

Selection and educational labeling as sociological processes

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Resumen

Este artículo aborda aspectos teóricos y empíricos en la perspectiva de la sociología de la educación, mirando el fenómeno de la selección educacional que ocurre durante la carrera escolar. En el marco de América Latina como región que todavía se mueve entre, por un lado, la defensa o la búsqueda de la identidad la búsqueda de la autonomía y la independencia y, por otro, la inclusión –para algunos irreversible– en la globalización y la apertura hacia los lineamientos de las organizaciones internacionales, este trabajo quiere responder a las siguientes cuestiones: ¿Por qué solamente unos pocos tienen oportunidad de estudiar en la Universidad? ¿Cuáles son los aspectos determinantes para tener éxito o fracasar en el sistema escolar de la educación superior? ¿Cuáles son las condiciones por las que algunos deciden aspirar o no a la Universidad? Finalmente, las conclusiones se enfocan a la importancia de la actitud de los estudiantes para ir a la Universidad, el papel del maestro en el éxito o fracaso de los estudiantes y la mediación del contexto social para superar los obstáculos de su entrada y permanencia en la educación superior.

Palabras clave: Educación superior, capital cultural, México.

Abstract

This paper explores theoretical approaches and empirical works in the perspective of the sociology of education, looking for insights into the phenomenon of educational selection that occurs during the school career. Within the frame of Latin America as a region that still tenses between the defense and/or search for identity, the fight for autonomy and independence in one part and for the other the inclusion -for many irreversible- into the globalization and the openness to the guidelines of international organizations, the structure of the work is developed to answer the following questions: why only some have opportunity to study at the university? Which are the determinants of success or failure in the school system of higher education? What are the conditions for some to

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decide aspire or not to university? Finally, conclusions focuses on the importance of the attitude of students to go to college, the teacher's role in the success or failure of students and mediation of social background on achievement to overcome the obstacles of their entrance and permanence in higher education.

Keywords: Higher Education - Cultural Capital - Labelling - Mexico

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Introduction

Marginality in Latin America survives with roots in much of the own cultural overlap of conquest with a hegemony-marginality (Recio, 1997) dichotomy which for centuries has sought to shake. Since 2003 the countries of the region had a promisory economic growth, and poverty reduction enabled to face new and powerful challenges. It was a time of consolidation and democratic renewal with increased funding, diversified sectoral policies and reaching borders not imagined before. The map of the region was intense, varied, dilemmatic and unpredictable. Governments of different political signs experienced common and divergent policies (Rivas, 2015). Nowadays 2016 there are signs that it has been a cycle that runs, but within that, in the Section of Latin American Studies considers important to highlight in one side the tension between identity, autonomy and independence and for the other, the inclusion -for many irreversible processes of globalization and openness to the guidelines of international organizations.

Since the triumph of the independence movements in the nineteenth century Latin American countries shaped a need to promote national unity educational state, and the conviction that education is a social right was strengthened from the popular movements that took place during the first decades of the twentieth century. Even with the changes experienced in the mid 40's of the twentieth century resulting from industrialization promoted by the US hegemony post-Second World War, none of the reforms to the education systems of almost all countries in the region disrupted the centrality of the state in the educational task nor the intention to ensure a minimum of education to the entire population by strengthening public education systems (Vázquez, 2015). However, changes in the world economy resulting from the oil crisis of the 70s, as Vazquez (Ibid) says "the formation of 'human capital' of the 'adaptable' individuals to the international labor market requires has been imposed as the social role that education must meet

since the early years of basic education as measurable performance and aligned to the labor market", and university education has not escaped this logic although has been more resistant to these changes.

The university degree, besides being an element of social distinction, has acquired a high value both individually and socially. In most countries, university studies constitute a privilege because of the economic and social benefits at the individual and country level. Similarly, universities have become more receptive to signals from their environment, and greatly to the economy and the logic of the market through competition and meritocracy. Given this importance, we believe enrollment growth in universities and exchange mechanisms between university and society have intensified in recent decades. The university entrance is very competitive and even -in the case of the Latin America región- opportunities have increased from the sixties of the last century, today the spaces are insufficient and especially in some liberal careers. So one may question: Why only some have the opportunity to study at the university? What determines the success or school failure? What are the conditions for some to decide aspire or not to university? In this article we seek to answer these questions by relying on some theoretical developments and empirical studies that provide insights, from the perspective of the sociology of education, of the phenomenon of selection that occurs during the school career.

1. Education: homogeneity and diversification

Society must be permeated by some general principles that gives the attribute of homogeneity. Without these principles, without this attribute, it is not possible to achieve an acceptable social cohesion. However, society also requires for its development of a wide diversity in the actions of the members who compose it.

In this sense, Durkheim in his text "Educación y Sociología" (1987) speaks of the dual nature of education, which promotes on the one hand the homogeneity required for an acceptable community cohesion, and on the other, the mechanism by which society is diversified and specialized.

Durkheim believes that diversification is necessary, and in fact occurs but by different levels, depending on the degree of development of societies. Although Durkheim does not speak explicitly of the need for the members of a community to be stratified in levels of education and access to each of these levels be determined by social issues, the fact is that this author considers educational diversity as a result of certain conditions:

“So this (**education**) has as function to raise in the child: 1. A number of physical and mental states that society to which he belongs believe should not be absent from any of its members (**homogeneity**); 2. Certain physical and mental conditions that the particular social group (caste, class, family, profession, etc.) also considers to be found in all those who constitute it (**diversification**). Thus, it is society and every social environments in particular are the determinants of this ideal that education has to fulfill”¹ (Durkheim, 1987: 25).

Durkheim neglects aspects of equality of opportunity and freedom of choice of individuals, and of course the problem is more complex. However, Durkheim's ideas are fundamental for understanding the role of education in society.

Diversification reveals great importance because without diversification it is impossible to conceive modern societies, even more now when we find the paradox of global knowledge and increased specialization. Then, individuals internalize social rules that are basic for insertion into community life principles, but also, according to their abilities, their origin and their personal goals, they specialize in a certain area, and various functions are performed together to achieve development so for the individuals as for the social group they belong to.

Education plays a fundamental role as well for internalization of the basic rules of human coexistence as for diversification and specialization of individuals for their development; this, despite the “social meaning of the imposition of a necessarily arbitrary culture through education.” (Vara, 2000: 30).

2. Differentiation at the school system

Parsons (1985), based on some Durkheim approaches conceives education as a microorganism which has certain functions to maintain social cohesion. As Fernando Gil cotes, Parsons “Conceive school, like Durkheim, as a microcosm, a small society and understands its key functions are socialization and selection.” (Gil, 1994: 39). On this basis, Parsons (1976) speaks of socialization and selection that takes place at school and explains how school class acts on the individual as an agent of socialization and role assignment. School class on the one hand, encourages the student to internalize skills, qualities and values that are fundamental for human

society and on the other hand, places the individual within the structure of roles, particularly related to labor-market, that in the future the individual will perform. That is, assigns a place that the student will take later in adulthood.

Then, school class acts as focal agent of socialization, and for Parsons is one of the most important but not the only agents because the individual establishes social relations in other areas outside the school, such as family and other groups he interacts with.

Parsons identifies some criteria for selection process that takes place in school and subsequently influence young people in the decision to go or not to college. There are two types of factors that he calls factor of affiliation and factor of achievement; being the latter the record of grades, and socioeconomic status of the student the first.

In this regard, Parsons analyzes the structure of basic and secondary school class, as he believes that it is at these levels where differentiation starts. He does it from a quantitative study (Parsons, 1976) of 3,348 high school students who could potentially go to college and relates to the profession of their parents. Results show that as socioeconomic status of the family (factor of ascription) increases, student considerably increases the opportunities for entering college. School has an influence as a factor of achievement since differentiation is based on the results obtained individually by students.

It is clear for Parsons that achievement factors refer to individual ability and performance are more important than ascriptive that, as we saw, refer to the socioeconomic background of the students:

“... The educational system plays a vital role because of the general direction towards differentiation in society. Relatively speaking, the school is a specialized agent who should become increasingly the main channel of choice and means of socialization (as should normally be expected) of an increasingly differentiated society and gradually ascending.” (Parsons, *ibid*).

However, other studies have shown that attitude is often more important than aptitude². Parsons agrees that the school is the main element where differentiation is operated. However, it should be noted that students

1 Bold letters are ours

2 According to Gil, “the critical sociology of education come... to show that basically the relative relationship -not completely- happens not between social status and no skills, but between social status and attitudes.” (1994: 41).

who manage to get into college make an elite whose socioeconomic background group usually is high or at least average, and it appears that the members of the lower social classes are less likely to form part of this group.

For Parsons, the selection is performed quite naturally and, as a result, society achieves diversification, advances and keeps the order. The ability and merits of the individuals are the elements that lead to university, but under the social origin the school is the mechanism by which they reveal and update these characteristics that are crucial. Hence the importance of school “that prefilters children and adolescents under its capacity and its social origin.” (Gil, 1994: 40).

Undoubtedly, we find in this theory a precise description of how the school system works in terms of differentiation and allocation of roles, but we believe it is too general, and continues to be deterministic. The system is developed -or rather, Works- first of all, due to the actions of individuals. That is, actors updates the system and have interests and expectations that do not necessarily correspond with the objectives of the system or society, and these actors bring into play specific strategies to achieve their goals, as discussed below. For example, as regards to the factor of achievement (grades), teachers have almost complete autonomy to evaluate the academic performance of their students and we could not say that his approach is always objective.

In the case of the Mexican education system, what for Parsons would be the factor of achievement, it is a very relative aspect because, as Bartolucci points out, the disparities in the forms of assessment are very large between one school and another, between different subjects and between each of the teachers. Thus, “it is possible that a student credits a subject with fewer products and lower quality than that produced by another partner that failed. In the midst of such academic disorder, it is quite logical the fact that some students move more than others is not directly related to social origin”(Bartolucci, 1994: 150)

To our knowledge, the importance of this theory is that it indicates that the phenomenon of differentiation occurs primarily in the basic and secondary education levels, and when it is the time to take the decision to enter college or not, in the individual this differentiation has taken place, indicating that the decision-making itself is relative, since “social origin is a strong filter selection, from the early years of school.” (Gil, 1994: 40)

Another aspect worth of noting in the context of Parsons work is the meritocratic ideology behind, in the sense

that “students should receive unequal evaluation as function of the effort and achievements [...] school selects and allocates manpower” (Peña, 2000: 73). For Parsons, the mentioned aspects are key to understanding the link between economy and education where the latter is mediated by concepts from the market such as competitiveness, quality and meritocracy.

3. Cultural Capital and selection

Here we will address some key concepts developed by Bourdieu about the reproduction that takes place in school, of which one of its functions is to “transform social differences in gifts and skills differences.” (Vara, 2000: 40)

For Bourdieu cultural capital is crucial for the success or failure of students, and is legitimized by the ruling classes as ideal for the development of individuals. Based on this concept the author explains the differentiation that takes place during the educational process

“The notion of cultural capital imposed primarily as a necessary hypothesis to account for the differences in school results that children of different social classes show regarding school success, that is, the specific benefits that children of different classes and class fractions can obtain from the school market, respect of the distribution of cultural capital between classes and class fractions” (1987: 11).

In analyzing the universe of possibilities to which he may aspirate (relationship between objective and subjective probabilities aspirations), the individual eliminates those alternatives considered unattainable. This process is not necessarily based on data and experiences of others, but is carried out through an internal subjective evaluation, mostly based on the individual’s history in terms of preconceptions, and that can be explained with the concept of habitus which is a kind of emotional or subjective charge that is part of individuals. In words of Bourdieu:

“Subjective assessment of the chances of success of a particular action in a particular situation brings into play a whole body of semi-formalized wisdom: Sayings, cliches, ethical precepts and, more profoundly, unconscious principles of the ethos” (Bourdieu 1997: 36).

In the discrimination and analysis of alternatives, habitus plays a decisive role in the conclusions to which people come to define their actions and to take a very specific way and will be a very important factor in further development. Individual self-determines himself not only according to their real possibilities but to a series of preconceptions that are part of his

habitus, and according to Bourdieu, it refers basically to their socioeconomic background.

The concept of habitus is very important for Bourdieu and allows to perform the analysis of the internalization of culture on individuals, as well as, at the macro level, mediate between the structures of society and practice.

The habitus is “generator principle of symbolic practice” that, in turn, has structures or institutions as principle, it is, the objectified symbolic capital. It represents the cultural competence and is the active presence of all the past of which is product. It is in the daily update of elements of the past and constantly objectified in practice, and this allows, in turn, operate the reactivation of sense objectified in institutions. “It’s what allows the institutions to dwell, keep them active, reviving the sense deposited in them and be in full realization” (1997: 45).

This habitus or set of individual and updated preconceptions at the institutional level, justifies the established order and allows, in the perspective of the members of a society, institutions and procedures appear legitimate.

“To the extent and only to the extent that habitus are the incorporation of history, or, more accurately, history objectified in the habitus and the structures- engendering practices that are mutually comprehensible, they appear as immediately adjusted to the structures, as objectively concerted among them and equipped with an objective sense united and systematic time transcending objective conscious intentions and individual or collective projects” (Bourdieu 1997: 45).

Regarding the selection of students entering college, it justifies itself as based on objective criteria, as allegedly individuals admitted proved (objectively) to be more capable than those outside the university classrooms. Distinction is given and it is clear, and in a way acceptable to all. As Bourdieu notes, “the most socially effective distinctions are those that appear to be based on objective differences.” (1985: 80).

However, although not clearly displayed behind this formation of habitus and its subsequent legitimation, institutions impose and constantly reinforce an established order that favors the dominant classes. This is what Bourdieu calls symbolic violence that in the particular case of school, appears daily in classrooms through educational action.

Also, this habitus is part of the cultural capital of people, but what happens with this capital respect of the

chances of success of the students? It turns out that the elements that form part of the culture socially accepted and therefore legitimate, are transmitted by an arbitrary symbolic action, while transmitting content owned and supported by the dominant social class.

In this sense, it is expected that students of dominated classes that do not have the adequate code to decipher the contents manifest a delay compared to students who belong to upper classes and do have that code. Consequently, there are significant differences determined by the possession of cultural capital. This is how the educational process reproduces social inequalities, as this action involves a classist imposition and differentiating in itself.

From this point of view, we can not say that there is equality of opportunity and the school success depends solely on effort, dedication and ability of students when we see that, according to their habitus, and therefore his cultural capital, some individuals are really disadvantaged to compete with those who possess cultural capital that enables a more complete code to decode pedagogical messages transmitted in the school system.

This process of differentiation happens and strongly mark the distinction between the privileged and the marginalized in higher education and the classification is unequivocal:

“Between the last approved and the first suspended, opposition creates differences of all or nothing, and for life. The one shall be polytechnic, with all the advantages that the position entails, while the other will be nothing. None of the criteria to be taken to technically justify the distinction (as legitimate difference) of the nobility is entirely valid” (Bourdieu 1986: 81).

Now, while these concepts help us understand what happens in the educational system, we believe that, at least in the case of education in Mexico and especially in college, the differences become apparent and are obvious a number of factors that Bourdieu highlights in the case of the French system and that are absent or minimal presence in other educational system like ours. For Bartolucci what happens in the case of the education system in our country has to do with those social phenomena of the Mexican context. Belonging to a higher or lower social class is not decisive for the student to succeed or fail on his school itinerary.

“The demand for higher levels of education, preferences for the preparatory studies and most prestigious careers and fierce exclusion of students in the early grades of

the cycle, are not acts attributable to mere ideological penetration; these are complex phenomena feasible explainable only if analyzed with a strongly analytical approach” (Bartolucci: 1994, 44).

4. The student as an actor

Giroux, like Bourdieu, believes that the school acts as a reproductive of class differences. However, for Giroux school not only reproduces the established order; in the educational process agents -teachers and students as actors- play a determining role in making reproduction more complex, as these actors are in position to express even their rejection of this order

“... Schools [...] although basically reproduce the dominant society, also contain possibilities to offer students an education that makes them active and critical citizens (and not just workers)” (Giroux, 1990: 46).

Also, Giroux agrees that the school is an agent of socialization, but still there are various factors and actors with a margin of decision. That is, it is not a mechanical process in which only factors of adscription and attainment determine functioning and assumed passively by individuals.

“Schooling should be analyzed as a social process, in which different groups reject and accept complex mediations of culture, knowledge and power that shape and meaning to the process of schooling.” (1990: 133).

For Giroux, cultural capital is more than acceptance of class differences and the roles to be played by each individual accordingly. And the school is more than the place where cultural capital assumed is transmitted and assumed passively.

“Just as a nation distributes goods and services ... also distributes and legitimizes certain forms of knowledge, linguistic practices, values, styles, etc., all of which could bring together under the label of cultural capital ... The concept of cultural capital also represents certain ways to talk, act, move, dress and socialize that are institutionalized by the schools. These are not mere places where the culture of the dominant society is learned, and where students experience the difference between status and class distinctions that actually occur in the whole society.” (Giroux, 1990: 45).

A fundamental concept in the Giroux's theory is the distinction made between formal curriculum and hidden curriculum According to Giroux, hidden curriculum is that which brings together the unwritten norms, values,

beliefs, ideology, academic training, culture, knowledge, customs, etc. that structure social relations that are implicitly established daily in the classroom. The formal curriculum, which is explicit, contains the written rules under which the operation of the school system is based.

Through the study of the formal curriculum, although mainly of the hidden curriculum we can explain what happens in the classroom, analyzing the relationships established among actors. We can also see what are the external influences and how and to what extent environmental conditions are reproduced or questioned.

It is interesting to note in this type of analysis that the contents of the formal curriculum -knowledge transmitted explicitly according to educational programs- have less weight than those informal elements concerned with the hidden curriculum, as are the practices of control, ways of being, to punish, reward or lead the class by the teacher and, of course, the answer you get from students.

“What students learn from formal curriculum content is much less important than what they learn from the ideological assumptions embodied in the three communication systems of school: curriculum system, the system of teaching styles to control the class, and the evaluation system” (Giroux, 1990: 73).

Then, educational process is by no means neutral and definitely yes a process mediated by social, political and economic aspects of their environment.

“A theory of instruction is a powerful political theory in the sense that it derives from the consensus on the distribution of power in society: Who should be educated? and what roles must meet? In this sense, educational theory has to start probably from a conception of the economy since in a society with a division of labor and exchange of goods and services for wealth and social esteem issues as which education people have received, in which amount and restrictions on the use of resources, must all be of great importance” (Giroux, 1990: 73).

Therefore, the education process is very complex and actors set a wide variety of strategies to achieve their goals. In a classroom groups with different interests and even opposed to the teacher or other students are formed, and throughout the school day are carried out a series of implicit and explicit negotiations among the various groups and actors in which power relations are showed.

So, school as an agent of socialization is not unique distributing, assigning roles and selecting students for

entering college through achievements. School as well, is not a neutral space, but gives a complex network of power relations in which the internal and external actors bring into play their strategies according to their interests and, above all, in their educational process ideology, as pointed out by Michel Apple: “Any reproduction is march fulfills not only with the acceptance of the dominant ideologies, but with opposition and resistance” (1979: 40)

With these proposals the vision of the education system expands and theoretical foundations are established to link the context to what happens in schools. Furthermore, the possibilities to understand that the student has some leeway and power of decision. That is, the system does not impose an absolute differentiation in individuals, as they are also active agents that have more or less clear expectations and have set specific targets that seek to achieve throughout his school career.

The “hidden curriculum” helps us to sustain the factor of accomplishment (Parsons), grades earned by students, is not unique in determining the results. There are other elements such as forms of behavior of each school system, customs, ideology, forms of authority, and in particular the relationships between teachers and students, and the strategies that they bring into play. All this at times is often more important than formal.

As for the factor of affiliation, that Parsons refers to as the social background of the student, is neither definitive according to the vision of Giroux, because regardless of their social background, the student who has the expectation to reach the university has the same opportunities as anyone else, even if this in some cases demands additional efforts.

All this makes us think of other abilities and skills that students will acquire (or not, as the case) and that will be very important for school success. These skills refer to the ability to negotiate with teachers, authorities and partners for fruitful results and get a good reputation. In addition, it gives the student certain skills to successfully conduct among very common situations of power at schools of different educational levels, and thus be in a position to solve problems and overcome obstacles encountered during their school itinerary. That is, besides testing their academic ability getting good grades or even regular notes in assessments, it will also be very useful to have these skills to negotiate opportunities, improve their skills and gain the goodwill of teachers and peers.

5. The role of the teacher and labeling

Schooling, as we have stated, is a far more complex process than success or failure of students, and here we

introduce the concept of labeling as “the way language can mystify and hide their own assumptions” (Giroux, 1990: 42) and expresses in “labels [... misfit students rather than students or rebels who resist] that teachers put students that, against alienating and oppressive school experiences respond with a whole wide range resistance behaviors”.

Undoubtedly, a major player in the educational process is precisely the teacher who has a significant degree of autonomy that enables him to perform his work, regardless of the guidelines set out in the formal curriculum. The student also has an amount of decision, although more limited: “Education is a continuous process of decision making and the students are never static.” (Delamont, 1985: 85).

Then, both actors contribute so the class works out. Irrespective of characteristics of each reference, the two come into play certain strategies.

But how do these studies contribute to the understanding of the selection process? In this regard, we take only some elements that have yielded empirical research in the classroom and that Delamont (1985) reports and analyzes.

Teacher controls and leads by a wide margin of discretion class, and owns the word in the sense that he is who speaks and who allows or prevents calls for students to speak. Moreover, he is the one who assigns a place to each student, and this undoubtedly is very important, because “When teacher has a low estimate of the ability of a student does not try to teach as much knowledge or expect answers in the same quality” (Delamont, 1985: 78). So teachers judgments about each of their students determine, in a sense, their behavior toward students, which in turn come to assume the role assigned to them and work in the classroom according to it: “The child’s capacities assessment made by the teacher is an important part of their decision as the task to be assigned, so expectations set at a very low level can be cause of educational failure”. (Ibid p. 81)

For example, issues such as social origin of students³, part of the judgment of the teacher, are very important, both in dealing with the student and the level of demand that is required to the student.

Maybe this assignment from teacher to students is one of the aspects that influence the performance of students

3 “It is an advantage for the student to be considered from a good family.” (Delamont, 1985: 104)

and, why not, their educational future, since, among other things: “teachers encourage the students to think and intelligent rethink” (Ibid: 102).

Hence the great importance of labeling and the power of the teacher to help or harm a student according to the judgment formed of him. This will often be decisive in the educational path a student will surely encounter the great obstacle to college if he does not stay on the road: “... if teachers believe that a child is not enough attentive they will treat differently, the child will internalize that judgment and behave in line establishing a vicious circle” (Delamont, 1985: 77).

However, it must be said that if the student is convinced of his ability and has a positive attitude toward studying, which has been reinforced in his family, and therefore his expectations are to get to college, teachers may be fairly away to refrain him.

Also, students will form a judgment about the teacher and depends of it on whether or not work with the class. Similarly, for the teacher is very important to have this collaboration, because, otherwise, the class can not be done, or at least may not meet the objectives: “Judging teachers is a continuous process in which all students are constantly engaged” (Delamont, 1985: 118).

However, teacher will always have at his disposal a variety of resources ranging from coercive or persuasive, and others, do not hesitate to use if necessary. That is, the power of the roll, the power of assessment, support of other teachers and the principal for only mention some of the most common resources: “... The teacher has full control. He has power or authority over many aspects of student life: knowledge, behavior, language and clothing, everything is included in its sphere of control” (Delamont, 1985: 60)

Due to the the previous considerations, we consider the behavior of the teacher and his attitude in front of students, as well as structured judgment about them, will be very important, and perhaps one of the elements that contribute more to give differentiation that begins in the first few levels and usually continues until the end of the school career. It is, another element to be taken into account in the school path is the teacher as a key player that has enough autonomy and power to influence the decisions of students to continue their studies, aspire to go to college or succumb in the path.

6. Access to higher education in México

As we said, possessing a college degree confers certain social prestige. On the economic side, for example, studies of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2008) have consistently shown

that the more education employment opportunities and higher wages increases. A view that also prevails among most people is that education is one of the most reliable means of social mobility.

However, at present the cost of higher education tends to increase, thereby preventing in some countries in Latinamerica the consistent creation of places to meet demand, that also has also increased.

We believe that the factor of adscription or the habitus that the individual possesses according to his social position is not a determining factor, and much less the only one that explain why some students come to the university and others not. There are other factors such as the labeling of teachers, gender, cultural or idiosyncratic aspects, family support and the vision the have about education, among others.

“The ways students view themselves and the opportunities conceived are associated with the social position acquired in society not only in terms of their socio-economic background but for other qualities, such as being male or female, good or bad student” (Bartolucci, 1994: 57).

Bartolucci points out that issues such as the student’s attitude to the educational process, which usually has its origin in the family is often very important in the success at school. The author analyzes through surveys and interviews a group of students from previous educational levels to the upper and discover that among all individuals who achieve academic success, socioeconomic aspect has not been decisive.

“The linkage observed in the path followed by the group since joining the school system shows a strong student segmentation process that is difficult to explain in terms of membership of a particular social group”. (Bartolucci, 1994: 149).

Also, this author argues that the theory of reproduction itself is not applicable, at least in the case of the Mexican educational system, where the scale of values and requirement levels are far from what happens in France, where Bourdieu conducted his studies to serve as a basis for the development of his theory.

“There are many cases in which advance semester to semester without having to overcome more obstacles than copy and paste or pressure their teachers as to believe that this route is the best for sociologically explain the fact that a student remains in college and other is left behind or to defect” (Bartolucci, 1994: 50).

Regardless of all this, we can conclude is that it is necessary to conduct studies that account of who are the

ones receiving the benefits of public higher education. It would be illusory to think that really are those with less economic possibilities, when we know from the figures provided by the education system that many juvenes do not conclude the basic level.

The demand exceeds the capacity of universities and that is why the selection is necessary. However, let's not forget that in Mexico as well in most Latinamerica a high percentage of enrollment in higher education is represented by the middle class, and this would not be so bad if the segment of the population that is currently living in poverty and extreme poverty were not nearly a third of the total population. In fact, from researchs by Jesus Puente Leyva (Quoted by Bartolucci, 2000) in the late sixties, it is known that the mode of the distribution of higher education corresponds to the privileged groups. Twelve years later, Carlos Muñoz Izquierdo (Ibid) wrote that, despite educational expansion was intended to offer an increasing number of educational opportunities to the working classes of the country, its scope is asymmetrically distributed, falling mainly in middle classes and other better accommodated.

Conclusions

Whether for a functionalist need for uniformity-diversity of society, or because not all individuals are able to strive and sacrifice to attain higher levels of education or because factors of adscriptionn are determinants of school choice, or because not everyone has the educational code to decipher messages, or because the habitus influences the decision to continue or not with the studies, or the phenomenon of labeling that somehow affects the student, the fact is that the stratified education in ascending levels is not available to everyone, and the chances of reaching the summit are reduced as it advances in the educational process.

However, the selection for university entrance is only a filter that shows an entire school trajectory of many years. During the course, the student encounters a large number of small or large obstacles, and this makes us think that rather, the student who achieved entering college is the one who has mastered the system and this provided him with some skill to solve the problems that are presented in the classroom every day. Undoubtedly, knowledge and academic skills acquired in school are important for a student makes it an element to enter college, but one factor associated with it is undoubtedly the attitude that assumes each student of strong will to achieve educational summit and the goals set to achieve it.

In all this, we believe that the teacher plays a key role. He is an actor who has in his hands the possibility of

collaborating with the success or failure of students. More than an attitude of hard work, dedication and self-ability of each student that can be ingrained in their families, we believe that relationships are heavier and assimilation of roles assigned to the school as principal agent of socialization and as a reflection of a established order, and where differentiation takes place, although not naturally and if it is so, conditioned by the social, economic and cultural.

We agree that school is an agent of socialization, and is the most important, but in this process within the classroom, the teacher is one of the central actors, and from him and supplemented by the characteristics of the students is as we expected, in some cases why some students come to university and others fall by the wayside. Certainly, qualitative research has been a valuable contribution to understanding this. It is a fact that there are also groups more vulnerable to school failure. For Gil Villa, for much of modern history, the poorest social sectors have been the more affected in terms of reduced opportunities of access and in terms of underachievement. For him "the exclusion here is of two distinct forms. Inequality of access and inequality of success" (Gil: 2002, 103).

Finally, we remark that selection is a process along the educational trajectory and those who make it to the threshold of higher education, and then manage to overcome the obstacles of access, the choice of certain careers, school performance, abandonment, and other issues that also involves educational inequality, are mediated by social origin that often significantly intervene to facilitate or complicate things.

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