

# **Incarcerated schooling: an analysis based the representations of prisoners from the prison of Uberlândia (MG)**

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## **Abstract**

This paper results from a thesis whose title is *Beyond the class cells: schooling in the incarcerated context in the light of the representations of prisoners from the prison of Uberlândia - Minas Gerais (MG)*, developed between 2010 and 2012, in the Education graduate program at the Federal University of Uberlândia. The purpose of this paper is to think about the schooling prescribed and instituted in an incarcerated context, based on a contextualized analysis of representations of prisoners from the prison of Uberlândia (MG). The aim is to contribute with the understanding of the limits and possibilities of school education in the prisons. Utilizing a qualitative and participative method of research, whose core is a bibliographical, documental and field investigation, the paper intends to problematize the official speech and the reality faced by the prisoners. The research subjects were selected at random, based on security criteria set by the prison's head office. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The results achieved show that the current scenario of schooling in the prisons has several fragilities, not only because it reaches a small number of prisoners in Brazil but mainly because the possibility of having an effective educational action in the prisons is sustained, above all, by the personal commitment of teachers, prison agents and technical staff involved in the task. In addition, in these contexts, a pragmatic view of schooling prevails as it is isolated from the other public sector policies and associated with achieving a job or occupation.

## **Keywords**

Schooling – Prison – Representations – Prisoners.

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# ***A educação escolar nas prisões: uma análise a partir das representações dos presos da penitenciária de Uberlândia (MG)***

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## **Resumo**

*Este artigo é fruto da dissertação de mestrado intitulada Para além das celas de aula: a educação escolar no contexto prisional à luz das representações dos presos da penitenciária de Uberlândia - Minas Gerais (MG), desenvolvida no período de 2010 a 2012, no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação da Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. A finalidade deste artigo é promover uma reflexão acerca da educação escolar prescrita e instituída no contexto prisional, a partir de uma análise contextualizada das representações dos presos da penitenciária de Uberlândia (MG). Objetiva-se contribuir para a compreensão dos limites e das possibilidades da educação escolar nas prisões. Com base na metodologia de pesquisa qualitativa e participante, e com fulcro em uma investigação bibliográfica, documental e de campo, o artigo pretende problematizar o discurso oficial e a realidade vivenciada pelos presos. Os sujeitos da pesquisa foram selecionados aleatoriamente, a partir de critérios de segurança da direção da penitenciária. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas e grupo focal. Os resultados alcançados mostram que o panorama atual da educação escolar nas prisões tem demonstrado fragilidades, não somente por atingir um número reduzido de presos no Brasil, mas, principalmente, porque a possibilidade de uma ação efetiva de educação nas prisões é sustentada, sobretudo, no compromisso pessoal dos professores, agentes penitenciários e técnicos envolvidos na tarefa. Além disso, predomina-se, nesses espaços, uma visão pragmática da educação escolar, isolada das demais políticas setoriais e relacionada à obtenção de um emprego ou profissão.*

## **Palavras-chave**

*Educação escolar – Prisão – Representações – Presos.*

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze the schooling prescribed and instituted in an incarcerated context following the representations<sup>1</sup> of prisoners housed in the prison Professor João Pimenta da Veiga, Uberlândia (MG)<sup>2</sup>, about the schooling implemented in the incarceration system. It attempts to build an analysis in the light of representations of the prisoners and guided by the educational laws and policies formulated to regulate schooling in the prisons and make it viable.

It should be stressed that schooling is part of the so called public policies. In the limits of this paper, the notion of public policy as a relationship between State and Society will be highlighted and deemed as contradictory and conflictive. For the discussion made herein, key actors will be pointed out in the dynamics of implementing the incarcerated education, such as the prison's security guards, teachers, and prisoners.

According to Höfling (2001), the analyses focusing on the official discourse of the State, of governments or the political institutions may darken the *praxis*, as it conveys an ideological nature – understood here according to the Marxist conception, referring to the false consciousness afforded by lacunar discourse, which legitimates social institutions, assigning them with functions that are different from those really performed.

It is indispensable to mention that the public policy is part of the branch of knowledge called *policy science* which, according to Howlett and Ramesh (1995), appeared in the United States and in Europe, after the World War II, when researchers investigated the dynamics of the relationships between governments and citizens, extrapolating the strict attachment to

the traditional normative dimensions and the details of the operation of specific institutions.

In relation to the policies for incarcerated schooling, its complex character in organization and functioning must be stressed out as they take place in the articulation of the education system with the incarceration system (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice, State Departments of Education and Departments of Social Defense or Prison Administration, in addition to bodies that are a part of this systems, such as the prisons and the penitentiaries) – which, in turn, is articulated with the penal system and with society.

Considering schooling in the prison's context as the unfolding of political decisions, some questions arise: how in the institutional/normative world and in everyday life, does schooling take place in prisons? Which are the effective results of schooling for prisoners in the everyday life of a prison? Which are the impressions and representations of prisoners about such schooling?

Starting off with these questions, the research presented herein analyzes schooling within a prison. It takes as empirical reference the representations of prisoners in Uberlândia, highlighting and contextualizing their voices, which often go unheard.

### **Education within a prison: legal provision**

The public policies for school education are legitimated by the legal provision in the national and international spheres. Thus, it is necessary to understand, first hand, the public policies which in fact convey the mark of being public, that is, for all, and not merely run by the state or collective.

People in a jail, as well as any other people, have the human right to education. On the international level, highlight should be given to the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights which, in its article 26, sets forth the right to education, whose objective is the full

**1-** The representations of those serving time are here understood as "facts of words and social practice", as defined by Lefebvre (1983). A representation is made of what is lived, perceived and conceived, in ceaseless dialectical movement.

**2-** The city of Uberlândia (MG) is characterized by the tourism for business people. It is located near the great Brazilian urban centers, such: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Goiânia, and Brasília.

development of a person and the strengthening of the respect for human rights. It is understood that human rights are universal (for everyone), interdependent (all rights are interrelated and none of them is more important than any other right), indivisible (they cannot be fractioned) and demandable before the State in legal and political terms.

Thus, according to Graciano (2005), the human right to education is classified in several ways as an economic, social and cultural right. It is also taken in the civil and political sphere, since it lies in the center of making the other rights true. Thus, the right to education is also called a right of synthesis, as it provides and enhances the guarantee of the other rights.

Moreover, this right is set forth by several international documents, including: the World Declaration on Education for All (article 1); International Convention on the Rights of the Child (paragraph 1, art. 29); Convention Against Discrimination in Teaching (articles 3, 4, and 5); Wien's Declaration and Action Plan (part 1, paragraph 33 and 80); Agenda 21 (chapter 36); Declaration of Copenhagen (commitment 6); Beijing's Platform of Action (paragraphs 69, 80, 81, and 82); Aman's Statement and Action Plan for the United Nations Decennial for the Education on Human Rights (paragraph 2).

The international document called *Minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners*, approved by the UN economic and social council in 1957, sets forth the access to education for incarcerated people. As Carreira makes clear (2009, p. 11), the document says that

[...] measures shall be taken to improve the education of all prisoners, including religious instruction. The education of the illiterate and young prisoners shall be integrated in the nation's educational system, so that after release they may carry on, without difficulties, with their education. Leisure and cultural activities shall be provided in all penitentiary establishments on behalf of mental and physical health.

On the national normative level, schooling within a prison is part of a type of education called Education for the Youth and Adults (EJA). Article 37 of the National Education Guidelines and Grounds Act (LDB), No. 9394 of 1996, defines this type of schooling as the one destined "to people who did not have access or continuity in their studies in primary, secondary and high-school at the appropriate age".

LDB regulates what is provided in the 1988 Federal Constitution, through article 208, paragraph I, according to which all citizens have the right to "Fundamental Schooling, compulsory and free of charge, and it also ensured that it will be provided to all those who did not have access to it at the appropriate age".

In addition, the Penal Execution Act (LEP), No. 7210 of 1984, sets forth schooling in the prison system in articles 17 through 21. For example, article 17 says that educational assistance shall include schooling and professional training for prisoners. Article 18 determines that primary and secondary (fundamental) schooling is mandatory and shall be integrated with the local (state) school system. Article 21 requires a library shall be implemented in each prison, to be used by all inmates, supplied with books of instructional, recreational and learning usage.

Same is true in the preparation of the National Guidelines for the Education in the Prisons, expressed in Resolution No. 03 of March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009, which was approved by the National Council of Criminal and Penitentiary Policy in the Ministry of Justice of Brazil. These guidelines present national parameters associated with three topics: 1) management, articulation, and mobilization; 2) training and appraisal of professionals involved in the supply thereof; and 3) pedagogical aspects.

The guidelines mentioned above legitimate schooling in the prisons and were ratified by the Brazilian Ministry of Education through Resolution No. 02 of May 19, 2010, issued by the National Education Council, with the purpose of pedagogically guiding the

provision of education for incarcerated youths and adults in penal establishments.

Considering the regulations currently in force, Julião (2006, p. 77) points out that:

[...] Brazil, as a member of the UN Social and Economic Defense Council, at least in the programmatic field, has been seeking to follow the international deliberations for the treatment of prisoners.

However, the Brazilian incarceration system, justice and the police are organized mainly on the state level, and as a result each state government has a relative autonomy to introduce public policies of schooling in the context of prisons. Consequently, due to regional and political diversity, the reality of Brazilian prisons is heterogeneous, according to each state or even the specific prison facility. Thus, norms are applied in accordance with the meanders and vicissitudes in the local level.

Thus, two aspects must be considered: first, the documents that bring forth the national guidelines for incarcerated schooling have only recently been published, which indicates their practical weakness even in terms of awareness by professionals who work in this field; second, the guidelines present an overview about incarcerated education, and are characterized in some of their provision as recommendations and associated with the need for future articulation between the institutions.

Altogether, there are the specificities of each prison, its management and common sense around the disregard of education a right to be enforced in the context of jails. About that, we must stress the comments stated by the research permanently underway conducted by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), which are highlighted by Maeyer (2006, p. 24):

The legal situation of inmates affects the organization of classes. People who have been charged with a crime but who have

not yet been tried find it more difficult (or are less motivated) to join a fixed class. [...] In some countries, attending class is compulsory, classes are organized by the state through qualified teachers, who have been trained to adapt their educational methods to the special context of a prison. In most countries, however, education is an option and competes with the possibility of working. [...] The creation of technical education programs leads to the organization of productive activities which, on one hand, allow for the development of technical skills aimed at the labor market but, on the other hand, adversely affect the educational activities or impact the social dimension of the educational programs. [...] The reality of overcrowded prisons disfavors the organization of educational sessions. Overcrowded prisons adversely affect the programs, especially in the countries of the South.

In regard of the compatibility between work and education within the prison's context, article 8 of Resolution No. 03 of 2009 by the National Council of Criminal and Penitentiary Policy sets forth that

[...] the work in a prison, also understood as an element of training that is a part of education, shall be provided in hours and conditions that are compatible with the educational activities.

Although the rule is in force, one notes that in the prisons work is utilized predominantly to the detriment of educative activities. On one hand, for the prison units this work satisfies emergent internal needs, and it also "keeps the inmate busy, avoiding laziness, diverting him from the practice of illegal activities, acting in this case as a kind of 'occupational therapy'", as says Lemgruber (1999, p. 135).

On the other hand, work is understood by prisoners as a way of spending time – more

than the education activities which, in general, are conducted in a period of the day only – and, in certain cases, as a way of receiving the respective financial compensation.

In Uberlândia (MG), the so called public policies for incarcerated schooling are conducted by two prison facilities: prison professor Jacy de Assis and penitentiary professor João Pimenta da Veiga.

In the research for my master's degree, which inspired this paper, the methodological approach was to investigate the policies actually implemented in the second facility, considering the fact that it houses prisoners serving time for a crime, which in theory allows for a lesser turnover of inmates and greater regularity of school activities.<sup>3</sup> The reason is after conviction a follow-up of the prisoner and his incarceration time will be planned out.

### **Beyond the class cells: the representations of prisoners**

In parallel with the bibliographical and documental research regarding incarcerated schooling, fieldwork was conducted with the purpose of contextualizing practice against the normative discourse. The research subjects were selected at random among male prisoners<sup>4</sup>, due to the fact that masculine men represent the broad majority in the Brazilian confinement system and based on safety criteria defined by the Uberlândia penitentiary.<sup>5</sup>

**3-** About this item, the Education Guidelines and Grounds Act (LDB) reads in its article 23 that a flexible service of education must be provided due to the turnover of the incarcerated population.

**4-** According to official data of the National Penitentiary Department of the Ministry of Justice in Brazil, regarding December 2010, the incarcerated population was 496,251 prisoners, out of which 37,315 were in the Penitentiary System of the Minas Gerais State, and 34,873 were male and 2,442 were female prisoners. Report available in: <<http://portal.mj.gov.br/data/Pages/MJD574E9CEITEMIDC37B2AE94C6840068B1624D28407509CPTBRNN.htm>>. Accessed on March 15, 2011. About this, see Sabadell's idea (2009) about sex selectivity in prison as a result of Western patriarchal culture in which penal law and the incarceration system are essentially male.

**5-** Penitentiary professor João Pimenta da Veiga opened in October 2003 with a capacity of serving 396 prisoners, and at the time of the research there were 477 inmates, out of which 427 were male. (Source: interview with the Uberlândia Penitentiary chief, in September 2011).

Within the penitentiary, there is the State Public School Mário Quintana, which opened in and has been in operation since June 2006, created by Decree N°. 44196 of December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005, of the Minas Gerais State Government to house up to 130 prisoners. At the time of the fieldwork there were 120 inmates taking part in the school activities, as officially registered the penitentiary's office.

The administrative facilities of the school are located in a building especially destined to such function, separated from the cell block. The cells used for classes are located in blocks where the prisoners are, and they are cell exclusively destined to such purpose. Thus, in order to attend class Monday through Friday, prisoners are taken by penitentiary security guards from the cells where they are secluded to the class cells, in the same block.

In this context, seven individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in January and February 2011 with prisoners who participated in educational activities of EJA type (youth and adult education). Interviews focused on the representations about the education policy in the incarcerated situation in the eyes of those who are the target of such policy.

Additionally, a focus group was conducted,<sup>6</sup> mediated by the author – researcher and participant, in October 2010, with 10 prisoners serving time, who did not take part in the school activities. The scope of that data collection was to investigate the representations of those who are alien to educational activities, although they are potential students and are able to attend school.

Among other aspects, the categories identified to perform the research were the prisoners' representations regarding: the access to and permanence in the prison's school; education as a right; relationship with

**6-** According to Lewin (1970), the group is the context where one can reconstruct and create meanings, experience and re-signify issues by exchanging information. The focus group is an investigation technique which collects data arising from the interaction among participants of a group that was invited to discuss a theme.



professionals who work in the prison, and schooling as social inclusion.

Speaking generally, for the research subjects, schooling is understood within the prison walls as a benefit, an opportunity for those who abide by the specific rule of the ambience. However, this kind of opportunity is associated with the existence of a personal will or desire, whose motivation may vary.

You go to school here if you have good behavior and the unit accepts you. There are people in the school who has no interests at all, but this is not the issue here. You must be determined. You have to want it. (E4)<sup>7</sup>

I think everybody wants it, they can do it. It depends basically on you. (E7)

I had an opportunity here, something I didn't have out there, but I showed no interest. Regarding the school, I'm satisfied. I'm still young, I have two kids and I wish to graduate. There is a lot of guys here who could not read and today they are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. School is good to you. [...] I attend it since the beginning. You have to have good behavior and I have always had it so that I would enjoy the opportunity. (E6)

What participants say reveal that the access to the right to schooling is conditioned to a personal will associated with good individual behavior required by the prison system. Such behavior is translated as the respect for the internal orders set for both by the written rules and by the rituals of conviviality agreed upon between the prison's professionals and the inmates.

Thus, what is a right of every person is then configured by the inmates as an opportunity, revealing what is immediate. That is, the logic of granting awards and punishment in the prison, based on the conduct of every prisoner, changes

**7-** The research subjects who participated in the interview will be identified with the letter E, followed by a differentiating number.

the right of all to education into an individual benefit and something to be conquered.

One therefore finds that prisoners do not see education as a legally established right of every person, which, besides being a duty of the State, represents one of the social achievements instituted to contribute to their personal formation, as a facilitator in the opportunities socially constructed.

Such finding was identified upon the fact that, during the fieldwork, only one prisoner among the 17 participants in the interviews and in the focus group, mentioned education as a right, as transcribed as follows:

I've been studying here for three years here. [...] I'm on the fourth grade now, because my cell block does not provide the fifth grade which is the one I left. But I know it is my right to take this grade where I left out there, but it is not possible. (E3)

The testimony shows the prisoner sees clearly that the prison system does not offer conditions for the continuity of his schooling, despite the fact that he has the right to it. This aspect is opposite to the national regulations currently in force, especially in what concerns the specificities of the different levels (basic and university) and modalities of education and teaching (education for the youth and adults, special education, distance education, professional education).

It should be highlighted that a research subject mentions other rights in general terms, showing that he is aware of and is seeking them:

I wanted to leave this place as a graduate. Take the benefit of the semi-open prison when I'm in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. To tell you the truth I did not even want to progress in order to complete [schooling]. But of course it better to enjoy the benefit. I want to leave here and seek my rights, which I know are many. (E6)

During the focus group, with the participation of prisoners who do not go to the prison school, the researcher said education is a right in the prison for all without any distinction and, theoretically, the State should provide it. Therefore, such right is not a favor made available by the government, but it is a duty.

Concerning the prison's need to meet the specific items of the different levels of schooling and their time shifts, compliant with the legislation and according to the needs of prisoners, the reality researched showed there is just one shift of educational activities. Many times such shift was incompatible with work, and the prisoners were unaware of the criteria to take part in the schooling provided by the prison they were in.

I'm not aware of the choice. There are a lot of names in the list. Security chooses but I don't know the criteria they use. The list<sup>8</sup> is forwarded and only afterwards the approved names are called. (E2)

You have to put your name in the list then wait to be called by the director's office. (E5)

Contrary to what was told by the prisoners, highlight must be given to paragraph VII, article 3 of aforementioned Resolution No. 02 of 2009 issued by the National Council of Criminal and Penitentiary Policy which includes EJA (youth and adult education) to be provided by penal institutions in all shifts. Attention must be also given to paragraph III, article 4, which sees to the implementation of strategies to disseminate educational actions among the inmates, including public regular calls for registration.

As one can see, implementing schooling in the prisons brings up a number of issues associated with the organization and everyday

**8-** The list is the way one is admitted to the unit's school. The security guards go through the aisles in the cell blocks holding the list and asking who, among the prisoners, wants to go to school. Those interested in it sign up their names and wait for approval by the director's office.

routine of the penal institution, which is opposed to what is provided for in the resolutions dealing with the national guidelines for this sector.

In this perspective, one must emphasize the testimonies of the research subjects concerning the difficulties they have to go through in terms of security when going to the class cell. According to the testimony of some prisoners, the security guards tend to make it difficult the access to the educational activities, in contradiction to the official discourse contained in the documents and regulations involving education in the prisons.

Thus, for the subjects of the research:

There is a great lack of education in the way the security guards treat us. I've already considered the idea of giving up school because of that, but I have to show I'm stronger than they are. I don't wanna be weak. (E4)

Sometimes, the guards get to the cell earlier and you have no time to brush your teeth. Then you just don't go. (E5)

Concerning the guards, someone could provide them with some consciousness. Give them a talk about the human being, about it all. [...] They treat us as criminals. They think they are cops and the prisoners as criminals. This is the relationship, and we are treated badly, as if we were criminals only. They forget we are human beings. I think guards should have some training about what is to be a prisoner who is still a human being, regardless of what he did. If he killed, trafficked, stole, raped, and all the other persons too. I feel like giving this kind of talk when I leave here. (E3)

What they say seems to reveal that, among the security guards, there might be a crystallized idea that incarcerated people are deprived of their rights, that is, an atmosphere



of entire suspension of rights. About this, Fragoso, Catão, Sussekind (1980, p. 1) say that

[...] it is the old idea that prisoners have no rights whatsoever. A convicted person is damned and, by serving time, he or she is the object of maximum reproach by the community, which deprives him or her of all any protection from the legal system that he or she dared to violate. The criminal is execrable and infamous, a servant of his punishment, he loses peace and is outside any right. [...] In primitive law, the offender was punished by being cast outside of the group (which virtually meant his death).

Considering the above, article 9 of the 2009 Resolution by the National Council of Criminal and Penitentiary Policy should be stressed as well as article 11 of the 2010 Resolution by the National Education Council; both state the need to ensure the access to the initial and ongoing education/training programs for teachers, managers and technicians who work in the criminal institutions, taking into account the specificities of the penal policy and the aid in understanding the relevance of educational actions in the prisons.

Thus, in relation to possible suggestions for prison schooling, it is indispensable to emphasize the following sentences pronounced by the research subjects:

Suggestion? First of all, respect from the security guards. They are very impolite in the way they treat us. I've already considered the idea of giving up because of that, but I think I'm stronger than they are. I don't wanna be weak. Second: it is necessary to provide more training and resources for the school. For example, why the use of computers was a benefit only for the semi-open cell block? There could also be a music wing in the classroom, something I like so much... Now, the teachers are great people. They are very patient (E4).

Technical training on computers, so that we can be prepared for the world outside which requires more and more skills from us. (E2)

My suggestion would be physical activities. (E5)

Handouts and other materials could be offered. There are only two small notebooks and pencils for all subjects. It would be great to have information technology so we can learn how to use a computer... and else the school could be separated from the cell block. There should be a building just for the school because a lot of noise comes from the cell block and there should be more vacancies for the brothers. (E6)

As mentioned by participants in the research, issues related to the conditions of how education is provided in the prison are a highlight. Such aspects are directly associated with the existence a pedagogical proposal adapted to the context of the schooling in the prisons, in compliance with the National Guidelines.<sup>9</sup>

One must also emphasize the issues arising in the focus group when the prisoners mentioned, among other aspects, the need to offer opportunity to all prisoners, making more time available for the school activities, providing full training, supporting the director's office, improving the relationship between the security guards and the learning conditions.

Thus, speaking generally, the way the research subjects conceive schooling, despite the difficulties found in the ambience of a prison, the existence of school activities seems to represent a possibility of learning and spending time in prison and, above all, a relevant aspect of the individual and social points-of-view.

Furthermore, research participants showed that, based on their experience in prison

<sup>9</sup> - Concerning that, see what Silva and Moreira (2011) think about it.

and in school, they are aware of the fragilities and they identify the aspects that, in practice, may be improved not only for the prisoners, but also for those who work in the prison, such as teachers, security guards and managers.

[...] schooling is essential in your life [...] If I were out there, I would not go back to school... here, I did it because you have nothing else to do, that is why I put my name in the list. (E1)

I started working because it would reduce my serving time, then I put my name in the list to go to school [...] I helps in a lot of things, in your self-esteem, for reading and knowledge. [...] Going to school brings more acceptance by society, mainly for us that served time in prison. (E2)

I've always found important to go to school to acquire knowledge, learn how to talk, write, when you need to write a letter, and to get to know people. I have always had such opinion before becoming a prisoner. [...] I intend to study Law, first I will take supplementary school and after that, be tested to go to university. It doesn't matter I'm old, no problem for me. (E3)

In the beginning I thought it was boring... here I learned to like the subjects, especially math. School here is very good, because there weren't school my time would be idle and my years would not be reduced. [...] School is very important, we learn a lot. (E4)

In the past, it was more of an impulse. Today school is paramount. We learn stuff. You learn to appreciate yourself. [...] I intend to continue when I'm out there so that I can get a good job and abandon this life. I have always worked as with general utilities. (E5)

In relation to school, I'm happy. I'm still young, I have two kids and I want to

graduate. There are lots of brothers here who could not read and today they are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. School is very good for you. (E6)

Consequently, the impression of prisoners about the changing power of education, within or outside the prison, becomes evident. However, one can observe the pragmatic view associated with schooling, resulting in a job and reducing the stigma<sup>10</sup> of being an ex-prisoner, fruit of an ideological view which does not see education as a legally ensured right and neither as a public policy implemented in the prison.

### **Closing comments**

The current scenario of schooling in the prisons has shown, on one hand, the emerging fragilities and needs. On the other hand, taking into account the legislation and the national guidelines currently in force, there are possibilities of implementing a public policy pedagogically connected with the criminal system.

Based on the objectives that guided this paper, and on the master's thesis inspired by them, it is relevant to stress that the research makes the reality of prisons more visible and schooling in this context more urgent, far beyond the common sense prevailing in regular minds. By introducing the voices of prisoners in what concerns the world of prisons, the investigation points to a perspective that intends to change this reality and overcomes the legal system, since it is limited to conceiving prison as a place of punishment and social reintegration, where education is to be included.

From the voices of prisoners, a close relationship is identified between schooling and the possibility of earning benefits within the

**10-** For Goffman (1974), stigma is status reduced and socially acknowledged as such. Once found out, it grants the stigmatized individual with characteristics that are socially devalued. Such are the cases of, for example, those commit prostitution and crimes, and the mentally ill. The individual is diminished and/or stigmatized because of his/her lack of certain characteristics that are valued by society and/or the group (honor, body aesthetics, gender identity). Stigma is a negative mark that may affect both an individual and an entire group and it is an important element to understand discrimination and prejudice.

prison, such as the reduction of serving time. It also identifies that the schooled learning is directly associated with the access to a profession, to the labor market, as it may also contribute to the personal and social valuation in detriment of the stigma for having been a prisoner.

However, it demonstrates that this pragmatic view of schooling, among most prisoners, comes from an ideological view which does not see education as a right, an aspect that makes it difficult for prisoners to get organized and then claim for such right. This view also shows the need to articulate education with the other sector policies in the prisons, in order to make it possible to achieve a system view that potentiates education.

In a roll of aspects mentioned by the research subjects, one could see that schooling in the prison represents, for those taking part in this study, a possible learning which, at the same time, makes one spend time and achieve benefits that may reduce their serving time.

Besides, in the context of prison schooling, in the class cells, a set of problems is marked about the prevalence of order and discipline intended for punishment. Thus, beyond the class cells, the relationship with the prison security personnel seems to significantly affect the development of school activities, both in terms of reaching out the greatest number of prisoners, and in terms of the exerting rights within or without the prison.

In this perspective, Craidy (2010) says that education in the prison reaches a small number of prisoners in Brazil and in the world. Moreover, it indicates that the possibility of an effective schooling in incarcerated ambiances is supported, today, by the personal commitment of those involved in the task. This may reveal a contradiction, as the normative provisions in the national and international sphere about the subject point to a movement that constantly emphasizes education as a right of everyone.

To get there, it is indispensable to expand the efforts to articulate the bodies of penitentiary management with those of

education, both represented in the federal level respectively by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and in the local level, by their managers and technical staff, stressing out the responsibility of all in the enforcement of the right to education and, consequently, the national guidelines.

About this matter, Maeyer (2006, p. 32) comments that

[...] education in the prison does not mean education for the prisoners only. Education in the prison in the perspective of a lifelong learning for all involves the ambience and, therefore, it also involves the staff and the penitentiary guards. In many countries, the penitentiary guards receive basic training about the duties, about security measures. Their potential role in supporting and promoting formal and non-formal schooling has not yet been sufficiently emphasized. Some experiences have been conducted successfully in a few countries, and the social role of the penitentiary guards has been stressed and valued – they are the ones who have more contact with prisoners. The role they play among all those working in a prison and in relation to the inmates' families is crucial. Education in prison must really include the penitentiary guards who in many countries also have a low level of schooling and no access to ongoing education.

For such purpose, it is necessary to keep and improve the understanding of the continuous training of people who work in the prison context to awake and keep the motivation of incarcerated people and the professional working with them to comprehend the right to education as something irremovable and the public policies in the prisons as stemming from the national guidelines.

It is fundamental to realize that it not enough to set up new schools, mainly those associated with professional training, to solve

the problem of education for young and adult offenders. We must value and exercise a wide and well-articulated educational conception, capable of giving priority and contributing to the formation of individuals with potentials and competences that enhance social mobility.

As we have found, stemming from the analysis of the prisoners' opinions, the everyday activities in the penitentiary school are full of contradictions when compared to the grounds that guide the normative provision. Overcoming this situation may take place if schooling in the prison is politically articulated with an interdisciplinary perspective in order to seek, above all, to implement the existing guidelines which, if applied, may contribute to potentiate the access to the right to education in the prisons.

In summary, a prison school must prioritize an educational conception and practice capable of enhancing above all the formation of citizens that will be aware of their social reality and their rights. And, for such, it is essential that the relevant bodies take education as a major policy for social inclusion, jointly with social sector policies, and embrace the collective construction of an education with the purpose of developing a critical and comprehensive formation, not restricted to schooling.

The perspective sustained herein focuses on the guarantee of access to the right to education understood in its broad meaning, related to dissemination and transmission of

the knowledge historically systematized in the sphere of culture and social diversity, going beyond the ideological search for official certification. This can be done, for example, by means of supplementary examinations associated with the gathering of statistical data that present a relative improvement in the Brazilian educational indices for the incarcerated population.

Thus, it is needed to build a pedagogical proposal for the actions of the penal in the prisons, in sight of performing other activities in the incarcerated ambience, such as health, labor, social assistance, and culture. This aspect is of the essence, as many prisoners do not study because, in most prisons, it is not possible to reconcile schooling with other activities.

As seen above, and based on Freire's (1998) assumption that "the world is not, the world is being", one does not intend to exhaust the debate proposed here. ON the contrary, it is understood that the social dynamics and the rise of research and legislation about the topic make the academic work, in its form and contents, unfinished as it has been produced in given historical circumstances which comprehend economic, political, emotional, institutional and social aspects.

On the other hand, this study may contribute mainly to improve the reality being researched by providing tangible subsidies for the discussion it is all about, as well as unfolding to a set of questions and further investigations.

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