

“Intellectual? No”,¹ expert.

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Another thing that does not seem to be understood by others is when they call me an intellectual and I say that I am not. Again, it is not about modesty but about a reality that does not hurt me at all. To be intellectual is to use intelligence above all else [...]. To be intellectual is also to have culture [...]. I'm not Literate either because I did not make the fact of writing books “a profession”, nor a “career”. I wrote them only when they spontaneously came to me, and only when I really wanted to [...]. (Clarice Lispector)²

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to problematize the concepts of “intellectual” and “expertise and experts” with the purpose of bringing elements to an ongoing debate in research that investigates processes that constitute knowledge in teacher training and teaching. For the discussion, the following guiding question was considered: “Are the concepts ‘intellectual’ and ‘expert’ synonyms?” recurrent demand of the cited researches. The narrative was elaborated based on researches that investigate the evolution of the “intellectual field” as well as researches that analyse constitutive processes of the “sciences field of education”.

Keywords: Know-how (savoir-faire); Intellectuals; Experts; History of mathematics education.

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RESUMO

Este texto tem como objetivo problematizar os conceitos de “intelectual” e “*expertise e experts*” com o propósito de trazer elementos para um debate em curso em pesquisas que investigam processos constitutivos de saberes na formação de professores e no ensino. Para a discussão considerou-se como questão norteadora a que segue: “Seriam os conceitos ‘intelectual’ e ‘expert’ sinônimos?”, demanda recorrente das referidas pesquisas. A narrativa foi elaborada com base em pesquisas que investigam a evolução do “campo intelectual”, bem como processos constitutivos do “campo ciências da educação”.

Palavras-chave: Saberes; Intelectuais; Experts; História da Educação Matemática.

¹ This is the title of one of the chronicles of Clarice Lispector in his book “All the Chronicles” (2018).

² Chronicle “Intellectual? No.”, by Clarice Lispector.

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A TRIGGER OF THIS WRITING...

The objective of this text is to bring contributions to the vast area of research history of mathematical education with respect to an ongoing discussion in the Research Group³ that this author is bound. This is the theme “*expertise and experts*”, concepts that have been mobilised in ongoing research in this Group.⁴ For this writing, two conductive axes were considered. A first one that briefly discusses the evolution of the “intellectual field” in contemporary times – a French case – from the production of Christophe Charle (1985), *Naissance des Intellectuels Contemporains (1860-1898)*”;⁵ and another one that addresses “expertise and experts” in education from French, Canadian, Genevian references (Hofstetter, R.; Schneuwly, B.; Freymond, M. & Bos, F. (collaboration), 2017; Veitl, P., 2005; Tochon, 2004; Lang, 2009; Lenoir, 2004; Burke, 2015; Valente 2017). The latter has guided the research of this author.

This writing attempts to situate what has been considered in the Research Group by “expertise and experts in education” in contrast to the “intellectual” concept. Above all, it is better to place dear concepts in the current GHEMAT-Brazil research. For this question: What do some research on concepts such as “intellectuals” and “experts” say? Can they be characterised as synonyms from these surveys?

FIRST NOTES – THE BIRTH OF CONTEMPORARY INTELLECTUALS⁶

One can question, from the words of Clarice Lispector in the epigraph, how to characterise an intellectual. Is this a given concept or is it a historical product? Burke (2015) states that it is employed, in particular, “in the sense of the writer or scholar who positions himself on public issues” (p.51). Starting from this conception, Clarice Lispector may not be actually intellectual... However, it would be naïve to close this discussion in these two excerpts... Like many others, this concept only makes sense if historicized. Moreover, of course, the limits of this text, as well as those of this author, will not allow an effective work in this respect.⁷ It is only an affectation, a “breath” that seeks to establish a “differentiation” between what has been characterised by this author as

³ Research Group on History of Mathematical Education in Brazil (GHEMAT-Brazil).

⁴ “*Expertise and Experts*” is the subject of research, linked to others, of two large projects of GHEMAT-BRAZIL. A first one that refers to one of the Axes of the Thematic Project funded by the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa (FAPESP), entitled “Mathematics in Teacher Training and Teaching: Processes and Dynamics of Professional Knowledge, 1890-1990” (Valente [coord.], Bertini, Pinto & Morais, 2017), Grant no. 2017/15751-2; and a second, titled “The Experts and the Systematization of Mathematics for the Teacher Training of the First School Years, 1890-1990”, which is funded by CNPq, in call MCTIC/CNPq Nº 28/2018 – Universal. Track C.

⁵ This text was translated into English under the title “Birth of contemporary intellectuals (1860-1898)” by Maria Helena Camara Bastos (Revised by Maria de Lourdes Cauduro) in the year 2003. This was the work consulted for the writing of this text.

⁶ “The Birth of Contemporary Intellectuals” is part of the research title of Christophe Charle (1985).

⁷ For example, the research by Christophe Charle (1985) “*Naissance des Intellectuels Contemporains (1860-1898)*” translated by Maria Helena Camara Bastos under the title “Birth of Contemporary Intellectuals (1860-1898)” – taken as the guiding principle of the discussions on this topic in this text – as well as the Jean-François Sirinelli, *Le hasard ou la necessite? Une histoire em chantier: l'histoire des intellectuels*. In: Vingtième Siècle, revue d'histoire, n. 9, janvier-mars 1986. Pp.97-108.

experts in education and the concept – historically constructed which in itself constitutes in the field of research – intellectual.

“The Dreyfus Affair” by the novelist Émile Zola, France (1894-1906), is one of the best known to begin a discussion about this historicisation. Zola is recognised as an intellectual⁸, to his time, in the sense expressed by Burke. It was he who led the group claiming that artillery officer Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935) Jew, who had been tried, convicted and taken to life imprisonment on Devil’s Island, for high treason for divulging military secrets to the Germans – was in fact innocent. Trapped in 1894, a second trial was held in 1898, but unsuccessfully due to insufficient evidence. Dreyfus remains in prison...

This case triggered the fury of Zola, who wrote a letter to the President of the French Republic, M. Felix Faure, under the title “*J’Accuse...! Lettre au Président de la République*”.⁹ Zola harshly criticised the president by saying that Dreyfus was innocent and a victim of an anti-Semitic political plot, “a shame stamped on the face of France” and stressed that it would be Felix Faure that history would register such a big social crime.¹⁰

Christophe Charle (2003) is a scholar of the evolution of the structures of the “intellectual field”¹¹ and takes “the Dreyfus case” as the guiding thread of his discussions. Considering it revolutionary, he believes that it can serve as a spectrum to discern the social transformations that affected the intellectuals in the second half of the century XIX. Charle (2003) says that “when of the Dreyfus affair, intellectuals claim a symbolic power and a collective identity sanctioned by the appearance of a new term” (p.142).

Considered, then, as professionals of symbolic goods, from the census of 1876, Charle identifies a sensible change in the categories of recruitment of intellectuals when of the case Dreyfus. He says that in 1876 were registered 4173 “men of letters, scientists and advertisers,” against 7432 in 1901.¹² In the latter case, two categories are identified, that of “men of letters and journalists” on the one hand, and “publicists” on the other. However, one could join other potential intellectuals, as Charle says, from other liberal professions, capitalist circles and secondary school teachers. Although numerous, what could constitute a divided group in parties, its personnel was very restricted so that they had an elitist collective conscience, which would imply intervention in the political debate. We identify here a new characteristic of the intellectual groups with emphasis on “collective consciousness”, which seems to be a fundamental characteristic of these groups. This change in the field is produced, according to Charle (2003), by urbanisation, the rise of “primary, secondary and higher education, the explosion of the press and

⁸ Available in: <http://expositions.bnf.fr/zola/zola/pedago/fiches/dreyfus6.pdf> Accessed on Dec 09. 2018.

⁹ I accuse you! Letter to the President of the Republic.

¹⁰ Available in: <http://www.omarrare.uerj.br/numero12/pdfs/emile.pdf> Accessed on Dec 07. 2018.

¹¹ Charle (2003) appropriates P. Bourdieu’s concept of the field: “the intellectual field”, that is, the social and ideological space within which the intellectuals think and situate themselves” (p.155).

¹² Charle (2003) states that “the Dreyfus affair” marked the entrance of university students into the political scene, that is, they became “intellectual officials”, but that they were not accounted for in this census.

publishing – is undoubtedly the origin of the change in the modes of action used by the intellectuals” (p.143).

The growth of a social category, says Charle, “can only be accompanied by an awareness of the internal structures of this category favour it” (p.144). What structures subsidise such growth? A characteristic element in the case analysed by this researcher refers to the geographical structure made possible by the great literary or scientific establishments, old or new, in the city of Paris (and region), which concentrated 50% of the intellectuals counted in 1876 and 1901. For these intellectuals, there was an equivalence between the professional field and the capital, an extremely centralised structure of the French intellectual field.

In the evolutionary process of the structures of the intellectual field, Charle (2003) emphasises the formation of literary or ideological groups, differently from what happened in the first half of the century XIX. The literary field, for example, is divided into three sectors, which correspond to three types of public and three types of literature: the academic sector, the intermediate and the avant-garde. With the reforms of 1880-1890, university students recognised as intellectuals since the 1901 census, do not form a homogeneous category, in the case of the first three quarters of the century XIX. In these terms, no university student, with the exception of those most recognised by the Sorbonne or the Collège de France, is an intellectual in the sense given in the Dreyfus case. Charle says that university reform has completely changed the values that had hitherto been dominant.

Intellectuals in the Anglo-Saxon countries are confused in the sense of the “professions,” that is, of the liberal professions; in Russia “intelligence” means a radical cultural elite far removed from power and masses; in France, on the other hand, the intellectual term allows all misunderstandings, it oscillates between two meanings: a restrictive as in the East (holder of a particular type of capital that isolates it from the rest of the other social categories), but without that implies a conduct politics; more broadly than in the West (with neither manual labour nor political or administrative responsibilities), which can therefore serve as a spokesperson for other classes or class fractions. (Charle, 2003, p.156)

As assumed at the beginning of this text, the intention to bring here the problematic of the evolution of the intellectual field is a “blow”, a movement that intends to reinforce that the “intellectual” concept must be historicized, considered as a cultural product, not naturalised. It is necessary to question what is being said, about what is spoken, and when to speak, that is, to situate this concept historically.

From the above, we identify elements that contribute to this debate from the creation of groups, from the change of status, sometimes intellectual in the sense given to the “Dreyfus affair”, sometimes taking on other senses. Pro-Dreyfus intellectuals, anti-Dreyfus intellectuals, although they were “partially agreed on their legitimacy to intervene in the political debate, do so in the name of divergent values” (Charle, 2003, p.151).

The fact is that, according to Charles, the time of the “Dreyfus affair” is “one in which the intellectual field acquires its structures, if not definitive at least more complete. From these new structures came the new forms of social and political consciousness of the intellectuals who generally remain up to today” (Charle, 2003, p.155).

EXPERTISE AND EXPERT – CONSTITUTIVE PROCEDURES

If the concept “intellectual” is a historical product, how to characterise the concepts “expertise and expert”? Are they also historical products?

Veitl (2005) states that, at first, the word expertise was understood as skill, experience, and later it was named *expertise* (1580, Montaigne), taking on parallel utilizations to that of the noun *expert*. This researcher says that this word, widely used in English as *know-how*, in French means “*savoir-faire*”, know-how. Veitl states, using Philippe Minard, that the emergence of the word expertise comes from the demand for a new competence in the function of the implantation of an industrial statistic with the objective of the “Will to know at the service of the State”. With respect to the concept expert states that, in principle, it is employed as an adjective in the sense of “alert, skill” (« *alerte, adroit* »). After the beginning of the XIV century, this concept is applied precisely to a person who acquires by experience a great ability, competence.

Such concepts, *expert* and *expertise*, according to Veitl (2005), carry with them definition problems because they are ambiguous. This condition is due to the fact that the actors themselves, for the most part, do not recognise themselves as such, as *experts*, as subjects of the *expertise*. For this same researcher,

[...] the practice of *expertise* and the qualification of *expert* are seen as a situational property. In other words, they refer to a *status* that is claimed to give weight to developed arguments [...] valuing a competence, a knowledge, related to the exercise of a trade.¹³ (Veitl, 2005, p.17, our translation)

According to Yves Lenoir (2004, p.14-15, our translation) “the notion of *expert* has nothing to do with erudition, nor is it related to that of sage and, in the field of teaching, to the figure of a wise master”.¹⁴ Supported by Blau (1955), he states that “the *expert* is defined by his competencies: he is not defined only by his knowledge, but by a know-how (*le savoir-faire*) or, better, by a know-how (*le savoir-agir*) that distinguishes it from others on an issue or in a given domain”.¹⁵

¹³ *a pratique de l'expertise et le qualificatif d'expert sont vécus comme une propriété situationnelle. Autrement dit, ils renvoient à un statut que l'on revendique pour donner du poids aux arguments développés [...] à valoriser une compétence, un savoir, liés à l'exercice d'un métier.*

¹⁴ *Si la notion d'expert n'a plus rien à voir avec celle d'érudit, il n'est même au regard de celle de savant et, dans le champ de l'enseignement, avec la figure du maître savant [...].*

¹⁵ *Pour Blau (1955), l'expert se définit par ses compétences ; il ne se définit pas par le savoir, mais par un savoir-faire ou,*

Talking about the production of knowledge in the pedagogical field in the XIX and XX centuries, Rita Hofstetter, Bernard Schneuwly, Mathilde de Freymond (with the collaboration of François Bos) identify new actors, individual and collective in different positions, with different profiles, attributions and constant productions. In this scenario “pedagogy is primarily a matter of ‘good men’, pastors, teachers, philanthropists, whose mission is to build a public school in order to generalise access to elementary education” (Hofstetter et al., 2017, p.56). This scenario is favourable to the professionalisation and discipline of pedagogy. First under the responsibility of “those considered as good men,” followed by experts – academics, researchers – whose primary function is to build knowledge about the school system.

Hofstetter et al. (2017) affirm that these evolutions are responsible for the sketch of the first forms of *expertises* of the field sciences of the education, to which they evolve in the XX century, becoming increasingly institutionalised and specialised.

It seems that the findings of these authors regarding the process of constitution and evolution of expertise are close to that of the intellectuals. In other words, the constitution of *expertise*, in the case of Hofstetter et al. of the *expertise* in education, that that directly interests this author, is in process, in movement, at the same time as the field of sciences of the education of the Genevan system is developed, scenery of the research of these authors. It seems possible to affirm that such concepts, *expertise* and *experts*, from all the preceding, must, as in the case of intellectuals, be historicized, as the field of sciences of the education of the Genevan system is developed, the scenario of the research of these authors. It seems to be possible to affirm that such concepts, expertise and experts, from all the preceding, must, as in the case of intellectuals, be historicized. If in principle the “said good men” are those responsible for building knowledge about the school system, read here as *experts* in their time, the evolutionary process of the field “education sciences” is outlining new forms of *expertises*, new characterisations and/or configurations of *experts* whose attributions are also becoming.

Barthe et al. (2005, p.39, our translation) affirm that “today, the use of *expertise* seems to be an integral part of the process of presentation, staging and elaboration of public policies. In addition, expertise has become a necessary passage from which political actors cannot free themselves in the management of public problems”.¹⁶ If “today” this was a condition, how would it have been in the passing of the XIX-XX centuries?

The findings of Hofstetter et al. (2017) indicate that at the moment in which the public authority, the State, becomes the person in charge of public education, the demand for “an ever-increasing body of professionals entrusted with the right and duty to organize a coherent and comprehensive public school system under its direction and funding [...]”. In the case of Geneva, this body of professionals is represented by the *Bureau of Research*, and it is to it that in 1918 the Department of Public Instruction (DIP) delegates

mieux, par un savoir agir qui le distingue des autres sur une question pu dans un domaine donné.

¹⁶ *Aujourd’hui, le recours à l’expertise semble faire partie intégrante du processus de présentation, de mise en scène et d’élaboration de l’action publique. Plus encore, l’expertise semble être devenue un passage obligé dont ne peuvent s’affranchir les acteurs politiques dans la gestion des problèmes publics.*

the task of entering the school and evaluating its real conditions so that one can then, make decisions.

This attribution characterises the broad sense given to the notion of expertise: an instance, in principle recognised as legitimate, attributed to one or more specialists – supposedly distinguished by their knowledge, attitudes, experiences – in order to examine a situation, to evaluate a phenomenon, to ascertain facts. This expertise is requested by the education authorities in view of the need to take a decision. (Hofstetter et al., 2017, p.57)

The last citation characterises a type of *expertise*, one that recognises an institution, or a person, as capable of resolving a practical demand of the State. In the case of DIP, the demand was to identify the school's problems so that decisions could be made about it. Establishing a comparison with the “good men”, even though they had not been convened by the State, but acted on it, it is possible at this point to outline two forms of *expertises*.¹⁷ Both holders of a competence, of a know-how, historically situated.

Hofstetter et al. (2017) are interested in the institutionalisation of the *expertise* in education identified by them at the moment the State convenes the *Research Bureau*. This call, in the understanding of these authors, characterises the institutionalisation of this instance.

At this point, it is possible to evoke other forms of *expertises* that, also in the service of the State, solve practical demands without, however, a direct, immediate summons. Two examples worth mention. The first concerns the person of the school director, the one who ruled the Normal School, especially at the end of the century XIX and the first half of the century XX, he himself is also a teacher, who “having an ascendancy over the others, living the day-to-day life of the school, taking care of evaluations, having administrative and pedagogical responsibility, promoting the articulation of the activities of the institution's teachers (Villela, 1990) (Valente, 2017, p.214), is, in this sense, considered an *expert*. It is up to him “guide teachers, promote meetings, meetings for the discussion of teaching and school achievement. Through it, come the references to teaching, the knowledge *to*¹⁸ teach (*Ibidem*, author's italics). He is the subject of the *expertise* that legitimises the demands of the State.

¹⁷ It is believed that there is a multiplicity of. Yves Lenoir (2004, p.7, our translation), for example, claims to have “witnessed the emergence of new, interdisciplinary, co-disciplinary and transdisciplinary expertises. A redefinition of ongoing expertise in other fields, such as Physical Education and sports.” [*On assisté ainsi à la naissance d'expertises nouvelles, interdisciplinaires, codisciplinaires et transdisciplinaires. Une redéfinition de l'expertise est en cours dans d'autres domaines, comme l'éducation physique et sportive*].

¹⁸ See Bertini, Moraes and Valente (2017) – The mathematics to teach and the mathematics for teaching: new studies on the formation of teachers. São Paulo: Livraria da Física. 2017; Valente (2018) – The professional knowledge of the teacher who teaches mathematics: history of mathematics to teach and of mathematics to teach in construction. In: Dassie, B.A.; Costa, D.A. [Orgs.]. *History of Mathematics Education and Teacher Training*. Mathematics History Collection for Teachers. São Paulo: Livraria da Física, 2018. pp.50-83.

The second case to be cited is that of teachers who, according to Tochon (2004), develop “[...] a practical competence that makes them autonomous as a professional body: as self-taught in the course of a lifetime and heterodidate in the sharing of experiences with their peers. In practice, the teacher develops his own expertise. We then indicate the use of the word ‘expertise’ in the sense of competence¹⁹ [...]” (p.89, our translation). This researcher seems to corroborate the idea presented by Hofstetter et al. (2017) and Valente (2017) regarding “men said good” when he states that

[...] for a long time, and still today in certain sectors, we consider that the teaching experts were outside the profession. For example, we state that the national education inspector is a first-level expert (1): through its educational activities, ensures the implementation of the ministerial policy. He inspects teaching and teamwork, participates in his recruitment and training.²⁰ (Tochon, 2004, p.89-90, our translation)

The demand in the two examples cited is also practical and is indirectly at the service of the State responsible for Public Instruction.

In short, a demand from the State will imply the convening of an *expertise*, whose subjects are the *experts*. This call is triggered by the recognition of the community to which this instance joins.

WOULD BE THE CONCEPTS “INTELLECTUAL” AND “EXPERT” SYNONYMS?

The answer, from the narrative produced so far, it seems, is: No! Of course, there are similarities, especially with respect to the processes and dynamics of evolution of the two fields, the “intellectual field” and the “field of education sciences”, invigorated by these two “subjects”, the “intellectuals” and the “*experts*”. However, the references adopted here²¹ describe different purposes of these “subjects”.

The very process of constitution and evolution of the two camps, it seems, produce “goods” of different natures. If in the “beginning” the intellectual is the subject who poses on political issues, they are professionals of the production of symbolic goods, what was

¹⁹ [...] les enseignants développent une compétence pratique qui les rend autonomes en tant que corps professionnel : à la fois autodidactes sur la longévité d’une vie et hétérodidactes dans le partage d’expériences avec leurs pairs. Dans la pratique, l’enseignant développe sa propre expertise. Nous indiquons alors que l’a utilisation du mot « expertise » dans le sens de compétence [...].

²⁰ Pendant longtemps, et encore actuellement dans certains secteurs, on a considéré que les experts de l’enseignement étaient à l’extérieur de la profession. Par exemple, on énonce que l’inspecteur de l’éducation nationale est un expert du premier degré (1) : par ses activités d’animation pédagogique, il veille à la mise en œuvre de la politique ministérielle. Il inspecte les enseignants et évalue leur travail en équipe, participe à leur recrutement et à leur formation.

²¹ Given the complexity of both concepts one could have adopted other references that would have led this writing to other ways. However, since all research is intentional, the objective here is to situate the research in progress by this author, as well as that of GHEMAT-Brazil.

observed here was that the “experts in education” are, from its most elementary conception, the moment at which it is identified the constitution of the field “education sciences”, subjects whose political position is legitimized through the production of knowledge²² in response to a practical demand from the one who recognized it as such, the State. Such pieces of knowledge, taking into account the initial *expertise*, the experiences and knowledge of the *expert* or group of *experts*, result in new knowledge in response to its call.

As quoted in this text, in France, taken as a scenario of discussion of the research of Christophe Charle (2003), “the term ‘intellectual’ allows all the misunderstandings” oscillating in one same country between two meanings, one that considers it a “holder of a particular type of capital that isolates it from other social categories, but where this implies a political conduct”; and another that constitutes a category that can “either serve as spokesperson for other classes or fractions of class”.

Thus, research in progress in the two projects cited at the beginning of this text, in which this author is an integral part, takes as reference the concepts of *expertise* and *experts* from Hofstetter et al. (2017) on page 8 of this text, briefly, “an instance, which in principle is recognized as legitimate, attributed to one or more specialists – supposedly distinguished by their knowledge, attitudes, experiences – in order to examine a situation, to evaluate a phenomenon, facts, “of producing knowledge from a state demand. In the case that interests this author, the *expertise* is recognised for its competence in producing knowledge about the school system.

In the process of finalization, Clarice Lispector’s denial, in the epigraph, of the title of intellectual may be characteristic of what was seen in Vitl (2005) on page 6 of its text when he stated that “the actors [of the *expertise*] themselves, most of the time, do not recognize themselves as *experts* as subjects of the *expertise*.” Perhaps this is a similarity, especially in contemporary times, among the guiding axes of this discussion, “intellectuals” and “*expertise* and *experts*”, that is, subjects in both fields do not recognise themselves as belonging to the social and ideological space in which they participate. In his chronicles, Clarice Lispector takes a stand on political issues, but in a different configuration from that of the “Dreyfus affair”, which may be the natural process of the evolution of the field. Is she, therefore, the subject of the *expertise*? Yes, in his ideological field. Maybe not like in the “Dreyfus affair”. If so, this would be a further finding that the concept of “intellectual” is indeed historically diffuse...

²² In what concerns this study, “professional knowledge in construction evolves in an ‘intermediate world’ between academic or institutional reference knowledge and more informal contacts with the knowledge of teachers in the field” (Lang, 2009, p.299, our translation).

It is assumed that such references reach these experts in education who, in contact with the school and moved by their expertise, transform knowledge in this “intermediate mode”, which go by them being systematized, naturally complex process. [“*les savoirs professionnels en construction évoluent dans un “monde intermédiaire” entre savoirs de référence académiques ou institutionnels et contacts plus informels avec les savoirs des enseignants de terrain*”.

An instance, in principle recognized as legitimate, attributed to one or more specialists – supposedly distinguished by their knowledge, attitudes, experiences – in order to examine a situation, to evaluate a phenomenon, to ascertain facts.

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