**Environmental Education in Amazon region: a study with social representations of pedagogues in public schools in the city of Castanhal – Pará (Brazil)**

Brazilian Amazon, for centuries, has been victim of a political, economical and educational standard which has strategically worked to hide an uncontrolled ownership of its natural resources. In such strategies the invisiblization of the population, the devaluation of its culture and, mostly, its knowledge disqualification are persistent. All these issues have reinforced a social network of exclusion, which is an effect of the environmental issues that have been imposed on this region. Such imposition was brought by the “colonization”, and it has continued up until today.

Since then it is recurrent in the Amazon a process of cultural “domestication” whereby the school has been used as the main tool for the reproduction of the dominant culture. However, we used to think that if the educational institution can be used to establish domination, it might also be a tool to fight against hegemony, hence a place of disruption and renovation, resistance and transformation.

In this setting raises our interest in getting into Amazon’s common reality to unveil the meanings attributed to Environmental Education, emphasized in the main goal of recognizing social representations of Environmental Education that guide pedagogical and community practices of teachers with training in Pedagogy, that work in the initial grades of Elementary School in public schools of Castanhal-Pará-Brazil.

It’s theoretical and methodological framework was oriented by contributions of the qualitative research, more accurately by the Theory of Social Representations in its ethnographic approach. We questionnaires, supplemented by two discussion groups and observations to collect data for this study, in which 121 teachers participated. The most significant results have demonstrated the interrelationship between the three dimensions that shape Social Representations:

1. In the first dimension, i*nformation*, speeches broadcasted in mass media is highlighted, which are one of the main sources of accessing Environmental Education among surveyed people; the weakness in university education programs to include environmental issue and the day-to-day dimension of Amazonian peoples in teachers’ training processes; the frequent presence of Official speeches in pedagogical school practices, that are the result of the knowledge-power relation.
2. In the second dimension, r*epresentation field*, a comprehension of Environmental Education tied with Amazon day-to-day reality is shown, from the environmental problems that appear in it; the re-definition of the concept, based on historical and cultural elements of this region; an abstraction of the Environmental Education which reflects the identities of the subjects in this research, especially in such a way where they are defined ad naturalist, integrative and anthropocentric.
3. In the last one, *social practices*, the interest in Environmental Education is emphasized, portrayed in pedagogical and communitarian daily practices, highlighting the different ways of accomplishing it; the relationship with Nature, as a historical and cultural product, socially built; the institutional guidelines and ideological speeches, present in the main sources of access to Environmental Education, which reveal up in their pedagogical practices and in their proposition of actions focusing on currents concepts established in social representations.

In all these dimensions we have identified the importance attributed to the Amazonian Nature and the interest, of the participants of this research, in Environmental Education. In the same way, it was possible to unveil the social representations, the symbolic elements that shape it and the manner in which these representations are materialized in their lives and daily practices. This materialization takes place through historic-cultural elements, whereby the subjects of this research aim to destabilize unequal relationships of power. In this sense, they question the production process of knowledge and know-how, as well as social relationships that feature hidden interests and imposed truths.

Furthermore, subjects are aware of devalued condition imposed on their know-how and culture, thus they seek in their cultural stock the key elements to outline other ways of organization in order to change social structures. This intentionality to change is clearly visible in their speeches, practices and in the meanings attributed to Environmental Education.

For this and other evidences, we figure out that historic-cultural elements, truly Amazonian, have fed a series of actions that explain and specify the resistance movements towards governmental policies that go against the interests of this population. Although in many speeches it is possible to observe that this resistance has been destroyed by very subtle strategies of consensus and social control or through physical confrontation. We understand these symbolic tensions highlight the struggle of this community to keep their cultural stocki and identity alive.