

INDISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS: THE ITINERARY OF A THEME/RESEARCH PROBLEM

JULIO GROPPA AQUINO

TRANSLATED BY Alzira Leite V. Allegro

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at elaborating a general mapping of the issue of the existing discursiveness about indiscipline in schools by analysing 35 articles published in Brazilian journals on the field of education between 1998 and 2015. For that end, two large analytical frames have been selected: the modes of apprehension of acts of indiscipline as shown by research carried out, as well as the proposals put forward by the researchers to tackle the problem. At the end of the text, some thought will be given pointing at the typical conflictuality of contemporary school practices as an observation post from where it is possible to catch the always uneven, unstable and, after all, indeterminate texture of the phatic relations among the protagonists.

In Brazil, one of the opening texts about discussions on indiscipline in schools as the object of research, Silva (1998, p. 127) points out that the theme/problem

[...] not always is treated in a straightforward and explicit approach, but usually in a vicarious way. Thus, the topic frequently appears in studies in the field of teaching methodology, school management, social relations in schools, and psychology of education; so, in view of such dispersion, locating it is even more difficult.

Notwithstanding the fact that, at that time, the pedagogical field already included the collections organized by D'Antola (1989) and Aquino (1996), besides nearly twenty masters dissertations dedicated to discussing indiscipline in schools, it is certain that only after the end of the 1990s, the theme of indiscipline – and the addition of the prefix does not seem to have been fortuitous – began to gather strength and shape within the area of education theorizing in Brazil.

After almost two decades, it is appropriate to put into perspective the paths taken by the academic production devoted specifically to the subject; hence the fundamental aim of this paper. For that purpose, a specific discursive layer was selected: articles published in journals of education. That is so because, to a large extent, our present intention offers continuity to previous research, the results of which were

published in *Cadernos de Pesquisa* (AQUINO, 2011). Part of the efforts made therein involved a detailed survey of the academic production that brought indiscipline in schools into focus, and split it into three large fronts: books, theses and dissertations, besides a selection of articles published in journals.

On that occasion, it was possible to estimate that the Brazilian bibliographic production on the theme of discipline – especially the one conveyed in books, the most influential production niche – was marked by two general features: 1) the prescriptive-practical content of most of the texts, as opposed to the analytical nature of some others, as well as a third trend, a hybrid one, which aimed at combining the two previous features; 2) the lack of a conceptual approximation or dialogue among the works, resulting in argumentative multiplicity and dispersion.

Bearing such characteristics in mind, our present option for an examination of the journals is justified inasmuch as, besides being within the scope of literature arbitrated by peers and with open circulation – differently from theses and dissertations, generally restricted to emerging research experiments, and books, the latter more oriented to some sort of pragmatistic resolubility of the discussions – the bibliographic production conveyed therein is both fruitful as regards the analytical path that we have here selected, and little explored, except for the study undertaken by Zechi (2007), which, despite being directed to the academic production on violence and indiscipline in schools, was restricted to the 1990-2003 period.

It is also worth pointing out the fact that here the focus was given to indiscipline in schools to the detriment of other usual themes developed in education research that either touched the issue of unruly behavior or resorted to them in order to engage in specific discussions, but without restricting to them. Such is the case of some research focusing upon violence (SPOSITO, 1998; BRANCALEONI; PINTO, 2001; SALLES; SILVA, 2008; MACEDO; BONFIM, 2009; SANTOS; RODRIGUES, 2013); upon democratic management of the school space (ALBUQUERQUE, 2004; FLEURI, 2008), upon building a socio-moral environment in the classroom (VINHA; TOGNETTA, 2006), upon the school atmosphere and its effects (BRITO; COSTA, 2010; CUNHA, 2014), or even in school bullying (TOGNETTA; VINHA, 2010; ENS; EYNG; GISI, 2013), and upon practices (GROSSI et al., 2009; SANTOS; GROSSI; SCHERER, 2014). These studies form a summary sample of the many interfaces or theoretical interest focus which come close to the investigations about school conviviality, the scope of which naturally goes far beyond the essence of the present paper.

Our aim, therefore, is restricted to what has been articulated as indiscipline in schools as far as education research is concerned; sometimes – exception must be granted – interwoven with the topic of

violence, according to the judgment of the researchers themselves. In the present case, from the sets of the most recognized and best evaluated journals in the field of education, according to Qualis System (segments A1, A2 and B1), established by Capes (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior / Coordinating Office for the Advancement of Higher Education), a selection was made of texts which, in their titles, abstracts or key-words, mentioned the term *indiscipline*. The outcome: 35 articles.

THE GENERAL CONTOURS OF THE PRODUCTION

With a reasonable safety margin, it might be possible to state that indiscipline, despite representing one of the prevalent complaints made by education professionals and, at the same time, being a reasonably reliable indicator of the micropolitical atmosphere in schools, does not constitute an explicit concern among researchers in this field. Evidence of that is the fact that the 35 texts tracked down in the nearly two decades researched have been found in 24 different journals; that is, most of journal had just one text about the topic within the time span under examination, although, as we have already mentioned, the issue of discipline appears in a marginal or circumstantial way in a variety of other texts.

The journals selected are listed here: *Cadernos CEDES*; *Cadernos de Pesquisa*; *Contrapontos*; *Currículo sem Fronteiras*; *Educação* (PUCRS¹); *Educação* (UFESM²); *Educação & Realidade*; *Educação & Sociedade*; *Educação e Cultura Contemporânea*; *Educação e Pesquisa/Revista da Faculdade de Educação*; *Educação em Foco* (UFJF³); *Educação em Revista*; *Educação Temática Digital*; *Educação UNISINOS*; *Educar em Revista*; *Ensaio: Avaliação e Políticas Públicas em Educação*; *Linhas Críticas*; *Perspectiva*; *Revista Brasileira de Educação*; *Revista de Educação Pública*; *Revista Diálogo Educacional*; *Revista Educação em Questão*; *Revista Ibero-Americana de Estudos em Educação*; and *Teias*.

Notwithstanding the infrequency of the topic, it is possible to state that the interest in indiscipline as an object of investigation has shown a considerable growth for the last decade. The first two articles date from 1998. Between 2002 and 2005, three further papers were published. From 2006 to 2010, fifteen texts appeared. The remaining fifteen papers emerged between 2011 and 2015.

As to the authors, fifty-two names are listed, and each of them appears just once; exception, however, is made for four authors: Joe Garcia (with four articles); Ana Lúcia Silva Ratto (with three articles); Ademir José Rosso and Julio Groppa Aquino (with two articles).

When it comes to the institutional origin of the authors, there is a set of 29 institutions covering nine states of the Federation besides the Federal District, with a prevalence – it must be said – of the Southern

1

Pontifícia Universidade
Católica do Rio
Grande do Sul.

2

Universidade Federal
de Santa Maria.

3

Universidade Federal
de Juiz de Fora.

and Southeastern regions (especially São Paulo and Paraná states). In alphabetical order they are as follows: Faculdade Arthur Thomas; Faculdade de Ciências Humanas Esuda; Instituto de Ensino Superior de Garça; Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo; Universidade Católica de Brasília; Universidade Cidade de São Paulo; Universidade de São Paulo; Universidade de Sorocaba; Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso; Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro; Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte; Universidade do Oeste Paulista; Universidade Estadual de Londrina; Universidade Estadual de Maringá; Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa; Universidade Estadual Paulista; Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora; Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso; Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto; Universidade Federal de Pernambuco; Universidade Federal de São Paulo; Universidade Federal do Acre; Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro; Universidade Federal do Paraná; Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul; Universidade Paulista; Universidade Salgado de Oliveira; Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná; and Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná.

An initial delving into said material reveals the bibliography used in the articles. Just as we had envisaged, the textual production selected by way of books and theses/dissertations, is marked by a clear dispersion of the sources mobilized in the argumentations. In order to outline a general picture of the authors and the main works they used, we have scrutinized the references employed in the thirty-five papers.

With regard to the bibliographic sources, Julio Groppa Aquino's production, especially the chapter in the book *Indisciplina na escola: alternativas teóricas e práticas* [Indiscipline in schools: theoretical and practical alternatives], titled "A desordem na relação professor-aluno: indisciplina, moralidade e conhecimento" [Disturbances in teacher-student relationships: indiscipline, morality and knowledge], and the article "A indisciplina e a escola atual" [Indiscipline and present-day school], was referenced twenty-eight times. In the sequence, with eleven indications, comes Yves de La Taille's production, with several sparse texts. Paulo Freire also appears with nine citations.

The Portuguese author Maria Teresa Estrela, in her book *Relação pedagógica, disciplina e indisciplina na aula* [Pedagogical relations, discipline and indiscipline in the classroom], holds 12 references. Another Portuguese author, mentioned seven times, is João da Silva Amado, especially with his book *Interacção pedagógica e indisciplina na aula* [Pedagogical interaction and indiscipline in the classroom]. The evocation of violence and sometimes of youth, topics that are quite often associated with indiscipline, is recurring in the discussions. And some authors stand out: Miriam Abramovay, with 12 references; Marília Pontes Sposito, with 10; Bernard Charlot, with nine; Eric Debarbieux, with eight; and Áurea Guimarães, with five references.

Finally, there is another set of authors directly concerned about the subject of indiscipline: with five citations each, Ana Lúcia Silva Ratto and her book *Livros de ocorrência: (in)disciplina, normalização e subjetivação* [Book of occurrences: (in)discipline, normalization and subjectification], as well as the collections *Disciplina na escola: autoridade versus autoritarismo* [Discipline in Schools: authority vs. authoritarianism], organized by Arlette D'Antola, and *Disciplina na escola: enfrentamentos e reflexões* [Discipline in Schools: coping with it and reflections], by Maria Luisa Xavier. With four citations, Cintia Copit Freller, the author of *Histórias de indisciplina escolar: o trabalho de um psicólogo numa perspectiva winnicottiana* [Accounts of indiscipline in schools: the work of a psychologist under a Winnicottian perspective]; Nelson Pedro Silva, and his *Ética, indisciplina & violência nas escolas* [Ethics, indiscipline and violence in schools]; Rosana Argento Rebelo, with *Indisciplina escolar: causas e sujeitos* [Indiscipline in Schools: causes and individuals]; and Silvia Parrat-Dayán, and her *Como enfrentar a indisciplina na escola* [How to tackle indiscipline in schools].

Considering the amount of information gathered in the collection of data, the option adopted here was for the delimitation of an analytical horizon capable of highlighting the argumentative niches formulated by the researchers themselves, with a view to processing the effects caused by certain diverging behavioral attitudes displayed by students. This means that we have taken the researchers themselves as a sounding board for certain pedagogical dictates at the time. It is necessary to take into consideration, though, that not all the articles submitted formulations about the prevention or management of acts of indiscipline, but all of them led to the conclusion that certain unfoldings of their effects on the school daily life were inferred.

For this reason, we have opted in the present text for the most faithful composition possible of a discursive patchwork, encompassing the manifestations of educational expertise on the conflictive relational environment in Brazilian schools. The result amounts to an analytical texture comprising nuclear excerpts of each of the thirty-five articles.

INDISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS ACCORDING TO THE RESEARCHERS

In view of a rather heretogeneous discursive mass, we have selected two general thematic frames of reference which stood out in the studies examined: the modes of apprehension of acts of indiscipline, as well as the proposals to manage them.

Both categories will be presented discretely, as it will be seen in what follows. However, it is important to stress that, considering the risks involved in every categorization, the different texts are not restricted to the framing we have proposed, for their argumentative

boundaries are continuously blurred, which, however, does not prevent us from recognizing in them some enunciative markers – without mutual exclusion, of course.

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The first of such markers refers to the modes of addressing the theme, which is done now through (in general, critical) access to the representations of those involved, now through documental support of the records of discipline incidents.

Let us go along the first framing by highlighting an alleged necessity – according to the researchers – of reviewing/updating the images the professionals of education have of contemporary students. Thus, an imperative change in worldview and schools should be sought.

Founded on the theory of social representations, the study undertaken by Santos, Cruz & Belém (2014, p. 191) drew on interviews and questionnaires presented to teachers and young students of four schools in Pernambuco state, revealing a sharp difference between thought and the reality lived by teachers, since the representations of the teachers about their performance

[...] distance teachers from participating in the collective building of future projects for young people, with the starting point being school education, as teachers do not legitimate contemporary adolescents as subjects of learning. [...] In this sense, we can state that teacher/student relations get tenser, for there is no correspondence between the behavior idealized by teachers and the stance adopted by adolescents in the classroom.

The mismatch between teachers' and students's expectations is one of the results of a comprehensive study carried out between 2001 and 2002, under the responsibility of Sposito & Galvão (2004), about how youngsters in a São Paulo state high school experience their day-to-day school life. Among their findings the following aspects stand out:

In this research the teachers' complaints concerning lack of interest shown by students with regard to the studies pursued, offer a contrast with the students' own voice, who point out learning problems as the most important ones to the detriment of problems associated with violence. [...] The youngsters we have heard made it clear that they expect a school to fulfil its role, that is, to teach, and, more than that, they made a clear demand to "stand" before the teaching of knowledge proposed by the institution, an operation which they point as a condition for learning, where the teacher's intervention is considered crucial. (SPOSITO; GALVÃO, 2004, p. 374)

On the other hand, Penna's research, in close connection with Pierre Bourdieu's views, devoted herself to contextualizing fundamental mechanisms of school socialization modes and their operating guidelines, with an emphasis on discipline issues. Starting from interviews carried out with ten teachers of cycle I elementary education in two state schools in São Paulo, the author presents quite clarifying findings, especially with regard to the moralizing and disciplinary ballast in teachers' performance:

[...] the teachers had the constant need to enhance the existing differences, so as to ensure a symbolic return in a socially devalued function, and for that it was important to emphasize the distinctions, by configuring students and teachers in different, and many times antagonistic positions, besides granting teachers conditions to deliver moral judgments about their students beyond the assessment of their pedagogical performance. These issues end up shaping aspects of school culture and learning developed by the teachers in the exercise of their function, with an emphasis on moralizing and disciplinary processes, thus forming facets of the *habitus* connected with the teaching occupation. (PENNA, 2010, p. 15-16)

Still with regard to the teachers' representations, another study, based on the theory of social representations and on the Piagetian genetic epistemology, used elementary education teachers of 18 state schools in Ponta Grossa, Paraná State, as its subjects. By means of the data collected in interviews and questionnaires carried out between 2011 and 2012, Santos & Rosso (2014, p. 238-239) analysed the images produced about indiscipline, by organizing them according to two discrete fields:

The first field, dominant and central, brings together negative images which translate attitudes and feelings of confusion, apprehension, fear, exhaustion, despondency, frustration and helplessness, associated with great wastage and suffering on the part of such teachers. [...] On the other hand, the second field – peripheral and less shared, but more reflexive – translates expectation of hope, commitment, future and persistence to prevent and defeat indiscipline in schools.

Likewise, Garcia, the most prolific researcher in the subject (in the scope of the journals), showed readiness to scan the representations of teachers with regard to the genesis of indiscipline. Differently from the previous authors, he isolates three enunciative fields: one focusing

on students as undisciplined subjects, upon whom the pedagogical intervention rests; another field, which places in classroom relations the very context which generates indiscipline; and a third field, which blames the school culture itself for indiscipline-related problems. It follows that, for this author, everything would depend on how acts of indiscipline are dealt with, as

[...] the teachers' representations about indiscipline in schools transform their views regarding diverse aspects of their pedagogical practices, reflecting positions and influencing the nature of their interventions. Besides, such representations transform their relations with knowledge, show an influence on their decision about the curriculum, and enlighten their views of what it is like to be a teacher. (GARCIA, 2009b, p. 322)

The prospect that substantial changes in the mentality of education agents take place is evident in another text by Garcia (2009a). It has to do, according to him, with an unpostponable need of change of paradigm, to be supported by pro-active approaches to proper education management of conflicts with regard to indiscipline and violence. For that purpose,

[...] it would be essential for us to advance towards reading texts about indiscipline and violence that go beyond views and strategies based on mere social control, which so profoundly deplete pedagogical relations. In my opinion, it seems much more productive to think of the challenges represented by indiscipline and violence as opportunities for a thorough review of our pedagogical ideas and practices. (GARCIA, 2009a, p. 522)

Devoted itself to scrutinizing the apprehension of acts of violence in schools among college completers of Universidade Estadual do Rio Grande do Norte [Rio Grande do Norte State University], by resorting to interviews and questionnaires, the research carried out by Santos, Pereira & Rodrigues (2013, p. 585) considers indiscipline the “visible face of violence in schools”. Concerned about the formation of future professionals of education, the authors harbour suspicion as to what they call “docentric logic” as a factor that unleashes transgressive attitudes on the part of students:

From the teacher, and only from the teacher — the center of full attention and authority of knowledge, order, and determination — stem every decision, every answer and every and perspective of production of knowledge. Indiscipline defiles such a presupposition, places the subjects again on a level for dispute, reorganizes the

docentric and authoritarian logic instituted in the classroom. It is imperative that something given, something absolute, historically constituted as right and inevitable, be reaffirmed and imposed. In the process of reaffirmation of the teacher's supremacy there comes a void, a space for questioning, a space of conflict of interests, of a necessary inquiring into why things are like that.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence of the role of teachers in their own causing indiscipline is that one measured by a survey conducted by Silva & Matos (2014). Their study intended to look into the perceptions of students of Minas Gerais state public schools on indiscipline, starting from their crossing with six intervening variables: teaching level, students' gender, socioeconomic status, education lagging, proficiency in Portuguese and Maths, and the teachers' pedagogical practices. Questionnaires associated with one of the assessment tests of the Sistema Mineiro de Avaliação da Educação Pública [Minas Gerais State System of Public Education Assessment], which aims at examining the proficiency level of the Portuguese and Math students in the fifth, ninth and twelfth levels. The data referring to 2007, making up the impressive figure of 715,646 students, were then analysed by the two researchers:

The results of this study indicate that acts of indiscipline in the classroom are outstandingly present. They also point to a strong relation between school performance and indiscipline when students' school lagging and their proficiency in Portuguese and Math are discussed. Besides that, it is worth noticing a low association between indiscipline and socioeconomic level as well as a strong relation between the teachers' pedagogical practices and indiscipline. (SILVA; MATOS, 2014, p. 727)

Another study which used a large-scale evaluative mechanism – in this case, the Prova Brasil [Brazil Testing] – was the one carried out by Martins, Machado & Bravo (2015). The authors analysed the answers given by the Portuguese and Math teachers in state schools of Guarulhos, in São Paulo state, to questions on indiscipline and violence included in the above mentioned test, comparing them with the data showing students' performance corresponding to ten schools with a low scoring in the Índice de Desenvolvimento de Educação Básica [Basic Education Development Index] – Ideb – and other ten low-scoring schools in the 2007-2011 period. Such study reports a significant increase in disciplinary occurrences in the time interval under study, especially in the schools of the second group, indicating an increase in the levels of intolerance among the school protagonists. One of the findings of such research is worth mentioning, as it evokes a wider analytical scope:

The education policies implemented, especially since the 1980s, have expanded the reach and attention to elementary education, which has enabled large segments of economically less favored classes to gain access to schools. However, the teaching networks and systems cope with difficulties concerning the invigoration of teaching and learning processes — which should consider the social, economic and cultural characteristics of such segments — and this may have contributed to intensify situations of conflict and/or symbolic or physical violence in the school environment. (MARTINS; MACHADO; BRAVO, 2015, p. 483)

A study carried out by Silva (2009) closes the first subset of the articles selected, Its singularity lies in the fact that the research, focusing on the representations of a group of students of a Pedagogy course in a teaching institution in São Paulo, was split into two moments: firstly, the dissertations of 85 individuals were used and analysed according to the theory of social representations; secondly, with the support of psychodramatic methodology, 14 subjects performed dramatizations of conflicts in the classroom, followed by a discussion with further twenty-three subjects that formed the audience, thus generating a new analytical material, which was then discussed and compared with the previous one. One of the results presented reiterated the key role performed by teachers in the relations they establish with students:

An in-depth analysis of the debates with the audience showed the tendency towards pondering about the importance of teacher/student relationships, stronger in the debates than in the dissertations, as all those involved, despite having pointed to causes for indiscipline as lying outside school, also stated that the solution to this question depends on the teacher and his/her relationship with the students. (SILVA, 2009, p. 31)

Following a distinct analytical path in the studies centered on the representations of students and teachers, a group of six texts delved into the record of acts of indiscipline found in school documents, especially in the so-called occurrence books.

In three different articles, backed by the same database, Ratto (2002) frames a kind of analytical triptych. The material examined covers about 600 entries in the occurrence book of an elementary school in the city of Curitiba offering the then called four first levels. In the first article, the author focused on the 1998-1999 time frame; the others include the year of 2000.

In the opening text of the series (RATTO, 2002, p. 105), the author analyses the confessional dimension supporting such recordings,

associating it to a logic that is typified now as juridical (indiscipline as a crime), now as religious (indiscipline as a sin), which would result in what the author outlines to perfection: “the tightening of our possibilities of existence, when we are reduced now to the condition of guilty, now to the condition of innocent; now at the service of good, now at the service of evil.”

In respect of the legal aspect, an initial approach to the accounts contained in the registers allows that researcher to draw the following conclusion:

The entries in such books are made by the school educators and are kept under their responsibility and guard. It is what they write that sets and makes the facts permanent, the evidence available, the penalties applicable.. Thus, following a judicial logic, they at one and the same time perform the role of judges, prosecutors and jurors. (RATTO, 2002, p. 99)

When it comes to the religious aspect, it can be noticed that

[...] after situations considered problematic, conversations are held and it becomes evident that there are moves towards awareness-raising, apologies, retraction, attempt at an agreement, settling the conflict and promises of no relapsing. [...] Such a reconciling and placatory dimension is typical of a religious confessional logic. (RATTO, 2002, p. 100)

Few years later, that same researcher broached a new argumentative aspect: the connections between school authorities and parents or those answerable for the children. It is, therefore, a perceptive widening of the range of normalization effected by the occurrence books:

A school, when it calls those who are answerable for the children, not only demands that they guarantee the kind of control that is required, but also (and especially) includes them in the disciplinary logic of the occurrence books. Such a logic, using the occurrence books as instruments, does not reach only the children, but, in fact, all those involved in the education institution: teachers, educators, principals, personnel, families [...] all of them [...] becoming permanently culpable and punishable. (RATTO, 2006, p. 1273)

In her latest article, which comprises the previous ones, Ratto extrapolates from the discussion and moves into the intrinsic relations between pedagogy and control. The main thesis in her paper is, roughly speaking, that one expressed in the title of one of the subchapters of the

text: the “political dream” that each child should become its own guard. (RATTO, 2007, p. 483).

With a view to problematizing the same kind of pedagogical axiom, Aquino (2011) intended to raise the issue about the contemporary discursive proliferation around acts of indiscipline, placing it in the center of a sociohistorical and institutional framework affected by multitudinous demands from the governing of school individuals. For that end, the disciplinary occurrence books of a high school in São Paulo Capital, in the 2003-2007 time frame were analysed. After finding that, in the case of this school, no vestige of degradation of the institutional practices and relations that supported them had been noticed, the aforementioned researcher operates a trade-off from the analytical point of view:

Notwithstanding the recurring claim concerning the dissemination of animosity, disrespect or else of apathy on the part of students, such complaints, seen from a different perspective, seem to point, paradoxically, to a kind of normalizing triumph of contemporary school practices, substantiated in the ambition of a long-lasting management of situations concerning behaviour, as well as management of the ulterior destinies of the lives that are at stake there, by means of a standardization not only of gestures, but especially of the underlying intentions. (AQUINO, 2011, p. 471)

Another article selected is that one by Ferrari & Almeida (2012). The authors analysed 21 reports – under the guardianship of the Departamento de Ações Pedagógicas da Secretaria Municipal de Educação de Juiz de Fora [Department of Pedagogical Actions of the Municipal Education Secretary of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais state] – recording manifestations of parents and school staff about disciplinary incidents that took place between 2007 and 2009. Such reports focused on discursive marks regarding the body, gender and sexuality expressed therein. After showing the possible relationship between regimes of truth subsidized by such records and gender relations articulated with normativity, the authors advocate

[...] the need to see such students as characters in a story who are always connected to a main plot spanned by other stories. Thus, the challenge would be to create new and other connections among these events, among these recordings, and the school space: [...] to force these connections out of their normality and bring to light what is unfamiliar, unknown, external. Through what is considered abnormal, it is necessary to bare what is normal, established, to know the structures that strengthen linearity, to recognize the

effects of the norm over each one of us and to denounce the established and fixed places; moreover, it is necessary to consider the school space as relational and set up by social practices, discourses, knowledge and power in relationships, and inscribed in the body. (FERRARI; ALMEIDA, 2012, p. 882-883)

At last, in a study with the aim of locating the irruption of indiscipline in the core of current cultural transformations, Nogueira & Soares (2015, p. 171-172), based on the analysis of more than three hundred occurrence books at the Delegacia de Infância e Juventude [Childhood and Youth Court] of the city of Sorocaba, in São Paulo state, involving state school students, between 2001 and 2003, maintain that

[...] it is in the world of porous and enunciative borders which schools inhabit nowadays, that indiscipline is (re)produced, culminating in the criminalization of the students. With this finding, we gather that there is no possibility of undertaking an analysis of contemporary subjectivities without understanding the changes that have taken place in current western societies; likewise, we cannot interpret such changes by separating them from each individual's character structure.

The second enunciative mark in the study carried out refers to facing disciplinary incidents, both with regard to their production and their management.

From the very beginning, the teachers' acting stands out as a target for debate in various studies. Thus, acknowledging that the irruption of acts of indiscipline would have an intrinsic correlation with the modes of conducting the classes, is a recurring idea. Such a point of view emerges in the text, many times indirectly, that is, the teachers' acting is not treated as an immediate target for blame, but rather as a possible route towards overcoming disciplinary obstacles. An example of such discursive articulation is evident in Pereira & Blum's paper (2014), who examined reports deriving from interviews and a discussion group involving 18 teachers from a state school in the town of Cruzeiro do Sul, in Acre state. The authors state that

[...] from the moment teachers stop treating a student as merely a number and is capable of recognizing the peculiarities, wishes and needs that shape him/her, their pedagogical practices gain a new contour, enabling better understanding and helping in the growing process of each one of these students. More inclusive actions that facilitate an active participation of everyone, and respect for diversities can make all the difference in the structuring

of the school pedagogical practices, in that they minimize the damaging effects of acts of indiscipline on the part of the students and optimize school energies towards the production and leaning of new fields of knowledge. (PEREIRA; BLUM, 2014, p. 755)

Following the same line of reasoning, the pedagogical protagonism shared in the classroom is evoked by Ferreira & Rosso (2014) in the text where they report about research conducted with 64 students attending the 9th level of three public schools in Paraná state, by means of interviews on the issue of indiscipline:

Students need the chance, at any given moment, of moving from the role of supporting actors to protagonists and, besides that, of criticizing the meanings of the classes, so that what is being dealt with makes sense, causing them cognitive conflicts. It is also necessary to reconsider the educator's pedagogical actions, so that the school may facilitate an encouraging ambiance for the creation of moral values, of solidary practices, of decision-making to favour the student's self-discipline. (FERREIRA; ROSSO, 2014, p. 247)

Likewise, in one of the opening essays of the series analysed, where he tries to deconstruct the more usual explanations about the presumed causes of indiscipline in schools, Aquino (1998) proposes a set of general rules of conviviality in the classroom, so as to be possible to hold other views of acts of indiscipline, the interpretation of which are, according to him, stereotypical:

The very first rule implies understanding the problem-student as a mouthpiece of the relations established inside the classroom. [...] The second ethical rule refers to a de-idealization of the student's profile. [...] The third rule implies fidelity to the pedagogical contract. [...] The last ethical rule — with which we close our itinerary — offers the notion that there should be two basic values presiding our actions in the classroom: competence and pleasure. (AQUINO, 1998, p. 204)

Seeking presumably successful alternatives to face indiscipline is what Eccheli (2008) does in an essay which mobilized part of the existing literature on the theme of motivation, with a view to supporting the hypothesis that there might be an intrinsic relation between such a theme and prevention of indiscipline:

If, in the classroom, the teacher succeeds in developing the adequate activities to promote the student's motivation, he/she

will have fewer problems with indiscipline, as a motivated student will direct his/her attention and actions towards doing an activity and, consequently, there will be less time to get involved in acts que may jeopardize the development of the task and generate indiscipline. (ECCHELI, 2008, p. 211)

It is on the notion of transdisciplinarity plus the notion of democratic management and political participation of the school staff that Naiff (2009) bets as regards equating discipline problems, in such a way that indiscipline comes to be seen as an occasion for triggering criticism and questioning of the established order without ever generating silencing among the professionals:

It is in the context of transdisciplinarity that the teacher may find room to exercise his/her investigative ability, which not only leads to a better understanding of his/her working area but also allows him/her to effect transformations. It can be seen in daily life, when the professionals succeed in deconstructing established positions and conducting new negotiations. It is the responsibility of the school staff to create theoretical, operational and disciplinary fields that can confront pre-existing knowledge and render it more flexible, thus leading to new inquiries. (NAIFF, 2009, p. 115)

The claim for a properly pedagogical jurisdiction of the difficulties involving indiscipline and violence in schools was brought up by Krawczun & Platt (2015) in a study based on the analysis of documents collected, interviews carried out and questionnaires submitted to state school teachers as well to military policemen working in the Community School Police Patrol in the city of Londrina, Paraná state. Their findings are accurate:

The findings recorded here not only through the existing literature, but also through the questions put to the teachers in respect to the difference between indiscipline and violence as well as concerning the confirmation that school patrols attend calls connected with indiscipline in schools, are data which are, at least, a matter for concern, as policemen report that being called to mediate issues of indiscipline is commonplace, and this was confirmed by all the teachers interviewed in this study, which shows that the professionals acting in schools reveal their difficulty in dealing with indiscipline. Taking into consideration the turbulent relations in the school environment, distinguishing between what is indiscipline and what is violence is extremely important to outline the more adequate agents to face the situation: either the teacher or the police, for indiscipline is not a case for the police, but rather a case for educators. (KRAWCZUN: PLATT, 2015, p. 501)

Following a nuanced look on the different types of school conflicts, similar to the views expressed by the previous authors, Golarte (2010) presents the results of a study driven by her own experience as a school counselor in two public schools of the cities of Duque de Caxias and Niterói, in Rio de Janeiro state. The aim was to investigate by means of a series of concomitant ethnographical strategies, how the adolescents of those schools viewed the themes under discussion. The author reports the following findings:

It is imperative to relativize the nature of the events, by distinguishing indiscipline from physical violence and bullying, the latter being the type of violence that was prevalent throughout the interviews and in observations in both schools. Otherwise, we will be doing what has already been socially done with regard to the negative conception of schools located on the outskirts, which absorb students coming from the lower classes. Despite being used to local violence, they reported that they suffer violence connected with taunting and persecution. Thus, the challenge schools are faced with is that of building dialogue strategies with this segment, of contributing to the reinforcement of positive projects, and valuing the creative and participative potential of young people. (GOLARTE, 2010, p. 26)

In the wake of above propositions and according to some authors, it would not be the case of initiatives emanating only from the teacher's decision-taking sphere of action concerning the classroom. To succeed, the teacher's performance should be based on something crucial in the structuring of schools: their political-pedagogical project. This is what Oliveira (2009) advocates in his essay, where he delves into some proposals for the prevention and control of indiscipline, which, in his view, would require a democratic conduct on the part of the teachers, as well as the students' participation, resulting in favorable conditions for individual learning and group socializing:

There is no doubt that, to allay school indiscipline, the best strategy to be resorted to is the elaboration and implementation of a shared Political-Pedagogical Project that can foresee and prevent routine problems at school. However, to make this feasible, it is necessary to count on professionals committed to quality in education: principal, pedagogical coordinator, and teachers must work together to attain the goals established. (OLIVEIRA, 2009, p. 303)

Besides the demand for transformation both in mentality and teachers's work, another argumentative front was advocated by the researchers: a kind of professional formation that would effectively take

into account the problem of indiscipline. Pereira & Blum (2014, p. 755), in the previously mentioned article, summarize the issue as follows:

What one can also notice is that there is a sense of urgency to discuss and study extensively the theme of school indiscipline, as teachers report not having built theoretical basis about the issue in their initial and continued formation, the reason why they must find support only in their experience.

Likewise, in a study aiming at a theoretical discussion stemming from some discipline incidents at Instituto de Aplicação da Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro [Institute of Application of Rio de Janeiro State University], Cruz (2002) points to what follows:

The triggering causes [for indiscipline] have to do with the previous history of a teacher's role and the life and education of the educator involved in each case. Thus, I can only infer that the disciplinary code of the teaching institution does not take into account a study of the circumstances promoting it, and that a previous attitude must be adopted. This attitude, in my point of view, would be found in the formation of educators through a curriculum that considers the evils of hidden contents. For that to happen, a process of self-reflection must be implemented in the educators' formation, qualification and daily life, so that they do not lose control over their actions. CRUZ, 2002, p. 115)

In turn, Vasconcelos & Bellotto (2010), by availing themselves of interviews and the presentation of two hypothetical conflicts regarding a situation of indiscipline in the classroom, developed an investigation to analyse the import of 100 elementary (2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th levels) and high school (2nd level) students of two public schools in the city of Assis, in São Paulo state; they report their finding:

[...] from the teachers' point of view, the internalized passivity attributing the causes of indiscipline to factors outside the school, leaves this possibility unexplored. Stimulating in educational institutions the debate about acts of indiscipline might be an alternative to afford a healthier environment in the school context. (VASCONCELOS; BELLOTTO, 2010, p. 14)

Garcia (2008, p. 378) is unequivocal in proposing focal attention to processes of formation, whether they are initial or continual:

[...] we should stress the importance — especially in schools that face chronic problems with indiscipline — of moving forward in teachers' formation courses. If the subject of indiscipline in schools keeps being underplayed in the initial formation of future teachers, projects of continual in-service formation should mobilize teachers for the different fields of knowledge, attitudes and growth that are necessary in their concrete pedagogical practices.

A similar perspective is that one which Lopes & Gomes (2012) offer in their essay about education for peace, in the wake of the contributions made by Paulo Freire and Célestin Freinet. For these researchers, this would involve intervention teams geared towards solving problems, implementing significant curricula and, lastly, instituting a dialogue as a matrix of sociability:

For that purpose, a continual education of teachers, especially of those who work directly with the classroom groups, is necessary to deepen the study of the whys and to acquire self-confidence, in order to use effective means to mediate, in the classroom, those acts of indiscipline that come as barriers to the learning process. Education for peace must be a constant quest. (LOPES; GOMES, 2012, p. 278)

According to Mutti (2014), in the only paper linked to French discourse analysis, attention to the discursive universe around indiscipline should be a constant from the very initial formation studies. The author's research corpus comprised texts produced by undergraduates of Teaching Degree reporting on their internship teaching experience in different schools in Rio Grande do Sul state, as well as interviews with teachers of Portuguese in a town in the Mato Grosso state outback:

[...] by giving voice to the subjects, the study enabled a careful analysis of old and new senses as regards the reality of the classroom, by highlighting the complex relations it involves. By offering a contribution to the reflection upon the issue of teachers' formation, it pointed out that questions concerning discipline should not be just underlying but rather brought up objectively, and more specifically in formation courses, both in a Teaching Degree and in continual formation studies. (MUTTI, 2004, p. 357)

Another formative experience involving interns — in this case undergraduate students of Natural Sciences of Universidade de São Paulo — was reported by Dominguez et al (2014). The study material consisted

of the records made by the interns who followed all the classes in the same group in of elementary level in a São Paulo state school in order to identify and analyse the variations in the behaviour displayed by the students in the classes of different teachers. The authors of the research claim that

[w]ithout intending to bring the reflection presented here to an end — quite on the contrary, proposing to amplify it —, it would be worth emphasizing once more that this paper aims not at indicating which teaching procedures better respond to the demand for control over the students' behavior, but rather to stress the potentialities of curricular internship as a space to elicit various questions from the future teachers. (DOMINGUEZ et al., 2014, p. 47)

Part of the research carried out seems to move beyond the demand for change, whether it is in terms of teaching actions or in terms of the formative agenda of the professionals. Such studies would involve the implementation of specific strategies for the suppression and reduction of acts of indiscipline.

It can be said that the most heterodox strategy is that one formulated by Nunes Sobrinho (2009): to teach procedures of cognitive-behavioral self-control. The author advocates the hypothesis that a resolubility of such a method would be its major quality when compared with the traditional methods of modification of students' behavior. Thus, there are various behavioral self-control techniques such as self-assessment, self-ranking, self-teaching, self-monitoring according to the frequency of answers, self-monotoring according to time interval, both overt and covert self-reinforcing. The author states that

[...] in a summarized way, the proposal for teaching cognitive-behavioral self-control implies helping students in their learning behavioral control, as well as getting them involved in their own emotional and cognitive changes, besides their personal growth. The goal is to include and develop self-control, self-determination abilities, and their right to exercise citizenship. (NUNES SOBRINHO, 2009, p. 167)

Located in a sort of extreme opposition, a proposal for class meetings as a mechanism for overcoming disciplinary stumbling blocks is advocated by Dias & Colombo (2013). The authors, grounded on the perspective of moral development and a collaborative atmosphere in the classroom, present the result of a study which focused on the recording of situations experienced by 7-8 year-old children in an elementary public school:

With a view to overcoming indiscipline problems through a collaborative atmosphere, the use of resources such as classroom meetings is given evidence in the present study. The space for classroom meetings enables concrete and practical conceptual experiences of democracy in the school, which may lead every member of the community to experience a democratic and respectful ambiance, thus contributing moral education and citizenship. Therefore, the educative action performed, which goes beyond imparting curricular content, might also promote the students' moral formation. (DIAS; COLOMBO, 2013, p. 371)

The value/moral dimension of disciplinary penalties was also a matter for reflection on the part of Cunha *et al.* (2009). In their article, where, by means of interviews, they intended to investigate the perceptions of teachers and 54 students of the 5th and 6th levels of elementary public schools in the city of Maringá, Paraná state, with regard to the concept of retributive justice and its two types of penalty (expiatory or by reciprocity), the authors deem

[...] important that the school, for instance, include practices that view education as a means to promote the need for thinking where other alternatives are prevalent, such as the notion of doing justice by reciprocity, in order to oppose behavior leading to expiatory penalties and coercion practices. It is worth stressing that studies have shown the importance of experiencing and practicing collaboration and the rules of equality for the promotion of the concept of reciprocity. (CUNHA *et al.*, 2009, p. 209)

In short, the issue concerning acts of indiscipline involves alternatives other than the ordinary punitive expedients; such expedients are an object of suspicion by Garcia (2006, p. 129) in the first of his four papers:

In this sort of scenario, it is necessary to see whether the disciplinary penalties and strategies practiced in schools really make sense or which ones do, considering the perspective of the school not only as a place for education for citizenship, but also a place where one exercises citizenship. Our perception is that the notion of disciplinary punishment still needs to be disentangled from the notion of strict punishment, and it further poses the challenge of incorporating an ethical purpose.

At a quite different level in comparison with the texts we have visited, which center on the quest for mechanisms to overcome or mitigate disciplinary misconduct, we have retrieved one of the inaugural

texts of the discursive series being under our investigation. We refer to the critical essay by Belintane (1998), which echoes an autobiographical ring, about a teacher's daily life: appalling, in the case of public schools located on the outskirts of big urban centers; canonical, in the case of middle class private schools. Reflecting in a very candid way, Belintane dissects critically the two main scenarios where contemporary teachers travel through and that which he comes across: a "deep crisis", in his words. In the first case proper, it would be, according to him, a relationship "underpinned by new and strange objects, very different from the traditional contents and school goals" (BELINTANE, 1998, p. 31). Hence, for him

[...] rebuilding new pacts for public education institutions, however many new techniques and educative conceptions emerge, will only be possible if other social pacts occur simultaneously. The isolated pacts with the community, promoted by principals and diligent and dedicated teachers (unique leaderships) — however much they are seen as models — are always living on borrowed time, as the cost-benefit ratio, both in economic and either social or psychological terms, in general, is not rewarding. (BELINTANE, 1998, p. 31)

FURTHER NOTES

Bearing in mind the general aim we have proposed at the beginning of this paper we have committed ourselves to elaborating an itinerary of the discourse about indiscipline in schools, by finding support in the texts arising from the selection of a set of journals on education in Brazil.

Nevertheless, a strategic reservation was present all the time: the expertise discursiveness under discussion should be understood as a fundamental part of current regimes of truth,⁴ and not as the luminous, enlightened counterpart and, therefore, more competent to rectify the errors in contemporary education projects, requalifying them by the university tribunal. Thus, the researchers were granted no eve authorization.

Then, two analytical fronts were discerned, taking into account the modes of apprehension of acts of indiscipline dealt with in the investigations, as well as the modes of tackling the problem that such investigations raised. In each of these fronts, thematic categories were brought out.

To a great extent, the path we have followed so far echoes some findings of the study by Zechi (2007, p. 7) already referred to, such as

[t]he studies indicate that the issue of violence and indiscipline in schools can be tackled in schools, by taking as a starting point

¹ The notion of *regime of truth* or *politics of truth* was formulated by Michel Foucault (2011, p. 217) in the following terms: "the types of discourse taken in by it [society], which it sets to work as though they were true; the mechanisms and categories that enable distinguishing between true and false enunciations, how some are confirmed and others are not; the techniques and procedures that are valued in the attainment of truth; the status of those who are assigned the task of saying what works as truth".

the construction of new significations that enable decoding, interpreting, negotiating and controlling the issue. [...] Schools must create constructive relations among students, teachers, staff and parents, aiming at developing a solidary, humanist and cooperative atmosphere. The measures intending to prevent acts of violence and indiscipline in schools must prioritize practices based on dialogue; the search for a consensus towards the resolution of conflicts should favor a well-grounded argumentation.

By way of closure, though, we have opted for not subscribing *in totum* to such assertions, but rather for elaborating a set of different reflections, urged by the premise that it is not possible to give support to argumentative efforts towards backing up the contemporary pedagogical common belief that insists on giving formal education the status of a threshold of a more orderly, more compliant, and, therefore, more developed world; a world where everybody would derive the joy of living not from the adventure of thinking in a different way, but from the servitude of acquiescing in what has been decreed by the dictates of the present.

From this perspective, when indiscipline in schools and especially when the possible strategies to fight it are mobilized by the researchers, one notices, to a lesser or greater extent, a type of salvational call from the educational scenario in Brazil, by deeming it hostage of an obsolete pedagogical and/or institutional organization, incongruous or even unruly with regard to the so-called demands of the democratic present. The outcome is a virtually ubiquitous obstinacy about an internal democratization of school daily life – notably of classrooms – associated with the motto of productive optimization in the relations that would then take place under the rule of a chimerical personal and social enrichment that would encompass everyone – teachers, students and the community; in a nutshell, schools as a founding epicenter of the long cherished dream of progress for all and everyone, resulting in a harmonious school concert.

Such mentality is materialized in one of the texts referred to at the beginning of this paper, but not included in the list previously visited:

One of the questions that one may pose for an analysis of school space management is that indiscipline, divergence, and disobedience can be considered and negotiated in the sense of a democratic management of such space. It is necessary to open for discussion what is and what is not indiscipline in the school space, with the actors on the stage as co-managers in a new sense and new significance. The resignification of what is (in)discipline

is necessary and pressing in order to build the school space as a democratic one. (ALBUQUERQUE, 2004, p. 47)

As it can be easily inferred, the discourse about the theme of discipline cultivated by a great number of the researchers we have listed according to the notions above discussed, does not seem to forgo watchwords that make up a semantic and pragmatic field favorable for the settlement of notions of self-control and self-managing efficiency; notions that contend paradoxically with those ones incensed most of the time, as the ones of dialogue, respect, cooperation, inclusion etc.

Again another text mentioned at the beginning of our reflections seems to sum up accurately such a perspective:

Schools have to build a favorable environment for children to experience situations that enable them to build their moral values, situations of mutual respect, justice, cooperation, decision-taking, responsibility-shouldering, reflecting, solving problems, so that, little by little, these children acquire self-discipline, thus regulating their own behavior and not merely complying with external orders. (VINHA; TOGNETTA, 2006, p. 54)

Thus, the longed-for students' disciplining – henceforth endogenous as well as centrifugal – would become an effect, and at the same time, a reinforcing cause of a renewed type of ordering the bonds and school tasks, now no longer imposed in a heteronomous way, that is, no longer oppressive and authoritarian, but sympathetic towards the democratic spirit and its many effluences. Hence the Promethean as well as peremptory character of a spontaneous self-discipline to be molded in the school benches since early childhood.

Adding to this, there is the fact that a great deal of the debate about indiscipline in schools is affiliated with a kind of undisputed enunciative circularity, consubstantiated in the juxtaposition of generalizing theoretical appraisals with certain topical and empirical circumstances, quite often resulting in disqualifying judgments of the abundance of forms of life in schools – whether they refer to students or teachers – or even in highly idealized solutions to the turbulences witnessed there.

In our view, this is what can be noticed below:

[...] for the educator who is capable of problematizing and holding a dialogue, indisciplined students' rebellious behavior can be one of the very challenges that entice a constant pedagogical struggle, because it articulates in a creative and pleasurable way personal and collective interests ordinarily denied by the school system. As far as schools are concerned, practices of transgression may

reveal their revolutionary potential, forming the basis for educative processes that can overcome the knowledge-disciplinary power relations, insofar as they are collectively (thus consolidating relations of reciprocity and solidarity) and actively (thus cultivating the diversity of initiatives and interactions) assumed. (FLEURI, 2008, p. 470)

From the presumed elegy on the transgressive acts to the pacifying triumph over the latter, going through a freely arbitrated regulation, the so-called democratic school answer would, thus, consist of an inclusive treatment towards students who are more and more refractory to teachers' guidance, students that should at any cost be affiliated not by stretching complex ideas that deserved to be enjoyed by the new generations in some equidistant point in the future, but by disseminating immediate competences – now with civil or subjective/moral emphasis – that would be acquired by the younger ones, under the pretext of a temperate conforming to pedagogical practices, though devoid of an intellectual sense proper, once they are undermined by many objections deemed attitudinal, which end up exceeding the range of jurisdiction of the education institution, greatly clouding its specificity and, by extension, its ingenuity; hence the grandiloquence of the confessed ideals deceiving the faltering vigor of concrete acts, the latter measured by constant failure on the part of teachers.

From our point of view, we bet on another line of thought, when confronted with the typical conflictiveness of contemporary school practices, in the wake of which it would be perfectly possible to address the idiosyncracies of the ongoing ways of existing/living together, not as a distress signal from an institution which is supposedly facing a risky situation because it is continually ruined by discordant habits developed by their own protagonists, but as an observation post from which one can catch sight of the ever rough, unstable and, in the end, undetermined ethical and political texture of the relations among them; the schooling world, therefore, not as temerity, inconvenience or imperfection, but rather as a permanent enigma; in short, not what, in principle, it would be lacking, but what, strictly speaking, it exceeds in. Therefore, the researcher neither as a sounding box of the pressing needs of the present, nor – even worse – as a demiurge of a favorable forthcoming time, but as an implacable inquisitor of our own present and its extravagant consensuses.

It is the unquietness of the world that the professionals of education inhabit and, with some luck, make inhabit. To them Jacques Rancière (2002, p. 142) lends his support: “Never will a party, a government, an army, a school or an institution emancipate a single person”.

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JULIO GROPPA AQUINO

Professor at the Faculty of Education of the Universidade de São Paulo – FE-USP,
São Paulo, São Paulo State, Brazil
groppaq@usp.br