



Social Imaginary: Factor that Interferes in the Acceptance of the Mass School

Sonia Lopes Lanzoni¹, Joyce Mary Adam²

Abstract

This study about this case intends to enrich the understanding that we have about the current school. It seeks to add explanations about the functioning and organization of schools, looking at them through the lens of the social imaginary, a component that remains in an invisibility zone but guides and mobilizes their actions. It understands that, new theories and new practices for mass school must find legitimacy in the social imaginary. It ponders that, ideas conceived by the social imaginary make difficult the engagement of the teaching professionals to confront proper issues of the present mass school, besides discouraging those involved in the school process and raising difficulties to establish them in the institution. It considers that, references offered by the social imaginary limit the understanding of conflict situations at school and the choice of preventive actions to school violence. It understands that, the legal determinations for the mass school do not find support in the social imaginary, making difficult their acceptance. It evaluates that, the school coexists with stereotypes derived from idealized models about school, family, student.

Keywords: Social imaginary. School Violence. Mass school. Violence prevention.

The actions developed by the school in an attempt to ease or prevent acts of violence that occur in its enclosed space and surroundings, often do not have the expected positive result. The difficult living together ends generating complaints from parents, teachers, from the management team and even from the students themselves regarding the difficulties of coexistence due to acts of incivility and even physical violence that get in the way or obstruct the welfare at school, the students' learning and the teachers' work .

These occurrences tend to discourage those involved in the school process, make it difficult for many professionals to be in school or to remain in the profession.

The school has not been able to indicate pedagogical actions, which can be positive to deal with the situations that make evident the difficulties of living together, because the understanding of these questions by teachers, students, parents, and community is limited by ideas conceived through the social imaginary.

Beliefs, preformed ideas that take part of the social imaginary dress us up so that we can get a bit of security in facing reality in school every day. They are often limited or directed "by idealized models", explains Cordeiro (2009, p.83). For the author,

Certain stereotypes derived from these models end up being part of the set of imaginary representations that the teachers build about the children and young people and finish being used in the diagnosis of problems, in the proposition of solutions and in the adoption of certain pedagogical proposals (CORDEIRO, 2009, p.83).

The social imaginary remains in an invisibility zone of the school context. By observing it we try to add explanations about the functioning and organization of schools, looking at them through the lens of this component that guides and mobilizes their actions.

We understand the school as an organization where there is the clash of beliefs, values, ideas that individuals go on establishing in their professional and personal relationship and that hold the imaginary built socially, whose faraway origins extrapolate the time of the school real living. It is not concretely observable, but it is present at the level of real and everyday occurrences, since it is in individuals and in human subjectivity that the school reality exists.

Stereotypes derived from the idealized models regarding the student and his family, his neighborhood of origin, violence, among others, are part of an imaginary representation that the school community builds and activates at the time of making diagnoses of problems, solving occurrences or adopting educational action proposals.

The references offered by the imaginary can crystallize in preconceptions that will restrict or limit the vision regarding the problems to be solved and we remember with Geertz (1989, p.19) that "the most of what we need to understand an event [...], an idea or whatever, is insinuated as background information before the thing itself be directly examined". Therefore, to understand the performance of the school, it is necessary to analyze its actions in greater depth, so that the elements of the imaginary can be identified.

¹ Rio Claro Technology and Education College, Brazil,

² Universidade Estadual Paulista/Unesp, Brasil



The social imaginary for Gauchet (1977) according to Baczko (1984) is one of the regulating forces of collective life that indicates to individuals that they belong to the same society and define more or less precisely the intelligible ways of reporting to it. Thus, the social imaginary is an effective and efficient part of the collective life control device.

The imaginary of the individual is derived from the imaginary of the social group to which he or she belongs. It establishes a bond, connects people in groups, compounds communities because “the real is put in action by the efficacy of the imaginary” (MAFFESOLI, 2001, p.75), which is disposed by contagion, mainly through acceptance and imitation. By the imaginary one is recognized by the other and each person recognizes him or herself (SILVA, 2012).

Only after internalizing the society does the individual become a member of it. In this process he or she goes through two phases known as primary and secondary socialization.

The primary socialization is that which occurs in childhood, and allows the child to enter the social imaginary of his or her group. It is imposed and reaches the individual by double selectivity: according to his or her social class and his or her individual characteristics.

On the other hand, the secondary socialization is the internalization of underworlds. They are partial realities in contrast to the primary socialization that offers the individual the basic knowledge and learning to appropriate the social life (BERGER and LUCKMANN, 1983).

In both moments of socialization, primary and secondary, the individual is subject to the influences of the social imaginary, since, in order to obtain a minimum of security in living the reality, individuals assume preformed ideas of their social environment, which guide and allow them to maintain a path understood as correct.

The current public school is facing great uncertainties due to profound changes in education systems: growth in the number of students, inclusion of those with special educational needs, evolution of technologies, concern with external evaluations, which have brought new perspectives about the role of the school, teacher and managers.

New practices can be adopted if ideas are modified. However, new ideas only gain meaning if they are understood as deserving, because “it is not enough to show the truth, it is necessary to make the people love it, it is necessary to take over the imagination of the people” (BACZKO in CARVALHO, 2012, p. 11). It is necessary to “form souls” (CARVALHO, 2012, p.11) so that the new understanding can become comprehensible to the groups involved, in a way that it was not previously (TAYLOR, 2010).

Comprehensive laws such as the 1988 Constitution and also the Law of the National Education Guidelines and Bases, (LDB) Law 9.394 / 96, guarantee the right of all people to enjoy social assets. In order to comply with the laws, however, one must create a social imaginary that recognizes the timeliness of such laws and they be cherished as a result of the interest and necessity of a folk.

However, the historical experience of our country is marked by the reality of violence, authoritarianism, injustice, discrimination, exclusion, and in the social imaginary subsist elements of the slave holding vision. We lodge our historical marks and misfortunes. We have lived with them for centuries.

It was hoped that the guidelines of the new LDB (1996) would ensure the reception of children and young people from the underprivileged segments in this mass school, making possible their social inclusion. Looking for explanations in Carvalho (1990) we understand that new visions must reach the imaginary of the groups that did not participate in their elaboration. In this case, the actors of the mass school. Those who must accomplish the new ideas.

New visions have to be the object of a preliminary work, employing images, allegories, symbols and instruments of easier reading, aiming at assent and legitimation. It is therefore necessary to mobilize the users for a new understanding of the school functions, to fight for the image of the new school that one wants. Giving rise to a new social imaginary that will give legitimacy to the Law

It is imperative to achieve not only the cognitive, but the aspirations, hopes, emotions of the people, for the creation of the imaginary. In the words of Carvalho (1990, p.11), “the manipulation of the social imaginary is particularly important in moments of political and social changing, in moments of redefinition of collective identities”. It is therefore necessary to seek the adhesion of those directly involved in the practices of the mass school: teachers, employees, students, parents.

It is in the social imaginary that groups define their aspirations, organize their past, understand the present, and project the future. Therefore, the imaginary formation should precede the law promulgation, in this case Law 9.394 that advocates suitable attendance for all, independently of ethnicity or social class.

The acceptance of mass school depends on the existence of what Baczko (1984) called “community of imagination” or “community of meaning” with roots rooted in collective aspirations, which requires “the development of a widely shared social imaginary that could give meaning to institutions” (TAYLOR, 2010, p. 136). Not having established a new imaginary, what went on prevailing with the school community was the preexisting one, the one of the old school, directed to select students.



In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries one of the regularities of the teacher's work was the work carried out in relative isolation, thus, marked by individuality and not by collective work because "his or her repertory did not include collective actions of this kind" (TAYLOR, 2010, p. 115). The new participatory work proposals have not been imposed yet on the social imaginary that does not legitimize the determined roles for the mass school.

It was considered with the purpose of providing at the same time: instruction, education, moralization of social habits and customs and being a strategic place for the implementation of several public policies. As the new order gradually infiltrates and transforms the social imaginary, the mass school can be accepted. Through the penetration, apprehension of a new common repertory. At Taylor's explanation (2010, p.37).

What are exactly the implications, when a theory penetrates and transforms the social imaginary? People often undertake, improvise, or are induced to new practices. These gain a sense because of the new vision, which began by being articulated in theory; this vision is the context that gives meaning to practices. Therefore, the new understanding becomes accessible to the participants in a way that did not previously exist.

Considering the data collected from the principals, teachers and staff of the school that was under a research, we could verify by the analysis of their answers that the social imaginary of this group gives shelter to the traditional school model. They say that in old times "it was very different because it was respected. There was time for everything and now the students do what they want". "The school of the past is lacking these days. There was respect. The students were polite, they went to school uniformed; how we miss it!". "It was a very good school, there was no violence, there was respect, especially to the teachers. These teachers were authorities and could play their roles".

The idea on which these statements are based is that discipline is a requirement for the performance of any school work. This point of view can be found in nineteenth-century thinkers. In this understanding, learning of school contents can only happen if a condition is met: the student has already been disciplined since before going to school.

Within this reasoning, educating and instructing are separate things (CORDEIRO, 119). It would be up to the teachers to teach and the parents to take care of the behaviors. It is evident that in this case the reference is to the family model centered on the formation of the children, concerned with good manners, obedience, thus, the so-called traditional, bourgeois family.

The managers and teachers continue working with the school suggested by the social imaginary because it "feeds the man and makes him act" (LE GOFF, 1994, p.16) which is explained by Cordeiro (2009, p.122) when he says that "the opening of the school to the children of the workers did not cause significant changes in the education of the teachers and in their most fundamental beliefs about the work and function of the school and the teacher".

When we consider the school as it ought to be, not as it actually presents itself, school actors wage a battle with themselves in an attempt to find in the work environment, the school, students, and families whose model lost in time, still populates their social imaginary.

Insisting on keeping in the present time the school of the past, whose function was only to teach contents to children of organized families and attentive to the school development, contributes to make the school keep on losing its importance in people's lives.

REFERENCES

- [1] BACZKO, B. **Les imaginaires sociaux: mémoires et espoirs collectifs**. Paris: Payot, 1984.
- [2] BERGER, P. L.; LUCKMANN, T. **A construção social da realidade**. 25ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2005.
- [3] BRASIL. Ministério da Educação e do Desporto. **Lei n.9394/96 de 24 de dezembro de 1996**. Estabelece as diretrizes e bases da educação nacional. Brasília DF1996.
- [4] _____. **Constituição** (1888). Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil: promulgada em 5 de outubro de 1988: atualizada até a Emenda Constitucional n 20, de 15-12-1998. 21.ed. São Paulo: Saraiva, 1999.
- [5] CARVALHO, J.M. **A formação das almas: o imaginário da República no Brasil**. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras,1990.
- [6] _____. **Cidadania no Brasil: o longo caminho**, 16ed. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2013. CORDEIRO, J. **Didática**. São Paulo: Contexto, 2009.
- [7] GEERTZ, C. **A interpretação das culturas**. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara Koogan,1989.
- [8] GOFF, J. L' **Imaginaire medieval**. Portugal: Editorial Estampa, 1994.
- [9] MAFFESOLI, M. O imaginário é uma realidade (entrevista a Juremir Machado da Silva), **Revista Famecos, mídia, cultura e tecnologia**. Porto Alegre. n. 15.p.74-82, ago. 2001.
- [10] SILVA, J. M. **As tecnologias do imaginário**. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2012.
- [11] TAYLOR, C. **Imaginários sociais modernos**.1ed Lisboa: Texto & Grafia, 2010.