Teaching Work and Inequality: Contributions of Educational Research in Argentina

The issue of the multiple links between teaching work, schooling processes and social inequalities has possibly been one of the biggest concerns in the field of educational research in Argentina in recent decades. The way in which the task of teaching and the problem of inequality are related and shaped together has integrated the agendas of the different traditions and areas of knowledge with which the field of pedagogy has established joints. As part of an ongoing research project, this article aims to conduct a critical and systematic analysis of scientific production on the links between teaching work, schooling, and inequality in the period 1985-2019 with the aim of examine the main conceptual and theoretical-methodological debates in research, as well as their main contributions to current discussions in the field of education.

Keywords: teaching work; schooling; inequality

Introduction

The issue of the multiple links between teaching work, schooling processes and social inequalities has possibly been one of the biggest concerns in the field of educational research in Argentina in recent decades. The way in which the task of teaching and the problem of inequality are related and shaped together has integrated the agendas of the different traditions and areas of knowledge with which the field of pedagogy has established joints. As part of an ongoing research project, this article aims to conduct a critical and systematic analysis of scientific production on the links between teaching work, schooling, and inequality in the period 1985-2019 with the aim of examine the main conceptual and theoretical-methodological debates in research, as well as their main contributions to current discussions in the field of education.

Method

 This article focuses on how academic productions released in the period 1985-2019 in Argentina inscribed in the processes of shaping the pedagogical field as a field of knowledge and power, and of the reconceptualizations and reformulations of the theoretical-methodological languages of research in education (Hillert, 2009; Llomovatte, 2009; Suárez, 2008). To this end, a corpus of 40 research and studies developed in that period was released and systematized to conduct a critical and systematic review of scientific and academic production on the links between teaching work, the processes of inequality, based on a series of coordinates:

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- Conceptual frameworks that research and studies use to approximate the links between schooling, teaching work and inequality.
- Theoretical-methodological definitions taken by research and studies to produce knowledge about the links between schooling, teaching work and inequality.
- Contributions and new questions contributed by research and studies on the links between schooling, teaching and inequality, as well as the discussions placed in the field of education by these scientific productions.
- Senses about schooling, teaching work and the inequality that research and studies build. These meanings are inscribed in the debates that cross the pedagogical field as a dynamic field of knowledge and power.

From these axes and an interpretive work of analysis of the content of the lathered texts, the article reconstructs three cores of discussion in academic and scientific production in Argentina on the links between teaching work, the processes of schooling and inequality. First, the text will explore the discussions and contributions of the reformulation of structural approaches and the redirection of the gaze towards subjects and school institutions. In a second instance, the paper analyzes the discussions arising from the critique of the generalizing approaches to teaching work, addressing the ways in which the field of educational research incorporated concerns focused on heterogeneity and dynamism of social identities when analyzing the processes of schooling subjects in contexts of inequality. Finally, the article explores the ways in which academic production placed the debate on the place of poverty contexts in training and teaching work, reconstructing the ways in which new approaches to the analysis of the links between teaching, schooling and inequality.

Results

The Question of the meaning of Inequality in the Field of Educational **Research in Argentina**

In Argentina, educational research aimed at researching the processes of building inequality had one of its important milestones in the pioneer work of Braslavsky (1985) around the discrimination processes in the school institutions. This study was a valuable contribution in terms of deepening the break with the pedagogical optimism that had inaugurated some developments in the field of sociology of education, based on analyzing how the Argentine education system developed differentiated forms of school integration that perpetuated social inequalities through schooling circuits or segments for different social sectors. It also noted the need to question what was going on within schools to address the issue of inequality, which raised questions about the distribution of opportunities between different schools, between teaching modalities and

between schools, families' own expectations, tracing a series of agendas and problematizations that would be recovered by further investigations.

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From that research, it is possible to say that – by the mid-1980s – the socio-economic segregation of the Argentine education system was a common practice and generated different educational circuits between schools of different quality in relation to the social origin of students. Discrimination involved not only practices of exclusion from impoverished sectors, but also differences in the realization of the right to education in terms of the type of schooling accessed by the popular sectors in respect of the one to which they access high and high middle sectors. Thus, the school played an important role in reproducing social inequalities. In this sense, there were differentiated circuits that expressed the ways in which education as a right was unevenly distributed in the different educational circuits, establishing articulations between schooling and socioeconomic origin of the students, who – according to the social sector to which they belong – traveled parallel circuits without contacts with each other (Braslavsky, 1985). These trajectories included several costs for those trying to move from one circuit to another (Braslavsky and Filmus, 1988).

Segmentation and disarticulation of educational systems constituted specific expressions and modalities of their horizontal and vertical differentiation dynamics. Horizontal differentiation manifested itself in situations where educational establishments that, according to legislation, had a very different curriculum and offered very different conditions for learning. The vertical differentiation, on the other hand, gave an account of the existence of various orientation and conduction bodies of each level of the educational system operating independently, being able to configure a disjointed system. As a result, segmentation and disarticulation were functional to the preservation of the monopoly on education in minority social groups (Braslavsky, 1985). Inequality, in this case, was based on the reservation of access to socially and culturally relevant knowledge, skills and patterns to certain segments and levels of the education system, and the deployment of certain market mechanisms that left these processes cleared to the various possibilities of the population. It was also expressed in access to non-equivalent levels of knowledge and different possibilities of continuing within the formal education system. According to Braslavsky (1985), in Argentina the incorporation into the segments was realized at key moments: the incorporation into the preschool, the passage to primary school, the passage to the secondary school about it stops the research carried out - and the passage to the university level.

This research and its results allowed to move away from classical reproductive models and enabled the incorporation of the perspectives, attitudes and representations of social subjects, accounting for the discussions in the field of sociology of education in the mid-1980s. The study analyzed the impact of some features of teaching work –like labor stability and training – on the educational processes and school performance of students. It also addressed how the pedagogical model of institutions prioritized knowledge transmission or socialization but did not include in the inquiry how teachers position

themselves in relation to their task. Braslavsky's work involved a valuable contribution in terms of dismantling the construction of the egalitarian appearance of the school system, disarming the hegemonic pedagogical optimism in the educational field in that time:

"Instead of the single or common primary schools provided for by the current law (Number. 1420, year 1884), equally equipped, with pedagogical practices that respond to the same model of pedagogical action, where levels and profiles of knowledge are taught equal to, in principle, allow equal access to successive levels within the formal education system, countless schools have been set up, in each of which the equipment is different, pedagogical practices are divergent, the acquired levels and knowledge profiles are not equivalent (...) The educational system is therefore clearly organized into different circuits that have crystallized as educational segments" (Braslavsky, 1985:142)

 The thesis of segmentation and unequal trends in terms of learning was based on an argument that identified both trends in reproduction and change, postulating that the State could assume this responsibility (Braslavsky, 1985). Democratization was understood in terms of improving learning and acquiring specific knowledge rather than socialization guidelines. These concerns led to research that diagnosed the hesitation of socially relevant knowledge of the education system and the obsolescence of programmatic content, advocating for the State to assume primary responsibility as content provider to the school system (Tiramonti, 2004). Democratization was associated with the equal provision of knowledge. In an open discussion with Orthodox Marxist reproductivism, that perspective supposed a vision of the State as a space to be conquered to transform school education from there.

The breadth and extent of the research lines opened by Braslavsky's work became visible in the following years in Argentina. The sociological studies of education put the focus on inequality as a social production and the way educational institutions developed processes that came into strain with promises of liberation and equality. The research in field of sociology of education incorporated the analysis of teacher/student interaction and the role of the subjectivity of social actors in the production and reproduction of inequality.

The gaze oriented towards the interior of the "black box" of the school, giving notice of the revision that the field of sociology of education had made of the objectivist models of the functionalist or Marxist type that favored the view of the whole (Tenti Fanfani, 2007), incorporating theoretical currents of Anglo-Saxon origin such as symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and social phenomenology. The shift towards processes, subjectivity, practices, and experiences of social subjects also took place in the educational research field in Argentina, hand in hand with the entry of social anthropology in these perspectives. This involved the deployment of other approaches that confronted the hegemonic "quantitative" sociology at that time (Batallán, 1999), enabling the deployment of social anthropological perspectives and ethnographic approaches into the analysis of links between subjects within the

classrooms. These movements deepened the shift away from reproductive models and strengthened the growing interest, in the field of socio-educational research, in developing more processual approaches that accounted for the role of social subjects.

Thus, problems such as school repetition or exclusion, which until the early 1980s were diagnosed by extracurricular causes began to be analyzed from the subjects' behavior, especially teachers (Batallán, 1999, 2007). Ethnography, as a perspective articulating theory, methods and techniques, was directed to document the undocumented to account for processes whose complexity exceeded the strictly didactic and in which forms of coercion, negotiation and resistance. Research on education and inequality aimed at reconstructing the perspectives of subjects on their daily lives to describe in the various situations of school life.

This emphasis on subject prospects had various expressions in the field of educational research. One of them was that studies began to investigate how expectations of teachers on their students influenced schooling processes and exclusionary dynamics (Kaplan, 1992,1997). Low prospects seemed concentrated on children of popular or subaltern sectors in terms of ethnicity or gender (Morgade, 1992, 2001, 2006). Contributions to studying inequality as a social production focused on the study of the naturalization of the differences and categories with which the world is learnt by students, and on the production and reproduction of these processes (Tenti Fanfani, 2007; Kaplan, 1992, 1997, 2008).

Emphatically aside from deterministic perspectives on school success and failure during the 50s and 60s, socio-educational research in the last decades became a key contribution to the show that teachers' representations operated as verdicts on student boundaries in relation to school success or failure, structuring a target effect (Kaplan, 2008). These discussions were based on the idea that inequalities in capitalist societies lied on the unequal distribution of material and symbolic conditions. Thus, subjective representations of teachers must be understood as a frame of present and past social configurations, and as productive acts and intervene on students' educational trajectories.

These research lines boosted discussions on the fact that students' educability does not depend on their natural interiority or external social conditions, but on the way schooling built relations between subjects that affected learning (Castorina, 2008; Llomovatte, 1988). As several studies showed (Kaplan, 1992, 1997, 2008; Morgade, 1992, 2001, 2006), attributes of gender, age, ethnicity and class were automatically linked to other properties that were presented as natural and non-arbitrary. The naturalization of intelligence in magisterial discourse occupies a central place in teachers' judgment.

Furthermore, research in the field of education in Argentina in the last decades approached the ways schools built the production and reproduction of inequality from the point of view of subjects and institutions. These studies were based on the obsolescence of the conceptual instrument of social scientists to analyze the problems of society, in the context of the restructuration of social relations and regulatory frameworks of subject actions. This need to revise

conceptual scaffolding was added to the fact that the distances between the different social strata had reached unthinkable levels by the beginning of the 2000 decade, producing new inequality scenarios in Argentina. The school expressions of these situations could no longer be explained only in socioeconomic terms, although they conditioned schools and educational subjects (Tiramonti, 2004).

From these coordinates, educational research in Argentina revised the conceptualizations around educational segmentation to account for how the processes of inequality were involved with the existence of a fragmented educational field in which actors move within a relatively enclosed space that marks the limits of their options. In dialogue with the category of segmentation, the conceptual production around educational fragmentation as a lens through which to observe the issue of inequality was meticulously supported in the analysis of the role played by expectations institutional resources, the cultural capitals of families and the strategies social sectors developed (Tiramonti, 2004). It also showed the inadequacy of the concept of class to explain those dynamics:

"Unlike the segment, which is constituted as a distinct space within the framework of an integrated set, fragmentation refers to an overlapping field characterized by ruptures, discontinuities, and the impossibility of passing from one to the other. This names the loss of unity, the absence of common references and a multiplication dynamic that moves away any possibility of recovery from the unit" (Tiramonti, 2007:26).

The fragment as a theoretical concept accounted for a self-built space inside which included schools that had little articulation with other institutions. Some studies in the framework of this research line analyzed the heterogeneity of the teachers' training institutions, the construction of their profiles and the strategies they develop in relation to students (Poliak, 2004), and the teaching representations about the public sphere (Arroyo, 2004). In this way, the revision of the category of segmentation implied the abandonment of structuralist views that established continuities between social positions and educational inequalities, enabling the consideration of subjects. This research showed that teachers presented ideas of acceptance of the context and absence of references to the responsibility of society for all its members. Thus, in the context of the fading of the public dimension in the conception of their work, teachers became mirrors of the fragments the way of dealing with educational problems, disassociating them from a broad social gaze (Arroyo, 2004). Inequality not only reached students and their material conditions, but also the teachers who teach them.

Research on the Links between Schooling and Teaching Work in Contexts of Social Inequality

Several recent research on schooling in poverty contexts in Argentina contributed to the construction of a perspective that argued that it was not

possible to sustain the idea of unity of the educational system and the senses associated with it, and that it was conceptually unfeasible to assume a homogeneity of subject positions. These studies shifted a perspective on inequality in more mobile and flexible terms than the old divisions of social class or positions of power (Dussel, 2005). Equality was not a static or defined state, but a set of strong relationships that are established between subjects and that encompass different areas: wealth, income, job opportunities, gender, ethnicity, geographical region, among others. The relational nature of inequality led to questions about society, and not just about the border that demarcates those who are excluded, as it is a political and social problem that is at the heart of institutions and subjectivity (Dussel, 2005). In this context, some authors emphasized the need to look inward from the school system when thinking about the relationship between it and inequality, focusing on the organizational conditions of institutions (Redondo and Thisted, 1999; Southwell, 2008).

In this sense, educational research argued the concept of exclusion did not allow us to see the inclusions that coexist and how both processes can be part of the same face of the coin (Dussel, 2004). This category often meant acceptance of the exclusionary order and made invisible the struggle for inclusion. Redondo (2004) pointed out that there was a risk in defining exclusion as a state and not as a process on which interventions could be made, warning of the risks of shifting the notion of inequality:

"The shift from the concept of 'inequality' to 'exclusion' naturalizes the current processes of social disaffiliation and places them, in a discursive operation of legitimacy, in new relationships of power that have their direct expression in the construction of social policies, including education" (Redondo, 2004:68)

The field of educational research in Argentina sought to account for impoverishment scenarios by showing how they reached teaching workers, whose socio-demographic, socio-economic and socio-economic characteristics varied. Some studies hightlighted how situations of job precarization crossed teaching subjects (Filmus, 2006). The research led by Tenti Fanfani (2005) showed that Argentine teachers perceived that they were worse than previous generations and they felt they were in a process of downward social mobility process that impacted on their daily work (Dussel, 2006).

As several research lines showed, these processes were parallel to a series of substantive changes in the conditions of teaching work In Argentina, in the framework of policies that aimed at changing its organizational contexts, trying to reconfigure the professional profile of teachers (Birgin, 1999, 2000; Tenti Fanfani, 2006; Feldfeber and Andrade Oliveira, 2006). Teaching workers were at the center of Latin American educational reforms, being in the place of responding to demands that would seem to go beyond their training, particularly when they develop their task in poverty contexts. The new educational regulations have caused a significant intensification of teaching work and precarization of employment relationships that have an impact on identity and teaching status (Tenti Fanfani, 2005).

These studies argued that new regulations resulted in a restructuring of teaching work, altering its nature extending it beyond classroom activity. These dynamics occurred in a context of intensification of teaching work which, according to research studies, expressed a sense of overflow based on the demand of other professional knowledge, the diversification of responsibilities, and the demand for emotional commitment (Tenti Fanfani, 2006). This occurs in the context of an increase in demands to the school in terms of teaching, restraint, care, accompaniment, health promotion and social assistance, protection of rights and extension of social participation, a situation that acquires specific particularities in the conditions of precariousness, poverty and inequality of the Latin American context (Dussel, 2006).

Also, these perspectives enabled to strengthen a view of the relationship between teaching work and inequality in contexts where teachers worked with students who belonged to families excluded from employment (Tenti Fanfani, 2006). Towards the beginning of the 21st century in Argentina, the expansion of the phenomenon of extreme poverty, vulnerability and exclusion of large groups had effects on the work and identity of teachers:

"Life's difficulties in conditions of extreme poverty (malnutrition, disease, violence, neglect, etc.) manifest themselves in the daily life of the school and affect the content of teachers' work. In many cases, they are obliged to perform socially considered urgent care tasks (food, affective restraint, moralization, etc.) that hinder the achievement of the school's traditional mission: the development of learning. These phenomena put in crisis certain professional identities and require a discussion: either the Magisterium chooses to deepen its professional specialization or develops a new pedagogical/assistive professionalism (organizer and mobilizer of social resources for children, depending on learning objectives and development of subjectivities)" (Tenti Fanfani, 2007: 41)

Several approaches in the educational research field argued that teaching in poverty conditions and social care practices towards students should not be thought in a dichotomic way (Antelo, 2009; Redondo, 2004). In addition, studies have emphasized that the quality of educational experience that certain schools propose did not have to do with their students' social origin (Duschatzky, 1999; Dussel, 2005; Puiggrós, 1990; Thisted and Redondo, 1999). These contributions showed how schools in Argentina were capable of opening democratic horizons for students who live in poverty conditions. In this frame, research projects highlighted that teaching work is traversed by unease, frustration and anger, but also by stubbornness, daily and militant struggle and voluntarism (Redondo, 2004; Southwell, 2004). Thus, there was an important risk if all schools were understood as homogeneous and unable to provide a quality education. In this way, the field of educational research advanced in showing the heterogeneity of situations and positions that are deployed in the processes of schooling sectors living in poverty:

"There is no such homogeneity within poor schools, and (...) each institution is permeated in a particular way with the surrounding context by building bonds between education and poverty and it is in the making of each collective where the senses that define whether this social frontier of poverty is set as an educational frontier" (Redondo and Thisted, 1999:170)

"The educational reality of these schools is far from homogeneous or uniform. Rather, the group of educational institutions that serve the child and adolescent population in poverty represent a highly heterogeneous set. This is due to (...) the prominence and positioning of the subjects inserted in these educational realities, which produce diverse institutional and pedagogical practices, heterogeneous and even contrasting" (Redondo, 2004:78)

Within the framework of this heterogeneity, studies that reported situations of educational fragmentation showed existence of a mandate of "containment" that acquired a strong reproductive content at the average level of teaching, and that did not have a single meaning for the subjects. In this context, there was research on the meanings that teachers in Argentina attribute to their expectations in territories characterized by disintegration and deinstitutionalization. Tiramonti (2004, 2007) characterized these institutions as "schools to resist the collapse" distinguishing religious schools with a pastoral component that aimed to develop a guardian protection of their students with a marked pretension to provide material and pedagogical assistance to help face the present. Research on educational fragmentation in Argentina focused on the institutional profiles built by schools and on the demands and ideas of pathways that families develop in relation to their children's education, in addition to different meanings that teachers and managers weaved around schooling.

In recent decades, Argentine schools, which were once built with a strong equalization mandate, have been overrun, and at times overwhelmed, by the effects of unequaling and differentiating policies. In this context, educational institutions were constituted as the only expression of the State on the periphery forming the last frontier of the public (Redondo and Thisted, 1999). The school system has shifted its uniformity task towards the production of cultural boundaries (Puiggrós and Dussel, 1999). Following the relational conception of inclusion-exclusion, the idea of "borders of exclusion" was raised to consider the differences between those who are included and those who are excluded, without assuming that this relationship is given in dichotomous or exclusive terms (Redondo, 2004). With the concept of border, authors intended to account for the edges, boundaries, passages, crosses, and margins that enable more complex glances of pauperization processes and their expression in the daily lives of families and school institutions. The notion of frontier departs from the mere celebration of differences and the binary consideration of those included and excluded that follows a logic from inside and outside (Puiggrós and Dussel, 1999). The border has nothing to do with the separation of two elements already defined according to topographical coordinates. On the contrary, at the borders of exclusion schools produce various re-articulations of the links between education and poverty, opening a field of positions that include strengthening inclusion processes and deepening situations of exclusion.

Following these coordinates, Redondo (2004) reported heterogeneous positions among teaching subjects working with students living in poverty: those who sought to compensate for the shortcomings of their students through affection and the inculcation of good habits, those who looked with indifference what happened to them, and those who recognized the situation of inequality and approached it from the conviction of producing reparation through teaching, based on the recognition of dignity and rights. In some cases, the configuration of the teaching identity was based on the link with students named as "lacking" and on covering what they did not have (Redondo, 2004). In addition, the author showed how teachers were crossed by what happened to students in conditions of poverty while in other cases they acted with distance and holding a stigmatizing vision of families for their children's "school failure."

From the field of social anthropology, Padawer (2008) analyzed a teaching initiative that discussed the organization by grades in primary school in Argentina, pointing out that it referred not only to technical-didactic issues but also to an expression of a debate on the political principles that structured the system of instruction in relation to social inequality. To do this, she considered the origins of school in relation to the graduation device and the experiences recognized as background by the protagonists, approaching to two experiences considering the social theories in use and particularities of teaching. This research showed that many teachers deployed the idea that poverty produced a "backward" cultural environment in children's homes and that this situation irreversibly led to school failure. It also gived account of non-homogeneous positions among teachers, including the idea that these conditions are a non-definitive, and of various criteria of grouping students as a mode of addressing their schooling. In addition, author found

"underlying ideas about the relationship between school, poverty and failure, where inequality is understood as difference or diversity, in a naive relativism that hides deterministic positions on students' poverty conditions" (Padawer, 2008:277)

Padawer showed that teachers developed complex reflections on their role in the discussion of social inequality. Like other authors, her research enabled to highlight the configuration of heterogeneous, contradictory and paradoxical senses for the schooling of subjects in poverty (Redondo and Thisted, 1999; Redondo, 2004; Tiramonti, 2004; Southwell, 2008). In this line, other research projects in Argentina focused on how principals characterized their students and their institutions (Southwell, 2012) arguing that these authorities developed a variety of positions around homogeneity.

An important number of research in the field of sociology of education and anthropology in Argentina investigated the relationships between schools and families, highlighting their complexity. In the case of institutions that worked with students in poverty, teachers pointed out that parents had "little

interest" in their children, and gave account of difficulties in getting parents to come up to the institution (Tiramonti and Minteguiaga, 2004; Achilli, 2010). According to these authors, teachers and principals conceived a certain "disciplinary weakness" of families, which became an ineffective socialization for the incorporation of their children into socially accepted patterns of conduct. The work of containment carried out by school is linked to an intention of social control and acquires affective and related edges related to supplementing a supposed "lack of affection" by the social and family environment of the students (Redondo, 2004). Some research noticed that affection seemed to have a contradictory circulation in schools, as a component of the increasing "affectivization" of pedagogical relations (Abramowski, 2010).

In this context, relationships between schools and families were characterized as oscillating and paradoxical, accounting for positions that could be contradictory in the same subjects (Southwell, 2008). In some cases, the institution was perceived as part of the community, but that in that movement it set educational action to the limits of what was next, without linking with other cultural horizons. In addition, some research focused on the issue of educational inequality since school choice practices in Argentina (Narodowski and Gómez Schettini, 2007). A series of work accounted for the relationship between choice strategies and social class, considering how families developed these practices by reflecting on what to demand from the education system (Tiramonti, 2007). These authors argued that the question of educational choice showed a growing market presence both in the material dimension of educational offerings and in the dimension of discourses that legitimize their logics. This presence set up on-demand schooling processes in Argentina that displaced previous dynamics based on the supply of education within the framework of broader social transformations (Pineau, 2001). In the same way, other researchers identified

"An expansion of the educational spaces governed by the rule of the market. The administration and management of education systems has clearly been heterogenized in recent decades, we have gone from dual systems where the dependence of institutions could be public-state or private-particular to a field where they exist multiple management models that articulate the public and the private, to the point that in some cases it is difficult to establish clear boundaries between each other" (Tiramonti, 2007:23)

From the field of anthropology, Cerletti (2010) showed that families living in poverty in Argentina gave a central place to education of their children as a possibility of social ascent. The author showed a wide heterogeneity of senses that families attributed to schooling in their educational choice practices. The deployment of a diversity of assessments and choices gave account of an active school search by families, who developed comparisons with their own educational trajectories and built arguments regarding the quality of public or private education. In this way, these practices of school valuation – and

avoidance of certain institutions— were not an exclusive heritage of rich social sectors, but also reached impoverished families.

In addition, Redondo (2004) highlighted that for popular sectors school remained as an opportunity and continued to be loaded with expectations, even in times of absence of promises of social advancement in Argentina. In a similar vein, in its analysis of the links between school and families in contexts of social inequality, Achilli (2010) hypothesized that both areas were built in dialectical processes and mutual conditionings. Several research discussed widespread notions about teachers that, from their day-to-day work, tended to hold families accountable for maintaining a supposedly passive and selfless attitude towards the processes of schooling (Achilli, 2010; Santillán, 2012; Tenti Fanfani, 2006).

Discussions on the Links between School and Context in Educational Research in Argentina

In several discussions on the links between teaching work and social and educational inequality, some authors argued on the suitability and relevance of the idea that children should receive "local schooling" in Argentina, with an emphasis on topics related to their cultural contexts. These adequations were highlighted by some research that maintained a pessimistic judgment about students and their interest to learn, founding these assumptions in problems of discipline and motivation, in the context of a supposed antagonism between what is popular and school (Tenti Fanfani, 2006). Some authors highlighted teachers held an idea of giving more to the ones who had less in terms of subsistence, family containment and behavior (Alliaud and Antelo). Based on these diagnoses, initiatives such as preparing teaching for the context, adapting the curriculum to the needs of students and relying on the support of specialists were often developed in Argentina. In a different direction, educational policy analysts continued to deepen a line of work from international agencies by proposing "contextualized" training to work with poverty, as if specific preparation to work with this sector were needed:

"Schools where students from popular sectors attend should have teachers trained to work in these contexts, including the different family and youth cultures, who can enrich the fundamental contents of the curriculum to adapt them to the knowledge and contexts of the students, and that they know how to work with diversity" (Veleda, Rivas and Mezzadra, 2011:120)

According to Serra and Canciano (2002), the issue of working with students in poverty conditions in Argentina turned into formalized training strategies that aimed to prepare teachers to educate poor children, turning poverty into a differential feature of the other that reorganized the pedagogical relationship (Serra, 2003). The assumption on which these proposals were supported was that specific training was needed to work with poverty, as teacher training revealed insufficient. Those initiatives were based on the idea of the existence of a deficit, relative to the social environment of children and

their families. Poverty was essentialized, establishing what the poor were and were not, what they could and could not, giving the context a decisive role. Teachers were reduced to mere technicians who needed to be trained to work with poverty. These operations reversed the way in which the relationship between education and poverty had historically been built in Argentina, in which school bet on teaching to ensure the consolidation of the social order. This also enabled upward mobility for the popular and middle sectors, by carrying out an intervention in relation to inequality. This operation was revoked when policies declined the aspiration to institute the common. Thus, the fragmentation dynamics of the education system were deepened:

"To admit the question of how we educate the poor, from where and where to, means supporting a reconfiguration of the field of pedagogy. The current question about the culture of the other, their attention or respect, reconfigures the pedagogical operation, and in the name of respect and attention to differences, we blur the illusion of equality" (Serra, 2002:107)

Several research strongly discussed the proposal for a "located" training for work with specific populations. These studies attempted to address the relationships between education and poverty as a link that delimits a problematic field, showing that if context was assumed as a limiting factor for educating it prevented school from becoming a place of construction of democratic horizons (Alliaud and Antelo, 2009; Frigerio, 2004; Redondo and Thisted, 1999; Redondo, 2004). This way of conceptualizing context as the cause of school failure structured a logic of exclusion: the outside was frozen as something associated with the evil (Dussel, 2004; Southwell, 2006). In this sense, a set of investigations argued about the need to produce knowledge that recognized the place of subjects and their potentiality, highlighting that the experience of context as a limit for educational possibilities did not invade schools in Argentina (Achilli, 2010; Cantero, 2006). These studies placed a central focus on methodologically approaching the ways subjects and educational practices are signified. They set the question of equality as possibility that required educating in a school, and that depended on what teachers did with their students (Dussel and Southwell, 2004). In this context, ethical and political training of educators became central (Alliaud and Antelo, 2009; Birgin and Serra, 2012; Redondo, 2012).

 Establishing a difference between education and transmission, Diker (2004) noted that the latter offers an inheritance and the enablement to transform and re-signify it, while education did not imply that a student transformed what is taught to him. For this author, transmission could not set a directionality since its effects depended on enablement of the new generations. Unlike education, which pursued objectives, transmission provided a starting point and allowed a subject to build the difference (Diker, 2004). In this context, the question of the common, the collective and the production of equality became essential:

"The world and the country in which we live, where knowledge circulates and communication creates new bonds, our lives are driven by inequality and injustice; there, some long-standing debts are still present and new ones show the limit of some past dreams. In that territory, we ask ourselves again about the political –transformative – role of the institutions that have as their object the common, the collective and among which we place the school (...) Education and teaching have a political dimension that houses rights, which produces subjects, that promotes or hinders the participation, democratization and transformation of institutions and society" (Southwell, 2009:180)

In that frame, several educational research in Argentina showed the need to make visible the possibilities, commitments and utopias set to be developed in pedagogical scenes (Redondo, 2004). Some authors raised the assertion that all intelligences were equal as a theoretical fiction capable of opening possibilities (Frigerio, 2004). This implied conceiving the other as capable of inhabiting that possibility, of being a subject of possibility, a position marked by an ethical perspective. That methodological position led to the production of studies where the focus was on the potential that each situation showed, approaching the way schools produced the plural within the common. These are aspects that integrated the discussions on teaching work as the construction of a position in specific scenarios, as a way of dealing with different policies (Southwell, 2009). These discussions enabled a perspective that addressed how teachers were producers of pedagogical knowledge and focused on the recognition of what they did daily in schools.

Discussion

This paper aimed to account for how the field of educational research in Argentina approached the analysis of the links between teaching work, schooling and inequality in the period 1985-2019. The article went through the inaugural works around educational segmentation to its most recent revisions around the notion of fragmentation. Methodological movements that sought to address the school "black box" shifted to the point of view of subjects and educational institutions to problematize the production of school inequality.

One of the most important consequences of those movements was the possibility of showing the inner heterogeneity of the dynamics of schooling in Argentina, and how institutions and subjects built their identities. This resulted in the possibility of showing the diversity of subject positions of teachers, teachers, principals and families (Redondo and Thisted, 1999; Arroyo, 2004; Poliak, 2004; Redondo, 2004; Tiramonti, 2004; Padawer, 2008; Southwell,

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Among the contributions of the systematization of research that was discussed in this paper, it is worth highlighting how studies incorporated the idea that notions of equality and inequality as a relationship, ruling out the possibility of considering them as immutable essences. As it was not a beforehand state, equality implied a set of links that needed to be investigated.

The analysis focused on the senses built in the schooling of sectors living in poverty, addressing school choice practices and the relationships between schools and families (Achilli, 2010; Cerletti, 2010).

Studies also highlighted the need to recover a pedagogical question when researching on the teaching profession (Alliaud and Antelo, 2005, 2009, Birgin, 2006, 2012; Diker, 2004, 2008; Dussel and Southwell, 2004; Frigerio and Diker, 2004; Hillert, Ameijeiras and Graziano, 2011; Pineau, 2001; Serra, 2002, 2007; Southwell, 2008, 2009, 2012), in order to extend our gaze beyond labor-related issues. In this way, the agenda of educational research in Argentina in relation to the links between teaching work, schooling and poverty has thematized how the latter did not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for more democratic horizons. This paper went over the problematizations of some studies around the development of a more complex approach based on what teaching could produce. Among other contributions, they showed the need to build conceptual and methodological tools to make visible the ways teachers in Argentina developed heterogeneous and valuable pedagogical practices.

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