

Teaching Work and Social Demands: Research Cases from the Political Discourse Analysis¹

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The aim of this presentation is to introduce certain uses of some conceptual categories developed within the political discourse analysis so as to examine several aspects of the education policy. The political analysis of the discourse is developed on a post-structuralist conception of the social, the ontological nature of the political, a discursive perspective of the Gramscian conception of hegemony and a socio-political incorporation of the psychoanalysis developments on subjectivity. We intend to introduce the conceptual use adopted in two case studies on teaching work.

Teacher professionalization

The concept of teacher professionalization was subjected to countless theoretical discussions and practical disputes in the last decades of the twentieth century, especially in Latin America. In a recent research, we wanted to analyze some of the ways in which teachers were interpellated as professionals in the Latin American background since the beginning of the reform processes - mainly the 1990's reforms - and from then on to analyze the tensions arising between different pronouncements and meanings under dispute in the framework of education policies. The peculiarity of these policies, as social processes of meaning, is that they are intended to set forth the notion of “education professional”, as subject position.³

At first glance and beyond the differences between countries, the latest reforms of the 20th century revealed a common identity not only as regards the purposes, principles and contemporaneity of their proposals, but also concerning the discourse that enabled them (minimal state, focalization, competitiveness, etc.). The reform movements accounted for the incorporation of a rhetoric on teaching professionalization (Popkewitz and Pereyra, 1994). There, the use of the term “professional” to interpellate teachers accounts for a certain reasoning style and presentation mode, which shaped the subject as bearer of certain qualities and conditions. At this point, it is necessary to emphasize that the concept of professionalization, as well as other concepts, does not have a fixed meaning, but that on the contrary, it is discursively constructed in specific institutional historical contexts (Popkewitz, 1995). Against this background, international organizations became remarkably important when accompanying the mentioned educational reforms by funding the programs to implement them or advising the countries of the region.



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We have also been interested in tracing the distinctive features of the aspects to which reference is made through teaching policies. By teaching policies we mean rules, laws, programs, practices and institutions which can be analyzed as discourses when social processes of meaning are involved⁴. In that sense, we explore how these discourses tried to set the notion of *teacher* in different ways as subject position, which interpellated a group of agents of the education systems assigning them a position in the discursive formations and also a particular history that constituted them as subjects. Those discourses strongly modeled the normative and organizational aspects of the training proposed for the sector.

The notion of teacher professionalization is placed in this discursive horizon as the signifier by means of which teachers were interpellated within the framework of education reforms; thus, we understand professionalization as a signifier in dispute involving different subjects struggling to join that wide notion with particular meanings. It was a hegemonic dispute through their discursive acts around that notion. In connection with the use of the signifier category, we refer to certain terms that are the subject of a very strong ideological struggle in society and that, thus, will tend to be empty signifiers - though never completely empty - by the fact that given the plurality of conflicts that occur around them, they cannot be fixed to a unique discursive articulation. Likewise, this vacuity is what enables them to be articulated to different meanings and, therefore, they are a powerful source of dispute.

Background of the discussion about the professional

Considering teachers as professionals and the debate related to such nomination did not come with the educational reforms of the twentieth century. The reassertion of this status has a long and intense history during the twentieth century, even though its beginnings date back to previous centuries.

In this regard, Dominique Julia (2001) highlights how a body of teachers was delimited as the State replaced the Church and municipal corporations in control of education by defining the minimum base of professional culture that teachers should have.

As a complement to these proposals, Antonio Viñao Frago (2002) indicates steps or stages in the professionalization process involving a legal framework on the performance of that task, the demand for specialized training and the establishment of professional associations. Even though it was governed by norms and values coming from public authorities, it did not completely abandon a clerical model. In this context, the meaning of teacher professionalization was linked to the legal regulation of training, access and working conditions of teachers, the creation of special training institutions and the development of a system of incorporation to public teaching.

The consideration of a historical perspective allows us to support the fact that the number of senses historically constituted around the teacher eventually made the operation of constituting him/her insufficient; thus, there was a tendency to look for another signifier retaining more stable senses: the professional teacher.

Disputes about the professional at the end of the twentieth century also inherited senses that had been granted to the teacher both in the initial phase of the establishment of public schools in Latin America (last decades of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century) and after the educational expansion. As in any reading of the past, in this heritage, the past is interpreted by the codes of the present. Thus, in most recent expressions when new senses are granted to teaching, both the recreated view of the teacher-priest-apostle and that of the teacher-unionized worker persist.



For instance, with normalism the construction of teachers' identity resulted from the confluence of 1) the condition of the teacher as a public officer who carries a social mandate, 2) the condition of *professional*, owner of expert knowledge for the development of a specific and socially differentiated activity and 3) the condition of intellectual as carrier of a theoretical and doctrinal body to the extent normalism organized the sense of its practice. This therefore suggests the displacement of meanings produced one hundred years after normal schools were opened. It also coexisted with other interpellations arising from fissures of that social mandate and from the State as their guarantor.

Teacher professionalization in the discourse of international bodies.

Essays on the fixation of meaning

The terms "teaching profession", "teaching professional", "professionalism", "professionalize", "professionalization" are commonly found in documents extensively developed in the last years of the twentieth century - both in the statements of the mentioned bodies and in the discourse of scholars. Beyond specificities, these terms referred to a qualification of work in teaching. This common sense idea does not meet univocal references in the specialized discourse and occasionally it was developed as a semantic field that by evading a definition presupposed its meaning and, thus, lent itself to different interpretations.

In this way, professionalism emerged as a signifier that functioned as a surface to record different meanings. Did teacher professionalization mean the same in the different national contexts? Did it mean the same in the enunciable environment produced by each of the actors who contested at each national level? These questions invite us to consider the comparison and the interpretation of different modes of significance.

The ways in which teachers' unions positioned themselves around the professionalization policies were diverse and were characterized by their own traditions, their greater continuity among party leaders and trade union leaders, their political participation and interference in education administration, corporate negotiation autonomy and by State guardianship, among other aspects. Another meaningful feature is the centralized or more decentralized character of each organization of the education systems and the ways in which teachers' unions were interpellated by new demands and interests of civil society.

The perspective from which this exploration has been developed begins with the recognition of the teacher through the set of positions of subject, interpellated with varying intensities, and set in different situations in the discourses which place him/her as object. It should be remarked that debates about teaching professionalization can refer to different aspects of the several stages involved in teaching. On the one hand, in the dimensions of teacher training, i.e. the characteristics implied in the initial instruction, modalities for career advancement, accreditations, updating in service, etc. On the other hand, those aspects related to working conditions, the ways in which tasks were regulated and work performance.

It could be said that unions had not traditionally taken this notion as a central point of their claims until just before the second half of the twentieth century. Conversely, the debates arising from this topic had been largely resisted by the unions by setting the need to review and improve working conditions, wages deterioration and - in general - State investment in education against the "professional" agenda on issues such as autonomy,



responsibility for the results and competitiveness.

However, in recent years, unions have had the need, or have found it productive to dispute about the senses that such a notion entails, rather than resisting it.

We have talked about disputes on a signifier given the fact that there are very different approaches to this problematic field; similarly, it must be noted that it is a signifier that contains a great ability to perform around ideas of educational quality and teaching task and thus - due to its ability to function as a prolific surface to record broad meanings that exceed it - works as a major interpellation to different sectors within the education field and also society in general. Our analysis focused on its positioning around the professionalism signifier and its ways to participate in the hegemonic dispute through its discursive acts around that notion.

Another point to mention is that policies aimed at professionalization are statements intended for individual performance, for the updating of each teacher, strengthening their autonomy and managing their own risks. Given these statements, some unions have responded to this interpellation by taking that demand and reshaping it as a collective issue in terms of working conditions.

We may add another element to this one. Earlier on we said that the consolidation of the magisterial careers in modern educational systems did not imply that they had to be accountable to their immediate communities; but nowadays, as Novoa (2002) suggests, there is the need for teachers to be strongly linked to the community.

On the other hand, the education policies that have sought to promote professionalization activities have tended to encourage certain features of training, management and accountability for results. A central feature that is not taken into account when speaking of professionalization is to regard the teacher as the interlocutor of education policies. In this context, trade unions have strongly participated in the debate about professionalization placing working conditions at the center of the debate; in this operation the scope of teachers' work to which teacher professionalization proposals seem most directly linked is loaded with new components that add up to the question of training or updating of teachers in service.

It has been fruitful to describe what are the senses that the professionalization signifier adopts in the discourse of teacher unions; i.e., how this notion is loaded with special contents as a way to intervene in the context of disputes for the construction of social significances, and thus, operate in public perception about the ways in which teacher work is stated and how it is shaped through specific policies for the sector.

It is a field of meanings that in turn functions as a regulatory mechanism. Insofar as the perspective of professionalization is being predominantly associated to one or some of the possible meanings, the policies adopted accordingly set a standard, a desirable course, a series of ideal conditions that characterize the professional teacher. Thus, a variety of practices, trajectories, experiences are matrixed by a perspective of training, recruitment, promotion, incentive, etc. The establishment of a professional teaching career has a certain stability of the meaning of teacher professionalism as a prerequisite.

The concept of teaching position

Teaching has been conceived as a vocation, work, career and condition (Alliaud, 1993; Alliaud y Antelo, 2009; Birgin, 1999; Tenti Fanfani, 1988, 2005), concepts from which it has been attempted to account for the problems mentioned above. In this section we intend to develop the way in which it would be possible to approach it from a category that we



have elaborated as a result of the research: "teaching position". We will also present a series of theoretical movements and paths that support this option. To do so, we will stop at the contributions that post-foundational prospects - and particularly the Political Discourse Analysis- have made with theoretical and methodological consequences for the study of teacher work regulations. Especially, we will consider the discursive, open and contingent configuration of the social relationships and identities and the identifications as temporary suture and fixation processes, trying to account for the way in which the notion of subject positions enables other ways of thinking about such configurations and allows us to raise the category of "teaching position".

As part of a line of work which is being developed and from a series of previous studies on the subject, we have approached the way teachers and professors subjects build *teaching positions* in the daily work with situations of social and educational inequality, which imply a particular reading of those problems and the configuration of identities that organize relationships, dynamics and strategies for their resolution, from specific conceptions regarding the sense of their task, the presence of historical elements of the profession, the appropriation of the circulation of meanings set by the official discourse and other agents, and the presence of utopian and democratizing senses that hybridize and articulate precariously and, paradoxically with other authoritarian, paternalistic and normalizing senses.

The notion of *teaching position* is built on the idea that education implies establishing a relationship with culture that is not situated at predefined, fixed and final coordinates. This relationship involves links with the knowledges and the ways of teaching that are never fully stabilized since they suffer changes driven by the search and invention of responses in the context of the schooling processes (Southwell, 2009). On the other hand, it involves a relationship with others⁵ expressed by establishing links of authority and founded on conceptions regarding what to do with future generations⁶- as they have the right to receive culture from past generations - which also have a dynamic and historic character articulated with more general notions concerning the role schooling can and should play in our societies and their relationships with the world of labor and politics.

The idea of position as relationship also involves the historical and social construction of insights on education problems facing teachers and the role education could play in their possible resolution. Over time, it implies sedimentations of various elements that are re-articulated in the present, configuring new hegemonic formations. It includes temporary and dynamic definitions about what situations imply inequality, injustice and exclusion and what elements would make up more egalitarian, fair or inclusive scenarios. Senses concerning notions of equality, justice and inclusion have the same open and unstable character than that of teaching position, being its fixation the object of broader disputes for hegemony.

The idea of teaching position gathers a set of reviews that the "cultural turn" or "hermeneutic" movements included in the field of social and educational research. Particularly, it is founded on the need to consider the construction of meanings by subjects from a central point and to overcome the aprioristic analysis of subjectivity, detaching it from a mere reflection of economic determinations. At the same time, those movements enabled perspectives that were determined to abandon the claim to elaborate ahistorical and transcendent laws as a way to approach an understanding of the social and, specifically, the regulations of teaching: the idea of teaching position refers to a construction which is given in the relationship, being impossible to define it, set it and hold it in advance and detached



from the historical construction of such work as we will discuss later. In addition, the construction of a teaching position involves the production and circulation of discourses on the task of teaching, in the framework of which the analysis of the meanings which actions, provisions and institutions have for those who live them becomes crucial.

As we have tried to show, the category of teaching position is closely related to that of discourse. For Popkewitz (2000), the discourses that structure schooling processes and configure directions for teaching work are part of the process of social regulation, as they are active elements of power for the production of capacities and provisions of subjects and the way in which they judge what is considered good and bad, reasonable and unreasonable, normal and abnormal. This positioning has a series of theoretical and methodological consequences. Firstly, it implies that practices, as activities carried out on a regular basis, are formed by sets of connected and overlapping rules that organize them and give them coherence. In this sense, practices do not exist without rules, and it is not possible to talk about rules without considering practices, as long as knowledge of the first ones means knowing how to proceed (Cherryholmes, 1998). The social practices developed by subjects that apparently use their freedom are supported by powerful provisions and regulations. Within this framework, Popkewitz incorporates the Foucault's conceptualizations (2002) as regards the notion of power, referring to relationships between individuals or groups, based on social, political, and material asymmetries that please and reward certain people and negatively punish others. This implies the need to focus on the provisions of power and in their effects, which lead us to the question of how certain discourses about the work of teaching arose and were possible and what relationships and processes produced them. In this context, the ideology is intertwined with power in the processes through which individuals accept, believe and internalize explanations and reasons about the social world in which they live. Ideology and power provisions shape our subjectivities as they prefigure how and what we think about ourselves and how we act accordingly.

For the analysis of teaching positions, another consequence related to the above is the assumption that discourse is action and, therefore, it is not possible to tell the difference between discursive practices - which would only imply talking - and non-discursive - that would only imply action. When a subject says he/she is doing something, and its meaning depends on the rules and the context of enunciation. What is performed with an expression is then something material, and thus it is not possible to distinguish specifically between discourse and practice: the discourse is a particular kind of practice and practice is largely discursive (Cherryholmes, 1998).

In this way, discourses do not imply a mere intermingling of things and words, nor a surface where "language" can be distinguished from 'reality', or a lexicon from an experience. Discourses are not sets of signs - even though they are formed by them-, but practices that systematically form the objects of those who speak. In this line, using the concept of "discursive formation" Foucault (2002) has helped to account for the way in which the discourse builds reality, gathering the heterogeneous that was not apparently able to come together. Such category refers to a set of rules of formation, emergence and dispersion of objects that operate as modalities of statements and conceptual architectures.

These practices occur in the context of discursive formations that can be understood as sets of differential positions which do not express any transcendent principle, but that may be meant as a wholeness from certain contexts of exteriority (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Southwell, 2003). In this context, the aim is to find regularities in the dispersion of



educational discourses and also to analyze the set of conditions governing in a given moment and in a given society, the emergence of statements, their preservation, the bonds established between them and the way in which they are grouped in statutory groups (Foucault, 2002).

Some post-Marxism developments based on the Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) have deepened a priori this idea of scattering discourses and differential positions that account for the absence of a transcendent fixation⁷ that are crucial in the construction of the category of teaching position. The discourse is one of the PDA central concepts to account for the configuration of social identities. This notion is rooted in the transcendental turn of modern philosophy, which postulated that the possibility of perception, thought and action depends on the structuring of a certain significant field which pre-exists the factual (Laclau, 1990). If the essentialist approaches are discarded, the notion of discourse becomes a meaningful and open totality that transcends the distinction between the linguistic and the extralinguistic. Thereby, the distinction between action and structure remains in a secondary position within the broader category of meaningful totalities (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Buenfil Burgos, 2007).

This idea of discourse is detached from the trivial and negative notions of the term that associate it to demagogy or exclusively verbal and linguistic acts to include in it both linguistic and extralinguistic meaningful sets. The sense of discourse is built on the relationship (of difference, equivalence, antagonism, opposition, etc.) that it engages with other discourses. As a meaningful "totality" that is never completely fixed, fulfilled or sutured, it is always exposed to the action of displacement produced by exteriority. It does not go against reality since this is not an extra-social materiality but a discursive construction, which implies that the discourse forms part of the reality as a social construction and builds it as an intelligible object. That does not imply the denial of the empiricity of objects but the possibility of identifying their existence in discursive terms and never away from a socially shared meaningful configuration (Buenfil Burgos, 2007).

The teaching position is made up of articulations of elements, translations of other discourses and of new interrelationships and plots that happen in the context of mechanisms "of hybridization" -as they have been called- (García Canclini, 1990), which operate mobilizing and articulating different traditions and discourses within a particular scope, such as the regulation of teaching work, thus promoting the configuration of new senses through discursive series and equivalences (Buenfil Burgos, 1993; Dussel, Tiramonti and Birgin, 2001). This display is always performed in particular historical conditions which involve limits and possibilities to the articulation of senses around the task of teaching. The hybridization develops from a translation process that links certain experiences, meanings and directions to those that were already available. In this process - which Williams (2000) called "selective tradition" - certain discourses are acknowledged, recovered and updated around teaching work while at the same time others are suppressed and silenced, as part of the mechanisms of hegemonic construction. In this sense, the changes designed and promoted by educational policies never overprint on an emptiness; they must negotiate with traditions and institutional cultures and with practices that may generate dissension and new hybrids.

The construction of teaching positions within the framework of disputes for hegemony



In society there are struggles to partially fix certain signifiers to certain meanings. These disputes make hegemony, which proves to be a process that is always active and needs permanent renewal, while discursive configurations are contingent and unstable. Conceptually, hegemony implies a theoretical field dominated by the articulation category, which implies the possibility to separately specify the identity of the elements that the practice of articulation recomposes or articulates (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). The hegemony as a discursive practice is not limited to the linguistic forms of consensus-building; however, the operations involved in a hegemonic practice are framed by socially shared meaningful networks (Buenfil Burgos, 2007). In this context, the construction of a teaching position - as every social action- turns into an action to produce sense.

Discourse is then that structured totality resulting from articulatory practice that establishes such a relationship between elements that their identity, far from being natural, is consequently established and modified. It is now necessary to specify what elements enter the articulatory relationship in the disputes over the "teaching work" signifier concerning the definitions of education policy, how subjects receive them, and that constitute the teaching positions. This is possible as long as the discursive structure is a practice that constitutes and organizes the differential social identities and relationships never achieving the last suture, that is, the final closure of meaning around the mentioned notion. The failure of this ultimate fixation of senses implies that there will always be partial fixations and that the social exists as an effort to produce that impossible total object. The discourse is here the attempt to dominate the field of discursiveness and it refers back to the meaningful totality which produces sense and structures the social life of which subjects are not fully aware. Discursive practices are productive as long as they produce the specific semantics of the words in use and relate them to objects and strategies of acting and thinking about things and people. The discourse produces a perception and representation of the social reality that forms part of the hegemonic strategies of the establishment of dominant interpretations of that reality (Bührmann et al., 2007).

This perspective on hegemony allows us to consider the way in which a regulation policy on teaching as a job becomes possible and the disputes between various proposals on education policy concerning what should be the discursive articulation that has to be enforced. Each initiative to regulate teaching work displays a series of elements and a certain articulation between them as regards the senses that this articulation gives to itself and that it intends to assign to the task of teaching. That possibility of articulation is feasible because there is never a complete fixation of elements and because a discursive formation is never a sutured totality. The possibility of contingency and dispute is always open and it is the object of a central analysis to the whole perspective of pedagogical analysis that wonders about the political and assumes the constitutive character of the hegemonic articulations it produces (Mouffe, 2007).

In this context, it is possible to consider the public policies in education as an articulation of meanings linked to a value or a sense assigned by the State. From the point of view of discursiveness, every policy is an instrument of regulation and a referential model of the social, and thus an attempt to temporarily articulate the meaning system, which is weakly structured, with cracks, and that will allow the incorporation of meanings in the frames of that institutional design, what makes it impossible to think about it as a total and final representation (Juárez Nemer, 2007). Then, the educational policy can be considered as an articulation of signifiers that attempts to identify a specific social field, but that joint by not fully representing the object (in this case, teaching work in the schooling



processes) allows the incorporation of loads of sense by its designers and also by teachers as recipients.

As mentioned before, in the framework of the PDA, the empty signifier category alludes to certain terms that are under a strong ideological struggle in society and therefore tend to be empty signifiers - but never completely empty - since by virtue of the plurality of conflicts around them, they never end up fixed to a unique and last discursive articulation (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). This trace of vacuity is what makes those signifiers possible to be articulated to different meanings and, therefore, a powerful space for dispute, accounting for their social and political influence. Vacuity is the result of struggles to dominate the field of discursiveness through signifiers seeking to absorb a totality that exceeds them.

Teaching positions and subject positions: polysemy and incompleteness of discursive identities

The category of teaching position is closely linked to the position of subject and its construction derives theoretically and methodologically from it. From the conceptual framework of the PDA, every subject position is a discursive position as it participates in the open character of every discourse and fails to be completely fixed in a closed system of differences. Accordingly, the subject category cannot be established either by absolutizing a dispersion of "subject position", or by the absolutist unification around a "transcendental subject" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). The subject category is permeated by the same incomplete, ambiguous and polysemous character than in every discursive identity, so the subjectivity of the agent is permeated by the same precariousness and absence of suture it holds. This lack of suture and the impossibility of a total dispersion of subject positions is what make the hegemonic articulation possible.

As can be seen, from this perspective the teaching positions and social identities in general lose their necessary character, as they are purely relational and never fully constituted. While the relational logic is incomplete and crossed by contingency, the concept of subject as rational agent and transparent to itself, the alleged unity and homogeneity between the set of their positions and the idea of subject as the origin and basis of social relations are seriously questioned. For Laclau, the notion of "subject position" becomes possible as consciences are not absolute and subjectivities become something constitutively strange and are always a void impossible to be filled.

In this context, subjects' identities are constituted as differentials, penetrated by the constitutive lack of the universal and crossed by a partial failure at the time of their configuration. Teaching positions "are" never in a closed and final state, but they "are always being" in a relational way, by virtue of the equivalences and temporary differences established with others. From here and the fragmented nature of identities it becomes possible to speak of subject positions and teaching positions.

Conclusion

The different approaches that have analyzed teaching work have taken other relevant topics: the characteristics of the initial training, the professionalization, the professional socialization, regulation of work by the State, membership associations and unions, etc.

The concepts that we have explored here, seek to activate notions inner to post-foundational, non-essentialist thinking, where subjects are not determined by their class, training and profession nor are subjects whose ways of being in the different dimensions of the social world, respond to a unified, predicted and classifiable pattern. Within the frame



of discourse analysis -mainly through the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) - any given identity is an effect of differential and contingent relations and the notion of subject positions is preferably used. For example, we have mentioned how diverse discourses try to set the notion of teacher in different ways as subject position, interpellating a set of agents of the education systems, assigning them a position in the discursive formations and also a particular history that constitutes them as subjects. We have considered the case of how the requirements of educational policies tried to set certain senses to the idea of teacher and thus, strongly modeled the normative and organizational aspects of training that was proposed for the sector.

In this way, we try to analyze the position teachers build in view of situations and subjects in an active, contingent, not previously “surveyed” or stable way, which occurs *in* the relationship and not before it, and that also generates a position (contingent, neither stable, nor previously established) in those with whom it is linked. From that perspective, we can include an analysis about on how teachers borrow, dispute, reformulate and negotiate senses of public policies, leaving behind prospects that assumed that the regulations of teaching work are very defining and that State provisions on them sufficiently account for what happens in the school world. In that sense, the idea of teaching position implies considering teaching subjects in their plurality, heterogeneity and complexity, ruling out the possibility of raising them as a homogeneous entity anchored in linear, ahistorical foundations that have a transcendent validity. Thus, our idea of teaching position consists of the circulation of the senses and discourses that regulate and organize the teaching work, and specifically refers to the multiple ways in which - in this framework - teaching subjects take, live and think their tasks, problems, challenges and utopias around it.

Notes

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³We refer to Laclau's conceptualization considering that "...Talking about a 'subject' refers back to the 'subject positions' within a discursive structure. Subjects cannot be the source of social relationships, not even in the limited sense of being endowed with powers that enable an experience, given the fact that every "experience" depends on precise discursive conditions of possibility" (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985) 132-133). The authors note that the totalizing essentialism of the subject should not be replaced by the essentialism of the parties which is inherent to the subject positions. They point out that it is essential to bear in mind that subject positions are set in a series of differential positions. None of them can be constituted as a separate position.

Notes



4 Our framework to approach education policies has been a notion of the social as discursive space, understanding social relations as relations of meaning where disputes occur due to the fields of meaning.

5 This idea of teaching position as a relationship with culture and the others also includes a series of dimensions and problems extensively dealt with by specialized literature, as the way in which teaching built and builds a profession "of State" - and the multiple links held with the latter - the different meanings around "vocation" and the way in which it was possible to be thought of as a job (Alliaud, 1993; Birgin, 1999; Diker and Terigi, 1997; Feldfeber, 1990; Morgade, 1992; Pineau, 1997; Southwell, 2006; Suárez, 1995).

6Some recent studies have pointed out the advantage of the notion of "trade" to approach these problems (Alliaud and Antelo, 2009) highlighting that it is more appropriate to account for the task of teaching than that of job, profession or vocation, as it would be more appropriate to account for its specificity. In this sense, the notion of trade is associated with the know-how or production of something in particular, while implying different meanings concerning occupation, position and profession, bringing them together and avoiding the need to use any of these components to refer to teaching.

7As an introduction, we could point out that the Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe unfolds as a "post-Marxist" perspective, which outdistances from any approach based on the concept of class to explain social and political identities, but in turn rescues the need to overcome a petrified notion of social relations after the centrality of social antagonisms (Laclau, 2006).

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