Documental analysis of educational public policy: foundations of Paul de Bruyne's quadripolar approach

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ABSTRACT. The present study seeks to explain the techniques and procedures, the concepts and categories with which the interpretation of the object studied, that is - documents related to the High School Technical Professional Education Policy - implemented in Bahia / Brazil, specifically, the reference regarding Paul de Bryne's quadripolar approach (1977), which provide the theoretical-methodological density of the object studied in relation to the epistemological, theoretical, technical and morphological poles. In this perspective, it is agreed with Gamboa (1987), in the sense that, the accomplishment of a research is not the fulfilment of 'methodological ritualism' with a 'theoretical fad' in order not to repeat what commonly happens in research in education, in progressively more intense way, of eclectic attempts that randomly collect techniques, methods and theoretical references without a clear understanding of the epistemological foundations and the philosophical implications of the different paths of knowledge.

Keywords: Qualitative methodology; Educational Research; Public Policy

INTRODUCTION

The movement[1] performed in the research[2] is supported by the theoretical-methodological approach and the discursive process[3] of historical materialist dialectics, explained below, which articulated the object of study - the High School Technical Professional Education Policy in Bahia, Brazil (TPE) and the training of egress subjects from technical courses - with the dynamics of the capitalist State and its particularity in Brazil. It was based on Paul de Bryne's quadripolar methodological approach (1977), from his assumption that Social Sciences, that is focused on an analysis of production conditions of knowledge, operate in an indispensable methodological awareness for the elucidation of the mechanisms of research.

> Far from reducing the methodology to a privileged approach or just to the technical [...] operation of data collection, [...] scientific practice, as intentioning to progressively build its object, is developed in a structure from four poles: epistemological, theoretical, morphological, and technical. These different methodological instances with their own requirements, do not represent separate moments of the research, but are articulated in each of one of the approaches that it follows (Bryne, 1977; w/o number).

If one wants to reach a true knowledge of social reality, it is necessary to capture it in its own production, that is, in action, considering this last in itself, in its effectuation, and not in its effects (Bruyne, 1977, p. 10).

Every research engages, explicitly or implicitly, these different instances of the quadripolar configuration; each of them is conditioned by the presence of the others, and these four poles define a

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[1] *Movement is understood from Cheptulin (2004, p. 165) as a constant passage of matter from one stable state to another, with the appearance of new formations that are replaced. The question that arises is to know what is the tendency of all these transformations, what is the meaning of the movement and what appears in place of the material formations that disappear.*

[2] *This text is part of the thesis: 'High School Technical Professional Education Policy in Bahia 2007-2014: contradictions between 'inclusive promise' and social practice'. Defended in February 2018 in the Postgraduate Program in Public Policy and Human Formation at the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.*

[3] *Bruyne (1997, p. 66) describes the discursive process of dialectics as an immanent approach to content that seeks the internal causes of its development, its contradictions; these internal causes are the reason for the changes, while external causes are only accidental conditions of the changes. [...] The dialectical method is only fully and rigorously realized in the total capture of the historical movement in its constituent contradictions. [...] Dialectical analysis aims at an objective set that determines the meaning of historical development (dialectical laws of history); it defines the relations of the general with the particular in its historical concretization. Dialectical laws reveal the objective meaning of a historical set, thus proposing a kind of hermeneutics of the objective meaning of history. Bruyne (1997, p. 67)*

methodological field that ensure the scientificity of research practices (Bruyne, 1977, p. 35).

The epistemological pole '...performs the function of critical vigilance. Throughout the research, it is the guarantee of objectification, that is, the production of the scientific object, the explicitness of the research problems. It is in charge of continually renewing the rupture of scientific objects with those of common sense (Bruyne, 1977, p. 35). The epistemological pole of this research - configured by Historical-Dialectic Materialism - guided me in the study of the public policy of professional education for the training of workers, their production and their movement in the period from 2007 to 2014, in Bahia, as well as their articulation and alignment with the unfolding of the same policy at the federal level, considering its socio-economic determinations in the period studied.

The theoretical pole guides the elaboration of hypotheses and the construction of concepts. It is the place for the elaboration of scientific languages, 'it is close to the frames of reference'. 'These frames of reference perform an implicit paradigmatic role and determine the conceptualization movement' (Bruyne, 1977, p. 35). This pole guided me to collect the specificity of the object. It was a question of elaborating the object conceptually, the frames of reference, with the help of the theory that gives it concreteness in its specificity. This study, which analyzes the professional education policy, reports the theory about the State and public policy, consistent with the epistemological pole. It is from this pole, which explicitly explains a hypothesis, such as research questions and objectives, in addition to the specific categories of object - contradiction, social praxis and the educational principle of work - in a manner consistent with the theoretical framework used. This study, which analyzes the professional education policy, refers to the theory about the State and public policy, in coherence with the epistemological pole. It is from this pole that I explained the hypothesis, the research questions and the objectives, in addition to the specific categories of the object - contradiction, social praxis and the educational principle of work - consistent with what the theoretical framework allowed.

The technical pole '...controls the data collect, try to find them in order to be able to confront them with the theory that raised them, has its neighborhood with particular modes of investigation, with researches choose, for a particular type of encounter with empirical facts' (Bruyne, 1977, p. 36). It guides me as official documentary sources and with the data used in the research from questionnaires and interviews. In the documentary analysis, it contributed to the conceptual identification of policies; in content analysis and interviews with the historical perspective; in the survey of quantitative data, it collaborated in the triangulation of sources and data, both primary and secondary sources. In the bibliographic review, it boosted the search for the state of the art. Therefore, it constitutes the very construction of the research method, based on an analysis of historical content, articulated with the categories of the historical-dialectical method.

The morphological pole '...is the instance that enunciates the rules for structuring, for forming the scientific object. It allows to place a space of causation in network where scientific objects are built (Bruyne, 1977, p. 35). It guided me in formalizing the results of the investigation carried out through the representation of the object now analyzed and the exposure of the entire research and analysis process, which allowed for the scientific construction around it. In other words, it is where it arrived with what was collected in the investigation process. From here, it was possible to elaborate the sequence of chapters and items of the respective chapters. This pole guided us on how to expose the investigation itself, when it was concluded.

For the elaboration of the thesis, 'the dialectical interaction of these different poles constitutes the set of methodological practices' (Bruyne, 1977, p. 36). The categories of the method of historical-dialectical materialism - totality, historicity, mediation, particularity, singularity and contradiction - emerge from the object of the research, guided by the direction given by the epistemological, theoretical, technical and morphological poles, which produced the materiality of the analytical and empirical categories for the interpretation of the researched object.

Minayo (2000, p.94) presents and distinguishes two types of categories, *Analytical Categories and Empirical Categories*. The first are those that historically retain fundamental social relations and can be considered as landmarks for the knowledge of the object in its general aspects. The second are those built for the operational purpose aiming at the field work, or from it. 'It is the empirical categories that make it possible to apprehend the determinations and specificities that are expressed in the empirical reality'. The second are those built for the operational purpose aiming at the field work, or from it. 'It is the empirical categories that make it possible to apprehend the determinations and specificities that are expressed in the empirical reality'. In Minayo (1994, p. 70), the term *category*, in general, refers to a concept that includes elements or aspects with common characteristics or that are related to each other. It is attached to the idea of *class* or *series*. The categories are used to establish classifications. In this sense, 'working with them means grouping elements, ideas or expressions around a concept capable of covering all of this. This type of procedure in general can be used in any type of qualitative research.

Research in dialogue with the theoretical-methodological referential

Cheptulin (2004, p. 5), in his definition of the nature of the categories, his place and his role in the development of knowledge, states that this categorical relationship is directly attached to the resolution of the problem of the correlation between the particular and the general in the objective reality and in consciousness.

However, for Cheptulin, the construction of the dialectic category system, which considers the categories and their correlation, presupposes, as a starting principle, practice. It is precisely based on the practice that the categories are formed in which the links and universal ways of being are reflected and fixed.

> Thus, the starting categories, in the analysis of the categories, must be those that reflect the fundamental and determining factor of the development of knowledge, that is, the categories of practice. Following the development of this determining factor (social practice), we reproduce the categories in the order in which they appear in the process of evolution of knowledge and, thus, we present them in their natural correlation and interdependence. (Cheptulin, 2004, p.60)

Karel Kosik (2011, p.18) affirms that knowledge is realized in the separation of the phenomenon and the essence, of the secondary and of what is essential, since only through this separation can internal coherence be shown, and with that, the specific character of the thing. What constitutes philosophical knowledge is that, without decomposition, there is no knowledge. Dividing reality to isolate what is secondary and what is essential is accompanied by a spontaneous need for perception of the whole.

> The distinction between representation and concept, between the world of appearance and the world of reality, between the daily utilitarian praxis of men and the revolutionary praxis of humanity, or the 'division of the unique', is the way in which thought collects the thing itself. Dialectics is critical thinking that aims to understand 'the thing itself' and systematically asks itself how it is possible to arrive at an understanding of reality. (Kosik, 2011, p. 20).

In the production of knowledge, according to Kosik (2011, p.37), that is, in the spiritual and rational reproduction of reality, in *all its plans and dimensions*, the phenomenon is explained if it is reduced to its essence, to the general law, to the abstract principle. It states that progress, from abstraction to concreteness, is, therefore, in general a movement from the part to the whole and from the whole to the part; from the phenomenon to the essence and from the essence to the phenomenon; from totality to contradiction and from contradiction to totality; from the object to the subject and from the subject to the object.

Konder (2004) quoting Marx will state that, 'the knowledge of the production of those conditions *does not* equate to the knowledge of social life - it is, only, the necessary component for the beginning of its study and to reach its theoretical knowledge'. *The analysis of social life is not reducible to the analysis of the production of the material conditions that make it possible* - it transcends them widely. The social theory that is capable of ideally reproducing the real process, the constitutive *movement* of bourgeois society, requires knowledge of the dynamics of the production of the material conditions from which it articulates and develops, and this knowledge founds social theory and is an undisposable stratum of it.

It also states that Marx does not recognize the existence of any aspect of human reality *above* or *outside* history; but he admits that certain aspects of human reality persist in history, precisely because the movement of history is marked by dialectical overcoming: in all great changes, there is a denial, but at the same time, a preservation (and an elevation to a higher level)) of what had been established before. Change and permanence *are reflective categories*, that is, one cannot be thought without the other (Konder, 2004, p.53-4).

In Minayo (1994, p.16), 'methodology is the path of thought and the practice exercised in reality approach. In this sense, the methodology occupies a central place within the theories and is always referred to them. Lenin (1965) said that method is the soul of theory. The development of research on the human education of egress of technical courses in professional education proposed by the public policy of professional education in the state of Bahia, Brazil (TPE) has as an assumption that the formation of man, the development of their potentialities, of what is peculiar to the humankind, everything happens in relation to the totality in which they live. Therefore, it is important to collect the mediations that interpose in the relationship between man and the totality.

To know this totality - which is formed by the unity between nature, society and men themselves - is to collect, above all, the historical mediations that configure it. The historian Fernand Braudel (1990, p. 9), a scholar of Social Sciences and History, places the latter among the social sciences, the one that studies 'the social duration, the multiple and contradictory times of men's lives, which are not only substance of the past, but also the matter of current social life '. He underlines the importance and usefulness of History in the dialectic of duration: '...whether it is the past or the present, a clear awareness of the plurality of social time is indispensable for a common methodology of the sciences of man.

Cheptulin (2004) clarifies that the construction of the correlated system of categories of the dialectic supposes, first of all, a correct choice of the starting principle. By the starting principle, it is possible to move from one category to another, connecting with each other through the relationship of reciprocity and

the relationship with the universal forms of being that they express. 'The categories are, at the same time, the products of consciousness, of the cognitive activity of men. In knowledge, there are fundamental and determining factors that mark all cognitive activity and, in particular, its results: they are the categories and their correlation'. (Cheptulin, 2004, p. 55-6).

The reflexive determination seeks to treat both sides of the reality that presents itself as a 'fluidization' of the concepts: 'he concepts work **as inseparable pairs**'. According to the author, dialectics does not admit pairs of concepts as metaphysical contrapositions. For dialectics, such concepts are like two sides of the same coin (Konder, 2004, p. 56).

Data collection in interviews with the subjects participating in the research

The interviews were not conducted through the linear and sequential application of questions and answers, but it was inspired by the methodological referential of the worker survey, as this technique was integrated into the interview. The 'worker survey' was the methodology used by Marx with the workers in 1880, as a strategy to make them think and realize their condition.

For a more in-depth knowledge of the methodology and way of conducting the worker survey, Thiollent's studies (1980, p. 30) address the social and cognitive mechanisms operating in the investigation instruments. It points out that the worker survey, as a matter of sociological investigation, is against the empiricism and positivism of conventional sociology, without discarding, however, the 'anti-theoreticist' demand to question the concrete reality. For Thiollent (1980, p. 103-105), the questionnaire, as Marx elaborated, would not be applicable today, due to the transformations of the capitalist world. However, he states that the important thing is the conception of this instrument, because the study of the model serves as a contraposition to the conventional conception, leading to the development of a new type of worker survey, updated and adapted to specific goals, dependent on an assessment of socio-political situation the be made by the promoting group. Thiollent affirms the relevance of the worker survey 'Instead of being prompted to express only feelings, affections or opinions, the respondent is invited to describe what he knows from his own experience in material life.

In the respondent's mental activity, the worker survey favors the cognitive process over the affective process. In the workers survey, the imposition of problematic that are manifested in the questions, and in their order, seems necessary to incite the respondent to formulate their responses in a contrary way to the simple reproduction of the current illusions in the production process (naturalistic character, functional

relations disguising despotism, etc.). In this stage of the research, it was the technical pole that guided the method of investigation from an historical content analysis, the categories of the historical-dialectical method are articulated.

The analysis strategies of documentary data and interviews with policy managers

The content analysis of official documents and interviews with managers was guided by Minayo's (1994, p. 77) conception on a proposal of qualitative interpretation based on the *hermeneutic-dialectic method*. In this method, the speech of social actors is placed in its context to be better understood. 'This understanding has, as a starting point, *the inside of speech*. And, as a point of arrival, *the field of historical and totalizing specificity that produces speech*. The following steps were used to operationalize the proposal of the hermeneutic-dialectic method:

a) *data ordering* – at that moment, a mapping of all the data obtained in the field work is done. Here, for example, transcription of recordings, re-reading of material, organization of reports and participant observation are involved.

b) *data classification* – in this phase, we work with the categories based on the theoretical reference and what appears as relevant in the data.

c) *final analysis* – here, we seek to establish joints between the data and the referential of the research (Minayo, 1994, p. 78). Relating this phase described by the author to the poles, this moment is guided by Bruyne's morphological pole. One of the references for the analysis of the content of official documents is epistemology of the hybrid of Mikhail Bakhtin[4] (2011), hybridization appears as discursive phenomena, guided by two social languages that regenerate and renew in an ambivalent way. He considers hybridization as a dimension of the interlacement of two social languages, it is the reunion in the arena of two linguistic consciousness separated by an age, by a social difference of languages (Bakhtin, 2011, p.127).

Bakhtin starts from the Marxist sociological method, which consists of the study of the philosophy of language as philosophy of the ideological sign. He

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[4] *In his studies on the philosophy of language, he places it as an effort to collect the real nature of the object that must '... consider the uniqueness of the social environment and that of the immediate social con text as absolutely indispensable conditions for studying language'. (Bakhtin, 2014, p.73, griffins by the author). He states that '... the classification of the forms of enunciation must be based on a classification of the forms of verbal communication. The latter are entirely determined by the relations of production and the socio-political structure. A more detailed analysis would reveal the immeasurable importance of the hierarchical component in the process of verbal interaction, the powerful influence that the hierarchical organization of social relations exercises over the forms of enunciation' (Ibidem, p.44)*

understands the structure of enunciation and mental activity as of a socio-ideological nature. He places the word in the field of ideology, and its use, mediated by language, is linked to ideological evolution.

1. *Do not separate ideology from the material reality of the sign* (placing it in the field of 'consciousness' or in any other elusive or indefinable sphere).

2. *Do not dissociate the sign from the concrete forms of social communication* (understanding that the sign is part of an organized social communication system and that it does not exist outside this system, except as a physical object).

3. *Do not dissociate social communication* and its forms from its material base (infrastructure) (Bakhtin, 2014, p. 45).

Any statement, however significant and complete, constitutes only a *fraction* of an current of uninterrupted verbal communication (concerning everyday life, literature, knowledge, politics, etc.). But this verbal communication, in turn, constitutes only a moment in the continuous evolution, in all directions, of a determined social group (Bakhtin, 2014, p.128).

In Bakhtin (2014, p. 129), there is an interdependent relationship between social relations with language and, that is, 'social relations evolve (depending on infrastructure), then communication and verbal interactions evolve within the framework of social relations. In the analysis of the documents and the contents of the interviews with the managers, therefore, guided by the reference of Bakhtin (2014), I considered the expression as a general category, of a higher level, which includes the speech act, the enunciation. The expression, therefore, comprises two facets: the *content* (interior) and its *exterior objectification* (for others). 'Theory of expression inevitably supposes a certain dualism between what is interior and what is exterior, with explicit primacy of interior content, since all act of objectification (expression) proceeds from the interior to the exterior' (Bahktin, 2014, p. 115).

In the study of federal and state professional education policy documents, enunciation and concepts are evidenced, which express, in an ambiguous, hybrid and contradictory way, the intentionality and even rationality in dispute of public policies for the professional training of workers, proposed by public educational institutions in Brazil and Bahia.

The analysis strategies of the interviews with the egress subjects of the courses

For the analysis of the data from the empirical field of the interviews with the subjects egressed from the technical courses of TPE, the methodological conception of Freitas (2012, p. 71) *of the development of the contradictions present in practice*, including their possibilities of overcoming, was followed. As it is an empirical field related to pedagogical work developed in a public school, the work of Freitas (2012, p. 94) was

adopted as a reference, because the author presents a methodological approach that I consider appropriate, based on his research conducted in schools, on 'the pedagogical work developed directly in the classroom and on the global organization of the pedagogical work.

The objective was to highlight some categories, in the form of dialectical pairs, which, materialized in the school curriculum, were mediators in the training of egress subjects from technical courses. Such statement is possible from the assumptions made by Freitas (2012: 1), that the school, inserted in the hegemony of the capitalist mode of production, there is a social organization historically determined. The forms that this organization takes in school, maintain connection with such type of social organization (Freitas, 2012, p. 98).[5] The unity of opposites (the categories in the form of dialectical pairs, in the evidences of empirical research) is given by the fact that the dialectical pairs are determined by the same 'strength': the social origin of the student and the classes antagonism of capitalist system (Freitas, 2012, p. 244).

Final considerations: the theoretical-methodological relationship between research and the object studied

Saviani (2008, p. 21), in the study he conducted on the Theory of the Dualist School, considers that there are two networks that are constituted by the relations that define them, in the capitalist school apparatus: the professional network and the superior network. The two networks form a unit of contradiction. As an ideological apparatus, the school performs two basic functions, but which are not separate: it contributes to the formation of the workforce and to the inculcation of bourgeois ideology.

In Bahia, the governmental agenda and State planning, elaborated based on Multiannual Planning, MAP (2008-2011), link, at least in the formal plan of official documents, the formulation, planning and the realization of the professional education policy for Local Productive Arrangements (LPA), following the guidelines of the federal government's MAP (2004-2007). It should be noted that the policy of consolidating of local productive arrangements networks is administered by the Secretary of Industry and Commerce of Bahia, Brazil (SICM / BA), and not

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[5]*According to Freitas (2012, p.95), the capitalist school embodies social objectives or functions that take on the shape of the society in which it is inserted. He accepts Mézáros' (1981) proposition that education has two main functions in a capitalist society: 1) the production of the necessary qualifications for the operation of the economy, and 2) the training of staff and the elaboration of methods for political control (p.273). It also stands out for its elitist vocation. The capitalist school is not for everyone. It is a school of class, considering it to be the pyramidal educational system. In addition to pyramidal, the Brazilian educational system still presents a type of selectivity that Bourdieu and Passeron (1975) call 'deferred elimination'.*

by the Secretary of Planning, which is responsible for the articulation and elaboration of MAPs in the State.

Understanding an educational public policy beyond its 'appearance' implies an effort to reach an understanding of reality, in the sense of the concrete, as pointed out by Karel Kosik (2011). Historical and dialectical materialism constitutes the theoretical and methodological basis for the study and analysis of the high school professional education policy developed in the state of Bahia, in its public network, as of decree 5,154 / 04, after the repeal of the decree 2,208 / 97 by the federal government.

Dialectically, the data from the empirical field were analyzed in order to highlight the contradictions that emerge in the materialization of that policy, especially regarding the concrete reality of young people in the territory, in confrontation with the category 'social inclusion', in view of the objective of this strategic perspective of politics. I understand that there are significant advances with TPE in the territory, especially with regard to raising the level of schooling of young people and the possibility of professional and technical human training that increases the chances of a potential and tendentially transformative social praxis, providing young people with the means of production and reproduction of their own existence, not by social reiteration of strict logic of capitalist production mode, which is to produce the worker adapted, flexible and appropriate to the production system of surplus value, which naturalizes the work-commodity form as the only possible for the production and reproduction of their own existence.

The understanding of the State adopted from the historical materialist dialectic and from Marxist and Marxian studies extract from the analysis of political economy the guiding categories for explaining the relationship between structure and superstructure, structure and conjuncture, the bourgeois state and its articulation with the conjuncture. The structure is thought with the economy in the sense studied by Gramsci *Apud* Liguori (2017, p.220): 'the economy is not as a science, but as a synonym of economic structure in its relationship with the superstructures.

The State, in Gramsci (ibidem 2017, p. 261), 'does not produce the economic situation, but it is an expression of the economic situation'. And he adds: 'one can speak of the State as an economic agent, since, in fact, the State is synonymous with such a situation'. The State, in the Gramscian's conception, has the function of producing social classes, in the proper sense of Marxism, however, any simplistic and mechanical application is rejected.

> The State is only conceivable as a concrete form of a given economic world, of a given production system, it does not derive from this that the relationship of means and end is easily determined and takes on the aspect of a simple and obvious scheme at first sight.

> The State is one of the 'two big super-structural plans', the other being 'civil society '. In Western societies these two plans are dialectically united in the concept of 'integral State', the expression 'expanded State' is also used. (Ligouri, 2017, p. 261).

The modern bourgeoisie itself is the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutionaries in the capitalist production mode under the aegis, in its beginnings, of industrialization, to the present day, with financial capitalism. The Communist Manifesto says that 'the bourgeoisie played a highly revolutionary role in history'. The bourgeoisie stripped from its sacred appearance all the activities hitherto venerable and considered with pious reverence. It transformed the doctor, the jurist, the priest, the poet, the man of science into paid workers for it. The bourgeoisie pulled out its touching sentimental veil to familiar relationship and reduced it to a pure relationship of money (Marx and Engels, 1848, p. 3).

When considering the existence of cyclical crises in the capitalist production mode, it is known that full employment is directly affected in these historic moments of crises. Thus, the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion is related to the historical mediations that are produced within the production system itself, in which there is sometimes a demand for work, sometime there is a retraction of work, with the existence of a large number of workers unemployed.

'Social inclusion' was articulated with the *social issue* as the social process resulting from the model of the capitalist State, based on classic and contemporary authors. I understand, through Saviani (2005), that the classic is not to be confused with the traditional and neither is it necessarily opposed to the modern and, much less, to the present. The classic is what has been established as fundamental, as essential.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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