

Chapter 20

Geographical Concepts and the Goal of Citizenship Formation in Brazilian Researches Concerning Geography Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Post-graduate education and research at Brazil has been amplified by quantitative and qualitative standards. One of its lines of inquiry which has stood out in the last three decades is geography teaching. The analysis of this theme, and particularly of investigations about geographical concepts and citizenship formation, is the motivation to the development of this essay's ideas. The text is a result of reviews into the state-of-the-art of the area's researches in the 2004 to 2015 period, amongst which the abstracts of theses and dissertations were considered. Based on the titles, abstracts, and keywords, studies concerning geographical concepts and citizenship formation in geography were selected. The data points out a diversification of thematic focuses to discuss the formation of concepts and the growing efforts to reference geographical concepts, as well as to the potentialities of the citizenship formation on those researches.

INTRODUCTION

The essay evidences the researches concerning Geography teaching developed at Brazil between 2004 and 2015 which had geographical concepts and citizenship formation as their main object of study amongst theses and dissertations developed at the country's research and post-graduate programs. The text results from other works that carried out state-of-the-art investigations in the area, such as Pinheiro's

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(2005), which published the *Catalogue* of dissertations and theses from 1967 to 2003; and Cavalcanti's (2016) paper that brought out the state-of-the-art of researches about Geography teaching at the theses and dissertations published between 2000 and 2015.

The cited surveys pointed to the growth of researches in the area on the last decades as a reflex, also, of Brazilian Geography's post-graduate and research lines development, with its subsequent spread of research lines about Geography teaching at those programs. Based on these studies of how concepts emerge in these researches and ways that they articulate to the goal of citizenship formation, considering the spacialities and temporalities at which the theses and dissertations were produced, an investigation is proposed. The growth of researches into this theme in the last years evidences the necessity of analyzing the contents of those investigations. What is the sense of analyzing the concepts' roles in researches about teachings? What is the meaning of this theme, present in Brazilian researches, to the development of school students geographical thought? In which measure those concepts are articulated with the goal of education for citizenship?

It is relevant to point out that teaching involves a set of activities beyond the act of knowledge transferal, reproduction of contents or Geography classes without any meaning for the student. At teaching activities the school is considered as a meeting space of cultures, histories, knowledge, desires, ideologies, that manifests as spatial and cultural practices at school's daily life and might be conceived as geographical phenomenon. Therefore, in this conception, Geography is a reference to concept formation that collaborates to student's geographical thought formation and citizen education and participation. The concept, in this perspective, can't be considered as a stable structure, immutable and isolable, but as a structure of active thinking resulted from the subject and object relation in the context at which it appears. It is emphasized that in this process the concept is a cognitive operation situated on the dynamics of primal and higher psychological functions that culminates in the word (VYGOTSKY, 2001). This, in turn, has meaning in the world and subject and undergoes a constant evolution through all processes of subjects intellectual development.

In Geography, concepts, as structural basis of the discipline teaching and students geographical thought development, are fundamentals of the concepts taught at school. It means that students might operate by concepts, according to notions which are built and rebuilt along their scholar course. The formation of geographical concepts, in its totality, is the basis for citizenship formation in that it allows for development of an in-depth theoretical thought, necessary for critical analysis of reality and orientation of everyday spatial practices. In this sense, school Geography has the greater objective of contributing to the citizen daily life. However, some concepts relevant to the structuration of geographical contents are particularly relevant to citizenship formation. For this reason, when working at researches on teaching, it is sought to highlight studies that unravels the geographical concepts in general and, specially, concepts closely related to citizenship, such as citizen, actuation, participation, democracy, rights and collective action.

Thus, theses and dissertations concerning concept formation produced at Brazil are sought in order to comprehend how the studies in this field have been carried out. The analysis of abstracts and keywords of those essays comprises a main data collection of methodological proceedings as to open up answers for the following questions: is concept a teaching content? Or, do the concepts orient the contents and themes taught at schools? Are the concepts more directly related to citizen formation as present in those studies?

In this analysis it is emphasized the (dialectic, interdependent) relation between city and citizenship on geographical studies. Diverse researches relate ideas of citizenship to the modern society and right to vote. The conception of citizenship that orients this essay, however, also envelops the political conscience

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