

Articles

The *Professional Culture* of the primary school teacher in Portugal: A line of research undergoing development

TELMO H. CARIA

tcaria@utad.pt

Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro

ABSTRACT:

This article intends to summarise the main conclusions of the ethnographical research that I carried out with primary school teachers in the 1990s in Portugal. This summary is based on the research undertaken in Portugal on education, work and knowledge in professional groups. In this background, the concept of professional culture and the ethnographical method it serves is explained. The culture and professionalism of teachers is characterised through reference to the relations of power that are developed by this group in relation to the educational policies of democratisation of teaching that have been implemented in Portugal since the end of the 80s. The study highlights the duality of meaning existing between the context of professional teaching in practice and the context of political action in education.

KEYWORDS:

Professional culture, Ethnographical method, Peripheral power of the teachers, Professional use of knowledge.

I intend through this article to return to the conclusions of the ethnographical research that I carried out with primary school teachers in the 1990s in Portugal (Caria, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 1997, 2000). I shall summarise and produce an up-to-date reading of these conclusions in view of the work meanwhile undertaken by a research group (seminar on social analysis of technical-intellectual professions (ASPTI)) (Caria, 1999b, 2001a, 2002, 2005a, 2006a, 2007c) which I have led since 1998. This group of researchers has dedicated itself to study the work and knowledge of several professions from the perspective of what I have called the ethnosociology of the professional groups¹ (Caria, 2001b, 2003a, 2005b; Filipe, 2003; Granja, 2005; Loureiro, 2006; Pereira, 2003, 2004).

This text is organised around the following topics: (1) I start by summarising the main aspects of the theory of professional culture; (2) I will then discuss its dependence on a certain epistemological conception of the ethnographical method and how the “culture object” is conceived in Social Sciences; (3) in a third phase I return to the same problem to tackle the main conclusions that I obtained regarding the professional culture of the teacher in Portugal.

In all these topics the research on the teachers will be situated in the widest background of the ethnosociological analysis of the professional cultures and I shall also seek to respond indirectly to some colleagues who have levelled constructive criticism at our analysis perspective. Therefore I will clarify that our interactionist and conjunctural perspective of culture does not exclude the problem of power and is not reduced to concise analysis when dealing with the culture of the teacher in the singular and when giving special emphasis to the microsociological processes.

The best way to start describing our analysis perspective is to outline the use we have attributed to the concept of *Professional Culture* (Caria, 2002,

2005d, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b; Caria & Vale, 1997). It is part of a theoretical problem of sociological and anthropological inspiration that aims to describe three kinds of social phenomena concerning how people view organisations and social institutions in post-industrial capitalist societies (Beck, 1998; Bell, 2004; Boltansky & Chiapello, 1999). These three phenomena are: the institutional role and the social position occupied, the professional identity, and the socio-cognitive activity in the employment background.

ROLE, POSITION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

With regard to the institutional role, the starting point of this concept is the introduction of a demarcation: institutions are set up for professions whose role and employment has gained high status and prestige, based on the possession of a title and a higher education academic qualification that enables the use and application of abstract and scientific knowledge in actions that are considered the exclusive domain of professionals and not amateurs. Hence, it corresponds to a social demand for professionalism as a consequence of a collective awareness in society regarding the need for a certain set of work activities that can only be performed by professionals with higher education certificates.

This approach was inspired by the Sociology of the Professional Groups contributions, and in part by the Sociology of the Social Classes. It is based on the Anglo-Saxon meaning of profession and not the common meaning we attribute to the notion of a profession in Portugal, which refers to any paid employment. Therefore we should point out some specifications to better understand how we read these two traditions of research. First, as we made clear above, we are referring to social

groups who respond to a demand for professionalism and do not derive from a supply of professionalism. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Sociology of the Professions always tended to focus analysis on professional groups whose professionalism confers high social status and as such boasts a rich historical past that began to be organised into a liberal profession and institute itself as a scientific university area. As a result, this sociological tradition ended up considering other professional groups, such as teachers, as semi-professionals, in comparison for example with doctors and lawyers who had a historical past of institutionalised professionalism and non-paid intellectual work (Dubar & Tripier, 1998; Rodrigues, 1997; Sánchez Martínez *et al.*, 2003). The analytical limitation whereby we define the professional role from the demand perspective and not the supply perspective is to be avoided. Hence, the social value of a professional group is more clearly understood as a plural and heterogeneous construction, and as such is not confused with the legitimacy of the professional ideology of a given social group (Caria, 2005c). But it is also worth remembering that analysis of this paid intellectual work presupposes organisational dimensions of technical, symbolic and political autonomy in the work process (Caria, 2000, pp. 117-221; Terssac, 1992) which leads it to occupy intermediate social positions (technical-intellectual work or *knowledge workers*) which are not confused with the organisational strategic decision positions (political-intellectual work), or places of practical execution of organisational tasks (technical-practical work or proletariat work) and which do not entirely match the organisational intermediate command/management positions (Caria, 2005c, 2006b; Dieuaide, 2004; Freidson, 1994, 2001; Rodrigues, 1999).

In second place, the meaning given to the institutional role does not derive only from an ideal reciprocity, but it is common to make a functionalist interpretation of the social phenomenology (Pharo, 1993; cf. Lukman and Berger, 1973). It is indeed a sociological description that supposes an instituted reciprocity of meaning, grounded on subjectivity and social norms, but which goes further because, as Pierre Bourdieu states, any institutional role is grounded on a social field of practices that is historically marked by the appropriation of resources (capital) and by the building of discourses that map out inequalities of power and conflicts of legitimacy. Therefore, it is understood that any professional group has an objective location of social class in relation to the structure of capital that it possesses in different social fields (Bourdieu, 1987).

For the case of primary school teachers it is worth referring to the empirical studies carried out in Portugal, inspired by Eric Olin Wright, in which this professional group is categorised as *non-management technicians* and *supervisory technicians* (Estanque & Mendes, 1998).

This situating of social class derives from the fact that we are dealing with a paid social group who do not own or determine the means of economic production/symbolic production of truth about the world (dominant position in the economic capital and scientific-technological capital), with high educational capital (dominant position in the instituted legitimate culture) and which occupies, as we saw earlier, intermediate social positions.

Therefore, through the concept of Professional Culture a vision of the institutional role is developed which acknowledges the importance of the processes of reciprocity of meaning in the social construction, but which does not limit the professions merely to an ideal or idealisation of the social relations, unconnected from the organisational conditions and the unequal positions of power regarding resources/social capital.

As for the identification phenomenon, another constraint is introduced: there is an identification of the social actor with a working activity that is chiefly determined through social interaction (in person or in a network) among peers of the same profession and as such not limited only to the interpretation and personal interiorisation of the role in the background of the institution in which s/he works, or the resistance and opposition to the technical-bureaucratic reasoning processes. The professional group identifies itself with the activity, chiefly determined by the collective subjectivity of the professionals in question, based, as mentioned above, on the autonomy they have in defining the process of their work (Falzon & Teigner, 2001; Jobert, 2001; Sainsaulieu, 1988).

This approach is inspired by Sociology of the Workplace and Theory of Organisations which deal with the social processes of subjectivation, informalisation and joint learning in socio-economic organisations (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977; Probst & Buchet, 1997; Senge, 2002). In this background it is important not only to consider individual autonomy within the context of the organisational constraints but also the important role that the informal structures play in opening up the organisations to the surrounding environment (Bagla, 2003; Gadrey & Zarifian, 2002). It is not a question just of personal or collective interiorisation of a role and the corresponding identification and/or distancing of the “I” with what is expected institutionally. It is mainly a matter of recognising that in modern and capitalist societies there is today a crisis of legitimacy of the social institutions (and especially the school institution), which brings into question the utility of continuing to think in professional socialisation processes (of teachers or other groups) only as a simple interiorisation of the external social and cultural conditions (Caria, 2005d; Dubet, 1994, 2002). The problem centred on the sociological concept of qualification, relative to the social use of school and professional titles and the processes to settle

conflicts of classification that they contain, exemplifies the limitations with which professional socialisation is still sociologically thought out today (Ramos, 2002).

Along this line of thought we should remember, especially, Claude Dubar's approach to the identification forms and implications in the history of social relations, when distinguishing a reflexive and collective identification in post-modern societies, clearly different from the narrative-individualist reflection and that of collective groups in traditional societies (Caria, 2006c; Dubar, 2000). Hence, through the concept of Professional Culture a social and theoretical space is created, the object of which is to analyse the sharing of meaning in the work context through the inter-subjectivity found in professional collectives (Wenger, 2001).

PROFESSIONAL CULTURE AS A SOCIO-COGNITIVE ACTIVITY

The socio-cognitive activity is played out in the background of the problem of establishing a theoretical link between the concepts of the professional role and identity. Hence, we have stated that it is the association between the use of science and abstract knowledge, deriving from the delimitation mentioned of the institutional role with the autonomy in the work context that is present in the collective identification process in the organisations and social networks, which enables us to say that professional culture is a phenomenon that results from the socio-cognitive mobilisation of knowledge, which brings together the application of science and the practical sense of the collectively accumulated and learned activity in the work context experience.

As such, the socio-cognitive phenomenon is overvalued in the concept of Professional Culture in two aspects: (1) the relations with the institutional role mobilise the collective meanings of professional knowledge which allow the *recontextualisation* of the scientific and abstract knowledge, obtained in formal higher education, in the contexts of action and work; (2) the relations with the professional identity mobilise the collective meanings of professional knowledge that enable the *transfer* of resources and routines of action between the different contexts and work activities (Frenay, 1996; Meirieu *et al.*, 1996). Within this scope there is a degree of inspiration in the Cognitive Sciences and Educational Sciences, particularly the contributions that aim to understand the learning processes in two directions: those that go from the formal to the practical action and those that go the practical action to the formal (Caria, 2007b; Correia, 1997; Schön, 1983, 1998; Tersac, 1998; Touchon, 1998).

One should, however, remember in detail two facts that we just described in order not to fall into relativist or positivist simplifications. On the one hand, it should

be outlined, against a degree of positivist epistemology, that when we go from formal and abstract knowledge to the professional action, recontextualisation processes take place that allow the application of general principles of knowledge and new situations, although one cannot fall into the typically naïve dogmatic reasoning that the theoretical domain of these principles automatically allows one to know how to apply this knowledge in all situations, or that competent professional intervention in a single case/situation is only the undertaking of already known regularities. On the other hand, it should be outlined, against a degree of relativist epistemology, that when we go from practical-professional knowledge to the formal/abstract, knowledge transfer processes take place, which allow the comparison of wide-ranging experiences, detection of analogies between singular situations and cases and the segmenting/formalising or routines and resources used in different contexts, although one cannot fall into the typically romantic constructivist reasoning that the practical domain of a context of action spontaneously leads to the possibility of transposing to another context, or that competent analysis of a complex professional situation is dependent only on an accumulated local experience.

More specifically, the sociological contributions of Basil Bernstein (1993, 1998) and Pierre Bourdieu (1979; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1978) must be taken into account, albeit in a critical perspective with regard to the problem of symbolic control of the social practice. Recontextualisation is a concept used by Bernstein to describe the mediations and instances that enable explanation of how production of discursive meaning about action translates into application of this meaning in social interaction. As Bernstein shows, these mediation processes are complex and heterogeneous and therefore we think they have to presuppose that the possible use of knowledge in the practical field can have a potential effect of transforming the "original" meaning given by the abstract structures of knowledge, albeit in a regime that is not one of government of the truth or symbolic domination (cf. Foucault, 1966, pp. 327-446, 2002), but rather of action (Dodier, 1993; cf. Boltansky & Thevenot, 1991) or mutual critical understanding (cf. Gadamer, 2002, pp. 400-558) and therefore the eclectic, oral and circumstantial sharing of meanings: the construction of a cultural mind (Iturra, 1990a, 1990b, 1994).

The idea in relation to a practical meaning supposes a structuring of the social practice that has a twofold social determination (Bourdieu, 1972; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992): externalisation and interiorisation of the material conditions of existence relative to the social position/trajectory occupied in the structure of capital; an internalisation and exteriorisation of the social position/trajectory occupied, measured/regulated in the social actor through an incorporated mind (a *habitus*), which

expresses an updating of the interiorised structure of perceptions, appreciations and improvised anticipations, in a unconscious way in social fields of practice.

As he himself always admitted, the regulation undertaken by the *habitus* of this twofold social determination is not mechanical, because it is open to social improvisation. Therefore it is possible there will be lags, discrepancies and faults (*hysteresis* of the social practice) between the internal and symbolic processes and the external and objective ones (Bourdieu, 1998, pp. 113-144). This phenomenon, in our point of view, to be properly regulated will have to be complementary to the *habitus*, i.e. it is not merely pre-reflexive, but now invites the practical conscience and inter-subjectivity of the social actors and a logic that would shift from an incorporated mind to a cultural mind (Caria, 2006c, 2007b).

This reconceptualisation of the practical meaning of the practice is similar to the contributions of Anthony Giddens (1989), with regard to the *duality of the structure* (social structure as the determining factor and opportunity for action) although one cannot assume (in contrast to this author) that it is the same for all societies and social groups. Indeed, these processes encompass aspects of legitimacy of the production of truth, symbolic control and multiculturalism that require specific study (cf. Foucault, 2002; Grignon & Passeron, 1989; Lahire, 2003).

To conclude, the concept of Professional Culture, at the socio-cognitive level, is associated with the hypothesis of considering that it is only possible to have some awareness of the transfer of practical meanings when the lag between the symbolic and social structures of the *habitus* can be carefully pondered by the social actors in the processes of social integration, and therefore can be recognised by ethnographical research as potential for action. To know a Professional Culture is to question and suggest hypotheses regarding the conditions, institutions, activities and social interactions that either help or hinder the *processes of recontextualisation and transfer* of professional knowledge, given that neither are triggered automatically and spontaneously, nor are they necessarily complementary and implicated. Indeed, these two processes are often parallel, contradictory and competing, without ever meeting to articulate and integrate.²

But to know a Professional Culture cannot be separated from an appropriate methodology of building the “culture” object. And it is this understanding about the ethnographical research that I will move on to.

A GUIDELINE FOR THE ETHNOGRAPHICAL METHOD

The epistemological guideline we followed in the ethnographical research on professions is demarcated by criticism, as mentioned earlier, of the dogmatic

reasoning and romantic constructivism. Therefore the ongoing and long-term presence of the researcher in the professional field alongside those who are involved in the work activities, in an action of observation and joint participation/reflection, is understood within the followed guidelines (Caria, 1999c): (1) the symbolic constructions of the social actors are not understood as the results of a structure or cultural norm that would be independent of them and which could be discovered, as if it was something hidden behind the appearance of the socio-cultural phenomena (Caria, 2006c); (2) the symbolic constructions of the social actors are not understood as arbitrary interpretations of the observer (cf. Hekman, 1990), whereby no suitable judgement can be made concerning the reality. This understanding derives from the fact that there is an interpretation of the phenomenological-hermeneutic vision of the ethnographical method that sets off from three starting points: (1) the symbolic constructions of the social actors have a experiential present, of simultaneousness and inter-subjective coexistence (a relation in us), which can be explained partially and in segments through social interaction (Shtuz, 1993); (2) the symbolic constructions of the social actors have a possible horizon of enlarging meaning, provided that they develop a critical vision concerning the limits of each particularity (Gadamer, 2002), both in the reflexivity of the researcher and the reflexivity of the group members in relation to the mutual ethnocentrism (Caria, 2003b); (3) The group members (understood in the particular case of any science object) are not passive bystanders as regards the way the acts of construction/interpretation are developed by the researcher (as part of a benchmark scientific community), as they influence the way the researcher acts (thus giving him retroaction about the suitability of his interpretations for the observed contexts) and the way that, as a consequence, the interception of common horizons are constructed (an interculturality) that enable the inequalities of symbolic power between the parties to be put into relation (Caria, 1995c).

The qualitative methodologies, whether ethnographical or not, that deal with the socio-cultural phenomenon only at the discursive level and out of context of the action, and therefore only contextualised through the relation of (arbitrary) interpretation centred on the text (including the interview text), certainly also have virtues to contribute in the identification and/or cognitive processes, but are not able to simultaneously allow analysis of the mind and the practice of professional culture: the cultural mind of the profession. I emphasise mind and practice simultaneously: it is important that it remains crystal clear that we do not consider ethnographical research as a task that views social action as a text to interpret (cf. Hekman, 1990). As we saw earlier, through the concepts of the *habitus* and the cultural

mind, we do not advocate a cognitivist or subjectivist conception of the relation in thinking and action: there is not the mind on the one hand, with its representations, and practice on the other, with its constraints and structural conditions (Borzeix *et al.*, 2003). This refusal also supposes that by searching for critical interceptions about the cultural minds in presence, one may gain the opportunity to reflect on the way the relations of symbolic power have limited and empowered the processes of ethnographical understanding, and therefore arrive at a judgement about the suitability of the subject for the object of social science (cf. Bourdieu, 2001; Caria, 2008).

This specific formulation for the ethnographical research has significant consequences for the way the relation between discourse and practices in social life are viewed, with special relevance on the discourses focusing on the policies that frame the professional practice. Hence one has to counteract and fight against a very common tendency in educational research, in particular in Portugal, in the analysis of the relations between teachers and the public education policies, when the opposition or unsuitability between the policies and school practices is brought to the fore. In this formulation an *epistemology of deficit* is drawn up, which gives special emphasis describing teachers (making them both victims and perpetrators at the same time) in terms of what they do not possess, do not understand, do not know, etc, taking it for granted that the local schools and teachers have a “deaf ear” when it comes to the central political-educational guidelines. Against this epistemology I have stated that the meaning of everyday school is not deficient or in opposition to the political-institutional discourse on the School. It has rather its logic and a direction in action that is not completely subordinated to the symbolic violence of the political-central discourses. This phenomenon seems to escape the education scientists, because in criticising to a greater or lesser degree, they are accomplices of the *epistemology of deficit* and are therefore not sufficiently able to design the direction of action that depends on the everyday experience and practice of the teachers: they see the practical meaning only as the result of processes of recontextualisation of knowledge or see it only as a local sense of experience, without considering the processes of transfer of knowledge regulated by the practical conscience.

If we take it as certain, as we mentioned earlier, that the *recontextualisations and transfers of knowledge* are not automatic and spontaneous among the different spaces and times of social life, I ask the following: how can we guarantee that the efficacy of the discursive meaning of any given policy, including education policy, can depend only on a greater or lesser degree of resources to interpret the policy texts or lack of systematised coherence of the texts to suitably implement the discursive meaning of the policies produced?

FROM DEFICIT TO THE FILTER: THE PRACTICE OF ETHNOGRAPHY

To better explain the difficulties of implementing a given policy, including education policy, it is more appropriate I believe to begin with an *epistemology of filter*. This formulation is a metaphor to explain how we conceive the functioning of a professional culture in relation to any abstract discourse (e.g. political or scientific). It should be noted that when we focus on the idea of *deficit* between discourses and practices we are thinking about the knowledge based on whom centrally in the institution *produces meaning* and then we will see, either critically or legitimising, to what extent this meaning is disseminated and reinterpreted by the people to whom it is addressed (even if we understand the people to whom it is addressed as victims of some symbolic power). On the contrary, when we start with the metaphor of *filtering* we start by placing ourselves at the point of view of those who use the knowledge every day and who, therefore, in an initial moment are not legitimate producers of the knowledge. They are, however, active in the use of the information that is available because they select, choose and reorganise it, but at the same time undermine and ignore the intentions, meanings and contents that, for whom is looking from the point of view of the centre of the institution, are seen as errors or faults of the users and not as identification and cognitive options when the users show a certain form of power peripheral to a given institutional system.

It is here that an ethnographical approach of the professional cultures, in the epistemological orientation I referred to above, is essential. It should be noticed that in the tradition of social anthropology the study of cultures is marked by the need of the ethnographer to place himself in the critical interception of the horizons common to the different cultural minds, discarding two incorrect formulations about the ethnographical method: (1) the naïve and empiricist idea that the researcher can completely take into account his symbolic power and the ethnocentrism of western academics, and therefore fully accept the point of view of the native (Clifford, 2002; Geertz, 1996); (2) the relativist formulation that nobody can manage to think/interpret outside the context of action in which a given cultural mind is built (Hekman, 1990; Reynoso, 2003, pp. 11-61). As such, the culture of any native in relation to a given context of action contains a native point of view of the world, including the relation of the self/us with the wider world: a horizon of meaning that can be interpreted by the social ethnographer, as the critical interception between different cultural worlds.

As a consequence, being at the periphery of a given social system is at the same time not being able to be aware, through a practical-contextual knowledge, of a condition of objective existence, filtered by the inter-

subjective sharing with others. This practical-contextual knowledge operates in a partial way, segmented and spontaneous, like common practical conscience, therefore not being an unconscious social operator like the *habitus*. It would rather be a reflective and shared explanation (an interactive reflexivity) of shifting from a natural attitude to a reflexive attitude in relation to the social world (see Cefaï, 1998). This shift, further below, we call know-how to be.

Applying this guideline in the 90s to the study of teachers, I had to make it clear for myself that my object of research could not start from the legislation of educational reform, nor from what teachers were expected to do, based on the official definition of the school institution. My object of study had to start from the inter-subjectivity of the group, of doing and thinking collectively that was transmitted to the younger teachers and that was being updated (in a consensual and interactive way) as the new political situation unfolded. The conclusion I arrived at was a question of tradition that contained the three aspects of a professional culture that I outlined above: a collective interpretation of the institutional role, a certain identification with the everyday activity of work and a certain mobilisation of knowledge, part of which was abstract and another part of which was practical, that produced in the workplace what was taken as a competent professional (Caria, 2000, pp. 240-276 and 307-408).

It was around these aspects of professional culture that the content of educational policy, and its legislative and administrative tools, was then reinterpreted and appropriated by the teachers, and was immediately ignored and undermined in some cases or supported and advocated in other cases. The texts and devices of the political-educational discourse were available and hence could be used (there was access to the information), but they had to be also ignored or advocated by myself as the ethnographer, just as the teachers did, or I would risk not understanding this culture as I would not be able to “remove myself from the logic” of the discursive meaning of the policy. I had to understand the filtering of knowledge that the teachers undertook, because only as such would my ethnographical text, as the discursive meaning of translation between cultures, be guaranteed to operate as a suitable reasoning of the culture of the teacher.

It is pointed out that in this understanding of the ethnography, the study of a professional culture corresponds to the analysis of the way a given social group is seen and sees others in the institution/field in which it participates. As such, the borders that the group creates for itself are demarcated to define the social world that surrounds it, within the limits of the power it believes it has. As a consequence, the object of the study contains analysis of the professional ethnocentrism itself

and the way this, in certain social conditions, manages to be viewed to a greater or lesser extent, through the interception of horizons with the other.

In the light of these conclusions I can say that I did not see the teachers as individualists, conservative, or dominated by the institution, as much of the scientific literature on the teaching profession proffers. The teachers seemed to me like a collective group that wielded huge power in the everyday life of the school institution and an appreciable capacity to experiment the new and create innovation.

THE PERIPHERAL POWER OF THE CULTURE-CONJUNCTURE OF THE TEACHER

But conceiving and describing this type of collective power, implemented in a given professional culture, is not a question of seeing the professional group as a community, nor seeing it as an active participant in the political debates that affect its activity. The mode of power which we are referring to is what we have already called *peripheral power*, in opposition to the centralised power in the social field that institutes legitimate social practices.

The power in the periphery of the institution/field is essentially informal, oral and interactive. It is not organised in order to constrain individual action or to establish conduct within a model of action. As such, the intention is not to be proactive or promote any given project of community action of origin or destination. The peripheral power is one of resistance, sabotage, silent opposition; which however does not have its own discursive identity that enables it to dispute a place within the power and the legitimate conflicts of a given social field, but which at the same time, every day, can constrain or enhance the practical power of instituting. Therefore, the collective interpretation that the teachers make of their role and professional identity cultivates a *momentary know-how to be* and not a *permanent know-how to be*. The teachers do not manifest a permanent know-how to be because they do not want to confirm a specific and collective knowledge that is part of the educational political and symbolic struggles. This is why they cannot, nor wish to take a stance in the political debate on education. But the teachers have *momentary know-how to be* with regard to the educational policy, because this guarantees them the unity of action needed so that at each moment they know how to position themselves in relation to the institution to preserve their peripheral power: what to undermine or advocate, in each situation, in the social interaction (Caria, 2000, pp. 542-570).

The *know-how to be* peripheral power, because it knows what collectively it does not want, knows what

does not belong to it, knows what it cannot have, knows what is not expected to happen. The know-how to be comes to the fore, therefore, through an *ethos* of negation and avoiding proactive action. This is why, as I said earlier, it is not a community of origin, nor of project: any and every more proactive attitude generates and highlights the separations and divisions of the ideologies and professional projects that coexist at the heart of the teachers. To sum up, the peripheral power does not want to run risks: the risk of losing effectiveness in its ability to constrain and undertake silent sabotage of the institutional power which guides the fortunes and debates the School, as it has no guarantee that it can earn a significant share of political power over the school system through the fact that it is a participant in the educational debate.

But faced with this risk it is not enough to cultivate an *ethos* of defensive or passive opposition; it is necessary that this principle of practice goes further, because as the teachers are not, as I said, a community of origin or project, it is important to know how to act and deal with the huge social and cultural heterogeneity that its own professional group contains. Indeed, we see that each time the group risks adopting a position and opts for an alternative path among several, that is not merely the confirmation of a “no” in relation to institutional decisions given, it immediately divides itself into a multiplicity of aspirations, directions and guidelines for action. This is why it is decisive for any professional group to create a local tradition of doing and thinking, that socialises the younger members and teaches the *know-how to be* to the peers, knowing how to live with the differences in professional projects and social trajectories at its heart. Failure to do so will lead to the risk that the evident differences turn into hierarchies and are viewed as deficits in relation to a standard or model, in the case of a professional teaching standard, which is foreign and external to them, because it is designed by social groups that hold more economic and social power (Caria, 2000, pp. 525-541).

As Bourdieu wrote, only the social groups that have greater social and economic power in society can afford to collectively show or cultivate differences and enable these differences to have connotations of social distinction on lifestyle (Bourdieu, 1979). In the everyday language of the teachers it is said that the group does not look favourably upon those who stand out, who excessively affirm themselves, who think and do for themselves, i.e. those who create distinction and for this reason reveal the heterogeneity of the group to the exterior. On the contrary, the group looks favourably upon those who innovate, propose, experiment but who do and think so without mapping out and radicalising the divergences, preferring instead to share the innovation with the rest of the group. This sharing is not borne out of altruism, but because it is known that the group will not appropriate

that which has an author, because to preserve the collective peripheral power educational innovation that distinguishes what each person experiments will never be formalised (Caria, 2000).

As a consequence, the professional culture of the teachers developed in the practical-cultural knowledge has to have the capacity to silence the divergences of positions in the group and know how to deal with the differences in interpreting how the surrounding world is viewed. The group has become skilled in the art of developing a culture that knows how to create consensus among the heterogeneity of positions and professional trajectories. And it knows how to enable educational innovation, informal and interactive, to coexist in the same place, without explicit opposition and splits against the formal and institutional conservatism, resisting the central power of the institution. The culture of the teacher carries out a symbolic work on the self, inasmuch as becoming and seeming equal to what is socially and culturally heterogeneous (Caria, 2000, pp. 309-341).

Therefore we return to the idea that the “culture object” is not a norm for us, or a symbolic structure. It is an apparent social construction that becomes real through the localized social reproduction of a given social group, through a tradition. The possibility of thinking the culture in these terms supposes, we believe, looking upon it as a situational determination of the practice, linked to the aforementioned *interactive reflexivity*, and not as a structural-symbolic determination, as is the case of the *habitus* (Caria, 2004; cf. Miranda, 2002).

If the teachers do not have the option of social distinction, the solution to enable power to be wielded, albeit peripheral, is to undertake a symbolic game which I have called *social levelling* (the opposite of social distinction): the group cultivates the similarities through silences of some practices and through consensus of meaning of others. This makes the divergences and conflicts between the professional ideologies of different teachers pale into insignificance in the public field and informal social interaction within the group. But this symbolic game has to be taken seriously by the participants (it is not “make-believe”) so that they can believe that they are a community, when at the same time they do not have objective conditions to be one. Meanwhile, the game observed was so serious that they also convinced the ethnographer, myself at the time, to recognise the symbolic existence of a professional culture in the singular, not that of professional cultures (in the plural) as is traditionally concluded in the analysis about the teaching profession³ if the professional group adopted a stance in relation to the educational policies and therefore entered into the game of revealing in the debates about the school institution the different professional ideologies existing and their articulations with the various positions under discussion.

THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE

As I believe has been left explicit, this description of the situational culture of peripheral power clearly stresses the way the teachers use this knowledge. Note that we are not highlighting the fact that the teachers may or may not agree with the content of the educational policies⁴. What we are referring to is that any content is subordinated to a certain way of using the knowledge: there is no content without a way of conceiving it. And as the very word suggests, the content of any educational policy is formulated, as in the case of the teachers, by a use that serves the expression of a peripheral power and not by a use that serves the affirmation or participation in the political power of the School.

There is therefore, for the culture of the teacher, a crucial qualitative difference between the contexts of action and the position adopted in the educational policy and the contexts of pedagogical-didactic action of teaching that constitute the culture of the teacher. In both contexts the use of the knowledge (content and form) is determined by the position cultivated and occupied in the school field: the central position or a peripheral position. This is the big difference in cultures of power that explains, as we said earlier, the apparent “deaf ear” of the teachers in Portugal to the central political-educational guidelines. Hence, the recontextualisation of the meaning of the texts proposed by the political-educational culture (located at the centre of the institution/school field) have to be filtered by the practical meaning of the knowledge of the culture of peripheral power of the teacher. This filtering has, indeed, to be mutual so that the apparent opaqueness between the discourse and practice is continually and mutually reproduced.

Any professional culture, in drawing up an interpretation of its institutional role and developing an identification with the content of its own institutional activity, does so through a socio-cognitive activity that is expressed not only in the contextual content of meaning

(the text of the discourse or the knowledge of practice), but mainly a way of using the knowledge that expresses and implements the power that it has or deems to have on the practices of institutionalisation of the knowledge.

In the case of teachers, the content of the educational knowledge is subordinated to the format of a use that implements a peripheral power in the school field. But such power must be seen as a social relation: this *professional peripheralisation* is in a relation of formal subordination to the central discursive power and the dogmatic use of the knowledge in the political-educational guidelines in Portugal. We say dogmatic use, because the evidence found seems to indicate that the way the abstract knowledge which is produced by the central-political power is used shows, simultaneously, an inability to dialogue with the knowledge of the practitioners (the discourse has no contextual-practical value) and inability to impose itself effectively on the practitioners (the discourse has no technical-instrumental value). There is a reproduction of an apparent separation between the cultural-discursive mind (the rational-positive mind, according to Raúl Iturra), that implements a *central political-educational practice* in a political text (specific to the school field), and the cultural-practical mind, that implements knowledge in a *peripheral political-educational practice* (specific to an everyday professional).

To conclude, both the social minds implement contents and ways of using the knowledge without, however, intercepting each other in a common reflexivity: the social actors understand that the practice of the practitioners and the texts of the politicians do not have contextual value for the other party. Not having contextual value, as we have seen, does not mean that the texts are not used by the practitioners, nor that the practices are not known by the politicians. It means only that the reflexivity of one side does not serve the reflexivity of the other: there is no critical interception of cultural horizons.

ENDNOTES

1. For more detailed information visit the website: <http://home.utad.pt/aspti/>.

2. The different ways of (un)articulating these two processes of mobilising knowledge have been conceptualised by us as *usage styles of the knowledge*. This problem can be found in the work previously referred to, written by myself after 2002.

3. Note that in the original ethnographical work the existence of several curricular cultures among the teachers is recognised, collected through reports of action in the classroom. But these are not the object of the collective attention of the group, of their social interaction and the interactive reflexivity. In this case, the cultural diversity shows itself only on an individual and private level of the classroom, because the organisational culture cultivates teaching individualism, resulting from the effect of segmentation of the school activity into disciplinary spaces and times (Cf. Caria, 2000, pp. 409-523).

4. This actually appeared to happen in many cases of teachers questioned by me individually and in private.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- BAGLA, LUSIN (2003). *Sociologie des Organisations*. Paris: La Découverte.
- BECK, Ulrich (1998). *La Sociedad del Riesgo: havia una nueva modernidad*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- BELL, Daniel (2004). *Las Contradicciones Culturales del Capitalismo*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- BERNSTEIN, B. (1993). *La estructura del discurso pedagógico*. Madrid: Morata.
- BERNSTEIN, B. (1998). *Pedagogía, control simbólico e identidad – teoría, investigación y crítica*. Madrid: Morata.
- BOLTANSKI, Luc & CHIAPPELLO, Ève (1999). *Le Nouvel Esprit du Capitalisme*. Paris: Gallimard.
- BOLTANSKI, Luc & THEVENOT, Laurent (1991). *De la justification: les économies de la grandeur*. Paris: Gallimard.
- BORZEIX, Anni; BOUVIER, Alban & PHARO, Patrick (orgs.) (2003). *Sociologie et Connaissance: nouvelles approches cognitives*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1972). *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Pratique*. Paris: Dunod.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1979). *La distinction — critique social du jugement*. Paris: Minuit.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1987). *Economia das trocas simbólicas*. São Paulo: Perspectivas.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (1998). *Meditações pascalianas*. Oeiras: Celta Editora.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre (2001). *Science de la science et réflexivité*. Paris: Éditions Raisons d'agir.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre & WACQUANT, Loic (1992). *Réponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive*. Paris: Seuil.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre & PASSERON, Jean-Claude (1978). *A reprodução – elementos para uma teoria do sistema de ensino*. Lisboa: Vega.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1995a). A interpretação da reforma educativa como processo de subordinação formal dos professores. *Inovação*, VIII, 3, pp. 333-344.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1995b). Qual o sentido e a organização da área-escola? - uma abordagem sociológica. *Educação, Sociedade e Culturas*, 3, pp. 57-71.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1995c). Prática e aprendizagem da investigação sociológica no estudo etnográfico numa escola básica 2.3. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 41, pp. 35-62.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1996). As políticas educativas e a mente cultural dos professores. *Economia e Sociologia*, 62, pp. 81-92.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1997). As culturas curriculares dos professores de matemática - uma contribuição etnosociológica no quadro do 2º ciclo do ensino básico. *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, 7, pp. 55-74.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1999a). A racionalização da cultura profissional dos professores — uma abordagem etnosociológica no contexto do 2º ciclo do ensino básico. *Revista Portuguesa de Educação*, XII, 1, pp. 205-242.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1999b). Investigar os intermediários do conhecimento. Comunicação ao *Colóquio Comemorativo dos 20 anos da Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*. Coimbra: Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra (mimeo).
- CARIA, Telmo H. (1999c). A reflexividade e a objectivação do olhar sociológico na investigação etnográfica. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 55, pp. 5-36.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2000). *A cultura profissional dos professores - o uso do conhecimento em contexto de trabalho na conjuntura da reforma educativa dos anos 90*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2001a). A Universidade e a recontextualização profissional do conhecimento abstracto: hipótese de investigação e acção política. *Cadernos de Ciências Sociais*, 21-22, pp. 71-85.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2001b). Notas sobre a relação profissões e uso da ciência: os casos dos médicos veterinários e dos animador-técnicos do desenvolvimento. Texto apresentado no *IV Seminário sobre Análise Social das profissões em trabalho técnico-intelectual*. Vila Real, documento de trabalho ASPTI, nº15 (mimeo).
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2002). O uso do conhecimento: os professores e os outros. *Análise Social*, 164, pp. 805-831.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2003a). As classificações “indígenas” sobre o trabalho técnico-intelectual: o caso de jovens engenheiros florestais no contexto de trabalho de Associações Florestais do Norte de Portugal.

- Comunicação ao *III Seminário de Investigação*. Organizado pelo DESG e CETRAD da Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Vila Real, Abril (mimeo).
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2003b). A construção etnográfica do conhecimento em Ciências Sociais: reflexividade e fronteiras. In T. CARIA (org.), *Experiência Etnográfica em Ciências Sociais*. Porto: Afrontamento, pp. 9-20.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2004). O conceito de prática em Bourdieu e a pesquisa em educação. *Educação & Realidade* [Brasil], XXVIII, 1, pp. 31-48.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2005a). *Relatório final do projecto de investigação Reprofor: síntese e análise auto-crítica*. Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Educativas da Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação da Universidade do Porto (mimeo).
- CARIA, Telmo H. (org.) (2005b). *Saber profissional*. Coimbra: Almedina.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2005c). Trabalho e conhecimento profissional-técnico: autonomia, subjectividade e mudança social. In T. CARIA (org.), *Saber profissional*. Coimbra: Almedina, pp. 17-42.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2005d). Trajectória, papel e reflexividade profissionais. In T. CARIA (org.), *Saber profissional*. Coimbra: Almedina, pp. 43-140.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2005e). Uso do conhecimento, incerteza e interacção no trabalho clínico dos veterinários. In T. CARIA (org.), *Saber profissional*. Coimbra: Almedina, pp. 197-232.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2006a). Os saberes profissionais técnico-intelectuais nas relações entre educação, trabalho e ciência. In A. TEODORO & C. A. TORRES (orgs), *Educação Crítica & Utopia: perspectivas emergentes para o séc. XXI*. São Paulo: Cortez, pp. 127-146.
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2006b). Connaissance et savoir professionnels dans les relations entre éducation, travail et science. *Esprit Critique*, VIII, 1. Retrieved March 2007 from <http://www.espritcritique.fr/publications/0801/esp0801article01.pdf>
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2006c). Reflexões teórico-metodológicas sobre as culturas profissionais. Conferência apresentada no *IX Seminário de ASPTI-Análise Social das Profissões em Trabalho Técnico-Intelectual/ Educação, Trabalho e Conhecimento*. Braga: Universidade do Minho (mimeo).
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2007a). Os saberes que fluem das profissões instituídas. In AA.VV. *Actas do Ciclo de Conferências: Experiências fluídas - carreira e precarização*. Braga: Núcleo de Estudos em Sociologia do Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade do Minho [no prelo].
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2007b). Itinerário de aprendizagens sobre a construção teórica do objecto Saber. *Etnográfica* [no prelo].
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2007c). Revisitar com os professores a Cultura Profissional 10 anos depois: actualidade de uma perspectiva etnográfica sobre o poder e o conhecimento. In *Actas do Simpósio Políticas Públicas e Conhecimento Profissional: a educação e a enfermagem em reestruturação*. UniversidadedosAçores [no prelo].
- CARIA, Telmo H. (2008). Poder e reflexividade em ciência: revisão crítica do *Science de la science* de Pierre Bourdieu. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* [no prelo].
- CARIA, Telmo H. & VALE, Ana Paula (1997). O uso racionalizado da cultura: o caso da relação entre a consciência metafonológica e a aquisição da leitura. *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, 8, pp. 45-72.
- CEFAÏ, Daniel (1998). *Phénoménologie et Sciences Sociales: Alfred Schutz — Naissance d'une anthropologie philosophique*. Genève: Librairie Droz.
- CLIFFORD, James (2002). *A Experiência Etnográfica: antropologia e literatura no século XX*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ.
- CORREIA, José A. (1997). Formação e Trabalho: contributos para uma transformação dos modos de os pensar na sua articulação. In R. CANÁRIO (org.), *Formação e situação de trabalho*. Porto: Porto Editora, pp. 13-41.
- CROZIER, Michel & FRIEDBERG, Erhard (1977). *L'acteur et le système*. Paris: Seuil.
- DIEUAIDE, Patrick (2004). Le travail cognitif comme acte productif. Eléments d'analyse pour une caractérisation de la notion de "knowlwdge worke". Comunicação apresentada na *Conference Interim of International Sociological Association (RC52): Savoir, Travail et Organization*. Paris: Université de Versailles (mimeo).
- DODIER, Nicolas (1993). Agir em diversos mundos. In AA.VV. *Téorias da acção em debate*. São Paulo: Cortez, pp. 77-109.
- DUBAR, Claude (2000). *Le crise des identités: l'interprétation d'une mutation*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- DUBAR, Claude & TRIPIER, Pierre (1998). *Sociologie des Professions*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- DUBET, François (1994). *Sociologia da Experiência*. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget.
- DUBET, François (2002). *Le déclin de l'Institution*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- ESTANQUE, Elísio & MENDES, José Manuel (1998). *Classes e desigualdades sociais em Portugal*. Porto: Afrontamento.
- FALZON, Pierre & TEIGER, Catherine (2001). Ergonomia e formação. In Ph. CARRÉ & P. CASPAR (orgs.), *Tratado das ciências e das técnicas da formação*. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget, pp. 161-179.
- FILIFE, José (2003). Reflexividade interactiva e reflexividade institucional no desenvolvimento

- profissional de educadores e professores de educação especial. Comunicação apresentada no *Midterm Conference Europe of International Sociological Association* (RCO4): *Educação Crítica e Utopia*. Lisboa: Universidade Lusófona (mimeo).
- FOUCAULT, Michel (1966). *As palavras e as coisas*. Lisboa: Portugália Editora.
- FOUCAULT, Michel (2002). *A microfísica do poder*. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Graal.
- FREIDSON, Eliot (1994). *Professionalism Reborn: theory, prophecy and policy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- FREIDSON, Eliot (2001). *Professionalism: the third logic*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- FRENAY, Mariane (1996). Le transfert des apprentissages. In E. BOURGEOIS (org.), *L'adulte en formation*. Bruxelas : Département de Boeck Université, pp. 37-58.
- GADAMER, Hans-Georg (2002). *Verdade e Método. vol.I*. Petrópolis: Vozes.
- GADREY, Jean & ZARIFIAN, Philippe (2002). *L'émergence d'un modèle du service: enjeux et réalités*. Paris: Editions Liaisons.
- GEERTZ, Clifford (1996). *Ici et Là-bas: l'anthropologue comme auteur*. Paris: Éditions Métailié.
- GIDDENS, Anthony (1989). *A constituição da sociedade*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- GRANJA, Berta (2005). O estágio curricular como espaço nuclear na construção de competências profissionais: o caso do serviço social. Comunicação apresentada no *VIII Congresso Galaico Português de Psicopedagogia*. Braga, Setembro.
- GRIGNON, Claude & PASSERON, Jean-Claude (1989). *Le savant et populaire*. Paris: Gallimard/Le Seuil.
- HEKMAN, Susan J. (1990). *Hermenêutica e sociologia do conhecimento*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- ITURRA, Raúl (1990a). *Fugirás à Escola para trabalhar a terra*. Lisboa: Escher.
- ITURRA, Raúl (1990b). *A construção social do insucesso escolar*. Lisboa: Escher.
- ITURRA, Raúl (1994). O processo educativo: ensino ou aprendizagem. *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, 1, pp. 29-50.
- JOBERT, Guy (2001). A inteligência no trabalho. In Ph. CARRÉ & P. CASPAR (orgs.), *Tratado das ciências e das técnicas da formação*. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget, pp. 223-240.
- LAHIRE, Bernard (2003). *O homem plural*. Lisboa: Instituto Piaget.
- LEICHT, Kevin & FENNEL, Mary (1997). The changing organizational context of professional work. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 23, pp. 213-231.
- LOUREIRO, Armando Paulo (2006). *O trabalho, o conhecimento, os saberes e as aprendizagens dos técnicos de educação de adultos numa ONGDL*. Vila Real: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (texto de dissertação de Doutoramento em Ciências da Educação/Sociologia da Educação).
- LUCKMAN, Thomas & BERGER, Peter (1983). *A construção social da realidade*. Petrópolis: Vozes.
- MEIRIEU, Philippe; DEVELAY, Michel; DURAND, Christiane & MARIANI, Yves (dirs.) (1996). *Le concept de transfert de connaissances en formation initiale et continue*. Lyon: CRDP.
- MIRANDA, José Bragança (2002). *Teoria da cultura*. Lisboa, Século XXI.
- PEREIRA, Fernando (2003). O caso dos saberes dos técnicos superiores agrários das associações e cooperativas agrárias de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro. Comunicação apresentada no *Midterm Conference Europe of International Sociological Association* (RCO4): *Educação Crítica e Utopia*. Lisboa: Universidade Lusófona (mimeo).
- PEREIRA, Fernando Augusto (2004) *Identidades profissionais, trabalho técnico e associativismo-cooperativismo agrário — uma construção identitária partilhada*. Vila Real: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (texto de dissertação de Doutoramento em Ciências Sociais).
- PHARO, Patrick (1993). *Le sens de l'action et la compréhension d'autrui*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- PROBST, Gilbert J. B. & BUCHEL, Bettina S. T. (1997). *La pratique de l'entreprise apprenante*. Paris: Les Éditions D'Organization.
- RAMOS, Marise Nogueira (2002). *A pedagogia das competências: autonomia ou adaptação?* São Paulo: Cortez.
- REYNOSO, Carlos (org.) (2003). *El surgimiento de la antropología posmoderna*. Barcelona: Editorial Gedisa.
- RODRIGUES, Maria Lurdes (1997). *Sociologia das profissões*. Oeiras: Celta.
- RODRIGUES, Maria Lurdes (1999). *Os engenheiros em Portugal*. Oeiras: Celta.
- SAINSAULIEU, Renaud (1988). *L'identité au travail*. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques.
- SÁNCHEZ MARTÍNEZ, Mariano; SÁEZ CARRERAS, Juan & SVENSSON, Lennart (coords.) (2003). *Sociología de las Profesiones. Pasado, Presente y Futuro*. Merced: Diego Marín.
- SCHÖN, Donald A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action*. USA: BasicBooks.
- SCHÖN, Donald A. (1998). *El Profesional Reflexivo: cómo piensan los profesionales cuando actúan*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- SCHUTZ, Alfred (1993). *La construcción significativa del mundo social: introducción a la sociología comprensiva*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- SENGE, Peter (2002). *La quinta disciplina. El arte y la práctica de la organización abierta al aprendizaje*. Barcelona: Granica.

- SILVA, Margarida Clara Santos (2006). *História e conhecimento profissional em Serviço Social: o caso da Escola do Porto (1960-1974)*. Braga: Universidade Católica Portuguesa (texto de dissertação de Mestrado em Serviço Social).
- TERSSAC, Gilbert de (1998). Savoir, compétences et travail. In J-M. BARBIER (org.), *Savoir théorique et savoirs d'action*. Paris: PUF, pp. 223-248.
- TERSSAC, Gilbert de (1992). *Autonomie dans le travail*. Paris: PUF.
- TOUCHON, François-Victor (1998). Grammaires de l'expérience et savoirs-objets: le savoir focal dans la construction de nouveaux modèles de formation. In J-M. BARBIER (org.), *Savoir théorique et savoirs d'action*. Paris: PUF, pp. 249-274.
- WENGER, Etienne (2001). *Comunidades de prática. Aprendizaje, significado e identidad*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- TELMO H. CARIA
Sociologist, Associate Professor of Social Sciences at the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro and Full-time Researcher at the Centre of Educational Research and Intervention (CIE) of the Psychology and Educational Sciences Faculty at Porto University. For further information on his professional activity see his personal website: <http://home.utad.pt/~tcaria/index.html>
- Translated by Thomas Kundert

