Recent Educational Reforms and Curriculum Change in England and Brazil: an Interpretation

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Abstract:

This study is about recent educational reforms in England and in Brazil.

The general argument is that the *symbolic universe* of schools normally offers resistance to proposals for curriculum change.

Following the Introduction, Chapter Two sets out the theoretical basis for this study: Habermas' theory of democratic society. The Chapter also singles out three core categories in Habermas' works: *knowledge, power and communication.*

Chapter Three identifies in the literature, educational and pedagogical traditions in England and Brazil that shape the patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication* in schools in both countries.

Chapter Four points out the differences in the style of elaboration of the 1988 English National Curriculum and the 1987 Brazilian proposal for curriculum change (Minas Gerais). The Chapter also analysis the concepts of *knowledge, power and communication* built into the curricula.

Chapter Five constructs ideal typical models of *communicative* schools and *informative* schools as a methodological step to conduct the investigation in the practice of the schools and to provide a comparative basis for the study. The models are constructed taking into consideration three categories: *knowledge, power* and *communication.*

Chapter Six covers the investigation carried out in four primary schools in England (Reading) and Brazil (Minas Gerais). Seven categories emerged from the analysis of data collected during the empirical investigation of the *symbolic universe* of the schools: decision-making, curriculum matters (curriculum planning and practice), beliefs

(teaching/learning process), values (schooling), elaboration of norms (school functioning), teaching styles and leadership styles.

In the Conclusion, the major outcomes of this study, based on the evidence in the previous Chapters are brought together. A better understanding of the characteristics, peculiarities and contradictions of the *symbolic universe* of schools is provided. Recommendations for a review of some important issues in the context of Brazilian education are presented.

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Contents:

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is organized in two sections: section I gives a brief account of the problem of educational reform and curriculum change world-wide and its importance, and section II clarifies the way in which the problem of recent educational reforms and curriculum change in England and Brazil - the focus of this study - is investigated.

Section I

Educational reforms and curriculum change are both important and problematic issues. Political and economic changes in societies throughout the world, frequently, put educational reforms and curriculum change at the forefront of national agendas. System organization, funding, curriculum and teacher education are among the areas most frequently affected by reforms. Generally, these reforms aim at changing education to meet new political, economic and technological demands in society.

In the past decade, the rapid pace of political, economic and technological change in the world affected significant educational

reforms in a number of countries.[1] Some of these reforms resulted in educational change, others did not.[2]

Explaining success or failure of educational reforms is not an easy task. A difference between 'reform proposals'[a] and 'school practices'[b] is a common problem in any society. The fact that a new Education Act has been passed by a parliament and that new regulations have been issued does not mean the automatic appearance of a new system of education, nor of new classroom practices. It takes a long time to accomplish a reform.[3] New practices in schools and classrooms are not achieved overnight. Schools are embedded in society and are themselves complex forms of social interaction. They are 'robust institutions', often resistant to changes.[4]

These resistances are generally linked to the ideas professionals hold of what practices in schools should be like.[5] Educational reforms and curriculum proposals anywhere in the world present indications of what is supposed to be taught and how it is supposed to be taught in schools, what kind of relationships are supposed to occur in schools and classrooms, and indirectly, what type of linguistic exchanges among people in schools is supposed to occur. By and large, curriculum proposals present different in-built concepts of *knowledge*, *power* and

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[a] 'Reform proposal' here means documents, recommendations, guidelines and syllabuses.

[b] 'School practices' here means the everyday life of schools and classrooms including interpersonal relationships and pedagogy.

communication. These differences are influenced by the socio-political contexts where the curriculum proposals are elaborated and by the style of their elaboration.[a] The concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* embedded in the reform proposals may not match the ideas professionals hold of what relationships, teaching practices and communication should be like in schools. This clash of ideas tends to hinder changes in schools and classrooms.

However, governments are inclined to take the view that workshops and teacher training sessions are sufficient to make changes occur at school and classroom levels. Governments tend to underestimate the complexity of the process of change.[6] Although the pressure to change education to make it compatible with the demands of a new era has been increasing in recent years, the complexities, contradictions and peculiarities of the problem of change at school and classroom levels are under-researched.[7] This situation contributes to a lack of understanding of the process of change of school practices. In this way, changes occur more frequently in documents than in practice. A difference between 'proposal' and 'practice' remains.[8]

Societies throughout the world have continuously made consistent efforts to expand education and to improve its quality.

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[a] At least two styles of elaboration of reforms can be singled out - reforms that are elaborated solely by politicians and bureaucrats and those that are elaborated with broader social participation.

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Education is now regarded as essential world-wide. On the threshold of the twenty-first century the democratization of education is urgent in all societies.[9] The democratization of access to education is important, which means more people having the right to free basic education.

However, the democratization of school practices is equally important and involves: the democratization of interpersonal relationships, of pedagogical practices and the non-discrimination of pupils according to social class, wealth and status. Good quality education for all is fundamental.[10]

Democratic practices in schools are an important means of self-development (including cognitive and moral development), self-realization and self-reflection; they foster individuals who are more tolerant of difference, more sensitive to cooperation, better able to make critical judgements and to make collective decisions guided by reflection.[11] A 'democratic climate' in schools contributes to the formation of individuals who are able not only to live and act in a democratic society but also to strive for democracy, rejecting forms of authority that exclude societal participation.

This study argues that a 'democratic climate' in schools is fostered by school practices that involve, cooperation, participation, construction of knowledge and norms, and equal opportunities for communication.

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It is urgent to increase the number of investigations which deal with the complexities of everyday school life.[12] Research approaches that contribute to a better understanding of these complexities are fundamental to help to improve the comprehension of the problem of change at school and classroom levels so that education does not fail to keep up with the rapid global societal changes currently underway.

Section II

In the late 1980s important changes in the curriculum were introduced in England and Brazil (Minas Gerais). Since then both countries have been trying to redefine practices in their primary schools.

The literature offers many different reasons to explain why school practices do not change as a consequence of modifications in curriculum documents, and a wide variety of research approaches have been developed. Nevertheless very few of them deal with the complexities of everyday life in schools and with the different styles of elaboration of the reforms. This study investigates everyday practices in primary schools in England and Brazil (Minas Gerais).

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the characteristics, peculiarities and contradictions of everyday life in schools and through this analysis to improve the comprehension of

some aspects that hinder changes in school practices. The differences in the style of the reforms in England and Brazil (Minas Gerais) are taken into account and the impact of those differences on the process of change is examined.

The main argument of this study is that the *symbolic universe* of schools offers resistance to proposals for curriculum change. The symbolic universe of schools involves teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges.

The study is developed within a framework of democratic relationships in schools and society and draws on Habermas' theory. The Habermasian <u>Theory of Communicative Action</u> synthesises well Habermas' deep commitment to democracy. Habermas' notion of democracy is rooted in his concept of the construction of communicative reason. Through his effort to re-think the concept of reason Habermas constructs a theory of democratic society that is partially grounded in the developmental psychology of Kohlberg and Piaget. Habermas also offers a theory of change within a democratic context that involves bringing routinized social practices that reflect modes of thinking into awareness, calling them into question through argumentation and reflection, and ultimately changing them. The theoretical framework within which this study is developed is discussed in Chapter 2.

This study argues that to understand the nature of the ways of thinking about the teaching/learning process that drive routine school practices in primary schools in England and Brazil, it is necessary to identify educational and pedagogical traditions that may have influenced those practices. Literature on English and Brazilian educational and pedagogical traditions was consulted and is discussed in Chapter Three. The Chapter is also an anticipation of the fieldwork where the *symbolic universe* of schools is explored empirically.

In Chapter Four the different styles of elaboration of the 1988 English National Curriculum and the 1987 Brazilian (Minas Gerais) proposal for curriculum change are discussed in the light of Habermas' concepts of relevance and legitimacy.

The difference between the style of elaboration of the National Curriculum and the Minas Gerais 1987 curriculum proposal is clear. There was ample participation of various sectors of society in the elaboration of the Brazilian curriculum whereas in England the participation in the elaboration of the National curriculum was restricted to the governmental sector. An account of the socio-political background of England and Brazil that led to the emergence of these reforms in both countries is also constructed in Chapter Four.

The dissimilar ways of thinking about the teaching/learning process embedded in both curricula are analysed in Chapter Four taking

into account Habermas' theory of knowledge-constitutive-interests. This study argues that the differences in the style of elaboration of the curricula in England and Brazil contributed to those dissimilarities.

As a methodological procedure, in Chapter Five, Weberian Ideal typical models of informative schools and communicative schools are constructed to help conduct the investigation in the practice of the schools and to provide a comparative basis for the study. Habermas' concept of instrumental reason gives a basis for the construction of the model of informative schools and his concept of communicative reason offers a basis for the construction of the model of communicative schools. The traditions discussed in Chapter Three also provide elements for the models of schools.

The investigation that was carried out in four primary schools in England and Brazil concentrated on the *symbolic universe* of schools - teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges.

The data was collected through interviews and observations in both countries. Teachers, headteachers, technical/pedagogical staff (when this applies) and pupils were interviewed. Classroom observations and observations of teachers' meetings for curriculum planning were undertaken.

Seven categories emerged from the analysis of the data collected in the investigation: curriculum matters (curriculum planning and

curriculum practice), decision-making, elaboration of norms, teaching styles, leadership styles, beliefs about the teaching learning process and values about schooling.[a]

The description and the analysis of the data collected in the primary schools in both countries are presented in Chapter Six. A comparison between the findings in England and Brazil is made and the tensions between different reform styles and change are discussed in Chapter Six as well.

In the conclusion, Chapter Seven, the major outcomes of this study based on the evidence described in the previous chapters are brought together. A better understanding of the symbolic universe of schools is highlighted. The chapter also confronts the traditions discussed in Chapter Three and the findings of the fieldwork. Some aspects that contribute to hindering changes in school practices are discussed. Recommendations for review of some important issues in the context of Brazilian education and for future research projects are presented.

NOTES

[1] This is the case of Japan, Canada, Australia, Brazil and England. See Peter W. Cookson, Jr., Alan R. Sadovnik, and Susan F. Semel (eds.), International Handbook of Educational Reform, London, Greenwood Press, 1992.

[a] The valuation teachers place on schooling.

[2] Peter W. Cookson, Jr., Alan R. Sadovnik, and Susan F. Semel (eds.), <u>International Handbook of Educational Reform</u>, London, Greenwood Press, 1992, pp. 1-7. Val D. Rust (ed.), <u>International Perspectives on Education and Society</u>, vol. 4, London, Jai Press INC, 1994, pp. ix-xiii.

[3] The educational reform in Sweden that took thirty years to be accomplished can be mentioned as an example of a successful post-war educational reform pointed out in Torsten Husén, "Problems of Educational Reform in a Changing Society," Val D. Rust (ed.), <u>International Perspectives on Education and Society</u>, vol. 4, London, Jai Press INC, 1994, pp. 3-22.

[4] Hans Weiler, "The Failure of Reform and the Macro-Politics of Education," Val D. Rust (ed.), <u>International Perspectives on Education and Society</u>, vol. 4, London, Jai Press INC, 1994, pp. 44-45.

[5] Miguel Arroyo, "Fracasso-Sucesso: O Peso da Cultura Escolar e do Ordenamento da Educação Básica," [The Failure/Success of Schooling: The influence of the School Culture and the Organization of the Primary Education], <u>Em Aberto</u>, Brasília, ano 11, no. 53, jan/mar., 1992, pp. 48-49.

[6] Geva B., E. Gwyn and A. V. Kelly, <u>Change and the Curriculum</u>, London, Paul Chapman, 1992, pp. 99-104.

[7] C. A. Torres, "Paulo Freire as Secretary of Education in the Municipality of São Paulo," <u>Comparative Education Review</u>, vol. 38, no. 2, May 1994, p. 211.

[8] L. Azevedo, <u>The Relationship between Curriculum Proposal and Curriculum Practice: A Case Study of Centro Integrado de Educação Popular</u>, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis), University of London, Institute of Education, 1992, p. 3. Sonia T. S. Penin, "Educação Básica: A Construção do Sucesso Escolar, " ["Primary Education: The Construction of Success in Schools"], <u>Em Aberto</u>, Brasília, ano 11, no. 53, jan/mar., 1992, p. 5.

[9] Irving Epstein in " Issues of Class and Educational Reform in Comparative Perspective," in Peter W. Cookson, Jr., Alan R. Sadovnik, and Susan F. Semel (eds.), <u>International Handbook of Educational Reform</u>, London, Greenwood Press, 1992, pp. 568-569, explains that in capitalist states education serves as a democratizing force as its expansion simultaneously fulfils both political and economic mandates while symbolizing the possibility of achieving increased social mobility and equality. J. J. Shields Jr., in "Japan," Peter W. Cookson, Jr., Alan R. Sadovnik, and Susan F. Semel (eds.), <u>International Handbook of Educational Reform</u>, London, Greenwood Press, 1992, pp. 324-325 points out that a study carried out in nine Asian countries came to the conclusion that the countries where the middle class had been most active in the drive for democratization also had great percentage of the population with high levels of education. What seems to happen is that when working, business, farming, and middle classes become well educated, politically conscious and mobilized, they no longer accept the authority of any government that excludes them from real political participation.

[10] A. V. Kelly, <u>The National Curriculum: A Critical Review</u>, London, Paul Chapman, 1990, p. 139.

[11] Mark E. Warren, "The Self in Discursive Democracy," Stephen White (ed.), <u>The Cambridge Companion to Habermas</u>, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 167-168.

[12] Sonia T. S. Penin, op. cit., pp. 3-4; 12.

Chapter 2:

DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES, SCHOOLS AND HABERMAS

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the theoretical framework within which the study is developed and to give reasons for choosing Habermas' theory as the theoretical basis for this study.

The general argument of the chapter is that autonomous individuals contribute to the construction of a democratic society.

The chapter is organized in two sections: section I constructs the relationship between Habermas' concept of communicative reason and democratic society and section II discusses the role of schools in a democratic society.

Section I

On the threshold of the third millennium a commitment to democracy is evident throughout the world.[1] In recent years from Africa to Eastern Europe, Asia to Latin America, more societies are becoming democratic.[2]

However, many meanings are attributed to democracy.[3] In his works, Habermas makes a consistent effort to re-think the concept of reason and he develops a theory of democratic society deeply rooted in

that concept.[4] The idea of a critical social theory incorporating an 'emancipatory' interest takes us to the centre of Habermas' thought.[5] Thus to construe Habermas' view of democratic society it is fundamental to have an understanding of his concept of reason.

Habermas constructs his concept of reason through a critique of instrumental reason. Instrumental reason is achieved through actions oriented to success - instrumental actions. An actor behaves purposive-rationally when (s)he chooses from a clearly articulated horizon of values and organizes suitable means in the light of alternative consequences.[6]

This is one of the of types of social action proposed by Weber and is what Habermas calls instrumental rationality - great control of nature and unconditional domination of man - purposive-rational action.[7]

In Habermas' reading, instrumental rationality became man's straightjacket, revealing all the irrationality of the system as a whole.[8] Individuals, making use of instrumental rationality, are interested in developing mechanisms by which other individuals reproduce their condition of submission and in concealing the particular nature of forms of domination.[9] Those individuals who use instrumental rationality are also interested in the forces that manipulate and homogenize the collective consciousness to fit a form of domination behind a veil of pretended universal interests.[10] Thus overall the communicative potential of reason

has simultaneously developed and has been distorted in the course of capitalist modernization.[11]

In contrast Habermas explains that communicative rationality is constructed among the participants of a social group in a process of argumentation.[12] They take part in dialogues where all have equal rights of participation to reach a consensus, free of coercion.[13] For Habermas, reason is not an abstract subjective faculty inherent in a subject which guides man's fate from one standpoint, but it is constructed in a process of argumentation where two or more subjects are able to come to an agreement without any form of domination.[14]

In communicative action, participants search for mutual understanding by offering arguments that could command assent. As opposed to strategic action, where participants are primarily interested in bringing about a desired behavioural response, in communicative action, participants are interested in bringing about a genuine understanding.[15]

Therefore communicative reason is not subject-centred, not transcendental, not innate and not dogmatic. The linguistic competence of social actors is of crucial importance for the construction of rationality because it enables them to construct communicative reason in a dialogue, in an argument and in a process of questioning validity claims. This is the basis for democracy.[16]

In Habermas' view democracy as a principle of political order does not single out, *a priori,* a specific type of organization as the correct one, nor does it exclude, *a priori*, any arrangement for improving representation, delegation and the like.[17] The point is rather to find in each set of concrete circumstances, institutional arrangements that justify the presumption that basic political decisions would meet with the agreement of all those affected by them if they were able to participate without restriction in discursive will formation.[18] In short, democracy for Habermas is the expression of autonomous wills leading to the achievement of a rational consensus.

The concept of communicative action refers to the procedures of argumentation in a compulsion-free consensus in which the participants overcome their first biased views in favour of a rationally motivated agreement that means raising validity claims to comprehensibility, truth, normative rightness and sincerity and the yes/no position of the participants. "Language is given a prominent place in this model"[19] as the concept of *communicative rationality* has to be analyzed in connection with achieving understanding through language. The normative-theoretical foundations of critical theory have to be sought in that distinctive and pervasive medium of life at the human level - language - which, according to Habermas is "what raises us out of nature and whose nature we can know".[20]

In Habermas' view, the problem of language has replaced the traditional problem of consciousness.[21] Habermas advances a proposal for a universal pragmatics which is based on the idea that not only language but also speech admits a rational reconstruction in universal terms.[22] Consensual speech actions rest on a background consensus formed from the reciprocal raising and mutual recognition of four different types of validity claims. The speaker has to select a comprehensible expression in order that the speaker and hearer can understand one another (comprehensibility); the speaker has to have the intention of communicating true propositional content in order that the hearer may share the knowledge of the speaker (truth); the speaker has to want to express his intentions truthfully in order that the hearer can believe in the speaker's utterance (sincerity); finally the speaker has to select utterances that are right in the light of the existing norms and values in order that the hearer can accept the utterance so that both speaker and hearer can agree with one another in the utterance concerning recognized normative background (normative rightness).[23]

Communicative reason lies at the intersection of "three worlds"[24] which correspond to the validity claims: objective world (truth), subjective world (sincerity) and social world (normative rightness). The competence to use language interactively that enables a person to raise these criticizable validity claims is the precondition to achieve *communicative*

rationality.[25] However, communicative competence should not be identified with linguistic competence alone as communicative competence is a broader notion which includes cognitive, interactive and egological[a] moments as well. The acquisition of communicative competence involves development in all these dimensions. Therefore, communicative competence is not complete with the mastery of phonetic and syntactic structures in early childhood but develops in stages at least through adolescence.[26]

Habermas' theory of communicative action is partially grounded in the developmental psychology of Kohlberg and Piaget who postulate stages in the development of individual moral and operational thought.[27] Habermas attempts to extend this kind of development to society as a whole.[28] Habermas stresses the importance of psychology for explicating the links between institutional framework of society and individual identity formation.[29] He has sought to develop the psychological dimension of critical theory by drawing on and integrating a range of contributions to contemporary individual and social psychology, including the symbolic interacionist theory of action (Mead, Goffman), role theory (Parsons), and cognitive developmental psychology (Piaget and Kohlberg).[30] If Piaget's own work can be interpreted as critical theory operating at the level of individual psychology then a Piagetian social psychology can contribute to

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[a] 'Egological' means the development of the ego

a critical theory of society, since it is in a position to unmask and criticize factors that block 'developmental' processes.[31]

Piaget describes stages of cognitive and moral development in children, which develop *pari passu,* in an attempt to explain how a person goes from less complex to a more complex thought or in moral terms how a person goes from anomy, heteronomy to autonomy.[32] He also considers the development of intelligence to be coupled with the process of decentration of worldviews. The decentration of worldviews means that as the child grows older, the child is able to see a clear demarcation of three worlds - the world of objects, the world of norms and his/her subjective world. The consciousness of rules undergoes a complete transformation. Autonomy follows heteronomy.[33] The child sees the rules no longer as an external law, sacred insofar that have been established by adults as the outcome of a free decision and worthy respect in measure that it has taken into consideration mutual consent.[34]

What Habermas emphasizes is that autonomous subjects recognize the possibility of having norms called into question, criticized and eventually modified. This means to look at the norms through a different perspective so that the individuals can reflect upon them in a process of argumentation and judge if they are justified or not. This perspective transforms existing norms that are empirically recognized or socially accepted, into norms that may or may not be valid, that is, worthy

of recognition. In other words, a norm is not seen as existing in itself but it is seen as something that can be tested, questioned, modified and justified. This way of dealing with norms and rules favours what Habermas calls the decentration of worldviews. In short, the decentration of worldviews means being able to step into another's shoes and also look at cultural givens in a critical perspective: to tell which rules and norms are justified and which are unjustified. Unjustified norms may cause oppression, suffering and unhappiness. Justified norms are essential in the construction of a democratic society.

My view is that the essence of democracy for Habermas is to understand the nature of laws as a social construction.[35] This means to replace the unilateral respect of authority by the mutual respect of autonomous wills.[36]

Piaget describes the autonomous subject as the individual who, among other capacities, is able to call laws into question and is able decentre, that is, the individual who is able to differentiate and cope with the external world, the social world and the subjective world.[37] Autonomy, then, is the capacity to distance self-identity from circumstances at the same time that one locates the self in terms of these circumstances.

Autonomy is a kind of freedom. [38] Internally, autonomy implies that one can adopt a reflexive attitude toward one's own internal impulses, interpreting, transforming, censoring, and providing names for needs,

impulses and desires, as well as expressing them to others as interests.[39] With regard to the social world, autonomy implies that one can distance oneself from traditions, prevailing opinions, and pressures to conform by subjecting elements of one's social context to criticism. [40] Autonomous individuals are able to make personal choices, decisions, judgements, and look critically at the world.[41] Autonomy includes, then, the capacity for critical judgement and 'communicative competencies'.[42] Discursive relations are central to demarcating and developing autonomy. Habermas explains that autonomy develops through language use in social interactions.

My interpretation is that the subject who recognizes a clear demarcation between the natural world, the social and the subjective world is the Habermasian interactive competent actor. Language plays an important part in this process. Thus the Habermasian competent actor corresponds to the autonomous subject for Piaget. Habermas argues that *communicative rationality* lies at the intersection of these three worlds. The subject is able to raise validity claims (truth, sincerity and normative rightness). To be able to recognize the demarcation of the three worlds is important for the rationalization of the *lifeworld* and this is expressed through communication and reflexivity.

Table One shows my view of the correspondence between Piaget's autonomous subject and Habermas' interactive competent actor:

Table 1

PIAGET	HABERMAS
Autonomous subject	**Interactive competent actor**
Absolutism, realism and egocentrism give way to AUTONOMY.	DECENTERED understanding of the world.
Constructs a public three-dimensional space (differentiates ego from physical and social world). [43]	Recognizes a clear demarcation between the natural world; the social and the subjective world. [44]

R e c i p r o c i t y, c o o p e r a t i o n and j u s t i c e

Habermas' Communicative Reason

The autonomous subject for Piaget is able to have a decentered understanding of the world, that is, the individual is able to construct a three dimensional space: s(he) differentiates the ego from the physical and social world. In Habermas' view, the interactive/competent actor recognizes a clear demarcation between the natural, the subjective and the normative world. This leads to reciprocity, cooperation and justice which in turn leads to the construction of communicative reason.

The idea of *lifeworld* has been introduced as a necessary complement to the concept of communicative action.[45] That idea links the concept of communicative action to the concept of society and makes it possible to construe rationalization primarily as a transformation of implicitly known, taken-for-granted structures of the *lifeworld* rather than

of explicitly known, conscious orientations of action.[46] *Lifeworld* includes society, culture and personality.[47]

The decentration of the understanding of the world and the rationalization of the *lifeworld* are necessary conditions for an emancipated society.[48] Subjects acting communicatively always come to an understanding in the horizon of a *lifeworld* that is formed from more or less diffuse, unproblematic, background convictions.[49] This *lifeworld* background serves as a source of definition of situations that are presupposed by participants to be unproblematic. The rationalization of the *lifeworld* brings an increasing reflexivity, that is, it gives the participants the possibility of being aware of what guides their choices and the reasons for those. They are not guided by cultural, traditional or institutional bonds. The rationalization of the *lifeworld* reveals a possibility of going beyond the bounds of culture and a possibility of interpreting needs as universal.[50]

The more the participants of a social group base their decisions and choices on cultural traditions and have little possibility to justify the grounds on which their yes/no positions are based in a process of reflection, the less the *lifeworld* is rationalized.[51]

This study argues that the rationalization of the *lifeworld* occurs in a process of argumentation that calls into question taken for granted norms,

beliefs and values and that is fundamental for the construction of democratic relationships in societies.

For Habermas, democratic relationships in societies are constructed through a coercion-free process of argumentation that includes reflexivity, awareness and critique. Habermas believes that autonomous individuals are better able to construct that process inasmuch as they are able to see a clear demarcation between objective, subjective and normative worlds, to call norms, beliefs and values into question and reach a rational consensus. Thus autonomy creates a freedom that limits itself in the intention of reconciling - if not identifying- worthiness and happiness.[52]

The role of schools for the construction of individual autonomy is discussed in section II.

Section II

The role of schools

Democracy does not emerge naturally (Habermas, 1991; McCarthy, 1978; Piaget, 1972; Freitag, 1992). It is highly unlikely that individuals act in a democratic way if they have not lived in a democratic context. To construct a free democratic society it is necessary that autonomous individuals are available.[53] A 'democratic climate' in schools

therefore is a necessary although not sufficient factor to provide individuals with a context which fosters the development of autonomous subjects.[54]

The development of logical and moral consciousness is not a natural one.[55] Biological development does not ensure the dual progress of conscience and intelligence leading to an autonomous ego.[56] The individual left to himself remains egocentric.[57] The development of moral and logical norms is the result of cooperation.

With the arrival of the stage of adolescence and the ability to think hypothetically the child can free himself/herself from "dogmatism of the given and the existing" but whether (s)he is able to do this or not depends on a multiplicity of factors not the least of which are the existing structures of social integration.[58] Then the issue is how to take a child out of egocentricity and lead him/her into autonomy. Education is a central dimension of any politics of autonomy.[59] The true object of politics can then be reformulated: to create institutions that internalized by individuals, facilitate their accession to their individual autonomy and their effective participation in all forms of power existing in society.[60] The school is therefore one of the necessary links to provide a context which stimulates social integration and so facilitates the emergence of autonomy.[61]

This study argues that democratic relationships in schools are important in two dimensions: they facilitate the process of emergence of

autonomy in individuals and they provide a context where curriculum change is favoured. Nevertheless, to comprehend the nature of the construction of democratic relationships, it is necessary to have a deeper understanding of the rationalization of the *lifeworld* in this particular case: the *lifeworld* of schools.

Society "reproduces itself" in two domains each having its own developmental logic: the domain of material reproduction and the domain of symbolic reproduction. Developments in material reproduction follow the logic of functional rationality and are achieved in modern societies by *systems* - superficially, the economic and the administrative systems. On the other hand symbolic reproduction follows the logic of communicative rationality and is achieved by building and maintaining consensus about acceptable norms, and the cultural tradition within the *lifeworld*.[62] Subjects acting communicatively always come to an understanding in the horizon of a *lifeworld*.[63] The *lifeworld* is formed from more or less diffuse, unproblematic, background deep beliefs. This *lifeworld* background serves as a source of situation definitions that are presupposed by participants as unproblematic. In their interpretive accomplishments the members of a communication community demarcate the one objective world and their intersubjectively shared social world from the subjective worlds of individuals and collectives.[64]

This study argues that the *lifeworld* of schools can only be accessible through their *symbolic universe* that is formed by teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges

This study offers an extension of Habermas thinking and argues that the possibility of demarcating the subjective world, normative and objective world enables the social group of a school to criticise traditional views of the teaching/learning processes, of teacher/pupil roles and of interpersonal relationships in schools through a process of argumentation. In this way the group will be able to think of, try or carry out innovations, reforms and changes in schools. This is the process of rationalization of the *symbolic universe*.[65]

This study also argues that teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges occur according to certain patterns in schools. The patterns in which they occur are influenced by the educational and pedagogical traditions of the school's social group.[66] Those traditions may be identified with the ideas the professionals at school hold of what teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges should be like in schools. In this way, educational and pedagogical traditions shape the patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication*[b] in schools. This is the subject matter of Chapter Six where ideal typical models of schools are constructed.

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[b] It is my view that *knowledge, power* and *communication* are core categories in Habermas' works to understand his concept of democratic society. Emancipatory interests lead to

The main argument of this study is that it is highly likely that educational innovations, reforms or changes that do not conform to pedagogical and educational traditions of a school's social group will be rejected by the group if the participants are not able to criticize the norms on which their interests, decisions and choices are based, that is, if their *symbolic universe* is not rationalized.

To provide more elements for the comprehension of the *symbolic universe* of schools, for the purpose of this study, before its empirical exploration, educational and pedagogical traditions that may influence school practices in England and Brazil are discussed in Chapter Three.

NOTES

[1] David Held, "From City States to a Cosmopolitan Order", David Held (ed.), Prospects for Democracy, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., p. 37.

[3] Ibid., p. 13-35.

[4] Thomas McCarthy, La Teoria Crítica de Jurgen Habermas, Madrid, Tecnos, 1992, p.10.

[5] Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p. 75.

[6] Jurgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol. 1, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 285-286.

[7] Ibid., pp. xxix-xxiv.

[8] Jurgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action - Lifeworld and System: The Critique of Functionalist Reason, vol. 2, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, pp. 292-293; 332-334.

[9] Helmut Dubiel, "Domination or Emancipation?" In Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Claus Offe and Albrecht Wellmer, (eds.), Cultural-Political Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment, London, MIT Press, 1992, p. 12.

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emancipatory knowledge through coercion-free communication that is fundamental to construct shared power relationships in society.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, pp. 94-98. Jurgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, pp. 314-315.

[12] Idem, The Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol. 1, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 14-57.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., pp. 285-286.

[15] Simone Chambers, "Discourse and Democratic Practices", Stephen K. White, The Cambridge Companion to Habermas, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 233-239. "In strategic action participants often attempt to sway each other by introducing influences unrelated to the merits of an argument, for example, threats, bribes, or coercion. Such inducements can bring about the desired behaviour even in situations where the other social actor is not convinced that there are any good reasons to act that way."

[16] Ibid.

[17] Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, pp. 331-332.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Jurgen Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol. 1, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, p. 86.

[20] Idem, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, p. xvii.

[21] Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p. 273. Jurgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, p. xiii.

[22] Idem, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 1-68.

[23] Ibid., p. 29. Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p. 288.

[24] Jurgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, pp. 313-314. Idem, The Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol. 1, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 279-279. Idem, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 67-68.

[25] Idem, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, p. 67.

[26] Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p. 336.

[27] John S. Dryzek, "Critical Theory as a Research Program," Stephen K. White, The Cambridge Companion to Habermas, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 100-101.

[28] Ibid.

[29] David Held, Introduction to Critical Theory - Horkheimer to Habermas, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1980, pp. 251-253.

[30] Ibid.

[31] John S. Dryzek, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

[32] Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgement of the Child, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, pp. 400-414.

[33] Ibid., pp. 84-96.

[34] Ibid., 57-63.

[35] Brand Arie, The Force of Reason - an Introduction to Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1990, p. 11. Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgement of the Child, London, Routledge, & Kegan Paul, 1972, p. 366.

[36] Jean Piaget, op. cit., pp. 57-63.

[37] Richard F, Kitchener., Piaget's Theory of Knowledge - Genetic Epistemology and Scientific Reason, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1986, p. 100.

[38] Mark E. Warren, "The Self in Discursive Democracy", Stephen K. White, The Cambridge Companion to Habermas, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 167-174.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] A. V. Kelly, The Curriculum: Theory and Practice, London, Paul Chapman, 1989, pp. 94-96.

[42] Mark E. Warren, op. cit., pp. 167-174.

[43] Richard Kitchener, op. cit., pp. 100-101. Jean Piaget, op. cit., pp. 87- 88.

[44] Jurgen Habermas, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, pp. 312-313. Idem, The Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol. 1, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, p. 72.

[45] Ibid., p. xxv.

[46] Ibid., p. xxv, p. 337.

[47] Ibid., pp. 70-74.

[48] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., pp. 70-71. Lawton's explanation of cultural analysis comes close to the process of rationalization of the *lifeworld* "Anyone attempting this kind of cultural analysis has to learn to stand back from society and try to see it as much as possible as 'an outsider'. The observer can never be value-free, but he can learn to become more aware of his own values, beliefs and prejudices." D. Lawton, Education, Culture and the National Curriculum, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, p.18. However, Habermas goes further and he suggests that awareness of values, beliefs and prejudices should lead to critique and change through a process of argumentation.

[51] Ibid., p.70.

[52] Jurgen Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, p. 94.

[53] Jean Piaget, op. cit., p. 372.

[54] Habermas in Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991 p. 70 argues that "an autonomous ego organization is by no means a regular occurrence, the result, say of a naturelike process of maturation; in fact it is usually not attained." Thomas McCarthy in Ideals and illusions, on Reconstruction and Deconstruction in contemporary Critical Theory, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1991, p.141-142, suggests that formal operational thought is heavily dependent on formal schooling and that social, cultural and economic factors also interfere in the process. Jean Piaget in The Moral Judgement of the Child, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, p.408, suggests that school is a necessary link to take the child out of her egocentric point of view. Barbara Freitag in Sociedade e Consciência - um Estudo

Piagetiano na Favela e na Escola, [Society and Consciousness: a Piagetian Study in schools and in Shanty Towns], São Paulo, Cortez, 1986 describes her study with children from the working class (in and out of school) and upper classes in São Paulo and she also suggests that the achievement of the formal operational thought depends on formal schooling although, she adds, considering the "traditional" way of schools, it depends less on the formal teaching/learning processes than on the opportunities of integrating with different people at school. Habermas does not mention the importance of schooling in the process of the ego developmental logic. It is my view that the access to formal schooling depends on the factors mentioned above so there is an interdependence between formal schooling and social, cultural and economic factors, although schooling itself is only one aspect of all of them.

[55] Jean Piaget, op. cit., p. 407;

[56] An individual may have reached the stage of autonomy with regard to a certain group of rules, while his consciousness of these rules together with the practice of certain more subtle ones may still *be coloured with heteronomy.* McCarthy, Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p.338 - 340; Jean Piaget, The Moral Judgement of the Child, London, Routledge, & Kegan Paul, 1972, p. 372; 406-412; Jurgen Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 199, p.70-71. A. V. Kelly, op. cit., p. 95.

[57] Jean Piaget, op. cit., p. 407.

[58] Thomas McCarthy, The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas, London, Hutchinson, 1978, p.338 - 340; Jean Piaget, op. cit., p. 372; pp. 406-412; Jurgen Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 70-71.

[59] Cornelius Castoriadis, "Power, Politics, Autonomy", Axel Honneth et al. (eds.), Cultural, Political Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment, London, MIT Press, 1992, p. 296.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Jean Piaget, op. cit., p. 372.

[62] Jane Braaten, Habermas's Critical Theory of Society, Albany, N. Y., State University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 78-80.

[63] Jurgen Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol. 1, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991, pp. 70-71.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Arthur Applebee, Curriculum as Conversation - Transforming Traditions of Teaching and Learning, London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 1-2.

Chapter 3:

THE SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE OF SCHOOLS, AND THE EDUCATIONAL AND

PEDAGOGICAL TRADITIONS IN ENGLAND AND BRAZIL

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a better understanding of some beliefs, values and ideas that contribute to the formation of the symbolic universe of schools in England and Brazil by identifying, in the literature, educational and pedagogical traditions[a] in both countries. The chapter also aims at being an anticipation of the fieldwork. The results and the analysis of the empirical exploration of the symbolic universe of schools are presented in Chapter Six.

The argument of the chapter is that traditions in education shape teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges in schools.

The chapter is organized in two sections: section I deals with educational and pedagogical traditions that have most influenced England and Brazil and section II deals with educational and pedagogical traditions whose influence is somewhat less present in both countries.

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[a] Educational traditions refer to theories that are reflected in the way the curriculum is elaborated. Pedagogical traditions refer to teaching practices in the classroom.

Major pedagogical and educational traditions in England and Brazil

Traditions are concepts, ideas and modes of thinking that shape our social, individual and professional lives.[1] In education, they represent different ways of thinking about the teaching/learning process. Thus school practices are influenced by those different ways of thinking.[2]

The literature consulted presented various approaches to educational and pedagogical traditions in England and Brazil: philosophical, sociological and psychological and there were several different terms given to them.[3] This study discusses these traditions taking into account the priorities they set in the teaching/learning process.

This study identified three main traditions, and their priorities in the literature which was consulted, that have in some way influenced pedagogical practices in both countries: the 'priority-of-knowledge' tradition, the 'priority-of-the-child' tradition and the 'priority-of-the-teaching-techniques' tradition.

The 'priority - of - knowledge' tradition

Knowledge is the most important aspect of the teaching/learning process.[4] The teaching/learning process concentrates on knowledge worked out over the centuries to give younger generations the best in terms of literature, music, art and history.[5] One of the central aims of the teaching /learning process is to develop qualities among the young that will serve them in later life, through acquaintance with great achievements of individuals of past generations. The subject matter is focused upon history, literature and philosophy with which to systematize this understanding.[6] There is a body of knowledge which must be passed on by teachers to pupils and there is great emphasis on memorization.[7] The curriculum is knowledge centred and based on subjects.[8] The curriculum is planned by reference to the knowledge it is designed to transmit. The 'knowledge-content' of the curriculum is in itself the main source of justification for curricular decisions.[9] The major purpose of education is to mould the child into what are regarded as socially acceptable habits and necessary knowledge.

The classic official statement of the purposes of English elementary education in 1904 balanced a development of cognitive capacities with a necessary respect for a superior wisdom in which pupils could not hope to share immediately:

> "It will be the aim of the school to train children carefully
> in habits of observation and clear reasoning, so that they

may gain an intelligent acquaintance with some of the facts and laws of nature; to arouse in them a living interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind, and to bring them to some familiarity with the literature, and history of their own country." (England and Wales Board of Education, 1968: 154)[10]

In England in primary education the predominance of this way of thinking about the teaching/learning process can be traced back to the nineteenth century public schools and the independent and grammar school sectors in our century. [11]

Class teaching was and could only be adopted when at least two main conditions were met. First when there were sufficient children in the normal school to allow them to be categorized or grouped in separate classes according to some principle of differentiation, and second when there were sufficient trained and experienced teachers able to cope satisfactorily with up to sixty or eighty children in the single separated classrooms.[12]

> "Some 100 years ago the single class teacher had the responsibility for organizing and controlling the activities of a large number of young children within the confines of a relatively small space (the four walls of a classroom)."[13]

There were specific skills that were involved in class teaching. Classroom management was one of them; Indeed the success of the whole enterprise depended effectively on this; particularly, in the circumstances of the time, on the maintenance of strict teacher control

over all movements of the pupils. The role of the pupils was that of immediate obedience to the teacher's commands. Manuals for students training teachers in the 1880s and 1890s specifically stressed these control aspects of the teacher's function.[14]

A typical book of this kind was written by D. Salmon - *The Art of Teaching - (1898).* Under the heading "Everything should be regulated" in a chapter entitled 'Order, Attention, Discipline,' Salmon writes:

> "The whole routine of the school should be regulated literally by clock-work. Lessons should always begin and cease precisely at the minute set down, and the time-table should be observed in the smallest particular. All general motions should be regulated by word of command. There should be a settled plan for assembling, standing, sitting, changing places and tasks, giving out and collecting books, pencils and etc. Nothing should be haphazard, nothing should be left to the caprice of the children."[15] [sic]

The whole methodology of teaching implemented in the classrooms in the nineteenth century was worked out with an eye to the disciplinary, or control function of the teacher. Specifically the techniques of questioning and answering were developed with the intention of ensuring that all pupils focused their attention on the teacher and on his/ her activity.[16] Children were expected to sit still at their desks and to carry out carefully and methodologically the instructions given by the teacher.[17]

In Brazil this way of thinking about the teaching/learning process dates back to the Jesuits, that is, to the sixteenth century. Their principle of education was based on the 'Ratio studiorum' (plan of study) and its main aim was the development of the intellectual capacities of the individual.[18] The teaching methods were mainly verbal and emphasized memorization, private study, repetition and oral exams.

Herbart's ideas also had great influence in this way of thinking about the teaching/learning process.[19] He identifies teaching with instruction. For Herbart the teacher is the architect of the mind and the process of instruction consisted of the following formal steps: 1- Preparation and presentation of the new subject matter; 2- Association of old ideas to the new ones; 3- systematisation of knowledge and 4- application of the knowledge acquired to practical reality.

According to Saviani the influence of Herbart's ideas has been present in the pedagogical practice of state schools since the middle of the past century and is still the predominant pattern in those schools.[20]

This way of thinking about the teaching learning/process was predominant in Brazil until the 1930s although since the 1920s new ideas about the teaching learning/process were circulating among academics.[21]

The 'priority-of-the-child' tradition

The child is the centre of the teaching/learning process.[22] It is a radical change from the previous way of thinking about the teaching/learning process. The transmission of cultural heritage is abandoned in favour of the goal of the child discovering for himself/herself and following his/her own interests.[23] In this tradition, the purpose of education is to develop the potentials of the child.[24] The child is offered a range of experiences and opportunities through which to discover the world; learning is an active process of discovery; Teaching becomes a facilitative process and opportunistic in the sense of responding to the needs of individual pupils as those needs become apparent.[25]

The child learns from his/her direct experience or intuition.[26] In this tradition, the curriculum is therefore best viewed as a set of opportunities or experiences rather than a clearly defined set of knowledge or skills.[27] Through discovery the child gains an understanding of the significance and connectedness of what is learned.[28]

Philosophers, educationalists and social theorists who are associated with the ideas that guide the teaching/learning process within this tradition are: Rousseau, Dewey, Decroly, Claparède, Froebel, Montessori, Piaget and Teixeira in Brazil.[29]

In England the child-centred curriculum was 'enshrined' in the 1967 Plowden Report in which even the title 'Children and their Primary Schools' proclaims the underlying philosophy.[30] This report is seen as having initiated a generation of progressivism in primary education which was very influential in the late 60s and early 70s. Children are portrayed as naturally curious, able to make discoveries for themselves and having a natural ability to choose activities which will give them educational knowledge and experience.[31] The role of the teacher is to be a facilitator of learning. (S)He should not instruct children or provide them with too much ready-made knowledge; his/her task is to provide opportunities for pupils to discover and create knowledge for themselves, to be creative, and grow socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically, morally and spiritually.[32]

Although it is widely known that the 'priority-of-the-child' tradition is dominant in England, according to Galton, et. al., only a minority of teachers actually practise according to that tradition.[33] Lawton points out a contradiction between official teachers' training, textbooks, official reports on primary education and teachers' practice in the late 1970s.[34]

In Brazil after the "Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Escola Nova" [Manifesto of the Pioneers of the New School] was launched in 1932 the ideas about the child as the centre of the teaching/learning process started to flourish in teachers' pedagogical practice. However, there was

an equilibrium between the influence of the ideas of the 'priority-of-the-child' tradition and the 'priority-of- knowledge tradition'[35] until the mid 60s when technocracy emerges after the military coup d'etat in 1964 influencing education as a whole.[36]

The 'priority-of-the-teaching -techniques' tradition

In this perspective the organization of the teaching methods and techniques is the centre of the teaching/learning process. The efficiency of the teaching/learning process is supposed to be increased by the correct arrangement of teaching methods and techniques.[37]

Learning outcomes, efficiency of schooling and planning become central issues in the educational process.[38] The underlying rationale of efficiency of schooling is primarily based on the use of new technological resources - how to employ the new media services and devices to educate more pupils, with fewer teachers, in less time, in existing physical facilities and at lower cost.[39] Programmed instruction and later computer-assisted instruction was promoted along with television as ushering in a revolutionary era in education.

The curriculum is set down in specific objectives or outcomes. Bloom and Mager are two of the main theorists who influenced this approach to the curriculum.[40] Once the objectives and outcomes are established it is possible to work backwards from them and to work out

how to achieve them. Assessment in this approach involves testing whether pupils have achieved the specified objectives. This approach has a powerful appeal for those who plan. It appears tidy, explicit and clear.[41] Within this tradition education is concerned to mould the behaviour of children according to certain predetermined goals.[42]

The teachers are responsible for the rational organization of the methods, techniques and media through which the instruction of pupils is going to occur.[43] Education is supposed to be value-free and the relationship between teacher and pupils is supposed to be ascetic. This approach to the teaching/leaning process is also influenced by Skinner's behaviourism, Taylorism[b] and Tyler's approach to curriculum design.[44]

In England one of the best examples of technocratic influence in education is the pre-Dearing National Curriculum which set down in great details in programmes of study, attainment targets and statements of attainment, what both the content and proposed outcomes of the curriculum at every level should be.[45] Publications in the 'Curriculum Matters' series in the late 1980's placed great emphasis on stating the objectives of the school subjects they are concerned with.[46] This approach to education has also something in common with the payments by results approach adopted in the nineteenth century.[47]

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[b] F. Taylor was an industrial psychologist who developed a theory of maximum efficiency in industrial management. F. Bobbit attempted to apply to education Taylor's techniques.

In Brazil the technocratic influence in education was consolidated by the 5692 law that was passed in August 1971. However, the technocratic influence had been present since 1956 when an important agreement was signed between Brazil and the United States to improve primary education - PABAEE.[48] Later, that influence was strengthened by the agreements between MEC and USAID that started in 1964.[49] The 5692 law established that the curriculum of all secondary schools should offer the students vocational education to enable them to have a vocational qualification when they finished their secondary education. Educational planning was integrated in the National Plan for Development establishing a link between education and economic growth.[50]

Saviani describes the situation of the primary and the secondary school teachers in the late 1970s in Brazil as follows: when the teacher finishes his/her teacher education (s)he holds ideas about the teaching/learning process that are compatible with the ideology of the 'priority-of-the- child' tradition as there was a predominance of these ideas in the teacher training courses.[51] However, when the teacher faces the reality of the schools (s)he realizes that it is not possible to put these ideas in practice because of overcrowded classes, lack of teaching materials, libraries and laboratories. The conditions offered by the great majority of the state schools favour the 'priority-of-knowledge'

tradition. Also, the teacher is bombarded with the demands from the local state educational authority to rationalize and plan his/her activities, and to fill numerous forms where he/she should state behavioural objectives, teaching strategies and summative evaluation.[52]

The traditions discussed in this section represent the main traditions that have influenced pedagogical practices in England and Brazil. However, there are other traditions in the literature that have not affected the pedagogical practice so much but they have had some isolated influence. These are discussed in section II.

Section II

The 'priority- of- society' tradition

Society is the centre of the teaching learning process. Knowledge is justified in terms of social needs, not in terms of custom or cultural heritage. Knowledge is important for an understanding of society and the physical environment.[53] The socio-historical aspect of knowledge is emphasized.[54] Education should be used not simply for the benefit of individuals, but also to improve society which is capable of development.[55] The curriculum will be a common or a national curriculum, but not a uniform curriculum, the details of which will be open to debate and will change from time to time.[56]

In Brazil within this tradition there is a belief that there is an objective universal knowledge that should be learned by all individuals. However, Saviani stresses that the historical and social nature of knowledge should be pointed out because individuals being aware of that can use the knowledge acquired to have a critical view of society and this attitude can lead to an improvement of it.[57]

The educational theorists that have widely supported this tradition in their works in Brazil are Saviani, Libâneo, Cury and Mello[58] and in England this tradition is best explained in the works of Lawton.[59] However, this tradition in England dates back to the nineteenth century with Mathew Arnold who wrote Education and Anarchy. Raymond Williams continued and developed this tradition in Culture and Society, (1958) and later in The Long Revolution, (1961).[60]

The 'priority- of popular- culture' tradition

This tradition is mainly associated with Paulo Freire.[61] Within this tradition popular culture is the starting point of the teaching/learning process.[62]

Kelly (1989) refers to Freire as a major international figure.[63] Freire's books have circulated in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, North and Latin America.[64] His educational thinking has influenced particular groups of teachers in all those continents.[65]

Within this tradition the teaching/learning process is a creative, critical, reflective action and not a mechanical one. The curiosity of the teacher and the pupils together in action is the basis of that process.[66] The pupils' social reality is considered to be of crucial importance and the starting point of pedagogical action.[67] Freire argues that it is not possible to disregard common sense knowledge because it is the means to get to more organized and critical knowledge.[68] The curriculum emphasizes contents that have social significance for the pupils and these contents are called 'generative themes' [*temas geradores*].[69] The essence of the relationship between teacher and pupils is the dialogue that gets them actively involved in the teaching/learning process[70] and leads them to 'conscientisation'.[71] Ultimately 'conscientisation' is a critical reading of reality itself.[72]

It is my view that the following quotation synthesises well Paulo Freire's ideas about the teaching/learning process:

> "I do not accept the sheer transmission of knowledge. Knowledge should not be transferred from one person to another. Knowledge should be produced, re-created. To enable me to produce, re-create, acquire and achieve a body of knowledge, I should act as a curious subject and not as a passive one memorizing the transfer of the 'outline' of knowledge."[73]

Erich Fromm describes Paulo Freire's pedagogical practice as follows: "A pedagogical practice like this is a kind of socio-historical - cultural and political psychoanalysis".[74]

My interpretation is that Fromm identifies Freire's pedagogical practice with psychoanalysis due to the reflective and dialogical nature of both of practices.

The influence of Freire's ideas in the Brazilian educational context dates back to the early 1960s when Freire was the coordinator of the national programme of adult literacy. The programme aimed at teaching five million Brazilians to read and write in two years. However, with the coup d'etat in 1964 this programme under the coordination of Freire was terminated.[75]

Although Paulo Freire's theory is more linked to adult education, adult literacy, 'popular education', and non-formal education, a number of teachers in Brazil have been trying to put his theory in practice in the different levels of formal schooling.[76]

It is my view that Paulo Freire's writings construct a critical theory of education.

Conclusion

The educational and pedagogical traditions in England and Brazil that were discussed in this chapter provide theoretical elements for the comprehension of the symbolic universe of schools in both countries.

A tension between primary teachers' education, teachers' practice (due to the reality of state schools) and the demands of educational authorities was pointed out by Saviani in Brazil. In England a similar situation was pointed out by Lawton between official teachers' training, textbooks, official reports, and teachers' practice.

This study argues that one more element adds to the tension faced by primary teachers in England and Brazil: the educational reforms and curriculum change that occurred in the 1980s in both countries. The 1988 educational reform in England that introduced the National Curriculum aimed at raising standards in education and the 1987 curriculum change in Brazil (Minas Gerais) aimed at democratizing schools and in this way to raise standards in education. These reforms introduced ideas about the teaching learning process that did not quite match those held by the teachers in England and Brazil.

The socio-historical context that contributed to the emergence of those reforms in England and Brazil, the styles in which they were elaborated, and the concepts and ideas, about the teaching/learning process, built into both curricula, are discussed in Chapter Four.

NOTES

[1] Arthur Applebee, Curriculum as Conversation-Transforming Traditions of Teaching and Learning, London, University of Chicago Press, 1996, pp. 1-2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Demerval Saviani, Introdução à Filosofia da Educação Brasileira, [Introduction to the Brazilian Philosophy of Education], Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 1987, pp. 22-23. Martin Maclean, Educational Traditions Compared, London, David Fulton Publishers, 1995, pp. 20-47. Michael Barber, The National Curriculum - A Study in Policy, Keele, Keele University Press, 1996, pp. 9-10. Denis Lawton, Education, Culture and the National Curriculum, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, pp. 1-8.

[4] Denis Lawton, op. cit., p. 4.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Martin Maclean, op. cit., pp. 20-47.

[7] Denis Lawton, An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, p. 28, p. 45.

[8] Ibid., p. 30.

[9] A. V. Kelly, The Curriculum: Theory and Practice, London, Paul Chapman, 1989, pp. 26-27.

[10] Martin Maclean, op. cit., 1995, pp. 25-26.

[11] Michael Barber, op. cit., p. 11.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Maurice Galton et al, Inside the Primary Classroom, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989, p. 52.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 191.

[16] Ibid., p. 52.

[17] Denis Lawton, An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, p. 28.

[18] José Carlos Libâneo, A Democratização da Escola Pública - A Pedogogia Critico - Social dos Conteúdos, [The Democratization of State Schools: The Socio-Critical Pedagogy of the Knowledge-Content], São Paulo, Loyola, 1996, p. 24.

[19] Demerval Saviani, op. cit., p. 25.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Michael Barber, op. cit., p. 11. Denis Lawton, op. cit., p. 29. José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

[23] Denis Lawton, Education, Culture and the National Curriculum, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, p. 5.

[24] Michael Barber, op. cit., p. 11.

[25] Ibid., p. 12.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., pp. 11-12. A. F. Moreira, Currículos e Programas no Brasil, [Curricula and Programmes of Study in Brazil], Campinas, Papirus, 1990.

[28] Tanner & Tanner, Curriculum Development - Theory into Practice, New York, Macmillan, 1975, pp. 420-421.

[29] A. F. Moreira, op. cit., p. 92.

[30] Denis Lawton, An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, p. 29.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Maurice Galton, et. al., Inside the Primary Classroom, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, pp. 155-165.

[34] Denis Lawton, An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, pp. 29-30.

[35] José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., 1986, p. 28-32. Demerval Saviani, op. cit., p. 35.

[36] Saviani, op. cit., p. 38.

[37] Tanner & Tanner, op. cit., 1975, pp. 431-432.

[38] Ibid. Michael Barber, op. cit., 1996, pp. 13-14.

[39] Tanner & Tanner, op. cit., 1975, p. 431.

[40] A. V. Kelly, op, cit., pp. 50-58. José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., p. 31.

[41] Michael Barber, op. cit., p. 13.

[42] A. V. Kelly, op. cit., p. 93.

[43] José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., 1986, pp. 28-29.

[44] Denis Lawton, Education, Culture and the National Curriculum, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, pp. 10-11.

[45] A. V. Kelly, op. cit., p. 51. Michael Barber, op. cit., p. 13

[46] A. V. Kelly, op. cit., p. 49.

[47] Denis Lawton, An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, p. 115.

[48] A. F. Moreira, op. cit., pp. 109-120.

[49] The first MEC-USAID agreement to improve primary education was signed in 1964 and the first agreement to improve secondary education was signed in 1965. Otaísa de Oliveira Romanelli, História da Educação no Brasil - (1930/1973), [The History of Education in Brazil - (1930-1973)], Petrópolis, Vozes, 1980, p. 212.

[50] Otaísa de Oliveira Romanelli, op. cit., p. 197. José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

[51] Demerval Saviani, op. cit., pp. 40-43.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Denis Lawton, Education, Culture and the National Curriculum, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, p. 6.

[54] José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., p. 38-41.

[55] Ibid., p. 8.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Demerval Saviani, Escola e Democracia, [School and Democracy], São Paulo, Cortez, 1989, pp. 79-83.

[58] A. F. Moreira, op. cit., p. 165.

[59] Barber, op. cit., p. 13.

[60] Denis Lawton, An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, p. 43.

[61] A. F. Moreira, op. cit., p. 174.

[62] José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., pp. 33-35. Paulo Freire explains in Pedagogia da Esperança, [Pedagogy of Hope], Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1992, p. 110 that: "Pedagogical practice should not be centred on the pupil, on the teacher, on knowledge or on the teaching methods and techniques. The teacher should understand the relationship among those components of the teaching/learning process and make use of materials, methods and techniques sensibly and coherently." Thus, in this study, 'priority-of-popular-culture' tradition does not mean that this tradition is centred on popular culture.

[63] A. V. Kelly, op. cit., p. 146.

[64] Paulo Freire, op. cit., p. 120-121.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Paulo Freire, op. cit., p. 81.

[67] Ibid., p. 114.

[68] Ibid., p. 84. A. V. Kelly in The Curriculum: Theory and Practice, London, Paul Chapman, 1989, p. 34, shares Paulo Freire's view about taking into consideration common sense knowledge in the teaching/learning process: "...it has been suggested that we should endeavour to base the content of the curriculum on the 'common sense knowledge' of the pupil rather than the 'educational knowledge' of the teacher." It is my view that this quotation suggests that Kelly has been somewhat influenced by Freire's ideas.

[69] José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., p. 33.

[70] Ibid., p. 34.

[71] The word 'conscientisation' is used in Andreola, "Action, Knowledge and Reality in the Educational Work of Paulo Freire," Educational Action Research, vol. 1, n. 2, 1993, pp. 221-234. There Andreola explains that the word 'conscientisation' in English, French, Spanish and Italian, originate from the translation of the word 'conscientização' in Freire's works.

[72] B. Andreola, op. cit., p. 227.

[73] Paulo Freire, "Formar Professores é um Ato Político", ["To Educate Teachers is a Political Act"], Roda Viva, Rio de Janeiro, ano I, n. 3, 1989, p. 5.

[74] Paulo Freire, Pedagogia da Esperança, [Pedagogy of Hope], Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, p. 106.

[75] Idem, pp. 224-225.

[76] José Carlos Libâneo, op. cit., p. 35.

` Chapter 4:

CURRICULUM CHANGE IN BRAZIL (1987) AND ENGLAND (1988):

DIFFERENT STYLES OF REFORMS

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the two different concepts of elaboration of the reforms in Brazil (Minas Gerais - 1987) and England (1988), and to explain how the political and social background in both countries influenced the style in which the reforms were elaborated. The chapter also aims at pointing out different concepts of *knowledge*, *power* and *communication* built into the curricula.

The argument is that different styles of elaboration[a] of curriculum reforms have different levels of legitimacy and relevance.

To develop this argument it will be necessary to construct ideal typical models of different ways of elaborating curriculum reforms: the participatory and the administrative. These models include different levels of legitimacy and relevance of curriculum proposals.[b]

The chapter is organized as follows: a brief introduction gives an overview of the concepts of legitimacy and relevance; section I constructs

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[a] At least two styles of elaboration of reforms can be singled out - reforms that are elaborated solely by politicians and bureaucrats and those that are elaborated with the participation of the society in general.

[b] Curriculum proposal here means curriculum documents, guidelines and syllabuses.

the model of the participatory style of elaboration of curriculum proposals; section II constructs the model of the administrative style of elaboration of curriculum proposals; and section III offers an analyses of both curricula within the categories of *knowledge, power* and *communication.*

Introduction

Legitimacy and relevance

Legitimacy and relevance are problematic concepts. There are several ways of addressing them.[1] In this study, they will be addressed following Habermas' ideas.

According to Habermas, legitimacy is coupled with human interests. Interests are not pre-given facts about people, constant throughout history and across cultures.[2] It is our location within the historical processes of social development that determines the range of our interests which are constructed in part by biological needs, in part by socialization processes and in part by interpretations of cultural values. Interests are formed and transformed by our social experiences, are dependent upon our place in and of history.[3] Depending on how generalizable these interests are, different levels of legitimacy arise.[4]

Relevance

Habermas refers to relevance as something that is intuitively known by the epistemic subject.[a] He distinguishes intuitive knowledge from factual knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is something implicitly known, something that socialized individuals who belong to the different spheres in society have already acquired in the *lifeworld*.[b] In this way, relevance has an epistemic content. Conversely, factual knowledge is counterintuitive.

Practical reflection on shared experiences, practices and forms of life bring into awareness intuitive knowledge and Habermas calls this 'insight'.[5] This practical reflection which critically appropriates intuitive knowledge calls for a socially expanded perspective, extending beyond the individual perspective of somebody acting on his/her preferences.[6]

This study will differentiate between "individual" relevance (that is justified on the premise of preferences) and "socialized" relevance (intuitive knowledge about what is relevant brought into awareness and constructed through communication). However, only "socialized" relevance will be taken into account. A curriculum proposal that has

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[a] "...Because we intuitively know what is attractive and repulsive, right or wrong, and in general what is relevant, here the moment of insight can be distinguished from a corresponding disposition of preference." Jurgen Habermas, paper given in the meeting of the Aristotelian Society held in the Beveridge Hall, Senate House, University of London on the 3rd of June, 1996 "On the Cognitive Content of Morality", in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol. XCVI , 1996, pp. 335-358

[b] In this way, relevance will be informed by norms, beliefs, values and cultural traditions

"individual" relevance is based on preferences and it would be elaborated in totalitarian regimes and those are out of the limits of this study.

The models of two different styles of elaboration of reforms will be constructed next: the participatory and the administrative styles. "Broad" and "restricted" legitimacy, and "ample" and "narrow" relevance will be addressed in the construction of the models.

Section I

The participatory style of elaboration of curriculum reform

The participatory style of elaboration of curriculum reform leads the curriculum proposal to have "broad" legitimacy and "ample" relevance.

"Broad" legitimacy is constructed with the participation[a] of the members of all spheres[b] within a community. If all the spheres have the

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[a] The level of participation will vary according to the predominance of discourses. When democratic discourse is predominant, participation means "a general taking part on the basis of equal opportunity in discursive processes of will formation" in Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, p., 134. When technocratic discourse is predominant, these opportunities are asymmetric: participation of the members of all spheres is denied and then participation is restricted to the administrative sphere. But in this particular situation there will be always a struggle of the other spheres to achieve a change in the degree of repression and broaden the scope of participation.

[b] The word spheres here means different groups of people in society. Generally speaking the people in each group are linked by similar interests. These interests may be defined by profession or by their position in society. Each of these spheres has a set of interests of their own which frequently struggle for hegemony. In this study several spheres will be mentioned: administrative sphere (represents the State - government, ministers, policy makers, state education officials), non-governmental organization sphere, social movements sphere, general public sphere (pupils, and parents) and professional sphere (teachers).

same interests then a curriculum proposal will have "broad" legitimacy since it will be legitimated by all the spheres which compose the groups which influence education as a whole. This situation would be genuine educational legitimacy.[a]

If the government has democratic aims that coincide with the teachers, the general public and the non-governmental organizations, it is highly likely that a curriculum proposal would be constructed in the interest of all involved in the educational process including parents and pupils.

"Ample" relevance means the collective acknowledgement of relevance of a curriculum proposal in different spheres. If a curriculum proposal has ample relevance it means that viewed from different stances it is considered relevant (more than one sphere considers it relevant).

This is what happened in Brazil when a new curriculum was elaborated for the State of Minas Gerais in 1987. The style in which the curriculum reform was elaborated led to "broad" legitimacy and "ample" relevance of the curriculum proposal.

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[a] This means that several spheres legitimate a curriculum proposal - administrative, general public, and professional spheres.

The emergence of curriculum reforms in several Brazilian states in the eighties came as a consequence of the gradual political liberalization of the country.[7] There was a controlled shift from a military authoritative regime to a more democratic one.[8]

In 1982 direct elections for State Governors were re-introduced.[9] In the long period of transition these elections for state governors in 1982 were the climax of the process of the re-democratization of the country.[10] Most politicians elected to occupy those posts in important Brazilian States such as São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Paraná were politicians opposed to the military regime.[11]

São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, Minas Gerais were some of the States that reformulated their curricula in the eighties.[12] The curriculum reform that occurred in Minas Gerais was chosen for this study because of the style of its reform. It involved the participation of teachers, parents, pupils, academics and Secretariat of Education officials.

In Minas Gerais the administrative sphere promoted democratic interests after Tancredo Neves took office as the Governor of Minas Gerais.[13] Neidson Rodrigues, the Director of the Educational Division, was well known professor for his political experience and academic work.[a] Otávio Elísio was the Secretary of Education. Otávio Elisio used his

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[a] One of his books Por Uma Nova Escola - O Transitório e o Permanente na Educação [For a Reformed School - What Changes and What Remains in Education], São Paulo, Cortez, 1985, showed his democratic interests. He discusses a school with democratic practices.

political-administrative experience to make viable the work of his staff. Neidson Rodrigues took powerful leadership in the process of major pedagogical reforms. Both Neidson Rodrigues and Otávio Elisio promoted wide consultation with teachers, pupils and parents so that their demands could give foundations and direction to new education policies for Minas Gerais.

There was a coincidence of interests between the general public, the teachers and the administration - all agreed that there should be an improvement in the quality of education which the state schools in Minas Gerais were offering their pupils.

All spheres were called to participate in the elaboration of a curriculum proposal that would fulfil the interests of teachers, parents, pupils and administrators and would satisfy needs of good quality public education. There was the participation of members of all spheres in the construction of a curriculum proposal for the State of Minas Gerais.

This participation[14] started with the *Congresso Mineiro de Educação* in 1983[15] and it culminated with the elaboration of the new curriculum proposal that had received suggestions from parents, teachers and pupils. There were several phases of elaboration of the new

curriculum from August to December 1986 aiming at implementation in 1987.[16]

The Congress took place from August to October 1983. The first phase of the Congress occurred in the first week of August with assemblies in all schools which were open to anyone who was interested. In some municipalities a holiday was decreed and in others the picking of fruit, vegetables and cereals was called off on that day to guarantee the full participation of the community. Each school wrote a report and elected deputies to go to the municipal assemblies. Each municipal district wrote a report and elected deputies to go to the regional assemblies which in turn wrote reports and elected deputies to go to the state assembly.[17]

The Educational Division made a study of thirty reports with 200 technicians from the Secretariat who had taken part in all the meetings from their starting point in the schools.[18] The outcome of that study was a document named: <u>Diretrizes para a Política Educacional em Minas Gerais</u> [<u>Guidelines to the Education Policy in Minas Gerais</u>]. This document was discussed widely and modified in a State meeting in which 1,300 people took part in working groups and assemblies. Later this document was the basis for the "Plano Mineiro de Educação 1984/1987" ["Plan of Education for Minas Gerais"].[19]

The new curriculum proposal was elaborated from the suggestions[a] that came from primary and secondary state schools to the local Districts of Education and from there to the thirty regional Districts of Education. Each regional District of Education constructed a report containing the suggestions. These thirty reports were discussed in two meetings in Belo Horizonte that involved representatives of the primary and secondary schools, representatives of the local and regional districts, officials from the Secretary of Education and academics from the UFMG[b] Faculty of Education.[20]

Seven texts emerged from these meetings and were published together in a basic document called: Novas Propostas Curriculares - Instrumento de Preparação para o Exercício da Cidadania. [New Curricular Proposals - a Means to Prepare for the Exercise of Citizenship].[21] This document was the basis for the development of the proposals for *primeiro* and *segundo graus* (first and second grades) in all five subjects. Portuguese, Maths, Geography, History and Science. This study will deal with the proposals which refer to the first four years of the first grade.

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[a] These suggestions had the participation of parents, pupils and teachers.

[b] Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais.

The basis for the "broad" legitimacy of these proposals is expressed in the basic document:

> "We brought together, parents, pupils, teachers and specialists from the schools, technicians from the Districts of Education and from the Secretariat of Education, and teachers from several Universities in the State of Minas Gerais and we started to discuss this new vision of school which was being built for a time in a historical battle conducted by the educators.[22] This battle was conducted to re-organize the curricula which we now give to the schools in Minas Gerais."[23]

Participation had begun and the outcome was the new curricular proposals for the five subjects in *primeiro* and *segundo graus* (first and second grades), broadly legitimated by the wide participation in its elaboration.

This study argues that the Brazilian Conferences of Education had a very important role in the process of consolidation of democratic discourse[a] in the educational arena in Brazil. These conferences helped legitimate the democratic discourse within the professional sphere. This process of legitimation is important: to achieve "broad" legitimacy it is necessary that a specific discourse is legitimated within a sphere so that it can exercise pressure to construct "broad" legitimacy.

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[a] Discourse here means modes of thinking and viewing the world (society in particular) shaped in the form of interests and represented in documents, proposals, programmes, planning, speeches, policies, movements, campaigns, laws and vindications. Any social group has its own discourse that may take the form of all the aspects mentioned before or of only some of them.

The Brazilian (Minas Gerais) proposal was also constructed with "ample" relevance. It was elaborated in the context of the political redemocratization of the country. All the spheres involved in the curriculum elaboration intended to introduce democratic practices in schools. This led to "ample" relevance of the proposal: in the view of each sphere it was considered to be relevant.

The main general aim of the Brazilian (Minas Gerais) curriculum proposal was to introduce democratic practices in the classroom to form critical citizens who are able to live in a democratic society and who are able to compete in the work market. Some of those aims are indicated in the basic document as follows:

> "In the first place I would say that the reformed school is the one which prepares individuals for democracy."[24]

> "A second characteristic of the reformed school for modern times is that school as a cultural institution should make it possible that all have access to knowledge, science and arts that are socially produced."[25]

> "The definition of the reformed school should be translated into a proposal for teaching the basic curricular components as a means to prepare individuals for life."[26]

> "The school itself does not form the citizen but gives him instruments, give him conditions so that he can form and build up himself."[27]

The "internal" relevance of a curriculum proposal is linked to the kind of citizen it intends to form. In short, the "internal" relevance of a curriculum proposal is coupled with its main aims.

The core of the curriculum proposal matches its main aims, that is, the curriculum has "internal" relevance. In the Portuguese language curriculum proposal the main guidelines for language teaching are indicated as follows:

> "From the starting point that language is the key to the functioning of our society as we live in a world of signs to be decoded, it is necessary to determine which conception of language guided the elaboration of the Portuguese curriculum proposal. More than merely being an instrument of communication language is a factor of integration, a factor of domination and consequently an instrument used for struggling. If culture is a system of discourses and the language is an instrument of these discourses it is absolutely necessary to have a good command of the language so that one can have an effective knowledge of the mechanisms which rule the society and its inherent ideological contradictions."[28]

The "internal" relevance of the curriculum proposal is shown by the coherence between the main aims - to introduce democratic practices in schools - and the way suggested in each proposal to deal with each subject. As was mentioned above in the extract from the Portuguese curriculum proposal, the teaching/learning of language should enable the individuals to use language as a means of access to knowledge and as a means to disclose domination. In short, it indicates the way toward the

preparation of the individual to exercise his citizenship in a democratic society.

The Brazilian (Minas Gerais) curriculum proposal was elaborated in a participatory style. It had "broad" legitimacy, and "ample" and "internal" relevance.

The administrative style of elaboration of a curriculum reform will be discussed in the next section.

Section II

The administrative style of elaboration of a curriculum reform

The administrative style of elaboration of a curriculum reform leads the curriculum proposal to have "restricted" legitimacy and "narrow" relevance.

"Restricted" legitimacy is created within one sphere, generally within the administrative sphere[a] and then the curriculum proposal is enforced by law. The curriculum becomes a legal document. This is the case of the English National Curriculum and the 5692 law in Brazil in 1971. "Restricted" legitimacy may exist within any of the spheres mentioned but the only one which can be enforced by law and become

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[a] Intra-sphere legitimacy means that only one sphere legitimates a curriculum proposal.

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legal is the one restricted to the administrative sphere. However, legality does not create legitimation in its "broad" sense.

Nevertheless, this dichotomy between legality and legitimacy of a curriculum proposal can be better understood if the point of view of teachers, pupils and parents is taken into consideration.

The interests of the administrative sphere tend to legitimate education and the curricular proposals which emerge in a different way as the society would legitimate. These curricular proposals are influenced by the State main goals for education as was the English National Curriculum.[29] The technocratic discourse has a tendency to legitimate these goals which are shaped by education policies to accomplish the aims of the State. From the stance of the administrators these proposals are legitimate but from the point of view of the teachers, parents and pupils the proposals are legal as they are enforced by law and not constructed with the participation of the society taking their interests into account.

Educational legitimacy will depend on the legitimation of interests within several spheres: the administration (government - State), the teachers, the general public, and non-governmental organizations.

If the interests are conflicting[a] ones there may be an enforcement of the interests of the administration and legitimacy will be restricted to one sphere - the sphere of the administration and from the standpoint of the general public this is a legal procedure rather than a legitimate one. There will be "restricted" legitimacy that leads to legality.

Legitimacy of a curriculum proposal within the technocratic discourse is restricted to the participation of the members of one sphere - administrative. The participants of a community are members of several spheres (administrative, professional, general public, non-governmental organizations and social movements) which constitute the community. Each of these spheres have a set of interests of their own which are always struggling to be predominant.

In this particular case, there is the prioritization of the interests of the administrative sphere over the other spheres (as the other spheres are not called for participation in the elaboration of the curriculum proposal) and so the "restricted" legitimacy is enforced by law creating the legality of the curriculum proposal. The participants of a community who are members of others spheres other than the administrative

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[a] When there are conflicting interests, the prioritization of some interests over others is more likely to occur than the other two possibilities such as: reconcile interests and disintegration of a community. The disintegration of a community is generally brought about by war and reconciling interests usually occur under democratic practices. South Africa is a good example of reconciled interests; Bosnia and Rwanda are examples of brutal disintegration of communities and the military regime in Brazil is an example of prioritization of a set of interests.

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consider the proposal *legal* but not *legitimate*. This is what happened in England when the National Curriculum was elaborated.

The National Curriculum was part of the 1988 Education Reform Act. It was a legal document and the teachers had to put it in practice. Teachers, pupils and parents did not have a major participation in its elaboration.

It was legitimated within the administrative sphere that the country needed to improve its standards in education by replacing the "ideological curriculum" which was being taught at schools for "real" knowledge.[30] This "real" knowledge was meant to bring efficiency to education. The legitimation of technocratic discourse within the administrative sphere led to the elaboration of a curriculum for England and Wales that was enforced by law in 1988:

> "What eventually emerged in the election manifesto - and therefore ultimately in the Act - was assembled in secret in the nine months before the 1987 General Election. There was a determined effort *not* to consult the DES or the civil servants or chief education officers or local politicians. Under the discreet eye of Professor Brian Griffiths, head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, the outline of a radical reform was set down in bold lines from which there was no going back. The transition from 1944 was complete: so complete that there was no longer any need to seek consensus." [31]

In April 1987 Kenneth Baker announced his intention of legislating in the next Parliament to ensure that all children received a grounding in Mathematics and English, Science, a foreign language, History,

Geography and technology. He expressed his belief that this could only be achieved if required and enforced by law. He added that the efficiency of the National Curriculum would be measured by tests for pupils aged seven, eleven and fourteen. These tests would be based on attainment targets to allow room for differences in abilities. This statement was made in a meeting of the House of Commons Select Committee on Education.[32]

The Education Reform Act 1988 emerged from the 1987 Bill and received the Royal Assent on July 29th, 1988. There are 238 clauses and 13 schedules in it. The first 25 sections are concerned with the National Curriculum. The Act increased the powers of the Education Secretary and restored to central government control over the school curriculum. The National Curriculum marks the reassumption by the central government of control and direction of the school curriculum, control which had largely been ceded in elementary schools by the end of the 1920s.[33] The National Curriculum introduced important limitations on the functions of LEAS and also did not define very well the partnership between central government, local government and individual schools.[34]

The Education Reform Act of 1988 was the most important and far-reaching piece of educational law for England and Wales since the Education Act of 1944 because it altered the basic power structure of the

education system.[35] The crucial issue of what should be taught in schools was taken away from producers - the teachers. But it was not given to the consumers - the pupils, parents and employers. It was placed firmly in the hands of central government in the shape of Secretary of State.[36] The National Curriculum gave the Secretary of State 415 new powers, and caused considerable opposition, partly because it represented a major shift of power in education in England to the central authority.[37] Within the context of educational reforms in England the National Curriculum was a major shift to something significantly new in the English educational scenario after the 1920s. Central control, formal evaluation to monitor school standards by the results of the test provided and subject teaching were the major innovations introduced by the National Curriculum.[a]

What the administrative sphere considers relevant may not be what the general public or the teachers consider relevant. This is the case of the English National Curriculum. In this situation, the curriculum proposal has "narrow" relevance.

The relevance of the National Curriculum is confined to what the administrative sphere considered relevant. The administrative sphere

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[a] Since the 1920s there was a relaxation of the control over the curriculum which was to last until mid the 1980s. The only curriculum requirements of the 1944 Education act itself was religious education. Even its paragraph of broad principles avoid any implication of a national curriculum. One of the teachers Union leaders Ronald Gould (mid 40s until 1970) once mentioned the existence of 146 LEAs as safeguards of democracy and added that an even greater safeguard was the existence of a quarter million teachers who were free to decide what should be taught and how it should be taught. However, the traditional model of the professional enjoying a high degree of autonomy no longer holds after the National Curriculum.

considered it relevant to elaborate a curriculum that was compatible with the economic and commercial needs of the country. Also the administrative sphere considered it relevant to take into consideration the aims of the State to form citizens who are better qualified for the work market and to have a curriculum that would be followed nationally so that schools would not differ so much in standards. In this way, the government would monitor the school standards by using standardised tests.

The English National Curriculum was elaborated in an administrative style with "restricted" legitimacy and "narrow" relevance.

The teachers in England and Wales were uneasy with the complexity and overelaboration of the assessment arrangements of the National Curriculum and its overprescription and excessive content.[a] In 1993 Sir Ron Dearing prepared the final report of the review of the National Curriculum and some modifications were introduced after that: the slimming down of the curriculum, and the reduction of the attainment targets and of the levels of attainment. These were the main modifications that responded partly to the teachers' claims.

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[a] Ron Dearing, The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Final Report, London, SCAA, 1994, p. 17.

In the process of the elaboration of the National Curriculum and in the process of its review the teachers' views were largely ignored. This situation contributed to the emergence of a curriculum that leads to an oversimplifcation of the complexities of the teaching/learning process.[38]

In section III it will be pointed out how the different styles of elaboration of the reforms in Brazil (Minas Gerais) and England influenced the concepts of *knowledge*, *power* and *communication* built into the curricula.

Section III

Introduction

The concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* according to Habermas

Curricula are representations of knowledge for the purpose of teaching. They are the languages teachers employ to talk about things and events in the world and as such they imply a stance.[39] The curriculum, as a language of education, not only refers to things in the world (its contents) but also marks the stance to be adopted by the teacher that is shared with the pupils.[40]

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This study argues that different curricula proposals in different places in the world have different concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* built into them. These concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* shape the discourse that is predominant in a determined sphere or in several spheres of a community in a particular historical moment.

To develop the first part of this argument the concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* built into the Brazilian (Minas Gerais) curriculum and into the English National Curriculum will be analyzed according to the Habermasian view of *Knowledge, power* and *communication.*

Habermas views Knowledge as originating in human interests and in means of social organization. He describes human interests in terms of technical control, communication (understanding) and emancipation relating to the respective social media of work, language and power.[41] Knowledge is the outcome of human activity that is motivated by natural needs and interests and these interests give the shape of the search for knowledge and the product of this search assumes quite specific and different characteristic forms. Habermas calls them "knowledge-constitutive-interests" because they are interests which guide and shape

the way knowledge is constituted in different human activities. He contends that human knowledge is constituted by virtue of three knowledge constitutive interests which he labels the "technical", the "practical" and the "emancipatory". Our discrete cognitive interests in controlling nature, social harmony, and individual growth each respond to a different problem in human experience but also lead to different forms of knowledge and knowing.[42] Habermas does not deny the other forms of knowledge (e.g. technical) but he refuses to accept technical knowledge as the only form of knowledge. He proposes emancipatory knowledge as another form of knowledge whose main aim is the emancipation of man from social constraints which irrationally denies him a chance for happiness.

The three cognitive human interests - the technical, the practical and the emancipatory - develop in three social media: labour, interaction and power (relations of domination and constraint). They are conditions for the possibility of three "sciences":[43] the empirical-analytic, the hermeneutic and the critical. The role of these three sciences is to systematize and formalize the procedures required for basic human activities (controlling external conditions, communicating and reflecting) necessary for the functioning of the human species: a trichotomous division between the natural sciences, the cultural sciences and the critical sciences.[44]

Interests, knowledge, power and science linkages are summarized in table nine:[45]

Table 9

Interest	Knowledge	Medium	Science
Technical	instrumental (causal explanation)	labour	empirical-analytic or natural science
Practical	practical (understanding)	interaction (language)	Hermeneutic or interpretive sciences
Emancipatory	emancipatory (reflection)	power	critical sciences

While technical (empirical-analytic) social science aims at the regulation and control of social action, and practical (interpretive) social science aims to interpret the world for people, an emancipatory social science aims to reveal the way social processes are distorted by power in social relationships of domination and coercion and through the 'invisible' operation of ideology. Emancipatory knowledge does not limit itself to illuminating social relationships as interpretive social science does, but aims to create conditions under which distorted co-existing relationships can be transformed by organized, collaborative action, a shared political struggle in which people aim to overcome irrationality and injustice which distorts their lives. Irrationality and injustice leads Habermas to label its guiding interest 'emancipatory'.[46]

Emancipatory interests lead to emancipatory knowledge which is constructed within the social reality of the social actors in a way to reveal contexts of illegitimate domination or relationships distorted by power and how this can be eliminated.[47] It is important to point out the relevance language has in this process. Unlike hermeneutic or interpretive science which aims at improving understanding of reality through language, Habermas proposes language to be the means which makes it possible to overcome domination and irrationality leading to emancipation. In this way critical social science is the science which serves the emancipatory interest in freedom and autonomy.

Knowledge, power and *communication* in the Brazilian (Minas Gerais) curriculum proposal

When the curriculum proposal for the State of Minas Gerais was constructed, democratic interests were predominant in the educational arena at that time. It is clear emancipatory interests leading to emancipatory knowledge were present in the basic document and in the curricular proposals for each subject (Portuguese, Mathematics, Science, Geography and History). Some extracts from the *basic document* show the presence of these emancipatory interests:

> "In the reformed school the pupils should understand what a capitalist society is, how it is organized and how social classes are organized in that society. They also have to

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understand how the city is organized, what are the relationships between the city and the country, what the fundamental relationships in the world of production are. They should also understand how culture is founded; how science is produced; what is the role of science and technique in the modern world; how political life in his city/town/village is organized and in his country how the international relations occur; how people are manipulated in these processes and how they participate in the construction and in the deconstruction of these processes; they should be aware why shanty towns exist; why there is the work in the country; why some people earn more money than others and why salaries are not established accordingly to the social importance of the production."[48]

"When the pupil comes into school he does not leave his "life" outside he brings with him his experiences, his worldviews, his own way of speaking, his culture and his values. The school starts since the literacy process and considers the pupil's reality to organize knowledge - this knowledge that the pupil brings with him and we at school will help him organize, broaden his perception of reality and his competence of comprehension of this reality so that he can be able to propose changes in this reality."[49]

My interpretation of the extracts above is that the curriculum in the reformed school should help the pupils to understand the society they live in. The classroom is a place to deal with the pupils' social reality. Knowledge should be constructed having this reality as the starting point. In this way, the pupils are be able to get to know about the contradictions and inequalities present in this reality and be aware of the relationships of power. This way of dealing with knowledge is important for the pupils to

have a critical eye on what happens in society and to start thinking of proposals for change.

Some extracts of each curriculum proposal - Portuguese, History, Maths, Geography and Science - and interpretations of these extracts will be offered next pointing out the concepts of *knowledge*, *power* and *communication* built into them:

> "The new curriculum suggests that the language teacher should not teach the Portuguese language as something 'inflexible' and 'immutable' in time and space, but as a 'flexible' vivid reality. The Portuguese language should not be taught only as a means of communication but as a means of interaction and above all as an instrument of struggle for social justice and for finding a decent job." [50]

> "It is essential that the school do not make the mistake to adopt the truths contained in texts as "ready made truths". No written texts can be mystified, all of them have to be questioned, discussed and analyzed. This is a critical reading done without fear, without "ready made formulas" and without laziness. The pupil as a critical reader will question the text, compare with others situate it in the historical context, and will be eager to know why it is this way and not another way." [51]

Language is considered to be a crucial instrument for emancipation. It is important to have a good command of the written and the spoken language so that it can be used to reveal contexts of domination and to overcome it. Being a critical reader the pupil will not let himself be manipulated by others as he will be able to demystify any written text and get its real meaning. Language is an instrument of

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communication, and power. The pupils need a good command of the language so that they can construct their knowledge in the other subjects.

The Maths curriculum proposal suggests that the social reality of the pupils should be brought into the classroom. The teacher should use the pupils' reality as a starting point for the construction of knowledge that will enable them to understand the importance of Maths in their daily lives:

> "The school should facilitate concrete experiences for the pupils in a way that they can turn out to be participant, reflective and critical. he school should enable them to change the society they live in and to solve their own problems they may come across in their lives."[52]

> "The pedagogical action should be guided by the concrete reality that is modified each moment, by positioning the contents in this context and by the methodology that should enable the pupils to construct knowledge for transforming (for changing)."[53]

The Geography curriculum proposal suggests that :

> "The children should learn that reality is not static and that changes and the solution of problems depend on the deliberate action of the social group as long as it is organized and struggles for changes."[54]

> "It is fundamental that the pupils are aware of the town, the state and the country. They should understand the interaction among the cultural, economic, political and social levels, the conflicts, the contradictions that cause continuous processes of changes."[55]

Geography is not treated as a collection of physical aspects of places but as a means to understand the cultural, economic, political and social aspects of the town, state and country.

The History curriculum proposal suggests that History should not be taught as a collection of dates and facts. Conversely it should be taught to give the pupils an awareness of their social condition and a critical interpretation of historical facts.

> "The school as it is tries to prepare the individual to adapt to the society facing reality as if it were unchangeable, this school does not suit us nowadays; now the main objective of the teaching of History is to enable the individual to be aware of the reality which surrounds him not to accept passively the influence of reality on himself. The individual should be able, through the construction of new knowledge, to interact within groups to try to change reality." [56]

The Science proposal suggests that:

> "The school is autonomous to adapt the suggested curriculum proposal to its reality having in mind what Paulo Freire says in one of his books *the practice of re-thinking the practice is the best way to think correctly.*" [57]

All the proposals share the same aim, that is, to bring the pupils' social reality into the classroom. They suggest that the construction of knowledge should have the pupils social reality as the starting point. In this way, the school will be able to form critical individuals who through reflection and collective action will be able to see the contradiction present in their social reality and to propose changes for it.

It is possible to call all the curricular proposals for each subject *emancipatory curricula or communicative curricula.* Language is considered to be not only a means of communication but as a means of social and intersubjective integration that leads to emancipation. A curriculum guided by an emancipatory interest aims at transformation of consciousness, that is, a transformation in the way one perceives and acts in the 'world'.[58]

These curricular proposals themselves are not meant to restrict the teachers in their choices of what and how to teach but they are suggestions about how the teachers can conduct their classes. They are open to modifications that may occur having teachers' practice and the collective action of the professionals involved as the starting point as it is indicated in the following extracts from the Science, History and Maths programmes:

> "Any curriculum cannot be considered either as an ideal one or definitive but it has to be considered as something subject to alterations." [59]

> "We should not interpret these curricular proposals as straightjackets. This would be an error." [60]

> "In each school the teachers must have freedom for planning. This means that the teachers can decide what should be taught in more depth and what should not. This decision will depend on the pupils they have." [61]

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In this way the underlying concept of *power* in the proposals is shared power relations which is suggested by the way the teachers and the community in general participated in the elaboration of the proposals and the possibility opened for them to continue to participate.

These are not the kind of proposals which have traditional ways of implementation as the proposals themselves are not "finished", "ready made" but they are to be constructed in the daily practice of schools and classrooms. The proposals can be enlarged, improved, questioned and reformulated as long as these processes are processes of participation, discussion and self-reflection free from domination to achieve the consensus proposed by Habermas which has already been described elsewhere in this study.

Habermas would never advocate a curriculum composed of subjects as he does not see distinct boundaries for knowledge.[62] Although the Brazilian (Minas Gerais) proposals are subject-structured for the sake of better understanding on the part of the teachers there is a strong tendency to consider the interdisciplinarity of knowledge as Habermas would propose:

> "The teacher of Portuguese aiming at maximizing reading in the pupils' life can work with texts from other subjects. The whole school functions based on texts. It is important to establish an effective relationship with the other subjects since Portuguese language is the object of all subjects as all of them are structured as a form of language." [63]

"According to this curriculum proposal it is urgent that we teach Science integrated with the other subjects. This way of teaching presupposes exchange of experiences, collective planning, creation of materials and definition of strategies of work." [64]

My interpretation is that there is no subject which is considered more important than others but the integration of all of them should help the search for emancipatory knowledge that is beyond the boundaries of empirical sciences.

This study argues that *communication* cannot be treated separately from the other two categories as it is the means through which knowledge and *power* are *legitimated*. As has already been explained elsewhere communication for Habermas does not only mean coding and decoding of symbols or the production of grammatical sentences but it also means to follow certain ethical principles (validity claims) leading to a consensus free of constraints which Habermas calls *communicative reason*.

It is clear from the curriculum proposals that the concept of *communication* embedded in them does not legitimate asymmetrical power relationships either between teachers and pupils or among teachers, parents, state educational officials and administrative sphere. As there is always a stress in construction - construction of the proposal, construction of knowledge - this construction implies ample opportunities

to engage in communicative roles which presuppose symmetric power relationships.

Knowledge, power and *communication* in the English National Curriculum

The National Curriculum[a] "is a policy document which is read here not as evidence of what politicians intend"[65] but as a way of shaping the predominance of the technocratic discourse in the administrative sphere that was legitimated within this sphere and legally enforced on the professionals and the society in the form of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

When the curriculum proposal for England and Wales was elaborated the technocratic discourse was predominant in education. The National Curriculum is shaped by the technocratic discourse in the sense that it aims at controlling education mainly by its "output".[b] This is indicated in the form of results of standardized assessment which are shown publicly. Under the slogan "parental choice", The National Curriculum was meant to give parents an opportunity to choose better schools for their children. However, by making the schools "output" public

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[a] The National Curriculum was the first statutory curriculum for England and Wales after the 1944 Education Act where the curriculum as such was not mentioned and the only subject required by law was religious instruction.

[b] The use of the word "output" here was preferred rather than "results" to match the technocratic feature of the curriculum.

it was clear that the government intended to force the National Curriculum into Schools by controlling its implementation by means of standardized evaluation rather than give parents more choices.

Also, the National Curriculum disempowers schools and teachers and gives more powers to the central authority and to parents who by using their power of choice are able to define the fate of a school. The National Curriculum as it is does not seem to stimulate communication between the several spheres (administrative, professional, general public) in the sense of negotiation or sharing their respective visions of educational aims and processes in dialogue. It is clear from the National Curriculum that the concept of communication embedded in it legitimates asymmetrical power relationships between teachers and pupils, between parents and teachers, and teachers and state government officials.

The National Curriculum has become more of a restriction than a flexible resource for teachers. The National Curriculum is being driven by the State as a means for delivering the kind of test information that enables comparison between schools to be made as a basis for parental choice and the distribution of resources to schools.[66]

There is a clear division of labour between the curriculum designers (bureaucrats and politicians in the administrative sphere) and the

curriculum implementers (teachers - in the professional sphere). The curriculum designers devised the curriculum and it is the teachers' duty to implement it or to deliver it as a ready-made-package.

The National Curriculum is subject-structured and three subjects are defined as core foundation subjects: English,[a] Mathematics and Science. Seven are defined as foundation subjects: Art, Geography, History, a modern language, Music, Physical Education and Technology.

In the way the National Curriculum has been developed there is little legal distinction between the *core subjects* and the *foundation subjects*.

Each subject was originally described[b] in four different ways:

a) attainment targets; b) levels of attainment; c) statements of attainment; d) profile components.[c]

Each subject was described by a different number of attainment targets. Each *attainment* target was subdivided into ten levels[d] of *attainment* and the statements of attainment provided the detail of what every pupil should know and understand as they progress through the curriculum. The attainment targets and the statements of attainment

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[a] In Wales, Welsh is also taught as a core subject where the medium of instruction in the school is Welsh. In all other Welsh schools, English is one of the foundation subjects.

[b] Before the 'Dearing Report'

[c] After the 'Dearing Report' the statements of attainment and profile components were abolished.

[d] After the 'Dearing Report' each attainment target is subdivided into eight levels of attainment.

framed standards required of pupils. Assessments, either by teachers or standardized ones was made against these criteria.[67]

The way in which the attainment targets and statements of attainment were to be taught was set out in programmes of study. These programmes were meant to give teachers more information about contents, methods and approaches to be adopted so as to get to the targets proposed.[68]

The way of describing subjects using targets and all other subdivisions is a typical technocratic influence in education.[69] Knowledge is something that can be "atomized". The "atomization" of knowledge in the curriculum serves the purpose of better controlling "inputs" and "outputs". Knowledge is seen as something measurable, so the "pulverization" of Knowledge is necessary so that it can be better measured.

The National Curriculum, elaborated through an objectives model, represents knowledge as non-problematic and suggests that it is an individual achievement rather than a social achievement. Science is viewed as a source of technical knowledge (knowledge = technical information) and techniques to be acquired rather than a contribution to culture. The National Curriculum gives the schools a view of production-

consumption systems where knowledge is manufactured as a commodity and children are entitled to possess as an individual right. The National curriculum offers the promise of providing a simple straightforward and unambiguous basis for consumers choice.[70]

The National Curriculum was elaborated by bureaucrats who believe that the correct selection of "means" will produce desirable outcomes. The programmes of study function as a source of suggestions for the proper choice of means.

The government has increasingly intervened on questions about appropriate teaching methods for implementing the National Curriculum requirements. The Curriculum plan which primarily organizes informational content as knowledge can only be implemented effectively if it also controls pedagogy.[71]

In the science programme of study for keystage 1 one of the topics the pupils should to be taught says: "taking exercise and eating the right types and amount of food help humans to keep healthy." This is too simple a way of dealing with this complex theme. This topic does not mention an investigation of what the pupils normally eat and why. To have the right amount of healthy food can be dear and low income families may not be able to provide that for their children. Alternative sources of healthy food or a balanced diet that is affordable to low income families are not mentioned. There is no indication that pupils live in a particular social
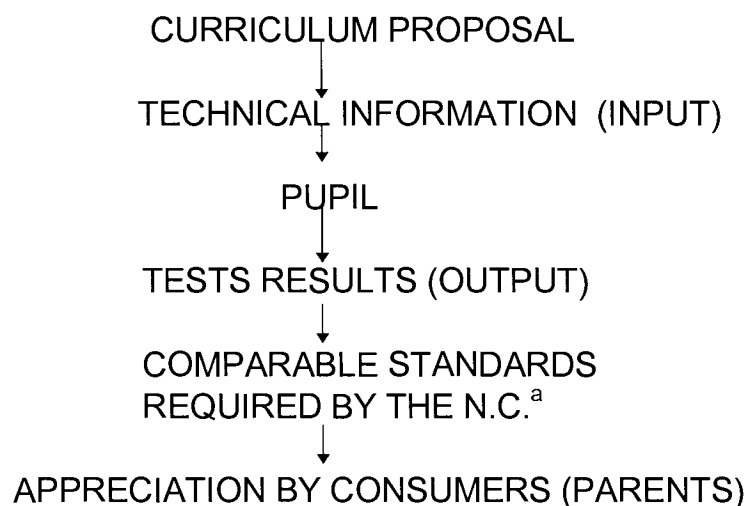
context and their eating habits are partly determined by it. There is no acknowledgment of the social reality the pupils live in. This compartmentalization of knowledge gives the impression that the world is arranged in separate parts and by acquiring information about these separate parts the child will be able to cope with the complexity of things found in real life. Also, the way this topic is stated does not give a hint for identity as no cultural aspect is included in it. It is presented as a neutral content that has value in itself without being socially contextualized.

Knowledge cannot be mistaken for technical information or collection of facts.[72] In History Keystage 2 the children are supposed to study: *the Romans, Anglo-Saxons*, and *Vikings* in Britain. These themes are to be studied without a 'critical view' of what they represented at that time and the influences in the present. Knowledge is broader and enables the individual to understand reality with its multiple facets and to endeavour to change it whenever it applies.[73]

As shown in diagram 4 a 'technical curriculum' regards the pupil as someone who will produce desirable or non-desirable outputs. If the pupils produce non-desirable outputs the teacher or the school is to be blamed for not implementing the curriculum in the expected way.

The National curriculum aims at preparing the pupils for adult life. However this study argues that by narrowing the scope and possibilities of teachers and pupils actions this aim is more difficult to be accomplished.

Diagram 4

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL
↓
TECHNICAL INFORMATION (INPUT)
↓
PUPIL
↓
TESTS RESULTS (OUTPUT)
↓
COMPARABLE STANDARDS
REQUIRED BY THE N.C.[a]
↓
APPRECIATION BY CONSUMERS (PARENTS)

Conclusion

The socio-political contexts which led to the emergence of curricular proposals in England and Brazil were characterized by different predominant discourses in education in both countries.

While in Brazil democratic discourse was predominant, in England predominance was given to the technocratic discourse. In Brazil (Minas

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[a] National Curriculum.

Gerais) the proposal was constructed based on "broad" legitimacy. In England the National Curriculum was elaborated and legitimated within the administrative sphere - 'restricted legitimacy' and legally enforced by law.

It was clear that different predominant discourses in both countries influenced the different ways in which the curricula were elaborated and also the different concepts of *knowledge*, *power* and *communication* on which the curricula were based.

In Brazil emancipatory interests contributed to the elaboration of a curriculum proposal that aimed at emancipatory knowledge, shared power relationships and symmetrical opportunities to engage in speech situations. In England technical interests contributed to the elaboration of a curriculum proposal that aimed at technical knowledge, one-sided power relationships and asymmetrical opportunities to engage in speech situations.

In this way, there were different movements of centralization and decentralization of the control over the curriculum in both countries. Within the democratic discourse in Brazil there was a tendency to decentralize the power over the curriculum empowering teachers and schools to adapt the curriculum to the reality they faced and allowing

them to make suggestions for modifications from the starting point of concrete reality. Within the technocratic discourse in England there was a tendency to disempower teachers and schools by giving the central authority major powers over the curriculum and the decisions connected to it.

In April 1987 Kenneth Baker indicated that he believed that a national curriculum could only be achieved if required and enforced by law. In Brazil (Minas Gerais) Otávio Elisio and Neidson Rodrigues believed that a major change in the curriculum could only be achieved if it was legitimated by all the spheres of the community.

Nevertheless both Kenneth Baker and Otávio Elisio had partial understanding of the reality. Kenneth Baker believed that by enforcing the National Curriculum by law changes in schools would occur smoothly and Otávio Elísio thought that by elaborating a curriculum that was broadly legitimated by society the schools would not offer resistance to it.

This study argues that however legitimate or legal a proposal may be it faces resistances that prevent it from being completely put into practice. The types of resistances are slightly different if the legality or the legitimacy of the proposals are considered. Among the types of resistances which are faced by both kinds of proposal there is one - the symbolic universe of schools - that it is extremely important to investigate as it can shed new light into the nuances of resistances faced by

curricular proposals. The empirical investigation of the symbolic universe is the subject of Chapter Six.

As a methodological procedure, ideal typical models of schools are constructed in Chapter Five to help conduct the investigation in the practice of schools.

NOTES

[1] Weber identified three sources of legitimacy: traditions and customs, legal-rational procedures (e.g. voting) and individual charisma. Max Weber, Economy and Society, Berkeley, California, G. Roth and C. Wittich (eds.), 1978, Chapter 3, pp. 50 - 120. Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau deal with legitimacy being some form of social contract between autonomous agents. Messick, Paixão and Bastos, (eds.) in Currículo, Análise e Debate, [Curriculum, Analysis and Debate], Rio de Janeiro, Zahar Editores, 1980, pp. 42-69, refer to relevance as the adequacy of the contents of a curriculum to its behavioural objectives.

[2] M. A. Hannam, Habermas and Democracy, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University College London, 1989, p. 88.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, pp. 110-111.

[5] Idem, "On the Cognitive Content of Morality", in the Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, vol. XCVI, 1996, pp. 335 - 358.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Eli Diniz, "The Political Transition in Brazil: Prospects for Democracy" in Geert Banck and Kees Koonings (eds.), Social Change in Contemporary Brazil, Netherlands, CEDLA, 1988, pp. 9-10.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: de Castelo a Tancredo, [Brazil: From Castelo to Tancredo], Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1988, pp. 452-453.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 455.

[12] Luiz Antonio Cunha, Educação, Estado e Democracia no Brasil, [Education, State and Democracy in Brazil], São Paulo, Cortez, 1991, p. 13.

[13] Thomas Skidmore, op cit., p. 455.

[14] The proposal for government presented by Tancredo Neves as candidate in his electoral campaign in 1982 gave support for the Congresso Mineiro de Educação to take place:

> "The search for solutions to the problems of education in Minas Gerais is a collective task that summons all professionals of education, trade unions, the community in general. These solutions should be found by a means of an ample open debate taking into consideration all the segments of the civil society from the starting point of the 722 municipalities in the state," in Luiz Antonio Cunha, Educação, Estado e Democracia no Brasil [Education, State and Democracy in Brazil], São Paulo, Cortez, 1991, pp. 166-167.

[15] "At the end of the Congress, 5.553 state schools had taken part in it, 9.200 municipal schools and 620 private schools. The participation of the schools included, parents, pupils and teachers", in Luiz Antonio Cunha, Educação, Estado e Democracia no Brasil [Education, State and Democracy in Brazil], São Paulo, Cortez, 1991, pp. 166-167.

[16] Ibid., p. 178.

[17] Ibid., pp. 166-171.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., p.178.

[21] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], Belo Horizonte, March, 1987.

[22] This study suggests that the "historical battle of educators" refers to the CBEs [Brazilian Educational Conferences] that started during the military regime. The military regime ended in 1985. These conferences promoted ample educational debate about the following themes: "Educational Policies" (1980); "Education: perspectives for the democratization of society." (1982); "From critique to proposals for Action." (1984); "Education in the Constituent assembly." (1986); and "the law of guidelines and basis for national education ." (1988). "The CBEs influenced the curriculum reforms in several Brazilian States that started with Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Paraná and after 1987 this was extended to several other Brazilian states: Pernambuco, Bahia, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, in Luiz Antonio Cunha, Educação, Estado e Democracia no Brasil [Education, State and Democracy in Brazil], São Paulo, Cortez, 1991, pp. 166-167.

[23] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], op. cit., p. 3.

[24] Ibid., pp. 3 -7.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], Programa de Língua Portuguesa e Literatura - 1o e 2o graus [Programme for Portuguese Language - 1st and 2nd grades], Belo Horizonte, 1987, p. 8.

[29] A. V. Kelly, The National Curriculum: A Critical Review, London, Paul Chapman, 1990, pp. 46-48.

[30] Mrs. Thatcher in her speech to the 1987 Party Conference.

[31] Stuart Maclure, <u>Education Re-formed</u>, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1992, pp. 178-179.

[32] Brian Simon, <u>Education and Social Order, 1940- 1990</u>, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1991, p. 532.

[33] Richard Aldrich, "The National Curriculum - an Historical Perspective", in Denis Lawton and Clyde Chitty (eds.), <u>The National Curriculum</u>, London, Bedford Way Papers 33, Institute of Education, University of London, 1991, p., 24.

[34] Clyde Chitty, <u>The Education System Transformed: A Guide to School Reform</u>, Manchester, Baseline books, 1992, pp. 37-38.

[35] Peter Gordon, Richard Aldrich, and Denis Dean, <u>Education and Policy in England in the Twentieth Century</u>, London, Woubourn Press, 1991, p. 315.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Denis Lawton, <u>Education, Culture and The National Curriculum</u>, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989, p. 43.

[38] A. V. Kelly, <u>The National Curriculum: A Critical Review Updated</u>, London, Paul Chapman, 1994, pp. 143-145.

[39] Bruner, J., <u>Actual Minds, Possible Words</u>, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1986, p. 125.

[40] John Elliott, "The Teacher's Role in Curriculum Development: an Unresolved Issue in English Attempts at Curriculum Reform", in <u>Curriculum Studies</u>, vol. 2, Number 1, 1994, p.49.

[41] Habermas, <u>Knowledge and Human Interests</u>, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, p. 313.

[42] Carr and Kemmis, <u>Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research</u>, London, The Falmer Press, 1993, p.135 and Gerry Ewert, "Habermas and Education: a Comprehensive Overview of the Influence of Habermas' Theory in the Educational Literature", <u>Review of Educational Research</u>, fall, vol. 61, n. 3, 1991, pp. 345-378.

[43] McCarthy (1978) uses the word "sciences" as a translation from the German *Wissenschaften*

[44] R. Roderick, <u>Habermas and the Foundations of Critical Theory</u>, New York, St. Martin's, 1986, p. 53.

[45] Adapted from Carr and Kemmis, op. cit., 1993, p. 136.

[46] Stephen Kemmis and Lindsay Fitzclarence, <u>Curriculum Theorising: Beyond Reproduction Theory</u>, Australia, Victoria, Deakin university, 1986, p. 71-72.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais. [Secratariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais] op. cit., p. 7.

[49] Idem, p. 13.

[50] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], <u>Programa de Língua Portuguesa e Literatura - 1o e 2o graus</u> [Programme of Portuguese Language - 1st and 2nd grades], op. cit., p. 13.

[51] Idem, p. 9.

[52] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais Matemática [Secretariat of Estate and Education in Minas Gerais], Programa de Matemática - 1o e 2o graus [Programme of Maths -1st and 2nd grades], Belo Horizonte, 1987, p. 2.

[53] Idem, p.2.

[54] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], Programa de Geografia - 1o e 2o graus [Programme of Geography - 1st and 2nd grades], Belo Horizonte, 1987, p. 20.

[55] Ibid., p. 23.

[56] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], Programa de História - 1o e 2o graus [Programme of History - 1st and 2nd grades], Belo Horizonte, 1987, p. 9.

[57] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], Programa de Ciências 1o e 2o graus [Programme of Science - 1st and 2nd grades] Belo Horizonte, 1987, p. 9.

[58] Shirley Grundy, Curriculum: Product or Praxis, London, The Falmer Press, 1987, p.99.

[59] Secretariat de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education in Minas Gerais], Programa de Ciências [Programme of Science], op. cit. p. 8.

[60] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education of Minas Gerais],Programa de História [Programme of History], op. cit., p. 12.

[61] Secretaria de Estado e Educação de Minas Gerais [Secretariat of State and Education of Minas Gerais] Programa de Matemática [Programme of Maths], op. cit., p. 10.

[62] "Compared with "absolute knowledge" scientific knowledge necessarily appears narrow-minded, and the only task remaining is then the critical dissolution of the boundaries of positive knowledge", in Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, p.4.

[63] Programme of Portuguese Language, op. cit., p. 8

[64] Programme of Science, op. cit., p.9.

[65] Denis Lawton (ed.), The Education Reform Act: Choice and Control, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1989, p.34.

[66] Elliott, op. cit., p. 45.

[67] Bob Moon, A Guide to the National Curriculum, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 1-5.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Michael Barber, The National Curriculum - a Study in Policy, Keele, Keele University Press, 1996, p. 13.

[70] Elliott, op. cit., pp. 52-55.

[71] Elliott, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

[72] A. V. Kelly, The National Curriculum: A Critical Review Updated, London, Paul Chapman, 1994, pp. 145-149.

[73] A. V. Kelly, op. cit., p. 147.

Chapter 5:

A HABERMASIAN CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SCHOOLS USING PIAGET:

IDEAL TYPICAL MODELS

The purpose of this chapter is to construct a model of school based on the Habermasian *Theory of Communicative Action*. To help develop this model, in pedagogical terms, it will be necessary to use some aspects of Piaget's theory as well.

The argument is that different concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* held by the professionals[a] in schools generate different kinds of schools.

To develop this argument it will be necessary to conceptualize two[b] dichotomous models of schools. This conceptualization will be possible through the construction of Weberian ideal typical models of schools.

To simplify the multiplicity of aspects found in the daily practice of schools and make them understandable for the purpose of this study before carrying out empirical exploration in schools, two ideal typical models of schools with different pedagogical and management aspects will be constructed. Some aspects in both models will be then

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[a] Teachers, headteachers and technical/pedagogical staff (when this applies).

[b] It is important to mention that these two are not the only possible kinds of schools in reality.

exaggerated. Thus the schools described in the models do not exist in reality. For the purpose of this study the model of schools in which *knowledge* is constructed, *power* is shared and *communication* is two-sided is called the *communicative* school; and the model of schools in which *knowledge* is transmitted, *power* is centralized and *communication* is one-sided is called an *informative* school.

The models are mental constructs and the dichotomy between *communicative* and *informative* schools is made to make the models clear. There is not such a clear pattern in the daily practice of schools between *informative* and *communicative* schools as many aspects of both kinds of schools are intermingled in it.

As theoretically these two types of schools are irreconcilable, the aim of contrasting those types is to improve the understanding of the characteristics of the *communicative* schools.

The chapter is organized in three sections: section I presents a brief overview of the Weberian theory of ideal typical models; section II constructs ideal typical models of *communicative* schools and *informative* schools through the categories of *Knowledge, power* and *communication*; and section III gives a detailed account of some management and pedagogical aspects of *communicative* schools and *informative* schools.

"The construction of ideal types is a methodological procedure for the purpose of concept formation." [1] An ideal type is like "a 'utopia' which has been arrived at by analytical accentuation of certain elements of reality." [2] Thus ideal types are mental constructs. [3]

These mental constructs are "ideal" not in the moral sense of "what ought to be" but in the sense of logical perfection, [4] and have nothing to do with *value-judgments*. Ideal types are useful to explore difficult concepts such as capitalism, Protestantism and socialism. Any of these concepts may appear in the "concrete world" in several different forms through and within different periods of time, so to make a concept stable, an ideal typical model is necessary.

Ideal typical models belong to the "world of ideas" but they are not a free invention of the imagination as they borrow elements from empirical reality. [5] These elements are a selection of those which best characterize the concept that is meant to be turned into an ideal type, that is, they are "typical" elements, so a pre-condition to construct an ideal type is that the elements and conditions presented in the model resemble those which prevail empirically. [6] These elements are exaggerated in the construction of the ideal typical model so that the concept it aims to exemplify can be made clear and understandable. [7]

Ideal types make the logical coherence of a concept possible. In the "concrete world" this coherence may not be possible due to the interference of context such as place, time and history. Reality[a] is so diverse that it is impossible for a concept to reproduce it, so an ideal type does not aim to be a faithful reflection of reality. On the contrary, precisely because it is a mental construct and takes us a step away from reality, the ideal type enables us to obtain a better intellectual and scientific grasp of reality; although necessarily a fragmented one due to the impossibility of embracing all different aspects of the diversity present in the concrete world.[8]

The ideal type is thus a concept which the specialist in the human sciences constructs for the purpose of research. However, the specialist must never lose sight of the limitations of the concepts with which (s)he works. It is not possible to understand more than a finite and ceaselessly changing part of the diversity of events in time. It is this fact that defines the role and methodological significance of ideal types.[9]

In short, ideal types are useful to guarantee the stability, the logical coherence the clarity and the comprehensibility of a concept. It is also possible to say that ideal types have a didactic[b] aspect.

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[a] *Reality* and *concrete world* are interchangeable throughout the chapter. It may appear that they are overused, however, this overuse occurs to make epistemological purposes clear.

[b] Didactic in the sense that in making a concept understandable and clear for the purpose of research the social scientist engages in a teaching/learning process of what the concept is about through reflection upon reality.

Thus the aim of constructing ideal typical models of *informative* schools and *communicative* schools is to make the concepts of those schools clear and understandable for the purpose of this study.

Section II

In this section, Ideal typical models of *communicative* schools and *informative* schools are constructed through three main categories: *knowledge, power* and *communication.*[a] Then a full account of pedagogical and management aspects of the schools will be given in section III.

To construct the concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* in both models of schools, the following aspects will be taken into consideration: nature, acquisition and boundaries of *knowledge*; location and maintenance of *power*; and opportunities of *communication.*

The ideas that are used in the construction of the model of *communicative* schools are based on the thinking of Habermas and Piaget. The concept of *communicative rationality* developed by Habermas and the concepts of construction of knowledge and moral development put forward by Piaget give elements for the construction of

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[a] These categories are considered to be essential ones in a school as school activities generally involve communication, relationships of power and forms of knowledge. However, they are interchangeable. This interchangeability links these categories together and forms the symbolic universe of the school itself.

the concepts of *knowledge, power* an *communication* and later on in section III for the construction of pedagogical and management aspects in this model.

The model of *communicative* schools is constructed next.

An ideal typical model of *communicative* schools

All kinds of schools have broad objectives which are linked with the type of individual the school intends to form.[10]

This study suggests that in a *communicative* school these objectives are generally cooperatively elaborated. This cooperation means that the members of the school who belong to the management staff, to the technical/pedagogical staff and teachers participate in the discussions and elaboration of these objectives.

The objectives of a *communicative* school are: a) to form a critical individual who is able to propose changes to reality through collective action when necessary; b) to prepare the individual for citizenship[a] and c) to form an individual who is able to make collective decisions guided by reflection.

Those objectives indicate the concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* which underlie the school curriculum and also shape all

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[a] Citizenship has various aspects. Three of these aspects which are considered here are: to have the right to education, the right to a dignifying job (this implies to be prepared to take up one) and the right to good health.

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Knowledge in a *communicative* school[a]

1- Nature - Knowledge is considered to be problematic and "unfinished", and not "ready-made". It is considered to have multiple facets, so the socio-historical aspect of knowledge is taken into consideration. Knowledge is considered to be problematic in the sense that it is not dealt with dogmatically. The problematization of knowledge opens opportunities for discussions.

2- Acquisition - Knowledge is constructed through action and reflection upon reality. Reality is the starting point for the construction of knowledge; knowledge is gained by action, discussions, imagination, understanding and critique. The subject is expected to have an active role in the construction of knowledge; in the long run, the understanding of this process of construction of knowledge will enable the subject to propose changes to reality.

3- Boundaries - the interdisciplinary character of knowledge is taken into consideration. There are no definite boundaries for "knowledge" of the different school subjects. The school subjects are not taught in isolation and there is an interdisciplinary integration of them. The interrelationship among the subjects is emphasized.

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[a] Habermas does not deal specifically with the teaching/learning process and schools. However, this study suggests that a model of school based on Habermas' ideas of *communicative rationality* and on Piaget's concept of construction of knowledge has the characteristics of *knowledge, power* and *communication* indicated in the model that is constructed next.

Power in a *communicative* school

1- Location - the relations of power consist of shared power relationships. Shared power relationships mean that power is not centralized in the hands of the school authorities: the headteacher and the technical pedagogical staff (when this applies).[a] There is a de-centralization of power that means *co-responsibilities for decisions*. Decisions are not the responsibility of particular individuals in isolation. They are the responsibility of all members of a school (headteacher, teachers, technical pedagogical staff, administrative staff, and pupils). Therefore the pattern of flow of power is symmetric.

2- Maintenance - threats are not used to ensure obedience to norms. Norms are constructed cooperatively in a process of argumentation. Therefore there is a cooperative co-responsibility in following them. The members of the school as a whole are responsible for the elaboration of norms so it is not necessary to use threats to guarantee that they are followed.

Communication in a *communicative* school

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[a] The schools will be considered in their management and pedagogical aspects.

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1- Opportunities - there are symmetric opportunities[a] to engage in

communicative roles. All members of school have equal opportunities to

take part in discussions and this enables all members of the school to

take part in management and pedagogical matters. Dialogical situations

are the basis on which school activities are constructed.

The ideal typical model of *communicative* schools that has been

constructed here will be developed in greater detail in section III. The

construction of the ideal typical model of *informative* schools is offered

next.

An ideal typical model of *informative* schools

The ideas that are used in the construction of the model of

informative schools are based on Habermas' concept of *instrumental*

rationality. His ideas give a basis for the propositions developed to

construct the selected aspects of *knowledge, power* and *communication*

in the model.

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[a] That is, there is an equilibrium in the opportunities to participate "*communicatively*". My interpretation is that this equilibrium means that all members of the school (teachers, headteacher, technical pedagogical staff, when this applies, and pupils) have equal opportunities to take part in *communicative* roles without restrictions made by the exercise of power, or due to the hierarchical position of the individual within the school. The symmetry of *communicative* roles is a concept that may well not happen in reality as such. However equal these opportunities may be in theory, in a real situation the participants in a *communicative* role may not take these opportunities. My interpretation is that what matters is that these opportunities are guaranteed even if they are not made use of.

It is suggested by this study that the objectives of an *informative* school are not elaborated in a cooperative manner. They are elaborated by the management staff or by the technical/pedagogical staff (when this applies) and the teachers are supposed to accept and follow them.

The objectives of an *informative* school are generally: a) to form an individual that will adapt into society so that (s)he can play his/her role in it. b) to develop the potentials of the individual and c) Instrumentalize[a] the individual so that (s)he can compete in the job market.

As has been mentioned in the model of *communicative* schools those objectives indicate the concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication* that are embedded in the school curriculum and shape most relationships in schools.

Knowledge in an *informative* school[b]

1- Nature - knowledge is considered to be unproblematic and it is reduced to technical information. The socio-historical aspect of knowledge is disregarded. Knowledge is considered to be dogmatic. Knowledge contained in textbooks is not supposed to be called into question but to be accepted.

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[a] Instrumentalize here means to give the individual as much information as possible.

[b] As has been mentioned in the model of *communicative* schools, Habermas does not deal specifically with the teaching/learning process and schools. However, this study suggests that a school based on his concept of *instrumental rationality* has the characteristics of *knowledge, power* and *communication* indicated in the model that is constructed next.

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2- Acquisition - there is an "atomization" of knowledge. Knowledge is acquired in small parts in small steps. Setting up behavioural objectives favours the "atomization" of knowledge. To deal with knowledge in small parts, important aspects of it are overlooked. Knowledge is "transmitted" by the teachers and "consumed" by the pupils. Knowledge is presented as "finished" and "ready" to be consumed. As there is no problematization of knowledge the school subjects are taken for granted. There is an attempt to transfer knowledge from one person to another. It is believed that knowledge can be transferred this way.

4- Boundaries - the interdisciplinary aspect of knowledge is overlooked. School subjects are seen as separate with definite boundaries. Each subject has a well defined field of knowledge that characterizes it.

Power in an *informative* school

1- Location - the relations of power are asymmetric.[a] There is a centralization of power in the hands of the headteacher for the management of the school. There is also a centralization of power in the

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[a] There is not an equilibrium in the power relationships, some members of the school of the have more power than others as far as decisions are concerned. In short, power is not equally distributed; they are unilateral power relationships.

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hands of the teacher for the management of the classroom. Decisions once made are enforced top-down.

2- Maintenance - to ensure obedience to norms threats are frequently used[a] as a means of control. Norms are elaborated either by the headteacher or the technical pedagogical staff and they are to be followed by all.

Communication in an *informative* school

1- Opportunities - the opportunities to engage in communicative roles are asymmetric.[b] Communication is one-sided. This situation leads to monological situations where equal opportunities to engage in communicative roles are denied. Only some members of the school are granted the opportunity to engage in communicative roles.

To provide a better understanding of the models that were constructed in this section, a detailed account of some pedagogical aspects of *communicative* schools and *informative* schools will be given in section III. These aspects involve teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges. The relationship between pedagogical aspects and management aspects of a *communicative*

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[a] It means that threats are part of the school routine. The obedience to regulations is guaranteed by the use of threats.

[b] There is not an equilibrium in the opportunities to take part in *communicative* roles. Some members of the school are guaranteed more opportunities to participate "*communicatively*" mainly because of their hierarchical position.

school and an *informative* school will also be constructed in the next section.

Section III

Some pedagogical aspects in *communicative* schools

Taking into account the main ideas of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action and some aspects of Piaget's theory, this study gives indications of what is a pedagogy based on both theories singling out the aspects of construction of knowledge and moral development in Piaget's theory.

This study suggests that in a classroom in a *communicative* school all the pupils and the teacher are responsible for the construction of norms for classroom functioning. The process of construction of norms involves the participation of all in discussions for this purpose.

The teacher is not seen as a coercive external figure, whose wishes and desires should be fulfilled. (S)he does not act in an authoritative manner. As a member of the group who plays the role either of a challenger or of a mediator between the pupil's cognitive capacities and moral development and the process of reaching a decentered understanding of the world. In order to construct a stimulating context

where this is possible the teacher and school authorities themselves have a clear demarcation between the inner, outer, and social world.

It is this reference system of three worlds that communicative actors make the basis of their efforts to reach understanding. Agreement in the communicative practice of everyday life rests simultaneously on intersubjectively shared propositional knowledge, on normative accord, and on mutual trust.[11] Yet in cases of disagreement or persistent problematization, interactive competent actors are able to differentiate and discern something that confronts them, whether it is something objective, something normative or something subjective. This means that the social actors have a decentered understanding of the world which includes complete *reversibility* of the perspectives from which the participants produce their arguments; *universality*, understood as the inclusion of all concerned in the discursive argumentation; and the *reciprocity* of equal recognition of the claims of each participant by all others.[12]

In those situations all have equal opportunities to engage in *communicative* roles where what prevails is the "unforced force of the better argument".[13] This leads to shared responsibilities and shared power relationships. It is also suggested that learning situations are based on the pupils' reality.[a] That reality is the starting point for the

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[a] Reality here means the pupils' everyday life within its social context.

construction of knowledge. The pupils have an active role in this construction and this process involves communication, discussion, action and reflection.

In the process of construction of knowledge, according to Piaget, the children's conceptions of the world are taken into consideration as a starting point for them to get to scientific knowledge. Their "fragmentary" conceptions about the concrete world that surrounds them are not considered wrong conceptions that should be corrected but as a genuine starting point to make them act and reflect upon it.[14]

Habermas considers scientific knowledge to be problematic, that is, "unfinished" and the socio-historical aspect of it is taken into consideration. Scientific knowledge here means that it is different from 'common sense' and it is not dogmatic.[15]

Scientific knowledge is different from 'common sense' because knowledge to be considered scientific has to go beyond empirical observation.[16] Bachelard mentions that there is a rupture between 'common sense' and scientific knowledge.[17] Contemporary science makes room for discussions. According to Bachelard, empiricism is the philosophy that serves 'common sense'. Rationalism is linked to science and presupposes a dialectical activity which imposes a constant extension of methods.[18]

The 'scientific attitude' is continuously led by invention and reflection.[19] Precisely different from 'common sense', constructed 'scientific knowledge' is built up by the stimulation of new investigations that surpasses the field of old ones.[20] Transmitted 'scientific knowledge' is always rehearsed and controlled. Dogmatism does not contribute to scientific advances. On the contrary it prevents science from advancing. It is necessary to have a 'potential doubt' that is different from 'Cartesian doubt'. 'Potential doubt' is not eliminated by the first successful investigation. 'Potential doubt' means that it is necessary to think that the final answer has not been reached. On the contrary there is always room for further investigations. Thus 'potential doubt' can be re-newed, re-born within each new investigation.[21]

This study argues that primary school methods which try to maintain the tradition of "elementary science" are criticizable[22] as well as any methods that encourage non-diversity of thinking. By oversimplifying scientific knowledge schools may lead pupils to misconceptions.[23] Also, by not giving room for diversity of thinking, schools enforce unenlightened conformism, lead to deterioration of intellectual capabilities and destroy one of the most precious gift of the young - their tremendous power of imagination.[24]

This study suggests that in a classroom in *communicative* schools the teacher considers it to be one of his/her tasks to make the pupils

realize that scientific knowledge is not immutable. In this way (s)he encourages the pupils to express their own thinking about the world. There is stimulation for research. This is a way of encouraging creativity as pupils believe they can contribute to the changing of paradigms of science in the future. Therefore the provisional aspect of scientific knowledge[25] is emphasized in *communicative* schools as it is considered relative, dependent on the predominant paradigm in a scientific field at the time. Some paradigms of science are so dominant that they are uncritically accepted as true until 'scientific revolutions' create a new orthodoxy.[26]

There is no neutral or objective standpoint in science and therefore no rational way in which one paradigm can be chosen over another. Instead, scientific knowledge is claimed to be the result of a range of sociological factors working to promote politically convenient notions of how nature operates.[27]

Habermas considers that science and technology also take on the role of an ideology.[28] This 'ideology' detaches society self-understanding from the frame of reference of *communicative* action and from the concepts of symbolic interaction and replace it with a scientific model. This becomes a background ideology that penetrates into the consciousness of the depoliticized mass of the population where it can take on legitimating power. This is how the depoliticization of the

masses can be made plausible to them (the masses). The politicization of the masses is replaced by 'science and technology' as ideology in a capitalist order, that is science and technology fulfills the vital need for legitimation of power.[29]

My interpretation of Habermas' view of science and technology is that scientific truths are dependent on the socio-historical context of the time. This study suggests that a teacher in a *communicative* school takes the socio-historical aspect of knowledge into consideration and its provisional aspect too by making pupils realize that there is no neutrality in science and that relationships of domination can also be disclosed in this field .

It is argued that this way of viewing science leads to particular ways of dealing with school subjects and to specific pedagogical practices. To develop this argument this study suggests certain ways of dealing with some school subjects. These ways of dealing with school subjects helps to clarify some pedagogical aspects put forward in the model of *communicative* schools.

It is suggested that in a classroom in a *communicative* school when the teacher deals with History, the historical facts are dealt with taking into consideration the society of the time it occurred and the socio-historical conditions which led to them. It is emphasized that man makes history and the course of history could have been changed if

something different had happened. History is not seen as a collection of facts, dates and heroes to be memorized, but it is considered to be a subject that requires reflection. Two aspects deserve reflection upon: the side of the defeated together with the consequences had the defeated been heroes and the political interests of the time that contributed to consider such and such heroes. In short, history is considered to be a "debatable" subject where a historical fact can be seen from various angles taking into account the socio-political interests of the time rather than a static subject where facts have to be accepted and memorized.

Geography is not considered to be a collection of geographic accidents, rivers, mountains, climate, vegetation, places and capital cities. Instead, all the geographical aspects are dealt with having in mind the people who live there. This suggests an integration between landscape and people. A river is not important because it is the longest, goes across such and such countries, states or towns but its importance is mentioned in relation to the people who live near it. More important than to know the places where there is drought in the world is to know what the consequences of this natural disaster to people's lives are.

A learning situation does not necessarily mean that a pupil will learn one subject at a time but some aspects of different subjects that a

learning situation may involve. Reality[a] is the "raw material" for children's learning and it is interdisciplinary and cannot be split into small parts. For example, a Biology teacher does not restrict himself/herself to teach the phenomena of physical life because this phenomena cannot be fully understood out of the socio-historical, cultural and political context.[30]

A foreign language teacher does not restrict her/his subject only to grammatical facts but takes into consideration the geographic and cultural aspects of the language. A language has no meaning detached from the people who originally speak it.

The teacher is a challenger and a collaborator who coordinates activities which help pupils overcome their "fragmentary" hypothesis about the world. The classroom is an instigating laboratory that requires constant link between life and what is being learned, researched or discovered.

The teacher/pupil relationship is based on the testing of hypotheses constructed by the pupils and teacher together. The teacher and the pupils confront the systematized knowledge with empirical reality and call into question to what extent this "knowledge" is useful to interpret reality, or to propose changes to it. In this way, the concrete world is the starting point for the construction of knowledge but once

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[a] *Reality* here means the world, the environment.

knowledge is systematized it can be used to re-interpret reality so that it can be understood and/or changed. This systematized knowledge is an instrument for this re-interpretation or proposal for changes.

This teaching/learning process requires constant discussions among pupils and between teacher and pupils because communication mediates all this process. There is an *intercommunicative* teaching style. Active experiment and discussions are always present in the classroom. Discussions are essential for the whole teaching/learning process. A lesson can be described as a meeting of people who are interested in the construction of knowledge so that they can improve their understanding and interpretation of the world. This attitude towards learning improves their social role in the form of participation because it enables them to propose changes to reality mainly because they are able to disclose relationships of domination in society and try to overcome them through collective action.

This study also suggests that in a *communicative* school the teaching/learning process is not child-centered. There is no prioritization of any components involved in the teaching/learning situation - teacher, pupil, method, didactic aids and contents of the subject. This means that learning is not guaranteed if we concentrate only on one of the

components of the teaching/learning situation.[a] All these components of

a learning situation interact in a dialectic relationship forming a whole

where none of the parts are to be prioritized. Diagram one represents

the relationship among the components of the teaching/learning

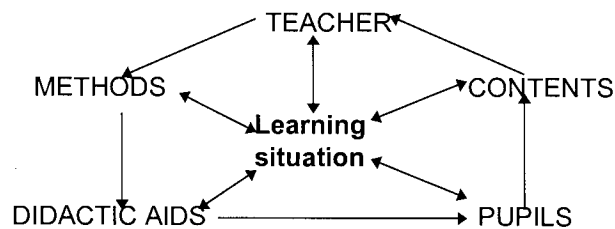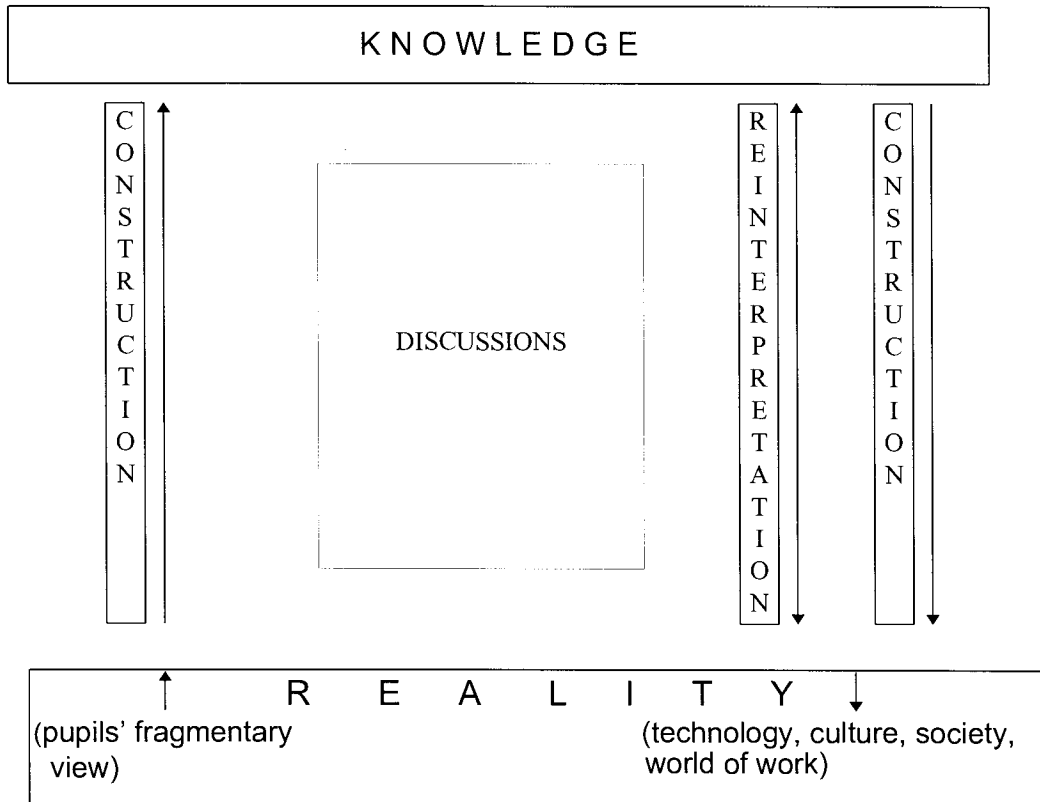situation in a communicative school.

Diagram 1

Diagram Two illustrates the dialectic process of the

teaching/learning situation, that is, a dialogical process of construction

of knowledge suggested in this section. Reality is the starting point for

the construction of knowledge. Knowledge is then systematized and

used to re-interpret and to contribute to the multiple aspects of reality

(technology, society, culture and the world of work). This re-

interpretation of reality may also lead to a re-interpretation of knowledge

in a dialectical process and it may involve proposals for change.

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[a] In certain periods of time pedagogy seems to have prioritized different components in the teaching /learning situation. This prioritization intended to guarantee that learning would take place.

Diagram 2

Diagram 2: KNOWLEDGE. Two vertical "CONSTRUCTION" columns on the left and right, "DISCUSSIONS" box in the centre, a "REINTERPRETATION" column, all above REALITY (pupils' fragmentary view) and (technology, culture, society, world of work).

This constructivist[a] perspective of learning also favours argumentation processes that lead to reflection upon routinized practices in schools. The school's social group do not repeat those practices just because they are considered to be 'traditional' practices. In a process of argumentation the practices are called into question and their worthiness is verified.

The construction of the relationship between management and pedagogical aspects in schools is offered next.

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[a] Habermas uses the phrase "constructivist concept of learning" when he refers to Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories in <u>Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action</u>, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992, p. 33.

The relationship between management and pedagogical aspects in a *communicative* school

This study suggests that the relationship between the headteacher and the teachers is one of mutuality.[a] The headteacher and the teachers form a group for discussions. This group discusses all the matters concerned with the school: from administrative matters to pedagogical matters. All the members of the group are invited to participate in discussions. All school members are supposed to have equal opportunities to play *communicative* roles in these discussions so that decisions are taken without coercion of any kind, that is, there is no pressure made by the school authorities in the management staff. Decisions are taken in a group free from coercion and so all are co-responsible for them. As the decisions are taken with the participation of all school members, the measures taken to ensure decisions are carried out involve the effort of all concerned.

The teachers arrange meetings among themselves to discuss pedagogical matters concerning the curriculum. These meetings have the aim to re-think practice based on pupils' responses to the teaching/learning process. The teachers have a general view of the

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[a] Mutuality here means reciprocity - equal in terms of power of decision administrative decisions and pedagogical decisions. (This word is widely used by Paulo Freire, but as it is essential for this study it is used here with a slight different meaning from that found in Paulo Freire's work).

whole school. The teachers who deal with initial school years know what is going on in final years and vice-versa so that they can understand what kind of pupils they are going to have and the difficulties they may find and how to cope with them.

Some pedagogical aspects in an *informative* school

Habermas' concept of *instrumental rationality* is taken into consideration in the construction of pedagogical aspects in an *informative* school.

This study suggests that in a classroom in an *informative* school the teacher is responsible for the elaboration of the norms for classroom functioning and the pupils are supposed to follow them strictly.

The learning situations are mainly based on the information contained in text books. The pupils absorb in small steps the knowledge that has been selected for them. Memorization is the main strategy for learning. Knowledge is "transmitted" and the pupils "consume" it. The pupils have a passive role in the learning situations and "participation" in the learning situation is restricted to either repeating information, reading aloud or answering questions. There is a *monocommunicative* teaching style.

There is a very sharp division of school subjects. Each subject is to be learned at a time. The acquisition of "small parts of knowledge" is considered important for efficient learning outcomes.
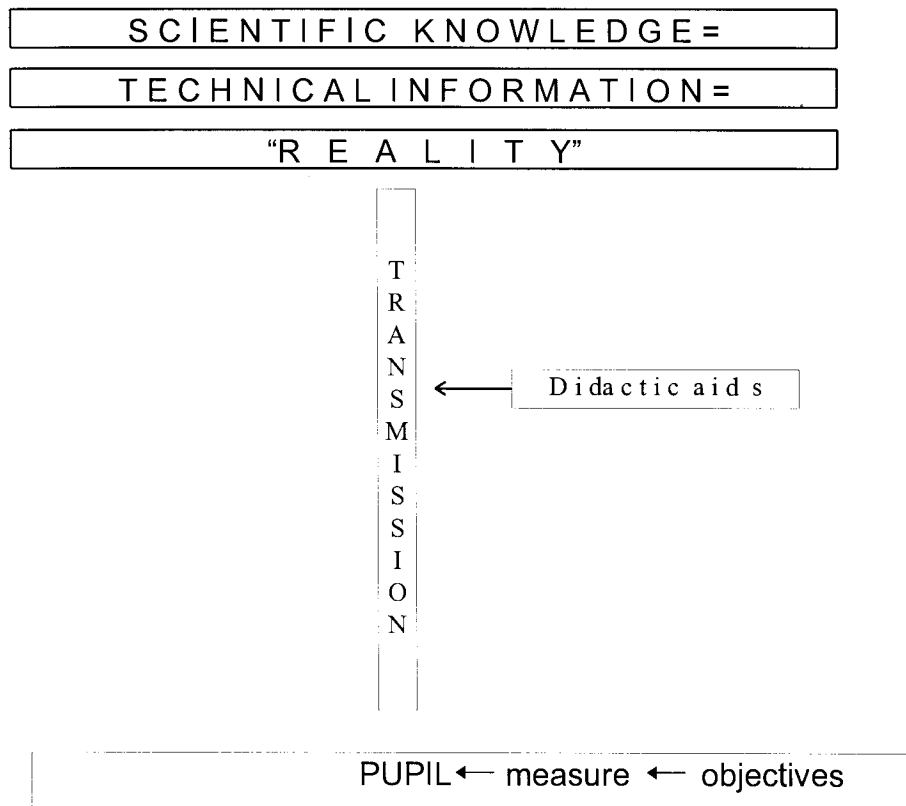
The teacher is responsible for the arrangement of the best combination of didactic aids so that learning is guaranteed. If the pupils fail to learn it is supposed to be the teacher's fault. In this situation the teacher will be blamed for not having arranged the ideal "means" to reach the desirable learning outcomes. These ends are set up in terms of behavioural objectives. These objectives are supposed to be the "ends" but they refer to very immediate "acquisitions".

This study also suggests that knowledge is considered to be "unproblematic" in an informative school as it is identical with technical information. The teacher maintains the tradition of "easy science" and it makes the pupils believe in the immutability of knowledge. There is an oversimplification of knowledge in an attempt to make it easier for the pupils to "consume" it. The pupil is not the starting point but the "reaching" point and as such the pupils' learning is measured by establishing whether the objectives which were set were reached or not. The pupils are to be measured against the pre-determined objectives. This is considered to be effective teaching/learning process.

Diagram three illustrates the unilateral process of acquiring knowledge in an *informative* school. One of the main purposes to

transmit knowledge to the pupils is to have the pupils tested so that the teacher gets to know how much knowledge was absorbed by the pupils. Special emphasis is given to the didactic aids in the teaching/learning process.

Diagram 3

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      S C I E N T I F I C   K N O W L E D G E =  │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│      T E C H N I C A L   I N F O R M A T I O N = │
├──────────────────────────────────────────────┤
│              "R   E   A   L   I   T   Y"         │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────┘

              T
              R
              A
              N
              S   ◄──────   Didactic aids
              M
              I
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              N


        PUPIL ◄── measure ◄── objectives
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The relationship between management and pedagogical aspects in an informative school

This study suggests that the headteacher elaborates and delivers norms for school functioning to the teachers who are supposed to follow them. Any decisions about the curriculum and the teaching/learning

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situations are made by the technical/pedagogical staff (when it applies) either within the school or outside and either in the Departments of Education or Secretariats of Education. Communication is one-sided. The power of decisions is centralized in the hands of the headteacher. The power to make decisions is asymmetric.

The teachers are supposed to follow syllabuses and strict schedules. They are not considered to be capable of "thinking by themselves". They need to be guided. The teachers' power of decisions over pedagogical matters is restricted to a minimum.

It is also suggested that in an informative school the teachers have a tendency to disregard pupils' social background. This means that they do not consider the individual as part of the complex economic-socio-historical relationships in society.

Conclusion

The way the characteristics of both *communicative* and *informative* schools were constructed and presented in this chapter suggests that they do not exist in reality. As has been mentioned earlier in this chapter these characteristics have been exaggerated to make the models clearer. Thus the schools - *communicative* and *informative* - are ideal types.

Different patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication* in schools were presented in those models. Those patterns set different characteristics of school practices through which two different ideal types of *symbolic universe* of schools were also constructed:

In *communicative* schools, decisions, elaboration of norms and curriculum planning are collective matters and all the professionals in schools are responsible for their elaboration. Curriculum practice is flexible, takes into account the pupils' social reality and the construction of knowledge. Discussions, and reflection that leads to critique are characteristics of teaching and leadership styles. The belief that interaction between teacher and pupils and among pupils is essential for the construction of knowledge guides teaching practices. The teachers' valuation placed on schooling indicates that all pupils' can learn regardless their social background.

In *informative* schools, decisions, elaboration of norms and curriculum planning are not collective matters. Curriculum practice follows a rigid plan, the pupils' social reality is not taken into consideration and the transmission and memorization of knowledge are paramount. Uneven distribution of power is a characteristic of teaching and leadership styles. The belief that quietness and concentration are the most important aspects of the learning process guides teaching

practices. The teachers' valuation on schooling indicates that pupils' learning is heavily dependent on pupils' social background.

In Chapter Six the models constructed in this Chapter are used for the analysis of the data collected in the empirical exploration of primary schools in England and in Brazil. In this investigation, some characteristics of the symbolic universe of those schools are pinpointed and elements for the understanding of the reasons why schools normally offer resistance to proposals for curriculum change are disclosed.

NOTES

[1] Thomas Burger, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation - History, Laws and Ideal Types, Durham, Duke University Press, 1976, p. 159.

[2] Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, New York, The Free Press, 1969, pp. 89-90. Julien Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber, London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970, pp. 62-63.

[3] Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, New York, The Free Press, 1969, p.100.

[4] Ibid., pp. 91-92, 98-99.

[5] Julien Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber, London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1970, pp. 59-60.

In Brazil there was a spiral of agreements between MEC [Brazilian Ministry of Education] and USAID (United States Agency for International Development). J.O. Arapiraca, A USAID e a Educação Brasileira [USAID and Brazilian Education], São Paulo, Cortez Editora, 1982, pp. 123-162 mentions that the first agreement that was signed in 1965 was due to end in 1967 but it led to other agreements in a spiral until 1976. These agreements influenced legislation for primary and secondary education (e.g. law 5692/71) and the university reform in 1968. Otaísa Romanelli, A História da Educação no Brasil - (1930/1973), Petrópolis, Vozes, 1978, p. 212, mentions that the first agreement between MEC and USAID was signed in 1964. This agreement dealt specifically with primary education. The influence those agreements had on primary school practices gave elements for the construction of the ideal typical model of *informative* schools together with "the new right coalition ideas in England that emerged as a major political force that were translated into the educational policies of successive British governments between 1979-1993." Wilfred Carr and Anthony Hartnet, Education and the Struggle for Democracy, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1996, pp. 150-182.

The educational reforms in various Brazilian States in the 1980s that had the aim of improving educational standards by introducing democratic practices in schools, Luiz A.

Cunha, Educação, Estado e Democracia no Brasil [Education, State and Democracy in Brazil], São Paulo, Cortez, 1991, pp. 22-168, provided elements for the construction of the ideal typical model of *communicative* schools together with the educational policy and practice in England by the 1960s and the many characteristics of a modernized educational system in the mid 1970s: comprehensive schools, more open to higher education and more progressive forms of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Wilfred Carr and Anthony Hartnet, Education and the Struggle for Democracy, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1996, pp. 92-121.

[6] Thomas Burger, Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation - History, Laws and Ideal Types, Durham, Duke University, 1976, pp. 155 - 179. Julien Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber, London, Allen Lane the Penguin Books Press, 1970, pp. 62-63.

[7] Max Weber, The Methodology of Social Sciences, London, The Free Press, 1969, p. 90.

[8] Julien Freund, The Sociology of Max Weber, London, The Penguin Press, 1970, pp., 60-72.

[9] Ibid., p. 72.

[10] Ralph Tyler, Princípios Básicos de Currículo e Ensino [Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction], Rio de Janeiro, Globo, 1981, pp. 1- 56.

[11] Ibid., p. 136.

[12] Ibid., pp. 122-137.

[13] Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action - Reason and the Rationalization of Society, vol 1, London, Heinemann, 1984, p.375. The *better* argument has its own force that makes it able to be agreed upon by all participants without any external pressure for it to be accepted. The *better* argument according to Habermas is one which fulfills all validity claims: comprehensibility, truth, sincerity and normative rightness.

[14] Idem, Knowledge and Human Interests, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, pp. 8-10.

[15] "Compared to 'absolute knowledge' scientific knowledge necessarily appears narrow minded, and the only task remaining is then the critical dissolution of the boundaries of positive knowledge", Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, pp. 4-5.

[16] "Objectivism deludes the sciences with the image of a self-subsistent world of facts structured in a lawlike manner; it thus conceals the a priori constitution of these facts," Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, pp. 68-69.

[17] Gaston Bachelard, "O Conhecimento Comum e o Conhecimento Científico", ["Common Sense and Scientific Knowledge"], Gaston Bachelard, O Materialismo Racional, [Rational Materialism], Lisboa, Edições 70, 1990, pp. 241-243.

[18] Ibid., pp. 241 - 260.

[19] Idem, "O Materialismo Composto" ["Complex Materialism"], O Materialismo Racional, [Rational Materialism], Lisboa, Edições 70, 1990, pp. 146-148.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 247.

[23] Paul Feyerabend, Against Method: An Outline of an Anarchist Theory of Knowledge, London, NLB, 1975, pp. 44-45.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Mary Hesse, "Defense of objectivity", Proceedings of Aristotelian Society, 1972, pp. 4ff quoted in J. Habermas op. cit, p.109: "philosophers such as Kuhn and Feyerabend have pointed out the provisional aspect of scientific knowledge."

[26] Thomas Kuhn, <u>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</u>, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970, pp. 144-159.

[27] Feyerabend, op. cit., pp. 49 - 53.

[28] Habermas, "Technology and Science as Ideology", <u>Toward a Rational Society</u>, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1989, pp. 81-90.

[29] Ibid., pp. 90-105.

[30] Paulo Freire, <u>Pedagogia da Esperança</u>, [<u>Pedagogy of Hope</u>], Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1992, pp. 78-79.

Chapter 6:

THE SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND

BRAZIL

The headteacher of one of the schools where this study took place expressed the importance of communication in the teaching/learning process as follows:

"Communication is very important. It is what the
teaching/learning process is about, isn't it?"

However, communication can be difficult:

In a year 5 class[a]

Teacher: (talking about shapes and angles). Look, this is a *right* angle. A *right* angle.
Pupil: Miss, Is there a *left* angle?
Teacher: No. (to the class) You have to be able to recognise a *right* angle......

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse the findings

of the investigation that was carried out in eight primary schools in

England and Brazil. The investigation concentrated on the *symbolic*

universe [b] of those schools. The general argument of this chapter is that

the different patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication* in

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[a] This class was observed between May and June 1995 in Reading, England.

[b] It is convenient to point out at this stage that the *symbolic universe* of the schools is formed by teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges as was mentioned in Chapter Two.

schools may hinder or favour the rationalization of their *symbolic universe.*

As was mentioned elsewhere in this study the *symbolic universe* of schools is considered to be an integrated part of the *lifeworld.*[a] It was argued in Chapter Two that the patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication*[b] in schools disclose their *symbolic universe* and if it is rationalized.[c] By investigating management and pedagogical aspects in the schools and the classrooms this study identified those patterns. They were present in interpersonal relationships, teaching practices and linguistic exchanges.

The study concentrated on Brazilian state primary schools and as a counterpoint primary schools in England were also investigated. Four schools in Brazil, more specifically in the town of Viçosa (Minas Gerais) and four schools in Reading (England) were investigated. The selection of the schools followed socio-economic criteria, that is, the intake of the schools was characterized by of pupils from low-income families in both towns. An average of seventy per cent of the pupils who attended those schools were from low-income families. The four schools in Reading were

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[a] *Lifeworld* includes society, culture and personality.

[b] Ideal types of patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication* were constructed in Chapter 2.

[c] The rationalization of the *symbolic universe* includes participation, discussions, reflection and collective actions. It means that the members of school are able to reflect upon their practices through discussion, criticise and justify their practices, and change them if necessary.

located in an industrial area and they had a percentage of sixty to seventy -five per cent free school dinners. The four schools in Brazil were located in peripheral areas of Viçosa and seventy to eighty per cent of their pupils belonged to families that had an average income of two minimum wages a month.[a]

Triangulation[1] was used in the field by using different data-collection techniques - interviews and observations[b] - to contribute to the validity of the data. The triangulation in the data analysis consisted of comparing the perspectives of people with different points of views - teachers, headteachers, technical/pedagogical staff (when this applies) and the pupils; and comparing interview data and observational data.

The validity of the data used to illustrate points made in this chapter was ensured by an analytic inductive strategy of data analysis. Each interview was analyzed on its own and as part of a larger context of interviews. Also, each interview was cross-checked with its corresponding observation and with other interviews.

After those procedures, contradictions between discourse and practice emerged and also contradictions and disagreement among interviewees. These contradictions and disagreements are shown in the chapter.

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[a] About 200 U.S. dollars.

[b] All the classes in each school were observed over a period of eight days and an average of three teachers' meetings for curriculum planning were observed in the schools where these meetings took place.

The ideal typical models constructed in Chapter Five and the Habermasian and the Piagetian theories were taken into consideration for the data analysis.

Seven categories emerged from the data analysis: decision-making, elaboration of norms, teaching styles, leadership styles, curriculum matters (curriculum planning and curriculum practice), beliefs about the teaching /learning process and values about schooling.

The analysis of the information collected was integrated to identify the main analytic objective of this study - the *symbolic universe* of the schools.

The chapter is organized as follows: part I constructs an analysis of the four schools where this study took place in England; part II constructs an analysis of the three schools in Brazil; part III constructs an analysis of a school in Brazil because it has peculiar characteristics that make it different from the other schools; and part IV offers a conclusion for the chapter.

PART I

ENGLAND[a]

Section I

SOME MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

The general argument of this section is that imposition of decisions and norms hinders the rationalization of the *symbolic universe* of schools.

1- Schools

<u>Decision-making and elaboration of norms</u>

By investigating the processes of administrative decision-making and of elaboration of norms for school functioning this study identified patterns of flow of power within the schools where this study took place and through this it was also possible to identify leadership styles.

It was gathered from the teachers' and headteachers' answers to the interviews that in all the schools in Reading where this study took place, only some teachers got involved in the processes of administrative decision-making and of elaboration of norms for schools functioning.

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[a] It is important to mention that the study carried out in Reading, England had the purpose to try to sort out any problems of meaning that might arise in the questions in the interviews and in the observation guidelines. However the data collected was used to make a comparison between the primary schools in England and in Brazil - the focus of this study.

The teachers who got involved in the process of administrative decision-making and in the process of elaboration of norms were the headteacher, the deputy-head(s) and one or two senior teachers.[a]

When asked how important they considered it to be to consult teachers to help in the solution of administrative problems the headteachers said:

> "Not so important. I do have a secretary who actually has had training and I do have a finance officer who happens also to be a teacher so we have a small finance committee that works together with the governors. And the governors have a small finance group so we are able to give each other support." (Mrs M., W.P.I.S)

> "I say fairly important. There is a senior management team in the school, two deputy heads, a senior teacher and me. We meet and discuss about important issues. There is a group of special needs, whole staff meetings, curriculum group, year group meetings. There are various and different levels of meetings." (Mr I., W.P.J.S)

> "Well, because I think I run a democratic school the teachers can voice their opinions but there are issues that are strictly administrative. In this case I don't see it as important." (Mrs H., G.P.I.S)
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> .

Mrs H mentioned the participation of teachers as a possibility in administrative decisions but not necessarily as an everyday practice incorporated in school management when she said that the teachers "can voice their opinions".

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[a] This is what the headteachers called 'the management team'.

Mrs M acknowledged that it was not so important to involve teachers in administrative decisions and stressed that administrative matters are separated from pedagogical matters in her school.

Mr I said that it was fairly important to have the teachers' participation but he also acknowledged that the school had a management team and other groups that met within the school and apparently each group had its own tasks.

The evidence shows that the headteachers did not consider the involvement of teachers to be important in administrative decisions.[a]

My interpretation is that this way of making administrative decisions caused a separation between administrative matters and pedagogical matters in the schools where this study took place.

Most teachers in the four schools acknowledged that they rarely took part in decisions of administrative issues. One of the teachers, when asked how often she participated in administrative meetings, answered:

> "Never, I suppose. The management team is for administrative decisions. Teachers generally do not get involved in this process." (Mrs H., W.P.J.S)

The teacher acknowledged the restricted involvement of teachers in administrative decisions and suggested that administrative tasks were not for teachers.

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[a] The most frequent administrative themes that emerged from the observations of at least three senior management team meetings in each school were: preservation and decoration of the school building, budgets and acquisition of equipment. These themes were frequently the focus of discussions in these meetings.

The process of elaboration of norms for school functioning was also investigated in all schools where this study took place.

The headteachers' answers to the interviews showed that existing norms in the schools were taken for granted and were supposed to be followed by both teachers and children. There was evidence that the headteachers gave a lead in the establishment of these rules.

When asked how important they considered it to be to give a lead in the establishment of school rules the headteachers answered in this way:

"I think it is very important to give a lead in the establishment school rules. When I say I am the leader in the school rules I don't mean I dictate them. The teachers can have a say but I sort of make clear that there are some points that are absolutely essential." (Mr. I, W.P.J.S)

"Extremely important to give a lead. I would not like to be taken as meaning that I dictate because once again if people are not comfortable about what they are being asked to deliver they don't deliver it well." (Mrs S. G.P.I.S)

"Very important." (Mrs M., W.P.I.S)

"I say very important. As a headteacher I am responsible for the school functioning and so I have to give a lead in these norms." (Mr H., J.F.J.S)

The evidence from the interviews shows that all the headteachers acknowledged the importance of giving a lead in the establishment of rules. However, they did not want to be seen as dictators. Although one of

the headteachers mentioned that the "teachers can have a say", this suggests that there was a possibility for the teachers to contribute to the elaboration of school norms. However, this contribution for the elaboration of norms was considered to be more of an individual and occasional nature than a collective frequent one.

The headteacher of the G.P.I.S said that the teachers had to be comfortable with the norms they were going to deliver. This implied that the teachers had to accept and understand the rules that were elaborated by the headteacher. There was no indication that rules were constructed in a collective process[a] where all members of schools were involved.

What emerged from the empirical investigation was that power relationships tended to be centralized in the four schools where this study took place. Norms and administrative decisions came from top to bottom. The management team and the headteacher gave a clear lead in administrative decisions and in the elaboration of norms. The way decisions were taken and norms were elaborated in those schools disclosed a pattern of imposition[b] of decisions and norms.

My conclusion is that in the schools where this study took place it was taken for granted that administrative matters were for the

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[a] 'Collective process' here means consultation of teachers, technical pedagogical staff (when this applies), parents and pupils

[b] 'Imposition of decisions and norms' means that they were not elaborated by teachers, headteachers, technical pedagogical staff and pupils and parents. The were elaborated either by the headteacher or by the technical pedagogical staff (when this applies).

management team; the teachers in general did not 'interfere' in these matters. Also, there was no indication that teachers got involved in a collective process for the elaboration of norms for schools functioning. The headteachers gave a lead in the elaboration of those norms.

Leadership style

The flow of communication promoted by the headteachers that emerged from the empirical investigation in all four schools where this study took place occurred within a pattern of one-sided communication.[a]

Decisions were taken by the management team and the headteacher gave a clear lead in the elaboration of norms. Following from this the leadership style can be characterized as centralized.

My conclusion is that in all four schools where this study took place the headteachers' approach to the management of the school did not favour the rationalization of the *symbolic universe* of those schools.

2- Classrooms

Decision-making and elaboration of norms

Two main themes linked to decision-making emerged empirically from the classroom observations: performance of routine tasks in the

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[a] One sided communication here means that all members of school did not have opportunities to engage in discussions for administrative decision-making and elaboration of norms of school functioning.

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classroom and the distribution of the pupils in the physical environment of the classroom.

The most frequent routine tasks which were noticed were: to take the register away, to distribute food (biscuits and glasses of milk) and to search for something outside the classroom (tape recorder, cleaning cloth and etc.). These themes were the most frequent issues for decision-making in the classrooms.

It was observed in all the classrooms that most of the time the children were not allowed to decide where they wanted to sit or with whom they would like to work. Also they were not allowed to choose a pupil to perform routine tasks in and out of the classroom.

When asked how often they let their pupils choose their own seats the teachers said:

> "Rarely because sometimes they do. Occasionally they do, it is important that sometimes they do as long as what they are doing doesn't need much concentration and it is important to develop friendship in the classroom. So it is rarely. Concentration is the most important thing. Some children find concentration very difficult. They need a lot of help in this area. Often if they are sitting next to a friend they can be distracted. They tend to sit in specific seats more for behaviour concerns than anything." (Mrs H., W.P.J.S)

> "They always choose their seats unless, unless, the badly behaved ones get moved around or I choose their seat but mostly they can sit where they like normally within a little group at a table. I might suggest an area of the classroom or that particular table but they can sit wherever they wish." (Mrs L., W.P.I.S)

"All the time. Having said that I usually like the children who are writing to go over there (central table) ....If I have a naughty person I do occasionally move this person. If that is necessary I do put this person either at a table on his own or sitting near me but they will still do the same sort of work as their group is doing." (Mrs C., W.P.I.S)

"I group my pupils according to their maths abilities. This is my slowest group (pointing to the group). That is my fastest group (pointing to the group). The badly behaved ones sit on their own facing that wall. I have put their names on the wall in front of their seats so that I don't have to tell them everyday. Apart from that they can choose their seats." (Mrs B., G. P. I .S)

Teacher H's answer suggested that her pupils were not supposed to sit near a friend because conversation might distract them. Also she acknowledged that the pupils could only choose their seats when they were doing some work that did not require much concentration. Her main criterion for choosing pupils' seats was behaviour. However, it was observed in her classes that the children did not have the opportunity to decide where they would like to sit and the badly behaved ones always worked on their own.

Although teacher L said that her pupils always chose their seats she acknowledged that she chose the seats for the badly behaved ones. She added that she might suggest an area of the classroom or a particular table for the others. It was observed in all her classes that she

indicated where each group would sit and the badly behaved ones sat on their own.

Teacher C also answered that her pupils could choose their seats all the time. However, she also acknowledged that she chose the seats for the naughty pupils and the children who were writing. It was observed in her classroom that the naughty pupils always sat on their own near her and she chose the other pupils' seats not only when they were writing but also when they were doing other activities.

Teacher B acknowledged that she grouped her pupils according to maths abilities and according to their behaviour. It was observed in her classroom that the badly behaved ones usually sat on their own, as was observed in her classroom, even when they were doing drawing or another practical activity.

It was observed in the classrooms that the children were grouped according to their level in English language as well. In year 5 and 6 classes all the classes were mixed and the children were grouped according to their ability in English. In year 1 and 2 classes the children were grouped according to their ability in English within the class.

There was a contradiction between what most teachers said in the interviews and what actually happened in the classrooms. Although most of them acknowledged allowing their pupils to choose their seats at least

sometimes, the classroom observations revealed that the children were not given the opportunity of choosing their own seats.

From the classroom observations it was gathered that three main criteria were used by the teachers to choose pupils' seats: behaviour, maths abilities and English language level. However, behaviour was an outstanding criterion because the pupils considered to have *behaviour problems*[a] were more likely to sit on their own when they were doing any subject; other pupils were allowed to sit in a group.

In all the schools where this study took place It was noticed that these groups were highly stratified and although some pupils were placed in groups, more often than not they were supposed to work individually without communicating with one another. However, this restriction was more evident in lessons of some subjects of the curriculum such as English, Science, Maths, Geography and History whereas in handwriting, Arts, Music and Design and Technology this control was a bit more relaxed. Pupils might be allowed to decide where to sit when the task to be performed involved more mechanical skills. As one of the teachers explained:

> "Occasionally I will give instructions that child A is not to work with child B until such a time when they can work sensibly together. You often have two boys who are bad influence on each other. Once I've given them the rule not to sit together when they are doing language or Maths I

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[a] The children who were considered to have behaviour problems were mainly the ones who found it more difficult to conform to schools rules. They might find it difficult not to communicate verbally with others, to keep still and to get a "sufficient" amount of work done.

expect them to know they won't sit together but they can sit together other times when they are doing practical work."
(Mrs M., G.P.I.S)

The evidence indicates that the teachers attributed different degrees of importance to the subjects of the National Curriculum and this affected the place where the pupils were allowed to sit; the pupils might be allowed to choose their seats for practical work.

It was made apparent by the classroom observations that the children did not have a sense of ownership of the physical environment of the classroom as the teachers more often than not indicated where they should sit.

My conclusion is that the main aim of the control over the distribution of pupils in the classroom was to restrict communication[a] among pupils as it was supposed to be harmful for their learning process. This control was determined by the degree of importance the teachers attributed to the subjects and by the idea the teacher had about the child's behaviour.

It was gathered from the classroom observations that the teacher made the decisions about who were supposed to perform some tasks in and out of the classroom and the most relevant factor that influenced the decision was behaviour.

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[a] In this study when 'communication' is addressed it means verbal communication.

The children who were considered well-behaved had the opportunity to help the teacher doing some tasks in and out of the classroom.

A year 2 teacher in G.P.I.S talking to the lady who came into the classroom with the cups of milk and biscuits said: "Choose someone who is neat and quiet to give out the biscuits."

Another year 2 teacher in G.P.I.S said: "Let's see who is nice and behaves sensibly to go out and look for a cloth for me."

It was observed, in the structure of sanctions and gratifications, that the children were punished for communicating with others and rewarded for non-communicating. The children who were considered well behaved[a] more often than not had the opportunity to do these tasks in and out of the classroom while the ones who were considered to be badly behaved had this opportunity denied.

The balance of the evidence indicates that the well-behaved pupils were rewarded by being allowed to participate in performing tasks in and out of the classroom and they were also allowed to sit in a group while the children who were considered badly behaved were punished by having this participation denied and by not being allowed to sit in a group. In this

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[a] The concept of well-behaved relies mostly on how much the child does not communicate with others.

way, the criterion of 'behaviour' was particularly important for teachers in making decisions in the classroom.

Although all the teachers who were interviewed acknowledged the importance of discussing school rules with the children and said they did it quite frequently, it was observed in the schools where this study took place that the norms of classroom functioning were mainly elaborated by the teacher. These norms primarily emphasized restricted communication between pupils and control over the movement of pupils' bodies.

From the observations it was gathered that what the teachers called *discussions of rules of behaviour* was a process of making the children accept what was already established without going deeply into why one mode of behaviour was *acceptable* and why another one was not.

It was observed in the classrooms that, to ensure these rules were followed, threats were often used. The most frequent threats were to go to the headteacher's office, to have lunch with him/her[a] and to miss playtime.

Although all the teachers interviewed said that the headteacher would be the last "resource" to deal with pupil's misbehaviour it was

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[a] As the headteacher of one particular school considered himself to be very busy and did not have time to talk to the pupils at any other time he dealt with misbehaviour problems at lunch time.

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observed that efforts to try to get "good" behaviour from a child very frequently used the *name* of the headteacher.

> "Whistle once more and I'll send you to Mr I." (Miss G., W.P.J.S)

From the observations it was gathered that in the infant school the most frequent threat was to miss playtime while threats that mentioned the headteacher were more frequent in the junior schools. This is illustrated by one of the year 1 teachers' words:

> "CE, Hurry up! You are in great danger of missing playtime. You are still on yesterday's work! You are turning into the laziest boy in the whole school! Are you concentrating?" (Mrs M., G.P.I.S)

On some occasions the threats turned into punishment so it was common to see children outside the headteacher's office waiting to talk to him or her and children who missed playtime doing their work with the help of the school secretary in the school entrance hall.

It was observed that the exclusion of a child from the learning environment either by sending the child out of the classroom, to the headteacher's office, to another teacher's classroom or giving her a suspension were the most frequent punishments used.

The most frequent reasons, that emerged empirically, for the exclusion of a child from the learning environment was an *unacceptable*

amount of communication with others, an *unacceptable* amount of body movement or an *insufficient* amount of work that was finished in time.

In one of the schools where this study took place the deputy head and the teachers who were interviewed said that the children in the school knew which punishment they would have if they misbehaved in such and such way.

> "The children can make a choice. If they want to misbehave
> they know what the punishment will be. It sounds like going
> to prison but they know exactly what they are doing and
> they've got a choice." (Mrs P., J.F.J.S)

It was observed that the kind of punishment used did not tend to solve the misbehaviour problems as more often than not the *same* children could be seen standing or sitting outside the classroom, outside the headteacher's office or doing work during playtime.

My interpretation is that as the children did not share the construction of norms of behaviour in the classroom it was harder for them to follow these norms. The difficulty in being committed to the norms was that they were seen as external to the children.

My conclusion is that the pupils did not get involved in the process of decision-making and in the process of elaboration of norms in the classrooms. The way these processes occurred indicated an uneven distribution of power in the classroom. The teachers made the decisions about the performance of routine tasks in and out of the classrooms and

about the distribution of pupils in the physical environment of the classrooms. The teachers also elaborated the norms for classroom functioning.

Leadership style

The flow of communication promoted by the teachers that emerged empirically occurred within a pattern of one-sided communication.

Pupils did not have equal opportunities to engage in discussions of matters related to the management of the classroom and the elaboration of norms for classroom functioning. Communication was used by the teachers to deliver decisions and norms. Following from this the teachers' leadership style can be characterized as centralized.

My conclusion is that the teachers' approach to the management of the classroom did not encourage discussions, reflection and collective actions. This way of managing the classroom makes more difficult the process of rationalization of the symbolic universe.

Section II

PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

The general argument of this section is that the planning of the curriculum, the teachers' curriculum practice in the classroom, teachers' beliefs about the teaching/learning process, the valuation teachers place on schooling and teaching styles give indications of patterns of flow of knowledge and communication in schools.

Curriculum matters

1- Curriculum planning

By investigating the process of planning of the curriculum at school and what the teachers' curriculum practice in the classrooms was like this study identified patterns of flow of knowledge and communication in the schools where this study took place.

In all schools where this study took place it was evident that the headteachers did not generally get involved in the process of curriculum planning, as the headteacher of one of the schools explained:

> "It is very difficult for a headteacher to be an absolute expert on every part of the curriculum In this school for example we have teachers who are curriculum coordinators, curriculum leaders. They are experts. The teachers who want help and advice go to these teachers or they can discuss in staff meetings, curriculum meetings, I don't see myself as an expert to be honest." (Mr I., W.P.J.S)

Another headteacher said:

"If you want to know anything about curriculum talk to Mrs P. I can't answer any questions about curriculum." (Mr., H. J. F J. S)

One of the teachers, when asked how often she talked to the headteacher about curriculum, answered:

"Rarely. In my status rarely. We have a curriculum manager who is Mrs K. and she makes sure the curriculum is being followed by all the teachers. As management we have a sort of hierarchy." (Mrs H., W.P.J.S)

The same teacher added:

"The head now is expected to be the financial administrator as well, he is more a manager."

The evidence from the interviews shows that the headteachers were supposed to be more involved in administrative matters of the school and as such they did not consider important their participation in curriculum planning .

Although this division between management and curriculum was noticed in most of the schools, in one of the Infant schools, the headteacher was the leader of curriculum planning. There was a meeting of the senior management team where main general topics for both year 1 and year 2 were discussed and decided. After a couple of days, there was a whole staff meeting where the general topics were presented, discussed, and suggestions for other topics were asked. There was an

attempt not to have overlapping themes and in the end the final version was handed to the teachers, within each year band, who tried to adapt it to the children they had in the classroom.

However, it was observed in three whole staff meetings that the participation of the teachers in giving suggestions for the curriculum in the these meetings was limited in this particular infant school (G.P.I.S). The headteacher gave a clear lead in the planning of the curriculum.

There was evidence that although the teachers got involved in the planning of the curriculum in most of the schools where this study took place they were confined to the planning within each year band. Most of the teachers made the point that they were not much aware of what was planned by the teachers in other year bands but they explained that the curriculum manager was responsible for the integration of the school curriculum.

This fragmentary way of planning the curriculum was very evident in one of the schools (G.F.J.S):

One year 5 teacher described the process of planning the curriculum in this school as follows:

> "We get a box with cards from the curriculum coordinators. They have worked out from the National Curriculum what is suitable for year 5 children in this school so we get a box with cards with the contents that should be covered during the year. We, the year 5 teachers get together and work out the topics we are going to develop to teach those contents." (year 5 teachers G.F.J.S)

The evidence indicates that the separation between the teachers and the curriculum was even greater in this particular school as there were intermediaries between the National Curriculum and the teachers - the coordinators. The teachers were restricted by the contents of the curriculum selected by the coordinators. They did not have a chance to call those contents into question or suggest other ones.

In contrast one of the headteachers acknowledged that one of the benefits of the National Curriculum was that it made the teachers come together to work out the curriculum:

> "That's been one of the benefits of the National Curriculum - it has made teachers come together to work on the curriculum," (Mr., I. W. P J. S)

However, although the teachers got together within each year band in all the schools to plan the curriculum, it was made apparent by the teachers' answers to the interviews and by the observations of teachers' meetings that they had come together as a necessity to work out what the government was demanding from them in the delivery of the curriculum. Also, the teachers got together to ensure consistency in the delivery of the curriculum as one of the headteachers said:

> "I think it is essential that we plan the work together. That the style of the delivery is enough consistent, has enough consistency so that the children know what is expected from them; the attitudes, the way we relate to children has to be

consistent otherwise it is very confusing to them." (Mrs S., G.P.I.S)

In contrast one teacher expressed her view about getting together to plan the curriculum as follows:

> "The National Curriculum has been developed by the government but it was given to the schools not in a total and complete way but the schools had to devise a way of teaching the National Curriculum and testing and recording. And the first thing we have got to have is the planning. It hasn't happened overnight. It started in year 3 and built up to year 6. We are quite a few years on now, 4 years on, 5 years on. We are a lot happier now than when we started, a lot more familiar with the material than at the beginning. We were confused and in the dark. we did not know what to do. We did need a lot of encouragement and support." (Mrs H., W.P.J. S).

My interpretation is that the involvement created by the National Curriculum among the teachers did not give them a sense of *ownership* of the curriculum but rather a sense of doing their best to carry out what was required from them. The teachers' decisions over the curriculum were limited to the best way of "delivering" the curriculum as a package.

What was observed in the schools where this study took place was that there was no involvement in the construction of a curriculum that empowered teachers as experts in education but when teachers got together for planning they were doing a "service" to ensure *good* delivery of the curriculum. There was a very restricted sense of ownership of the curriculum.

Three reasons emerged from the balance of the evidence for teachers to get together to plan the curriculum: a) to work out what the government was demanding from them; b) to achieve consistency in the delivery of the curriculum and c) to encourage and support one another.

My conclusion is that although headteachers supported teachers' meetings for curriculum planning this support was restricted to the reasons already mentioned in the previous paragraph. This way of dealing with curriculum planning indicates a pattern of flow of knowledge that does not involve construction but delivery of knowledge that was ready-made.

2- Curriculum practice in the classroom

In most schools where this study took place It was observed that the way the curriculum unfolded in the classroom did not seem to take into consideration pupils' lives and views about the world.

From the observations in the classrooms it was gathered that the teachers had a plan of what had to be done and they carried out the planning without being very much interested in the children's view about a particular subject. There was not a 'dialogue' between the teacher's plan and the children's experiences.

In all the classes which were observed no change was noticed in the direction of lessons because of the interests of the pupils. One

example of this was in Mrs B's year 2 class in G.P.I.S when, after the registration one pupil said:

> *Pupil:* (showing a piece of broken glass to the teacher) Mrs, I found this in the playground.
>
> *Teacher:* (taking the piece of broken glass from the boy) Don't pick up broken glass because it is dangerous. Yes, it is very dangerous.
>
> *Another pupil:* Isn't it glass from the treasure of the earth box?
>
> *Teacher:* No, I don't think so.
>
> *Pupil (a third one):* We put glass in the treasure of the earth box
>
> *Teacher:* I am not sure.
>
> *Pupil: (a fourth one):* (he tried to say something but the teacher interrupted and said): Listen, do not pick up glass because it is dangerous. Is there anybody who is having school dinner today and is not used to having it?

Then the teacher continued the class by talking about herbs and showing the children the herbs she had brought with her. It was observed that the children were uninterested in the subject and the group on the carpet eventually split and some children were totally unaware of what the teacher was talking about. They started talking to each other in very low voices.

In this class it was observed that the children were very much interested in that piece of broken glass but were uninterested in the

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theme proposed by the teacher. However, no change was made to suit the children's interests.

As the evidence shows, the pupils' interests did not influence the direction of this lesson.

It was noticed that the reality that surrounds the pupils was not taken into consideration. The *real* world was out of the classroom and the classroom activities moved in a *fairy-tale* world. It was observed several times when the children wrote stories that the stories were generally about adventures in caves, woods, forests, ghosts, monsters, but very little or nothing was seen in terms of writing about problems of life linked to the reality[a] that surrounded them.

For example, It was gathered from the classroom observations that the topic about rainforests was offered in most of the classrooms, but a study about the vegetation of the area they live in and the problems and the benefits of this vegetation was not .

The children did not see much connection between what happened in the classroom and their lives outside the classroom or school. The teachers generally refused to hear what the children had to say about what happened during playtime.

One of year 6 boys (W.P.J.S) said:

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[a] *Reality* here means the children's home life and the life in the community where they live. The physical environment is included.

"I hate school. I always talk with my friends about what I am going to do after school. There is nothing in school I like."

Out of the forty children interviewed 35 said what they liked most in school was playtime, dinner time and P.E. Some of them included Art and silent reading. The main reason for that, they said, was because they could be with their friends during these activities.

The year 6 boy and the others (year 5 and 6) felt this sort of disconnection between school and their lives. In school they were restricted by so many things that they could not find it enjoyable and these restrictions included the separation from their own lives.

It was also observed that some teachers introduced non-scientific concepts to the children trying to make science easier for them. However this led children to misconceptions[a] as the following example illustrates:

In a year 5 class in G.F.J.S a teacher was teaching the children how to multiply by two digits. Then she told the children not to forget to put in the magic 0 as it follows:

$$
\begin{array}{lll}
\begin{array}{r} 270 \\ \underline{\times 10} \\ 000 \\ \underline{2700} \\ 2700 \end{array}
&
\begin{array}{l} 0x0=0 \\ 0x7=0 \\ 0x2=2 \\ 0 \\ 1x0=0 \\ 1x7=7 \\ 1x2=2 \end{array}
&
\begin{array}{r} 350 \\ \underline{\times 11} \\ 350 \\ \underline{3500} \\ 3850 \end{array}
\end{array}
$$

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[a] Gaston Bachelard, "O Conhecimento Comum e o Conhecimento Científico" in O Materialismo Racional, [Rational Materialism], Lisboa, Edições 70, 1990, p.237.

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The magic 0 is not a scientific concept.[a] My conclusion is that the magic 0 is something the teacher devised for the pupils to get their answers right but in doing this she was leading the children to think that magic worked together with scientific knowledge.

It was gathered from the interviews and observations that tests were not considered important by teachers who by and large did not test their pupils frequently but in all the schools the pupils in keystage 1 and the pupils in keystage 2 did their SATs.[b] In one of the schools (W.P.J.S) one year 6 teacher acknowledged that she was teaching *bits* of everything because the pupils were going to do the National Curriculum tests the week after and she was preparing them for that.

The teachers acknowledged that their assessment was on-going and they did it taking into account the children's daily work. In one of the schools (G.F.J.S) one of the year 5 teachers said that they had all sorts of 'colouring' and 'shading' for the evaluation of the attainment targets and she added that "doing all this we almost forget the child".

The balance of the evidence suggests that the way the curriculum unfolded in the classroom did not to take into consideration pupils' lives and views about the world. The curriculum was delivered as a ready-made package. This way of dealing with the curriculum did not give the

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[a] In some classes the teacher referred to the magic 'e'. The magic 'e' supposedly would help the children get right the pronunciation of some words: mat /mate; rat/rate; at/ate;

[b] Statutory Attainment Tests.

teachers the chance to take those into account, and did not give the children a chance for participation in the construction of their own knowledge. This indicates that the curriculum did not unfold in the classroom taking into consideration the process of construction of knowledge.

Values (*Schooling*)

This study argues that values about schooling are connected to the importance given to children's achievement in the teaching/learning process.

In the model of *communicative* schools constructed in Chapter Five importance is given to efficiency through more equitable outcomes for pupils from low-income families. In the model of *informative* schools there is the issue of equal opportunities. However, it is argued that the schooling process is highly selective. Teachers do not think that all children can learn so it is just natural that only some children are successful.

Most of the teachers interviewed acknowledged that to teach children from low income families was hard and this made the teachers' task more difficult. They thought the teacher had twice as much work as a teacher who worked in a school in a middle class area because these children from low income families came to school with a *deficit*. They also mentioned that it did not seem that these children would ever keep pace

with other ones from a *better social environment*. The children had lost three or five years depending on the age they came to school. This *deficit* that was supposed to impose limitations to their academic progress was attributed to the children's social background. "The school has to provide what the families do not", said a year 2 teacher in W.P.I.S.[a]

Most of the teachers acknowledged that the social background of the child interfered with their learning:

> "These children come to school with a deficit. Children from professional homes are different. They come to school reading at the age of five. Some of these children don't even know the colours.".(Mrs C., W.P.I.S Year 1)

> "We do have a lot of demanding children with learning disabilities, special needs, but not with physical disabilities but emotional and behaviour problems. When they start school they are starting school very much hindered because they haven't had the input other children had. When they come to school they can't count. They do not know the colours. They are really starting at rock bottom which means we have to put an awful lot of input that they would have had at home in homes where parents are together and they are more aware and they don't have social problems. It is really starting with a deficit. We have to put in things that should be there." (Mrs S., W.P.I.S)

From the empirical investigation what emerged was that: a) schools attributed to the families a teaching role before the child started school without which schools could not fully fulfil their own teaching role; b) the teachers had expectations of what sort of abilities a child should have

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[a] All the teachers mentioned that the parents' support to children's learning was insufficient, mainly in reading. They said that the parents did not hear the children reading and the books that went home took a long time to be read and returned.

when they came to school and c) the teachers did not consider it to be the role of the school to teach children certain things they assumed should have been learned at home. If the child's abilities did not quite match the teacher's expectations the children were considered to have a deficit.

The balance of the evidence indicates that the teachers did not construct their expectations considering the social context of the school but according to a *pre-decided idea* of what a child should be like when s(he) came to school. It was made apparent by their answers in the interviews that they had an 'ideal' child in their expectations and this led the teachers to *see* a deficit where there was a difference. The children from low income families may have different social experiences from those middle class ones, but their cognitive capacities are not different .

This study argues that grouping the children is a form of letting these social differences perpetuate and be carried on during all the school years. In all four schools where this study took place it was noticed that the children were grouped according to their abilities in Maths and also according to behaviour. In the Junior schools the children were also grouped for English and they generally changed teachers for English lessons.

In one of the junior schools this grouping process was even more refined than in the other schools. Each year band had two classes but three teachers because these two classes were grouped into three

groups according to each subject area (but not for Design and Technology, Physical Education, Art and Music) - *fast group, middle group and bottom group*. Each teacher works with one of the groups. For example, one teacher might have the fastest group in Maths, the bottom group in English and the middle group in science.

The classrooms in this school were very big and were called *areas (green area, red area, blue area* etc..). These *areas* were divided into three smaller *areas* called *quiet area, studio area* and *workshop area*. Each day of the week there was a chart which told the children to which area they should go to according to their groups which were named after *geometrical shapes* for maths, *fruit names* for English and so on. These groups were sub-divided into other groups. The fastest group was grouped into *fastest, middle* and *bottom* (of the fastest) as were the other groups. One of the year 6 teachers when interviewed said that they had nine levels of abilities and the activities were carried out in nine different levels.

In all the schools where this study took place, although the children, generally sat within a group (an exception was made to those who were considered *badly behaved* who were generally on their own), the children did not "function" as a group. They carried out their activities individually.

One of the children when asked if he helped his classmates in any way answered:

"Normally I don't help my classmates with their work. They have to get on with their work for themselves really, haven't they?" (year 5 pupil W.P.J.S)

It was gathered from the observations that children came to school with different social experiences and they were generally grouped according to these differences so they did not have many opportunities to interact academically with children who had different social experiences. This situation added a limitation for these children to overcome these differences and made the schooling process highly selective as teachers tended to vary their expectations according to the social experiences of the groups.

My interpretation is that the groups in which children had a large amount of varied social experiences tended to raise higher expectations in teachers whereas children with limited social experiences tended to raise lower expectations in teachers.

One of the teachers acknowledged grouping the children not only by their abilities but also by their social group:

"I try to sit them within their social group but also because they are generally children with the same sort of abilities[a], except English where we have different groups together with the other class." (Mrs G., W.P.J.S)

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[a] It was made apparent by the classroom observations that the teachers considered homogeneity, that is, having homogenous groups, as something important for the learning process.

In this respect two criteria for grouping children emerged empirically: *abilities* and *social group*. And one criterion was used for banning them from groups: *behaviour*. It was made apparent by the classroom observations that the teachers considered homogeneity, that is, having children with the same sort of abilities sat in the same group , as something important for the learning process.

From the data collected it was gathered that communication was not used for the construction of improved opportunities for learning as children with restricted social experiences did not have opportunities to interact with other children with a larger amount of social experiences in the classroom.

My conclusion is that the different expectations teachers had for children of different social backgrounds influenced the pattern of flow of knowledge in the classrooms. By separating children in groups according to their abilities and/or their social class the teachers did not give the children opportunities to exchange ideas with other children from different social backgrounds. Also, by encouraging the children to 'function' individually in the groups the teachers were not giving the children opportunities to interact with other children to help their construction of knowledge. The children were only allowed to interact with other children when they were doing practical work.

Beliefs (*teaching/learning process*)

By investigating what kind of beliefs the teachers held about the teaching/learning process this study made a relationship between those beliefs and the teachers' curriculum practice in the classrooms.

It was observed in the schools where this study took place that restrictive communication, homogenous groups,[a] and skills such as listening, concentration, quietness and observation were considered important to improve the teaching/learning process.

The teachers arranged homogenous groups of children in the classroom by sitting pupils with similar abilities or from the same social class together. The members of these groups were not supposed to interact (quietness and stillness were valued) so that they could concentrate on their work. It was gathered from the interviews that concentration was supposed to improve children's learning in the classroom. Skills such as listening and observing were valued as well.

A teacher, asked what she thought could improve children's learning in the classroom, answered:

> "Anything. With these particular children they are children who just need to try and get their observation skills going, and listening as well. Their listening and observation skills are very poor. It is just developing them. Being able to share ideas and to encourage them to help each other as well. They just sit and watch tv at home." (Mrs L., W.P.I.S).

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[a] Groups of children with similar abilities and/or similar social background.

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The evidence shows that the teacher believed that improving skills such as observing and listening could improve children's learning in the classroom. Her practice in the classroom reflected her belief about the teaching/learning process. Her pupils were not supposed to talk to each other. Although she criticised the fact that the children just sat and watched tv at home, it was observed that over a period of eight days the children were taken twice to watch recorded tv programmes.[a] After these programmes the children answered questions about what they had watched but no discussions developed from them.

Although teacher L also mentioned that to share ideas and to encourage the children to help each other would improve children's learning, this practice was not observed in her classroom when this study took place. The children in the groups were not supposed to help each other because this would mean talking to each other. They were supposed to ask the teacher for help to do their classwork instead.

The teachers and headteachers interviewed considered the teaching/learning process to be either transmission of knowledge or to be the outcome of the adequate rationale of teaching methods and techniques. The right stimulus will produce the desirable learning outcome.

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[a] While the children were watching the programmes they were supposed to cross their legs and put their hands on their lap.

One of the headteachers expressed his views on how to improve children's learning as follows:

"First if they are interested. Secondly if the teacher gives the right stimulus to the work that is going on. Thirdly to give them work at their level, not too difficult and not too easy." (Mr I., W.P.J.S)

The evidence in the interview shows that the headteacher was suggesting a simplistic approach to the teaching/learning process. If the teacher gave the right input, there would be the desirable output. This approach to the teaching/learning process makes it sound as if it were a linear process.

It was gathered from the interviews that none of the teachers referred to learning as development of cognitive capacities but as skills to be acquired or developed. They did not consider that knowledge was constructed and for that the children needed opportunities to confront diversity and challenges:

"They need a lot of concentration and they also need to learn to listen. But concentration is more important, I suppose." (Mrs L., year 2 W.P.I.S)

"These children need a lot of calming down. They need to be quiet first and listen. This can improve their learning." (Mrs B., year 5 W.P.J.S)

In the interviews most teachers mentioned that classroom work had to be appropriate to the children's level of ability. This implied that challenges to their cognitive capacities stayed at a very low level.

> "Concentration is the most important thing for learning. Some children find very difficult to concentrate. I think that having the children doing activities at their own level is also very important." (Mrs H., W.P.J.S)

It was observed that reproduction of knowledge rather than creation was valued. In several classes it was observed that children had to draw objects exactly as the model on display provided by the teacher. No traits of creativity was valued. On the contrary there was severe reprimand if any creativity was shown. The reproduction had to be from the teacher's stance and not from the child's stance of the object as was observed in some of the classes.

A group of children (year 2) had been out with the teacher collecting worms. After looking at the worms with a magnifying glass in the classroom the teacher asked the children to draw the worms. One child drew her bucket where her worms were and the worms inside it. When she finished drawing she showed it to the teacher who said: "I don't want you to draw your bucket. I want you to draw the worms. Go back and draw the worms." The child went back to her seat but looked rather puzzled. She started standing up and looking at the worms from above but she did not manage to do the drawing.

In another class (year 1) the children were asked to draw different objects looking at a model (a plate, a flower pot and tea pot). Some children were not allowed to go to playtime because they had coloured the objects different from the models. For example one of the children instead of using orange to paint a part of the plate, used red; another one used blue instead of orange. The children justified the change of colour on the grounds of their preference.

My interpretation is that the teachers wanted the work to be done in a particular way but they did not quite understand the point of view of the child when the child drew the bucket and the worms inside it or when the children used different colours to paint the objects they had drawn.

When asked how often they gave pupils opportunities to express personal views in the classroom one of the teachers acknowledged:

> "That's difficult. Because you are so busy with everything else that...I do try to give them time. Usually when they first come in the morning. But I try to make time for this." (Mrs C., W.P.I.S).

This quotation shows the teacher's acknowledgement that it was difficult to give the children time to express their personal views in the classroom because she did not consider this as embedded in the daily practice of the teaching/learning process. She, like most of the teachers, mentioned that there was a particular time to give children an opportunity to express their personal views.

Some teachers acknowledged this practice of giving pupils opportunities to express personal views as being part of the National Curriculum. One of the teachers when asked if she gave opportunities to her pupils to express personal views, answered:

> "As part of the National Curriculum there is a section of speaking and listening. In year 6 we encourage the children to present a talk on something they are interested in. We often have debates on current affairs." (Mrs H., W.P.J.S)

This quotation indicates that there was a definite time for the "expression of personal views" to happen and so it was not an on going practice (as the teacher interpreted it - a topic to be talked about).

Also, when asked how often they encouraged their children to express themselves through questioning and classroom discussions one of the teachers answered:

> "That's hard with these children because they have a limited vocabulary and they have never been questioned before. They are OK at answering questions but they don't have an inquisitive mind...It is hard work in this area. If I give them time for discussions it will take a long time and there is the curriculum to be covered." (Mrs L., W.P.I.S)

The evidence shows that the teacher mentioned the children's lack of vocabulary to explain why she did not encourage questioning and discussions in the classroom. As the children lacked vocabulary it would take a long time for them to engage in discussions, she explained.

However, she did not mention any classroom practices to overcome this lack of vocabulary on the part of the children.

When she said that they were "OK at answering questions" she was acknowledging *question and answer* as a practice in the classroom.

In all four schools it was observed that *question and answer* was the preferred practice in the classrooms and most of the time the pupils were the ones who answered the questions.

It was noticed that most of the teachers found it hard to say what improved children's learning in the classroom. They all had to have second thoughts to answer it. Apparently although schools are a *teaching/learning place* most teachers took it so much for granted that they tended to overlook it, that is, they tended not to think much about it.

The balance of the evidence suggests that the teachers believed that quietness, concentration, listening, observation and reproduction of knowledge improved children's learning in the classroom. Little or no attention was given to the encouragement of interaction among children and between children and teacher in the classroom. The teachers' beliefs about the teaching/learning process influenced their curriculum practice in the classroom.

Teaching Styles

Two styles of teaching were described in the models presented in Chapter Five: *intercommunicative* and *monocommunicative styles.*

The *intercommunicative* teaching style fosters interaction among children and between teacher and children. The *monocommunicative* teaching style means one-sided communication.

It was observed that aspects of the *monocommunicative* style were predominant in all the four schools where this study took place.

Question and answer was the practice currently present in the classrooms observed. One teacher would do the registration calling the pupils names and asking them a question such as:

> "Peter, What is the capital of Spain?" or "Where is Dusseldorf?" (Mrs P., G.F.J.S)

In this way the children were supposed to have memorized and to produce, when asked, this kind of de-contextualized information.

The teachers did not foster practices such as discussions and questioning.

It was observed that the discussions, when there were some, were limited. The children had to say what the teacher expected them to say. It was not exactly an exchange of ideas.

One year 5 teacher in W.P.J.S said that she did not use discussions with her pupils because they were not very good at it.

"This class is not very good for discussions. There are very hot blooded children in this class and discussion can end in an argument." (Mrs B., year 5, W.P.J.S)

The teachers had a tendency to stress what abilities the pupils' lacked. The children mentioned by the teacher in the example above lacked the ability of carrying on a discussion. The teacher then avoided having discussions in class.

Children had a very limited say in the classroom in the four schools observed. The children's talking was very much controlled by the teacher. This control over communication in the classroom was within a *monocommunicative* pattern of flow of communication that characterizes a *monocommunicative* teaching style.

PART II

BRAZIL[2]

Section I

SOME MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

1- Schools

Decision-making and elaboration of norms

The evidence showed that in the Brazilian primary schools[a] in Viçosa where this study took place the involvement of teachers in the process of decision-making of administrative matters and of elaboration of norms was also restricted apart from one school that was different. [b]

There was a deliberative group in each school, called the *colegiado* [collegiate]. This group dealt mostly with administrative matters. The *colegiado* had 12 members and they represented the *staff* of the school (administrative, teaching, technical/pedagogical and cleaning) in school and also the parents. These representatives were elected within each category and community every two years. Each representative had a deputy. All members of the school community (parents) and of the *staff* of the school were allowed to attend the *colegiado* meetings and they could voice their views but only members of the *colegiado* could vote. The headteacher[c] was a member *ex-officio* and the president of the *colegiado* but she/he was not allowed to vote. The meetings took place regularly once a month but the president or any other member of the colegiado could call for extraordinary meetings when urgent matters needed to be discussed and decisions had to be made. However, the members of the *colegiado* must be notified at least 48 hours before a meeting.

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[a] The schools will be mentioned as School C, E , F and S.

[b] This school will be dealt with separately due to its peculiar characteristics (school F).

[c] The headteacher is elected by direct vote of all school members : teaching staff, administrative staff, technical/pedagogical staff and cleaning staff) and community members (parents). The headteacher is chosen among the teaching staff of a particular school.

It was made apparent by the observations that although all teachers were allowed to attend the *colegiado* meetings generally only the teacher representative did so. As most of the teachers had more than one teaching job[a] (so that they could cope financially) they had not got time to attend these meetings. It was observed that the teacher representative might have an informal chat with the teachers in the staff room during break-time about matters that were going to de discussed in the meeting and he/she wrote down their suggestions.

In one of the schools during break-time:

> "Can I have your attention, please! Tonight we are going to discuss what the priorities are to spend the money we have just got from the government. It is a small amount but we have to have clear what the main needs of the school are. I would like you to give your suggestions so that I can voice them in the *colegiado* meeting." (teacher representative in school C to the other teachers in the staff room)

However, most of the teachers did not show interest in the matter. The teacher who asked for suggestions got a few from one or two teachers but the others showed that they were not interested in the possibility of participating in the decisions.

All the headteachers who were interviewed acknowledged the importance of having the teachers' participation in solving administrative problems and in the elaboration of norms for schools functioning:

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[a] In Brazil a teaching job in primary and secondary state schools is a part time job. According to the law a primary or secondary school teacher is allowed to have not more than two teaching jobs in state schools.

"Formerly the headteacher acted on his own. He solved problems according to his own ideas. He did not share ideas and opinions with the teachers and other staff. Nowadays this way of managing the school has changed. To manage a school nowadays means to get together as a group, to discuss the problems and to look for a solution for the problems based on consensual ideas of the group-headteacher, deputy-head, teachers, pedagogical supervisor, parents and servants." (headteacher school C)

"It is very important to get the teachers' participation in administrative problems as they may come to solutions for problems we had not thought of. The headteacher may look at a problem with an "administrative" mind and cannot see the problem from the teacher's stance so it is very important that teachers participate in administrative decisions." (headteacher school S)

"As long as these decisions affect the teachers in any way this consultation is important but if the problems are merely bureaucratic matters I do not see it as important." (headteacher- school E)

The evidence in the interviews shows that the headteachers were very much aware of the importance of involving the teachers in the administrative matters and this involvement was seen either as a democratic practice or as a means of getting help to solve a problem having a different point of view.

However, two headteachers and one pedagogical supervisor also pointed out different reasons why it was difficult to get teachers to participate:

"It is difficult to get the teachers to participate in meetings. As their salary is insufficient for them to support their families, they have to have more than one job and also to

cope with housework . This makes their participation more difficult outside their working hours."(headteacher - school C)

"To base school rules on my own ideas is not important. The school has to be seen as a whole and to make sure everything works well it is necessary to have the participation of all. It is very important to have consensual ideas." (headteacher - school C)

"I cannot give a lead in the establishment of rules. I cannot base these rules on my own ideas because it will not work, Will it? We have to base the school rules on the school pedagogical project. It is very important to base these rules on consensual ideas so that they can be followed. There is more commitment to the norms if they are constructed by the group than when they are established by an "authority"." (headteacher - school E)

"I think participation in general is insufficient in this school. I myself have difficulty in participating in a group. I know it is important to have decisions based on consensual ideas but in the end I want my ideas to prevail. I like to make decisions on my own." (pedagogical supervisor A - school E)

"It is difficult to get teachers to participate. It is difficult to have this participation because they did not live through it either as pupils or students (at primary school, secondary school and even the university) they were not accustomed to this participation. This participation is something new and we are managing very slowly to have the participation of all (teachers, parents and pupils). I was not allowed to participate when I was at school, so I did not live through it either. I myself have to be careful because I have a tendency to want to impose my own ideas." (headteacher - school E)

More than one teaching job, the non-habit of participation and the

headteachers' difficulty in making decisions in a group (one of them

acknowledged that she tended to want to impose her ideas) are the reasons for the teachers non-participation that emerged from the balance of the evidence.

Those quotations are important because they indicate an agreement among the headteachers about the importance of the participation of all members of school in the construction of norms for the school to ensure that they were followed and in administrative decision-making. The evidence in the interviews indicates that these ideas were widespread but there was counter evidence when it came to the practice itself.

A contradiction between discourse and practice was made apparent when pedagogical supervisor A described the practice at school C for the elaboration of norms. In school C pedagogical supervisor A acknowledged that the school rules were elaborated by the technical/pedagogical staff and the headteacher:

> "The school rules were elaborated by the technical /pedagogical staff and the headteacher this year. The teachers did not participate. After the rules had been elaborated we showed them to the teachers who accepted them but they did not call anything into question. They accepted the rules in a passive way. I think our school has to change a lot We have to construct the rules with the participation of all to make sure they are followed. On an everyday basis these rules are not obeyed, in fact."
> (pedagogical supervisor A - school C)

When asked why they did not get the participation of all school members once the headteacher and pedagogical supervisor A acknowledged the importance of having this participation for the construction of rules she said:

> "The fact is that we did not have time to have a big meeting or more than one big meeting for the discussion of school rules so we decided to elaborate them and then pass them on to the teachers but we expected that the teachers would call into question any rule that they did not find appropriate and then it could be changed but this did not happen." (pedagogical supervisor A - school C)

Then she added:

> "I think the teachers do not have the habit of participating so they accept things passively but on the other hand it seems that they do not take very much notice of the rules themselves."

Although headteachers and pedagogical supervisors agreed about the importance of getting teachers to participate in administrative decisions and in the elaboration of norms, the evidence shows that the headteachers' practice did not always match the ideas expressed in their discourse.

When the teachers were asked how often they participated in meetings for decisions about administrative matters, most teachers in schools C, E and S - apart from the teacher representative in each school

- said they never gave suggestions to the headteacher about school administrative decisions.

However, it was observed that the teachers did not give suggestions or participate in meetings to discuss administrative decision-making not only because they did not have time to come to these meetings but also because they thought administrative decisions were for the headteacher to deal with. They had a partial view about the school. Although meetings to discuss administrative matters occurred quite frequently the teachers did not get involved because they did not consider their views important for the administration of the school.

It was noticed that there was a separation between administrative and pedagogical matters in the schools where this study took place. One pedagogical supervisor of school C acknowledged that:

> "Our school is fragmented. We have groups that do not communicate with each other. The management group, the technical/ pedagogical group, the administrative group and the teachers. There isn't communication between these groups. Every group is confined within its own limits. It shouldn't be like that but it is. It is very hard to change this. We try but..." (pedagogical supervisor A school C)

This piece of evidence shows that pedagogical supervisor A from school C acknowledged a difficulty in communication between different groups in school. Although she acknowledged that this difficulty should not exist, she was aware that it was hard to change the situation mainly

because the teachers were not accustomed to exchange ideas and also due to pressure of time there was an impossibility to have meetings for discussions.

The balance of the evidence suggests that, although headteachers and pedagogical supervisors acknowledged the importance of having teachers participating in administrative decision-making and in the elaboration of norms for school functioning, this participation did not occur in the daily practice of schools for a number of reasons that have already been mentioned elsewhere. This situation led to centralized power relationships in practice although at the discourse level shared power relationships were aimed at. In these schools the relationships of power occurred within a pattern of uneven distribution of power.

Leadership style

The flow of communication promoted by the headteachers that emerged from the empirical investigation in all three schools occurred within a pattern of one-sided communication. At the discourse level the headteachers suggested that they should give the members of the school equal opportunities to participate in administrative decisions and in the elaboration of norms.

Norms were elaborated by the headteacher and the technical/ pedagogical staff and decisions were taken by the *colegiado*. Following from this the leadership style can be characterized as centralized.

My conclusion is that in all three schools the headteachers' approach to the management of the school did not favour the flow of communication in a pattern that contributed to the rationalization of the *symbolic universe* of those schools.

2- Classrooms

Decision-making and elaboration of norms

As was mentioned in part I, the two main themes that were frequent issues for decision-making in the classroom were: the distribution of pupils in the physical environment of the classroom and performance of some tasks related to the routine of the classroom.

When interviewed most teachers in the schools where this study took place said that they allowed their pupils to choose their seats in the classroom. However the teachers might move children around according to their size,[a] to their behaviour, to their learning performance. Also, the teachers would take into account whether they got along with the pupils they sat next to.

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[a] The desks were distributed in columns in the classrooms and they were generally placed in pairs. Smaller children sat in the front rows so that they could see the board well.

Although some children in some classes in schools C, E and S might be moved according to their behaviour they did not sit on their own. They sat together with a different pupil with whom they might not talk so much during the class.

In some other classes the teacher might move the children around so that children who performed better in tests could help the ones who had a lower performance by sitting together in pairs.

Also, if the pupils in a pair could not get along well and argued too much the teacher suggested that they should choose another pupil to sit next to.

Only teacher AN (year 4) in school C said that she chose her pupils' seats:

> "They never choose their seats because if they choose they will sit near their friends. I myself prefer to choose their seats because if they sit near their friends they will talk and this disturbs the class."[a]

The evidence shows that the main reason for the teacher to choose her pupils' seats was behaviour. This suggests that the teacher considered communication between pupils to be inconvenient during the class.

My conclusion is that the children had some sense of ownership of the physical environment of the classroom. The control over the

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[a] In this classroom the desks were distributed in isolated columns.

distribution of pupils in the classroom was not a main concern of teachers in general. However, some teachers were really keen on pupils together that had different performances in tests sitting together. The teachers said that this way of distributing pupils in the classroom helped their learning much more than if the *good* ones were sitting together and were separated from the *weak* ones.[a]

It was observed in schools C, E and S that generally the teachers drew lots to find out the pupils who were going to participate in routine tasks for the classroom. This procedure was part of the daily routine because this was done as soon as the children came into the classroom. Alternatively, some teachers used alphabetical order, for the pupils to take turns. Good behaviour was not a criterion for the selection of the children who would help the teacher with routine tasks for the classroom. The *helpers* might be one or two pupils each day; it depended on the age of the pupils. In classes where there were young pupils there were generally two *helpers* each day.

The evidence shows that the teachers had a flexible approach to the selection of pupils to help the teacher doing some tasks in and out of the classroom. They did not tend to exclude pupils from these activities but rather devised criteria that guaranteed the participation of all.

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[a] However, in school C the classes were formed according to the children's level of performance in tests. In this school in each year class No 1 had the best pupils, class No 2 the "medium ones" and class No 3 had the weak ones. The distribution of pupils among the classes was highly selective.

It was observed that the norms of classroom functioning were mainly elaborated by the teacher based on the norms of the school and they primarily emphasized no communication between pupils and control over the functioning of the pupils' bodies.

It was noticed in a year 1 class in school C that the teacher used quietness as a criterion to choose pupils to participate in an activity where they had to move the hands of a clock and ask their classmates to tell the time:

> "I am going to choose who is quiet to take part in the activity of telling the time. The pupil has to come to the front and set the hands of the clock for his/her classmates to tell the time."(teacher V - school C)

The rule for the selection of a pupil to take part in that classroom activity was exclusively the teacher's criterion: the children had no participation defining the criterion.

It was made apparent by the observations that some teachers used threats to make the pupils follow the rules in the classroom. The most frequent threat was to stay in school after school hours. These threats were generally directed to the pupils who were considered to be talking at an inappropriate time.

> "I am going to leave you here after school finishes." (teacher A year 3 school C)

"I don't want to hear a single noise in this room (shouting). I am going to see who I am going to leave here after the class."(Teacher M year 1 school E)

"Stand up again and you will see what is going to happen to you."(Teacher R year 1 - school E)

Although it was not a routine to see pupils excluded from the learning situation and threats along these lines were not frequent it was observed that this might happen at some teachers' discretion .

In a year 1 class in school E a boy was sent out of the classroom to talk to one of the pedagogical supervisors:

"You are going out of the class to talk to the pedagogical supervisor because you are not allowing me to carry on my lesson." (teacher M)

In a year 3 class in school C

"I am going to send you out of the classroom if you continue to do this." (the pupil was whistling) (teacher D)

However, the pedagogical supervisors in all three schools expressed their disapproval of some teachers' practice of sending pupils out of the classroom:

"We still have one or two teachers who still send the pupils they consider badly behaved out of the classroom. We talk to these teachers and try to make them evaluate themselves and see if the bad behaviour is caused by the way they conduct the class." (pedagogical supervisor A school C)

Suspension was not used in any of the three schools and the name of the headteacher was not used to threaten pupils. However the pedagogical supervisor might be mentioned by those teachers whose practice included excluding pupils who were misbehaving from the learning environment. Immediate rewards were not used. The teachers often referred to the fact that if the pupils did good work and paid attention in class they would be able to have a better job when they finished school or they would be able to continue their studies. The more immediate reward was to be able to get average or above average marks in their bi-monthly evaluation.

The balance of the evidence suggests that norms of classroom functioning which were elaborated by the teachers mainly focused on the control over verbal communication among pupils and control over pupils' body - functioning or movement. Most sanctions were given to counteract verbal communication and inappropriate body movement in the classroom.

However, in schools C, E and S most teachers, when interviewed, acknowledged the importance of discussing rules of behaviour with the children. There was evidence that *discussion* meant asking the child why he/she was behaving a way considered inconvenient behaviour by the teacher, and getting the child to explain. The teacher took this opportunity

to tell him/her that that particular behaviour was not allowed or was not convenient in the classroom at that particular moment.

> "I discuss the rules with them but I do not construct rules with them. What I do is, for example, I ask: " Do you think it is the right time for you to talk? Do you think what you are talking about interests everybody else?" I try to make them realise that their behaviour is inappropriate." (teacher J - school E)

The evidence shows that the teacher made the children acquiesce to pre-established rules which were taken for granted. These rules were the ones to be followed and the possibility of them being called into question was remote

Some other teachers when asked if the rules in the classroom were constructed by both teachers and pupils, said that it was not possible to let the children participate in the construction of rules in the classroom because they would be too lenient :

> "I do not let the children construct the rules of behaviour in the classroom because they would be lenient. They would say that there should be a lot of talking and little paying attention. I tell them what the rules are." (teacher A year 4 school C)

The evidence indicates how teacher A felt about letting children participate in the construction of rules in the classroom and her concern about verbal communication between pupils. She thought that the

children were unable to construct rules that would work in the classroom.

She did not consider the pupils to be interested in learning.

One teacher said that she found it rather difficult to get the pupils to

follow the rules in the classroom and she pointed out that older children

even rebelled against the rules:

> "This is something difficult. I try to discuss the rules with them but they do not understand the rules. I don't know if this has to do with the way we deal with he rules or the fact that as they are year 4 pupils and are about 10 to 16[a] years old influences it. We try to impose the rules but they do not follow them. If we are working with younger children they have a tendency to follow the rules better but particularly the older ones in my class call the rules into question a lot and they think we want to impose the rules on them for the sake of the rule, they don't understand why and so they rebel against the rules." (Teacher M year 4 school S)

Pedagogical supervisor A in school C offered a different view about

children constructing rules of behaviour when she explained how a year 2

class improved their behaviour:

> "We had a problem with a year 2 class.[b] They were rejecting the rules imposed by the school. The solution was to ask them to elaborate the rules they wanted for their class. The class teacher and I got together in the classroom and asked them what rules they would like for their class. What was going to be allowed and what was not going to be allowed. The rules were written on a large piece of paper and it was stuck on the wall. From that day on they improved their behaviour because they started following the rules and if any of them forgot any of the rules they would

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[a] The children who were 12 years old or above had repeated any of the 4 school years and that is why they were above their age group for a year 4 class.

[b] This class had a peculiar characteristic because the children in this class had repeated the year several times and they were about 10, 11 and 12 years old so they were above the age group for a year 2 class.

remind him/her promptly. in fact, children are very strict when they elaborate rules and they want to ensure that they are followed. These children also improved their participation during the classes. They wanted to have a more effective participation in their school life. They did not want to be treated like small children. They wanted to participate and they felt important for having participated." (Pedagogical supervisor A school C)

The evidence shows that there was a contradiction between what some teachers thought about children constructing rules and pedagogical supervisor A' s practice. Two of the eight year 4 teachers interviewed said that the children would be too lenient if they participated in the construction of rules. However, pedagogical supervisor A in her practice came to the conclusion that the children were strict when they constructed their rules and in this way they were more committed to them.[a]

The example given by pedagogical supervisor A in school C about children constructing rules of behaviour that was quoted above illustrates in practice what Piaget says:

"The common sense of law ... which is possessed by children aged 9-12 shows clearly enough how capable is the child of discipline and democratic life." [3]

"True discipline can only come into being if it is discipline that the children themselves have willed and consented to."[4]

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[a] The improvement of behaviour of the pupils in that year 2 class in school C was not communicated to other teachers at school. This fact reinforces what pedagogical supervisor A said about the difficulty on communication in school C.

The pupils in that year 2 class were the same age as the pupils in a year 4 class (10, 11, 12 years old) and according to Piaget,[5] these children are in the stage of semi-autonomy heading towards autonomy. One of the characteristics of this stage in the moral development is that the children start calling rules or norms into question because they start to realise that rules do not exist by "divine right". If rules exist, someone has elaborated them, that is why they start to reject rules that they do not understand or have not participated in their construction. This is what teacher M in school S talked about. In her say she described what children of that age were like corroborating her experience with Piaget's theory. Once the children in that year 2 class had a chance to participate in the elaboration of rules they improved their behaviour.

Also, all teachers who teach year 4 classes in school C pointed out that they were having problems with discipline in their classrooms but none of them let their pupils participate in the construction of rules in the classroom for fear of losing control over the pupils.

What teacher M in school S and what the pedagogical supervisor A of school C said are important quotations because taking into consideration what they said there was an illustration of what Piaget postulates about children from 10 /11 years old on: they start rebelling against pre-established rules. The children mentioned by teacher M and pedagogical supervisor A were more or less the same age although they

were in different school years. These children presented the same kind of behaviour. The way described by pedagogical supervisor A to solve the problem with the year 2 children suggested the importance of having the children participating in rule-making in the classroom.

My conclusion is that the participation of children in the construction of rules in the classroom makes them more committed to these rules so there is an improvement of behaviour that is socially constructed. However, the non-participation leads to problems due to less commitment to the rules. Also, the difficulty in communication within school C that was mentioned by pedagogical supervisor A prevented other teachers in the same school from getting to know the successful outcome of constructing rules with the children's participation.

My conclusion is that the non-involvement of children in the process of decision making and in the process of elaboration of norms indicate that the pattern of flow of power in the classroom is centralized.

Leadership style

The flow of communication promoted by the teachers that emerged empirically showed a pattern of one-sided communication.

Teachers did not give to pupils opportunities to engage in discussions for the elaboration of norms. Also the pupils did not take part in the decisions about administrative aspects of the classroom.

Communication was used by the teachers to deliver decisions and norms. In this way the teachers' leadership style can be characterized as centralized.

My conclusion is that the teachers approach to the management of the classroom did not encourage collective decisions and participation in the elaboration of norms. This way of managing the classroom makes more difficult the process of rationalization of the symbolic universe.

Section II

PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

Curriculum matters

1- Curriculum planning

By investigating if headteachers and teachers got involved in the process of planning the curriculum at school and what the teachers' curriculum practice in the classrooms was like this study identified patterns of flow of knowledge and communication in the schools where this study took place.

In schools C, E and S it was evident that the headteachers did not get involved in curriculum planning. One of the reasons was that the

pedagogical supervisor was an *intermediary* between the headteacher and the teachers.

It was observed that the pedagogical supervisor dealt with curriculum matters at school and the headteachers only talked to the teachers about curriculum in whole school meetings that occurred about twice a year in each school.

When asked how often they talked to the headteachers about curriculum most of the teachers in schools C, E and S said that they rarely talked to the headteacher about curriculum but they talked to the pedagogical supervisor about that quite frequently.

Although the primary schools in Brazil are not divided into infants and juniors, it was made apparent by the observations and the interviews that the split of supervision within the four years (one pedagogical supervisor for year 1 and year 2[a] and another one for year 3 and 4) contributed to the teachers' partial view over the curriculum.

The teachers got together to plan the curriculum within each year band but one pedagogical supervisor said:

> "Currently it is one of the difficulties we find in schools to get teachers to work together. Each teacher comes to give his/her classes but they do not have time to come to pedagogical meetings. When two teachers in the same year band get along well they plan together, well, but not really together, they decide that one of them is going to plan

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[a] Year 1 and year 2 together are considered to be a "ciclo básico de alfabetização" commonly referred as the "CBA" [Basic Literacy Cycle]. The peculiar characteristic of it is that the child is supposed to move from year 1 to year 2 without taking examinations for that. The child would automatically be promoted according to their abilities in the literacy process.

Maths and Science for both classes and the other is going to plan Language, History and Geography. Sometimes they only exchange teaching materials. The exchange of ideas does not exist. There is a difficulty in creating this "space" in schools. There is this space in the pedagogical meetings every week but the teachers do not want to come to these meetings and the "school" does not make it compulsory because of the salary the teachers receive. We know that the salary is very low and they need to have another job. Ideally these meetings should occur once a week to plan the curriculum, re-plan and solve any problems the teachers may be having in the classroom. However these meetings happen once in a while and this does not help us to have an overall view of the curriculum." (pedagogical supervisor A school C)

This rather lengthy quotation is important because although the pedagogical supervisor recognised the importance of teachers getting together to plan and re-plan the curriculum, she mentioned the obstacles that prevented this from happening. She explained how this *getting together to plan the curriculum* happened on a routine basis in school C. The way the teachers planned the school curriculum illustrates the difficulty the teachers had in communicating with each other. This way of planning the curriculum contributed even more to the teachers' partial view of the curriculum. Each teacher was only in charge of planing two or three subjects and this created an obstacle for the integration of the subjects.

My conclusion is that this way of planning the curriculum restricted the teachers' view of the curriculum because they were only *responsible*

for two or three subject areas and this created an obstacle for the integration of the subjects. The teachers were not empowered by the constructing the knowledge of the school curriculum.

Two reasons that contributed to the teachers' restricted view of the curriculum emerged from the balance of the evidence: a) the split pedagogical supervision and b) teachers' planning of the curriculum by subject areas. This also led to a limitation of the teachers' access to knowledge.

It was gathered from the interviews that there was no agreement about which curriculum proposal was being used by each school where this study took place. However, agreement was evident, at least at discourse level, about the importance of democratic practices in school.

While in school S one of the pedagogical supervisors acknowledged that the teachers were using the curriculum proposal that came out in 1994, in school C the pedagogical supervisors said that the teachers were not using any proposal:

> "The proposal that is used in fact in this school is the proposal of the textbooks because the teachers don't know the proposals - either the 1987 one or the more recent one - 1994. We give the proposals to the teachers but they don't read them. They just take them home and the copies stay sitting there in a drawer. If we talk about one of the curriculum proposals they say they don't have it but in fact they don't remember they have it at home. The teachers follow the textbook and this lead them to a traditional way of teaching." (pedagogical supervisors A and B - school C)

Pedagogical supervisor E in school E also acknowledged:

"To say the textbook is only a support for the teachers is in fact a way of masking what happens in most schools. In most cases, the textbook is the only one resource the teacher has, it is the main tool that the teacher has in the classroom."

However, it was noticed that the pedagogical supervisors in school S did not really know either the 1987 or the 1994 curriculum proposal. They said that the 1987 proposal gave more emphasis to the contents to be taught to the children and that it relied a lot on memorization while the 1994 one gave more emphasis to the methodology to be used by the teachers. This was contradicted by the pedagogical supervisors in school E who acknowledged that they were combining the 1987 proposal and the 1994 proposal. They said that the proposal that came out in 1988 was strongly concerned with methodology, the way teachers teach children, while the 1994 one was concerned with contents which is why it was really called "the programme". They added that specialists in each subject area elaborated that 1994 proposal:

"We studied the 1987 proposal a lot. Its methodological proposal is inside us now, we cannot work in a different way because we saw that proposal at the very beginning of its construction. It really started to be constructed in the schools and then the consensual ideas were handed in to the Secretary of Education and then it came back to us in the form of an official document. But this proposal was beautiful if you like in terms of participation. I had never seen such a beautiful thing in terms of participation. also the 1987 proposal was very much concerned with low

income pupils and how to improve their learning."
(pedagogical supervisor E school E)

"I was very resistant to "the programme". There was a political difference between the two proposals. While the 1987 one was constructed through discussions, the 1994 one came ready-made from the Secretary of Education which we considered politically wrong. So instead of adopting the 1994 one we decided to combine both proposals using the strengths of each one." (pedagogical supervisor E - school E)

The balance of the evidence indicates that only pedagogical supervisors E and F in school E and pedagogical supervisors A and B in school C were fully aware of both curricula proposals. In school S both pedagogical supervisors did not really know the proposals.

All the six supervisors in the three schools mentioned the fact that the teachers did not know what the proposals were like. Both pedagogical supervisors in school C said that the teachers did not have time to read the proposals that were photocopied and given to them. The pedagogical supervisors in school E said that the number of copies sent by the Secretariat of Education was insufficient for the number of teachers and this led them to devise activities for all the four years based on both curricula proposals and they gave these suggestions to the teachers in the form of a plan.

Pedagogical supervisor E in school E mentioned that she tried to give the teachers new ideas about how to teach the curriculum in the class but she had felt that:

> "Sometimes the teachers agree with you[a] in a meeting to discuss the curriculum but it is not always true that they incorporate these new ideas in their practice in the classroom. For example, the spelling book. I always tell them that the spelling book is useless in the process of learning how to read and write but when we come into the classroom we know that the pupils have their spelling books in their school bags because we see some of them just hiding it quickly. In fact, if the teacher doesn't want to change nothing changes in the school." (pedagogical supervisor E - school E)

Pedagogical supervisor E reinforced the point that the teachers relied entirely on textbooks. This fact led to a separation between the teacher and the curriculum because the teacher was really using something ready-made but this did not empower them. Using textbooks did not give the teachers a sense of ownership of the curriculum.

The balance of the evidence suggests that the teachers and some pedagogical supervisors did not know exactly what the curricula proposals were about and this led the teachers to rely on the textbooks.

Pedagogical supervisor E acknowledged the importance and the difficulty in changing teachers' pedagogy when she said: "if the teacher doesn't want to change nothing changes in the school." Also, the

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[a] *you* = pedagogical supervisors who generally led pedagogical meetings and curriculum meetings

evidence shows that there was a gap between what the pedagogical supervisor thought should be done in the classroom and some teachers' practice in school E. Although all the pedagogical supervisors recognised the importance of teachers getting together to plan the curriculum, all of them agreed that there was a difficulty in doing that in schools either because they were not accustomed to participate in former times, or because the teachers did not have time to come to meetings for these discussions.

There was evidence that there was no genuine involvement in the construction of the curriculum that empowered teachers as experts in education. What actually happened was that the teachers had a partial view over the curriculum as they split the planning among the teachers who taught a particular year (one teacher was responsible for language planning, another one for Maths and Science planning and another one for History and Geography). However, this plan did not exclude the heavy weight put on textbooks.

My conclusion is that the flow of knowledge in those schools occurred within a pattern that did not favour the teachers' construction of knowledge about the curriculum.

2- Curriculum practice in the classroom

It was observed in the schools where this study took place that the decisions about the learning situations were in the teacher's hands and they were defined mainly according to a particular sequence found in textbooks as was noticed in a year 4 class:

A year 4 teacher (teacher M) in school S was giving a class about the respiratory system. First she gave an explanation about the respiratory system (its organs) and showed the pupils a home-made apparatus that illustrated how the breathing works (this was passed on to the pupils so that each pupil could see how it works). Then she made an experiment to show the presence of CO_2 in expiration and finally she asked the children to do an exercise from the book that included questions and answers about the respiratory system. A pupil then asked:

> *Pupil:* Teacher, what are the pulmonary arteries?
>
> *Teacher:* We are going to see that when we study the circulation system next week.
>
> *Pupil:* I have got a book here that says something about that but I do not understand.
>
> *Teacher:* I have already told you that we are going to see this next week. Now it is time for you to do the exercise in the text book.

The teacher did not change the direction of the lesson to follow the interest in pulmonary arteries shown by one of the pupils. The evidence also indicates that the pupils' interests were not a defining factor in the course of a lesson. The teacher was fragmenting the knowledge about

the human body for the sake of following a sequence in the textbook. This study suggests that the teacher's attitude hinders rather than improve pupils' interest for learning.

It was observed that the way the curriculum unfolded in the classroom did not take into consideration any curricular proposal other than the textbooks.

Although some teachers, when they were interviewed, denied using textbooks, the observations indicated that even if the children did not have a textbook to refer to, all the activities planned by the teacher were based on a particular textbook. These activities were duplicated and then given to the children.

The fact that a year 4 teacher in school S refused to explain and talk about the pulmonary arteries to a pupil on the grounds that that would be the subject matter for the following week was an example of how much the teachers relied on textbooks. Knowledge was fragmented for the sake of keeping the sequence of the contents presented in a particular textbook. This fragmentation interferes with the pupils' comprehension of the functioning of their bodies as a whole in this particular situation. In more general terms it interferes with the pupils' interest in learning. It was noticed that the pupils' interest was greater than the possibility the teacher had to cope with it.

Tests and evaluation schemes carried heavy weight in the classroom routine. Most of the teachers acknowledged testing their pupils fortnightly and some others admitted that soon after they finished teaching a new topic they tested their children to evaluate how much they had learned.

The teachers were very much test-oriented; they even tested children who were not supposed to be tested (e.g. year 1 and year 2 children). [a] It was gathered from the interviews that there was an over use of tests. The main aim of the basic literacy cycle was to avoid children repeating year 1 and year 2. In year 1, if the child recognised the letters of the alphabet, wrote phonetically, could count from 1 to 10 and could add up and take away, he /she would able to move forward to year 2. However, in school C, E and S there was a failure rate of 20% in year 1 and this meant that the children were being tested at the teachers' own discretion but not according to the curriculum proposals of 1987 or 1994.[b]

It was gathered from the interviews that in year 3 and year 4 this test orientation guided the teaching process in general terms. The main aim of the activities done in the classroom was to prepare children for tests. It was made apparent by the observations that there was not a

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[a] Year 1 teachers are not supposed to test their children as year 1 and year 2 together form the basic literacy cycle [CBA - ciclo básico de alfabetização). Evaluation is supposed to be on-going on a daily basis based on the progress of the child concerning literacy skills.

[b] Pedagogical supervisor B in school C pointed out that even after 8 years of its creation most teachers do not know the "philosophy" of the basic literacy cycle [CBA] - two years for the child to consolidate basic literacy skills.

concern about pupils using what was learned to improve their own comprehension of the social and physical world. This way of dealing with knowledge implied memorization and storage of knowledge for immediate use - the tests:

> "I don't like when there is Geography test because there are
> a lot of things for us to study and memorize."

Some year 4 pupils in school C when asked what they liked about their teacher they said:

> "I like her because she always gives us fifteen minutes
> before the test for us to study for it. We can read again
> what we memorized at home."

What these children said revealed a teaching/learning process that was mainly based on memorization, storage of information and testing.

It was observed that teachers in general had a major concern to make children differentiate *fantasy* from *reality*. Whenever they told the children a story or a legend they made sure the children know that what the story or the legend tells is fantasy.

Teacher J told a story to her year 4 children in school E. The legend was about the *Vitoria Regia*, a typical flower of the rainforest that lives in the Amazon River:

 (To the children - year 4 class)

> *Teacher.* Is a legend true ? Does it mean that this really
> happened?
> *Children:* No.

Teacher: A legend is a story invented by someone and this story is passed on through the generations. It generally has supernatural aspects in it.

It was observed that teacher A in a year 4 class got confused when she was trying to teach her pupils how to calculate the area of the classroom:

The teacher asked all the children to construct a square metre made of newspaper at home and bring it to school on a particular day she determined. Then she asked the children to measure the length and the width of the classroom - that was a rectangular one - using the square metres they had. However, they measured 7.32 m and 5.75m and the teacher wrote 7.32m and 5.75m on the board.. Then she asked the children to work out the area of the classroom.

It was noticed that the children had difficulty in working out the area and kept asking the teacher how to do it. The teacher had the intention to have the children working out the area *concretely* so that they could understand the concept of an area. However, it was observed that the teacher did not know how to conduct the whole procedure of the calculation of an area *concretely.* First she asked the children to use the square metre to measure the length and the width of the classroom. Then she told the children that they should know how they calculated the area because they had done it concretely. It was made apparent by the observation of what happened in her classroom that the teacher herself did not have a clear concept of how to calculate the area.

It was observed that the teachers had a tendency to ask children to do some coursework in groups but the coursework was done outside their school hours. The children either came to school before or after school hours or met in one of the children's houses. Generally the children were asked to produce a poster about a particular topic. The favourite subjects for posters were Science and Geography.

My conclusion is that the curriculum practice in the classrooms in school C, E and S was guided by textbooks and tests and it did not involve group work in the classroom but outside it. This practice put a lot of stress on the memorization of knowledge. The oversimplification of some scientific concepts led to misconceptions probably because the teacher did not have a very good command of the subject she was supposed to teach. This issue shed a light on teachers' education. The flow of knowledge that emerged empirically occurred within a pattern of "storage" of knowledge.

Values (schooling)

In the schools where this study took place most of the teachers said that the social background of the child interfered with their learning but some others (3) acknowledged that there was no connection between the two - social background and learning:

"I think the social background of the children interferes with their learning because they don't have support at home. They hardly ever do their homework." (teacher M, year 2, school C)

"Children from low income families generally don't do their homework and their mums don't help them with school work either because they are illiterate or because they work all day long." (teacher M, year 1, school E)

"Low income pupils do not have support from their parents at home to do their homework. Some of them haven't even got a TV. A TV may be good or bad for children. I think it is good as a source of information for them. I often ask my pupils to watch the news on TV and write down the one they are interested in and then we can discuss about it in class. Alternatively, I may ask them to pay attention to a particular piece of news from a determined country or a state in Brazil that may be interesting for a particular theme I am developing in class. It is a way of enlarging their knowledge about the world. However, those who haven't got a TV can't do this, so they are hindered." (Teacher AD, year 4, school C)

"I think children who come from low income families are slower in their learning process because they are not fed properly and they do not have school materials such as books which they can write on, pens, pencils and so on." (teacher MD year 3 school C) [a]

The evidence in the interviews indicates that some teachers believed that school could not be effective if the children did not get some teaching at home from their family. Some teachers attributed a teaching role to the family as the children went through their school life without

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[a] School C selected pupils when they came from the pre-school to start compulsory schooling. There was a selection to form year 1 classes and this selection followed the criteria of the social background and teacher's evaluation of the child. It was very unlikely that a child who started in a No 3 class would move to a No 1 class as he/she progressed in his /her school life.

which they could not do well at school. Some teachers put a heavy stress on homework. They mentioned that for the children to be successful at school they had to do their homework every day and they considered parental help to be essential in the accomplishment of it. Also they found that the parents' interest in the children's school life helped their success at school.[6]

However, some other teachers did not think the social background hindered the children's progress at school but they pointed out that family problems might interfere with children's progress:

"Most of my pupils are from low income families but they learn easily because they are hardworking children. I think family problems may interfere more with their learning. For example I have a pupil who has a better social background than the others and he was having behaviour problems and consequently learning problems. I talked to him and he told me that their parents were getting divorced and he cried a lot." (teacher V year 1 school C)

"Most of the children in my class come from low income families and very low income families but they learn very well. I think it depends on how the teacher approaches the children. If the teacher uses concrete teaching materials, is aware of their social reality and base their lessons on these children's experiences the children can do well. I suppose family problems may interfere more than the social background and family problems do not depend on their economic situation." (teacher N year 2 school C)

"I don't think the social background interferes with pupils' learning. I myself was from a low income family and in my schooldays I was as poor as many of my pupils are now. However I have got a degree and all my seven brothers and sisters have got a degree as well ... I think family problems interfere much more with their learning. I have a pupil whose father is a heavy drinker. When his father

arrives home late at night he will wake him up and send him out of the house so he does not get a proper night 's sleep. When he comes to school he is sleepy and sometimes I let him sleep in the class. There is nothing much you can do about that." (teacher M year 4 school S)

This last quotation is particularly important because the teacher said she was from a low income family when she was a child and she pointed out that the fact that not only she was successful but also her brothers and sisters as they all managed to get a university degree.

It was observed that although most teachers were keen on having pupils with different abilities working in pairs so that they could help each other, the teachers who believed there was a connection between social background and learning process did not consider that to work in pairs was helpful for the children improve their learning. Instead, they considered it to be helpful for the teacher. The other teachers who made the point that children from low income families could learn as well as other children from a better social environment viewed pair work as follows:

"It is very good to have them helping each other while working in pairs. They exchange ideas and sometimes they can understand an explanation given by a classmate better than an explanation given by the teacher. It is important to have children with different abilities in these pairs because one may have experiences that the other lacks". (teacher M., year 4, school S)

The balance of the evidence suggests that the teachers had the view that the social background of the children might interfere with their academic progress. There was no consensus about that among teachers where this study took place.

Beliefs (teaching/learning process)

The evidence in the interviews showed that there was no agreement among the teachers about what improved children's learning in the classroom. While some teachers considered the teaching/learning process as linear and passive, some others considered this process as active and constructed by interaction and participation.

In the interviews a few teachers expressed the view that quietness, concentration and the family's support were important to improve children's learning in the classroom. These teachers had a tendency to give a lot of emphasis on certain skills and the family's role:

> "I think the support of the family is essential to improve children's learning in the classroom. Also, concentration and quietness." (teachers V., A., and M., - school C, teachers R, M and G - school E)

The evidence indicates that these teachers also tried to move the responsibility for teaching and learning away from the school. They gave very much emphasis on the teaching role of the family.

When asked what improves children's learning in the classroom one of the headteachers answered:

> "Good planning - but it can be flexible - the relationship between teacher and pupils, affection, incentive, specific materials - we do not have enough because of our financial condition. Also, when the teacher plans taking into consideration the social reality of the pupils, the children will learn better but if the teacher can't be bothered to do this, the children will have more difficulty in learning. (headteacher school C)

Some other teachers mentioned as important factors to improve children's learning in the classroom: a) participation in the class when the pupils express their thoughts and personal views, b) concrete teaching materials, c) group work, d) cooperation, e) the pleasure of learning, f) a class that takes into consideration the social reality of the pupils and g) a good relationship between teacher and pupils. Also, flexible planning and frequent teacher training were mentioned as important for the teacher to be able to conduct a class that would have the factors just mentioned in this paragraph that improved children's learning in the classroom. One of the pedagogical supervisors said:

> "I think what improves children's learning in the classroom is mainly the participation of the pupils in their own learning process. Also the relationship between teacher and pupils, the pleasure of learning and cooperation." (pedagogical supervisor A school C)

The evidence from the interviews and from the observations showed that there was a difference between what some teachers said they considered to be important to improve children's learning in the classroom and what they really did in the classroom. Although some of the teachers considered cooperation, participation and the use of concrete teaching materials important for the teaching/learning process, it was observed that this did not always happen in their classrooms.[7]

The balance of the evidence indicates that there was no agreement at the discourse level about what the teachers considered to be important to improve children's learning in the classroom because they expressed different views when interviewed. However, this disagreement could not be noticed in those teachers' practice. The teachers who acknowledged that participation, specific materials, cooperation and children's social 'reality' were important for the children's learning, did not use those principles in their practice.

Teaching style[a]

When interviewed, pedagogical supervisor A in school C described the predominant teaching style in the schools where this study took place.

> "What predominates in the classroom is the lecture-like style of giving a class. The pupil only knows how to be

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[a] In part I two teaching styles from the models constructed in Chapter 3 were mentioned : *monocommunicative* and *intercommunicative* teaching styles.

passive and "receive" knowledge from the teachers who primarily base their classes on textbooks."

The evidence indicates that the children did not have an active role in the teaching/learning process. They were supposed to *receive* knowledge provided by the teacher.

It was observed that normally a class followed very definite steps: a) the teacher's explanation about a subject or a text for the children to read about a particular subject; b) children's participation through asking questions, minimizing doubts; c) exercises written on the board for the children to copy, or exercises in the textbook or the teacher gave out a duplicated sheet of paper with the exercises on it; d) correction of the exercises either on the board or oral correction. Generally one or two children (or depending on the length of the exercise) were asked to go to the board for the correction of the exercise or they were asked to state the answers orally for the whole class. Sometimes the criteria for choosing a child to go to the board to do the correction of a whole exercise or part of it could be behaviour (good or bad) - the well-behaved ones as a reward and the badly behaved ones as a punishment - or good performance in tests.

Although most teachers who were interviewed said that they allowed their children to express their own ideas and offer controversial views about classroom matters and subjects, it was observed that the

teachers would listen to what the children had to say, but a real discussion or exchange of ideas did not take place.

My conclusion is that the overuse of textbooks was one of the aspects that favoured a pattern of flow of communication in the classroom that was one-sided. This way of conducting a class led to a *monocommunicative* teaching style.

PART III

A DIFFERENT SCHOOL [a]

It was decided to write about this school (school F) separately so that its peculiar characteristics could be singled out. School F is extremely important in this study because its characteristics illustrate aspects pointed out in the ideal typical model of a *communicative* school. Dealing with it separately will allow the construction of a clearer picture of it.

The general argument of part III is that discussions, reflection, and collective actions contribute to changes in school practices.

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[a] It is important to mention that school F has cut down its repetition rate to 0.4%. School C, E and S have an average repetition rate between 20% and 30%.

Section I

SOME MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

1- School

<u>Decision-making and elaboration of norms</u>

It was observed that the way decisions were made and norms were elaborated in this school indicated that the teachers got involved in administrative decisions and in the process of elaboration of norms.

When asked how important she considered it to be to involve teachers in administrative matters the headteacher answered:

> "It is very important that the teachers get involved in all levels of decision in the school. The main aim of our school is to improve the pedagogical aspect of it but sometimes something connected to the physical aspect of the building has an influence on the pedagogical aspect, for example the teachers have been asking me to change the kind of windows we have upstairs. They are very small and in hot weather the children cannot concentrate because of the heat inside the classrooms. We have not had enough money for that up to now. We've put electric fans on the ceiling of the classrooms but this has not solved the problem. This affects children's learning because if they cannot concentrate properly because of the physical conditions of the classroom they are not going to learn as much as we would like them to." (headteacher)

The quotation above illustrates the importance of the teachers' participation in administrative matters.

The headteacher also said that when the time came to choose the windows the decision would be a collective one.

"No single administrative decision in this school is made without consulting the teachers, the headteacher added, "so much so that the teachers sometimes said."

> "You could have decided on your own about this matter, you needn't have consulted us." (teachers to the headteacher)

However, the headteacher explained that she made a point of getting the teachers' participation in decisions of all kinds.

The teachers' and the headteachers' answers to the interviews suggested that to make administrative decisions was a collective issue in this school with the prime objective of improving children's learning, as the headteacher herself explained:

> "In my view the main aim of a school is to improve children's learning. Everything we do here is concerned with that because the pupils are the heart of the school and everything we do is for them."

When interviewed the headteacher pointed out that she did not consider it important to give a lead in the establishment of norms for school functioning. However, she mentioned that she considered it to be

fundamental to have the participation of all school staff in the construction of these norms:

> "The people who are supposed to follow the norms are the ones who have to construct these norms. The participation of the staff will make them more committed to these norms because they had the opportunity to choose. In this way, we ensure that the norms are followed by all."

Not only did the headteacher find the participation of all in the construction of school norms to be important but she also managed to get this participation of all school staff. Teacher N year 3 said:

> "In this school everything is constructed together. We get together to construct the curriculum, to construct the norms and to "construct" the building. There is a collective feeling in the school. This feeling is contagious because even if a new teacher comes to the school she will soon engage in this cooperative mood. This happened to me."

The evidence indicates that some of the reasons that emerged in the other schools for non-participation of teachers did not emerge in this school although the same working conditions and salary applied here.

Teacher N of year 3, when asked the reason why the teachers had an effective participation in this school, said:

> "We earn the same salary as the teachers in other schools but we are very much valued here. The headteacher makes a point to mention how important our work is. This raises our self-esteem and although many of us have two teaching jobs we always find a time to meet. The work in this school is rewarding so we almost forget the salary we earn."

This teacher mentioned something that was not mentioned by other teachers in the other schools - *recognition of the importance of their work* - as a reason for getting the teachers to participate in major decisions.

My conclusion is that the involvement of teachers in administrative decisions and in the construction of norms for school functioning through discussions was a practice that had been incorporated in the school routine.

Leadership style

The flow of communication promoted by the headteacher that emerged from the empirical investigation in school E occurred within a pattern that favours equal opportunities for communication.

All members of school took part in administrative decision-making and elaboration of norms for school functioning. Administrative decisions were taken in the *colegiado* meetings that had ample participation of teachers and parents and the headteacher. Norms were constructed collectively. Communication was used for the construction of norms and collective decisions. This way of managing the school indicates shared power relationships and characterizes a shared leadership style.

2- The classroom

Decision-making and elaboration of norms

The same themes[a] mentioned in part I emerged as the most frequent issues for decision-making in the classroom. It was observed in most of the classrooms that generally the children took part in these decisions.

All the teachers who were interviewed, acknowledged that they allowed their children to choose their own seats in the classroom. In general terms the teachers said that the classroom had to be a pleasant place for the children to be so if they sat in a place they did not like or if they sat together with someone they did not like, instead of this contributing to an exchange ideas when they worked in pairs or in groups, this would be a constraint that would count as a drawback for their learning.

All the teachers considered it important to leave the children free to choose where they would like to sit. One teacher (Teacher J - year 1) pointed out that she would only interfere in the choice if the child had a physical problem for example if the child was short-sighted and sitting in the front row would contribute to overcome this physical constraint. However, the same teacher mentioned that the situation would be made clear to the class as a whole so that they could acknowledge the importance of the teacher's intervention in the process.

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[a] Distribution of pupils in the physical environment of the classroom and performance of some tasks related to the routine of the classroom such as: taking away the register, distributing books, exercise sheets, and searching for something outside the classroom .

All the teachers pointed out that as the children constructed the rules to be followed in the classroom the fact that they chose their own seats was not a problem because they had the responsibility of following the rules wherever they were sitting.

It was evident that this process of construction of rules helped to minimize behaviour problems in the school. All the teachers said that they did not expect the headteacher to solve more serious behaviour problems because they considered their pupils did not have behaviour problems. They said they only had 'children who behaved as children'.

It was made apparent by the classroom observations that the way the classrooms were administered helped the children to develop a cooperative attitude towards the class as a whole.

It was observed that each class had a criterion to select the *helpers* of the week that would perform some tasks in and out of the classroom. The criterion was established by the children.

Instead of having daily helpers they had weekly helpers. The teachers explained that this was an opportunity to develop responsibility for doing certain things over a period of time. With different helpers daily this sense of responsibility was fragmented.

It was gathered from the interviews that the children's participation in the management of the classroom was an attempt made by the

teachers to build shared responsibility and cooperation among the children.

It was made apparent by the classroom observations that the participation of the children in rule-making in the classroom through discussions made it easier for the children to be committed to the rules.

All the teachers interviewed in this school acknowledged the importance of getting the children's participation in the construction of norms in the classroom. The teachers also added that the children had a sense of owning the rules and this built a feeling of responsibility in them because they had to follow rules that were constructed by them.

> "At the beginning of the year I make it clear for them that we are going to construct the rules for our classroom and we do it. Then even if there are some children who are not so much responsible and forget the rules the others immediately remind them of the rules. They do this quite frequently and this makes it easier to have discipline in the classroom." (teacher A year 3 school F)

The same teacher said that she did not have behaviour problems in her classroom. When interviewed, all the teachers acknowledged that they did not have children who were badly behaved apart from one teacher who referred to a boy as having "difficult behaviour". She pointed out that this particular boy had a medical report for being emotionally disturbed.

Another teacher (teacher E - year 4) described the process of construction of rules in her classroom as follows:

> "The children get into groups of four or five and discuss which rules they think they should have in the classroom. After that all the groups present their rules. These rules are put together and then they vote. The rules that have more than 50% of votes are fixed as established rules and they are written on a piece of paper and stuck on the wall. After some months they decide if the rules have to be kept on the wall or they already know the rules well and the paper can be removed. This year they decided that they didn't need to look at the rules on the wall any more so we removed them." (teacher E year 4)

The same teacher added that doing it this way the children were more committed to the norms because it was given them the opportunity of participating. The rules were not imposed by the teacher so they had the responsibility to follow the rules they themselves constructed.

Teacher C year 4 mentioned that the norms of classroom functioning were elaborated by the teacher and pupils together in her class but the pupils had had a leading role in this elaboration. The teacher acted as a guide and helper to the children's actions.

In her year 4 class the norms for classroom functioning were as follows:

- Bring all the books everyday.
- All must participate when working in groups.
- Don't drop litter on the floor.
- Read everyday.
- Wait for your turn to speak.
- Participate as much as possible in the class.
- Be responsible.

- Do all exercises everyday.
- Respect all classmates and teachers.
- Help classmates when they need it.

It was evident that the rules emphasized participation, respect and responsibility. Threats were never used in the class. If a pupil misbehaved the teacher or other classmates always referred him/her to the rules and asked if what (s)he was doing was within the rules and the pupils would soon get into the appropriate behaviour again.

It was observed that there was no control over the pupils' body. They were free to go to the toilet whenever they needed. They did not even ask permission of the teacher. However, the fact that they were free to go out of the classroom did not make them go out more frequently than was necessary: it was observed that very few pupils went to the toilet during a class.

Also, the pupils were free to stand up and go to a classmate's desk to help him/her if the classmate was having difficulty in doing any task. This cooperation was appreciated by the teacher.

It was observed that there was no suspensions or exclusions of children from the learning situation.

The balance of the evidence suggests that communication for the construction of norms leading to shared responsibilities was part of the

routine in the classrooms of this school. This way of dealing with norms made it easier for the children to be committed to them.

My conclusion is that the way the classrooms were managed indicated shared power relationships. The children had the opportunity to get involved in decisions and in the process of elaboration of norms in the classroom. This helped to build the children's responsibility for their behaviour. This fact not only improved children's behaviour but also gave them enhanced opportunities for dialogue and communication improving their learning opportunities and their interest for learning. It was observed that the children were always busy involved in classroom activities. Also, they showed interest in what they were doing. This way of managing the classrooms indicated shared leadership style.

Leadership style

It was made apparent by the classroom observations that the teachers' approach to the management of the classroom helped to foster collective decisions and construction of norms. The flow of communication occurred within a pattern of two-way communication. This pattern of flow of communication indicates a shared leadership style.

PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

Curriculum matters

1- Curriculum planning

The headteacher was not only interested but also participated in the discussions about the school curriculum and pedagogical matters of the school, as she herself explained:

> "Besides the "*Colegiado*" meetings we have general whole school staff meetings[a] ... In these meetings we discuss general school matters, curriculum and pedagogical issues. We find it important to involve all in these meetings so that from the teachers to the cleaning staff we have a consistent approach on how to relate to the children."

The teachers got involved in the planning of the curriculum within each year band but they were also involved in the integration of the curriculum through out years 1, 2, 3, and 4 so that they did not have overlapping themes and also for the teachers to be aware of what was possible to be covered in the previous year so that they had a starting point.

There was a coordinator (of each year band) who was responsible for listening to the needs of the teachers for materials. The teaching staff

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[a] Whole school meetings generally happened once a month.

met whenever they felt it necessary to re-plan the curriculum of the whole school based on the pace that was possible for them to follow according to the pupils they had in their classes.

> "We plan at the beginning of the year but we do not know what our classes are going to be like, we don't know their pace so after two or three months we generally feel we need of another meeting to adjust what we had planned previously because then we can have in mind our "real" pupils with their strengths and weaknesses." (teacher M year 2 school F)

The teachers met once a month within year band 2 and 3 but it was not fixed. If they felt they needed another meeting before a month had gone by they would arrange to meet. Within year band 1 and 4 there were weekly meetings.

As part of the integration of the school structure, the whole staff of the school had elaborated the *Plan of the Development of the School.* This plan had two pedagogical projects - an *orthographic project,* an *extra-shift cooperation project* and one *administrative* project for the improvement of the physical structure of the building.

The *extra-shift cooperation project* aimed at helping the pupils who had learning difficulties so that they could keep pace with their class. It meant that the pupils with learning difficulties had to come to school outside their school hours. For example a pupil who studied in the morning (7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.) came to school in the afternoon for this

project and the pupils who studied in the afternoon came to school in the morning twice or three times a week depending on the child's needs. A member of the community who was willing to help (mums, dads, aunts, university students or retired teachers) did the work with these pupils.

The *orthographic project* aimed at improving the spelling of the pupils as a whole. The project was elaborated by all teaching, administrative and technical/ pedagogical staff. The idea of elaborating such a project started when the teachers felt the necessity to improve the children's spellings in a more pleasant and efficient way rather than just copying words. They managed to edit a brochure with the activities they found suitable for all levels of children. This brochure was used at the teachers' discretion according to the level of their classes and their specific difficulties and needs.

It is argued that the planning of the curriculum gave the teachers a sense of ownership over the curriculum developed in the school.

When asked how important she considered it to be to have teachers working together to plan the curriculum the headteacher said:

> "I think it is fundamental for the teachers to work together.
> They exchange ideas and they exercise their capacity for
> reasoning, judging and deciding. They are the ones who
> know their pupils better and they know what suits them. I
> give them all the support they need for their meetings, I
> encourage these meetings and I also encourage teachers
> to attend congresses, symposiums and refresher courses.
> When one teacher goes to one of these courses they
> arrange a meeting so that they can pass ideas on to the
> other teachers who were unable to attend the course. I also

encourage the teachers to go for a degree in Pedagogy and very few teachers in the school do not have a degree."

The evidence shows not only that the headteacher supported and encouraged teachers' meetings for curriculum planning and re-planning throughout the academic year but also encouraged teachers' professional improvement stimulating their participation in refresher courses, congresses and symposiums.

When asked which curriculum proposal they were using as a guide for the work developed in the classroom the teachers said :

> "We are using our own proposal. We got together and studied both proposals (87 and 94) and decided what we thought was best in one and the other and this is the way we are doing it. The 94 proposal came to schools as a political manoeuvre. It is not to be implemented this year but next year." (teacher C and E - year 4; teacher N and A year 3; teacher M and R year 2; teacher H and J year 1)

The evidence indicates that the teachers were fully aware of the contents of both proposals and the political context in which the both proposals emerged. Also, they were in a position to discuss and criticise them.

Also, teacher M - year 2 mentioned that the starting point for the school to re-structure its curriculum, pedagogy and the way they related to children was the curriculum proposal that was sent to schools in 1987.[a]

She added that this curriculum proposal was very important because its

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[a] They started this process in 1990 when the school finally managed to have its own building.

major concern was to democratize school practices and to improve the learning of pupils from low income families and most important of all this curriculum proposal was an outcome of a big educational debate in Minas Gerais State with the participation of all.

It was observed that not only did both pedagogical supervisors and the teachers in this school know quite well what the curriculum proposals were about but so did the headteacher. They could all talk about the curriculum proposals, make comments on them and criticise whatever they considered inappropriate in them.

The balance of the evidence suggests that the way the curriculum was planned in this school gave the teachers a sense of ownership over the curriculum developed there. This way of dealing with the school curriculum suggests that the flow of curriculum knowledge among teachers and the headteacher occurred within a pattern of construction of knowledge. Also, pedagogical matters and administrative matters were quite close together.

2- Curriculum practice in the classroom

It was observed that pupils' views and experiences were much valued by the teachers who let the children express their views and these views were most of the time brought into the core of the lesson.

Teacher M, a year 2 teacher, asked her children to cut out some words from a newspaper and these words were used by the children to make sentences. One of the words was *salary*. From the sentence one of the children produced with the word 'salary', the children started a discussion about salaries in general - how much the minimum wage was, how much their parents earned, if the minimum wage was enough to support a family. Then the discussion moved on to the idea that the more you study the more you will be able to earn in the future. They came to the conclusion that people who do not have a certain level of education will earn a low salary, will have a bad job and will have a difficult life.

It was noticed that instead of cutting short what the children had to say about salaries the teacher conducted the discussion so that the conclusion the children came to was an incentive for them to study harder. Also, the children remained interested when they went back to sentence formation.

It was observed that the teachers in this school did not rely entirely on textbooks to give their classes. They used other materials as well such as newspapers, magazines, leaflets and tv.

The only textbook the children had in all classes was a textbook for Science. However, the textbook used was not the one sent to the schools by the government. Teacher M year 2 said:

> "It is not possible to use the books distributed by the
> government because they are not good books they lead

you to a traditional teaching method. They do not match our views about education."

It was observed that teacher R year 2 used newspapers as a source of motivation to develop themes in the classroom. In her classroom there was a notice board full of newspaper news. When she was interviewed teacher R said that she used newspaper news about the environment, sports, local community, weather, or any other news that might interest her pupils so that they could have debates, discussions and, as a follow up, writing activity.

Teacher M year 2 said she asked her pupils to watch the news on t.v and to write down the news they found interesting. Then they had to tell it to one of their classmates the following day. Sometimes they might have a classroom discussion if it was a polemical theme interesting for them. At other times she asked them to watch the weather forecast, to pay attention to the location of Minas Gerais in the map, compare temperatures in other parts of Brazil and they had a chat about this in the classroom the following day.

It was evident that the teachers did not seem to be so much concerned about testing their pupils. Most of them said that they gave formal tests because this was what the government demanded from them but they were much more concerned about the daily progress of the pupils in the classroom.

In this school the 'ciclo básico de alfabetização' [basic literacy cycle] functioned as suggested in the 1987 curriculum proposal. The children were not held back according to test results in year 1 and year 2. The evaluation process was on-going.

The balance of the evidence indicates that the flow of knowledge in the school occurred within a pattern of construction of knowledge. The way the curriculum unfolded in the classroom took into consideration pupils' lives and views about the world. Pupils' interests and experiences contributed to enrich and change the course of a lesson and this kept children's interest in learning and in the long term helped to improve their learning performance. Textbooks and tests did not guide the development of most of the lessons.

Values (schooling)

Eighty percent of the pupils who attend school F were from low income families. However, the teachers either said that the children's social background did not interfere with their learning or the slight interference that it may have should be coped with by the school:

> "I think the social background doesn't interfere with their learning. The low income children have good results. I have excellent pupils that I know are from very low income families ... . They are hardworking but I feel sorry for them because I don't know if they will be able to continue their studies after they have finished compulsory schooling." (teacher E - year 4)

> "I think it may interfere slightly but they can learn well. We just have to have a bit more patience with them. In fact, it is the school role to do it because they do not have many learning opportunities at home. After all this is what school is for, isn't it?" (Teacher M Year 2)

The evidence indicates that the teachers in school F did not have a pre-decided idea about what children should know before they came to school. They did not attribute to the family a teaching role without which the children could not do well at school. The teachers did not move the responsibility to teach children from the school to the family.

The evidence in the interviews showed that teachers were aware that many parents were unable to help their children with their homework so the work the children were supposed to do at home was always something that they had already learned well in class and the homework was just for reinforcement and for the children to feel confident about a particular subject.

Also, it was made apparent that the teachers tried to instil responsibility in the children and they always told the children that they were responsible for doing their homework and they should not wait for their parents to tell them to do it or to ask if they had got any homework to do.

> "We always tell them that their parents work all day and they are tired at the end of the day. Parents are responsible for the work they do and children are responsible for their studies. *Do you ask your mum and dad if they have worked*

well?, If they did everything they had to do at work?"
(Teacher M year 2)

There was evidence that teachers tried to minimize problems that might arise because of lack of family support and the family was not blamed for the children's occasional learning difficulties. Most teachers said that cooperation in the class was fundamental to minimize different social experiences.

> "Exchanging ideas they can learn from each other - that is one child may have one experience that the other one lacks that's why we use pair work frequently. Group work is not used quite so often because of the difficulty of moving the desks around due to the size of the classrooms."
> (Teacher E year 4)

However, most teachers considered that family problems might interfere with children's learning whatever their social background might be, as some teachers acknowledged:

> "It is important to let pupils express their emotions in the classroom because a child who may be very quiet may be suffering. The children *bring their families to school* and this may disturb their learning." (Teacher E year 4).

> "To think about family problems is much more disturbing to a child than any social background." (Teacher H year 1)

The balance of the evidence suggests that teachers in this school did not consider that the social background of pupils from low income families hindered their possibility of learning or their academic progress.

The teachers acknowledged that learning difficulties might appear despite the social background of the child and family problems might be one of the most important reasons for that.

Beliefs (teaching/learning process)

All the teachers interviewed in this school mentioned cooperation, interaction, a friendly atmosphere in the classroom and concrete teaching materials as being important to improve children's learning in the classroom.

Some teachers mentioned that it was important to relate the contents to be learned by the children to the children's lives so that it could make sense to them.

> "We cannot talk about grapes to children who have never seen them unless we bring some into the classroom." (teacher N year 3)

One of the pedagogical supervisors who was also a year 4 teacher in school F said:

> "The more cooperatively they act the better will be their learning and also their participation in class. It is also important that the children like what they are doing." (pedagogical supervisor G/teacher E - year 4)

When they were interviewed all teachers said that they considered it to be important to have children's participation in class; they encouraged the children to express their views in the classroom all the

time. It was observed that there were often dialogues between children and the teacher and that the children were very much interested in what went on in the classroom. They expressed excitement when the teacher mentioned they were doing this or that activity.

All the children who were interviewed in this school, besides P. E. and break-time, they also mentioned that they liked to *study*. Most of them said *they liked everything in school and there was nothing they disliked*.

Also, when asked what they thought made learning easier for them the children said that the possibility of talking to their classmates about something they were having difficulty in learning made them learn better. The sense of cooperation was one aspect mentioned by most of the children that made them like their class.

The balance of the evidence indicates that participation and cooperation were considered to be important to improve children's learning in the classroom.

Teaching styles

It was observed that aspects of *intercommunicative* teaching style were predominant in this school. Discussions, debates, pair work and group work was present in the classrooms observed. Most of the teachers encouraged discussions in the classroom and stimulated controversial

views as a means of getting the children to participate in debates and express their own views. Teacher E year 4 said:

> "My children are always talking to each other. I don't mean that my class is a mess but they are encouraged to exchange ideas and help each other. I also like to throw some topics that can be issues for discussions so that they can learn how to express and support their views."

My conclusion is that the way the teachers relate to children builds a two-way communication scheme leading to an *intercommunicaitve* teaching style. This teaching style fosters the flow of knowledge to occur within a pattern of construction of knowledge.

PART IV

Conclusion

Eight schools were investigated in England and Brazil altogether. Seven schools showed similar patterns of flow of *knowledge, power* and *communication:* 'storage' and 'pragmatic' knowledge, centralized power relationships and one-sided communication. Only one school was different from the others: construction of knowledge, shared power relationships and two-way communication were the patterns there.

However, the schools in England and Brazil faced different situations. In England the curriculum that was supposed to be used in the

schools had come from the government as an imposition; in Brazil the curriculum proposal still in use was the proposal that was born in the schools as result of a full educational debate in Minas Gerais. The proposals which resulted from the debates were given to educationalists and educational authorities who elaborated the final curriculum proposal. Both curricula have the purpose of raising educational standards in both countries.

Although the style of elaboration of the curricula was different in England and Brazil it was found that the professionals[a] in the schools had very similar concepts of *knowledge, power* and *communication.*

The headteachers' discourse in three schools in Brazil was quite different from the headteachers' discourse in England. However, their practices were quite similar. The headteachers in Brazil had incorporated the discourse that would build a *communicative* school but they failed to put it in practice. All of them acknowledged that they had difficulty in doing things with the participation of all and that had a tendency to want to impose their ideas because they had not been accustomed to participation. This was noticed in decision-making, elaboration of norms and leadership style.

The teachers in both countries had similar concepts about the teaching/learning process. They mentioned skills such as listening,

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[a] Teachers, headteachers and technical/pedagogical staff (when this applies).

quietness, concentration, observation, and home study as important to improve children's learning. Only the teachers in school F and a few teachers in other schools in Brazil acknowledged that participation, cooperation and interaction improved children's learning in the classroom.

Most teachers in Brazil acknowledged that low income pupils could learn quite well (all teachers in school F) and only some of them attributed a teaching role to the family. In England the teachers were unanimous in affirming that pupils from low income families were hindered at school because of their social background and because families did not carry out their teaching roles.

Only in school F did the teachers take into consideration children's lives and experience when they were constructing the curriculum in the classroom. All other teachers in Brazil and England did not take children's lives into consideration when curriculum activities were carried out in the classroom. In Brazil the overuse of textbooks was one of the reasons for that.
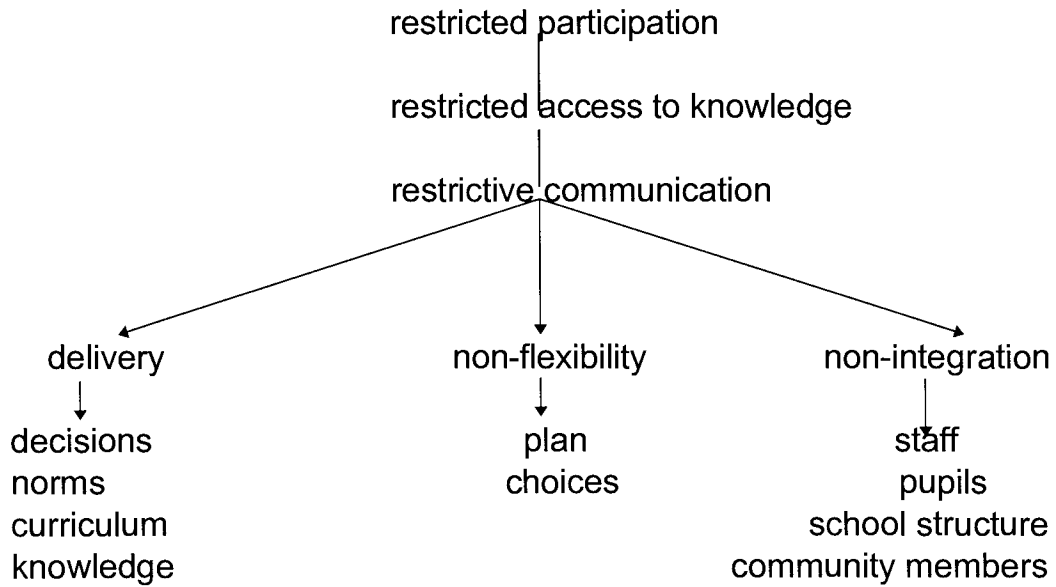
In seven schools communication between teacher and children and among children was very much controlled and it was only supposed to happen in a one-way basis. In school F the teachers allowed ample participation of the children who would engage in dialogues and conversation either with the teacher or with classmates in group work or pair work.

The headteachers used communication within a pattern that led to imposition of norms and decisions in seven schools. This way of managing the school did not favour the rationalization of the *symbolic universe* of the school. However, in school F the headteacher promoted a flow of communication that favoured discussions, collective decisions and construction of norms. This way of managing the school favoured the rationalization of the *symbolic universe*.
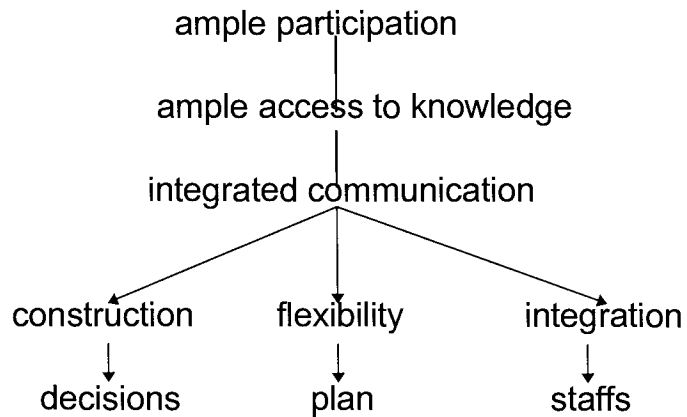
In short, three main themes emerged from seven schools: 'delivery', non-flexibility and non-integration as a consequence of restrictive communication, restricted participation of school members in the daily life of the schools and restricted access to knowledge. Thus these schools can be characterized as *informative* schools. Three other main themes emerged from school F: construction, flexibility and integration as a consequence of integrated communication, ample participation of school members in the school daily life and ample access to knowledge. Thus this school can be characterized as a *communicative* school.

A summary of the characteristics of both kinds of schools follows:

INFORMATIVE SCHOOL

restricted participation

restricted access to knowledge

restrictive communication

delivery	non-flexibility	non-integration
decisions	plan	staff
norms	choices	pupils
curriculum		school structure
knowledge		community members

COMMUNICATIVE SCHOOL

ample participation

ample access to knowledge

integrated communication

construction	flexibility	integration
decisions	plan	staffs

norms   choices   pupils
curriculum   school structure
Knowledge   community members

The characteristics of each category that emerged from the analysis of the data collected in the schools where this study took place can be summarized in each type of school as follows:

MANAGEMENT ASPECTS

1- The schools

Decision-making

Communicative school

Teachers' participation in discussions about administrative matters, pedagogical matters and curriculum matters is fundamental.

The headteacher supports and encourages these discussions as well as teachers' professional improvement.

Informative school

Teachers' participation is not considered so important for administrative matters

The headteacher considers it important that the teachers get together to work out the curriculum to deliver it as the government demands.

Whole staff meetings have the main purpose of delivery of information and decisions.

Elaboration of norms

Communicative school

The headteacher together with the various school staff and community members construct norms of school functioning.

Informative school

The headteacher not only gives a lead in the establishment of norms in the school but also imposes them on school members.

Leadership styles

Communicative school

The headteacher promotes an integrated style of communication that favours the integration of the school structure.

Informative school

The headteacher promotes a restrictive communicative style that does not favour the integration of the school structure.

2- The classrooms

Decision-making

Communicative school

Distribution of pupils in the physical environment of the classroom

 Pupils are free to choose their own seats

Some tasks in and out of the classroom

The participation of children in the administration of the classroom follows a criteria worked out by the children themselves.

Informative school

Distribution of pupils in the physical environment of the classroom

The pupils are not free to choose their seats which are chosen by the teacher mainly according to pupils' behaviour.

Some tasks in and out of the classroom

The participation of children in the administration of the classroom follows the criteria of good behaviour established by the teacher.

Elaboration of norms

Communicative school

The teacher together with the pupils construct the norms for classroom functioning

Informative school

The teacher elaborates the norms of classroom functioning and imposes them on the pupils

Leadership styles

Communicative school

The teacher promotes a flow of communication that characterizes a shared leadership. This favours the integration of teacher and pupils and staff.

Informative school

The teacher promotes a flow of communication that characterizes a centralized leadership style. This does not favour an integration between teacher and children and staff.

PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS
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Beliefs (teaching/learning process)

Communicative school

Participation, cooperation and interaction are supposed to improve children's learning in the classroom

Informative school

Skills such as quietness, concentration, and home study are considered to improve children's learning in the classroom

Values (schooling)

Communicative school

Children with any social background are supposed to be able to learn well.

Children's interaction in the classroom is supposed to minimize differences in social background enhancing children's learning.

Informative school

Only children of a particular background are supposed to learn well.

Segregation of children is supposed to help their learning.

A teaching role is attributed to the family.

Curriculum matters

Communicative school

1-Curriculum planning

Teachers get together to plan the school curriculum within each year band and within the school as a whole.

2- Curriculum practice in the classroom

The way the teacher constructs the curriculum in the classroom takes into consideration pupils' lives and experiences.

Informative school

1-Curriculum planning

Teachers get together but within each year band or each subject area has a teacher who is responsible for the planning of it.

2- Curriculum practice in the classroom

The way the teacher delivers the curriculum does not take into consideration pupils' lives and experiences

Teaching styles

Communicative school

The teacher allows ample participation of the children who engage in dialogues either with the teacher or with classmates in group work or pair work.

Informative school

Communication between teacher and children and among children is very much controlled by the teacher.

NOTES

[1] M. Patton, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, London, Sage Publications, 1990, pp. 464-470.

[2] It is important to clarify that the structure of Brazilian primary schools in Viçosa is different from English Infant and Junior schools. While in England there is the administrative staff, the teaching staff and support staff, in Brazil there is also the technical/pedagogical staff that is formed by one or two pedagogical supervisors (supervisor pedagógico) and an educational guide (orientador educacional). In the schools where this study took place there were two pedagogical supervisors in each of them. One for year 1 and year 2 and another one for year 3 and year 4. The primary

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function of the pedagogical supervisor is to give the teachers supervision on pedagogical and curriculum matters. The primary function of the educational guide is to deal with problems of relationship between teachers and pupils and to give early professional guidance for year 3 and year 4 pupils (9 and 10 year olds). For the purpose of this study the pedagogical supervisors in the four schools were interviewed but not the educational guides. Also it is important to point out that school is part time for both teachers and pupils (morning shift and afternoon shift) but for the technical pedagogical group it is full time.

[3] J. Piaget, The Moral Development of the Child, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, p. 367.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 327-414.

[6] In fact, although some teachers think the social background of the child interferes with their learning mostly because they do not get any help with their school work at home, they do not think these children have a "deficit". they think that at any time that there may be a change in the family circumstances; More parents' interest in the children's school life for example can make the children catch up:

> "I have got twins from a very low income family in my class. Their dad works for the town hall and earns the minimum wage and their mum does not work. They did not write anything and I kept asking his parents to come to school to talk to me and after his dad started coming here and showing interest in their school life they started improving and the girl has started writing and now the boy has started writing as well. Without their dad's interest I believe they wouldn't have progressed." (teacher R year 1 school C)

Although the headteacher and the pedagogical supervisor A in school C pointed out the complex nature of the teaching/learning process and also its dynamism, the pedagogical supervisor A acknowledged that in school C :

> "The teachers here have a "traditional" way of giving a class. They talk all the time and the pupils listen to them. The pupils don't know how to cooperate because they are not accustomed to working in groups. The teachers here rely on textbooks to give their classes. The textbooks lead the teachers to a traditional way of teaching and so they do not use concrete teaching materials and they do no take into consideration the "reality " of the pupils."

Pedagogical supervisor E in school E agrees with pedagogical supervisor A in school C :

> "Unfortunately the textbook is the staple material in the classroom. This is our reality. When the pedagogical supervisor goes into a classroom it is very common to see pupils hiding their spelling book. We think that it is not important to use spelling books for the children to learn how to read and write, but if the teacher does not want to change, nothing changes in the school."

Chapter 7:

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate a problem that affects most societies in the world - the problem of educational reform and curriculum change. The need to reform education generally starts from political and economic changes in society. These reforms usually include change in the curriculum. To change the curriculum means to alter not only curriculum documents but also school practices. School daily practices do not change overnight just because a new Education Act has been passed by a parliament. Changes in schools are usually slow and take a long time to be accomplished.

The difficulty in altering every day practices in schools leads to a situation where 'reform practice' does not correspond fully to 'reform proposal'. This non-correspondence between 'proposal' and 'practice' is the main problem that has provided the initial cue for this study to be carried out.

The study was developed with the argument that the *symbolic universe* of schools offers resistance to relevant and legitimate proposals for curriculum change.

The initial purpose of this study was to investigate the *symbolic universe* of schools to provide a better understanding of the

characteristics, peculiarities and contradictions of school practices and by this to improve the understanding of some aspects that may hinder changes in school practices.

This chapter is organized in three sections and has three purposes: a) to summarize those characteristics, peculiarities and contradictions of school practices that may delay changes in schools in section I; b) to discuss the implications of this study for further research projects and for the literature on curriculum change in section II and c) to make some suggestions for review of some important issues in the context of Brazilian education in section III.

Section I

The investigation was carried out in eight primary schools: four in Reading, England and four in Viçosa (Minas Gerais), Brazil.

The data were collected in England and Brazil through interviews and observations. Headteachers, teachers, technical/pedagogical staff (when this applies) and pupils were interviewed, and teachers' practice in the classroom as well as teachers' meetings for curriculum planning were observed and notes were taken.

The investigation provided evidence that seven of the schools investigated in England and Brazil had more characteristics of

informative schools as described in the ideal typical model in Chapter Five. However, it cannot be said that all the characteristics described in the model of an *informative school* were found in the schools. The practice of a few teachers in schools A, C and E in Brazil was more compatible with *communicative* schools. However, their practice became diluted among other teachers' practices in other classrooms. Those teachers did not manage to influence the practice of the school as a whole and the schools were characterized as *informative* schools.

There was evidence that there was an inconsistency between 'discourse' and 'practice' in the schools that are considered to be *informative*. In Brazil, this inconsistency was noticed mainly between the headteachers' 'discourse' and practice. There was evidence that the discourse of the headteachers in these schools expressed ideas that were compatible with the model of *communicative* schools but they failed to put these ideas in practice.[a] They were generally unaware that the ideas they put across did not quite match their practices. However, there was evidence that although the headteachers mentioned that they found it important to have teachers' participation in the process of decision-making in the schools it was difficult to get this participation for reasons that were beyond the headteachers' control.

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[a] It would have been misleading if this study had taken into consideration only the discourse of headteachers to have a picture of the schools.

In England there was evidence that there was an inconsistency between some teachers' 'discourse' and their 'practices' in the classroom. These teachers like the headteachers in Brazil were not aware of this inconsistency.

The evidence gathered in one school (school F) showed that it had more characteristics of a *communicative* school as described in the model. The teachers including the headteacher shared similar concepts of the teaching/learning process. They also shared similar ideas of management of the school and the classroom; these ideas comprised participation, cooperation and construction. Their practices were compatible with the ideas they expressed.

After the analysis of the evidence gathered in all the schools, different themes emerged from both the *informative* schools and the *communicative* school. It was evident that in the *informative* schools that there was restricted participation, restricted access to knowledge and restrictive communication. These led to *delivery* of decisions, norms, curriculum and knowledge; *non-flexibility* of planning and choices and *non-integration* of pupils, school structure and community members with administrative and teaching staff. This restricted participation and communication led to a taken-for granted attitude towards everyday managerial and pedagogical practices and relationships including the teaching/learning process.

The *communicative* school (school F) showed that there was ample participation, ample access to knowledge and integrated communication in the school. These led to *construction* of decisions, norms, curriculum and knowledge; *flexibility* of planning and choices, and *integration* of staff, pupils, school structure and community members with school staff. This ample participation through integrated communication led to a constant reflection upon everyday practices (both management and pedagogical practices) and relationships in the school. There was evidence that the teachers were constantly calling into question their own practice and one another's practices and were always trying to improve them.

In school F this participation and reflection upon their practices started with the need the whole school staff had to start working together in their own new school building.

When the whole staff in school F started working together in the same school building,[a] they felt the necessity of getting together to discuss their practices and relationships and to reflect upon them. This created ample participation of school members within the school.

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[a] School F was created in 1963 and it functioned in annexe classrooms of a private convent school until 1986. Then it functioned in three different buildings for three years - two separate residential homes and in the basement floor of a social club in the town. In 1990 the school managed to have the construction of its own building finished. Only then was the school staff put together as a proper school. Most teachers who work there now started working there after 1986.

There was evidence that the teachers needed to redefine the main guidelines for the pedagogical practices in school F, so that there was coherence in their practices. As the teachers had spent a few years working as separate individuals who hardly ever met due to the difficult conditions under which the school functioned, the teachers had to find a way whereby their teaching practices would not be inconsistent. They found that the only way of doing it was getting together and discussing their problems.

Also, the teachers needed to find a reason why the school should "survive" given the possibility that the school would be closed down. In this event, the pupils would be re-distributed among other state schools in the town and the teachers would eventually lose their jobs.

The school staff needed the support of the community. The parents were called into the school so that they could define what sort of school they would like for their children. The 1987 curriculum proposal had started with a full debate with parents, pupils and teachers. Parents and school staff agreed that the 1987 proposal would fulfil their aspirations for a better quality education for their children. This agreement was translated into four main objectives: a) to raise the standards of the teaching/learning process; b) to reduce the repetition rate; c) to improve pupils' academic achievement; and d) to try to minimize the fragmentation of knowledge. Those objectives were based

on a major one: the construction of a collective pedagogical project that would lead the teachers to deal with the pupils' life experience (social, economic and cultural background), and parents' participation in school issues would be welcomed by the school staff. These aspects of the project were expected to contribute to the autonomy, improvement and creativity of the teachers.

It can be concluded that the teachers' participation through communication in all school matters in school F was a result of the need of the teachers to have the support of the community. The teachers had to justify for the parents why the school should not be closed down.[a] The teachers had to offer their pupils good quality education and so they improved not only their pedagogy but also their management of the school and the classrooms. The re-definition of their practices and relationships was supported by the 1987 curriculum proposal. The school staff decided to study the proposal and put it into practice. They asked for and got the help of the Department of Education of the Federal University of Viçosa.

The teachers and the headteacher in school F pointed out that they were pleased with their change (which was admittedly slow and demanded a lot of effort of all members of school and the community).

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[a] "The Municipal local authority wanted to close down the school so that the new building could be used for other purposes that would be more profitable for the municipality. However, what they told us was that the building was not safe." (teacher M year 2 school F)

One of the reasons was that they had managed to cut repetition rates dramatically (currently 0.4% - formerly between 20% and 25% the same as schools A, C and E). Having managed to cut repetition rates did not mean they lowered their expectations of the pupils. On the contrary they raised their expectations and the pupils responded in a very satisfactory way.

There was evidence that all the pupils in this particular school liked to come to school and they said that there was not anything in the school that they disliked. They also pointed out that they liked to study.

The practice of dialogical communication that generated ample participation became incorporated into the everyday practice of the school so much so that the headteacher and the teachers acknowledged that these practices were embedded in the school culture and they did not know how to work in a different way.

The government in Minas Gerais launched a new curriculum proposal in 1994 that was to be implemented in 1996. The school staff studied this new proposal and they decided to construct their own curriculum proposal based on the new proposal and that of 1987. By doing this the teachers showed their autonomy and that they were empowered. This empowerment started with the construction of the whole process of participation through communication that emerged from a crisis.

The other schools investigated in Brazil that were characterized as *informative* had always been established as a school since their creation - about 30 years ago. Although one of the schools (school C) moved into a new building some years ago the classrooms had always been in the same building. These schools did not have to find a reason for their existence. They did not have their practices called into question so they did not feel the need for changing.

In England the government introduced greater parental choice in the 1988 Education Reform Act. The school results are published in league tables and this allows parents to compare school results and choose the "best" school for their children. This is a way of letting the community know different levels of school effectiveness.[a] In this way the schools justify their existence before the community. However, as it is now, parental choice is rather difficult to exercise because many families are not prepared to cope with the expenses incurred on transport to school if their children have to go to schools that are far away from their homes. Another problem is that these results in the league tables may be deceptive because schools in middle class areas may show better results than those in working class areas. These results need a deeper analysis and cannot be taken at their face value.

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[a] *School effectiveness* is used here because the quality of the school is measured by tests.

In Brazil (Minas Gerais) the proposal for the democratization of the teaching/learning process in the 1987 curriculum was coupled with a change in the concept of how this teaching/learning process takes place and how leadership in the school and the classroom should occur. Democratic practices that included interaction in the classroom between teacher and pupils and among pupils, and interaction among teachers and between headteacher and teachers were to be introduced in schools. In this way, the pedagogical practice of *transmission* of knowledge was to be changed to that of *construction* of knowledge. Also, the practice of centralized leadership style was to be changed to a shared leadership style. The use of *communicative* practices was supposed to help the construction of knowledge and to develop democratic relationships in the school.

There was evidence that the *symbolic universe* of three schools in Brazil was resistant to the incorporation of these practices because there was not a belief that these democratic practices together with the practice of construction of knowledge would bring about learning. Also, by not participating in the process of decisions either because they were short of time or because they believed administrative decisions were for the headteacher and pedagogical decisions for the pedagogical supervisor, the teachers showed that they resisted accepting democratic

practices in the school and in another way resisted adopting these practices in the classroom.

There was evidence that one school - school F - made changes in its *symbolic universe* because they felt in special circumstances the need for it. This way they altered their beliefs about the teaching/learning process and this contributed for them to alter their practices in the classroom. They also altered their beliefs about democratic practices and relationships in the school and the classroom. This includes the way decisions are made and norms are constructed; the way the curriculum is planned and developed in the classroom. Also, the way of communicating with others was altered. They 'unlearned' old practices and beliefs and substituted them for new ones.

There was evidence in England that the *symbolic universe* of schools offered resistance to the introduction of tests. The teachers did not believe that tests would help raise standards and there was no evidence that these tests could have an impact on the pupils' academic life.[a]

Also, in the classroom observation there was evidence that there was resistance to the idea of having subjects to be taught in the classroom as the teachers were not accustomed to the teaching of

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[a] Mainly in keystage 2 because the children leave primary school to start secondary school the following academic year and the result of the tests come to the school when the academic year is practically finished.

subjects but topics. Many teachers still continue to give topic based classes. As the National Curriculum does not stipulate the methodology that should be used in the classroom to teach these subjects the teachers have still got the freedom to teach in the way they think it is most convenient to them. However, when the teachers plan their curriculum at school they first think of a topic and activities. Then they find out how these activities fit in the National Curriculum according to the year they teach.

This study revealed that the *symbolic universe* of schools has multiple complex facets that make the whole process of change an intricate one. Political support, bureaucratic structure and teacher training mentioned by Azevedo[1] are necessary but not sufficient conditions to bring about change.

The multiple facets of the *symbolic universe* that were disclosed in this study emphasised that the whole process of change in schools deals with changing people - their beliefs, their values, their way of communicating with others, their way of elaborating norms, their teaching styles, their leadership styles, their way of making decisions and their way of dealing with the curriculum itself. With so many facets to be changed the whole process of changing schools is far from being an easy one.

Curriculum change is not only about the curriculum itself but also about a number of aspects that influence directly or indirectly the way the curriculum is developed in the classroom. Any curriculum proposal for curriculum change in itself is an 'ideal type' in terms of objectives, contents and methodology. Only when the proposal is confronted with the 'actual' world of the school and the classroom will it be brought into life. In this event, the *symbolic universe* of the school will interfere with it - beliefs, values, teaching styles, leadership styles, decision-making, norms, curriculum planning and practice. Any proposal for curriculum change to be incorporated in the daily practice of the schools will have to take those aspects into consideration.

One of the ways of interpreting some of the findings of the fieldwork[a] is to revisit Habermas' theory of democratic societies and his theory of change at this stage.

Habermas discusses in his theory of change how a social group can actually think of changes and innovations. This implies reflection upon the *lifeworld* of the participants of a social group. The *lifeworld* of a social group includes beliefs, values, norms, patterns of behaviour and social practices. Only by achieving a degree of rationalization of the *lifeworld* will the social group be able to think of changes and innovations that may alter those. This rationalization implies reflectivity

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[a] The schools that were investigated in this study will be taken as microcosms of societies.

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and communication that can call into question the taken-for-granted values, norms, beliefs patterns of behaviour and social practices. In this way Habermas suggests that imposition of any kind does not bring about change. Neither a curriculum proposal that is elaborated with restricted legitimacy and then enforced by law (this is the situation found in England) nor a curriculum proposal that is constructed with broad legitimacy (this is the situation found in Brazil) will succeed in bringing about changes[a] in a school if its *symbolic universe* is not rationalized, that is, if reflection upon school practices and relationships does not occur.

However, it is highly unlikely that a curriculum proposal that is constructed with 'restricted' legitimacy will give a basis for school practices that will start a process of rationalization of the *symbolic universe*. This process is more likely to start if a curriculum proposal is constructed with ample participation of the society.

In school F the school members started to call into question routinized teaching and management practices after they moved into their new school building. Since then the professionals in the school began to reflect upon their practices through communication. They started a process of rationalization of the *symbolic universe* of the school, that is an integrated part of the *lifeworld.* According to Habermas

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[a] Nonetheless, it does not seem appropriate to suggest changes in schools that do not contemplate democratic practices and relationships on the threshold of the next millennium.

the rationalization of the *lifeworld* brings an increasing reflexivity, that is, it gives the participants of a social group (in this particular case the professionals in school F) the possibility of being aware of what guides their choices and the reasons for those. This whole process of rationalization brought about changes in pedagogical and management aspects of school F .

Each school is a universe with particular symbolic characteristics and only by bringing routinized practices into awareness of the school members can changes and innovations effectively start to take place - in this way, contributing to reduce the non-correspondence between 'curriculum proposal ' and 'curriculum practice'.

Although Habermas describes how a social group can start thinking of changes and innovations, he does not mention how it is possible for the participants of a social group to start this process of reflection upon their practices that will lead to changes. In the particular case of school F there was a 'crisis'. The school was threatened to be closed down. It was from this 'crisis' that the whole process started.

This study will move further into Habermas' theory of knowledge where he couples knowledge with human interests to extend the interpretation of the changes occurred in school F. As was discussed in Chapter Four Habermas argues that knowledge is the outcome of human activity that is motivated by natural needs and interests and

these interests give the shape of the search for knowledge and the product of this search assumes quite different characteristic forms. He contends that human knowledge is composed by three knowledge constitutive interests which he labels the "technical", the "practical" and the "emancipatory".

The school members in school F were threatened by the local authority that the school could be closed down. They were interested in finding a way of not losing their jobs and of the children not losing their school. They called the parents into the school so that they could disclose to them the reason why the local authority[a] wanted to close the school so that together they could find a solution for the problem. That was the situation that triggered off the process of change.

Through organized collaborative action the teachers and parents were able to overcome that situation: to close down a school. This would mean job losses, overcrowding other schools in the town and parents paying for transport for their children to get to school so that the municipal local authority could increase their profits. The interests of the professionals in school F shaped their search for knowledge. According to Habermas emancipatory interests lead to emancipatory knowledge

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[a] The teachers, the headteacher and the technical pedagogical staff, acting on their own initiative, asked for three surveys of the building to be done so that they could get to know if the building was safe. The three surveyors did not see anything wrong with the structure of the building. However, the local authority did not take any notice of the surveys and carried on insisting on the fact that the building was not safe.

which is constructed within the social reality of the social actors in a way that reveals contexts of illegitimate domination so that relationships distorted by power can be eliminated. The teachers in school F had emancipatory interests when they decided to disclose the situation they were in, to parents. Habermas suggests that situations of domination should be overcome using the means of language. Thus communication is of crucial importance in this process.

The school members' and parents' collective action through discussions led them to surmount the 'threat' of the school being closed down by leading the teachers, headteachers and technical/pedagogical staff to reflect upon their pedagogical and managerial practices. In this way they started the process of rationalization of their *symbolic universe*. This resulted in the construction of emancipatory knowledge. They were interested in having a school that would justify its existence. The school needed to be a place where pupils could learn better and repetition rates would then be cut down. The teachers were empowered by having a critical view over their pedagogical practices and eventually changed them. Teachers and parents came to the conclusion that the 1987 curriculum proposal matched their aims of improving school standards. The pupils were empowered by being able to attend a school where democratic practices were used in the classroom, their active participation in the teaching/learning process was important and the

main aim of the school was to make pupils learn better as was mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

It seems possible that the *symbolic universe* of a school, can be changed to incorporate democratic practices by altering the communication style that shapes all the relationships in the school to a style that allows participation and construction will give the opportunity for school members to express their ideas and justify their choices of pedagogical and management practices. If this happens, a reflection upon the practices will be triggered off. It is important to point out that the changes in school F occurred in special circumstances. However, the professionals in school F - teachers, headteacher and technical/pedagogical staff - had a curriculum proposal that was elaborated with 'broad' legitimacy to give a basis to their 'new' practices.

It was quite unexpected to find out that the English primary schools where this study took place showed more characteristics of *informative* schools than those of *communicative* schools. It was also unexpected that one school was characterized as *communicative* in Brazil (school F).[a] England has been a democratic country for a long time and the Plowden Report on primary schools recommended that practices in the classrooms should be democratic. Therefore, it was expected that the schools in England would be more *communicative.*

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[a] However, no generalization should be drawn, as only eight primary schools were investigated in England and Brazil.

Conversely, Brazilian society has had authoritarian governments for a long time and those include a military regime for twenty-five years. The re-democratization of the country took place slowly. It was not expected that a *communicative* school would be found in Brazil that is, a school that had a 'democratic climate'.

For Habermas in a democratic society law is a product of collective will and (does not emanate from a transcendent will); there is symmetry of communication, that is, the participants of the society are able to engage in communicative roles and reach a coercion-free consensus over problematic matters; Habermas also mentions that in a democratic society knowledge is considered to be "unfinished" and problematic. This way of thinking about knowledge stimulates research and investigation.

Those Habermasian ideas were synthesised in the model of *communicative* schools: shared power relationships, dialogical situations with equal opportunities to assume dialogue roles and construction and problematization of knowledge are supposed to be present in a *communicative* school. Although Habermas does not explicitly discuss a teaching/learning process, he does discuss the nature of knowledge and calls into question the dogmatic aspect of it. Therefore, it is very unlikely that Habermas would argue in favour of *transmission* and *storage* of knowledge as a teaching/learning process.

In school F norms for school and classroom functioning were elaborated collectively (teachers, headteachers, administrative staff and community); discussions took place to solve administrative and pedagogical problems in the school and the classroom; and there was a consensus among the teachers about the construction and problematization of knowledge. This consensus about the construction and problematization of knowledge was observed in the classrooms in school F. The pupils had ample participation in the classes and were most of the time engaged in active roles that included discussions with the teachers and other pupils.

The correspondence between the Habermasian theory of democratic societies, the model of *communicative* schools and what was found in school F is summarized in table three:

Table 3

Habermas	Model of *communicative* schools	School F
Law as a product of collective will	Shared power relationships	Collective elaboration of norms for the school and the classroom
Coercion free consensus/ symmetry of communication	Dialogical situations	Discussions for the solution of administrative and pedagogical problems
Knowledge is not dogmatic Knowledge is constructed by the epistemic subject (Piaget)	Problematization and construction of knowledge	Ample participation of the pupils in the classes through active roles that included discussions. Collective planning of the school curriculum through discussions.

In short , the teaching/learning process in a democratic school is viewed as a social construction. The pupils construct their knowledge through discussion, participation and cooperation. However, this way of viewing the teaching/learning process may be different from pedagogical traditions held by the school's social group.

It was argued in Chapter Three that educational and pedagogical traditions shape teaching practices, interpersonal relationships and linguistic exchanges in schools. In this way pedagogical and educational traditions influence the way the school's social group deal with changes. A comparison of those traditions and the findings in the empirical investigation is offered next.

Educational and Pedagogical traditions in England and Brazil

There was evidence both in England and in Brazil that most teachers (except those in school F) believed that quietness, concentration, observation, listening and the help of the family at home would make the children learn better and achieve better academic results. Although the teachers in both countries had different background traditions and assumptions about the teaching/learning process their concepts were quite similar. This suggested that they believed that knowledge could be transmitted from one person to

another. For the transmission to take place the children had to develop certain skills. No active roles were supposed to take place otherwise they would interfere with this transmission of knowledge and it would be jeopardised.

England

Although the teachers in England had a background tradition of Progressive Education and the Piagetian active school as was described in the Plowden Report (1967):

> "The children are active, engaged in exploration or discovery, interacting both with the teacher and with each other...",[a]

these aspects were not actually noticed in the classrooms.

As the pupils were seated in groups, it might have suggested that the children would work in interactive groups but what really happened was that each child in the group generally worked on his/her own without being allowed to interact. Also, discovery and exploration was so much guided by the teacher that these processes were undermined. The results of these processes were generally non-creative activities.

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[a] Maurice Galton, Brian Simon, and Paul Croll, Inside the Primary Classroom, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989, p. 49.

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These findings contradict what was recommended in the Plowden Report and show that the teachers have not widely adopted those recommendations.[2]

The present study revealed that the teachers did not use mixed ability grouping as a pattern in their classrooms. The children were grouped by their abilities or social class (streaming within the class). Also, the teachers maintained very precise control over their pupils' activities, where children sat and moved and when they were allowed to communicate. The teacher would often isolate individual children on the justification that these children could not concentrate on their work if they were allowed to sit in a group.

Teachers' pedagogical practices in the classrooms revealed that their pedagogical traditions also have roots in the behavioural approach and in direct instruction[a] (perhaps more than in progressive theory).

The isolation of a child from a group (on the grounds that the child cannot concentrate on a specific task if placed in a group), the exclusion of a child from the learning environment if the child has misbehaved (either by sending the child to the headteacher's office, to stay in the corridor or to another teacher's classroom), the reward system (stickers and smiling faces), the positive reinforcement (good boy/good girl) and

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[a] Maurice Galton, Crisis in the Primary Classroom, London, David Fulton Publishers, 1995, p.152, mentions that "Quietness, concentration and listening are necessary under direct instruction". These were the fundamental concepts expressed by the teachers when they answered questions about the teaching/learning process.

"playing the game" (Making the rules clear to the children and the consequences of misbehaviour as well) are closer to techniques employed by teachers who have been influenced by the behavioural approach[a] than to teachers who have learned to support interaction, freedom, action and discovery.

By investigating school practices this study found out that the Piagetian Theory that was used to justify teachers' practice in the sixties in England (Plowden Report) may have been somewhat misinterpreted by teachers.[b] This misinterpretation led to teaching practices that are not compatible with Piaget's theory. Some of these misinterpretations can be described as follows: a) The labelling of children according to their developmental stage and their segregation in "ability" groups. As a consequence the children are given tasks according to the level of their cognitive capacities and so they do not have their cognitive capacities challenged at a higher level; b) The individualization of learning that leads to non-group work (groups with its members operating individually - non-interactively) and to dependence on the teacher (queues of

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[a] In Roger Burland, "The Behavioural Approach at Chelfham Mill School of Emotionally Disturbed Boys", in Kevin Wheldall (ed.), The Behaviourist in the Classroom, London, Allen & Unwin, 1987 most of these behavioural techniques are described as they were employed at Chelfham Mill School. Also, suggestions for teachers in a Guide to Teaching devised by a local authority to help probationary teachers but also claimed to help more experienced teachers described ways of teaching and managing the classroom influenced by the behavioural approach. Excerpts of this Guide were found in Maurice Galton, Teaching in the Primary School, London, David Fulton Publishers, 1989.

[b] Lawton in An Introduction to Teaching and Learning, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1981, p. 51, mentions that Piaget's work has been "misunderstood, over-simplified, misinterpreted and badly applied in schools."

children seeking the teacher's attention); There is a confusion between individualization of learning, individualization of work and individualization of teacher's attention. c) the discovery process is so much guided that it becomes routinized and stereotyped and does not lead to creative work.

In order to move away from this oversimplification of the Piagetian Theory two fundamental ideas present in the theory should be taken into consideration: a child, independently of cultural background and hereditary is able to learn and make good academic progress; and knowledge is constructed by the epistemic subject rather than transmitted to and stored by the subject.

Piaget's concepts of construction of knowledge and moral development link with Habermas' theory of democratic society. Coupling the Habermasian concept of communicative rationality with the Piagetian theory, enables communication to play a major role in an educational theory that would take these two theories into account. Communication to help overcome social differences; communication for the construction of knowledge; communication to develop democratic relationships in the classroom; communication to stimulate moral development; communication for cooperation and communication for critique.

The National Curriculum in England strongly relies on the content of the subjects to be taught (10 subjects) which runs counter to the non-subject tradition in English education or in other words traditionally the activities developed in the primary classrooms were not normally subject differentiated. [a]

Brazil

The teachers in Brazil had an education background tradition of Jesuit and French education. Their practices and beliefs about the teaching/learning process were compatible with this tradition. Transmission and storage of knowledge was one of the aspects. Even the teachers in school F acknowledged that they had "traditional" pedagogical practices before 1990 when they got their own building and started the process of change. The behavioural approach and the progressive theory had little or no influence on the Brazilian teachers' pedagogical practice.

Brazilian education was influenced by American trends (Technocratic approach to curriculum design and behavioural approach to teaching and management) that were present in the Brazilian educational context mainly through PABAEE and MEC-USAID.

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[a] In teachers' meeting to plan the curriculum in one of the schools where this study took place the headteacher would suggest an activity and then she would think which subject would fit in that activity.

PABAEE (Programa de Assistência Brasileiro-Americana ao Ensino Elementar [Brazilian-American Programme of Assistance to the Primary Education]) started in the mid-50s and went on to the 60s and had three main aims: a) to train pedagogical supervisors for the primary schools and teachers for the Normal schools; b) to elaborate, adapt and distribute didactic aids to be used in the teacher training courses and c) to send selected competent teachers to the United States to be trained in primary education. MEC-USAID (An agreement between the Brazilian Ministry of Education [MEC] and the United States Agency for International Development [USAID]) was on in the 60s and 70s. However, these trends were not noticed in the teachers' practice. Also, the ideas of the Pioneers that argued in favour of the "new school/active school" had little or no influence on the teachers' pedagogical practice observed in this study.

The curriculum change in Brazil (Minas Gerais) was more concerned with changing the teachers' practice than with subject contents. The 1987 curriculum proposal strongly relied on methodology of the subjects to be taught in the primary schools and on what relationships should be like in a school. This change in methodology would work against the transmission and storage of knowledge tradition. The new curriculum pointed out a different concept of how the teaching/learning process takes place. It advocated that real learning

takes place through the construction of knowledge by the epistemic subject. This implied radical alteration of classroom practices.

The reforms both in England and in Brazil contradict pedagogical traditions in both countries. These traditions were expressed in the teachers' beliefs about the teaching/learning process and practices. However, in England there is a tradition claimed at the discourse level (progressive education) and a tradition revealed in teachers' practice in the classrooms (a behavioural approach).

Section II

Literature

Many studies that have dealt with curriculum change and changing teachers' practice have been consulted. However, most of the literature consulted focused either on the curriculum proposal or on the teachers' practice (Hargreaves, 1994; Barber, 1996; Moon, !990). Also, literature that refers to the Habermas theory linking it to the educational practice was consulted but all these studies were found to be very theoretical without reference to the everyday practice of schools (Young, R.,1990).

No study was found that dealt with in-classroom and school everyday practices based on the Habermasian theory that made a

comparison between Brazilian primary schools and English ones. However, two authors that dealt with curriculum change - Michael G. Fullan,[3] Leda Azevedo[4] - and one that dealt with planning matters (Barbara MacGilchrist et al)[5] were useful for this study.

Azevedo studied the 'gap' between curriculum proposal and curriculum practice in Brazil. She mentioned three arenas that act as intermediaries between proposal and practice - political support, bureaucratic structure and teacher training. These arenas can minimize or maximize the 'gap' between proposal and practice depending on which end of the continuum they are placed - stability or instability, function or dysfunction, and consistency or inconsistency.

This study adds one more arena - the 'fourth arena' of mediation between curriculum proposal and curriculum practice - the *symbolic universe* of schools. How the *symbolic universe* of schools resists changes or adopts them, in other words how teachers' beliefs and values, make them resist or adopt change in the teaching/learning process was investigated. The resistance to making changes contributes to a non-correspondence between curriculum proposal and curriculum practice.

By investigating the *symbolic universe*[a] of schools this study contributed to a better understanding of peculiarities and contradictions

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[a] Adopting Azevedo's terminology it can be said that the *symbolic universe* would be placed on a continuum which has as its extremes *rationalization* and *non-rationalization*.

present in school practices. In this way, it shed light on some aspects of school life such as different types of communication and leadership styles, that contribute to hinder changes in school practices. Those aspects contribute to widen the non-correspondence between 'curriculum proposal' and 'curriculum practice'.

Barbara MacGilchrist et. al. studied different types of school development plans and constructed a typology for different kinds of plans - the rhetorical plan, the singular plan, the co-operative plan and the corporate plan. The school which had a rhetorical plan had many characteristics similar to the *informative* schools described in this study while the schools which had a corporate plan had many similarities to the *communicative* school also described in this study.

MacGilchrist et. al. point out that it is the type of plan elaborated by a school that contributes to different degrees of efficiency of the school. The rhetorical plan was considered to be the simplest and the least effective plan. The corporate plan was considered to be the most complex and effective and contributed to the effectiveness of the school, that is, it had a positive impact on pupils, teacher and school wide-improvements.[a]

MacGilchrist et. al. consider the management and leadership of the school to be the main reasons why different plans are elaborated

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[a] MacGilchrist et al., op. cit., pp. 210 - 212.

and developed.[a] By investigating the *symbolic universe* of schools this study brought up more elements to explain why a school develops rhetorical plans and another develops corporate plans. This study suggests that management and leadership of a school are necessary but not sufficient elements to pinpoint why schools develop different kinds of plan. A set of characteristics makes it possible for schools to develop different types of plans.

Macedo in the article "Pensando a Escola e o Currículo a Luz da Teoria de Habermas" ["Thinking about School and the Curriculum in the Light of the Habermasian Theory] published in the Brazilian periodical - Em Aberto],[6] deals with theoretical issues that can influence the school curriculum having the Habermasian theory as a starting point. However, it is not mentioned how the issues raised in the article can be operationalized in the every day practice of the schools.

Most of the Brazilian literature on curriculum is either very theoretical (Macedo, 1993; Paro, 1992) not really touching practical issues of curriculum development in the school and the classroom or fails to contextualize the development of the curriculum in the whole school. A few studies deal with classroom practices but generally the classroom is seen as apart from the school (André, 1992) (in the English literature as well).[7] Studies that deal with the curriculum without

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[a] MacGilchrist et al., op. cit., p.200.

mentioning management aspects of the school, that is, studies that do not deal with the school as a whole cannot explain the complexities of school everyday life.

In Brazil, the literature produced from 1980 onwards stresses the importance of the in-depth knowledge of the everyday life of the schools across the country. There is a tendency to reject international influences in education. The literature emphasises the necessity of getting to know Brazilian regional peculiarities better. It is suggested by the literature that the school curriculum should be adapted to these regional characteristics of the school.. However, this view about the school curriculum has been more of an academic nature (confined to the universities post-graduation courses) without really influencing the curriculum practice in schools themselves. Teachers usually do not have access to this kind of literature that is produced in the academic environment of universities. Literature produced two or three decades ago is used in primary teacher training courses. These books are considered "classic" for primary teacher training. In this way, prospective primary teachers and teachers at work do not have the opportunity to get acquainted with the literature that is produced, read and discussed inside the universities.

<u>Research</u>

This study has made it possible for future research projects on curriculum change to investigate in-depth school practices taking into account the *symbolic universe* of schools as a site of resistance or adoption of changes besides other aspects currently mentioned in the existing literature. It is suggested that future research projects in this area should take into consideration the schools as a whole and deepen the investigation of the seven-sub categories mentioned in this study. Each category can be investigated on its own. This would provide a really deep understanding of each category in the context of schools. Also, the ideal typical models of schools can be useful to other research projects that aim at a comparison besides dealing with school practices. The models can then be refined.

The everyday life of schools is very complex. It is extremely important that other research projects are developed to investigate school practices so that the understanding of the complexities of schools everyday life can be improved . This understanding will contribute to the emergence of new educational theories about curriculum change and school reform. This is an extremely important field of research. However, not very many projects have been developed in the area particularly in Brazil.

Recommendations in the context of Brazilian education.

The difficulty in formulating recommendations for Brazil is due to the complexity of the problem described in this study. The recommendations do not suggest that dramatic changes can be introduced quickly but they aim at drawing attention to some of the problems pinpointed by this study in schools in Brazil. Through a careful analysis of these problems, consistent actions can be taken to try to minimize them.

The recommendations cover a wide span of crucial aspects that need to be reviewed within the Brazilian educational context: a) the daily routine of schools; c) teacher training; b) teaching as a job; d) the ethos of the teaching profession; e) the relationship between universities and schools and f) the influence of oscillations in politics on the school curriculum.

The first recommendation is to suggest a re-structuring of the daily routine of schools. This would lead to a new type of school: a school where members of the teaching staff besides teaching will have time to study, interact, discuss and learn from their own problems. This will be an attempt to minimize the isolation of teachers. This isolation contributes to the fragmentation of planning and development of the

curriculum. In practical terms the teaching job would be a full time job (8 hours a day). However, the pupils would have a five-hour school day (half an hour more than at present). Also, raising teachers' salary so that it is compatible with a full time job the teachers would not need to have another job to complement their earnings. Having a second or a third job was one of the main reasons that prevented teachers from participating in staff meetings and "colegiado" meetings at schools. This would mean changing the 'culture' of the teaching profession. It would mean that teachers would have time to study and reflect on suggested changes introduced by proposals of curriculum change. Unless teachers have time for this reflection, it is more likely that they will stick to their usual practices even if changes are necessary and urgent. They may not know what they are resisting and if this resistance is justifiable.

There was evidence that it is taken for granted that a school is a place for children to learn. In England this concept was so much taken for granted that the teachers had difficulty in describing what they thought improved children's learning in the classroom. However, a school should not be considered a place only for children to learn. The teachers need to have a space to learn as well. The school should be considered a learning environment for all - children, teachers, headteacher, other staff and the community. Learning is a dynamic

process that never ends and communication is an essential element for it.

The teachers have been prepared to be teachers but it does not mean that they have learned everything about the teaching/learning process in a few years of teacher training. This is partly because schools are different from each other. They are in different contexts, they have different children, different staffs and different headteachers. Each school has to learn about itself so that the professionals in the school together can work out the best solutions for their problems. This awareness will lead the school members and the community to constantly call into question their own practices and will enable them to change when necessary.

A major change in education would be to shift the emphasis of curriculum elaboration to teachers.[8] It is not sufficient to elaborate a proposal for curriculum change with 'broad' legitimacy to make changes happen in schools. The process of consultation to teachers should be on-going. The construction of a curriculum proposal should not be confined to a moment in time. It should be a dynamic process in the sense that educational debates with teachers should be routinely carried out. This does not mean that these debates have to happen on a large scale every time they occur, as was done in the past in Minas Gerais, for example. But teachers from different selected areas of the country should be invited

to exchange ideas with academics and state officials from the Secretariats of Education so that the 'reality' of schools and classrooms is taken into consideration in any process of curriculum change. This contributes to a 'democratic climate' not only in schools but also in society.

If teachers are regarded and regard themselves as autonomous "doers" of actions rather than *someone else's servant* [9] it would be a first step into the process of rationalization of their *symbolic universe* and consequently the *symbolic universe* of schools.

Being able to understand and justify their choices for their everyday practice through a constant process of rationalization, teachers are able to devise changes when they think they are necessary. This procedure empowers teachers, implies autonomy and critique and means growth in professional conscience. Changes in the curriculum should not be devised solely by policy-makers, politicians or bureaucrats but teachers as specialists in their field are able to create and consolidate a "changing environment"[a] in schools and this way being able to build a different culture.

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[a] "changing environment" means that schools can be the cradle of changes and this can become part of the school culture. Practices do not become crystallized but they are always being called into question as a process of the rationalization of the school *lifeworld*. This way school practices are legitimatized through the participation of all involved (teachers, headteachers and pupils) and not only through tradition and cultural constraints.

If changes flourish from inside schools as a "process of reflection in practice" [10] and as a collective action,[a] any differences of opinion can be sorted out by discussions instead of being turned into resistances.

If academics, politicians, bureaucrats and policy-makers are the only ones who devise and write about changes it will be very difficult to make them happen at the school level.[b] The story of change is the story of teachers and so they are the ones who are the most able to devise it and write about it.[11] However, this process is not a determined point in the continuum of the school life but it is a process that is constantly evolving and becomes part of the school. In this way, the process alters the *symbolic universe* of schools.

The second recommendation is to change nationally the level of qualification required for the job of a primary school teacher by introducing the requirement of having a degree[c] to enable a person to teach in primary schools. It should be taken into consideration that teachers' education does not end when they leave the training courses; their education continues into the schools where they work. They would

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[a] Teachers, pupils and headteachers are the ones involved in the reflective process.

[b] In 1994 a new curriculum proposal was launched in Brazil (Minas Gerais) to be implemented in 1996. This proposal was elaborated by the Secretariat of Education without consultation to teachers.

[c] In three schools where this study took place 50% of the teaching staff had a degree in Pedagogy and one teacher in school S had a degree in Social studies. In school F 80% of the teaching staff had a degree in Pedagogy. However these numbers are atypical in the Brazilian context. In Viçosa where this study took place there is a Federal University that offers an evening part-time pedagogy course and in a town nearby there is a private faculty that offers evening courses in letters and social sciences.

have a space to continue studying but this time coupled with their practice. The teacher training courses should have the task to instil in prospective teachers this new stance: teachers' education continues into their working life. In this way, teacher training courses will need to redefine their practices and aims radically. Instead of preparing teachers to be able to follow "prescriptions" for teaching, teacher training courses should be able to prepare independent, reflective, creative teachers who are prepared to take an active role in curriculum planning and are able to develop a curriculum practice compatible with a 'democratic climate' in schools.

The third recommendation is to create an interchange between Universities and schools. The elaboration of research projects together with school teachers will help teachers develop curiosity over and skill in their practices. Also, this interchange between universities and schools will make relevant literature accessible to all school members. The school then will be involved as a whole.

The fourth recommendation is to develop consistent educational actions based on research results. It is urgent that Brazil gives more attention to developing research projects that investigate school practices. Getting deeper and consistent understanding of school practices - their characteristics, peculiarities and contradictions - not least by reviewing some points mentioned in this study, Brazil will be

able to develop relevant national educational policy that will take into account the everyday life of schools. This will make it possible to overcome obstacles present in the everyday life of schools that hinder changes in school practices and prevent them from keeping up with rapid changes that characterize a time close to the twenty-first century.

The recommendations made in this study for Brazil involve practices that can be extended to the society as a whole. In this way, this study aspires to foster the consolidation of democratic relationships in Brazilian society.

NOTES

[1] Leda Azevedo, The Relationship between Curriculum Proposal and Curriculum Practice: A Case Study of Centro Integrado de Educação Popular, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, Institute of Education, 1992..

[2] Simon in, "Why no Pedagogy in England?" in B. Simon, B. and W. Taylor W. (eds.), Education in the Eighties, The Central issues, London, Batsford, 1981, estimated that only about 10 per cent of the primary teaching population could be said to have embraced the "Plowden" style at the time the report was published and Galton in Maurice Galton, Crisis in the Primary Classroom, London, David Fulton Publishers, 1995, mentioned that nothing much had changed during ORACLE (Observational Research and Classroom learning studies (1975-1980)). In the ORACLE research first published in 1980 (Maurice Galton, Brian Simon, and Paul Croll, Inside the Primary Classroom, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980, p.49) Galton mentioned that co-operative, joint enterprise in the solution of problems, or joint activities of various kinds were rarely used in the primary classrooms and many pupils did not experience it at all. Also, he stressed that while grouping existed, both spatially and to some extent notionally, in reality the pupil worked on his own.

[3] M. Fullan, and S. Stiegelbauer, The New Meaning of Educational Change, London, Cassel, 1991.

[4] Leda Azevedo, op.cit. pp. 316-326.

[5] B. MacGilchrist et al, Planning Matters, London, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, 1995.

[6] E. F., Macedo, "Pensando a Escola e o Currículo à Luz da Teoria de Habermas" [Thinking about School and The Curriculum in the Light of the Habermasian Theory], Em Aberto, Brasília, MEC/INEP, ano 12, no. 58, abr/jun, 1993, pp. 37-42.

[7] Maurice Galton, Brian Simon, and Paul Croll, Inside the Primary Classroom, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989, Pollard et al, Changing English Primary Schools, London, Cassell, 1994.

[8.] F. M. Connelly, and D. J. Clandinin, Teachers as Curriculum Planners, New York, Teachers College Columbia University Press, 1990, pp. 148 -155.

[9] Ibid., p. 148.

[10] D. Schön, The Reflective Turn - Case Studies in and on Educational Practice, New York, Teachers College Columbia University Press, 1991, pp. 164 - 186.

[11] It is important to address here the issue of teachers' education. Instead of being "trained" to be teachers, they should be "educated" to be teachers. The difference lies on the fact that *to be trained to be teachers* means to act according to somebody's will and *to be educated to be teachers* means to be prepared to act as autonomous interactive subjects who are able to think for themselves and are conscious of their professional expertise.

Appendix:

Guidelines for Interviews with Pupils:

1- What do you like about your class?

2- Is there anything you dislike?

3- What do you like about your teacher?

4- When do you most enjoy school?

5- Is there anything that makes you not enjoy school?

6- When do you think learning is easy?

7- Is there any particular moment that you find learning difficult?

8- Do you work in groups in the classroom?

9- Do you talk with your classmates about your work?

10- Do you share anything with your classmates in the classroom?

11- Do you help your classmates in the classroom?

12- Do you talk to your teacher?

13- What do you talk about with her/him?

14- Do your classmates help you in any way?

Guidelines for Interviews with Headteachers:

As the head of this school, how important you consider the following:

( ) very important   ( ) fairly important   ( ) not very important

a) to improve administrative and management techniques

b) to encourage teachers to work together

c) to seek ideas and suggestions from the teachers for the solution of administrative problems

d) to seek ideas and suggestions from the teachers for the solution of pedagogical problems

e) to establish school rules

f) to establish school rules based on consensual ideas in school (head + staff)

g) to ensure that school rules are followed both by teachers and students

h) to discuss pedagogical issues with the teachers

i) to talk informally to teachers about curriculum issues

j) to solve problems without bothering the teachers

k) support teachers initiatives to improve children's learning

l) to allow teachers to organize classroom in a way he/she thinks appropriate

m) to support teachers' initiatives to create a cooperative and interactive

environment in the classroom

1- What do you think improves children's learning in the classroom?

2- What do you think a well disciplined school is?

Guidelines for Interviews with Teachers

How often do you do the following:

( ) frequently[1]*   ( ) rarely   ( ) never

a) Keep strictly to teachers' manuals and textbooks

b) talk to the headteacher about:

students' misbehaviour

curriculum

 improving children's learning

c) discuss curriculum issues with other teachers at school

d) talk to other teachers about pupils' misbehaviour

e) give your pupils opportunities to express their own views in the classroom

f) use discussions your pupils feedback about classroom tests

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[1]* *Frequently* here means something done on a regular basis, it is a routine, it is part of the school practice or the classroom practice.

g) share things teaching materials and new teaching ideas with other teachers

h) get pupils to participate in the discussion of rules of behaviour in the classroom

i) give the head-teacher suggestions and ideas about school issues

j) try new practices in the classroom to improve pupils' learning

k) participate in decision-making concerning pedagogical issues administrative issues

l) give your pupils opportunities to exchange views with you in the classroom

m) encourage pupils to express themselves through questioning and classroom discussions

n) take classroom problems (e.g. students misbehaviour) to be solved by the head-teacher

o) have your students working cooperatively and interactively together in small groups

1- What do you think improves students learning in the classroom?

2- What do you think a well disciplined classroom is ?

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