

THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF MATO GROSSO PROFESSORS' SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THEIR ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

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1. Introduction

The Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), solitarily located in the state of Mato Grosso for almost twenty years, seems to have lost the mirror where its identity elements are sought, elements that are sometimes scattered with those who leave the campus. In what ways do the ones who stay and all the ones who have gathered here contribute to the construction of its portrait? Who are they? What do they think? What are their own representations of their professional practices?

There are attitudes and beliefs regarding the most varied aspects of academic life. This study presents a proposal for mapping out this reality, this relatively hidden, fugitive dimension that is considered hard to quantify while, at the same time, reveals itself as intensely powerful in conducting human behaviour: the Social Representations (SR) and their areas of shadow and light.

If at the beginning professors came from among the local population, today they are, in their majority, migrants in search of work and professional space. While the old teachers

nurtured the ideal of building the Federal University of Mato Grosso, current ones live the crisis of the Brazilian public university. The task of the seventies was the construction of the physical infrastructure and the constitution of departments, institutes and colleges. In the last years the challenge has shifted to the strengthening of research groups, masters' degree and doctoral programs, as a way of resisting the threat of the university evaluation system imposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) project.

In this game of contradictions established along with the history of the UFMT, an interest rises for researching aspects of the UFMT professors' Social Representations concerning their professional activity. The choice of this category as the target population of this research project relies on the assumption that professors are responsible for the institutional dynamics in all of the different levels of academic life.

The UFMT will see drawn a profile of its professors, which may be useful in the design of internal policies of professional qualification, reward and provision of infrastructure, among others. The final result will be made available to the UFMT central administration, presented to the sectorial administrations, and to ADUFMAT, the professors' syndical section, besides becoming a part of the reference resources available for consultation by any one who has an interest in the theme.

2. The Sample and Its Relations with the Universe

The campus of Coxipó, in Cuiabá, currently employs 1006 professors. A total of 520 individuals were chosen from the 14 Institutes and Faculties. The sample was established based on the proportionality criterion that took into consideration the total number of professors at the Cuiabá campus and the number of professors in the different Institutes and Faculties.

Table 1 - The Sample and Its Relations with the Universe

Institutes/Faculties	N	Sample
Administration, Economics and Accounting Sciences	76	39
Biology	31	16
Education	62	32
Exact Sciences and of the Earth	145	75
Forefall Engineering	30	16
Humanities and Social Sciences	108	56
Languages	92	48
Law	40	21
Medical Sciences	134	69
Nursing and Nutrition	82	42
Physical Education	28	14
Social Sciences	34	18
Technology and Engineering	82	42
Veterinary Medicine	62	32
Total	1006	520

3. Instruments, Data and Analysis

The ALPHA questionnaire produced by the team of researchers consisted mainly of questions requesting closed answers. It also included one free association item. The questions were organized starting from categories that the researchers found relevant, after extensive discussion and exchange of information with members of the faculty. The ALPHA questionnaire was given to 397 professors. In December 1999, viewed from the academic titles and the component individuals' class, it yielded the following table.

Table 2 - Professors, by Class, Level and Qualification

Class/Level	Graduate	Specialist	Master	PhD	Tot
Auxiliary I	85.7	34.3	3.6		19.9
Auxiliary II	2.9	7.4	0.6		2.7
Auxiliary III		6.5	2.4	3.4	3.8
Auxiliary IV		12.0	1.2	1.7	4.4
Sub Total					30.8
Assistant I		0.9	30.1	1.7	14.2
Assistant II		.9	10.8		5.2
Assistant III		.9	6.6	1.7	3.5
Assistant IV	2.9	4.6	13.3		7.6
Sub Total					30.5
Associate I		2.8	1.2	32.8	6.5
Associate II		0.9	1.8	5.2	1.9
Associate III		5.6	3.0	10.3	4.6
Associate IV	2.9	21.3	25.3	39.7	24.3
Sub Total					37.3
Titular	2.9	1.9		3.4	1.4
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The SPSS software supplied tables not only of a more demographic character but also pointed towards correlations between variables of importance for the determination of the academic dynamics.

Some considerations that will possibly guide the reading of SR, should be formulated:

1. The large concentration of professors in the Auxiliary Class is explained by the high number of professors contracted as substitutes, who do not move up or down in their career structure.
2. In opposition, the Class of Titular Professors shows a draining, because it is being treated by the superior administration as something in extinction. The large number of qualified professors who chose to retire in the seventies and eighties were not replaced.

3. Thus, the high concentration in the Associate Class, Level IV is explained since it is formed by professors whose access to titles was detained by the absence of competitive examinations.

4. A peculiar feature of the UFMT staff can be noticed. Among the total number of Specialists who should be accommodated in the class of Auxiliary professors, 7.3% are Assistants, and 30.6% are Associates. Among the Associates, 31.3% hold master's degrees only.

The ALPHA questionnaire lent itself to data collection aimed at the identification of the structure and the Central Nucleus (CN) of the SR, starting from the presentation of a generating expression: "To be a professor at the UFMT." The data collected and processed through the EVOC software, added up to almost 3000 words, reduced during the process to less than 800 different words then organized in a dictionary.

Three groups of judges, working independently, analyzed the words in the dictionary, grouping them in a dozen categories.

Table 3 - The Categories, by Words, Number of Occurrences and Occurrence Rates

Categories	N° Words	% Words	N° Occurrences	% Occurrences
Well Being	59	7.77	235	8.13
Shortage	34	4.47	84	2.90
Citizenship	38	5.00	150	5.19
Conformism	08	1.05	31	1.07
Future	30	3.95	100	3.46
Uneasiness	158	20.81	450	15.58
Personal	158	20.81	732	25.34
Production	17	2.23	232	8.03
Profession/Job	105	13.83	313	10.83
Qualification	28	3.68	178	6.16
Relationships	60	7.90	182	6.30
Non-Financial Rewards	22	2.89	153	5.29
No Category	42	5.53	48	1.66
Total	759	99.92	2888	99.94

Rearranging the categories, starting from the number of different words found in each one of them or starting from the total number of occurrences, two different hypotheses can be observed and compared.

Table 4- Categories, by Number of Different Words (Hypothesis 1) and by Number of Occurrences (Hypothesis 2)

Categories	Hypothesis 1		Categories	Hypothesis 2	
	N° Words	N° Occ.		N° Words	N° Occ.
Uneasiness	158	450	Personal	158	732
Personal	158	732	Uneasiness	158	450
Profession/Job	105	313	Profession/Job	105	313
Relationships	60	182	Well Being	59	235
Well Being	59	235	Production	17	232
No Category	42	48	Relationships	60	182
Citizenship	38	150	Qualification	28	178
Shortage	34	84	Non-Financial Rewards	22	153
Future	30	100	Citizenship	38	150
Qualification	28	178	Future	30	100
Non-Financial Rewards	22	153	Shortage	34	84
Production	17	232	No Category	42	48
Conformism	08	31	Conformism	08	31
Total	759	2888	Total	759	2888

Two categories, uneasiness and personal, present the same number of words (158), which apparently gives them the same weight. Observing the number of occurrences within the categories it is possible to verify that, while uneasiness has 15.58% of the total words, personal has 25.34%, which makes it a category with many more occurrences of attributes, as opposed to conformism (1.07%) and production (8.03%), the weakest categories. However, it will be precisely in the production category that we will find the word with the highest occurrence rates: the attribute research appears 101 times.

According to those data, UFMT professors regard teachers' personal qualifications, individuals' personal characteristics, and their experience of uneasiness in the institution as descriptive of their professional identity.

For a general panorama of the results it is important to show the words with higher occurrence rates, enunciated beside the categories where they are accommodated. The attributes highlighted here seem already to allow for indications of the possible content of SR.

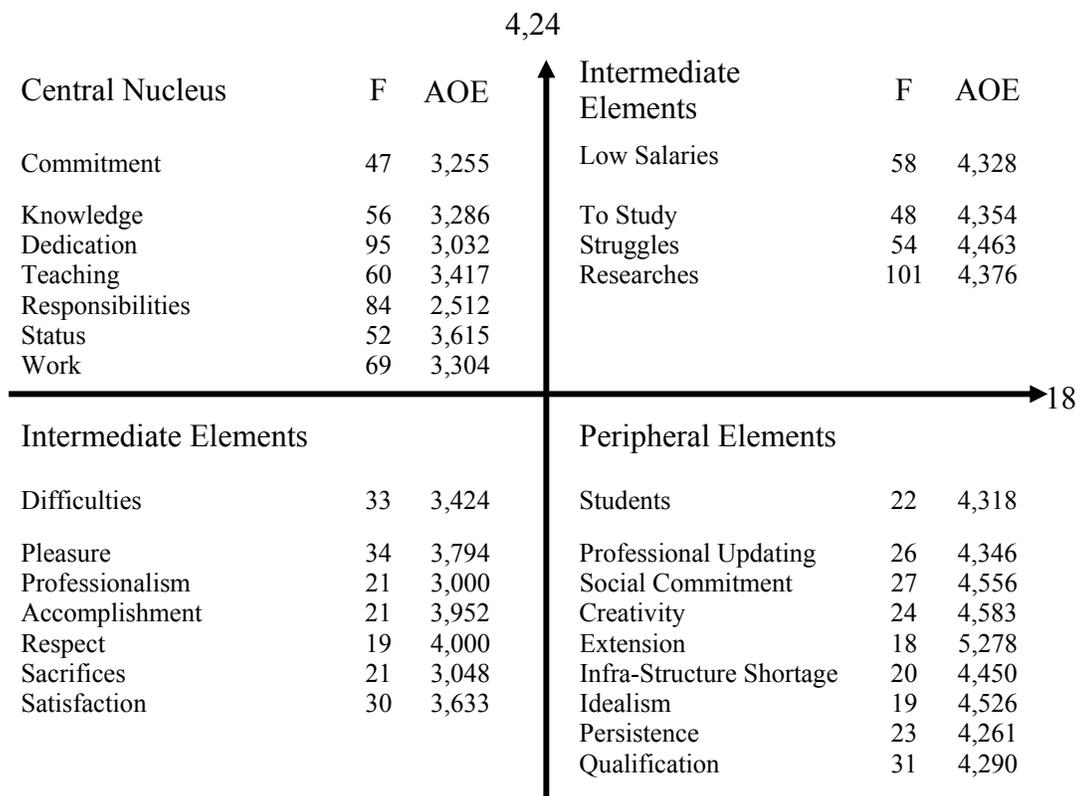
Table 5 - Categories and Main Attributes

Category	N° Words	N° Occurrences	Attributes	F	St
Well Being	59	235	Pleasure	34	85
			Satisfaction	30	
			Accomplishment	21	
Shortage	34	84	of Infra-Structure	20	36
			of Institutional Support	11	
			of Recognition	05	
Citizenship	38	150	Struggles	54	91
			Social Commitment	27	
			Politics	10	
Conformism	08	31	Self-Denial	17	31
			Resignation	05	
			Accommodation	04	
Future	30	100	Challenge	16	51
			Hope	13	
			Future	10	
Uneasiness	158	450	Low Salaries	58	112
			Difficulties	33	
			Sacrifices	21	
Personal	158	732	Dedication	95	235
			Responsibility	84	
			Knowledge	56	
Production	17	232	Research	101	179
			Teaching	60	
			Extension	18	
Qualification	28	178	Study	48	105
			Qualification	31	
			Professional updating	26	
Relationships	60	182	Students	22	49
			Ethics	17	
			Relationship	10	
Profession/Job	105	313	Work	69	107
			Professionalism	21	
			Learning	17	
Non-Financial Rewards	22	153	Status	52	88
			Respect	19	
			Prestige	17	
No Category	42	48			

The personal category is the main constituent of the ranking, followed by production. In opposition, conformism and shortage constitute the smallest parts.

Contrary to what could be expected, not all attributes with higher frequency ranking are present in the CN. The attribute research, for instance, is placed among the intermediate elements. The explanation for this is that, in order to identify the structure of the representation, EVOC compares the frequency of the words with the average order of evocation of each attribute.

Figure 1 - Central Nucleus, Intermediate Elements and the Peripheral Elements



The CN displays attributes that we can organize according to the average of the order of evocations, or according to the frequency of the attributes:

Table 6 - The Central Nucleus and its Attributes, by Frequency and Average Order of Evocation

Attributes	F	AOE	Attributes	F	AOE
Responsibilities	84	2,512	Dedication	95	3,032
Dedication	95	3,032	Responsibilities	84	2,512
Commitment	47	3,255	Work	69	3,304
Knowledge	56	3,286	Teaching	60	3,417
Work	69	3,304	Knowledge	56	3,286
Teaching	60	3,417	Status	52	3,615
Status	52	3,615	Commitment	47	3,255

In both alternatives we found two attributes at the top: dedication and responsibility, characteristics that professors attribute to themselves. In other words the outlined CN appears from a group of attributes related to the personal category, derived from the production and directly imputable to professors themselves.

What happened to the attribute research and its high frequency? Although some words present the highest occurrence rates, they were not quickly evoked, and, for this reason, were defined as intermediate elements. This is not different from what happened with the attribute low salaries. It can be seen in the top right quadrant that such attributes were evoked, on average, as the fourth word mentioned by individuals. That position compares with the attribute responsibilities, that appeared, on average, as the second evocation.

Concerning the intermediate elements (top right and bottom left quadrants), they show attributes that are placed in two antagonic poles: on one side, low salaries, struggles, difficulties and sacrifices, and on the other, pleasure, accomplishment and satisfaction. Intermixed are words connected to the actions of research, study, accomplish, as well as to the attributes professionalism and respect.

What do we read here? What can be derived from such data? UFMT professors believe they are the ones who provide the energy that moves academic life. Throughout the existence of the UFMT its professors have built a representation of themselves as pillars

and base of academic life. That constitutes the duramen of SR that they entertain regarding themselves.

The CN shows a composition that resembles the mental construction of the UFMT that has always permeated its documents and official speeches, its daily tasks, and its professors' effort.

The University staff was formed, in the beginning, by professionals who, in their majority, had not received formal pedagogical preparation. They reinvented, in the light of their personal technical competence, ways to discuss knowledge and share it with the student body.

The UFMT was officially created in 1970, gathering professors from the seminal nuclei, which were the Federal School of Law and the Institute of Sciences and Letters of Cuiabá. In the middle of the decade, at the cost of immense personal sacrifices, groups of professors went annually to the centres of excellence in search of qualifications at master's and doctorate levels. This movement became the foundation of the CN, attaching meanings to the proposition "To be a professor at the UFMT". Professional qualification has always been a source of status, which also originated from the excellence that was being built for the teaching activity.

The CN cannot be read simply as a cast of words, but also as a discloser of the social process of its construction, that is immersed in the silenced history of the institution, either because of the absence of many of its actors, or because of the perverse function of social memory, modified through the force of interests. Such elements will be discussed again when the results of the data processed through the software ALCESTE are discussed.

The intermediate elements point to the immediate reality, to the present plot. Therefore, the peripheral elements (bottom right quadrant) are directed towards to professors' daily routine: students, professional updating and qualification, creativity and a lack of infrastructure.

What kind of profile do UFMT professors draw of themselves? The main indications detected so far are:

1. Professors do not seem to doubt that their best descriptors are associated to personal characteristics (25.34%). The elements that constitute uneasiness (15.58%) are equally important, in the performance of their academic activities.

2. Professors attribute themselves a low level of conformism in opposition to a good dose of citizenship. It seems that it is from the elements of non-financial rewards (status, respect, prestige) and citizenship (struggles, social commitment, policies) that professors set themselves free from conformism and search well being.

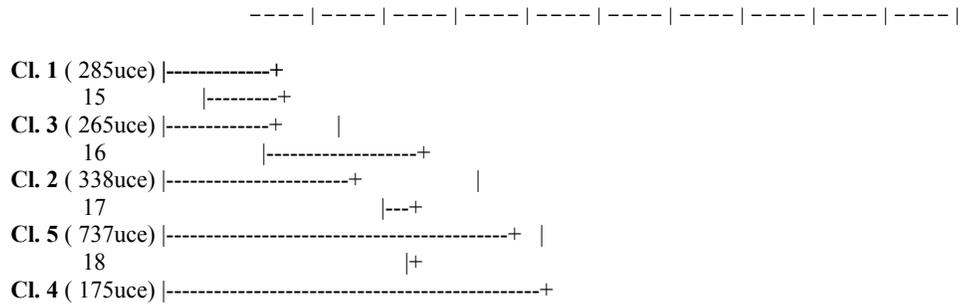
3. The role of professors in teaching and researching is closely correlated, as well as their role in research and the level of investment in their career. When questioned about investment in their career, an explanation was provided that this factor would cover research, publications, qualification, acquisition of books and/or equipment and participation in scientific events, activities that depend, as a rule, on professors' own initiative and financial resources.

4. Professors represent themselves in a situation in which they are subject to depreciation, sacrifices, difficulties and low salaries, leading to a feeling of uneasiness, compensated by typical employment relation behaviour: production and search for academic qualification.

5. The group's emancipatory line may be drawn by the tendency in which the larger the investment in a better career the more importance is attributed to research. Besides, the analysis of the situation seems to be better developed among professors with higher qualifications and involvement in their career, which, in turn, throws their perspectives of the future off balance, making them more pessimistic. This seems to be one of the possibilities for re-signification of reality, leading to the construction of new elements within the UFMT professors' identity.

Based on the data processed by the textual analysis software named ALCESTE, the corpus built by the interviews was organized in five classes that can be visualized in the following dendrogram:

Figure 2 –Dendrogram and Classes Names

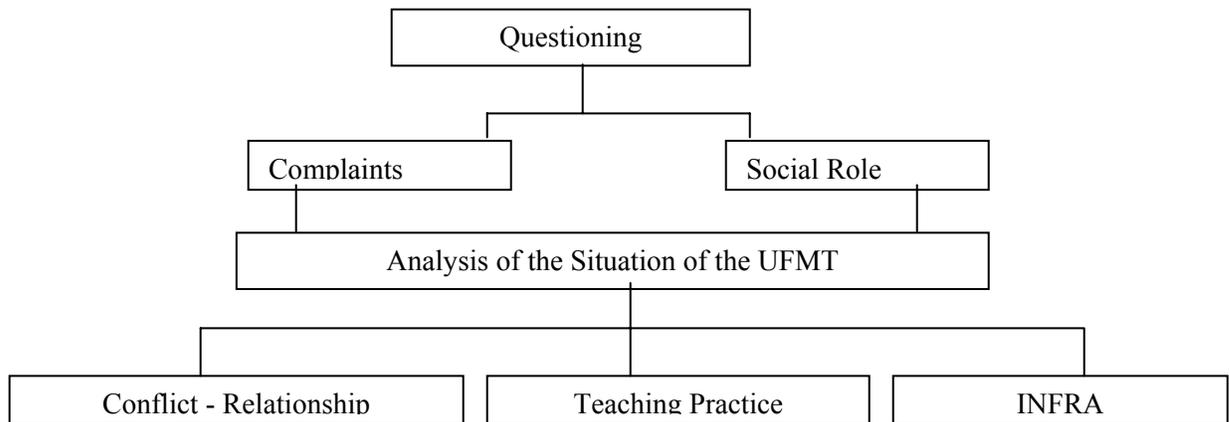


- C 1: Conflicts
- C 2: Personal relationships and political engagement
- C 3: Teaching practice and professional engagement
- C 4: Circumstances and criteria of admittance to UFMT
- C 5: Analysis of the situation of the profession

There is a noted proximity between classes 1 and 3 in the dendrogram. Both show a connection with class 2. Class 5 joins the group made up of the first three, thus justifying its designation as analysis of the situation. Class 4 presents the largest difference in comparison with the others.

Based on those data, the strength of the connection between words in each class, as well as the context in which they emerged were analyzed. A discussion of the categories allowed us to identify the quality of the contribution of each class.

Figure 3 - Class A/1: Conflicts



This class appears more clearly when professors question the social role of the university as well as their own. It is here that it touches conflict relationships, teaching practice and infrastructure. The bridge that links those three categories and the social role is the professors' ability to analyze the situation of the UFMT.

In Class 1 professors speak about their conflicts starting from academic competence, interpersonal relations in the university and the social role of the UFMT. It is possible to notice arguments that give indications of the professors' concern about academic competence in the sense of performing the social role expected from them.

Such perceptions seem to be experienced as claims coming from social, institutional and individual levels, as we can see in the following fragments of interviews.

Then, I demand from myself, it puts me in a conflict to talk like this: I was once like that! Suddenly, what if everybody does what I do and don't go?

Then I will watch a movie or read, or I'll think like this: I am going to the airport. While they are walking in the streets I am going to the airport. What happens when I arrive at the airport? I have a guilty conscience, while my friends are there, struggling.

They demand from us; they demand from doctors and masters. This is what we would like to see changed, to combine theory with practice, that's what students need.

The social role of the UFMT appears as a demand and criticism from society to professors.

That teaching practice... I read on the newspaper that the university does not attend to the population's needs. Then I ask myself, to what extent do we not do it?

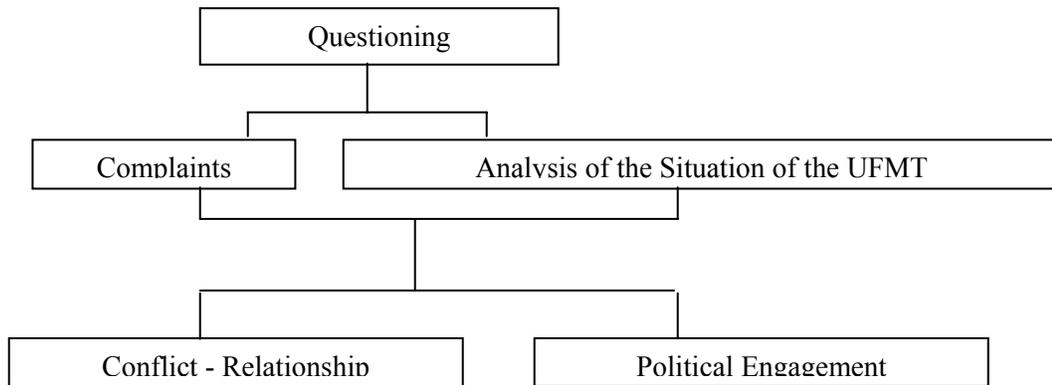
Personal relations are permeated by conflicts, stereotypes.

He arrives as if he were some superior being. Then (...) people say: we will not call him, we will solve it right here, because the moment he arrives he'll want to change everything.

Then there are people we have already condemned before they ever open their mouth, you see? Just because that person seems to be an unfriendly person, you know?

Class 1 outlines content linked to the relationship between conflicts and demands.

Figure 4 - Class B/2: Personal Relationships and Political Engagement



In this class professors question the ethics of their relationships with colleagues, and their implications in the political articulation of their professional category.

In Class 2 a denser relational universe is outlined, where aspects of personal and collective relationships are concentrated. The personal dimension reveals more fluidity in social exchanges that are sustained in the personal, and intra-departmental spheres. However, when professors refer to their relationships with other departments, or even with higher administrative sectors, this fact is not confirmed.

I believe that this leaves me well in relation to my colleagues, and my personal relationship is very good with certain groups, I have no complaints (...)
(...) As for myself, my relationship with those departments is very good. But I think it could be a little closer, not only to the higher staff, but also to the presidency. The higher administration should be a little closer to the Professor.
(...) I believe that professors should be in those positions. I believe that the relationship with the administrative instances is good, although we sometimes notice that there are clashes between the people who run the other side, if they are not professors, and people from our side.

Within a collective perspective it can be noticed that professors think of political engagement starting from their participation in ADUFMAT, the association that congregates the professional class.

(...) the only instance where we could meet is the ADUFMAT, but attendance is insignificant.
I think there is no commitment. (...) mainly in my department, in my university, no commitment exists. It is always the same people to participate.

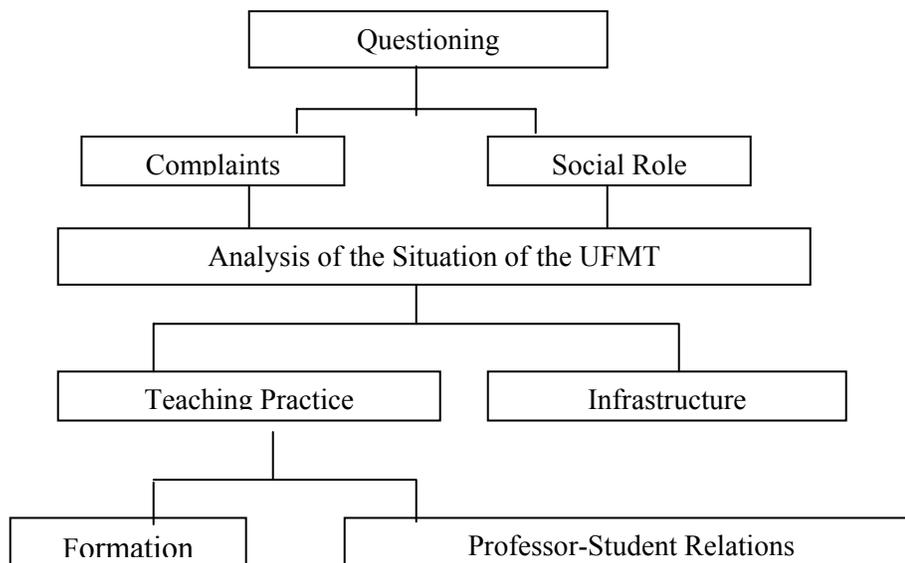
This detachment professors experience, in relation to their professional Association is named as a lack of involvement, consisting, on one hand, of a response to their disagreement with the decision making processes of the professional category, and, on the other, of an absence of reaction, a lack of commitment.

Even during strikes there is hardly any participation. Many things are lacking in that sense. As for political parties, I think there are groups in all of the political parties. I don't usually talk about politics, but as far as the professional class and social movements are concerned I believe professors don't participate as much as they should.

They allow things to happen freely, they don't gain awareness. I am an example of that (...) I don't get involved. I am not very patient to participate in meetings, in ADUFMAT's general assemblies.

(...)Hardly anybody participates. I don't know why, but this distancing is increasing, people don't get involved anymore. I don't know, I think commitment is lacking, you know? People are giving up. I don't know, they don't want to commit themselves.

Figure 5 - Class C/3: Teaching Practice and Professional Engagement



Class 3 characterizes the teaching practice in what it refers to the needs experienced. The needs mentioned are connected to pedagogic formation and infrastructure. Concerning pedagogic formation there seems to be a distance between having knowledge and knowing

how to do something. Professors speak of the opposition between technical knowledge and pedagogic knowledge.

That is the student that catches my attention. I sometimes feel the need to prepare my classes. (...) it is not a course aimed at forming teachers, it doesn't include educational psychology, it is placed there to transmit and not to discuss the content that students already bring with them. We don't have the teaching practice. We have the experience of transmitting technical knowledge, but not, I believe, of being educators, as a profession.

As a result of professional development professors describe the teacher-student relationship as characterized by professional complicity and commitment, pointing towards a connection between competence and seduction.

I have been trying to be close, to see my students' human side, too. Not that we will solve everything, but it is gratifying when a student comes to us for other things, besides information.

Is it only books? The latest news are on the Internet (...) I bring it for my student to feel committed, to prepare the classes with me.

Often you are concerned with reviewing some content, reproducing some content, and then we have nothing to worry about. We speak a lot about the construction of knowledge, but how will I work with those students?

Soon our work is done within that formative evaluation where tasks are assigned to students so that they build tools that can make them learn with fewer difficulties.

Infrastructure appears in the class through daily problems that hinder professors' pedagogic project.

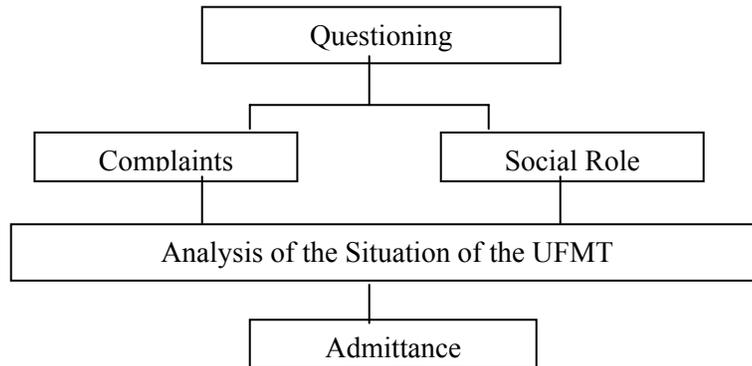
On the other hand, and internally, we still have other difficulties, small everyday problems: the working conditions for the professor when it comes to laboratories, classrooms, audio-visual equipment, a series of small issues that face professors.

In this class a movement towards overcoming this problem by means of programs of continuous development can be observed.

What is lacking in the physical education course is courses such as professional ethics, philosophy, basically philosophy, because it is through great thinkers that we can change, and that I learned in my master's degree.

I think we should improve our teaching practice through continuous education, not learn didacticism, that's not what I mean, but we have to have more knowledge of philosophy, psychology and history.

Figure 6 - Class D/4: Circumstances and Criteria of Admittance to UFMT



In Class 4 the way in which professors' were admitted to the UFMT was configured as an axis for them to discuss the intersection between the institution's history and their own personal, family and professional history. There is a tendency for a gradual approximation of the substitute professor's condition to the one of permanent professor, fully inserted in the staff of the institution. Parallel to that, a wider and deeper adhesion of the personal destiny to the institutional destiny occurs.

People were admitted to the University in a variety of ways, from simple interviews and tests to competitive examinations. Within this context, an informal dimension appears in the form of invitations coming from extra-academic professional contacts.

My admittance took place with my arrival, after obtaining a master's degree in general surgery in medicine from the University of Brasilia. I got here when the Health Department was being implemented, as well as the nursing undergraduate program. I was invited to work as a professor in the department by the hour.

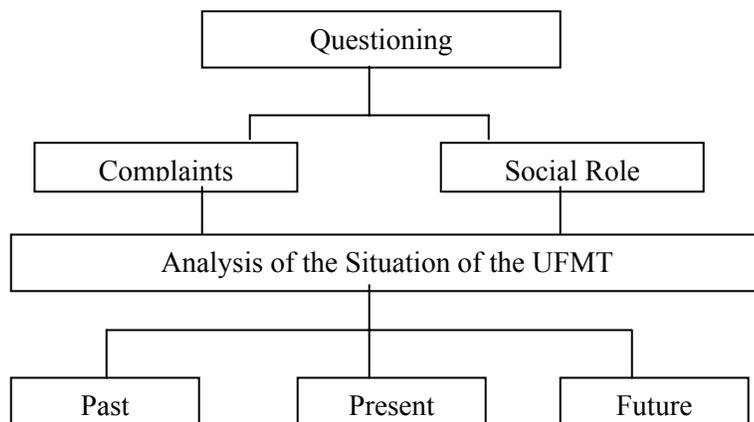
I was initially admitted as a substitute professor in the UFMT. At that time the position was called visiting professor. And, later, I passed the competitive examination and took over in 95.

I received an invitation. I accepted it, not very enthusiastically, and never left. My personal life was determined by being a UFMT professor. To be a university professor fits my way of living, my way of understanding the world.

However, it is here that the discussion brought up by CN data supplied by EVOC is resumed. The ways in which the UFMT has recruited its staff have contributed decisively towards the construction of the professors SR through time. Personal routes that we claim have been denied by the perverse function of social memory translated in official texts, emerged together with the development of the university itself, revealing that personal

concurrency both to the career and to obtaining the qualifications for professional exercise demanded decisions and efforts from the teaching staff, more than from the institution.

Figure 7 - Class E/5: Analysis of the Situation on the Profession



In Class 5, professors analyze the situation. They search for subsidies in the axis of time to understand the present and outline their future in the UFMT.

The central theme of this class rotates around professors' dissatisfactions, discomforts and displeasures.

In the present dimension it can be said that professors name their uncomfortable feelings characterized as: low salaries, early retirement, a threat of privatization and institutional death. They reveal conflicts such as the choice between retirement and investment in their career. They seem to believe that only qualification can provide the balance between self-esteem and their teaching role.

I think the idea of privatizing, of making space for private universities; the idea that if professors retire they won't be replaced the idea of softly killing the university by removing the oxygen slowly, I think that leaves us with a horrible perspective.

Summing up this uneasiness: low salaries, the institution's lack of resources, the low worth attached to its employees, the lack of a long term qualification project (...) added to the current model in itself.

Then, summarizing, in this case, the structural issue, the policy of academic autonomy, it is already a serious problem. It is not the only cause of uneasiness. It is complemented by low salaries, and by a lack of administrative support.

Thus, that is the uneasiness that the institution experiences, that new category of precociously retired professors.

Confronting uneasiness seems to oppose the social image of a serious professional, someone who is competent and capable of helping society in its struggle for citizenship.

We go to the inner parts of the country, we go to communities that are less attended by the government, and we are recognized and even sought as a possible solution for the action, mainly of citizenship.

An image of people who are capable, coherent with what they do (...) our relationship with the community is still small compared to its extension, but inside society the university professor is seen as a serious person.

Regarding the future, professors see their perspectives as related to maximizing the UFMT potentialities, taking professional qualification as a strategy to manage them. Research is implicit in this process.

(...) I, myself, believe in the UFMT. I believe in the progress of this university. We are certainly going to become a centre of excellence. In this case, those that qualify themselves will participate in that progress and, indeed, there will be a larger impact on their salaries.

I, as a professor of the UFMT, have a hope: I think the university has a very strong potential to grow and to become an excellence centre of the Mid-West region.

Based on the data yielded in the dendrogram, a strong relationship between classes 1 and 3 can be assumed, which points towards the proximity of the contents of these classes. All that is lacking, as well as the demands expressed when professors question the situation can be taken as approximate axes of the classes. While in class 1 needs are expressed through demands explicit in the professors' discourse, in class 3 the demand can be identified mainly in the concern with academic competence marked by the limitations of the professors' pedagogic formation.

The proximity that is evidenced in classes 1, 2 and 3 is concentrated on the subject of interpersonal relations (especially with people that are closer) and their implications to the political and pedagogic project of the institution.

In the relations between classes 1, 2, 3 and 5 the professors' capacity to question and analyze aspects of their profession is observed.

Class 5 is characterized, as being the most significant one in terms of the textual data, once its frequencies and X2 are the highest. The words appear associated, forming a well-

defined body and structure whose themes reveal an analysis of the situation of the profession, and that is probably the reason why the class is closer to classes 1, 2 and 3.

Class 4 differs from the others as a result of its more narrative and less analytic character.

4. An Attempt at Comparing the EVOC and the ALCESTE Analyses, Starting from the Personal Category

The significant presence of the personal category in the top left quadrant processed by EVOC, the *locus* that lodges the attributes that point towards the central nucleus of the social representations, suggested a comparison between the results originating from EVOC and the ones supplied by ALCESTE.

In the mentioned quadrant, the existence of a strong tendency for professors to define themselves through such personal attributes as competence, responsibility, and dedication was verified.

The proposed question as the starting point for the analysis was: how do professors characterize themselves starting from adjectives, verbs, and expressions?

In a subsidiary way, seeking to widen understanding, the concept of identity used was that of a representation of an individual that is turned towards practical work activity and to groups they belong.

4.1. Class 1: The Subject of the Action

Professors seem to see themselves as subjects, conscious of their social function. Through the expressions “I read”, “I question myself”, “I will watch a film”, “I worry”, “you are bad”, it can be said that professors represent themselves as subjects who search for information in which they question their reality, and perceive the conflicted relations, as well as their implications to their personal and professional identity.

I’ve been feeling like this... I am not disappointed, you see? I begin to feel tired, you know? I’d rather be home, instead of walking under the hot sun. I won’t go.

The only thing I would like to add is that, what you are doing, and what we all do, may really give this institution some support to make it become what we hope and what people out there need.

It is possible to observe how professors’ attitude concerning the investment in their profession oscillates. The issue of competence in the field of scientific investigation is

present in the last comment, made to the interviewer, referring to the work accomplished by this research.

4.2.Class 2: Sociability and Political Engagement

Professors have a more evidenced social competence in the ways of involvement in the ambit of immediate personal relations, which they qualify as excellent, very good, closer and respectful when they refer to the professor-student relation.

In the institutional dimension, professors describe themselves as lacking involvement and commitment, maintaining bearable and competitive relationships.

In both cases we find, in their discourse, evidences that professors understanding their sociability.

4.3.Class 3: Mediation and Technical-Pedagogic Competence

In this class, professors see themselves as engaged in their pedagogic practice, concerned with the construction of knowledge, with their own views on mediation, and with the implications of their interpretative capacity of the other-the student.

Professors represent themselves as being capable to change and to look for a more humanitarian tone to the process of their pedagogic formation.

The search for technical competence is directly associated to the professor-student relationship.

4.4.Class 4: Autonomy in the Construction of a Teaching Career

Professors' potency is evidenced, once he has passed the selection rituals and the competitive examination to access the career and join the permanent staff, processes through which their technical-pedagogic competence is exhibited and approved.

It is noted that professors perceive a significant autonomy in the administration of their own professional career and professional ascent.

4.5.Class 5: Academic Competence and Ability to Build Excellence

The problems concerning the excellence of the Public University place professors' competence under social pressure, which they can very well identify and analyze. To the coercion forces that point towards the degeneration, the degradation of the University competence and of its professors, they react by reaffirming their researcher profile, their

social status recognized by the community, and future plans for their career and for the UFMT. It is here that professors can be characterized as full of hope and expectations.

Professors believe in a better destiny for the UFMT, and place themselves as historical subjects capable to take, to brake and lead for better ways the undesired project of privatization of the public university.

In general, it can be said that professors question and analyze their competencies whether they refer to sociability, technical-pedagogic or academic ability.

In the analyses of the quadrants and the classes processed by softwares EVOC and ALCESTE, respectively, an interesting movement of the attributes teaching, research, extension and qualification was evident.

Although research has been the most evoked attribute, it has nevertheless remained in the peripheral system. This did not occur with the attribute teaching, less frequently evoked, however present in the central nucleus. Taking the principle of identity into account, which points to the notion that human beings build themselves through their own activities translated in the form of work, it can be verified that the representation of UFMT professors concerning their professional activity place teaching in a central position and not research or extension activities.

Still in the peripheral system, it is possible to point out the presence of the professors' dissatisfaction evidenced by the attributes of low salaries, difficulties, sacrifices, lack of infrastructure, opposed by the attributes of well-being and non-financial rewards such as: pleasure, fulfillment, satisfaction and respect. These attributes can act in the sense of sustaining the central nucleus.

5. Conclusion

UFMT professors represent themselves as being responsible for making the university follow a direction. For these professors, their personal characteristics sustain academic life. They originate decisions related to the acts of teaching, obtaining professional qualification, conducting research and working with the community, to maintain their existence as professors of a public university.

The UFMT professors represent themselves as teaching beings whose personal attributes sustain the pedagogic project of the university.

In contradiction, they live in a state of dissatisfaction that they believe is caused by the objective working conditions. Due to the difficulties, they face the challenge of conducting research, searching for qualification and strengthening the extension activities as strategies for the maintenance of their position as dynamos and catalysts of the UFMT.

Sense and direction are in their hands.

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