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DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING AND CITIZENSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Schools in democratic societies not only have the traditional task of teaching literacy and numeracy but also play a prominent role in education to citizenship by training students to maintain democratic social institutions. A high drop-out rate therefore seriously impairs the ability of youths to act as adult citizens in the complex, contemporary world, because they have neither the literate skills to deal with information nor the competences to face global problems. As research into students' performance in schools has pointed out, this problem applies particularly to large groups of unsuccessful children from economic disadvantaged groups or ethnic minorities, inhabiting rural areas or urban peripheries who, by failing or dropping out of school, are excluded from developing the skills to participate fully in a democratic society at home and the wider global culture (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Field, Kuczera, & Pont, 2007; Marks, Cresswell, & Ainley, 2006; Secada, Fennema, & Adajian, 1995). In regard to Portugal, research studies also show how the issue of schooling in such families emerges as a complex and multifold problem, and that Portugal has one of the Europe's highest drop-out rates (Benavente, Campiche, Seabra, & Sebastião, 1994; Moreira, 2002; Stoer & Araújo, 2000; Tavares, 1996). Considering that the drop-out rate seriously compromises the capacity of youth to later face the contemporary world with the necessary competences and skills as informed and critical citizens, a large group of the Portuguese boys and girls is being excluded from participation in the global, contemporary culture as effective citizens.

This investigation addresses the issue of education to citizenship by relating it to families' comprehension of the social dimension of schooling. It examines the meanings attached to schooling in Portugal and how the practice of citizenship generally relates to schooling among low-income, multiethnic urban groups with low formal education levels. This includes the forms how people invoke schooling and project it in the future as well as how schooling is lived and participated in by families. The study begins by discussing the role of schools in developing citizenship and its implications for interactions between schools and students, families, and communities in general. Using a methodology of participant observation to understand the school-family relationship, and after a brief contextualization of the social setting, the study introduces four families to present their genealogies, their own ways of legitimise school and how the families'

different perceptions of schooling, synthesized in different realities, projects itself in the families' educative process, in different ways, and in their comprehension of the social dimension of schooling and the role it plays as a mean to comprehend contemporary Portuguese society.

Ultimately, in the frame of the construction of a social, historically situated, meaning about schooling and the importance of citizenship, this investigation attempts to understand the valorisation and justification of schooling to low literate and low professional qualifications environments, as well as the social and logical contexts underlying them and their specific strategies.

THE PORTUGUESE EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO

Portugal was one of the first European countries to legislate for mandatory education. Even so, when it happened, in 1835, the provision of institutional education for the whole of the population did not emerge (Fernandes, 1978; Ramos, 1993). Portugal remains among those European countries with the largest number of illiterate people. In 1960, when most of the European countries had already established their basic educational systems – with children of school age enrolled in schools and finishing basic education – only 15% of the Portuguese students completed the fourth grade. This situation started to change from the late 1960s and especially after the revolution of April 1974, which established democracy in Portugal. From 1986 on, schooling in Portugal became mandatory for children from 6 to 15 years old; thus a successful student finished school with, at least, the ninth grade. Nonetheless, in 2004 only 60% of Portuguese youth between 18 and 24 years old have more education than ninth grade, although in the European Union, among the same age level, it is about 85%.

As a result of this disturbing historical situation today we are living in a time of changes and reforms that have produced moments of re-affirmation and consolidation of basic education, but also moments of crisis. According to Stoer and Araújo (2000), on the one hand, the crisis occurs because the low-income population and the ethnic minorities experience high levels of school failure that bar their access to medium and superior levels of education, and also, because “the relevance of schooling to the majority of such youths is not evident” (p. 137). On the other hand, the State's further consolidation of the principle of equal school opportunities for all is fundamental for its implementation and further governmental measures are being developed to ensure that all youths finish school at an appropriate age. Therefore, the present moment is also a time of consolidation and reforms of basic education. However, as Stoer and Araújo (2000) also point out, “in Portuguese schools, social and human rights are proclaimed, but, in reality, they are not concretized” (p. 146), because, among other factors, in Portugal “1) the principle of equal opportunities remains abstracted and formal; and 2) the formal recognition of the existence of different cultures is insufficient to understand and value cultural differences” (p. 145). Moreover, before the revolution of the 25 of April of 1974, Portugal was under a fascist dictatorship, and consequently most of the Portugal's experience of citizenship and human rights are

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still evolving. As Heater (2004) observes, "one of the problems relating to citizenship and its associated rights is the difficulty of firmly embedding them in the socio-political culture of a state in a short span of time" (pp. 117-118), and as Anderson and Roßteutscher (2007) argue participation in democracy also includes "(...) the efforts of individual citizens to exert influence over their own life situation in important social roles such as (...) in the domain of child education" (p. 221). Thus, these arguments suggest that within the Portuguese society, at large, the fact that the *praxis* of citizenship is not systematically implemented has important repercussions in the success of contemporary schools.

Education, citizenship and social context

This investigation combines theoretical approaches from different disciplinary areas, namely, the literature of Citizenship Studies, Education and Anthropology of Education. This multidisciplinary approach was required in order to comprehend specific details of the local setting, as well as the relationships of the locality to the larger and complex cultural system of contemporary society and schooling.

From the field of Education, Skovsmose (1994) provides an interesting framework to analyze and discuss the role of schools in citizenship education within the broader socio-political contemporary context. As Skovsmose (1994) states,

democracy refers to formal conditions concerning the interplay between the institutions of a democracy, material conditions concerning distribution of goods and services, ethical conditions concerning equality, and finally conditions concerning the possibility for participation and re-action. (p. 29)

In addition, democracy has immediate implications in education, as schools should provide an introduction to democratic life in society and be concerned both with the distribution of knowledge and with the material educative possibilities of children. Hence, life in schools should represent democratic values; democracy, society and schools, as institutions, should mutually reflect each other in a complex manner.

These are also basic components to the success of democratic societies: socialization of students in the public spaces of schools with the goal of using this training, along with the content knowledge, to critically and lawfully participate in social life as an autonomous citizen; new ways of interacting with students, parents and the community, which should include knowledge of how to act and to transmit a social rationality that includes democratic competences.

Consequently, in this framework schools are acting as institutions where both the content knowledge and the knowledge to practice citizenship are the fundamental bases upon which school life is established.

Anthropology of education provides an holistic and cross-cultural approach to education that situates it within the broader contexts of society, culture and history (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970; Goode, Schneider, & Blanc, 1992;

Knipmeyer, Bueno, & San Roman, 1980; Moreira, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 1996; Street, 1993).

In general, these investigations take into account different social contexts and their relationship with local history and collective and individual experience of schooling. Some of them have showed how social and historical variation not only influences the diversity of school populations but also the school culture itself. Others highlight how change can be constructed locally when schools incorporate previous educational traditions and practices.

Moreover, school universe is viewed nowadays as a space of communication, participation and construction of local and national life considering that individual and collective diversity inter-cross in schools putting in contact different forms of being, knowing and learning. This heterogeneity, with its creative and conflict double meaning, stress the need for research with theoretical approaches capable of dealing with the complexity of educational phenomena as well as methodologies able to take into account a multiplicity of diverse situations. Thus the research perspective shifts around from inside to outside from focusing on schools and classrooms per se, to considering the interplay of homes and schools. In fact, when children start to go to school, this institution begins to participate, simultaneously, with families in their education. These two processes of education might develop as different rationalities, in regard to disciplinary contents as well as in regard to values, attitudes, realities and experiences. This is one reason why, in order to investigate by which ways, in Portugal, different social groups' realities interfere with their expectations regarding schooling it is necessary to draw on the research tradition of anthropology of education to locate emergent cultural differences between social groups and to discover the meaning of "citizenship" outside the school context, in a more private domain, such as the family.

As Iturra (1997) notes, "Reality changes according to the person that one is, and with his/her social context, environment, work and social class" (p. 33). Moreover, if from society we take over a set of rules and social benefits, from the family we inherit not only the name and material goods, but also, in Iturra's words (1998), "the goods that are inherited as ideas, behaviours and preparation to collaborate" (p. 59). Consequently, from the interactions in the family at home, we gain access to a field of experiences, imagery and emotion with which we construct the autonomy that produces future behaviour. It is to this inheritance, which schools estrange, that I turn now to further develop the educational ideas discussed in this text, by analyzing genealogies as the *locus* of social memory as concretized in stories, performances, and knowledge that are orally transmitted to and learned by children (Connerton, 1989; Frenness & Wickham, 1992; Iturra, 1997; Rose, 1996).

Genealogies function as a way to understand the transmission of the older generation's understanding of the contemporary world to the younger generation (Bertaux, 1992; Coenen-Huther, 1994; Muxel, 1996; Zonabend, 1991). On the whole, genealogy's transmissive function is characterized by its capacity to supply examples, models and experiences that teach children about their roles and status. This inheritance helps to produce a collective identity, the internalization of "us" and the feeling of belonging to a group. For this reason, data and contexts taken

Simultaneously, to illustrate further the differing attitudes toward schooling within different family groups and to highlight the families' educational background and understanding of their social conditions, four children and their families were selected as key informants. The criteria to select the four families required each family to have one child in fifth grade who had previously been enrolled in the neighbourhood's elementary school; at least one adult with basic education completed (sixth grade at that time); to have inhabited the neighbourhood for at least ten years; to have the parents be of similar ages. With these criteria I found similarities among families that allowed me to combine them within similar social memory frames, formal education levels, and degree of cultural belonging.

Thus, I focused in detail on four families. Weekly, during the school year, I visited each family's home helping their children with school assignments and subject matters. Informal conversations took place with parents during the time I was working with each children on their school assignments. Formal interviews were also held with parents and children separately. Furthermore, during two years, I listened to the community history, learned its life stories and appreciated the educational experiences of the families.

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOLING

The neighbourhood constitutes a local setting where ethnic diversity, unemployment and precarious jobs are salient social characteristics. In regard to schooling, data shows positive progress in the last two decades, although children continue to drop out of schools, mainly during fifth and sixth grades. The methodology of participant observation allowed me to analyze the heterogeneity of the neighbourhood regarding behaviour, family structure, life styles, mobility, incomes, employment and formal education. Within this diversity, the pattern of low formal education levels and professional qualifications characterized the majority of the inhabitants. Frequent conversations revealed their common concern about people with drug addition in the neighbourhood and how to withdraw children from it, about how to care for the needy and how to improve the lot of their children so that their lives would be better than those of their parents (Moreira, 2002).

The contacts with community led me to conclude that families are unanimous in considering school a "good thing" and believed that social improvement could be achieved through education. Similar findings about parents' perspectives on schooling are found out in other studies conducted among working class, rural and immigrant families (Abreu & Lambert, 2003; Goode et al., 1992; Reed-Danahay, 1996; Suárez-Orozco, 2002). The majority of the families share beliefs that schooling helps to achieve human and children's rights. They care about their children's home-work and they engage in complex financial management to buy books and school materials. Still, there are families for whom schooling is not a useful institution mostly because of their hopeless situation due to extreme poverty or health problems that withdraw these families to regard school positively.

Among the families that want their children to succeed in schools, basic education is equated with the need to learn how to read, write and do basic arithmetic to perform daily activities, as well as with job requirements and other related practical needs, for example the need for a driver's license or the capacity to fill out employment forms or other forms needed for life in society. Hence, parents invest in the schooling of their children and send them to schools with the necessary supplies, but what children and youth do at school was not clearly grasped from 5th grade on. Families acknowledge school mainly by asking about school grades and demanding children to study, but the fact is that generally, in this local setting, families are unaware of the school's activities, disciplinary contents, pedagogical processes, aims, projects, and methodologies. Other researchs have pointed out similar findings especially in regard to school content (Abreu, Cline, & Shamsi, 2002; Abreu & Lambert, 2003). Thus, many of these families failed to grasp the school's processes and disciplinary discourses linked to citizenship education in the contemporary world.

Moreover, in this community as in several places around Europe, schooling is also regarded as something that brings advantages for the future and related to the job market (Jones, 2005). References to schooling as a mean to get "a better job" were frequent; however its projection in the future, as something that helps to delineate a professional road, was occasional, mostly because in this social setting everybody knows that the jobs which make a socio-economic difference demand more and more formal education. This need for more formal education linked to employment is difficult to support given the economic situation of local population. Moreover the local job market is skewed to low skilled positions.

Indeed, parents credit school only partially for any achievements in gaining a "better life". Instead their lived experiences tell them that only hard work, obedience to their social betters, or luck might improve their social and economic status. The experience of others tells them that life only changes by taking risks, namely, trying business ventures and changing from one local setting to others looking for new jobs. As a local inhabitant said, a better life is achieved mainly by:

"pushing their heads ahead, calculating life"

Thus many people in this local setting, although realizing the idea of social mobility throughout schooling, nevertheless, continue to search for a means of survival where schooling has not yet a clear meaning. This situation is transmitted to children, who have to face in their daily lives two modes of distinct discourse one that highlights the benefits of schooling and, one that clearly states:

"in school you do not learn what is needed to life" (Local inhabitant words)

Looking more closely at each family who wanted their sons and daughters to go to school, and to finish it with success, we are able to detail the expectations of schooling in their lives as well as the ideas and meanings transmitted to the youth about the literate culture and its importance to the future. Below I outline the case

studies of four children and their genealogies, which highlight the families' educational background and understanding of their social conditions.

Marisa

Marisa was born in 1988. She was initially enrolled in the elementary school in the neighbourhood where the study took place because her grandmother took care of her while her parents worked. Marisa now lives permanently in the neighbourhood because her mother returned to her parents' home after a divorce. This way of solving family difficulties by sharing each other's homes was also used by Marisa's grandmother who, during a serious illness, asked her sister to raise Marisa's mother. Therefore, this transitory family re-organization occurs naturally in Marisa's family.

Marisa's family group includes three successive generations with changes in occupational status occurring from one generation to the next. From great-grandparents to grandparents, their occupations changed from rural workers to urban proletariat workers. From grandparents to parents, their occupations changed from urban proletariat to office workers. Figure 1 shows the formal educational levels of each member of Marisa's family group.

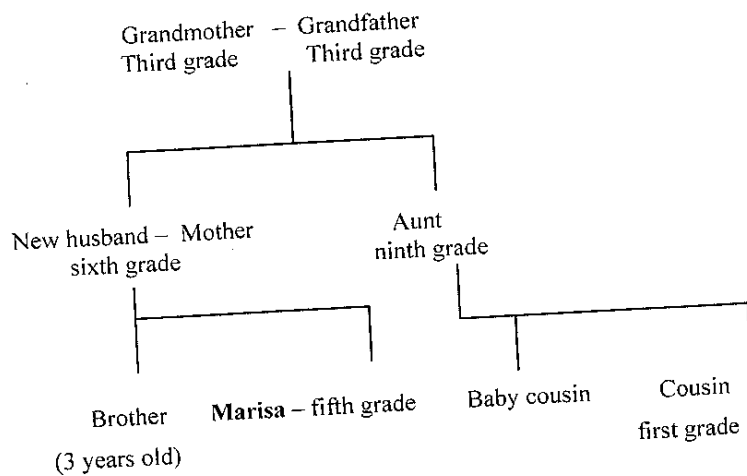


Figure 1. Marisa's household and each member's formal education level

These occupational changes introduced new and diverse situations into the life of the family, which changed its behaviours and imprinted new habits on its members. As levels of education have gradually increased from generation to generation, schooling is now featured as part of each family member's biographies. The values and artefacts of schooling have a place in the family's memory and the practices that are transmitted to the youngest generations in terms of daily life.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING AND CITIZENSHIP

The importance of public life is another reference in Marisa's family group and is incorporated in its practices. In fact, Marisa's grandmother, when the neighbourhood was re-built to provide people with better conditions of living, was a prominent figure in the process of the re-settlement of inhabitants, and became a respected person due to her participation in role conflict management and implementation of just criteria in the distribution of houses. This active posture demonstrated by the grandmother was supported by Marisa's grandfather and transmitted to their children, especially Marisa's aunt, who also became a recognized person in the neighbourhood due to her involvement with the planning of out of school activities for in the community. This feature was also noted by Seifer (1976) who argued that one of the reasons why working women get involved in political and social issues related with neighbourhood's stability is because it is in the neighbourhood that work and affectivity meet together.

Family members' social relationships within the neighbourhood especially their involvement in community life, requires a kind of social behaviour that mobilizes knowledge and connects family members with general civic information, duties and rights. This fact turns out to be a source of transformation as living these processes implies a comparison of family members' experiences with those of others and an evaluation of what is better for each one and the community as a whole.

Genealogy, in its function to transmit knowledge to the next generation, includes the memories of individuals where each person struggles in her or his own way to solve daily problems that might shared by others, and family members highlight the role of literate culture in these problems. These social relationships have accumulated and family members express an understanding and consciousness of them as evolving. Thus social exchanges as well as literacy and numeracy are seen as requirements for adapting to contemporary society. In this frame, the recognition of schooling is mainly related to citizenship. Social memory is thus transferred to Marisa, animated by a strong idea of change and social participation by her family group. This is the spirit of the family group's educative processes where the group's survival histories articulate the idea of change and risk. Literate culture and schooling are remembered and framed within educational processes as necessary to survival in contemporary social life.

At the end of the school year, Marisa sadly told me that she was held back in fifth grade. But, she was aware of this year's troubles due to her mother's divorce. In fact Marisa perceived her mother's daily struggles to recompose the family, and as a result tried to facilitate life by helping to take care of her brother and trying to minimize her mother's problems, because as Marisa observed:

"Next year everything will be all right and I know I will succeed at school."

Tania

Born in 1988, Tania lives at home with her family in which everybody works except her and her little sister. Tania's mother is illiterate, having dropped out of school in second grade because she had to care for her younger brothers.

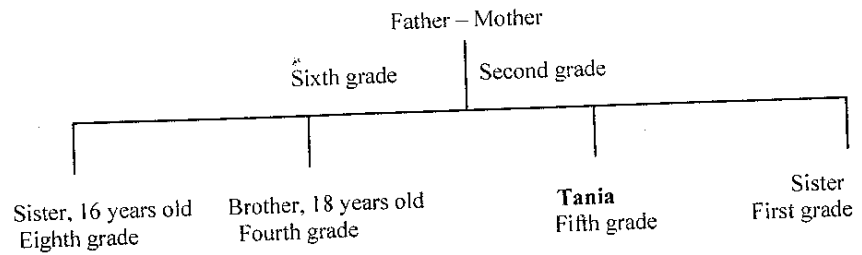


Figure 2. Tania's household and each member's formal education level

When both of Tania's parents were young, profound losses in their family required that Tania's parents, at an early age, started to do manual labour. This remains the only way to guarantee family reproduction and daily survival. Since that time, as Tania's mother says:

"It was a life of misery until life set to right."

The study found that family memory mainly begins in the generation of Tania's parents, who barely remember the generations before them. In their social memory the changes of contemporary time and urban culture have not yet been particularly meaningful. Tania, therefore is living a lifestyle created by her parents, which she has internalized and consolidated. This model does not offer much opportunity to look at the outside world because work does not leave the family with any free time. Exchanges with those outside the family mainly occur through work relationships. As a result, the educational process transmitted to children at home is based on the imitation of the parents' daily life. Their teaching highlights that life has few alternatives and that the only reliable work option is based on the strength of the bodies.

In spite of sacrifices for the children to do well in school, Tania's family does not recognize literate culture and its benefits. School knowledge and the social behaviours required to be at school stay outside the family's daily practices. Thus, while the family has difficulties following Tania's school achievements because of the lack of school knowledge, they also do not legitimate school contents and activities. Basic education is looked upon as something necessary, but only until a work opportunity appears, an opportunity that is sought among family social relations, while waiting for a change to a better work position through exemplary behaviour and experience. Nevertheless, Tania's mother desired that her daughter enroll in a professional school where Tania could learn a "craft".

In short, the family educational processes and school educational processes are disjunctive in Tania's case. However, because Tania is living in both systems, she recognizes, based on what she experiences in school and with her schoolmates, that her family's technologies and educational practices are old fashioned and inappropriate, belonging to an "*old and passed over*" world, according to her own words. Thus, Tania tries to cut herself off from her family's social memory, but it is an enormous task to do alone. The family does not help her assimilate all the social changes happening in the larger society. The questions that she asks, the explanations and interpretations that she is looking for, do not exist either in the family or in school conversations, because neither in the home nor in the school do they understand what she is seeking.

In this context, in the face of these two disjunctive educational processes Tania resists family and renounces school. As a result, she was held back in fifth grade.

Debora

Debora was born in 1989 and lives in the neighbourhood at her grandmother's home. Debora's parents asked her grandmother to take care of her because they work all day in Lisbon and reside in its suburbs. Thus at the end of each work day, Debora's parents come to her grandmother's home and have dinner together before going to their house, and Debora stays with her grandmother. In 1994, Debora's brother was born. Although during the daytime he also stays at the grandmother's home, at night he goes home with his parents and returns the next morning.

Debora's grandmother did not attend school but she knows how to read, write and count. As the grandmother says:

"I did learn."

The grandfather's serious illness for fifteen years prevented him from working and, consequently, Debora's mother and uncle needed to start working too early in their lives. This situation had important repercussions in their formal education, and because the family's social position was not strongly consolidated, its hopes for social mobility were dashed.

Memory is strongly centered in the family but it does not omit influences from outside. To improve its economic position the family adopts, as far as possible, a kind of domestic production. Therefore, to plan, to calculate and to make at home, are current practices in this family, and, in spite of having an urban and modern type of life, the family lives with caution, prudence and wisdom. Although social mobility is a strong aim, to definitively avoid stepping backward socially, this family's primary stake is the consolidation of the social status of Debora's parents and uncles.

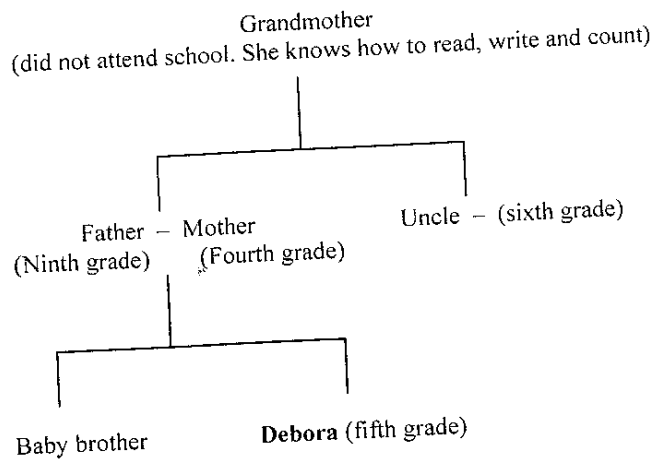


Figure 3. Debora's household and each member's formal education level

The family generally recognizes the benefits of schooling and the economic advantages that it might bring to their reproduction as a group. This recognition is more the result of memory and acquaintance with the experiences of others who have succeeded rather than a direct experience. They recognize school's relevance, but their social prudence and experience with social hierarchies lead them to set as their first goal for Debora's generation success in basic educational without grade repetitions. Nonetheless, this goal is open to negotiations and more sacrifices if Debora becomes a good student with real possibilities of going further in her education. At the same time, the family is developing educational strategies that might turn into professional alternatives if schooling does not work out. For example, they enrolled Debora in a local firemen's association that teaches first aid as an extra-curricular activity, which might evolve to the paramedical profession.

Thus, the social experience and memory of this family group, although not fully articulated with school, works to achieve the benefits of education. Debora cooperates with family as well as with school. As a result of this cooperation, she has finished fifth grade and is now in sixth grade.

Marcelo

Marcelo was born in 1988 and he is from a Capeverdean family background.

Marcelo's grandparents emigrated from Cape Verde before the military coup of April 25, 1974, and settled in the neighbourhood where they have live since. Both of Marcelo's parents have Portuguese nationality and arrived in Portugal after their parents, as did many Capeverdean emigrant families whose older members came first, and after they were settled, called for the others members to come.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLING AND CITIZENSHIP

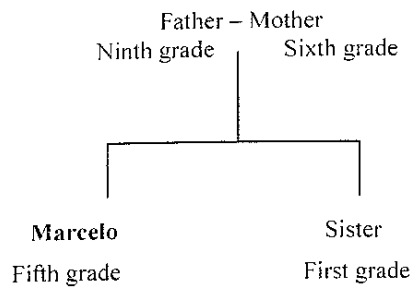


Figure 4. Marcelo's household and each member's formal education level

Cape Verde is a country with a huge diaspora, and there are many examples of successful emigrants who keep contact with their homeland and its people. The study found this model of emigration strongly present in Marcelo's family: initial sacrifices for emigration travel were justified and strengthened by the knowledge of cases of successful persons within the Capeverdean diaspora. In addition, the understanding of the Capeverdean reality left family members with no alternatives to emigrating and instigated their search for places where better work possibilities might be found.

Although contact with literate culture was rare during Marcelo's parents' youth, it has increased substantially because of the recognition that school was a means through which work options might improve. In fact, both of Marcelo's parents went to school as adult-students to accomplish their aspirations for work alternatives. Moreover, the social memory that inspired the search for diaspora labour market alternatives was reinforced and strengthened, especially when the meaning of labour started to be interpreted in a broader frame and as a possibility for a new kind of social intervention. For example, Marcelo's father actively participates in the Local Resident Commission that was set up when people were relocated in the neighbourhood, and he became a delegate in the Workers Commission in his workplace.

The home-based pedagogy is ruled by a social memory where the searching for alternatives to reach the ideal is a structuring element and it is transmitted pragmatically in daily practices to strength family members' understanding of contemporary society. The desire for social mobility is understood and worked out in conformity with norms along with action to obtain social rights.

In Marcelo's family group, there is an orienting implicit understanding about the relevance of school in contemporary societies, which emerges in the structure of family educational processes that take into consideration the school's educational processes. Namely, every day Marcelo's parents ask him about school and about what happened there. Schooling is recognized for its economic and symbolic value and Marcelo's parents search within the Capeverdean community for support for their son's schooling process.

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In this frame, the family transmits to Marcelo the idea of social time where changes are welcomed and schooling is necessary. It gives him plenty of meaning to understand and face all dimensions of social life. In addition, the family offers to Marcelo space to construct his individuality. So he sets up his own priorities, to study, especially certain topics, and above all to play while trying to find his own way of life. Consequently, Marcelo finished fifth grade with good grades and he is now in sixth grade.

"Behind the school's door: the comprehension of social time and its implications to children's school success."

The cultural diversity of the local setting in this study is evident and multifaceted as its inhabitants adopt different behaviours to face common realities. This multicultural character is manifested in different ways: some ignoring it, some working daily with it, others taking advantages from it to educate their children. Regarding schooling the situation is similar: Types of behaviours differentiated in success, accommodations, resistances, conflicts and indifferences contribute to a particular perspective of schooling which also reflects its valorization as a function of particular conditions of life.

Economic motives are the most significant to justify schooling as well as knowing the most basic school content due to practical reasons of ordinary life. On the other hand, the citizenship issues start to emerge when applied to bureaucratic needs and with the necessity to get information on social benefits and legal rights, and so on. Yet in comparison with the necessity of finding a job, citizenship issues usually escape the notice of the families in this locality. In short, schooling is important, but even more important is to warrant the future throughout the present. That is, a positive future can be imagined only when the present is consolidated and lived with the serenity that foresees tomorrow without alarm, because as a local person states:

"The only thing that we have, are days and nights."

The four children discussed above have common experiences with the community and schools where they live. Nevertheless, although these four shared the social and human reality in the local setting, the neighbourhood provided quite different social contexts and possibilities for them to either reject or appropriate. In addition, each one has social networks that make possible new experiences, new human contacts and different behaviours from which each can construct his or her own reality. The identical situation happens in regard to school and teachers who interact with their own social backgrounds. The school's social networks are diverse. Different classes with different teachers produce different relationships with students and influence them toward new areas of interest.

Finally, in regard to material and economic resources, although each family has differences that might be significant in regard to school success, money is not plentiful in these four families. Daily life is lived in economic contention and the unexpected is not welcome, mainly if it implies additional expenses.

Although all these families favoured cooperation with the school, there was an awareness of alternatives to school for securing their children's future. Knowing their own limitations these families give as much time as they can to support their children, to clarify their talents in relation to expectations of schooling, and at the same time searching in their social networks for supplementary support to help the future professional development of their children. Thus, Marcelo's family seeing that he had effective possibilities where schooling could play a central role, searched among their relatives for someone to support Marcelo's school education, in this case, a cousin from the twelfth grade tutored Marcelo in order to help him overcome some difficulties. Debora's family, although believing her learning capacities, looked to the local firemen's, "Fanfarra", to train her for alternative employment in case of failure at school. Tania's family considers school a place where she goes simply to finish her childhood before going to work, a place to wait while her body becomes ready to work, although Tania's mother continued to look for a professional school to enroll her. Marisa's family, going through a complex domestic situation, decided that it was better for Marisa to help at home in the short term while planning for a better future at school in the longer term.

From an early stage, therefore, the families began to think about their children's future and to look for alternatives outside school, among their known social networks, to secure their future and find employment, as it happens in several locals in Europe (Anderson & Roßteutscher, 2007; Jones, 2005).

Moreover in two of these four families, the Marcelo's and the Marisa's families, the interest in social rights and citizenship highlighted the worth of schooling. The families' existing participation in social rights and citizenship activities legitimized schooling and revealed its relevance to contemporary life by providing examples of how to apply school knowledge to their own daily lives, and how to act within literate contexts, simultaneously, relating it with their own local daily life. In fact, to the extent that these practices demanded that local experiences revealed the impact and the influence of Portugal's laws and contemporary social norms and rationales, families became acutely aware, of the relevance of literacy and numeracy for understanding information, making new proposals and decisions and understanding their social rights and citizenship duties.

Finally, in all families, regardless of their attitudes toward school, the loss of a caring family member is significant. In fact, in two of these families there were situations of death and prolonged illness among the grandparents that coerced their parents to quit schooling and take a job. This situation, which was not covered by social programs, was common in Portugal in the 1970s, due to the fact that the welfare state was not broadly established. As Almeida, Alves and Casanova (1992) highlight, before 1974, "in Portugal, in practice, the construction of the Welfare State was never possible to compare with the majority of European countries" (p. 5). Thus families affected by illness or death could solve their problems only by putting the youngsters to work to help supplement the family income. Thus, the episodes in grandparents' generation, still affected the daily school practices of these children due to the fact that their parents were themselves forced out of

school. The lack of social security during the grandparents' generation harmed the education of the family – the repercussions of which are still being felt.

Moreover, as Elliot (2001) notes, "The foundations of citizenship belong to the nourishing sphere of the nation-state and its welfare systems" (p. 47). Thus, families' comprehension of the social dimension of basic education and its role in citizenship education proceeds from their own social experiences. Among the different levels of justification of schooling and its importance to life in the contemporaneous world, it is the economic rationale that is the most prominent. At a daily level school's content knowledge is acknowledge and integrated in family life, but after 5th grade, it is regard as an expense. Finally, at the citizenships level, schooling starts to emerge related with bureaucratic aspects and information about human and social rights as well as with the idea of respect and consolidation of human rights.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study finds that schooling is anticipated in children's lives long before they enter school, and is articulated in different ways according to the families' social experience and the influence of their prior education. Each family studied had a different *ethos*, which was related to their distinct histories, associated ethics and social networks.

In addition, schooling within each family's memory is transferred to children's lives in complex ways that reflect the family's comprehension of the social position that they occupy. Thus the way in which education features in families' lives depends on the characteristics of the encounter between school and home, whose success or failure is strongly related to the collective experiences and attitudes regarding citizenship and organized participation in society.

As Bosniak (2006) argues,

(...) the universal availability of citizenship rights means little in the context of a society of citizens who live pervasively passive and privatized lives, with little engagement in community and the process of self-government. (p. 30)

In this neighbourhood to the extent that family members participate in civil rights movements and local organizations, and practice their citizenship duties, they approve of the idea that education should play a role in promoting citizenship.

One finding is that, family members legitimize schooling both for its capacity to connect different historical-social conjunctures that each family has lived and for its power to disclose labor alternatives that simplifies access to material goods as well as inclusion, and respect. In addition, family's involvement with citizenship practices outside school emerged as an important process to value the role of school in contemporary society as well as to give a new role to school knowledge. In conclusion, there are other social factors that put children in different positions towards schooling. Although all families promote the importance of schooling they are at different positions in their genealogies in terms of their synthesis of the role of schooling to empower their development as a social group. In Portugal,

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schooling needs to be comprehended in a way that includes not only the lower formal education of families, in general, but also the fact that from this formal education there were still few results that highlighted new understanding of others social contexts.

In local settings where material and economic resources are not available, only human resources are able to be mobilized. It is the family with their social relationships, as well as the persons in schools and the community, that have the power to act flexibly to provide children with guides, making it possible for them to achieve personal goals. It is in this frame that schooling support must be understood.

This study suggests that the State must stimulate civic participation, and help to create a strong sense and practice of citizenship if schooling and other educational processes are to transform students' lives (Carle & Hammer, 2005; Magnette, 2005). In addition, schools should systematically promote discussions with the community and participation in community activities. Schools ought to comprehend the multiplicity of reasons for failure, as well as to facilitate the dialogue between school and families to provide families with real possibilities of participation in their children's success (Abreu & Lambert, 2003; Field et al. 2007; Moreira, 2003).

In short, schooling is intertwined with children's daily lives according to their family's social memories and practices of citizenship outside school. Not only are schools necessary as a preparation to citizenship, but also the practices of citizenship are most importance for the school's success. Therefore, the State must be aware of the different realities of the localities to develop a national strategy to develop more adequate forms of intervention to strengthen the relations between schools and communities and encourage local participation to give meaning to citizenship education.

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