC-RJ	1
		Subtotal	13
Northeast	Bahia	UFBA	1
	Pernambuco	UFPE	1
	Ceará	UFCE	1
		Subtotal	3
North	Pará	UFPA	1
		Subtotal	1
		Total	23

Source: Elaborated by the author based on research data.

The predominance of the Southeast and South regions in the distribution of dissertations is an easy situation to explain, since it is in these regions that most of the Graduate Education programs are concentrated.

Epistemological characteristics of the dissertations

The identification of the themes and the categorization of the dissertations, according to the approaches already mentioned in the previous section, were made from the systematization of the objectives/theses/hypotheses and/or study questions, as can be seen in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 - Objectives / theses / hypotheses and / or study questions

Number of dissertations	Objectives/theses and/or study topics
1*	Identify and analyze the causes/reasons that lead PROUNI teaching undergraduate students to evade.
2	Identify personal, institutional and public policy actions that contribute to access, permanence and completion.
3	Understand the subjective dimensions of the scholarship students in relation to PROUNI in its multiple dimensions. **Hypothesis:** The scholarship holder has a multi-dimensional understanding of PROUNI.
4	Verify if the presence of the scholarship students impacts the quality of education in the HEIs that receive them.
5	Analysis of the effectiveness of targeted policies. **Hypothesis**: Focused policies tend to reinforce the universalist (democratizing) appearance, the formal and illusory nature of the principle of equality.
6	Analyze the scholarship's holder commitment to his/her learning and the impacts that this new academic student may have on the university and society. **Thesis**: The actual or potential results in the formation of the Prouni undergraduate student are related to the commitment of this student profile to his/her learning. **Hypothesis**: The greater the intensity, variety and quality of the actions developed by the student during his/her education, the better will be the set of competences built by him/her.

Number of dissertations	Objectives/theses and/or study topics
7	Investigate the itinerancy of young people from the popular classes in Higher Education. **Thesis/assumption:** In unschooling spaces, founding knowledge is built that favors a positive relationship with formal knowledge. Understand the knowledge socialization networks in order to interpret the educational pathways of the PROUNI'S young students.
8	Analyze the Program as an academic and social inclusion. Analyze the meso and microinstitutional dimensions: the instituted and instituting processes mediated in two Higher Education Institutions.
9	Understand how the education provided by PROUNI can build working class hegemony. **Demonstrate** how PROUNI, being a compensatory policy, originates and organizes itself from the political, economic and social reality that surrounds it.
10	Critical examination of the Program and its consequences for the formation of the working class, as well as its role in the expansion of education entrepreneurship, especially in Higher Education in Ceará, Brazil. **Defend the idea** that the commodification of education was stimulated by the structural crisis of the acute capital in the 1970s with the exhaustion of the Taylorist/Fordist model.
11	What is this new student profile now inhabiting the academic spaces. [Know] his/her trajectories, feelings, perceptions, academic achievement and future perspectives. The hypotheses indicated various difficulties for this scholarship student.
12	Analyze the implementation and repercussions of PROUNI in Santa Catarina's HEIs. Know the student profile of the researched HEI, and the student's perception of access and inclusion in Higher Education and the social commitment of the HEI. Critically analyze PROUNI ... evaluate the program's advances and weaknesses, as a public policy for inclusion and democratization of Higher Education.
13	Investigate the constraints that motivated PROUNI scholarship holders to pursue Higher Education, as well as the meaning attributed to this teaching, and how this university experience occurred. **One of the hypotheses** is that, for this excluded young person, the place of Higher Education coincides with social ascension and easier job acquisition.
14	Analyze whether the completion of a private Higher Education course, funded by PROUNI, influences the social inclusion of individuals through indicators such as community participation, employability, access to social, political and cultural capital, widening of the social network.
15	Understand the strategies adopted by PROUNI'S scholarship students of the state of Pernambuco and their families, in a reality influenced by the new possibility of access to Higher Education. Categorize the profile of the student and compare it with the profile of other students enrolled in private HEIs.

Number of dissertations	Objectives/theses and/or study topics
16	Carry out a political evaluation and clarify the reasons that made the program one of the priority policies as a strategy to promote the democratization of access to Higher Education. **Thesis**: The process of constitution of the Higher Education system in Brazil was the builder of a barrier that separated those considered worthy of obtaining the titles of those who were not, legitimizing meritocratic discourses and residing bachelorism as a social phenomenon.
17	Assess if PROUNI corresponds and meets the expectations of these new social layers included in Higher Education
18	Investigate whether PROUNI enabled better conditions of insertion in the labor market, as well as improvement in the socioeconomic condition of its graduates.
19	Understand and problematize the public vs. private relationship in the historical perspective. **Initial hypothesis**: The relationship between the public and private spheres is of mutual implication and not of polarization or exclusion.
20	Investigate the subjective dimension of social inequality, from the choice of the university course by the PROUNI scholarship holders. **The base is on** the idea that social inequality permeates all social phenomena, among which the choice of courses; therefore, the choice is made under unequal conditions.
21	Analysis of the implementation of PROUNI in the 2005-2008 period in two HEIs in the city of Campo Grande. Identify its meaning as a democratization policy that aims at the inclusion of black people in Higher Education. **Hypothesis**: Although it is a focused policy, formulated in the neoliberal context, it may represent a strategy for access and permanence of young black people in Higher Education.
22	Analyze the financing policy of private Higher Education through PROUNI and FIES [Student Financing Fund] as a means of expansion and formation of oligopolies. **Thesis**: Incentive to private HEIs meets the interests of finance capital by contributing to the accumulation of owner shareholders.
23	Highlight the Education Policies that underlie Higher Education in Brazil, as well as the forms that social inequality has in education, focusing on the subjective dimension of this reality.

*A number was assigned to each dissertation, which was kept constant throughout the work.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the abstracts and introductions of the PhD Theses.

The analysis in Table 6.3 elucidates the variation in the way the different authors state their purposes: some in the form of clearly and unambiguously stated objectives, others in the form of theses and/or hypothesis accompanied or not by the research topics. Except for theses dissertations number 1,

2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18 and 23, which state descriptive-analytical purposes, the others start from some kind of "bet"; some clearly stated as "thesis", others as hypothesis, hypotheses, or even through verbs such as "demonstrate" and "defend". Procedures to support their assertions generally involve document analysis combined with questionnaires and interviews with scholarship students, graduates, managers and teachers, except for dissertations number 5, 9, 10, 16, 19 and 22 that can be classified as theoretical-documentary.

Categorizing the types of study, thematic, sub-thematic, and the approaches favored by the authors of the dissertations involved choices that went beyond judging similarity and difference. It was necessary to move from an initial proposal, based on the literature already mentioned, to the reading of the dissertations and to go through successive refinement steps until reaching the presented result: a particular and conscious reading of the limitations inherent to working with long and complex texts such as PhD Theses.

Considering, according to Perez (2010, p. 1185), that the top down model aims to analyze the degree of achievement of the policy objectives and their impacts and the main factors affecting the policy itself, as well as other aspects; and that bottom up approaches focus on local actors and are based on "the compatibility of programs with the desires, willingness and behavioral patterns of the actors and the decentralization process", it is possible from aspects of implementation and the themes of the dissertations systematize them into three groups: [7]

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7 Clarification: Since there are few studies that work with models coming from the policy field, only an analytical effort allows us to treat them using these terms. As stated by Perez (2010), the concern with this theme appears, in Brazil, only in the late 1980s, from the finding of the studies conducted by Figueiredo and Figueiredo (1986) that, in the area of education, academic research rarely addressed implementation. Based on the finding of this gap, according to Perez (2010), the specialized literature would have begun to pay attention to the contributions that this type of research offers.

Group 1 is composed of dissertations 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 15 and 17. Due to the emphasis on the scholarship holders as the main empirical source of information and to deal primarily with their experiences in Higher Education, these researches can be considered as Bottom up studies. Overall, they look at some aspect of implementation in partner HEIs. It consists of eight dissertations, with the following thematic distribution: reception and avoidance (dissertations 1 and 2); impact on the quality of teaching (dissertation 4); student commitment to learning (dissertation 6); trajectories, socialization networks and relationship with academic knowledge (dissertation 7); profile of scholarship students and insertion into Higher Education (dissertation 11); adaptation strategies (dissertation 15); meeting the expectations of the scholarship students regarding Higher Education (dissertation 17).

Group 2 is made up of dissertations that can generally be considered as policy evaluation studies or that aim, in addition to evaluating some aspects of PROUNI, to also conduct a political evaluation of the program. It consists of two subgroups: The first includes dissertations 5, 8, 18, 12, 14, 21 and 22, which analyze PROUNI from the point of view of its effectiveness; from different perspectives, such as: criticism of the focused character of politics (dissertation 5); financing aspects (dissertation 22); social mobility and insertion of graduates into the world of work (dissertations 12 and 14); inclusion of black students (dissertation 21); advances and weaknesses of the program (dissertation 18). Of this group, dissertation 8 deserves special mention, because, despite not stating theses or hypothesis, it analyzes the program from the point of view of academic and social insertion at the macro, meso and micro levels. The policy cycle approach in

Ball's[8] version better explains the development of this research, which focuses on all policy contexts: from influences on the issue entering the government agenda to a broad assessment of policy recipients in two HEIs in Rio de Janeiro. The second is formed by dissertations 9, 10, 16 and 19, which evaluate PROUNI from the following perspectives: critical potential (dissertation 9 and 10); possibilities for democratization of Higher Education (dissertation 16); public versus private relationship (dissertation 19).

Group 3 includes dissertations 3, 13, 20 and 23, which were categorized separately because, despite having a number of scholarship holders, they did not analyze or evaluate PROUNI, but the meanings attributed to the program by the subjects involved in the research (dissertations 3, 20 and 23) and Higher Education, in case of dissertation 13.

As for the approaches, based on the policy literature already mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, the dissertations were grouped into four categories[9]: Policy analysis, Policy evaluation, Policy evaluation and some aspects of policy, and Others. The "Policy analysis" works include the dissertations that dealt with some aspect of PROUNI'S implementation in one or more HEIs. "Policy evaluation" includes the dissertations that focused on PROUNI and its more broadly effects, using concepts such as social inclusion, or even the idea of policy effectiveness, though without mentioning the use of this concept in the public policy literature, as in the text already cited by Figueiredo[10]. The

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8   Used by the author based on Mainardes (2006).

9   The creation of these categories represents an attempt to better explain what, in fact, the authors of these works focus on, who, with few exceptions, made use of neither the models nor the specific vocabulary of the field of public policy or Education Policy for the purpose of addressing this program which, it is important to remember, is an outgrowth of a broader policy, that of democratizing access to Higher Education which, in addition to the private sector, also encompasses the public sector by booking seats.

10   According to the authors, the evaluation of the effectiveness of a policy aims to verify the extent to which the program had effects on the situation that it aimed to correct; the efficiency

ones from "Political evaluation and some aspects of policy", a category that combines the first two, are those that used a mixed approach; while analyzing some aspect of the implementation, they prioritized the criticism of the program because of its neoliberal bias. These works can be considered Top Down Studies. The works included in the category "Others" are those that focus on the meanings attributed by the scholarship students interviewed to PROUNI, not including analysis or evaluation of the program, properly.

Table 6.4 summarizes the approaches, categories and subcategories constructed based on the complete reading and general mapping of each dissertation, elaborated through the use of the Simple Mind software[11], covering from objectives to results, including data collection and analysis procedures. [12]

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evaluation considers the minimum possible cost for maximum benefits and the effectiveness assessments seek to determine the adequacy of the means to the program objectives.

11   See example at the end of the paper.

12   Due to space limitations, these aspects will not be discussed in detail in this paper.

Table 6.4 - Approaches, themes and main sources of the PhD Theses

Policy analysis		Policy evaluation		Evaluation of policy and some aspects of policy		Others	
Implementation aspects in partner HEIs	Resources and dissertations	Effectiveness	Resources and dissertations	Critical and democratization potential of the policy	Resources and dissertations	Paths and meaning assignment	Resources and dissertations
Reception and evasion prevention	HEI Dissertations 1 and 2	Criticism of the policy focused character	Documents Dissertation 5	Contribution to the formation of the working class	Documents Dissertations 9 and 10	Understanding the different dimensions of PROUNI	Scholarship students Dissertation 3
Impact on quality	HEI Dissertation 4	Social and academic inclusion	Scholarship students, managers and documents Dissertations 8 and 12	Democratization	Documents Dissertation 16	Reasons for seeking Higher Education	Scholarship students Dissertation 13
Student's commitment to learning	Scholarship students Dissertation 6	Mobility and social ascension	Graduates Dissertations 14 and 18	Public vs. Private relation	Documents Dissertation 19	Subjective dimension of inequality and career choice	Scholarship students Dissertation 20
Trajectories, socialization networks and relationship with academic knowledge	Scholarship students Dissertation 7	Inclusion of black students	Scholarship students Dissertation 21			Poverty, education and subjectivity	Scholarship students Dissertation 23

Policy analysis		Policy evaluation		Evaluation of policy and some aspects of policy		Others	
Implementation aspects in partner HEIs	Resources and dissertations	Effectiveness	Resources and dissertations	Critical and democratization potential of the policy	Resources and dissertations	Paths and meaning assignment	Resources and dissertations
Scholarship students' profile and insertion into Higher Education	Scholarship students Dissertation 11	Funding	Documents Dissertation 22				
Adaptation Strategies	Scholarship students Dissertation 15						
Meeting Scholarship students' expectations	Scholarship students Dissertation 17						
Total	8 Dissertations		7 Dissertations		4 Dissertations		4 Dissertations

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the collected information of the dissertations.

Epistemological Perspectives and types of theorization

The systematization and analysis of the epistemological and theoretical perspectives, from which the authors of the dissertations organized their investigations, presented some difficulties, due to the great variety in the way such works were structured. Some with a separate theoretical chapter, others covering different topics prior to the empirical part of the research, and even a work in which the theoretical foundation was made together with the literature review, merging with it. Table 6.5 presents a synthesis of the epistemological and theoretical framework informed by the authors in the abstracts and or introductions or even in separate theoretical chapters.

Table 6.5 - Epistemological and theoretical perspectives - synthesis

Epistemological Perspectives	Dissertations	Theories, authors and concepts	Dissertations	Combined Theorization*	Dissertations	Absence of theorization	Dissertations
Marxism, neomarxism and historical-dialectical materialism	9, 10 and 22	Paulo Freire and Gramsci	2	Authors of the Policy field + Combined Theorization	8 and 16	Literature Review on the Dissertation Theme	1
Perspective of socio-historical Psychology	20 and 23	Theory of Complexity	3	Combined theorization	4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 21		
		Bendix Historical-Compared Sociology	5				
		Bourdieu and Bourdieu and collaborators	13 and 15				
Total	5		5		12		1

* Based on McLenann (1996), Mainardes (2018) defines combined theorization as "an effort to articulate theories or concepts from different theories, in order to compose a consistent theoretical framework to support a particular analysis. Such an effort demands making theoretical choices and justifying them, which implies an exercise in reflexivity and epistemological vigilance. The notion of added theorization means the more or less random adoption of theories, concepts, ideas from different theories and epistemological perspectives, resulting in a set of ideas and concepts without coherence, unity and theoretical articulation. The result of a simple addition and overlapping of ideas of different authors results in a failed attempt to define a theoretical framework, which can be considered fragile, disjointed and epistemologically inconsistent" (Mainardes, 2018, p. 6-7).

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the abstracts and introductions of the dissertations.

From the point of view of the general conceptual-analytical scheme of the Epistemologies of Education Policy Approach (EEPA), it can be seen, firstly, that considering the *epistemological perspective* as the great conceptual structures from which the researcher builds reality, only in dissertations 9, 10 and 22, and 20 and 23 explicitly state their assumed epistemological perspectives: Marxist, Neomarxist, and Historical-dialectical Materialist in the first case, and Perspective of Sociohistorical Psychology in the second. The others form three subgroups: (1) dissertations 2, 3, 5, 13 and 15, whose authors inform of theoretical framework, name authors, concepts and work fundamentally with them, although many other authors appear cited in different passages; (2) dissertations 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 21, which combine different authors concepts and theories; (3) dissertations 8 and 16, the only ones that explicitly use authors and models of analysis from the field of Education Policy and public policy, although they also use combined theorization. Finally, there is also a dissertation in which there is no theorizing.

Therefore, the small number of authors that explain the epistemological perspective assumed to make the investigation, information consistent with the studies conducted by Mainardes (2017, 2018a) and Mainardes and Tello (2016), who, in these and other texts, have drawn attention to the consequences of this absence and to the importance of a definite epistemological perspective to increase the coherence, rigor and interaction between theory and data, thus contributing to consolidate the production of the field. Secondly, the amount of work that makes use of the combined theorization[13] feature, which represents

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13 In the case of dissertations that work with combined theorization, the references and themes are very varied and include, among others, the contribution of authors from different areas and dealing with topics such as affirmative action, Higher Education, democratization of access, state reform and neoliberalism, embracement, evasion, inequality, quality, social mobility and employability, relation with academic knowledge, trajectories and education funding, as well as PROUNI itself.

both intentional decision making, with a view to constructing a theoretically more solid framework to handle the object, such as dissertations 8 and 16, whose authors combined the contributions of analytical models of policies with sociological contributions, as well as, probably, motivated choices for other reasons, such as the line of research of which the author of the dissertation was or is part of, the influences of the advisor or wealth of possibilities of the object.

It is worth remembering that combined theorization refers to pluralism, a perspective whose contribution to social research is not yet consensual (Mainardes, 2017, 2018a). Coutinho (1991, p. 13) warns that pluralism cannot imply relativism or eclecticism and that "one cannot think of reconciling irreconcilable points of view in the name of pluralism". In this sense, while it can promote novelty in science, stimulate criticism and stimulate dialogue, it can also, in the absence of a solid framework, slip into the simple addition of theories, generating fragile research, which does not contribute to consolidation of knowledge in a given area. What remains open is whether, as a whole, it is possible to have a political and policy evaluation that can serve as a reference for new researchers who, in the literature review phase, can find a point from which to advance, thus contributing to the constitution of a corpus of consolidated knowledge with regard specifically to this program.

Levels of abstraction

Having verified the extension and structure of the dissertations, besides the content of the respective chapters,[14] the systematization of the abstraction levels was made considering the following possibilities, combined or not: descriptive,

14 Sixteen of the dissertations have, besides the introductions and conclusions, 3 to 5 chapters, 3 have six chapters, 2 have 7 and 2 have 8 chapters.

analytical and comprehensive studies (Mainardes & Tello, 2016) or, still, as proposed by Dunleavy (2003), a combination of analytical and argumentative, argumentative and analytical styles and vice versa. Altogether, the dissertations contain a lot of description, although some have also worked with concepts and categories, derived from the information obtained in the HEI from scholarship students and other informants, or from some theory in use, or even presented original ideas and/or conclusions. Mixed studies were identified, which combined description and analysis, analysis and argumentation, purely descriptive chapters, and analytical work combined with attempts at theorizing. Table 6.6 summarizes this information:

Table 6.6 - Theses abstraction levels

Abstraction levels	Number of dissertations
Analytical Descriptive	11
Comprehensive Analytics	5
Analytical comprehensive	1
Argumentative Analytics	1
Descriptive argumentative	1
Analytical argumentative	3
Explanatory	1
Total	**23**

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the research data.

From the group of dissertations 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 15 and 17, categorized in Table 6.4 as Policy analysis studies focusing on aspects of program implementation, the dissertations 1, 2, 4, 11 and 17 are analytical descriptive. All of them advance to the formulation of categories, but generally contain more description than analysis. Dissertation 6 is a research that works

with a clearly delineated thesis and hypothesis, informed as proven, and with the purpose informed as "explanatory", to demonstrate that the actual or potential results in the formation of PROUNI'S graduate are related to his/her commitment to learning. Dissertations 15 and 7 are comprehensive analytical researches. Dissertation 15 addresses the different perceptions of scholarship students regarding access to Higher Education. It presents advances in theorization, by defending and empirically sustaining the idea of a "fight" between two fields by the scholarship holder, who builds his/her own strategies to transit between the family and the academic environment in a balanced way. Dissertation 7 consistently articulates theories of sociology, anthropology, and social policy, with a focus on youth policy, and addresses in a unique way the notion of the creation, by scholarship holders, of "underground networks" of socialization in order to deal with academic knowledge and meet the demands of Higher Education.

Of the group of dissertations 5, 8, 12, 14, 18, 21 and 22, which evaluated the effectiveness of the policy in different dimensions, dissertations 5, 8 and 22 stand out as they present original contributions to the discussion about the program. They are integrated dissertations, in which their authors delivered what they promised (Dunleavy, 2003), also advancing to the level of comprehension. Dissertations 5 and 22 are theoretical and documentary. Dissertation 8 is a comprehensive analytical research, in which, in addition to a full description of the implementation of the program in two Higher Education institutions, PROUNI was analyzed from the context of influence as well as from the context of practice. In total, 904 subjects were heard, involved at different levels of the policy. Dissertation 5, categorized as analytical argumentative, presents a well-grounded critique of PROUNI'S focused, "illusory" character. Dissertation

22, an analytical-argumentative dissertation, demonstrates, through document analysis from three major private educational groups, the role of PROUNI and FIES [Student Financing Fund] in the expansion and formation of oligopolies. Dissertations 12, 18, 14 and 21 are descriptive-analytical; dissertations 18 and 14 focused on aspects related to the inclusion of graduates in the labor world; dissertation 12 focused on the importance of the commitment of HEIs to the reception of scholarship holders through the analysis of an experience; and dissertation 21 analyzed, with great quantity of data, the role of PROUNI in the insertion of black students in Higher Education.

Dissertations 9, 10, 16 and 19, which focus on political evaluation and some aspects of policy, are all documentary and have different levels of contribution. Dissertations 9 and 10, just like 22 and 5, cited previously, depart from positions already taken against PROUNI and are respectively descriptive-argumentative and analytical-argumentative. Dissertation 9 works with Gramscian categories and seeks to show that PROUNI does not favor the construction of the working-class hegemony by analyzing excerpts from the 2009 Audit Report of the Federal Court of Accounts (*Tribunal de Contas da União - TCU*) and PROUNI statistics. Dissertation 10, also based on Marxist literature, points out the pseudo-democratizing character of the program and its harmful consequences for the formation of the working class, as well as its role in the expansion of the entrepreneurial sector of Higher Education in Ceará, Brazil. Dissertation 16 combines Max Weber's Comprehensive Sociology with Kingdon's Multi-Flow Model and other contributions from policy analysis (Figueiredo & Figueiredo, 1986; and historical Neoinstitutionalism) to conduct a political and policy evaluation in order to emphasize the separation between higher and lower prestige courses, as well as the reasons why PROUNI took

precedence over other policies. It is a comprehensive analytical dissertation. Dissertation 19 is an analytical argumentative research, which assumes that the relationship between the public and private spheres is one of mutual implication and not of polarization or exclusion. It concludes that PROUNI'S results express social gains, translating its public dimension, as well as market gains, proving, this way, its private dimension.

Finally, dissertations 3, 13, 20 and 23 are respectively comprehensive analytical, descriptive analytical, comprehensive analytical and analytical descriptive. In dissertation 3, the author explored the information obtained in the interviews with the scholarship students, comparing them with the theory used to answer the main research question. Dissertation 13 investigated, through data analysis on PROUNI and questionnaires and interviews with scholarship holders, the motivation to attend Higher Education and the meaning attributed to PROUNI. The last two, dissertations 20 and 23, have in common the fact that they assumed the perspective of critical Socio-Historical Psychology and both worked with analysis of the meaning cores constructed from the collected empirical material. Dissertation 20, in dialogic interviews with four scholarship holders, from different courses; dissertation 23, in 30 questionnaires and one interview. Dissertation 20, despite working with a small number of subjects, manages, through the analysis of the meaning cores identified in dialogic interviews, to discuss in an integrated way the relationship between subjectivity, career choice and inequality. Dissertation 23 privileges the questionnaires and describes more than analyzes.

Final considerations

In dealing with the theme of the constitution on the field of Education Policy, in Brazil and Latin America, in general, reference is made to its complexity, the diversity of its objects, as well as the need for more consistent research, in which the authors do not only clearly indicate the perspective and epistemological positioning that inform them, but also show coherence between the different poles (epistemological, theoretical, methodological and technical) in these investigations.

As a way of contribution to consolidate the research of this field, the meta-research has been pointed as a useful instrument to perform the research evaluation, identify characteristics, trends, weaknesses and obstacles for the development of a research field or theme (Mainardes & Tello, 2016). In this paper, we presented the results of a meta-research that, unlike studies that seek to map research more broadly, focused the PhD Theses on a single program, PROUNI, supported by analytical-conceptual schemes and theoretical references from the field of public policy and educational research, with the objective of epistemologically characterizing the studies on the theme, in the analyzed period.

The results focused on three major aspects: the themes and approaches, the theoretical and epistemological references and the levels of analysis and abstraction. The research step by step required a great effort of systematization and data construction; thus, many aspects remain to be explored. Briefly reviewing the research questions, we found the wide variety of subjects, with multiple ramifications, present in the works, the small amount of studies in which the perspectives and epistemological positions are explicitly presented, the majority use of combined theorization, as well as presence of only two studies using the literature and models from the policy field.

A controversial aspect that will require further deepening concerns the boundaries between analytic and comprehension dissertations, which will entail a closer examination of the ways in which authors operate with theories, create categories, and deal with evidence in general. Further investment in understanding data construction and analysis procedures, as well as textual configuration, may provide insights to clarify these aspects. A final point that deserves attention is the absence, in most studies, of more substantive discussions about PROUNI, in the light of concepts such as democratization, social inclusion and equity, topics only tangentially approached in most works, as well as a broader overview of the different ways Higher Education systems in other countries have been addressing access to Higher Education.

Appendix A - List of PhD Theses that made up the research *Corpus*

1. Rocha, C. S. (2015). *Por que eles abandonam? Evasão de bolsistas Prouni dos cursos de licenciaturas* (PhD Thesis). Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos, São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

2. Sena, E de F. (2011). *Estímulo, acesso, permanência e conclusão no Ensino Superior de alunos bolsistas do Programa Universidade para Todos (Prouni): contribuições para o enfrentamento do processo de inserção* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

3. Ferreira, J. A. (2012). *A compreensão do sujeito bolsista em relação ao Programa Universidade Para Todos – PROUNI, à luz do pensamento complexo* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Nove de Julho, São Paulo, Brazil.

4. Pinto, M. L. M. (2010). *Qualidade da Educação Superior e o Prouni: limites e possibilidades de uma política de inclusão* (PhD Thesis). Universidade do Vale dos Sinos, São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

5. Marinelli, C. R. G. (2010). *Programa Universidade para todos: aspectos da cidadania fragmentada* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Metodista de Piracicaba, Piracicaba, São Paulo, Brazil.

6. Felicetti, V. L. (2011). *Comprometimento do estudante: um elo entre aprendizagem e inclusão social na qualidade da educação superior* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

7. Borghi, I. S. M. (2013). *Uma margem outra: itinerâncias de jovens das classes populares na educação superior* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.

8. Faceira, L. da S. (2009). *O ProUni como política pública em suas instâncias macro-estruturais, meso-institucionais e microssociais: uma pesquisa sobre a sua implementação pelo MEC e por duas Universidades na Região Metropolitana do Rio* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

9. Bergamo, E. A. (2013). *Programa Universidade para Todos (Prouni) e a construção da hegemonia da classe trabalhadora* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil.

10. Rocha, A. R. M. E. (2009). *O Programa Universidade para Todos - Prouni e a pseudodemocratização na contrarreforma da educação superior no Brasil* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil.

11. Estacia, M. A. T. E. (2009). *Alunos do ProUni da Universidade de Passo Fundo: trajetórias, percepções/sentimentos e aproveitamento acadêmico* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

12. Krames, I. P. K. (2010). *Na trilha do PROUNI: implantação, acompanhamento e perspectivas em uma instituição de Ensino Superior de Santa Catarina* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

13. Ferreira, K. T. (2011). *Prouni: Trajetórias* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, São Paulo, Brazil.

14. Giacon, B. D. (2012). *Prouni: influências sobre a inclusão social dos seus egressos* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

15. Neto, R. de D. e M. (2015). *Não vou me adaptar: um estudo sobre os bolsistas pernambucanos durante os 10 primeiros anos do Programa Universidade Para Todos – ProUni* (PhD Thesis). Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

16. Moreira, C. R. B. S. (2017). *Um olhar sobre o muro: avaliação do Programa Universidade para Todos (Prouni)* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal do Paraná, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil.

17. Bovério, M. A. (2015). *Prouni: estudo multicasos com alunos e concluintes* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho", Araraquara, São Paulo, Brazil.

18. Costa, F. de S. (2012). *O ProUni e seus egressos: uma articulação entre educação, trabalho e juventude* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

19. Oliveira, A. P. de. (2007). *A relação entre o público e o privado na Educação Superior no Brasil e o Programa Universidade para Todos (Prouni)* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil.

20. Oliveira, A. dos S. (2014). *A dimensão subjetiva da desigualdade social: um estudo sobre a escolha do curso universitário entre os alunos bolsistas do Programa Universidade para Todos – ProUni* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

21. Marques, E. P. de S.   (2010). *O Programa Universidade para Todos e a inserção de negros na Educação Superior: a experiência de duas Instituições de Educação Superior de Mato Grosso do Sul - 2005 – 2008* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal de São Carlos, São Carlos, São Paulo, Brazil.

22. Filho, J. R. dos S. (2016). *Financiamento da Educação Superior privado-mercantil: Incentivos públicos e financeirização de grupos educacionais* (PhD Thesis). Universidade Federal do Pará, Belém, Pará, Brazil.

23. Nogueira, M. O. G. (2013). *Educação, desigualdade e políticas públicas: a subjetividade no processo de escolarização da camada pobre* (PhD Thesis). Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

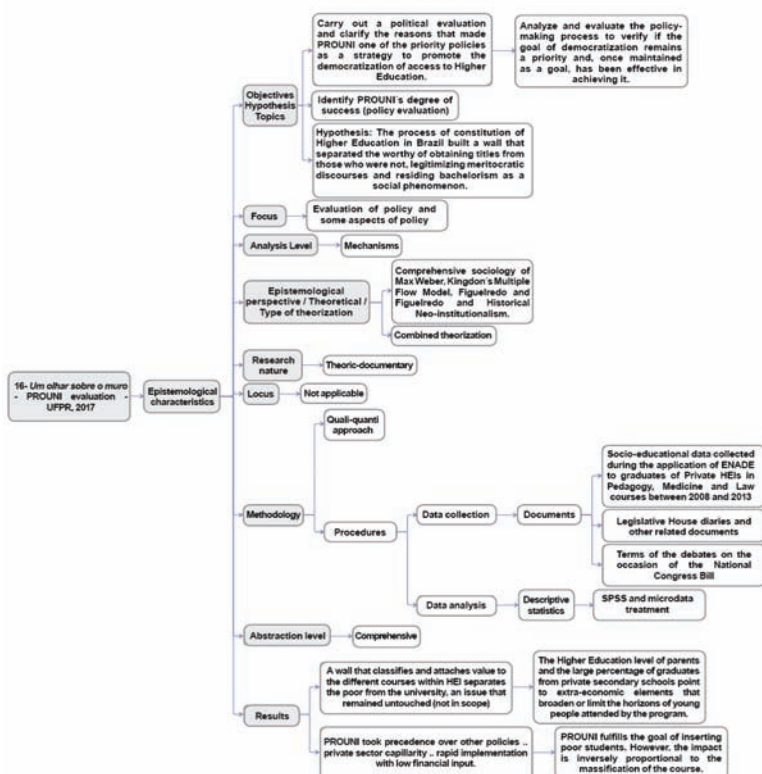## Appendix B - Example of Map of the PhD Theses

Figure 6.1 - Map elaborated for data collection
Source: Elaborated by the author.

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Chapter 7

The constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil: historical aspects[1]

Silvana Stremel
Jefferson Mainardes

Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil. The research was based on Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical-methodological contributions on the notion of field. Based on the author's theory on the formation and functioning of the fields, the methodological course and sources of study for the understanding of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil were defined, and of which an extended discussion is presented in Stremel (2016, 2017).

In this text we present the historical aspects of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil, considering the contexts, the agents, the institutions that contributed to the emergence and development of the field. Initially, we approach the theoretical-methodological foundations that guided the research, defining the concepts of field and academic field, and we indicate the sources that constituted the empirical corpus of the research. Subsequently, we present

aspects of the emergence and development of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil based on the analysis of the sources selected for the research.

The research on the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil: theoretical-methodological foundations

Bourdieu's concept of field constitutes a theoretical element to understand the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy as "product of a historical process", drawn from the "historical and social conditions of its integration" (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 17, own translation). Thus, understanding the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy demands taking into account Bourdieu's perspective on the necessary establishment of relations that cover the study of a field. In the analysis undertaken here, we seek to establish the possible relations between the academic field of Education Policy with the historical-political context, the education field, the international context and other fields of knowledge.

To Bourdieu (2004a, pp. 22-23, own translation), "every field, the scientific field, for example, is a field of forces and struggles, to conserve or transform this field of forces". He postulates the existence of many possible fields (political, religious, intellectual, artistic, scientific, etc.)[2]. Thus, the concept of field refers to the different spaces of social practice. These spaces have their own logic of operation. This logic of functioning structures the relations between agents within each of these spaces, insofar as agents organize themselves around specific goals and practices.

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2 Publications translated into Portuguese, in which the author addresses specific fields: religious field (Bourdieu, 2004c), intellectual field (Bourdieu, 2002, 2004b, 2004c), economic field (Bourdieu, 2005), scientific field (Bourdieu, 1983, 2004a), bureaucratic field (Bourdieu, 1996), political field (Bourdieu, 2011a), university field (Bourdieu, 2011b).

Therefore, field is a space of positions and social relations. The structure of the field is characterized as a state of power relations between its occupants who have several fundamental interests in common linked to the very existence of the field (Bourdieu, 2003; Thiry-Cherques, 2006). In general, authors based on Bourdieu, understand that associations, journals, technical and scientific meetings, university chairs, etc., contribute to the structuring of the fields (Gómez Campo & Tenti Fanfani, 1989; Suasnábar & Palamidessi, 2007). As the fields become increasingly structured, they reach a high degree of autonomy. A given field builds its autonomy and legitimacy through processes of institutionalization (Gómez Campo & Tenti Fanfani, 1989; Suasnábar & Palamidessi, 2007), that is, the creation of scientific associations, journals, research networks, departments, disciplines, etc. Thus, a field needs specific agents, institutions, ideas and interests to give it support and legitimation.

According to Bourdieu (2004a, 23, own translation), "the structure of objective relations between the different agents" – in the case of the academic field of Education Policy: researchers, research groups, working groups, scientific associations, research networks, etc. – determines and guides how the field develops. Mangez and Hilgers (2012), when approaching Bourdieu's notion of field, explain that in all fields agents are involved in a struggle for the definition of the legitimate symbolic structures of the field, which are the ways of doing, thinking, the principles of hierarchy, etc. The principles that command the field and its specific rules result from the activity of the field and the web of relations between its different agents (Mangez & Hilgers, 2012).

In this chapter, we approach Education Policy[3] as an academic field, based on the definition of authors whose foundations were drawn from Pierre Bourdieu's (Hey, 2008; Santos, 2009). According to Hey (2008, p. 15, own translation), "academic field is the locus of relations, having as protagonists agents that have by delegation to produce academic knowledge, that is to say, a type of social practice legitimized and recognized as such". To her, the academic field "refers to the use of an institutional apparatus, up to the present, assured by the Brazilian State, which guarantees the production and circulation of academic products" (Hey, 2008, p. 15, own translation). In Brazil, according to Hey (2008), such an apparatus covers both universities and funding agencies (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel [CAPES] and the National Council for Scientific and Technological

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3   In this chapter, the term "Education Policy" is employed in a broader sense, referring to the specific field or area of knowledge. In the context of Education Policy, "education policies" are formulated, that is, policies, programs, action projects for the various educational environments (Azevedo & Aguiar, 2001b) developed by governments, intergovernmental organizations and corporations (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The conceptualization of Education Policy is complex and varies from one epistemological perspective to another. From Bourdieu's theory, one can consider that the State is a multiform and complex structure, with disputes between agents and agencies in several microcosms for the establishment of specific forms of power and not a unified and totally articulated committee to the ruling class (Amar, 2018). The policies formulated by the State are shaped by disputes and influences from the political, economic and cultural spheres, as a situated construction of power. Based on Bourdieu's theory, Amar (2018, p. 4, own translation) explains that the "State also produces/reproduces a dominant cultural arbitrariness that reinforces social structures, their hierarchies and inequalities between groups and classes". Thus, education policies constitute instruments of symbolic power, whether expressed in the form of legal texts or official speeches, since they are symbolic representations of the interests of the State, although they are concealed as being of public interest. In this perspective, policies can produce or reproduce or amplify inequalities and hierarchies instead of effectively overcoming them. Mainardes (2018b) considers that the object of study of Education Policy is the analysis of education policies formulated by the State apparatus at its different levels and spheres (federal, state, municipal). This analysis covers studies of a theoretical nature, empirical studies and studies to overcome reality. To Souza (2016), the field of research on Education Policy deals with the relation between social demand for education and the State's position on this demand, with all the consequences of this movement, especially those related to the dispute over power and its relations with the universe of education.

Development [CNPq]), with the support of which it is possible to create graduate and research associations, produce scientific journals and events in the country, create centers and research groups and to make institutional arrangements for scientific exchanges with international centers. To Santos (2009), the academic field can be taken as a subfield of the scientific field. The author understands that the production of knowledge in Education Policy can be considered an academic field of research or subfield of the field of research in education.

Thus, we understand that Education Policy is a field and, within the scope of this discussion, we treat it as an academic field.[4] Therefore, Education Policy has been constituted with the creation of several institutional spaces in universities or research centers (disciplines, lines of research in graduate studies and research groups), scientific associations, specialized journals, scientific events, research networks, etc.

In view of Bourdieu's contributions to what structures the fields, which are the institutions, the agents, as well as what is generated within the fields, which are the productions of agents, their publications, we selected sources for the research. The research on the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy is a subject that has not yet been explored, which required the definition of specific methodological strategies. These strategies were based on the identification and selection of the first studies on Education Policy (decades of 1820 to 1950), survey of field productions (from the 1930s), as well as the collection of the following empirical data: bulletins and annals of the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação* (ANPEd) - National Association of Postgraduate

4   Other authors use this term. The term "academic field" is used by Grenfell and Bailey (2007) to deal with Bourdieu's analysis of the university field carried out in *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 2011b).

Studies and Research in Education, publications of the *Associação Nacional de Política e Administração da Educação* (ANPAE) - National Association of Education Policy and Administration, publications of pioneering journals in the area of education (*Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos* - Brazilian Journal of Pedagogical Studies) and journals considered relevant in the area (*Educação & Sociedade* - Education & Society), publications of specific journals of Education Policy, data of lines and groups of research on Education Policy in Graduate Programs, data of the discipline Education Policy in the courses of Pedagogy[5]. The following table summarizes the selected sources.

Table 7.1 - Sources of research

Sources	Period
Brazilian pedagogical bibliography (organized by Inep)*	1812-1944
Publications of the *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*	1944-2014
ANPEd bulletins and annals	1979-2015
Publications carried out within the scope of the ANPAE	1961-2015
Publications of the *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração da Educação*	1983-2014
Publications of the journal *Educação & Sociedade*	1978-2014
Theses, dissertations and papers with the term Education Policy in the title	Decades of 1960/70/80
Relevant official books and works whose titles refer to Education Policy	1935-2014
CBE Collection (*Conferências Brasileiras de Educação*)**	1992
Capes Indicator notebooks (data on Graduate Programs in Education and lines of research)	1998-2012
Directory of Research Groups in Brazil - CNPq (data on Education Policy research groups)	2015
Table of areas of knowledge of CNPq	1976-2005
Curriculum of undergraduate courses in Pedagogy of Brazilian universities (data on the discipline Education Policy)	(***)
Specialized journals, specific scientific events and Education Policy research networks	1993-2015

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5 The explanation of the collection, systematization and cataloging procedures of these sources is presented in Stremel (2016).

* Inep - *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* - National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira
** Brazilian Conferences of Education.
*** Note: The curricular proposals of the courses referred to different periods in the analyzed institutions. The sample involved the curricular information in force at the time of the research (2015) and, in the case of some universities that made available, the previous formulations of the curriculum.
Source: Organized by the authors.

From the empirical data it was possible to make an interpretation of what we can consider as temporal demarcations of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil. These demarcations or moments of the constitution of the field, addressed in this text, took into account the creation of institutional spaces, as well as the process of development of the field in terms of production and research.

As it is a relatively recent field, there are still few studies that address this issue. Among the publications that highlight some historical aspects and the constitution of this field, as well as the knowledge production in the field, we can mention: Wittmann & Gracindo (2001), Azevedo & Aguiar (2001a), Gonçalves (2005), Sander (2007), Santos & Azevedo (2009, 2012, 2014), Santos (2009, 2014), Bittar, Bittar, & Morosini (2012), Krawczyk (2012), Weber (2012), Arosa (2013), Bello, Jacomini, & Minhoto (2014), Schneider (2014), Souza (2014), Guimarães (2016, 2018), Mainardes (2017, 2018a), among others.

The publications that deal with the production of knowledge about Education Policy in Brazil (Azevedo & Aguiar, 2001a; Bello, Jacomini, & Minhoto, 2014; Gonçalves, 2005; Mainardes, 2017; Sander, 2007; Santos & Azevedo, 2014; Souza, 2014; Weber, 2012; Wittmann & Gracindo, 2001) bring relevant contributions to focus on the main characteristics, what and how Education Policy has been researched. One common ground that can be drawn from these works is that the field of Education Policy is comprehensive and heterogeneous.

The productions that deal with historical aspects and the constitution of the field (Arosa, 2013; Bittar, Bittar & Morosini, 2012; Guimarães, 2016; Krawczyk, 2012; Santos, 2009, 2014; Santos & Azevedo, 2009, 2012; Schneider, 2014) highlight elements of the historical context of research development or study important instances that are part of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil, such as: the Graduate studies in Education (Santos, 2008) and ANPEd (Arosa, 2013). Such research shows the complexity involved in this field, especially regarding the diversity of study objects that is articulated with Education Policy; to the struggles within the field in search of legitimacy and hegemony of discourses; as well as to the mutual influence between political field (State) and academic field, since, through its regulations, the State influences the configuration of this field, but it is also influenced by the political action of representatives of the field that occupy official spaces.

All of these studies focus on elements that help to understand the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil and deal with aspects related to publications and the production of knowledge, to scientific associations, to the institutionalization of Graduate Studies or to the historical context of research development in Education Policy. However, in a comprehensive and integrated way, the constitution of Education Policy in Brazil as an academic field still needs to be investigated, which is the purpose of the research that resulted in this chapter.

Emergence and development of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil

It is difficult to demarcate the point of origin of a field or a research area. Regarding Education Policy, some researchers

have indicated elements of the emergence of Education Policy as a specific field in several countries such as Argentina, Spain, the United States, Portugal and the United Kingdom (Carvalho, 2014; Garcias Franco, 2014; Johnson Jr., 2003; Lingard & Ozga, 2007; Puelles Benítez, 2013; Scribner, Aleman & Maxcy, 2003; Scribner & Layton, 1995; Tello, 2012; Wong, 1995). With regard to Brazil, the studies of Azevedo (2004), Santos & Azevedo (2009), Krawczyk (2012) e Schneider (2014) can be cited.

In general, studies that deal with historical aspects (Azevedo, 2004; Cibulka, 1994; Johnson Jr., 2003; Scribner, Aleman & Maxcy, 2003; Scribner & Layton, 1995; Tello, 2015; Wong, 1995) consider that, in its initial phase, research on Education Policy and public policies in general were developed from political science. From their constitution as a specific and relatively autonomous academic field, in each context, these fields assume their own characteristics. In the case of Brazil, in its initial phase, Education Policy arose linked to the administration of education (as it happened in the United States) and to comparative education. In the United Kingdom, Education Policy emerges more in line with Sociology of education. In Portugal, Education Policy studies are linked to both Sociology of education and Administration of education. In Argentina, the beginning of the constitution of the field occurred in a way closely related to the legislation (as in Spain) and to the comparative education.[6]

As in other countries (USA and UK), in Brazil, the emergence of Education Policy as an academic field began to gain momentum especially from the 1960s (Stremel & Mainardes, 2016). In summary, this landmark in the constitution of the field in Brazil can be related to three aspects: a) the creation of the National Association of Education Policy and Administration -

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[6] On the emergence of the academic field of Education Policy in different countries, see Stremel & Mainardes (2016).

ANPAE[7] in 1961; b) the most frequent use of the term Education Policy(ies) in the titles of theses, dissertations, papers and books; and c) the implementation of the Graduate Program (1965) and the first Master's Degree in Education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) (1966). Although it was possible to demarcate the emergence of the field from the 1960s onwards, an explicit[8] ground for the institutionalization of the field occurred in the 1980s with the creation of the *GT 5 - Estado e Política Educacional* - Work Group 5 - State and Education Policy - (1986/1987) within the scope of the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education - ANPEd. From the 1990s onwards, the institutionalization of the field expanded to other academic spaces with the creation of: disciplines of/on Education Policy in the curricula of undergraduate courses, lines and research groups in the graduate programs, specialized journals, specific scientific events and Education Policy research networks.

The analysis of the set of sources of the research offered evidence for a periodization of the field. The attempt to elaborate a periodization is always a challenge because it demands the search of innumerable data and evidence to subsidize the fractionation of a specific whole in temporal successions. It is undoubtedly a construction process that results in a synthesis work, which can contribute significantly to the area of study. However, rigid sectioning can lead to inaccuracies and hasty analyzes (Almeida, 1988). An important point to consider is that there is no absolute

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7   Subsequently, ANPAE changed its denomination four times: *Associação Nacional de Profissionais de Administração Escolar* - National Association of School Administration Professionals (1971); *Associação Nacional de Profissionais de Administração Educacional* - National Association of Educational Administration Professionals (1976); *Associação Nacional de Profissionais de Administração da Educação* - National Association of Education Administration Professionals (1980); and *Associação Nacional de Política e Administração da Educação* - National Association of Education Policy and Administration (1996).

8 From our point of view, it is necessary to consider the explicit use of the term "education policy", as it is the case of the nomination of the that Work Group 5.

temporal division, but a periodization that can be considered more adequate, from the sources and instruments used for the development of the research. As Bourdieu's own notion of field suggests, categories should not be taken for granted, they must emerge from the process of object construction (Bourdieu, 1989). In this perspective, the following presentation of the historical aspects of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil in three time periods represents an interpretation from the set of sources selected for the research. In Table 7.2, we present a summary of the three periods.

Table 7.2 - Temporal demarcations of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil

Period		Aspects that contributed to the constitution of the field	Historical-political context
The antecedents of the academic field of Education Policy (decade of 1820 to 1950)			
Decades from 1820 to 1880	→	Publications related to education policies, organization and administration of teaching: memoirs, reports, speeches, non-systematic descriptions	Brazil Empire (1822-1888) → Conquest of political autonomy; first attempts at school organization in the country (decentralization of education).
1920s	1924	*Associação Brasileira de Educação* (ABE)	First Republic (1889-1930) → Period marked by several educational reforms
1930s	From 1935	First theoretical studies on school administration, educational administration and comparative education	Revolution of 1930 → Centralization of the administrative decisions of the country (creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health) and expansion of government action in education
	1935/ 1937	First publications with the term "Education Policy" in the title (Bruno, 1935; Alves, 1937)	*Estado Novo** (1937-1945) Marked by a dictatorial character →
	1937	Creation of Inep	Strengthening of the centralizing politics of the government and implementation of concrete bases of a national education
1940s	1944	Creation of RBEP (*Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*)	

Period		Aspects that contributed to the constitution of the field	Historical-political context
1950s	1955	Creation of CBPE (*Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais*) and CRPEs (*Centros Regionais de Pesquisas Educacionais*)**	Political regime characterized by democratic governments (1946-1964) ↓ Technical-scientific and planning optics as the focus of the country's economic development policy; modernization of the Brazilian education

The institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy (from the 1960s)

Period		Aspects that contributed to the constitution of the field	Historical-political context
1960s	From 1960	More frequent use of the term "Education Policy" or "education policies" in titles of theses, dissertations, books, papers and official publications	Military regime (1964-1985) ↓ Planning as an instrument of governmental intervention and perspective of technical rationalization in education
	1961	Creation of ANPAE	
	1965	Implantation of the Graduate Programs in Brazil	
1970s	From 1971	Creation of journals in the area of education	
	1976	Creation of ANPEd	
	1979	Foundation of CEDES (*Centro de Estudos Educação e Sociedade*) and ANDE (*Associação Nacional de Educação*)***	
1980s	From 1980 to 1991	Realization of CBEs	Political opening, redemocratization of the country (from 1986) ↓ Intense social mobilization
	1986/ 1987	Creation of the work group GT 5 - *Estado e Política Educacional*	

Period		Aspects that contributed to the constitution of the field	Historical-political context
		The expansion of the academic field of Education Policy (from the 1990s)	
1990s	From 1990	Creation of Education Policy lines and research groups Creation of Education Policy disciplines Creation of Education Policy journals	Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government (1995-1998 and 1999-2002) → Neoliberal educational reforms
	1996	ANPAE was renamed National Association of Education Policy and Administration	
2000s	→	Extension of specialized scientific events and creation of research networks	Lula's government (2003-2006 and 2007-2010) Dilma's government (2011-2014) → Expansion of social policies

*Third Brazilian Republic - political regime established by Getúlio Vargas.
**Brazilian Center for Educational Research and Regional Centers for Educational Research, respectively.
***Center for Education and Society Studies and National Association of Education, respectively.

Source: Organized by the authors.

The antecedents of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil (decades from 1820 to 1950)

Since the 1820s, publications on educational themes have been found in the Brazilian pedagogical bibliography (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* [Inep], 1944), as well as on topics that are currently considered as the object of study of Education Policy. Such publications are the result of memoirs, reports on public instruction in the provinces, speeches, letters, minutes, regulations, opinions and unsystematic descriptions. At that time, Brazil had conquered its political autonomy with the Independence (1822) and elaborated its first Constitution (1824). Thus, in the so-called Brazil Empire (1822-1888), the first attempts to organize education in the country appeared, which were characterized by a decentralizing orientation, since primary and secondary education was in charge of the provinces and higher education of the central government. (Ribeiro, 2010).

With the establishment of the Republic (1889), several educational reforms began to take place and the problem of national education became increasingly a concern in the face of Brazil's economic and social development needs. It is in the 1920s that education as a field takes its first steps in terms of organization with the creation of the *Associação Brasileira de Educação* (ABE) - Brazilian Association of Education. This association brought together several educators engaged in the Brazilian education renewal movement and played a notable role in the debate and struggle of educational issues, in the dissemination of pedagogical ideas and influence in the definition of Brazilian Education Policy.

From 1930 onwards, Brazil experienced a period of centralization of political decisions with the Revolution of

1930 and the *Estado Novo* (1937-1945). This expansion of State performance is evidenced in education that immediately creates the *Ministério da Educação e Saúde Pública* (1930) -Ministry of Education and Public Health - and tries to reorganize the structure of education in the country in order to ensure the unification and articulation of state educational systems. The new political-economic order that is installed in the country based on the industrial expansion drives the demands of a universal school, whose claim was already being defended by the Progressive school educators engaged in the movement of renewal of the education (Aguiar, 1991). Thus, before the development needs of the country and the pedagogical ideas that defended the structuring of a national policy of education based scientifically, the first theoretical studies on policy, school administration, educational administration and compared education emerge with the works of Anísio Teixeira (1935), Isaías Alves (1937)[9], José Querino Ribeiro (1938) and Antônio Carneiro Leão (1939/1945).

In the *Estado Novo*, the concrete foundations of a national education and of a process of centralization of educational information are released (Aguiar, 1991). In 1937, Inep[10] was created, with the purpose of coordinating studies and research on the problems of teaching in its different aspects, as well as systematizing the educational knowledge to subsidize governmental actions. The creation of Inep is considered a

9 In the bibliographical survey that was part of the broader research of this chapter, Isaías Alves' work "*Técnica e política educacional*" was the first book located that is said to be on Education Policy. According to Mello (2005), the central theme of Isaías Alves's theoretical production focused on education policies, whose perspective was closely linked to political militancy as a defender of the *Estado Novo.*

10 Inep was instituted through Law no. 378, of January 13, 1937, with the name National Institute of Pedagogy. However, it began its activities in 1938 with Decree-Law no. 580, dated July 30, 1938, which provides for its organization and changes the name to *Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos* - National Institute of Pedagogical Studies. Only from 1972, it was renamed *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais - National Institute* for *Educational Studies and Research* (Inep, 2015).

milestone in the more systematic development of education research in Brazil.

In view of its purpose, Inep creates, in 1944, the *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos* (RBEP) - Brazilian Journal of Pedagogical Studies. RBEP was one of the pioneering scientific journals in the dissemination of knowledge in the area of education and education policies, contributing in a very peculiar way to the emergence and development of the field. In its first issue, papers on the situation of national education involving aspects of what we currently understand by Education Policy were published (Lourenço Filho, 1944; Bastos, 1944). Over the years, studies related to Education Policy have had a greater or less centrality in their publications due to historical factors, such as: the passing of new education laws; implementation of educational reforms or innovative education policies, mainly as a result of redemocratization; expansion of neoliberal policies (from the 1990s); creation of policies and programs of national scope, etc.

With the end of the *Estado Novo*, marked by a dictatorial political system, a new phase begins in Brazilian politics characterized by a democratic regime. A new stage of modernization of Brazilian society and, consequently, of education was also set up in the 1950s. According to Aguiar (1991), this phase is marked by technical-scientific thinking and the vision of planning within the State. This is due to the need for accelerated economic and social development with a view to overcoming the underdevelopment of the country. Education is perceived as a factor of development and, therefore, of economic investment (Aguiar, 1991).

In this context, the development of research in education gained more momentum and found a more specific space with the creation in 1955 of the *Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais* (CBPE) - Brazilian Center for Educational

Research), headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, and the *Centros Regionais de Pesquisas Educacionais* (CRPEs) - Regional Centers for Educational Research) in the cities of Recife, Salvador, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo and Porto Alegre (Gatti, 1987). According to Rothen (2005), the new structure of Inep, through the implementation of CBPE and CRPEs, was intended to strengthen research in education, as well as to decentralize Inep's actions, establishing a position of rupture with its past, linked to the *Estado Novo*.

In this first moment of the antecedents of the academic field of Education Policy, the contribution of the so-called pioneers of school administration, educational administration and comparative education, as well as of ABE, Inep, RBEP, CBPE and CRPEs to the development of research in education and the emergence of the first studies related to Education Policy in Brazil.

It is in the decade in which research in education gains greater strength in the university field that we place the second moment of the constitution of the field, characterized by the process of institutionalization, as discussed below.

The institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy (from the 1960s)

The process of institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil can be demarcated from the 1960s. A moment in which the strengthening of research in education occurs with the institutionalization of graduate studies in the mid-1960s. Implanted during the military regime (1964-1985), its valorization and the decision to institutionalize it, according to Saviani (2008a), stemmed from the perspective of modernization of the Brazilian society, where scientific and technological development was defined as a strategic area. The

rise of Graduate studies in Education dates back to 1966, when the first Master's degree in Education was created at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio).

The institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil, beginning in the 1960s, is also marked by the creation of scientific associations. One of them was ANPAE in 1961. Considering the relation between Education Policy and the administration of education, the creation of ANPAE (1961) can be considered as a first milestone in the process of institutionalizing the field. This relation between the fields is evidenced later, when ANPAE changes its denomination. In the course of its trajectory, ANPAE had four other denominations. In 1971, the association expanded its associative framework, changing its name to *Associação Nacional de Profissionais de Administração Escolar* (National Association of School Administration Professionals). In 1976, it was named *Associação Nacional de Profissionais de Administração Educacional* (National Association of Educational Administration Professionals). In 1980, it was changed to *Associação Nacional de Profissionais de Administração da Educação* (National Association of Education Administration Professionals), and finally in 1996, its focus was expanded with the denomination *Associação Nacional de Política e Administração da Educação* (National Association of Education Policy and Administration) (Sander, 2011).

In addition to contributions to the debates in the academic field of Education Policy through its Brazilian Symposia and International Congresses, ANPAE has been publishing several specialized works on policy and educational management issues. Another important contribution of the ANPAE to the field was the creation of the *Revista Brasileira de Administração da Educação* (RBAE) - Brazilian Journal of Education Administration - in 1983, which, from 1997 onwards, expanded its focus and scope

when started being denominated *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração da Educação* (RBPAE) - Brazilian Journal of Education Policy and Administration.

The creation of the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education (ANPEd) in 1976 and the Working Groups (called *GTs*) was another important factor for the institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy. In fact, the first explicit moment to legitimize the field was the creation of the Working Group *Estado e Política Educacional no Brasil* - State and Education Policy in Brazil, which began its activities with the 13 *GTs* of ANPEd in 1987, on the occasion of the 10th Annual Meeting. The *GT* was effectively established in 1986 during the 9th Annual Meeting. However, the discussion on the creation of a GT on "Education Policy, Administration and Planning" (ANPEd, 1986, p. 3) since 1984 (7th Annual Meeting) was already under discussion. As a GT "in formation", it initially received the denomination *Administração e Planejamento da Educação* - Administration and Planning of Education - (ANPEd, 1985, p. 19). From 1995 onwards, the *GT Estado e Política Educacional* in Brazil began to form the *GTs* of the 18th Annual Meeting with the denomination *GT 5 - Estado e Política Educacional*, expanding its scope beyond the national level. Concomitant to the creation of the *GT Estado e Política Educacional* in Brazil, there was also a change in the denomination of some working groups, which included the term "policy". From 1987 onwards, the *GT Ensino de 1º Grau* - 1st Grade Teaching - was renamed *Política do Ensino de 1º Grau* - 1st Grade Education Policy, and the *GT Ensino Superior* - Higher Education - was renamed *Política de Ensino Superior*[11] - Higher Education Policy (ANPEd, 1987). These changes gathered more evidence

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11 From 1995 onwards, these working groups have been called respectively *GT 13 - Ensino Fundamental* - Elementary School -, and *GT 11 - Política da Educação Superior* - Higher Education Policy.

that it is possible to infer that the period of 1986/1987 can be understood as an explicit milestone in the institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil.

The moment of the creation of *GT 5* and the changes in the denominations of the working groups mentioned above reveal the struggles in the process of building the field according to the conceptions of its agents and the capital at play (Bourdieu, 2003, 2004a). In the case of the formation process of *GT 5*, there were clashes between researchers with a conception based on education planning and administration, and others with a more Education Policy perspective[12]. In the political-social context of the 1980s when it was formed, democratic yearnings mobilized society because of the country's political openness. In this sense, the Education Policy perspective was favored and the *GT* was constituted. In its formation proposal, the "macro-structural approaches of Education Policy" (Azevedo & Aguiar, 2001a, p. 55) were favored, a focus that is defined in the name of the *GT* by means of the word "State".

It is important to note that *GT 5* is aimed at discussing specific issues of education policies, which are also discussed in other *GTs*, such as: Teacher education, Work and Education, Higher Education Policy, Curriculum, Fundamental Education, Special Education, Education of young and adult people, Education of Children from 0 to 6 years old, among others. This expresses that it is a comprehensive and multidisciplinary topic, which concerns different fields and areas of research.

Thus, although the creation of the ANPAE can be considered a first milestone in the institutionalization of the field, because of the relation between the field of education administration and

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12   The research involved an interview with two researchers (Márcia Ângela Aguiar and Janete Lins de Azevedo) who participated in its creation and acted as the first coordinators of the *GT 5*.

Education Policy studies, it is with the creation of *GT 5 - Estado e Política Educacional* that in the most explicit way, Education Policy is defined within an institutional space.

The enactment and contribution of ANPEd to the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy are not only restricted to the creation of *GT 5 - Estado e Política Educacional*. The engagement with the discussions on the Brazilian Education Policy is also present in the themes of the national meetings. In addition, its articulation with other entities promoted broad debates on Brazilian Education Policy.

The organization of the education field from the end of the 1970s is characterized by the foundation of several entities. In addition to ANPEd (1976), two other important entities were created: *Centro de Estudos Educação e Sociedade* (CEDES) - Center for Education and Society Studies, and *Associação Nacional de Educação* (ANDE) - National Association of Education, both founded in 1979. These three entities mobilized together in the organization of the *Conferências Brasileiras de Educação* (CBEs) - Brazilian Conferences of Education - that occurred between 1980 and 1991. The main concern that characterized the events of the CBEs turned not only to criticism, but especially to the search for proposals and referrals to the problems of Brazilian education (Saviani, 2008b).

Thus, these scientific associations made an important contribution since they participated in the movements of the education field for the reorganization of Brazilian education and promoted events that added several researchers and educators to discuss broadly themes related to the Brazilian Education Policy. In the context of these events, it can be considered that the knowledge produced contributed to advances in the process of maturation of the discussions in the academic field of Education Policy. The VI CBE held in 1991, for example, organized a series

consisting of six volumes with the texts of the symposia and round tables. One of the volumes of the series (*Coletânea CBE*, 1992) was devoted to examining the trajectory and contradictions of the relation between State and education.

Another aspect that makes the demarcation of the institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy since the 1960s possible is the more frequent use of the term "Education Policy(ies)" in the titles of publications. The term Education Policy appeared in the titles of some theses and dissertations, as is the case of Rivadávia Marques Júnior's dissertation, for a PhD competition, in the area of History and Philosophy of Education, at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Literature Studies of Araraquara (Marques Júnior, 1967); of the Master's thesis of Luiz Antônio Cunha, for the Master's in Educational Planning - PUC-Rio (Cunha, 1972); of Miguel Arroyo, in the Master's in Political Science - UFMG (Arroyo, 1974). It also appeared in titles of papers (e.g. Cunha, 1974; Lima, 1970; Martins, 1969; Silva, 1969), books (e.g. Cunha, 1973) and official publications (e.g. Santos, 1960; Porto Alegre, 1966; Sodré, Cintra, & Azanha, 1969).

During this period, the country was led by the military regime (1964-1985) whose logic of state intervention in education was based on the perspective of planning and technical rationalization. In fact, studies on Education Policy at that time emerged linked to discussions about educational planning. Thus, until the mid-1970s, a significant portion of the work, which is currently considered Education Policy studies, was considered as research and discussions of educational administration or school/educational administration or educational planning. This is the case, for example, of Cunha's master's thesis (1972) that was in the area of educational planning. Subsequently, it was published in a book format (Cunha, 1973).

Therefore, in the process of institutionalization of the field throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Education Policy was approached as a study of educational planning or administration of education. Education Policy began to gain greater legitimacy in the 1980s. In detriment to intense social mobilization, in the face of the country's re-democratization, Education Policy began to acquire specific space for debate in institutional spaces with the creation of *GT 5 - Estado e Política Educacional* within ANPEd and, later, from the 1990s, with the creation of lines and research groups in the Graduate Studies, disciplines, journals, events and research networks of Education Policy, aspects to be discussed in the next temporal demarcation.

The expansion of the academic field of Education Policy (since the 1990s)

In the context of the expansion of the academic field of Education Policy since the 1990s, several educational reforms of a neoliberal nature are situated, formulated and implemented in the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-1998 and 1999-2002), in which several researchers began to dedicate themselves to the analysis of the actions of the State in this new political-economic conjuncture. Therefore, there is a significant increase in Education Policy studies. In particular, from the 2000s, with Lula's Government (2003-2006 and 2007-2010) and Dilma's Government (2011-2014), there is an expansion of social policies and the implementation of a set of programs at all levels and teaching modalities. In this way, new research objects become a concern of researchers in the academic field of Education Policy.

One issue that has marked the expansion of the academic field of Education Policy since the 1990s is the set of proposals

presented by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) for the organization of Graduate Programs in lines of research (Stremel, 2016). It was in this context that lines of research began to emerge from/on Education Policy, as well as research groups that dealt with the study of issues related to Education Policy. The creation of lines and research groups brought important contributions to the structuring of the field of research in Education Policy[13].

The moment of the creation of the discipline Education Policy in the curricula of undergraduate courses can also be considered a milestone in the process of institutionalization of the academic field of Education Policy (Stremel, 2016). With this denomination, the discipline Education Policy begins to be part of the curricula of the courses of Pedagogy from the decade of 1990 onwards. In addition to this denomination, the disciplines of/about Education Policy present in the curricula of the Pedagogy courses assume different designations, such as: Structure and Functioning of Basic Education, Public Policies and Education, Education Policy and Organization, Education Policy and Legislation, Policy and Educational Planning, Education Policy and Management, among others. Despite this diversity of denominations, the terms "Education Policy(ies)" and "policy(ies) and management of education" have been more commonly used to refer to the field, either to designate disciplines in undergraduate and graduate studies, or even groups and research lines in Graduate Programs in Education, working groups in scientific associations and events, etc. (Stremel & Mainardes, 2015).

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13   In the survey, of the 121 Graduate Programs in Education evaluated in 2012, 88 programs had lines of research related to Education Policy. Of a total of 412 lines of research in the area of education, 93 referred to lines of research on/about Education Policy. In relation to the research groups, from the consultation in the Directory of Groups of Research of CNPq, in 2015, 255 research groups of/about Education Policy were identified (Stremel, 2016).

Besides discipline, another aspect that can be understood as part of the institutionalization process of the academic field of Education Policy is the creation of journals, scientific events and research networks.

Since the 1990s, several specialized scientific journals on Education Policy have been created: *Revista Brasileira de Política e Administração da Educação* (1983)[14], *Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação* (1993)[15], *Revista Eletrônica de Política e Gestão Educacional* (2001)[16], *Jornal de Políticas Educacionais* (2007)[17], Políticas Educativas (2007)[18], *FINEDUCA - Revista de Financiamento da Educação* (2011)[19], *Educação e Políticas em Debate* (2012)[20], *Laplage em Revista* (2015)[21], *Revista de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos en Política Educativa* (2015)[22].

In this moment of development of the field, characterized by a certain accumulation of knowledge produced, evidenced by research on the production of knowledge in the field, there is also the growth of specialized scientific events and the creation of research networks that integrate researchers interested in the advancement of knowledge of Education Policy. As an example of research networks and scientific entity can be cited: *Red de Estudios Teóricos y Epistemológicos en Política Educativa -* ReLePe (created in 2010)[23], *Rede Latino-Americana de Estudos Sobre Trabalho Docente - Rede ESTRADO* (founded in 1999)[24], *Red de*

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14   It expanded its focus from 1997 onwards. Until 1996, it was denominated *Revista Brasileira de Administração da Educação -* Brazilian Journal of Education Administration. Site: <http://seer.ufrgs.br/rbpae>.

15   Site: <http://www.scielo.br/ensaio>.

16   Site: <https://periodicos.fclar.unesp.br/rpge>.

17   Site: <https://revistas.ufpr.br/jpe>.

18   Site: <http://seer.ufrgs.br/Poled>.

19   Site: <http://seer.ufrgs.br/fineduca>.

20   Site: <http://www.seer.ufu.br/index.php/revistaeducaopoliticas>.

21   Site: <http://www.laplageemrevista.ufscar.br/index.php/lpg>.

22   Site: <http://www.revistas2.uepg.br/index.php/retepe/index>.

23   Site: <http://www.relepe.org>.

24   Site: <http://redeestrado.org>.

Investigadores de América Latina y Europa en Políticas Educativas - RIAIPE (started in 2007)[25], *Associação Nacional de Pesquisa em Financiamento da Educação - FINEDUCA* (founded in 2011)[26] and *Rede de Estudos sobre Implementação de Políticas Públicas Educacionais - REIPPE* (created in 2014)[27].

Research networks and scientific entities, each with its objectives, demonstrate the growing organization that the academic field of Education Policy has been acquiring. According to González Hernández (2015), the academic or scientific networks add people linked to teaching and research in educational institutions. These people compose study and work teams with the purpose of achieving specific objectives in a certain area of knowledge (González Hernández, 2015). In this way, an academic network can potentially advance the constitution of academic teams to face, increase and apply new knowledge, as well as to promote dialogues, the generation of academic spaces of cooperation and the establishment of joint projects (Chavoya Peña & González Hernández, 2012). Hence, research networks have made collaborative actions and collective effort possible, which potentially contribute to the process of consolidation of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented the historical aspects of the constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil from three periods. It is noteworthy that this field has been developed in articulation with the historical context of each period. Based on Bourdieu's (1989) ideas, we understand that in research on the constitution of a particular field, of a relatively

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25   Site: <http://riaipe.org>.

26   Site: < http://www.fineduca.org.br>.

27   Site: <https://www.reippe.com>.

autonomous space, its essence can only be apprehended by historical analysis. Still according to this author, a field is structured by institutions, agents and by what is generated in its interior (ideas, productions of agents). In this sense, although the role of institutions in the process of establishing the academic field of Education Policy has been emphasized, the role of the subjects (researchers, authors) in the field has not been disregarded, since institutions are formed by subjects and these are represented by their contributions to the field through their research, publications and political participation.

Based on the historical aspects presented, it is possible to affirm that Education Policy is an academic field that is specific and institutionally legitimized in Brazil and in other countries. In the case of Brazil, it is a field in expansion and in permanent construction. Like the field of comparative education, the field of Education Policy lacks "strict gate-keeping rules and is rather inclusive, as seen in its world congresses and other academic forums, where few of its participants have only a vague notion of the field or are weakly identified with it" (Manzon, 2011, p. 2).

In our perspective, the process of building the field, in view of its continuous strengthening, involves some challenges, such as: a) the necessary relation and interlocution of the field of Education Policy with other fields, such as the field of social sciences, political science, economics, and the development of social theory; b) the internationalization of Education Policy studies; and c) the need to develop studies of a theoretical and epistemological nature. Based on Susen (2011), we consider that the field of Education Policy is a scientific project and a political project. As a scientific project, it needs to offer consistent analyzes and conclusions, based on scientific criteria, such as: objectivity, adequacy and verifiability. As a political project, research on Education Policy is always committed to

offering socially referenced and politically engaged analyzes and conclusions, based on criteria of political normativity, such as: legitimacy, effectiveness in terms of social justice and equality and criticality. Thus, the issue of Education Policy does not constitute a monopoly of a scientific community, journals, research networks, etc., because it is something of public interest and can be debated in different social and political spaces.

Finally, we emphasize that this chapter focuses on the constitution of Education Policy in Brazil as an autonomous and specific field. It should be noted that there is no consensus on the validity and relevance of developing Education Policy studies as an autonomous and specific field. Stephen J. Ball, for example, in an interview with Mainardes (2015), questions the importance of the existence of clear distinctions and demarcations between the research areas. He believes that it would be more productive to minimize such demarcations and to think in a "post-disciplinary, post-philosophical way about theory and analysis, drawing from the insights and possibilities of different theories and disciplines, uniting them – a more pluralistic and diverse theorization" (Mainardes, 2015, p. 164, own translation). In spite of this, we argue that it is relevant to develop studies in a double dimension, that is, to explore aspects of the constitution of Education Policy as an autonomous and specific field, as well as studies that analyze the relations of Education Policy research with other areas (Social Sciences, Political Science, Economics, Anthropology, Social Theory, etc.), as well as expanding the debate on the contributions of these areas to the theoretical development of Education Policy.

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Chapter 8

Aspects of researcher education for the field of Education Policy at graduate level in Brazil[1]

Jefferson Mainardes
Silvana Stremel

Introduction

This paper aims to present the results of a survey conducted with graduates of Brazilian Graduate Education Programs who completed their doctorate in the period from 2013 to 2016, as well as to develop theorization about the process of education researchers to the area of Education Policy. The field research involved the application of an online questionnaire for graduates of research lines related to Education Policy. The option to do it with doctoral graduates is based on the fact that this is the highest level of researcher education. In addition, in Brazil, graduate studies have been one of the most important locus of research development and education of researchers.

The text presents a brief contextualization of the education of researchers as object of study, followed by the theoretical reference, methodology, data analysis and conclusions.

The education of researchers in the doctorate as object of study

Merga (2018) conceptualizes the education of researchers in the realm of Education as the process by which individuals acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct research in the field of education in an effective and ethical manner. It involves an ongoing process of learning beyond the completion of formal academic education, extending throughout the career as a researcher. The adequate education of researchers in the realm of Education is vital because of the contribution that educational research presents to inform policies and pedagogical practices in schools, colleges and universities (Merga, 2018).

In Brazil, research on the education of graduate researchers, especially in the doctoral level, is still scarce (Hostins, 2006, 2013; Patrus & Lima, 2014). In the international scenario, there is a significant number of publications about the role of the doctorate in the education of researchers, research and educational cultures, the essential skills in the researcher's education, the importance of evaluation of teaching and education of researchers in the graduate studies, among other relevant aspects (Deem & Brehony, 2000; Mowbray & Halse, 2010; Crossouard, 2010, 2013). An important aspect of the international literature is that the future of research in a given field is closely related to the spaces and conditions of the education of researchers, and it is necessary to investigate the educational processes, as well as to propose alternatives for improvement in education. Some authors point out that the growing interest in the doctorate studies may be related to the importance given to the knowledge economy, to the priority given to the development of a highly qualified research force and to the relevance of the doctorate studies for employability and scientific development of the country (Crossouard, 2013).

With regard to the education of researchers for the specific
field of Education Policy, literature is also scarce (Tello, 2015a;
Gorostiaga, 2017). It is thus verified that this is a very recent area
of research and still to be explored.

The interest in the investigation of this theme is related to
the authors' involvement with the Network of Theoretical and
Epistemological Studies in Education Policy (*Red de Estudios
Teóricos y Epistemológicos em Política Educativa -* ReLePe),
created in 2010 and whose objective is to develop research
on the theoretical and epistemological aspects of research in
Education Policy.

In this paper, we assume the perspective that the Education
Policy constitutes an academic field[2] in permanent construction.
In Brazil, it became an autonomous object of investigation
from the 1960s, having its origins in School and Educational
Administration. Since the 1980s, the area has expanded and
asserted itself as specific. In addition, we emphasize that research
on it is necessary and can bring elements that may be reinvested
in it, aiming at its continuous strengthening and expansion
(Stremel, 2016; Mainardes, 2017, 2018a).

Theoretical framework

Deem and Brehony (2000), when they theorize about the
concept of educational culture for the research, consider that
the programs of graduate studies have the role of offering an
extensive education for the research. Broadly speaking, there are
programs that are based on a more individualized educational
culture, while others are articulated around common disciplines
and activities or are integrated research programs structured

2   According to Hey (2008, p. 15), "academic field is the locus of relations, having as
protagonists agents that have by delegation to produce academic knowledge, that is, a
type of social practice legitimized and recognized as such".

around a legitimate culture of research education. The existence of a strong and structured research culture is valued both by funding agencies and research sponsors, as well as by scholars of the education of researchers. The authors also point out that the cultures of research and education of researchers differ from one area to another (and from one context to another).

In Brazil, Graduate Programs have a high autonomy to define their curricula. In general, the programs have conventional disciplines and seminars (such as compulsory and/or elective activities). Gradually, because of the proposition to organize the Graduate Programs in concentration areas and research lines (through the *Coordination* for the *Improvement of Higher Education Personnel - CAPES*), the creation of the Directory of Research Groups (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq), as well as the process of institutionalization and the maturation of research in the country, the existence of a more integrated and articulated culture of researchers is increasingly observed. In this context, research lines and research groups have acquired an essential role in the process of researcher education and orienting the research of students and professors.

Some aspects of Bernstein's theory (1998) contribute to the analysis of the processes of knowledge production and the education of researchers. Bernstein (1998), when discussing the so-called "new official economics of research" and its relation to research methods, sheds important light on the understanding of the research process. According to him, in the English context, from the end of the 1980s, through the influence of official funding agencies, scholarships were linked to what was dogmatically defined as education for "effective research". The new financing economy started to exert competitive pressure on beneficiaries to produce more with less resources. In this type of

regime, time is fundamental and influences the way of collecting
and analyzing data.

Dependence on government contract research may limit it
by using very tight samples or very strict methodological designs.
To Bernstein, the new doctoral design became "a permission to
drive and not a license to explore, to investigate" (Bernstein,
1998, p. 160), which has incalculable consequences for methods,
since both student and professors shall endeavor, by all means,
to complete within the established time limit. Bernstein's analysis
refers to the English context, beginning in the 1980s, strongly
marked by neoliberalism and, later, by managerialism. Since
then, research funding has become increasingly competitive.

In the Brazilian context, most of the doctoral students
are in public universities[3], the professors that integrate
the Graduate Programs in Education are effective and have
stability in the employment and the minimum of required
publications is reasonable. However, Bernstein's explanations
of the new economics of research can serve as a warning in
the face of questions about the gratuity of graduate studies in
public universities and the advances in the commodification of
education in Brazil.

In addition, it contributes to the hypothesis that the
researcher is not a mere technician who collects and analyzes
data. We assume the fundamental assumption that he/she requires
education that allows the acquisition of the scientific *habitus*[4],

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3 According to data from CAPES (2017), out of 74 Graduate Programs in Education
with master's and doctorate degrees in operation in 2017, 44 were from public universities.
Of the 5,989 enrolled doctoral students, 4,726 were from public institutions (78.91%).
Of the 1,342 graduates (PhD), 1,038 were from public universities (77,34%).

4 To Bourdieu and Wacquant (2012, p. 274), the work of a researcher is a *modus operandi*
and an *habitus*. The formation of *scientific habitus* is complex, as it involves "translating
highly abstract problems into fully practical scientific operations", which presupposes a
very peculiar relation to what is commonly called "theory" and "empiria". Thus, there is
no other way of mastering the fundamental principles of a practice (and the practice of

which includes the domain of theoretical-epistemological foundations of the main knowledge production approaches of the specific area and the methodological, ethical and political issues involved in the process of research.

A second contribution of the theorist refers to the role he attributes to theory in the research process. Bernstein (1998), when reviewing his 35-year trajectory research, says that theory, however primitive, always comes before research. The moment a concrete research is initiated, "the theory has already been submitted to a conceptual clarification when posed in relation to an empirical problem; and at the end of the concrete investigation, further conceptual developments are carried out" (Bernstein, 1998, p. 121). Thus, the education of the researcher demands the broad and consistent mastery of the theories underlying research in a particular field, as well as of the conceptual and ideological disputes that exist.

In the essay in which he develops the concepts of vertical and horizontal discourse, Bernstein (1999) presents the concepts of strong and weak grammar within horizontal knowledge structures. To the author, theories of weak grammar are constituted by parallel languages, produced by several authors and that contain weak power of conceptualization. Strong grammar theories, however, have an explicit conceptual syntax that allows relatively precise and unambiguous empirical descriptions and/or generating formal models of empirical relationships. Bernstein (1999) considers Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies as examples of weak grammar and Economics, Linguistics and Psychology as examples of strong grammar.

Morais (2004) explains that the science of education is a fundamentally horizontal structure of knowledge, characterized

scientific research is no exception) other than practicing them together with a guide or "trainer" that gives safety and tranquility (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2012).

by weak grammars, that is, a structure of knowledge characterized by parallel languages, produced by several authors and which contains weak conceptualization power. This fact is difficult for educational theories to originate an external language of description and an empirical activity with a secure structuring (Morais, 2004). One possible inference based on these concepts is that the process of education of researchers needs to instrumentalize future researchers with the solid theoretical-epistemological domain to be able to distinguish epistemological matrices, identify the potential of vertical and horizontal discourses and theories (strong and weak) and define the theoretical reference in a conscious and reflective way[5].

Thirdly, Bernstein (1998) makes a conceptual distinction between the pedagogical models of competence and performance. The social logic of a competency model has a view of the subject as active, creative and self-regulating. A competency model is turned inward insofar as it focuses on the development of the individual and hence on an introjected (inward) identity; by promising a "universal democracy of acquisition" (Bernstein, 2003, p. 78), reflects the possibility of emancipation. In contrast, Bernstein's performance model shifts attention to the texts or outcomes that the acquirer is expected to develop or the specialized skills he/she must develop (Bernstein, 1998).

While a model of competence is therapeutic in the way it directs attention to the individual, a performance model is seen

5   The discussion on strong and weak grammar is complex and controversial. Moore and Muller (2003, p.1348) explain that "sociology of education is then a horizontal knowledge structure with weak grammar, with a conceptual syntax incapable of generating accurate and unambiguous empirical descriptions. And since this grammar fails to relate empirical descriptions to theoretical descriptions without controversy, the empirical description cannot arbitrate conceptual disputes. Consequently, when disputes arise, a new specialized language is invariably created because there is no generally accepted principle for integrating the existing disputed theories. In the same way, there are no generally accepted means to get rid of the old-fashioned theories that begin to hinder literature".

as primarily attentive to economic objectives and is therefore considered instrumental, hence a projected identity (outward rather than an internalized identity). In his performance model, Bernstein (1998) distinguishes between the singular, the regions, and the generic modes of knowledge production. These distinctions are made considering the strength of the classification that allows them to be recognized as distinctive.

The concept of classification has a particular *Bernsteinian* meaning as it focuses on the force of isolation that allows certain categories to be understood as distinct. In a strong classification, disciplines and areas are seen as separate. Regionalization reflects a weaker classification, evidencing the emergence of new interfaces between knowledge production fields and fields of practice. The generic modes and the performances they generate are directly linked to the instrumentalities of the market, to the construction of what is considered to be flexible performance.

Applying these concepts to the process of education of researchers, it is observed that often the performance model is emphasized through strong classifications (few interdisciplinary relationships in education) and explicit control strategies (deadlines, goals to be achieved) and with low cost (do more with less resources, even if the education turns out to be faster). In this model, projected identities are created (directly linked to the field of economics and, therefore, with greater external dependence). The projection thus translates into a utilitarian position, based on market requirements.

The competency model, on the other hand, has a higher cost, since it demands more time and greater investment for research and education. In the competency model, the classifications are weak (with strong intra and interdisciplinary relationships) and student autonomy is highly valued (projected identities). Although the mastery of research techniques is

valued, a pedagogical model of competence engages more intensely with the development of intellectual and cognitive skills that are essential for academic work. The introjected identities are associated with personal projects, in which the concept of self becomes fundamental. Introjection can in this way be translated into a sense of loyalty to a particular discipline (field) or a commitment associated with a personal project.

Based on these theoretical assumptions, it can be argued that the research and educational cultures of researchers are historical processes and vary according to the context, area, time and traditions of research. Although the education of researchers for the field of Education Policy, in doctorate studies, takes place within a national and global context, it has specificities to be explored. In addition, from the contributions of Bourdieu's theory (2011), it is emphasized that research on the field itself is important and can bring elements that can be reinvested in itself, aiming at the understanding of its function, as well as its continuous strengthening and expansion.

Methodology

The research involved the application of an online questionnaire for Brazilian students of the Graduates Programs in education who completed their doctorate in the period from 2013 to 2016. The stages of the research were as follows:

- Survey of the Graduate Program that offered doctorates and had lines of research related to Education Policy in the Sucupira Platform, of CAPES;
- Survey of the names of the professors that integrated the lines of research related to the Education Policy based on the sites of the Graduate Programs in Education;

- Survey of PhD Theses oriented by the professors of the lines of research of the Graduate Programs in Education based on the Lattes Curriculum of the professors;
- Location of the e-mail of the graduates of the Programs in Education and dispatch of the invitation to respond to the online questionnaire. In addition, the invitation to participate in the survey was also sent from the contact space available in the Curriculum Lattes;
- Data analysis.

According to CAPES data, in 2016, Brazil counted on 170 Graduate Programs in Education - 130 academics and 40 professional master's degrees. Of the total of 170 academic programs, 74 offered masters and doctorates and 54, only masters. Of the 130 academics, 90 had lines of research related to Education Policy (69%), while 16 of the 40 professional masters (43%) had lines of research in the field. Of the 74 programs (masters and doctorates), it was found that in 53 there were doctoral graduates in the period. Table 8.1 presents the total number of PhD Theses of the Education Policy line of research and the number of PhD Theses that, after the analysis, were considered with a theme related to Education Policy.

The selection of Graduate Programs in Education with lines of research related to Education Policy was based on data from an earlier research (Stremel, 2016), in which data were collected on all Brazilian Graduate Programs in Education (concentration areas, lines of research etc.) from Capes information (Sucupira Platform) and the line of research description (from the Graduate Programs in Education websites). The definition of the Graduate Programs in Education list with lines of research related to Education Policy involved the analysis of line of research names and the description of each one. The selection of PhD Theses

and their adherence to the field of Education Policy were carried out from the analysis of the title and the abstract, taking as a parameter the areas and themes that researchers in the field have considered to be the objects of study of Education Policy (Tello, 2015b; Mainardes, 2018b).

Table 8.1 - Number of PhD Theses of the lines of research on Education Policy (PhD) and number of PhD Theses on Education Policy (2013-2016)

	Institution	Lines of research	Total number of dissertations of the line	Total number of dissertations on EP
1	*Universidade Federal do Paraná* (UFPR)	*Políticas Educacionais* (Education policies)	25	25
2	*Universidade de São Paulo* (USP)	*Estado, Sociedade e Educação* (State, Society and Education)	37	18
3	*Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná* (PUC/PR)	*História e Políticas da Educação* (History and Policy of Education)	27	17
4	*Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (UNICAMP)	*Estado, Políticas Públicas e Educação* (State, Public Policies and Education)	27	16
5	*Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho/Marília* (UNESP/Marília)	*Políticas Educacionais, Gestão de Sistemas e Organizações, Trabalho e Movimentos Sociais* (Education Policies, System Management and Organizations, Work and Social Movements)	18	16
6	*Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* (UFMG)	*Políticas Públicas de Educação* (Public Education Policies)	9	9
		Política, Trabalho e Formação Humana (Policy, Work and Human Education)	27	6
7	*Universidade Federal do Pará* (UFPA)	*Políticas Públicas Educacionais* (Public Education Policies)	18	15
8	*Universidade de Brasília* (UnB)	*Políticas Públicas e Gestão da Educação* (Public Policies and Education Management)	19	14

	Institution	Lines of research	Total number of dissertations of the line	Total number of dissertations on EP
9	*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS)	*Políticas e Gestão de Processos Educacionais* (Policies and Management of Educational Processes)	14	14
10	*Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro* (PUC-Rio)	*Educação, Desigualdades Sociais e Políticas Públicas* (Education, Social Inequalities and Public Policies)	13	13
11	*Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora* (UFJF)	*Gestão, Políticas Públicas e Avaliação Educacional* (Management, Public Policies and Educational Evaluation)	18	12
12	*Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ)	*Políticas e Instituições Educacionais* (Policies and Educational Institutions)	15	12
13	*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte* (UFRN)	*Educação, Política e Práxis Educativas* (Education, Policy and Educational Praxis)	14	12
14	*Universidade Federal de Pernambuco* (UFPE)	*Política Educacional, Planejamento e Gestão da Educação* (Education Policy, Planning and Management of Education	12	11
15	*Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo* (PUC/SP) - *Educação – Currículo* (Education – Curriculum)	*Políticas Públicas e Reformas Educacionais e Curriculares* (Public Policies and Educational and Curricular Reforms)	21	10
16	*Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul* (UFMS)	*História, Políticas e Educação* (History, Policy and Education)	14	10
17	*Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Goiás* (PUC-Goiás)	*Estado, Políticas e Instituições Educacionais* (State, Policies and Educational Institutions)	12	10
18	*Universidade Federal de Goiás* (UFG)	*Estado, Políticas e História da Educação* (State, Policies and History of Education)	10	10

	Institution	Lines of research	Total number of dissertations of the line	Total number of dissertations on EP
19	*Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos* (UNISINOS)	*Educação, História e Políticas* (Education, History and Policies)	15	9
20	*Universidade Federal da Bahia* (UFBA)	*Política e Gestão da Educação* (Policy and Education Management)	11	9
21	*Universidade Federal Fluminense* (UFF)	*Políticas, Educação, Formação e Sociedade* (Policies, Education, Training and Society)	13	8
22	*Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho/Araraquara* (UNESP/ Araraquara)	*Política e Gestão Educacional* (Policy and Educational Management)	22	7
23	*Universidade Nove de Julho* (UNINOVE)	*Políticas Educacionais* (Education Policies)	31	6
24	*Universidade Federal de São Carlos* (UFSCar)	*Estado, Política e Formação* Humana (State, Policy and Human Education)	19	6
25	*Universidade Federal do Piauí* (UFPI)	*Educação, Movimentos Sociais e Políticas Públicas* (Education, Social Movements and Public Policies)	12	6
26	*Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná* (UTP)	*Políticas Públicas e Gestão da Educação* (Public Policies and Education Management)	11	6
27	*Universidade Estadual de Maringá* (UEM)	*Políticas e Gestão em Educação* (Policies and Management in Education)	8	6
28	*Universidade Federal de Uberlândia* (UFU)	*Estado, Políticas e Gestão da Educação* (State, Policies and Education Management)	7	6
29	*Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul* (PUC/RS)	*Formação, Políticas e Práticas em Educação* (Education, Policies and Practices in Education	25	5
30	*Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa* (UEPG)	*História e Políticas Educacionais* (History and Education Policies)	11	5

	Institution	Lines of research	Total number of dissertations of the line	Total number of dissertations on EP
31	*Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho/Presidente Prudente* (UNESP/P. Prudente)	*Formação dos Profissionais da Educação, Políticas Educativas e Escola Pública* (Education of Education Professionals, Education Policies and Public School	10	5
32	*Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* (UFSM)	*Práticas Escolares e Políticas Públicas* (School Practices and Public Policies)	15	4
33	*Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo* (UFES)	*Educação, Formação Humana e Políticas Públicas* (Education, Human Education and Public Policies)	14	4
34	*Universidade Federal da Paraíba* (UFPB)	*Políticas Educacionais* (Education Policies)	10	4
35	*Universidade Católica Dom Bosco* (UCDB)	*Políticas Educacionais, Gestão da Escola e Formação Docente* (Education Policies, School Management and Teacher Education)	4	4
36	*Universidade do Vale do Itajaí* (UNIVALI)	*Políticas para a Educação Básica e Superior* (Policies for Basic and Higher Education)	4	4
37	*Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC)	*Educação, Estado e Políticas Públicas* (Education, State and Public Policies)	3	3
38	*Universidade Metodista de Piracicaba* (UNIMEP)	*Núcleo de estudos e pesquisa Trabalho Docente, Formação de Professores e Políticas Educacionais* (Center for Studies and Research Teaching Work, Teacher Education and Education Policies)	13	2
39	*Universidade Católica de Brasília* (UCB)	*Política, Gestão e Economia da Educação* (Policy, Management and Economics of Education)	9	2
40	*Universidade Metodista de São Paulo* (UMESP)	*Políticas e Gestão Educacionais* (Education Policies and Management)	7	2

	Institution	Lines of research	Total number of dissertations of the line	Total number of dissertations on EP
41	*Universidade Católica de Santos* (UNISANTOS)	*I: Formação e Profissionalização Docente: Políticas e Práticas* (I: Teacher Education and Professionalization: Policies and Practices)	3	0
		II: *Educação Escolar: Políticas e Práticas* (II: School Education: Policies and Practices)	4	1
42	*Universidade Federal de Alagoas* (UFAL)	*História e Política da Educação* (History and Policy of Education)	6	1
43	*Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho/Rio Claro* (UNESP/Rio Claro)	*Educação: Políticas, Gestão e o Sujeito Contemporâneo* (Education: Policies, Management and the Contemporary Subject)	3	1
44	*Universidade de Passo Fundo* (UPF)	*Políticas Educacionais* (Education Policies)	2	1
45	*Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais* (PUC/MG)	*Educação: direito à educação e políticas educacionais para os diferentes níveis e modalidades de ensino* (Education: the right to education and education policies for the different levels and modalities of education)	1	1
46	*Universidade Estácio de Sá* (UNESA)	*Políticas, Gestão e Formação de Educadores* (Policies, Management and Education of Educators	1	1
47	*Universidade de Sorocaba* (UNISO)	*História e Historiografia: Políticas e Práticas Escolares* (History and Historiography: School Policies and Practices)	8	0
48	*Centro Universitário La Salle* (Unilasalle)	*Gestão, Educação e Políticas Públicas* (Management, Education and Public Policies)	3	0
49	*Universidade Católica de Petrópolis* (UCP)	*Formação e Trabalho Docentes: Políticas e Práticas* (Education and Teaching Work: Policies and Practices)	3	0

	Institution	Lines of research	Total number of dissertations of the line	Total number of dissertations on EP
50	*Universidade Federal do Amazonas* (UFAM)	*Educação, Políticas Públicas e Desenvolvimento Regional* (Education, Public Policies and Regional Development)	2	0
51	*Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (UNIRIO)	*Políticas e Práticas em Educação* (Policies and Practices in Education)	1	0
52	*Universidade Federal Rural do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRRJ)	*Desigualdade Sociais e Políticas Educacionais* (Social Inequalities and Education Policies	1	0
	TOTAL	54	662	369

EP – Education Policy.

An important data of Table 8.1 is the difference between the numbers of PhD Theses defended and dissertations that effectively addressed issues of Education Policy. In the period 2013-2016, 663 theses were defended, of which 369 (55.65%) dealt with themes directly related to Education Policy. These data indicate that the lines of research are comprehensive and cover a range of themes beyond the Education Policy. In Brazil, the lines of research of Education Policy are related to other areas, such as Management, History of Education, Evaluation, social movements, right to education, curriculum, teacher education, etc.[6]

The Graduate Programs in Education that concentrated a greater number of students, with more strongly articulated PhD Theses to the themes of the field of Education Policy, in descending order, were: *Universidade Federal do Paraná* (UFPR); *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP); *Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná* (PUCPR); *Universidade Estadual de Campinas*

6   Regarding the constitution of the field of Education Policy in Brazil and the characteristics of line of research in Graduate Programs of Education, see Stremel (2016).

(UNICAMP); *Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho"* (Unesp), *campus* Marília; *Universidade Federal do Pará* (UFPA); *Universidade de Brasília* (UnB); *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS); *Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora* (UFJF); *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ); *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte* (UFRN); PUC-Rio; *Universidade Federal de Pernambuco* (UFPE); PUC-SP (Curriculum); *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* (UFSM); PUC-Goiás; and *Universidade Federal de Goiás* (UFG). In the surveyed period, there were 432 professors in the Education Policy lines of research, and 219 had doctoral graduates; 95 had no doctoral graduates; 90 had doctoral students, but they did not have any graduates at that time; and 28 had already conducted a doctorate student, but had no graduates during the period.

In order to meet the research objectives, a total of 369 PhD students were considered, whose PhD Theses dealt with specific themes of Education Policy (from the analysis of the title and abstract). The invitation to participate in the survey (online questionnaire) was sent to all 369 graduates, and responses were received from 108 of them (29.2%).

Regarding age, the majority (38%) of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years old; 35% were 41 to 50 years old; 22%, from 51 to 60 years old; 4%, over 60 years old; and 1% between 20 and 30 years old. Of the 108 respondents, 3% had postdoctoral studies in the country and 1% abroad.

With regard to the time of research experience, including scientific initiation (undergraduate), master's and doctorate, the following was found: 38% with experience from 6 to 10 years; 37% from 11 to 15 years; 16% from 16 to 20 years; and 9% with more than 20 years.

The respondents carried out the doctorate in the following institutions: UFPR (10 graduates); UFRGS (7); UNESP (7); UFJF

(6); UFPA (6); *Universidade Federal de São Carlos* (UFSCar) (6); USP (6); UFRJ (5), UnB (5); UFG (4); UFPE (4); PUC-PR (3); PUC-Rio (3); PUC-RS (3); PUC-SP (3); *Universidade Federal Fluminense* (UFF) (3); UNICAMP (3); *Universidade Católica Dom Bosco* (UCDB) (2); *Universidade Estadual de Maringá* (UEM) (2); *Universidade Federal do Ceará* (UFC) (2); *Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul* (UFMS) (2); *Universidade Federal da Paraíba* (UFPB) (2); *Universidade Nove de Julho* (UNINOVE) (2); *Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos* (UNISINOS) (2); *Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná* (UTP) (2); *Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa* (UEPG) (1); *Universidade Federal da Bahia* (UFBA) (1); *Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo* (UFES) (1); *Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* (UFMG) (1); *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte* (UFRN) (1); *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (UFSC) (1); UFSM (1); and *Universidade do Vale do Itajaí* (UNIVALI) (1). Respondents completed their PhD in the following years: 2013 (19%), 2014 (26%), 2015 (32%) and 2016 (23%). There was a great dispersion with regard to the PhD mentors, of 108 respondents the total of 74 mentors was verified.

With regard to participation in research networks, 48% stated that they were connected to networks and research groups. Of the respondents, 82% participated in specific Education Policy events.

Data analysis

The majority of respondents (59%) considered the education received as satisfactory and adequate; 38% rated as quite satisfactory; 2%, unsatisfactory; and only 1% indicated that education was non-existent. These data indicate that the graduates have a positive perception of the education, but they do not fail to indicate fragilities, gaps and weaknesses. The main

gaps mentioned refer to the absence of discussions on theoretical-methodological and epistemological aspects (22 graduates); absence of specific disciplines and discussions on Education Policy (14); shortage of time to further studies (6); weaknesses of the academic trajectory since undergraduate studies (3); lack of exchange between research groups and international researchers (3); lack of discussion about State theories and public policies (3); and weaknesses in the orientation process (2).

With regard to the educational spaces, the most recurrent were: reading and individual study (100 graduates); compulsory subjects (92); individual counseling sessions (85); Research Group meetings (81); optional disciplines (79); seminars offered by the program (58); collective counseling sessions (52); seminars offered by the Research Group (49); and reading and group study (47). It is interesting to note that the respondents indicated other spaces, such as: professional empirical field; participation in events and courses; sandwich PhD; discussion meetings organized by the students themselves; and participation in research projects and interinstitutional research. It is observed that a significant number of graduates (92) highlighted the importance of compulsory and optional disciplines. The disciplines with the highest number of indications were those on Policy Analysis; on State, Society and Education; those that addressed Public Policies and Curricular Reforms; various seminars; and the seminar on epistemological trends in Education Policy research.

Although acknowledged as an exploratory and small-scale study, data indicated that education privileges the development of more generic skills, but without neglecting specific issues of Education Policy. To Bernstein (1998), performance modes, at least regionalized and generic, serve economic purposes and are considered instrumental. The specialized knowledge (regionalized) of Education Policies (analysis of policies, State

and Education Policy, etc.) was not always available to the doctoral students of the lines of research related to the area.

Significant evidence to support this analysis were the responses given by participants in relation to the key elements of the researcher's education on Education Policy. Although this education is a long process and extrapolates the education received during the doctorate, it was considered that the graduates would have relevant contributions to the definition of the fundamental elements. In their view, education needs to contemplate in a more organic and articulated way the study of theoretical foundations for research (49 replies), of the study of methodological issues in the research in Education Policy (33); and Epistemology (general) and epistemologies of education policies (20). However, the graduates indicated the need for the education to contemplate more specific topics, such as educational and school management, democratic management, education financing, legislation, ethical issues, curriculum, History of Education Policy, regulation, educational evaluation, policy evaluation, bureaucracy, democracy, emancipation, public-private, conjuncture analysis, data analysis, evaluation policies and political economy.

In the pedagogical model of competence, it can be argued that the in-depth study of the major theoretical currents and broader epistemological debates of the Social and Human Sciences, as well as the study of more specific aspects of Education Policy research become highly relevant (Tello & Mainardes, 2015). When asked about the study of Epistemology, 59 respondents (55%) stated that they attended the discipline (or disciplines) of this area and 49 responded that they did not have it (45%). Among those who did not attend it, several pointed out that this had been "a weak part of my education" (G1).[7] Regarding those who attended it, they highlighted positive contributions:

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7   G: PhD graduate.

Yes. It was fundamental to my education because it is important to understand that there are different approaches and perspectives that can be used in a research and that, depending on the choice made by the researcher, there will be a type of research result (G5).

Yes. I think it was the most important discipline of my education as a researcher. (G6).

Yes. It was decisive besides my mentor's guidance (G7).

Yes. Epistemological education is the basis for argumentative construction. However, the discipline, in spite of having contributed to my theoretical education, did not contribute to the researches that I developed, due to its limitation to theoretical studies directed only to some perspectives (G23).

Yes, of course. In fact, it was not very good, since the professor dedicated himself only to the area of knowledge that he dominated and left behind the other epistemological perspectives (G38).

Yes. One of the best disciplines studied, fundamental to the education of the researcher, since it addressed the very genesis of scientific investigation, through positivism, critical rationalism, hermeneutics and epistemology of educational research (G41).

Regarding the existence of disciplines or discussions on specific theoretical-methodological issues of Education Policy, the majority (90%) answered affirmatively and 10%, negatively. According to the participants of the research, these issues were dealt with in conventional disciplines of the curriculum (79 graduates), in the activities carried out in the research groups (63), in the orientation sessions (63), in seminars (58), during

the sandwich doctorate (2), in individual studies (1), in research networks (1) and in events (1). Among the respondents, it was evident that graduates value the most specialized study in the field:

> It allowed to construct theoretical-analytical subsidies for understanding the field of the evaluation of Higher Education (G3).

> They contributed to the expansion of the theoretical and methodological debates, presenting us several authors in a decisive and thorough way (G14).

> These reflections allowed me to know and perform a critical analysis of the most used references in the analysis of education policies, almost always based on the Marxist categories (G16).

> In several aspects, but the main one was the development of my ability to critically analyze the theoretical aspects of other research, and even in the Education Policy guidelines (G23).

> To know how to differentiate the movements in the field of Education Policy, define concepts, understand the influence of foreign policy in the policies of our country (G24).

> It helped me to construct interpretive paths on education policies and also to have methodological security (G26).

> They contributed to an expanded vision of education policies, since I, as a teacher of Basic Education at that time (in the state and municipal public sector), had the mastery of practice, of the programs that came to schools, but did not know what there was behind them. This had relevance and still has today as a university professor and researcher in the area of Education (G38).

> They contributed to the dialogue of different, and often conflicting, views on Brazilian Education Policy, its origins, management models, financing and influences from other countries (G40).

> They contributed by demonstrating the problems that arise from the researches that use methodological and/ or analytical references detached from the underlying epistemological frameworks (G45).

> It allows the researcher a repertoire and knowledge that helps him/her to make theoretical and methodological choices (G90).

> These disciplines contributed to the delimitation of the object, in the theoretical deepening, in the elaboration of concepts, in the methodology, in the construction of my research, both in the process of findings and in the process of exposing these findings (G103).

Another issue was related to the existence or not of discipline or discussions related to research ethics and its implications for research in Education Policy. Fifty-one percent answered that they had no discipline or discussion and 49% answered affirmatively. Of the 108 questionnaires, 19% reported that they faced ethical dilemmas in the research process and 81% answered that they did not. The main ethical dilemmas were related to the following issues: anonymity, use of public access data, difficulties in obtaining the return of transcripts sent to interviewees, proximity to research subjects, and difficulties in accessing information and in meeting the requirements of the Research Ethics Committees. According to the respondents, such dilemmas were solved with the help of the PhD mentor and, sometimes, of the members of the panels.

Regarding the definition of the theoretical-epistemological reference for the PhD Theses research, the participants answered that such definition occurred from individual readings (25); orientation sessions (23); Research Group (14); disciplines of the Program (8); literature review (6); seminars (3); studies and previous experiences (3); sandwich PhD (2); political and trade union education and militancy (2); since the undergraduate thesis; and specialization course (2). The importance of the orientation sessions, the Research groups, the literature review, as well as the individual study are observed. Some respondents (3) emphasized the importance of previous experience and of political and union education and militancy, and some of the procedural nature of this definition:

> The theoretical-epistemological framework was defined in the course of the individual orientations and had as selection criterion the ability to explain the object investigated, that is, the option was made for the theoretical reference that presented the best ways of approaching reality (considering the cutoff of the research) and, consequently, of producing the possible answers to the problem. Thus, the empirical analysis was based on the theoretical presuppositions of the understanding sociology, having as main interlocutor the work of Max Weber, which subsidized the debate about bureaucratic and ethos administration that distinguishes the roles and relations of power between the two internal actors to the State apparatus: the politician and the bureaucrat (G31).

> Along with my mentor, through readings that used complex lenses to analyze educational phenomena. Throughout the research, I incorporated new references, considering that the collected data could not be analyzed with the theoretical lenses of the PhD Thesis project (G5).

I conducted a field survey. I identified the main theoretical affiliations in the area of educational evaluation, and consequently, in the area of evaluation of Higher Education. Supported by the fundamental discipline, which I attended in my doctorate, I made a framework of theoretical reference with the various conceptions of evaluation, present in the evaluation practices developed in educational evaluation policies. Then I did the same procedure with the conceptions of regulation (G3).

Conclusion

Despite constituting itself as an exploratory and small-scale study, this research brings elements for the understanding of the education and some implications for the process of education of researchers for Education Policy:

- It is necessary to develop more comprehensive research on the nature of doctorate in Education in Brazil (training cultures), as well as on policies and practices related thereto;
- The prevalence of the generic skills model (of Bernstein's pedagogical model of performance) in the education of the researcher on Education Policy needs to be questioned. Generic modes are not merely economic pedagogical procedures of acquisition, but are based on a new concept of "work" and "life", an idea that might well be called "something meant for the short term" (Bernstein, 1998, p. 88). From the generic modes, we hoped that "they will realize their full potential for flexibility and transfer, not just for specific performance" (Bernstein, 1998, p. 88); thus, they are fully structured in the concept of "capacity

building" (Bernstein, 1998, p. 88). The generic mode tends not to guarantee the development of skills and practices more related to the field itself (Education Policy) and those destined in "long term": to the broader theoretical-epistemological domain, in an expanded educational model (competency model), critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem solving and communication. The fact that lines of research are characterized by a certain hybridity and interdisciplinarity enrich them, increasing the possibilities of theoretical-methodological debates. However, deepening more specific research issues in the area of Education Policy is also required to maintain a link with the specific field;

- An important challenge for the area is the creation of an organic, articulated and conscious educational project. In general, we understand that this project needs to include essential aspects such as the study of Epistemology, research methodology, research technologies, academic writing (generic skills), ethics in research, but also a more in-depth study of issues more directly related to the field of Education Policy: epistemologies of Education Policy, theoretical references for the analysis of policies, history of the constitution of the field, among others. The relationships between general and specific aspects are fluid and dynamic (Crossouard, 2013) and should aim to integrate the acquisition of intellectual virtues that are necessary in the process of research and elaboration of the PhD Thesis, instead of offering an education dissociated from the development of the research.

Recent studies on research in the area of Education Policy (Mainardes, 2017, 2018a) have shown that it is a field strongly influenced by pluralism (strategies of combined theorizing), with a relevant potential to respond to its problems. However, the use of strategies of added theorization and absence of theorization were observed, whose adequacy and validity have been criticized. In addition, these studies indicate that most research tend to fit the levels of analysis and description, with a significantly smaller number of comprehension studies (Mainardes & Tello, 2016). These trends are related to factors associated with the culture and tradition of research in Brazil, research funding, characteristics of teaching work in public and private universities, but also the characteristics of the educational model of researchers in Brazil in the current historical moment.

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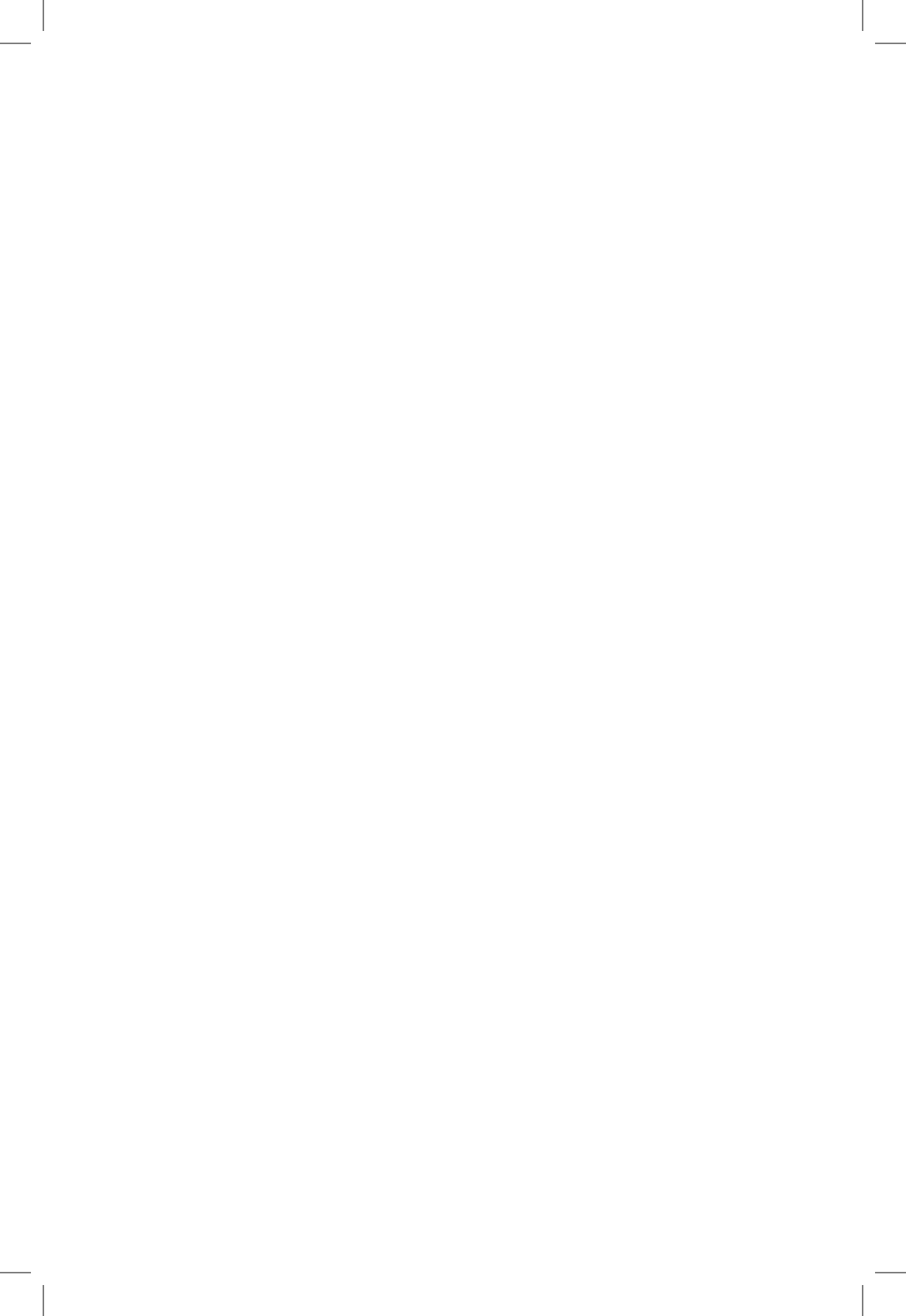
Chapter 9

Training researchers in the field of Education Policy: a discussion from the Latin American context[1]

Jorge M. Gorostiaga

Introduction

This chapter addresses the problem of the training of researchers in the academic field of Education Policy in Latin America. It systematizes a set of reflections arising from my participation in debates developed within the Latin American Network of Epistemological Studies in Education Policy - *Red Latinoamericana de Estudios Epistemológicos en Política Educativa* (ReLePe). At the same time, this issue is connected with concerns about doctoral training and the preparation of researchers, which have recently gained some prominence worldwide and regionally (Fernández Fastuca & Wainerman, 2015; Halse & Malfroy, 2010).

The text is organized in three parts, beginning with some considerations on Education Policy as a theoretical field. The second section discusses the current situation of research on Education Policy in the region. Framing the current situation in the general conditions of academic work, and of knowledge production about education in particular, some limitations

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1 This is a slightly modified version of an article published as J. Gorostiaga. "La formación de investigadores en el campo de la política educativa: una mirada regional". *Revista de la Educación Superior*, n. 183, 2017.

and problems are presented, such as the predominance of a professional-oriented approach in careers in the sciences of education or pedagogy, weak instances of academic debate, insufficient epistemological reflection and theoretical and methodological development, as well as relative absence of consolidated research programs at the institutional and national levels. The third section, presents some notes about the convenience of moving towards a training model that, without pretending to be valid and uniform for all contexts and level of specialization, exposes those who aspire to carry out research activities to the main theoretical and methodological debates in the field; promotes the analysis of both the epistemological assumptions of a diversity of approaches to the production of knowledge and of the social processes within which educational policies are framed; prepares them through their active participation in research projects within research groups; and promotes a reflection on ethical issues that affect the training process itself and more general aspects of the current conditions of academic production.

Considerations about Education Policy as a theoretical field

Strictly speaking, Education Policy deals with the study of public (or governmental) policies[2] that directly or indirectly affect education. This means considering the State, but also other actors and other levels of analysis (global, local, institutional) that influence the origin, development and impacts / results of public policies. In the Latin American context, authors such as Paviglianiti (1996) for Argentina, Azevedo and Aguiar (2001) and Mainardes (2015) for Brazil, and Flores-Crespo (2008) for

2 Barroso and Carvalho (2011) and Rizvi and Lingard (2013) both problematize, from an Education Policy perspective, the concept of public policy. On the other hand, Roth Deubel (2008) illustrates the diversity of theoretical perspectives in the field of public policies.

Mexico remark the prevalence of this vision, although within it there co-exist various theoretical conceptions of the State and its relationship with society, including the relationship between politics and public policies.

In a broader sense, Education Policy can be considered as the study of regulations that affect the government and functioning of education systems. The theory of the regulation of educational systems postulates that there are several sources of regulation, which interact in a complex and conflictive way and that originate at different levels or scales, from the supranational to the local. These regulations include institutional arrangements established both by government authorities and by market mechanisms, coalitions of organizations, professional associations and other actors or instances (Maroy, 2012). The concept of regulation has similarities with those of "public action" (Barroso and Carvalho, 2011) and "gobernance" (Reis, 2013), as the three concepts try to account for government conditions that have been altered by the processes of globalization, the questioning of the Keynesian State and the expansion of activities by civil society and the market. Jans (2007) notes that governance is an elastic concept that encompasses phenomena that involve collective decisions outside policies monopolized by the national state, where private actors and supra-national and sub-national instances intervene. "Governance" is thus associated with "soft instruments" of public policy, different from classical (top-down) regulation (Jans, 2007).

Studies that have used the concept of regulation in the Latin American context include Feldfeber (2009), Miranda et al. (2006) and Oliveira (2005). While an example of the use of the concept of governance as it has been proposed here appears in the works of Mancebo (2012) and Vaillant (2012).

Knowledge production about Education Policy shares many of the elements that structure, at a worldwide level and

in the region, the field of educational research. The emergence and historical development of knowledge production about education are determined by its search for both its legitimation as scientific knowledge and for guiding and justifying pedagogical practices and public policies. Even more, educational research is structured largely from the demands of state power (Palamidessi, Gorostiaga & Suasnábar, 2014), even though the agendas of international organizations and civil society actors also play an important role, besides the existance of purely academic interests. Educational research takes place in diverse institutional contexts which are linked in complex ways not only to the field of academic knowledge in the social sciences and the humanities, but also to the fields of technical-bureaucratic knowledge and pedagogical practices. It deals with multiple spaces of discourse production that do not correspond to the canonical model of scientific disciplines or of clearly recognizable, delimited and formalized scientific communities, but to areas with imprecise contours and changing connections, that work in different levels and hierarchies (Díaz, 1995; Palamidessi, 2007).

Unlike fields like the sociology or the anthropology of education, the field of Education Policy does not depend solely or mainly on a mother discipline. In this sense, it is not the application of political science - unlike what authors such as Pedró and Puig (1998) argue - to the study of education, not even the application of public policy studies (which, in turn, sought from their origin, as DeLeon and Vogenbeck (2007) to position themselves as a multidisciplinary approach[3]), although it includes them as relevant disciplines or approaches. The interdisciplinarity of the theoretical field of Education Policy

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3   The study of public policies as a theoretical field recognizes Harold Laswell's work in the 1950s in the United States as one of his points of origin. The "policy studies approach" has been characterized by three elements: orientation towards problem solving, multidisciplinarity and guidance by values (DeLeon & Vogenbeck, 2007). Other approaches, such as Muller's (2002), also emphasize the multidisciplinary nature of public policy research.

(Paviglianiti, 1996, Mainardes, 2015) implies the application also of approaches and tools of political sociology, anthropology, economics and comparative/international education.

The controversies of a fragmented field, which allow to speak of the "epistemologies" of Education Policy (Tello, 2013), are manifested in criticisms such as those made by Whitty (2002) when he points out that much of the research in Education Policy remains "one-dimensional, uncritical and decontextualized" (p. 13), particularly the "policy science" approach. Whitty (2002) also emphasizes the need for a sociological and historical perspective that considers and analyzes the broader social structures and dynamics in which the processes of elaboration and implementation of educational policies are inscribed. On the other hand, works such as that of Espinoza (2009), which contrasts critical and functionalist views in the analysis of educational policies, or that of Ginsburg et al. (1990), which describes four approaches in the study of educational reforms, account for the diversity of perspectives present in the field. This fragmentation is accentuated even more if one takes into account the tension between the interventionist objectives (contributing to the solution of specific policy problems) and the academicist objectives that historically characterize the studies on Education Policy. This tension is characteristic of both public policy studies – with the classic distinction between analysis *of* policies and analysis *for* policies (Espinoza, 2009) – and of the general field of education (Palamidessi, Gorostiaga & Suasnábar, 2014).

Current situation of research on Education Policy in Latin America

The field of educational research in the region, including the area of Education Policy, has experienced a strong expansion since the early 1990s (Gorostiaga, Tello & Isola, 2012).

Among the factors that have contributed to this growth are: a) the cumulative effect of the years of political stability under democratic regimes (despite the recurrent economic crises); b) the processes of educational reform, which stimulated a greater discursive production around the policies and strategies and instruments of expansion and improvement of the educational system; c) the increase in university enrollment and the development of professionals and academics trained in the years following the return of democracy; d) the expansion of graduate studies in education and social sciences (Palamidessi, Gorostiaga & Suasnábar, 2014).

A general trend in Latin American higher education systems in this period has been the growth of graduate programs, including education. The Mexican State, for example, put in place measures to increase the number of full-time and doctorate university professors, which resulted in a strengthening of research activities (COMIE, 2003). Argentina also implemented policies to modernize higher education and to strengthen the figure of the research professor, such as the Research Incentives Program under the responsibility of the National Ministry of Education. The implementation of competitive funds, incentives and research evaluation in several countries of the region has had diverse, in some cases controversial, effects, such as prioritizing quantity over quality of production (Restrepo, 2015). With regard to academic professionalization, measures have been implemented by science and technology national bodies to reinforce those carried out within higher education systems, resulting in a strong growth in the number of researchers and doctoral students in the region (RICYT, 2016).

One of the characteristics of the Latin American context that influences the academic field of Education Policy is the predominance of a professional-oriented approach in bachelor's

degrees in the sciences of education or pedagogy, an approach that involves preparation mainly for teaching or other types of professional performance within the formal and non-formal education system. Although undergraduate education is not the level in conditions to provide the socialization nor the necessary tools for the full induction to the craft of research, it does play a fundamental role in the possibility of guiding students towards an academic career, insofar as it should promote interest in scientific research and activities that generate a minimum development of competencies associated with it[4]. This includes, as a very important element, the familiarization of students with the main schools of thought and the more general epistemological, theoretical and methodological debates within the social sciences. This element is what a professional orientation tends, many times, to relegate or ignore.

Another feature of our region is the weakness of the academic profession, particularly in the field of education. Although the panorama between 2000 and 2015 supposed a general improvement in the conditions for carrying out research -with important differences according to the context of each nation- difficulties persist in many countries that result in relatively few people with full dedication, scarce resources, and low levels of internationalization in research. In education, in particular, the professional field continues to have a much greater weight, in most of our countries, than academic work in terms of opportunities in the job market. These elements combined translates into low levels of institutionalization of educational research (Palamidessi, Gorostiaga & Suasnábar, 2014), manifested in weak instances of academic debate and

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4 For example, García de Fanelli (2010), points out that in Argentina undergraduate students in education, sociology and other degrees (whose graduates nurture the field of educational research) study subjects such as methodology and statistics, but they do not usually have the possibility of a systematic application of this knowledge in the rest of the courses.

absence of consolidated research programs at the institutional or national level.

Nonetheless, the expansion of the academic field of Education Policy in the region has been notable in the last twenty years (Tello & Mainardes, 2015; Krawczyk, 2013), stimulated by the elements mentioned in the first paragraph of this section. However, this expansion shows that there are important pending challenges for the consolidation of the field. The observation by Wainerman (2010) that publications in the field of education place emphasis on normative-descriptive developments at the expense of the transmission and discussion of research results is completely applicable to the area of Education Policy. To this is added an insufficient epistemological reflection and theoretical and methodological development, which has been pointed out by numerous authors (Flores-Crespo, 2008; Giovine, 2016; Krawczyk, 2013; Loyo Brambila & Romero Gonzaga, 2017; Tello, 2013; Tello & Mainardes, 2015). On the other hand, the sociological view that Whitty (2002) defends has been typical of a large part of the research on Education Policy predominant in the region, at least since the 1990s (see, for example, Krawczyk (2013) for the case of Brazil), but not always with the necessary complexity to avoid falling into reductionisms and linear explanations.

Elements for a possible training model

In this section I do not intend to develop a systematic model for the training of researchers, but to highlight some aspects that may be relevant to our context and our specialty, although not necessarily exclusive to them. Before, however, it is necessary to make explicit some of my assumptions. The first is that a researcher is an academic, a scientific knowledge worker, not a mere technician who collects and analyzes data.

The researcher's task is centered on knowledge production in accordance with scientific canons, but also on teaching, on maintaining dialogue with peers and other social actors, and on the projection of their work towards the community. A second assumption is that academic research is a craft or profession that functions as a *habitus*, which is acquired in a reflexive practice, oriented in its beginnings by an expert who transmits the necessary competencies thorugh the practice of doing research (Wainerman & Fernández Fastuca, 2013). In the learning of this craft, the doctorate is the main -and almost ineludible- formal instance, conforming as a means of socialization in the academic culture, in which the dissertation supervisor or tutor, as well as the teaching and learning process that takes place during the elaboration of the dissertation, play fundamental roles (Fernández Fastuca & Wainerman, 2015). A final assumption, more strictly linked to our specific field, is that research on public policies is inevitably connected to political projects and social processes (Ball, 1997)[5] and such linkage often has important ethical connotations (Gewirtz, 2007).

A good training base for the researcher in Education Policy includes the knowledge of the main schools of thought and of the more general debates of epistemological, theoretical and methodological type within the social sciences. This knowledge is necessary for the researcher to be able to approach both the main (current, but also historical) theoretical and methodological debates as well as the analysis of the epistemological assumptions of the main approaches to knowledge production on Education Policy. At the same time, it also seems necessary to develop the

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5   Although this does not mean that the scientific task is put at the service of a determined party or ideological position, we can recognize that "In a variety of ways our research and 'scientific' conceptualisations can be tied back into broader political projects and social processes and to the functions of managing and neutralising 'social problems'" (Ball, 1997, p. 263).

ability to dialogue with other epistemological perspectives and other theoretical traditions different from that adopted for his or her own research. The training of the researcher should also include the tools to approach the analysis of educational policies with a historical perspective and within the framework of national and global social, economic and political processes, essential elements for understanding the origin and implications of policies (Ginsburg et al., 1990; Whitty, 2002). On the other hand, at the graduate level, in addition to deepening the knowledge and skills already mentioned, it is worth highlighting (although it may seem obvious) the need to establish training in a state of the art updated in theoretical terms and in empirical accumulation at the international, regional and national levels. From the recognition of our peripheral position (in Latin American countries) in knowledge production and the questioning of the mechanisms that reinforce this position, it is possible to articulate a stance that values the local/national generation of theory and empirical development without ignoring the global character of science and the necessary exchange with the spaces and actors located in the center and in the rest of the periphery.

In clear connection with the above, the training of researchers in Education Policy should stimulate - in my opinion and in line with what the ReLePe has been promoting - a high degree of self-reflexivity about epistemological and theoretical options. The convenience of explaining from what perspective or approach is the research conducted (Tello, 2013) can be considered as an exercise in "epistemological surveillance" that recognizes that the object of study is theoretically constructed (and not based on a supposed direct observation of reality) and that it forces us to review the coherence in epistemological and theoretical/methodological terms of our designs of inquiry. This is related to what Krawczyk (2013) considers one of the main

current challenges for the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil (and, one might add, throughout the region), as is the revitalization of the theoretical and historical debate, given that the data collected in empirical research requires for its organization and analysis of frameworks built on the basis of theoretical and historical perspectives of social and educational reality.

In a more instrumental sense, it can be pointed out the convenience of starting the research training (even at the undergraduate level) through active participation in a project - or better yet, a research program-- that allows the student to observe the application of theoretical and methodological tools to specific research problems as well as the real development ("the kitchen") of a scientific knowledge production process. In this line, training within research teams, an experience not so common in the social and human sciences, seems to have a fundamental importance. Participation in a team reinforces the process of insertion into a "community of practice" and academic socialization (Wainerman & Fernández Fastuca, 2013). The research team complements the vertical relationship (teacher-student, director-grantee, tutor-doctoral candidate) with the possibility of exchanges of greater horizontality that promote the acquisition of both theoretical and methodological knowledge and the *habitus* and the unwritten rules that are part of the craft of research.

In relation to these processes of academic induction and socialization, one of the problems that remains poorly addressed, although there has been some accumulation of theoretical and empirical production, is that of preparation in the direction or orientation roles of doctoral students and researchers. These roles involve a work of artisan type that includes a set of activities that are learned, fundamentally, in practice and over a long period of time, involving tacit knowledge, which is more difficult to transmit than coded knowledge (Fernández

Fastuca & Wainerman, 2015; Hockey, 1997). Thus, it becomes evident the need to deepen the issue of how to be trained in the orientation and supervision of researchers.

The process of researcher training in Education Policy also involves a series of ethical issues, some of which I will briefly consider here. Given what was previously mentioned about the inevitable connection of our research with social and political projects, it would also seem convenient to promote reflexivity around these issues, starting with the choice of research problems to the way of presenting our results, without compromising the necessary adherence to established procedures and the spirit of scientific work. As Gewirtz points out (2007, p. 9),

> in the case of policy analysis, although we cannot control how our work is read or used, we need to try as far as it is possible to reduce the potential for our analysis to contribute to what we would regard as undesirable ends.[6]

Or, put in positive terms, to ensure that our research agenda and the products of our work give some answer - even in terms of illumination or greater understanding - to what we consider genuine social problems.

This is linked to our stance regarding participation in consultancy activities or in work oriented to analysis for the design and evaluation of policies. Without ignoring the importance and necessity of this type of activities, there is a legitimate concern about the role played by many short-term consultancies that result in works that, lacking solid theoretical

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6   It is appropriate, here, the distinction formulated by Sousa Santos (2006) between objectivity and neutrality: "Objectivity, because we have social sciences´ methodologies that allow for a knowledge that is rigorous and that defends us from dogmatisms; and, at the same time, we live in very unjust societies in relation to which we can not be neutral" (p. 18, my translation).

and methodological bases, are used to make important decisions, sometimes affecting entire nations (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006; Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal, 2003). As Whitty (2002) also points out, academic work is the most conducive for studying education in its relationship with the broader social order (and, therefore, for the analysis of educational policies in all its complexity), while other types of work are more exposed to pressures to generate "quick and superficial solutions" to the problems of Education Policy. At the same time, the tension between the academic field and that of politics should be recognized as inherent to the researcher's work in Education Policy (Krawczyk, 2013).

Finally, it is worth mentioning other issues that pose ethical dilemmas that we face on a daily basis as tutors or supervisors, from the type of relationship and the level of commitment that we assume with our students[7]; to the degree of autonomy that we grant them and the possibilities of acquisition of academic capital that we offer them (for example, incorporating them as co-authors of publications); and to the stance that we adopt as directors of research projects facing the demands of external evaluation processes that, increasingly, put us at risk of falling into a productivism that neglects the quality, relevance and originality of our work.

Conclusion

The possibility of generating research training processes of greater academic excellence and social relevance depends, to a large extent, on the working conditions established by our institutions and by national science and technology policies. Although these

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7   The importance of the level of commitment in doctoral training is one of the issues highlighted by Bayardo and Morett (2011), which is linked to the reference that other authors make about the widespread "pedagogy of indifference" that usually prevails among tutors and professors in graduate education (Fernández Fastuca & Wainerman, 2015).

conditions and policies have improved significantly in the last two decades, contributing - along with other factors - to the expansion of educational research in the region, important limitations remain to be faced in order to achieve the consolidation of research on Education Policy in the region.

Other challenges more directly address the role of research communities in the academic field of Education Policy. One of the main ones is the strengthening of epistemological reflection and theoretical and methodological development, responding to the regional and specific problems of each country, and in dialogue with international academic communities. As I argued in the previous section, this strengthening is essential to develop a training model that exposes those who aspire to carry out research activities to the main theoretical and methodological debates that have been given historically and to those that exist today; that it promotes the analysis both of the epistemological assumptions of a diversity of approaches to knowledge production and of the social processes within which educational policies are framed; and to shape them through their active participation in projects and research groups. Also of importance is the reflection, within research teams and in formal instances of training, on ethical issues that affect the training process itself and more general aspects of the current conditions of academic research production.

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EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH

epistemological and theoretical issues

This book presents theoretical and epistemological issues of the Education Policy field, developed for researchers of the Relepe - Network of Theoretical and Epistemological Studies on Education Policy. This research network was created in 2010, initially with researchers from Latin America, aiming at joining researchers interested in theoretical and epistemological issues of the research on Education Policy.

The book explores the following aspects:

- The three elements of the focus of epistemological studies on Education Policy: epistemological perspective, epistemological positioning and epistemethodological approach;
- Levels of approach and abstraction in the research on Education Policy (description, analysis and understanding);
- Meta-research on the field of Education Policy;
- The constitution of the academic field of Education Policy in Brazil;
- Aspects of the research training in Education Policy.

The book presents new and innovative discussions in the field of Education Policy research and is a contribution for the development of the field from Latin American perspectives.