

**INTRODUCTORY DIALOGUES ON THE TRAINING AND PERFORMANCE OF
PRIMARY TEACHERS IN THE ALTO SERTÃO PARAIBANO (1970-1980)**

***DIÁLOGOS INTRODUTÓRIOS SOBRE A FORMAÇÃO E ATUAÇÃO DE
PROFESSORAS PRIMÁRIAS NO ALTO SERTÃO PARAIBANO (1970-1980)***

***DIÁLOGOS INTRODUCTORIOS SOBRE LA FORMACIÓN Y DESEMPEÑO DE LAS
DOCENTES DE PRIMARIA EN EL ALTO SERTÃO PARAIBANO (1970-1980)***



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ABSTRACT: This article discusses the history of the teaching profession, through memories of oral expression, of teachers who worked in primary education, in schools in the Alto Sertão Paraibano. It delineates theoretical and historical aspects of the training of lay teachers in Brazil, with special attention to the second half of the 20th century. The methodology of the study is focused on documents. The historical cut is circumscribed between the 70s and 80s of the twentieth century. Such temporal demarcation is justified by the increasing creation and implantation of public schools in the Sertão of Paraíba in the mentioned period. The research corpus consists of lay teachers who worked in schools in this geographic region, between the aforementioned years. The study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how the teaching professionalization of collaborating teachers was constituted and consolidated, based on listening, writing and analysis of their life stories.

KEYWORDS: History of Brazilian Education. Teaching Professionalization. Lay Teachers. Sertão Paraíba.

RESUMO: *O presente artigo discute a história da profissão docente por meio de memórias de expressão oral de professoras que atuaram no ensino primário em escolas do Alto Sertão Paraibano. Delineia aspectos teóricos e históricos da formação de professores leigos no Brasil, com especial atenção para a segunda metade do Século XX. A metodologia do estudo é de caráter documental focada. O recorte histórico está circunscrito entre as décadas de 70 e 80 do século XX. Tal demarcação temporal justifica-se pela crescente criação e implantação de escolas públicas no Sertão paraibano no período citado. O corpus da pesquisa é constituído por professoras leigas que atuaram em escolas desta região geográfica entre os anos supracitados. O estudo busca contribuir para a compreensão de como se constituiu e consolidou-se a profissionalização docente das professoras colaboradoras, a partir da escuta, escrita e análise de suas histórias de vida.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *História da Educação Brasileira. Profissionalização Docente. Professoras Leigas. Sertão Paraibano.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo discute la historia de la profesión docente, a través de memorias de expresión oral, de profesoras/docentes que actuaron en la enseñanza primaria, en escuelas del Alto Sertão Paraibano. Delinea aspectos teóricos e históricos de la formación de profesores legos en Brasil, con especial atención a la segunda mitad del siglo XX. La metodología del estudio se centra en los documentos. El corte histórico se circunscribe entre los años 70 y 80 del siglo XX. Tal demarcación temporal se justifica por la creciente creación e implantación de escuelas públicas en el Sertão de Paraíba en el período mencionado. El corpus de investigación está formado por profesoras legas que trabajaron en escuelas de esta región geográfica, entre los años mencionados. El estudio busca contribuir a la comprensión de cómo se constituyó y consolidó la profesionalización docente de los docentes colaboradores, a partir de la escucha, la escritura y el análisis de sus historias de vida.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Historia de la Educación Brasileña. Profesionalización Docente. Maestras Legas. Sertão Paraibano.*

Introduction

The historical search on Brazilian education, in recent decades, has strengthened significantly, especially with regard to theoretical-methodological approaches, based mainly on a historiography beyond the approach positivist. This investigative aspect centered its focus on the description of political facts, based on the analysis of narratives that especially highlighted the political dimensions of social life, blurring other possibilities of reading and critical analysis of the socio-historical process that is also linked to educational practices.

The pragmatic turn of research in the history of Brazilian education, in the 20th century, began to take as one of its theoretical-methodological bases the foundations of Cultural History, one historiographic movement that emerged on France at the first half of 20th century, which argued that historical time constitutes itself in a sum of facts that can be analyzed using different methods and techniques, giving the researcher the possibility of using different types of sources.

From this perspective, the object of study of this work it is the understanding of how the initial and continued training and practice of lay teachers who worked in the first four grades of primary education in schools in Sertão Paraibano took place, between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century. It is part of the History of Education Research Line of the Postgraduate Program in Education at the Federal University of Sergipe. It is also part of the context of thematic oral history, as it aims to essentially contribute to recording facts inscribed in memory, experience and participation in events.

The guiding question for this research seeks to understand: how did the initial and continued training and performance of lay teachers in primary education in schools in the Sertão Paraibano occur between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century?

For the course of the investigation, as a hypothesis to answer the research question, a priori, we understand that the training of lay teachers in the Sertão Paraibano between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century took place, mainly, through the Logos II Project, and the working conditions to which these teachers were subjected reflected the problems experienced by Brazilian educational policy in this historical period, marked by deficiencies of all kinds and, mainly, submission to the dictates of the Civil-Military Dictatorship.

From this perspective, the general objective of the work is to understand, through memories of oral expression, how the training and practice of lay teachers who worked in the first four grades of primary education in schools in the Sertão Paraibano, between the decades 70s and 80s of the 20th century. The demarcation of this historical-temporal cut is justified because it constitutes a period of effervescence in the creation and implementation of public

schools in the Sertão of Paraíba and, consequently, for the consolidation and greater search for teaching professionalization.

We understand the relevance of this research due to its contributions to the historical understanding of teacher training and practices in education in Paraíba and, consequently, in Brazil.

Lay teacher training: intersections between national public policies and local realities

The lay teacher has always been present in the history of Brazilian public education, since several courses, programs and projects were created to try to eradicate lay teaching in the country, throughout the professional trajectory of this non-graduate teacher, so that he could meet the needs requirements of current educational legislation. Therefore, the history of teacher training in Brazil is one of the educational themes that permeate socio-historical, cultural and political aspects as one of the central axes for understanding key issues that permeate the history of Brazilian education.

Although the term “layman” is sometimes considered pejorative, with the meaning of strangeness or lack of knowledge of a function, activity, profession, this was the term used by the State, educational leaders, published in newspapers, periodicals, and even used within the institution itself. In this sense, the lay term is taken as:

[...] When the question of the 'lay' teacher is examined today, it is clearly suggesting that these are teachers who are unaware or ignorant of the work they do and, more significantly, those teachers who do not have the basic training to teach a certain level or series (BRASIL, 1990, p. 43, our translation).

It is important to highlight that by the name “lay teacher” we understand non-graduated teachers, professionals who did not have the appropriate training according to legislation and State requirements to carry out their activities, having emerged, mainly, to work in areas in which there was need for teachers to work in teaching, without, for this purpose, there being adequate preparation and, therefore, diplomas to practice the profession.

The discussion on the problem of lay teaching in the process of teacher training and professionalization is a topic that has raised several studies, as it corresponds to a significant portion of the constitution of national education. In this sense, throughout the entire 20th century, this discussion was in vogue, in a more pronounced way, since: “The problem of 'lay' teachers, since the 1920s, was the object of concern for 'education professionals' and it will

appear more acutely in the late 1940s and, mainly in the 1960s” (BRASIL, 1990, p. 40, our translation).

With regard to teacher preparation, especially during this period, Decree-Law no. 8,777/46, referring to the Organic Law of Normal Education, established the Sufficiency Exam, which allowed lay teachers to be legally accepted by the system Brazilian educational system, in the form of “authorized teacher”. In this direction, Rodrigues (1985, p. 45) highlights that the exams of sufficiency should be carried out by lay teachers or candidates for teaching through Normal Schools, Institutes of Education and Faculties of Philosophy, for the purpose of proving the knowledge required for the role and authorizing such teachers, on a precarious basis, to teach in primary and secondary schools.

From 1960 onwards, the concern to effectively try to solve the problem of lay teachers in teaching became more concrete throughout the country, with the emergence of educational policies aimed at this issue. During this period, the Primary Teaching Improvement Program (PAMP) was created in 1963 by the federal government, with the proposal to provide subsidies for teaching methodologies courses aimed at qualifying lay teachers, at the pedagogical level, developed directly, during the vacation period and, indirectly, during the school period, which provided greater investment in the training of lay teachers in Brazil.

Studies indicate that the number of lay teachers or non-graduate teachers in Brazil, in 1964, was a contingent of 127,879 teachers, representing more than 44% of the total teaching staff in primary education classes. According to Law 4,024/61: “Of the 44% of lay teachers, 71.60% only had a primary education (complete or incomplete); 13.7%, high school (complete or incomplete); 14.6%, high school course (complete or incomplete)” (TANURI, 2000, p. 77, our translation). Thus, the majority of these teachers worked in primary education at the time with only the same training (primary education itself).

Such discussions reveal that situations involving lay teaching were precarious and required effort from teachers, especially female teachers, who were responsible, in addition to teaching, for other functions, such as management, administration and school policy, with all the organizational, functional, administrative and pedagogical work of the institution, not to mention the double or triple working hours they accumulated at home, at school and in other work activities. Another important aspect refers to low salaries, since the category of teachers, even among those with diplomas, already received unsatisfactory salaries and, when it came to lay teachers, their salary situation was even more precarious, with lower salaries.

Although Law 5,692/71 has sparked a significant discussion around the problem of the large number of lay teachers existing in the country, especially in rural areas, working under precarious working and living conditions, the same Law contributed to endorsing the conception of lay teacher contained in Law 4,024/61. Furthermore, it can be seen that both Laws 4,024/61 and 5,692/71 highlighted an urban vision of schools, when they provided for sufficiency exams for unqualified individuals to practice the profession (RODRIGUES, 1985, p. 39).

From this perspective, despite movements in favor of teacher qualification and the development of projects to train lay teachers, the problem still persisted in the 1980s. In this sense, the numerous projects implemented by the Federal Government in rural areas at the time, although appeared to have an explicit social objective at the level of discourse, most of the time, in practice, they were guided by implicit political objectives (RODRIGUES, 1985).

In Paraíba, at the beginning of the 1970s, with the aim of establishing schools to meet these specificities, the aim was to implement Regional Normal Courses. During this period, Paraíba had eight regional normal courses, in addition to an Institute of Education and seven Normal Schools.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, it is essential to highlight the importance of the Logos II Project, created in 1975 by the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), whose main objective was to train lay teachers who worked in the classroom in four first grades of 1st Grade. This program legally qualified students at the secondary and teaching level, in a modular distance learning system, which was based on the Supplementary Education model, under the responsibility of the Brasília Technical Education Center (CETEB).

To better understand the dimension of the LOGOS II Project, in the context of the training of lay teachers in Brazil, it is worth highlighting what Andrade (1995, p. 19) highlights, showing that, in 1972, in Brazil, around 200 thousand lay teachers They worked in classes in the first four grades of primary school. In Paraíba, specifically, three thousand, three hundred and thirty-four teachers had degrees, and seven thousand, five hundred and twenty-five were lay people.

In this context, the Logos II Project was implemented in several states of the federation, initially in Piauí, Paraíba and Rondônia (then Federal Territory) and, subsequently, in other states, including Paraíba. The LOGOS II Project was under the responsibility of the Federal Government until 1981. From 1979 to 1981, LOGOS II was part of the Subsecretariat for

Supplementary Education of the Ministry of Education. From 1982 onwards, it became the responsibility of the Education Departments of the States where it was implemented.

It is worth noting that the installation of LOGOS II in the North and Northeast states was mainly due to the high rate of illiteracy in these regions, in addition to the precarious teaching conditions. Based on the assumption that the LOGOS II Project was created to qualify the large contingent of lay teachers, it also had the task of improving LOGOS I and complying with the provisions of Law 5,692/71, whose objective sought to expand teaching and reduction in school dropout rates, which was partly due to the lack of teacher qualifications and the lack of conditions in the schools.

It is also important to highlight that if the Logos II Project proposed a personalized and individualized study, as it had a national scope, it ended up making it difficult for teams to prepare material capable of meeting the specificities required. One of the main problems highlighted by the program consisted of the lack of linking the course to the problems experienced by the teacher who worked in rural areas and small urban centers, as it did not contribute to making the Logos II student “more aware of their role as an agent of social transformation” (GONDIM, 1982, p. 171, our translation).

Methodological path

The theoretical support adopted for this work is based on studies on History and Memory, based mainly on studies by Burke (1992), Le Goff (1998), Bosi (1994). It outlines historical aspects of teacher training in Brazil, based on Guiraldelli Júnior (2006), Saviani (2009), Tanuri (2000), among other studies. It addresses the training and performance of teachers in the state of Paraíba, based on the basis of Andrade (1995), Araújo (2010), Gouveia (2019), Pinheiro (2002).

The methodological basis for data collection and analysis is mainly based on the perspective of Narrative Research, especially from the perspective of Clandinin and Connelly (2011, p. 20, our translation), who define narrative research as “[...] a way of understanding the experience”, in a collaborative process between researcher and researched. Commonly, this type of research consists of collecting stories about a certain topic, so that the researcher collects information to understand a certain phenomenon. Thus, stories can be obtained through various methods: interviews, diaries, autobiographies, recording oral narratives, written narratives, and field notes.

The main source for data collection for the study presented here is the oral narrative,

through recorded interviews with the research subjects and transcribed *afterwards* for the appropriate analyses, that is, the production of the source through the textualization of the oral to the written. However, the interview is not the only source, others are also used as ways of broadening the view, intertwining with the subjects' narratives in order to contextualize the speeches, such as official documents and private collections, such as photographs and work materials.

Here we call the research subjects as *collaborating teachers*, reiterating what Meihy and Holanda (2007, p. 20-21, our translation) state when they define that: “The interviewer and the interviewee, in the interview situation, must recognize each other as *collaborators*. Because participation is spontaneous, both parties must maintain a comfortable possibility for establishing the interview.” (authors’ emphasis)

In this direction, thematic oral history (MEIHY; SEAWRIGHT, 2020) is taken as the main methodological resource for listening and writing the stories of the collaborating teachers. This type of approach has been adopted as an important resource in the field of New History, because it allows the reconstruction of past experiences of excluded social groups, giving the possibility of recording, official or not, their actions and lives. Oral history therefore presents itself as the possibility of covering the gaps left by traditional history, presenting the study of subjects and historical facts that were not considered important. The objective is not to write another type of story, different from the one that uses written sources, but to write a broader and more complete story. This is because:

[...] oral sources are not an alternative to written sources; They are another type of source, not only necessary, but essential for making history, giving oral sources an important role in the search for silenced and marginalized stories, in addition to enabling the understanding of situations that have not been sufficiently studied throughout history (ALCÁZAR I GARRIDO, 1992, p. 36, our translation).

The present investigation assumes, through these paths, the perspective of documentary research because it uses, especially, memories of oral expression from teachers, collected from collaborators, through recorded interviews and, later, transcribed and analyzed. We defend, by adopting this methodological bias, that the understanding of teaching practice and performance, based on teachers' memories of oral expression, allows the interweaving of past and present facts. We see in these memories the possibility of (re)writing the history of professional training, enabling the analysis, understanding and interpretation of lived and socially shared realities, based on the practice of teaching.

Also constituted as indispensable documents for this research were the collections of the schools in which the collaborating teachers graduated and worked, such as standard documents for the creation, structuring and operation of the schools in question, minutes, books in enrollment, yearbooks, subject programs, personal diaries, photographs, among others. From these collections, here we mainly present the interviews initially recorded and, *subsequently*, transcribed and analyzed, photographs, illustrations of training materials.

To better outline the conceptual and methodological bases of this work, research was carried out in the Theses and Dissertations Banks of the Postgraduate Programs in Education at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB-PPGE) and Federal University of Sergipe (UFS-PPGED). Dissertations and theses were collected that address the history of the teaching profession inscribed in the trajectories of teacher training and practice between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, and of these, five directly address memories of lay teachers. Such studies dialogue with the theme that is close to the object of investigation that we outlined for the construction of this work, as they use similar key concepts to understand the object of study proposed here.

To systematize the data collected from the aforementioned works, we chose the following criteria: search in databases using a set of descriptors – history of the teaching profession; teacher trajectory; teacher training; history and memory of the teaching profession, tabulation of selected works, presentation of the theme, year of defense, author and nature of the work (Dissertation or Thesis); After selecting the works, we proceeded to organize the productions, discarding those that were not of interest.

Based on the theme studied, works that showed, in their nomenclature, an approximation with the object of study: history of the teaching profession and teachers' trajectories were selected as the search universe. The summaries of the registered and cataloged works were read and, although they all do not specifically address the topic, they present, to a certain extent, aspects that are similar to the present investigation, whether due to the focus on trajectories and memories of teaching training and practice, either by the assumed theoretical framework.

Having carried out this survey of works already produced on the topic in question, we endorsed as a specific *locus* for the development of this research the school institutions training for primary teaching located in the Sertão of Paraíba, in addition to the schools where the collaborating teachers of this study.

We justify the demarcation of the historical-temporal cut, between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, for being a period of effervescence in the creation and implementation of

public schools in the Sertão of Paraíba and, consequently, for the consolidation and search for teaching professionalization, since teacher training in Brazil was proving to be uncomfortable, due to changes in educational legislation and to the high levels of lay teaching

The set of collaborating teachers delimited for data collection was constituted with the main criterion being teaching, in schools located in the Sertão of Paraíba, between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century. A priori, the sample was defined according to the brief presentation below:

- **Professor Judite Lourenço de Araújo (JLA)** - was born in São João do Rio do Peixe (formerly Antenor Navarro), on October 20, 1928. She attended primary school in the same city. She began his teaching career in Cajazeiras, in 1943, when she was studying Admission (transition studies between Primary and High School). She began working in São José da Lagoa Tapada on January 27, 1956, in the urban area of the municipality. In 1962, she started working at Sítio Lagoa Comprida, remaining until her retirement in 1978.

- **Professor Denizia Gomes de Sá (DGS)** - was born in São José da Lagoa Tapada, on March 15, 1948. She attended Primary and High School in the city of Sousa - PB. In 1969 she joined the Paraíba state education system as a primary teacher, a job she held until 1993, when she requested retirement. During her teaching career, she studied and completed secondary education, via supplementary education, through the LOGOS II Project, obtaining the title of primary education teacher. Of the teachers collaborating in this research, she was the only one who completed a higher education course: Degree in Geography, at the Teacher Training Center of the Federal University of Paraíba – Cajazeiras Campus. Throughout her teaching career, she worked at the Genésio Araújo School Group, in the city of São José da Lagoa Tapada-PB.

- **Professor Maria das Dores Araújo (MDA)** - was born in São José da Lagoa Tapada, on October 15, 1949. She studied Primary Education in São José da Lagoa Tapada and High School integrated with the Accounting Technician in the city of Coremas – PB. She also completed the LOGOS II Project, obtaining the title of primary school teacher. She was a teacher in the initial grades of primary school at Grupo Escolar Genésio Araújo, from 1982 to 2007, when she retired.

- **Professor Francisca Alexandrino de Sousa (FAS)** - was born in São José da Lagoa Tapada, on August 26, 1939. She entered teaching at the age of 23, graduating in her fifth year of high school. After 13 years of practice as a lay teacher, she completed secondary education, via supplementary education, through the LOGOS II Project, being qualified to practice teaching. She was a primary school teacher in the state education network at the Várzea dos Martins School Group, in the rural area of São José da Lagoa Tapada.

With the definition of research collaborators, in March 2022 we began the investigative trail, and chose to carry out interviews with lay teachers. The Sertão da Paraíba was defined as a geographical space that served to listen to these teachers. Adopting the Oral History methodology, we carried out interviews with collaborators between September 2022 and January 2023 in the interviewees' homes.

The four teachers presented above were interviewed: Professors Judite Lourenço de Araújo, Denízia Gomes de Sá, Maria das Dores Araújo, and Francisca Alexandrino de Sousa. It is worth mentioning that the specific choice for the collaborators, listed above, was due to the researcher's knowledge that these teachers graduated and taught in the schools mentioned and the acceptance of the initial invitation for them to collaborate in the development of the research presented here.

It is important to highlight that the number of four collaborators was defined based on the conditions for transcription and analysis of the interviews recorded, transcribed and, a *posteriori*, analyzed to understand the object of study of the research on screen: the trajectory of the formation and performance of primary school teachers, in order to understand the aspects of the teaching profession and professionalism, based on the understanding of the professional trajectory of teachers from the Sertão of Paraíba and their actions in primary education, in the period between the 70s and 80s of the 20th century.

Thus, to conduct the interviews with the collaborating teachers, a “cutting question” was used, in order to highlight in the narratives of all the collaborators “[...] the motives, the contexts, the reasons and the circumstances” that marked training and teaching practice in the period and *locus* investigated (MEIHY; SEAWRIGHT, 2020, p. 47, our translation). From this perspective, we guided our interviews by asking the collaborators the following “cutting question”: How did your training and work as teachers happen in the Sertão da Paraíba between the 70s and 80s?

In this sense, three moments were used to conduct the interview and, consequently, data

collection: the “pre-interview”, as a preparatory condition for recording, which will consist of contact and selection of collaborators and selection and testing of materials to be used for data collection. To this end, initially, the intentions, objectives and procedures for conducting the research were presented in a simplified way, allowing collaborators to decide whether or not to participate in the research.

The “post-interview” consists of the materialization procedures, checking of the recorded texts with the collaborators, and the due authorization for use and publication of the data through the copyright “letter of assignment”, as expressed in the submitted project and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Teacher Training Center of the Federal University of Campina Grande, linked to Plataforma Brasil³. Only after the creation of the documentary *corpus* were analyzes of the interviews carried out.

The narratives were crossed with other official documents, such as: standards, notebooks and photographs, seeking to establish connections between what was remembered/experienced and what was kept/documented, in addition to personal files, photographs that house the memory of training and teaching activities during the studied period.

The recorded and transcribed interviews constituted a documentary basis for understanding the professional trajectory of the collaborating teachers, their training processes throughout their profession and the relationships they established with the communities in which they worked; the knowledge built in relation to daily activities, the strategies designed to overcome difficulties and the role they played in the schooling process of the population of these municipalities, in the period covered. The bibliographic and documentary analysis relevant to carrying out the work was also an integral part of the methodology.

After the interviews were transcribed, the oral source was textualized into written form so that we could have this document for analysis. Already duly transcribed, in a third meeting, in March 2023, the texts were presented to the collaborators for approval and signature of the letters of transfer of rights to use the information for the present research.

In general terms, all the teachers who were interviewed see their role in Education in the spaces in which they worked and understand that their statements will serve to contribute and perpetuate the history of the teaching profession of which they are part. In this sense, in the context of this work, we chose Thematic Oral History, since this modality is the one that comes closest to academic expectations that merge Oral History with conventional documentation. In other words, the documentary character arises from the interviews, which constitute the guiding

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thread of this type of approach.

The methodological path outlined allowed us to understand that academic research, for us, especially in the field of History of Education, requires careful It is caution at the treatment of sources. It is known that much has already been expanded in relation to the what it can be used as source for analysis on one historiographical study.

We understand, therefore, that the study of the teaching career favors the understanding of how the training and professional performance of teachers in the first four grades of primary school in schools in the Sertão da Paraíba region. It is possible, above all, to understand that the stories experienced in local education by the collaborators can be intertwined with Brazilian educational history and allow us to reflect on the structuring of the Brazilian educational field, throughout its history.

In this way, it was possible to analyze the teachers' schooling process, and cross-reference the narratives, from a diachronic perspective, with the history of education and the expansion of primary schools in Brazil, but also synchronically, seeking to understand that one time specific in that place. In other words, when they talk about the school, the teacher, the conditions in which they studied, what does this represent for them in their memories? These reports about the past are no longer the past itself, but a reconstruction of memory in which there is a selection of what came to light, a necessary forgetting, because remembering the past for another means making choices thinking about what that other wants or you can listen, share these memories.

Between stories and memories, the meanings of “being a teacher”

The History of Education lives in the memories of teachers who, on a daily basis, are involved with the joys, achievements, difficulties, aspirations of the profession, when facing challenges in their pedagogical practices, for which they are often unprepared. For all these reasons, it is essential that we get closer and listen to what they have to tell us, as Freitas (2000, p. 12, our translation) illustrates:

Thus, as they tell their stories, we discover a new meaning in the streets, in the buildings, on the window grilles, on the facades of the schools [...]. These voices multiply from the voices of the narrators who find in their memories other people who passed through these scenarios, giving them new meanings.

The analytical section presented here confirms for us the privilege of listening and writing the sensitive, which guided the profession chosen by the narrators, which was and is

something of great importance in their lives. They assume, in essence, to be WOMEN AND TEACHERS, that is, the profession strongly characterizes them as a symbol of female empowerment.

The beginning of their career is characterized by the narrator teachers as a moment in which they were offered the “opportunity” and achieved it through their efforts to practice teaching. Choosing teaching meant for them the beginning of a much-desired profession, in addition to achieving financial independence.

According to Assunção (1996, p. 14), when the “vocation speech” presents itself as absolute, others remain silent, as it is conclusive, it brings the idea of something innate, of an internal force that guides people towards a certain profession. However, what can be seen in the reports of the teachers who collaborated in this study is that the “wanting to be a teacher”, if at first presented as a vocation, later on, it expands, as “a want” influenced by external issues, by their own decisions that contradict other “life projects” that were designed for them by their family, mainly. In this case, the decision to work as a teacher is characterized as a vocation, but it goes beyond this conception, as the collaborating teachers tell us.

Major Jacó was the political leader of Antenor and promised Dad to find a business for me [...]. Then he promised to find a business for me. It's so much so that when he did this I wasn't yet old enough, so they got bigger (JUDITE LOURENÇO DE ARAUJO, 2022, our translation).

When I returned to São José with the Gym, there was a selection process at the Teacher Training Center in Sousa. It was a preparation for lay teachers. My father found a place for me, in 1965, with the region's politicians [...]. When we finished, my class of NINETY-SIX STUDENTS, in 1969, invited the governor of Paraíba, João Agripino, to be godfather of the class [...] and in his speech he said that the teacher who had finished the course could look for him, that he would appoint to teach in the State [...]. My appointment was made official on November 20, 1969, by recommendation, to work at the Genésio Araújo Group, here in São José, which was opening [...]. This appointment was very important, because I was starting to earn my own money (DENIZIA GOMES DE SA, 2022, our translation).

I always wanted to be a teacher. I think that when we are born, we are born with that, how can I say [...] with vocation, because studying was very difficult for me, because I lived in a place, very far from here in São José, even so, she intended to be a teacher (MARIA DAS DORES ARAUJO, 2023, our translation).

I REALLY WANTED TO BE A TEACHER BECAUSE I WANTED TO STUDY, I was studying and I didn't even know what I wanted to be for, then I chose, which was to teach to be respected in the city (FRANCISCA ALEXANDRINO DE SOUSA, 2023, our translation).

The life stories analyzed allow us to perceive a diversity of reasons that led the narrators to choose the teaching profession. If in the narratives analyzed, teachers consider teaching as a “vocation”, we realize that this professional choice suffered external influences that motivated the feeling of “wanting” to carry out the teaching profession, such as: good school experience in childhood, family influence, indication by influential politicians at the time, in addition to the social representation of the teaching profession, that is, social status.

The reasons that lead to the performance of the teaching profession vary, as explained by Gonçalves (1992, p. 162, our translation):

Studies have shown that there are multiple reasons why teaching is chosen as a profession, with factors of a material and strictly professional nature competing in this decision. Both aspects are always present when choosing a career, with the predominance of one over the other being the result of individual and circumstantial conditions.

It is clear from the narratives of the collaborating teachers that, at the same time as they demonstrated their desire to pursue the teaching profession from an early age, they also reveal the reasons that influenced them to “dream about being a teacher”. Gonçalves (1992), when approaching the subject from a study carried out with 32 primary teachers through interviews, makes the following observation:

The teachers whose “vocation” led them to choose a career in primary education stated that in their decision to choose they weighed “having always dreamed of being a teacher”, “liking the profession” and “liking working with children”. As can easily be seen, subjective reasons determine professional choice, corresponding to a certain personal and social imagination, which may have led to this profession, more than intrinsic motivation. The remainder pursued a teaching career in primary education, fundamentally, due to “the lack of other professional alternatives”, or for “economic reasons” (GONÇALVES, 1992, p. 163, our translation).

Thus, we can observe an approximation of the author's study with the interviews analyzed with regard to the reasons that influenced these four teachers to want the teaching profession, as the speeches range from “vocation” to “fostered dream”, expressing themselves sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, through their narratives.

The collaborators of the present study also confirm that the teaching profession, especially for women, opened the prospect of a paid activity that enabled financial independence. Thus, in some cases, the teaching career became, for those who lived in rural areas, the possibility of following another path other than agricultural work. For those who lived

in urban areas, entering the job market was also not an easy task. This is what the analyzed narratives reveal:

When I taught at MOBRRAL, the money wasn't enough for anything, I could only buy sardines, buy them and take them home (laughs). Teachers were not valued. Then Zé Almir said he would give me something better later and took me away from teaching (!). They only value people from outside, and have never even given anything a job (JUDITE LOURENÇO DE ARAUJO, 2022, our translation).

My appointment was made official on November 20, 1969, by recommendation, to work at the Genésio Araújo Group, here in São José, which was opening. This appointment was very important, because I was starting to earn my own money, because my father and mother did not study and he, especially MY FATHER, provided conditions for me to study, even studying at my cousins' house (+) (DENIZIA GOMES DE SÁ, 2022, our translation).

Before being hired by the Government, I spent a year as a volunteer, called by Maria Marques and she rewarded me for helping with the work, made a quota and rewarded me for helping with the students. Then Seu José Almir spoke to the Deputy (+) THAT SHORT, Soares Madruga (MARIA DAS DORES ARAUJO, 2023, our translation).

I really liked the money, being a teacher, but I liked the money more (laughs), it was enough to live on, it was used to survive. I liked being a teacher too, but I liked the money more because I'm still surviving today. And at that time it was difficult for women to get a job, I arrived before Judite (FRANCISCA ALEXANDRINO DE SOUSA, 2023, our translation).

Therefore, entering a profession without the need for prior preparation, that is, without specific training, and which still offered a certain social prestige, became a good professional option. As Alencar (1993, p. 187, our translation) considers, when referring specifically to lay teachers:

Objectively, a young woman or housewife applies for a teaching position to fundamentally satisfy a double need: one of an economic, conscious, individual nature; another of a social, collective nature, culturally felt although not explained. Professionally unqualified, she passively accepts the conditions proposed and imposed on her.

With regard to the feminization of teaching, Almeida (1998), when discussing this issue, observes that between the end of the 19th century and the 20th century there was a significant entry of women into teaching, initially justified by the quantitative increase in the educational field. The ideological discourse that followed this feminization of teaching consisted of the fact that teaching was linked to the ideas of domesticity and motherhood. Thus, caring for children and educating was a feminine mission, which is why teaching proved to be a feminine place

par excellence. The author further states that:

The attributes of marriage, domesticity and motherhood continued to be an endorsement for the exercise of teaching by women through the male perspective (and also some female ones), coming from social, political and official sectors that dictated the regulations in force at the time. The conception of motherhood and the emphasis on it being in women's nature to care for children indirectly allowed women to move from the domestic to the public space (ALMEIDA, 1998, p. 118, our translation).

According to the design of the Law, mother and teacher should instruct in the formation of moral values: the role of mother allowed her to develop civic motherhood, a public function exercised in homes. The school space should be a space for paid work outside the home. Thinking from this perspective, Almeida (1998, p. 62, our translation) highlights that:

It is understood that the exercise of teaching represented an extension of maternal functions and instructing and educating children was considered acceptable for women: at the time the most attractive job for literate middle-class women (...) being a teacher in the opinion of large part of society (...) it was the ideal profession (...).

From then on, the profession of teaching becomes a duty, a priesthood, and the woman educator becomes a sculptor of character, since, in theory, patience, affection and feeling are characteristic of the female soul. According to Louro (2007), when analyzing these representations, one is not just analyzing indications of a feminine position, but one is directly observing a social process through which a given position is produced. The teaching profession, therefore, being feminized, served to indoctrinate the character of children in the early years, as the narrators attest:

Nobody knew how to read or write or pray. 16-year-old boy who did not know how to make the sign of the cross (+). There was also parental carelessness (JUDITE LOURENÇO DE ARAUJO, 2022, our translation).

The student was good, he was interested, he wasn't that easy. It was strict teaching, you had to do your homework, or you would be punished. And the relationship between students was great, parents participated, there weren't these meetings like today, but whenever they met us on the street they asked about their child and their behavior. If the son fought, he told us to punish him. If a father didn't take care of his quarrelsome son, the following year the school would no longer accept him. And then there was no school (DENIZIA GOMES DE SÁ, 2022, our translation).

At that time the rooms were huge and the students were respectful. Their family also had respect for the teacher [...]. And there we focused a lot on that student if he had difficulty in this part [...]. This encouragement to discover the child's interest comes from the teacher. Not every teacher was concerned with

observing student interest. It was a lot up to each teacher, not every teacher had this attention to the student [...] I (+) I don't know, I think I played my part (MARIA DAS DORES ARAUJO, 2023, our translation).

They wanted to study, I followed the students' lives inside and outside the classroom, there was order, my daughter (+) I did everything for the Várzea dos Martins Group, I cooked, cleaned, that's why I knew everything. And I knew when they advanced, I knew when they scratched the wall and put it out. The student was trained to have a career, he decided [...]. It is, up front, what career I wanted to pursue (FRANCISCA ALEXANDRINO DE SOUSA, 2023, our translation).

Thus, being a teacher has become, as the narrators said, over the decades, the possibility of professional practice linked to the mission of women as educators. In this way, women became professionals without straying from their maternal vocation.

It is also essential to highlight that entry into primary teaching, as narrated by the teachers collaborating in this study, is remembered with great enthusiasm and pride. Their professional beginnings were marked by the fact that they did not have pedagogical training, but also by issues related to “being a woman”. In general, these teachers sought to achieve their “maternal mission” in their teaching career, combined with the possibility of becoming professional. From this perspective, we corroborate what Almeida (1998, p. 94, our translation) states:

The teachers' testimonies allowed us to recover fragments of their history and the history of their profession that do not exhaust the much that still has to be told about them and by them. This memory showed women committed to carrying out work in which liking children, love for the profession, vocation, qualities proclaimed by social discourse and public authorities, were not separated from the competence necessary for their performance. Recovering her memories meant uncovering female lives from the past and from an entire professional category.

The teachers' narratives taken as raw material for conducting our research demonstrate that they created, in their daily practices, new ways of recording and understanding their students, giving new meaning to performance. Clothed with affection and the “power of authority” that they conceived to have, beyond the reductionism of exacerbated official demands, they saw in their students those who sought knowledge through their teaching practices, an existence of their own, with which they lived, and learned, also, in the most different daily contexts they experienced. They not only acted as repeaters of the teaching methods and techniques in force at the time they taught, but they created and recreated ways of being in the school space, despite the many limitations and difficulties faced.

This dimension of teaching inscribed in the memories of the collaborating teachers

allows us to see that the experiences shared by them move human relationships as raw material for social, political, economic and cultural transformations, based on educational contexts and practices. These shared experiences allow us to understand that the relationships established by teachers, through teaching, with students and the community in general, move the daily praxis between subjects towards the transformations essential to ensuring citizenship.

Conclusion

The understanding of teaching practice based on teachers' memories of oral expression, such as the one we present here, allows the interweaving of past and present facts. We see in these memories, therefore, the possibility of (re)writing the history of professional training, enabling the analysis, understanding and interpretation of lived and socially shared realities, especially through teaching.

These memories do not derive from isolated stories, since they are singular reports, in which the subject is conceived as a historical-discursive figure produced by the archives that derive from/through language. These are stories built in everyday practice, in collaboration, in shared experiences, in participation in various activities, in decision-making and in the development of social and political responsibilities. These are social relationships that are established, based on the concrete working conditions of the time, situating their voices in terms of the meaning and significance given to their own work and the historical, political and economic context in which they were inserted.

Through narratives it is possible to construct unique reports, which intersect with collective memories. The stories constructed in everyday practice, in the collaboration of these subjects, in shared experiences, in participation in different activities, in decision-making and in the development of social and political responsibilities, can produce historical events, which will be consolidated and expanded by these particular narrators, who weave the story, designing social representations.

We realize, therefore, that it is possible by listening to and analyzing the voices of these unique subjects, in this case the teachers collaborating in this research, to understand the guiding principle for the teaching profession, based on the understanding of problems and perspectives inscribed in the training and practice of these teachers.

By embroidering the life stories of “these teachers” we see that, through the threads of memory, it is possible to weave together the encounter between the past and the present.

Rescuing their voices, most of the time silenced by the “official” history of Brazilian education, is to endorse that listening to and writing these common stories, which are not part of historical treatises, is necessary to understand their important contributions to knowledge of significant moments in the training and performance trajectories of lay teachers from the Sertão of Paraíba, which cannot be ignored in the actions that focus on the problems and perspectives of a Brazilian education project that is based, above all, on studies of a historical nature.

It is therefore necessary to rescue these unique narratives, to endorse the contribution that Brazilian teachers, from the most different regions of the country, have made to the design of a model of national education indispensable to civic education, so desired by all of us.

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