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Artículos Científicos

Las disposiciones normativas de la participación social en una escuela primaria

The Normative Provisions of Social Participation in an Elementary School
As disposições normativas da participação social em uma escola primária

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Resumen

El presente artículo expone los resultados de un estudio en caso, realizado en una escuela de educación primaria pública en México, a más de dos décadas de que el Gobierno federal impulsara una renovada participación social en educación con diversas normativas para las instituciones de educación básica. La perspectiva de la investigación fue cualitativa con orientación etnográfica. El propósito fue documentar la manera en que las disposiciones normativas son recontextualizadas por los agentes sociales. La investigación es coincidente con otras que han estudiado la cultura escolar; argumenta la necesidad de seguir documentando y recreando narrativamente lo que sucede en las instituciones educativas, tomando distancia de las propuestas elaboradas en otros contextos, con el fin de construir unas que se acerquen a los mundos de vida de los agentes sociales.

Palabras clave: educación básica, gestión, participación social.

Abstract

This contribution has been a research made in an Elementary Public School, from Mexico. More than two decades after the Federal Government promoted a re-new social participation in the education, with various regulations for basic educational institutions. The research perspective, in which the study was conducted is the qualitative one, from an ethnographic perspective. In the



text there have been re-built, in a narrative manner the way that the narrative regulations have been re-contextualized by the social agents.

This research has coincidence with others that have studied schools' cultures and this proposed the need of continue documenting and re-creating in a narrative way, what is going on in the educative institutions. Taking distance from elaborated projections from another contexts. In order to built one that reflects the real world of the social agents.

Keywords: basic education, management, social participation.

Resumo

Este artigo expõe os resultados de um estudo de caso realizado em uma escola pública pública no México, mais de duas décadas depois que o governo federal promoveu uma participação social renovada na educação com vários regulamentos para instituições de ensino básico. A perspectiva da pesquisa foi qualitativa, com orientação etnográfica. O objetivo era documentar a maneira pela qual as disposições normativas são recontextualizadas pelos agentes sociais. A pesquisa é consistente com outras pessoas que estudaram a cultura escolar; argumenta a necessidade de continuar documentando e recriando narrativamente o que acontece nas instituições de ensino, afastando-se das propostas feitas em outros contextos, a fim de construir aquelas que abordem o mundo da vida dos agentes sociais.

Palavras-chave: educação básica, gestão, participação social.

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Introduction

Social participation is considered by some researchers as an attempt by Latin American governments to modernize their respective educational systems. In this the governments were following the recommendations of international organizations that deal with technical and financial matters. The adoption of the recommendations had as background the reconfiguration of the traditional relations of the State with society, due to the appearance of a new actor in the process of economic globalization: the market (Torres, 2006).

In the Mexican education system, as in other Latin American countries (Díaz, Alfaro, Calderón and Álvarez, 2010), social participation in education was one of the axes of the educational reform in the 90s, concretized with the signing of the National Agreement for the Modernization of Basic Education (Ministry of Public Education [SEP], 1992). At present, it is considered as a necessity to strengthen management capacity and autonomy in schools (Official Gazette of the Federation [DOF], March 7, 2014). Its purpose is to create the conditions for students, alumni, teachers, managers, parents and other social agents to be involved in solving the problems faced by schools.

However, parental involvement in schools has deep historical roots; These have always taken part in school affairs. Their participation begins at the time when primary schools were institutionalized with the formation of educational systems in the nineteenth century, reaching the creation of associations during the twentieth century - such as the National Union of Parents - for Catholic private schools and by presidential decree of the Mexican State, the National Association of Parents (García, 2002).

In this dimension, parents have been part of the school life in a regulated manner through various mechanisms,¹ according to their interests, needs, expectations and worldviews of what the educational process should be. More often than not, their participation is induced, seduced or bound by the policies that the State implements, in the form of implicit or explicit courses of action, seeking to meet the goals set by government plans (Flores, 2011).

Social participation, as a strategy and practice of the Government, has involved implementing a series of normative devices for basic education institutions. Some of these are: the General Education Law, which demands the establishment of Social Participation Councils (SEP, 1993); Agreement 280, which defines the general guidelines to which the constitution and operation of the School Social Participation Councils (SEP, 2000) will be adjusted; Agreement 535, which specifies the general guidelines for its operation (SEP, 2010), and Agreement 717 (DOF, 2014), among others.

In this historical context, the document presented aims to present a narrative approach on the way in which the normative provisions set forth above are specified by the social agents -

¹ Como la Confederación Nacional de Agrupaciones de Padres y Maestros, creada en 1929; el Reglamento para la Constitución y Funcionamiento de las Asociaciones de Padres de Familia en las escuelas dependientes de la SEP de 1949, o, en la historia reciente, el Reglamento de Asociaciones de Padres de Familia (DOF, 4 de febrero de 1980).

director, parents and teachers - making use of practical sense in their various ways of life within an elementary school (Bourdieu, 2002).

Method

The purpose of the investigation was to document the way in which the social participation in a primary school located in the city of Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico is specified. The case study is in the institutional dimension and was carried out during two school cycles. It focuses on the particularity of social generality in which social participation policies are promoted in basic education schools. Some of the questions that guided him were: How do teachers, managers and parents participate in the constitution of the Social Participation Councils? What actions do teachers and managers perform in the administrative field to comply with the provisions of the SEP? At the school, at the time the research was conducted, there was a principal, a deputy principal released, 12 teachers, three support teachers (English, arts education and physical education) and two mayors. Of the 12 professors, eight have completed basic and undergraduate studies at the National Pedagogical University; In addition, two studied the normal superior and two are pursuing a master's degree.

The perspective with which the research was conducted was the qualitative one, with ethnographic orientation (Rockwell, 2009). Research techniques and resources characteristic of this tradition were used: participant observation, interviews, surveys, documents from the institution's archive and school supervision.

Initially, the analysis of observation records and interviews was performed using descriptive matrices to identify social categories (Coffey and Atkinson, 2003), which, as plexuses of meaning, denote the meanings of the participants. Subsequently, they were placed in the historical framework in which social participation is promoted through diverse devices (Bertely, 2000).

The documentation of how school actors are involved in social participation allowed us to know what is happening in the school to reconstruct, by way of correlation, the way in which the normative provisions established for the constitution of the school board are being implemented.

The social participation in the school in which the study was carried out was carried out with the presence of some parents who, voluntarily or obligatorily, expressed criticism and proposals to face the difficulties that arise in the daily life of the school.

Results

As prescribed by article 69 of the General Education Law (SEP, 1993):

The school authority will do the necessary thing so that in each public school of basic education a school council of social participation operates, integrated with parents and representatives of their associations, teachers and representatives of their union organization, who will attend as representatives of labor interests of workers, school executives, alumni, as well as with other community members interested in the development of the school itself (p. 28).

Agreement 535 establishes the actions to constitute the School Social Participation Councils and sets the calendar of activities of the members in four sessions and three assemblies with the community. The activities correspond to what is called the functional cycle, which comprises three stages: 1) conformation, 2) management and 3) transparency and accountability (SEP, 2010).

For the formation of the councils, the provisions were sent to the schools through the administrative structure of the Ministry of Education in the State, as is tradition, in a hierarchical way: level coordination - sector leadership - supervision - school management.

The school management is the authorized body to convene and comply with the provisions: integrate the board of directors of the Association of Parents and the School Board of Social Participation. However, the director usually finds it difficult to form both instances, especially since it involves the assistance of fathers and mothers. "The Society of Parents has little functionality. It is always the same: there is difficulty in forming the board of directors because nobody wants to participate "(E-090611).

According to the results of a survey, the low participation of parents is due to the fact that at the time the meetings are held, both the School Social Participation Council and the Association of Parents, are working, and A lack of work means a reduction in your salary. For that reason, the meetings show the attendance of between 35 and 40 parents out of a total of 200. Regardless of the previous information they must have to participate in an informed manner in the school assemblies.

In the school where the study was conducted, in the meetings that were held to form both the Parents Association and the School Social Participation Council, the principal was accompanied by some members of both school bodies. The meeting began with the presentation of the reasons for the meeting and the importance of parents participating. At the meeting for the

formation of the School Council, the principal explained the functions that the members would assume in that school body, the problems faced by the school and emphasized the need for them to participate with proposals or self-proposals for their integration.

However, upon perceiving that the parents did not intend to hold any position, the meeting continued with an optimistic attitude in order to persuade the assistants to engage persuasively. At this point, the following should be taken into account, as established in Agreement 280, in Article 20 (SEP, 2000):

School boards for social participation in education will be made up of a presiding counselor and up to fifteen counselors. A technical secretary will be appointed, who will be appointed by majority vote among the members of each school board (p. 4).

Thus, 17 people, that added to the 10 of the Association of Parents, add a total of 27 members that integrate, in theory, the school bodies. Therefore, the effort that the principal should have made to achieve parental involvement is not small.

The formation of the School Social Participation Council seeks ways to have some help, some benefit. Here are those who can do it. I don't want to say who, but I'm already seeing them ... Go ahead! Cheer up! Does anyone say me? If not, we will have to do it as a volunteer for forces. Would you, madam, help us? (RO-230911).

At first, the principal informed the parents about the benefits obtained by administratively complying with the integration of the School Social Participation Council, such as receiving the support that the SEP and the State Government provide (“Schools at 100”, “School Breakfasts”, etc.). However, his speech failed to convince the attendees to self-propose or propose as candidates to hold a position in the Council, so he directly appointed the people with whom he had previously spoken.

Once the School Board was formed, it asked the members to sign the form of the charter to comply in a timely manner with the administrative requirement. Subsequently, he invited attendees to join the different committees for food, safety, reading, etc., in order to meet the needs and priorities of students and school infrastructure. It should be noted that, during that school year, the principal served as President Counselor, so that the proposals that the other members made would need to have their authorization.

In this dimension, the constitution of the School Board of Social Participation in the school in question is administrative rather than participatory; the provisions issued by school authorities are complied with in a timely manner, without the involvement of parents in a voluntary manner.

Double representation

As recorded in the minutes of the 2012-2013 school year, in September, the same parents held 50% of the positions of both the Parents Association and the School Social Participation Council. That is to say, there was a double representation in the two school bodies, because participating in the school requires time and the practical way to do it from the principal is to propose immediate solutions so that the educational authorities do not sanction it, but also to avoid possible conflicts between the members of both school bodies, regardless of whether not all parents participate, only a few.

Healthy nutrition

In order for teachers to have financial support to help them with the expenses they make in the development of school activities, there is a stall in which some products are sold and the profits obtained are shared with the school management to solve the needs that are generated in the school (E-080911).

The items offered in the pond do not reflect what the national campaigns implemented by the SEP for healthy eating promote. The items sold are fried foods, treats and soft drinks. We can see how campaigns not only have to face the eating habits of the general population, already rooted in the same culture, but also the same teaching staff of the school. The criterion that guides the choice of products for the store is to have higher sales and, therefore, higher profits. This is logical if dividends are thought to be distributed among teachers and the management of the campus to meet different needs.

However, as the School Board Committee was organized at school to promote healthy eating, an alternative menu was established and this was offered room by room, at a cost of ten pesos to students interested in buying it (RO- 081012).

When parents offered healthy products, the sales of other foods declined. Therefore, the income of teachers and managers also decreased. However, this was not worrisome, since the principal supported the proposal and was willing to allow parents to sell their products in classrooms during class hours, even if this type of activity would be a distracting activity for students. . The foregoing was not of importance to teachers, managers or parents.

Other aspects of "selfless interest" is the attention to students' health problems. For example, the management authorizes the visit of representatives of institutions of the health sector to identify students who are overweight and obese or cite parents to answer surveys.

The above, for the observer who is oblivious to the daily life of the school, can be contradictory because, on the one hand, the parents are summoned by the representatives of the health sector (supported by the principal) to obtain information about their style of life and food. On the other, during recess, students are allowed to consume products that will hardly help them control their weight. However, everyday life in schools and classrooms, as documented by Philip W. Jackson (1992) and Francois Dubet and Danilo Martuccelli (1998), has its own logic, most of the times not written in the curriculum that prescribes the administration, but acquires its practical sense, based on the contingencies and interests of social agents.

Discussion

More than two decades ago, the State promoted a renewal of social participation in basic education. To do this, it created collegial instances and enacted laws, agreements and guidelines in order to transform the subjectivity of social agents and their practices. As documented in the present study, social agents are not guided by promptly following the prescribed actions, but through practicality (Bourdieu, 1988, 2002), which does not always reflect the proposal of what the State seeks with the laws, agreements and guidelines, but the contingency and interests of social actors.

The study coincides with others who have studied school culture and reveals the need to continue documenting and recreating narratively what happens in educational institutions (Canales, 2006; Estrada, 2009; Perales, 2013, 2014 and 2015) to understand the system of relationships that guides them. Likewise, as Ezpeleta (2004) points out, the school is an institution permeated by multiple processes in which educational innovations implemented from technical rationality are limited to its own logic, without considering other processes that allow its articulation.

Conclusions

From the sense, practical and the reasons that guide it, it is possible to understand the double play of the representatives of the Association of Parents and the School Council of Social Participation. The "selfless interest" in accessing, staying and being in school with a particular status is understood. The practical way in which the director intends to control the members of both organizations is also perceived. Finally, they get to understand the crossed interests in the administration of the school store and the way in which the menu with healthy food is offered to the students, even at the cost of invading the classrooms and taking time away from teaching.

One of the strengths of this study is to give an account of the way in which the normative provisions are concretized in a specific school and social context through practical reasons of the social agents, crossed by multiple processes and interests, different from the context in which they are designed, devised, fantasized and longed for as something that is expected to happen in schools to transform the practices and culture of social agents. Perhaps you can share similar patterns in the way in which the School Social Participation Councils are constituted in other schools, in time and in the formats established by the educational authorities, with the purpose of complying with the administrative provisions, leaving the implication far away. of the participants because the practical reasons guide the meaning of their actions. However, it shows the particularity of social generality in the way in which policies and devices that seek to promote social participation are implemented.

On the other hand, the limitation of this study is the impossibility of generalizing the results as a representative sample of what happens in other schools, because it is a case study. That is, only evidence that shows the conditions of possibility in which the technical decisions that aim to modify the culture of social participation materialize.

Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the recontextualization processes in which they are carried out, taking into account the interests and practicality of the agents involved that are accepted as normal when they are part of the daily life of the institutions.

Documentation may contribute to readers, decision makers and educational authorities taking distance to reconsider the proposals of international organizations that deal with technical and financial matters, from technical rationality, to build others that touch social agents more and their worlds of life, which are guided by practical reasons rather than by normative dispositions, constituting participative subjectivities that make possible the construction of a citizens engaged in the formation processes.



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