

Professional choice of male teachers for primary school

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Abstract

This paper is a comparative study about the male teacher who works in the primary public education in Rio de Janeiro – Brazil and Aveiro – Portugal. We intended, fundamentally, to investigate the reasons of teachers 'professional choice who are engaged in area typically associated to women, for this we analyze the teachers' professional choice from questionnaires and interviews that we made with them. We note that the representations of the attributes considered feminine exert great influence on male 'teachers' career choice, which have repercussions on the high percentage of primary female teachers and in low percentage of male primary teachers. However, we demonstrate that man can choose this activity for pleasure and success and those individuals are capable of doing their job regardless of gender prejudice in education.

Keywords: *Male teachers, Gender, Professional choice*

Introduction

Researching the teaching option of men who enter public teaching is important because it is this educational experience/coexistence space where the majority of the population is socialized.

Firstly, it should be noted that the concept of socialization depends on the society in which it is carried out, so the theories that explain socialization also depend on the context in which they are inserted, that is, they all help to understand how the

individual is socialized currently, but we must always associate it with the prevailing socio-historical conditions. There are several authors who elucidate this process, here we are opting for some more general concepts (for example, Musgrave, 1984; Dubar, 1997b; Berger and Luckman, 1985; Pinto, 1995), which demarcate the school as a key place of socialization in society.

In this sense, the male teachers that we researched somehow chose to work at school, especially in public schools, therefore, they end up contributing to the socialization of future generations, especially the popular classes that obligatorily attend public schools.

In this way, this work proves to be relevant by promoting discussions centered on gender representations that surround the professional field of teaching. Furthermore, showing that there are other themes and other voices that echo in schools, that is, individuals capable of exercising this profession for like and regardless of their sex, but who also suffer from teaching problems.

We show in this article that the motivations for teachers' professional choice are influenced by factors extrinsic and intrinsic to the profession (as defined by Jesus, 2002).

The extrinsic was related to the context of this activity, such as: employability; profitability; need for employment and lack of opportunities; lack of option; the best possible choice; among others).

The factors intrinsic to the profession was: the like for the profession and for the transmission of knowledge; the like for children; the almost utopian search for the transformation of society; the choice motivated by the example of family, a

friend or a teacher; the professional choice caused by a desire for freedom and authority.

In this way, we will analyze and demonstrate the results we found based on their close interconnection in narratives and responses, but also on the preponderance of one over the others (especially those influenced by intrinsic factors).

Objectives

All the writing that follows presents the results of an investigation centered on the figure of the male teacher who works in primary school in public education. What we intend with this investigation was to fundamentally understand the reasons and consequences of the professional choice of these teachers who embark on an area typically associated with the feminine.

Theoretical Framework

In this paper we analyzed and dialogued with important authors who also researched the male teacher, such as Abreu (2002), Carvalho (1998), Catani et al (2000), Galbraith (1992), Pincinato and Bueno (2008), Sarmiento (2002), among others who analyze teaching issues in a general and gender-specific way, such as Almeida (1998), Araújo (2000), Bruschini & Amado (1988), Freire (1997), Goodson (1995), Louro (1989), Nóvoa (1989), Stoer (1982) and Williams (1995).

Methodology

We carried out semi-structured narrative interviews with six teachers chosen at random from a sample of 209 public school teachers who had previously answered a questionnaire (objective and subjective). Sixty from the District of Aveiro - Portugal (AV-PT) and one hundred and forty-nine from the State of

Rio de Janeiro – Brazil (RJ-BR)ⁱ. Such data allowed the analysis of the information obtained and provided broader data (through the categorization, appreciation and quantification of statistics and written speeches from the surveys), as well as making it possible to situate the information in experiences (in the interviewees' narratives).

The methodology we use to encompass our objectives was developed from a set of processes. Thus, we do not separate quantitative and qualitative research approaches, on the contrary, according to the proposal by Sampieri, Collado and Lucio (2006), we prefer a multimodal and mixed research model that converges such approaches, taking advantage of their advantages.

That is, we chose to use the qualitative method to obtain a greater depth of data, because we consider that between the individual and his surroundings. In addition, there is a dynamic relationship with an inseparable link between the subjective and the objective that cannot be translated only by numbers. However, at the same time, we used quantitative research in order to obtain more general data on the subjectⁱⁱ. Finally, we converged the data to better analyze the situation in general and also in more depth.

We take the opportunity to explain that this spatial cut was taken and chosen as the central point of discussions and comparisons in order to capture differences and similarities between these two placesⁱⁱⁱ, never forgetting the influence of Portuguese colonization on Brazilian culture and school, but also highlighting the local characteristics as a way of perceiving that different paths can be traced and that these depend on the various conditions to which they are subjected.

Results: reasons for men's professional choice for teaching for primary school

One of the questions of this work was to apprehend the motivation of teachers' professional choice, because as highlighted by Galbraith (1992), a better understanding of the choices of those who choose careers that are atypical for their gender which can serve as a basis for interventions and increase the reach of career options considered by young people, thus reducing segregation.

Our interviewees show in their narratives several aspects that were important in their professional choice, some extremely personal, others very contextual (historical, social and cultural). The association of various motivations was also found in the sample studied when we asked “what were the reasons for choosing a profession”^{iv}.

It is important, then to highlight that few teachers marked only one reason for the choice, only 17% of Portuguese and 12% of Brazilians marked only one reason. Most AV-PT (50%) marked 2 options and most of RJ- BR (34%) marked 3 options, but there were respondents who marked up to 8 options. These data indicate that hardly a single factor leads to a professional choice, usually there are several aspects that interfere in this option^v.

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' answers in relation to their professional choice.

Table 1: Reasons for professional choice (%)	AV-PT	RJ-BR
For enjoying being a teacher	78,3	80,5
For liking children	58,3	57,0
By trying to make changes in society	20,0	51,7
It was the best option among the existing ones.	21,7	23,5
Due to the ease of professional insertion	8,3	17,4

for lack of option	1,7	5,4
It was the course for which I got an entrance average	3,3	2,0
Ease of career advancement	0,0	2,7
For having had a great teacher who inspired you	13,3	20,1
Is there one (or more) teacher in the family who motivated you	11,7	13,4
He was influenced by his family to pursue this career	6,7	10,7
A friend suggested you	1,7	4,0
He was forced by his family to follow this career	1,7	0,7
For enjoying exercising authority	0,0	1,3
Other	3,3	5,4

The analyzes carried out indicate that the teaching profession is not chosen only by personal factors specific to the individual, as their choice is permeated by various social influences, which interfere with the subject since birth^{vi}.

Fernandes (2004) also emphasizes that the professional choice is not an exclusively individual decision, but linked to several factors so teachers can emphasize the like for the profession as the main motivator for the option for teaching. But they do not fail to highlight other aspects such as family influence, economic issues, a fondness for children and a desire to transform.

According to Jesus (2002), among the factors of professional choice (as well as motivation) there are extrinsic factors (which are those related to the context of this activity, active or negative motivations, such as lack of option, and the best possible choice among others). Moreover, intrinsic factors (which are those that concern the content of the tasks that the teacher performs in his professional activity, are the active and positive motivations for professional choice). In his analysis, it is “[...] above all factors intrinsic to the teaching activity that most

influence the choice of this profession, namely the enjoyment of teaching and contributing to the development of students.” (Jesus, 2002, p. 61-62)

From the data presented in the table, we can infer some important observations for understanding the motivations for professional choice, initially that intrinsic factors were also the most cited. The like for the profession appears more frequently in the answers, that is, most of these teachers chose the profession because they like it (78.3% of Portuguese and 80.5% of Brazilians). The second highest value (58.3% of Portuguese and 57% of Brazilians) leads us to a “discovery”: men also like children (and why not?). This means that not only women are motivated by “liking children” in their career choice, but also men.

Still motivated by intrinsic factors, the third most significant value in the choice of teaching praises the “almost” utopian search for the transformation of society (20% of Portuguese and 51.7% of Brazilians). However, when verifying the respondents who invoke the people who interfere and influence the options of each one, that is who marked some of the options example of teacher, family influence, or suggestion of a friend. We found values very close: 29.9% of Portuguese and 37.6% of Brazilians (higher in AV-PT and lower in RJ-BR). In addition, although in a minority (or little assumed?) way, some other intrinsic motivations to the profession such as the desire for authority also appear as a motivation, as well as the freedom to manage their work and for having had a previous experience as a teacher that motivated.

The extrinsic motivations associated with issues of employability, profitability, need for employment and lack of opportunities^{vii}. When we count at least one of these options, they also appear as important (28.3% of Portuguese and 35.5% of Brazilians would be).

We want to highlight that in general the data indicate little difference in the professional choice between RJ-BR and AV-PT. The biggest differences were found in the options “For trying to make changes in society” (31.7% higher in RJ-BR), “For having had a great teacher who inspired you”, (almost 7% higher in RJ-BR). BR), “For the ease of professional insertion” (also about 9% higher in RJ-BR).

Choice of teaching motivated by intrinsic factors to the profession

As mentioned, intrinsic factors are highlighted in several investigations (Cruz; Dias; Sanches; Ruivo; Pereira; Tavares, 1988; Benavente, 1990; Esteve, 1992; Gonçalves, 2000; Jesus, 2002), as being the most mentioned in the choice of teachers by the profession. Esteve (1992) shows that there is a criticism that these motivations for choosing teaching (mainly liking to take care of children, the vocation and the desire to change society). Or, hide under an idealized image, and the moralizing function that is required. and wait for the teacher. However, the author points out the importance of an initial selection of future teachers based not only on their intellectual abilities, but also on criteria of motivation and personality, in order to avoid “teaching malaise”.

But, as Gonçalves (2000) points out there is an exchange relationship between the intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation. This can lead an individual not to seek an intrinsically motivating activity or profession, provided that it is subject to strong extrinsic reasons that do not favor this choice. (such as of an economic, social, cultural nature).

That is, for teachers to indicate that their professional choice was made for intrinsic reasons. Probably either they were not aware of the extrinsic factors associated with it, or these were not considered unfavorable (often compared to other options they visualized), or such intrinsic motivation was so strong to

override the negative factors of it. We will see then, how these justifications of intrinsic motivations stand out in the speeches of the interviewees and inquired.

Choose by like for the profession

As we have already mentioned, the vast majority of teachers interviewed and surveyed in our research indicated that they chose teaching because they liked the profession (78.3% in AV-PT and 80.5% in RJ-BR). In the justifications present in the oral and written narratives^{viii}, this appreciation is related to several aspects.

As we highlighted earlier and as explained by Gonçalves (2000), that this is due to a certain socio-cultural tradition. That is a common sense that are translated into the popular expression of the “being born for”, to which, in the case of the teaching profession, is added the idea of providing a 'personal' and 'humanitarian' service, which presupposes delivery and sacrifice.

However, sometimes only the like for the profession is described as a choice. In these cases, several justifications are highlighted for such an option. The importance of the teaching profession is an aspect highlighted in some answers, which demonstrates that the idyllic vision of society and the school institution. Nóvoa (1988) describes as disseminated mainly from the beginning of the 20th century, are still part of the teachers' discourse. and still lead many people to choose this profession.

In the surveys, the “like for the profession” is often associated^{ix} with a “like for studying, teaching, education, transmitting and sharing knowledge”. In addition, the like for teaching and for the profession appears in the responses as being inherent to the profession. The narratives of most of our interviewees, we also

noticed that a great appreciation for school, for studying and for teaching is also a great motivator of professional choice and like for the profession.

Catani, Bueno and Sousa (2000) consider that the like for school/education (as well as the relationships established with the teachers and the help of the father, mother, siblings and other people in school tasks) are crucial for the development of relationships positive or negative that later the students come to establish with knowledge and with other values related to the teaching activity. The pleasure/displeasure of reading and writing, the curiosities, among others.

As analyzed by Alves (1997) generally, people who choose the teaching profession because they like the profession and consider that they have a vocation for it are those who have a stronger academic-secondary performance than those who embark on other careers, that is why it is necessary to analyze “[...] the reason for personal aspirations to enter the teaching profession, traditionally linked by innate or gift theories, to the problem of inner motivation – vocation for teaching.” (Alves, 1997, p. 89). In this sense, the role of initial education institutions is important in the process of realizing the student's aspiration, in providing pleasant experiences and favoring professional preparation.

This like for the profession above all other possible motivations is predominant among our respondents. In this way, liking is highlighted not only as a motivator of professional choice, but as necessary for the professional teaching practice (as said Gonçalves, 2000). A “choice” that comes to be considered as innate or from childhood^x. Such innateness is often present in the concept of “vocation”.

Cruz (1988) asserts that the vocation or initial choice for teaching is pointed out by most teachers in Portugal. Regardless of religion, social status, segment of activity, which makes us question whether we are in the presence of a multiplicity of specific and distinct effects. for such motivation.

In the first place, everything indicates that this “vocation” is not necessarily innate, because as Gonçalves (2000) explains, the effective number of vocations is much smaller than what a deeper analysis of the problem reveals, since it can be concluded that some of the vocations pointed out by the teachers are nothing more than the result of environmental factors, extrinsic to the person, and that lead them, over time, to reconsider their position.

The author reaches this conclusion because, in his longitudinal study, some interviewees who considered themselves without a vocation started to consider themselves with a vocation. Therefore, they were probably self-motivated in their professional practice, which proves that vocation and professional motivation are “fundamentally constructed processes that change throughout the career” (Gonçalves, 2000, pp. 304-305)

It is also worth noting that the professional choice motivated by vocation and love has already been harshly criticized. Schaffrath (2000) summarizes such criticisms as an attempt to unveil the concept of vocation, admitting that it was used as a mechanism to legitimize prejudice against the female sex, as the author said: “Working as a teacher and being subject to low pay was part of the vocational profile of women” (Schaffrath, 2000, p. 2).

But not only that, as Mónica (1978) states, this concept was also used by the Estado Novo to legitimize the low qualification of teachers, and the author affirm that “Primary teachers should only be required to have “a natural

vocation for teaching”. Equipping him with a general education was not only superfluous but harmful” (Mónica, 1978, p. 211).

Bruschini and Amado (1988) intertwine the two explanations by showing that the mystique of maternalism goes beyond the professional role and makes it difficult to solve the problems of the profession, as “love” can hide a lack of technical competence and the struggle for better working conditions (Louro, 1989). However, the authors point out that some studies consider that affective involvement may be one of the main factors for positive results within the precariousness of their working conditions^{xi}. Thus, they conclude that it is necessary to realize that the teaching profession is not a vocation or a “call” for women. Contrariwise this is a profession that requires solid pedagogical education, effort, dedication, competence and class spirit, which also needs good working conditions, compatible work and remuneration.

Only then is it possible to face the relationship with the students with affection, but without the disguise of love and demanding fairer salaries, through their participation in their class organ.

Manuel Sarmiento (2000) also analyzes the concept in this sense. For him one of the representations built on primary teachers that dominantly integrate the political discourse on teachers and schools, is the “missionary metaphor” (which appears more in Portugal during the Estado Novo and in the period of democratic normalization, but not only in these periods^{xii}). This representation centers educational action on the moral qualities of the teacher's performance, on individual values and on the moral order.

The profession is considered a service to which one adheres by “vocation”, whose gains are of a spiritual nature, so the “[...] Such a metaphor is usually

accompanied by modes of professional disqualification and proletarianization, as in the reduction of wages and the attribution of a status identical to that of less qualified wage earners” (Sarmiento, 2000, p. 214-220).

However, such a devaluation does not mean that there is no discursively symbolic overvaluation of educational work, simply if the teacher is a missionary or apostle, his reward is not “earthly” (which could even mean perdition). It is in the Kingdom of Heaven, that is the social (symbolic) valuation of the profession which is associated with the moral protection that reduces autonomy and the implicit threat.

Thus, Alves (1997) points out that it is excessive to speak of “teaching vocation”, as is often heard (with the metaphorical-religious tone associated with this concept), because when one enters the teaching profession. One does not enter a religion and can if you continue to lead an absolutely normal life. But, on the other hand, it is necessary to have sufficient faith, a belief in what you are going to do.

Jesus (2002) highlights that it is important to understand that the stereotype of considering that the spirit of mission is the basis for choosing the teaching profession and not the salary (not least because the pedagogical vocation was for a long time associated with to a priestly vocation), can be one of the factors (among others) of the low remuneration of the profession, since the professions for which it is considered necessary to have a “spirit of mission” are normally poorly paid. However, he also questions whether “[...] it will be impossible to reconcile the performance of the teaching profession, in a motivated way and with a spirit of mission, with the recognition of this effort, namely through a fairer remuneration” (Jesus, 2002, p. 33-34).

Martins (1991) makes another criticism of the concept of vocation, the author explains that the need to resolve dysfunctional situations in education and in the job market “[...] sense of imposing on the individual certain paths according to the needs of society or, more particularly, of employers [...]” (idem, p. 86-87).

In a process where students acquire a knowledge of what their real situation is in the face of the possible system of choices (and of employment). That is it aims for the young person to get to know himself, to get to know the system of existing possibilities (where discrediting courses are praised as being easy to get a job and its functionality), the external constraints and for him to learn to make decisions.

In this process, another common situation is the definition of “individual vocations” and making them correspond to a certain social position. In other words, these courses that are associated with the need for vocation are the courses of lower social status, for which the “vocation” appears as a discourse to direct young people to courses appropriate to their social position, aiming at having professionals for such professions, , similar to what is explained by Becker e Hacken (2009).

However, we also agree with Almeida (1998) who argues that the criticism around vocation and love needs to be rethought. That so as not to impose on the teaching profession the game of oppression and sexual discrimination. And to take into account no longer the universal, asexual, passive and unique subject, but “[...] to rediscover the detail, the dissonant note, the plurality of social structures and actors that transit in it” (Almeida, 1998, p. 83-84).

When criticizing and disqualifying the choice of vocation, the teacher is assigned roles of passivity receptive to extrinsic motivations and the possible

truth that may be hidden in the affective discourse is ignored. The teacher is ignored as a historical subject that regulates his/her destiny, which makes choices determined by the concreteness of its existence and by its personal desires.

Finally, it is necessary to have love and aptitude for teaching, but it is essential that teachers are aware of the social constructions about the representations of vocation and love for teaching:

- that they are not innate and can be constructed;
- their association with the financial and academic devaluation of the profession;
- the integration of this with the feminization/removal of men from this profession (based on their lack of aptitude);
- in maintaining social positions.

Men like children too! Why not?

The like for children is the reason for men's professional choice for teaching, which appears in second place in the surveys^{xiii}. This data allows us to verify that this is not one of the last motivations of men to choose teaching. On, the contrary unlike what some representations that circulate in society disclose men also like children, and want to deal with them in their professional practice.

Generally associated with a liking for the profession or with the possibility of transformation, the narratives of our interviewees and our respondents^{xiv} show that many of them consider “liking children” as strictly necessary for the exercise of teaching. Even, most of the time, relating this “like” with other aspects, it is still essential and one of the main factors that motivate this professional option. As Paulo Freire said (1997, p. 18) “[...] it is not possible to

be a teacher without loving the students – even if loving, alone, is not enough – and without liking what you do.”

There are many criticisms around the teaching discourses when they refer to the affective dimension of the teacher's work (especially the teacher's). Almeida (1998, 206-207) asks “What quality is required for school education, without taking into account that it is developed by human beings, in an interactive process from which feelings, affections, the choices dictated by desire?”.

Thus, the affective discourse^{xv} is accused of devaluing the teaching profession, but as we have shown it was already devalued before these representations circulated.

However, we emphasize that it is not enough to like children to be able to teach. We point out that perhaps this naive look makes the profession so undervalued, not only in the eyes of government officials, but in the eyes of fathers and mothers who leave their children at school. At the same time liking children and the profession is an important aspect of the teaching profession. Although, we conclude that much more is needed for a professional to be “good” or competent at what he does.

Almeida (1998) also notes that when investigating the teaching universe, the questions made about the choices usually stand out “[...] with the aim of discovering, in the teachers' answers, the meaning and the meaning of concepts such as vocation and mission, which are also translated, roughly speaking, by liking children or finding it important to be a teacher” (Almeida, 1998, p. 83).

Disqualifying reasoning starts to be used “[...] ignoring the possible truth that may be hidden in the teacher's affective discourse” (Almeida, 1998, p. 83).

Finally, it is necessary to think if, when valuing affection, the like for children, the will to teach, solidarity as essential attributes for the teaching exercise “[...] it is necessary to think that the discourse is real and not fictitious, that this comes from her intimacy as a human being and a female being, and even from the very projection of maternal love” (Almeida, 1998, p. 83).

Although this affective discourse is socially linked to the feminine, especially when it comes to liking children, believing that only women make choices motivated by affection and liking children is a mistake. As Almeida “[...] men are also teachers and take care of the family, but they are rarely described in these tasks, as if this fact should remain hidden” (Almeida, 1998, p. 82).

We noticed that men extol in their explanations how easy they are to deal with the “little ones”: patience, love, the possibility of helping them to grow and also to learn from them.

Carvalho (1998) describes that some of his interviewees (male primary teachers) claimed ideological or religious reasons for their choice of teaching with children and that they were emotionally involved with the children, they wanted to be a kind of “big daddy”. of children”. They also considered that the teacher must have “their maternal side very well developed”, in order to get along well with the minors, “because affection is very important” (Carvalho, 1998, p. 9).

But this affection, motherhood, like and involvement with children (characteristics that would refer to the hegemonic model of femininity) were justified as part of her ideological options and thus integrated into her own masculinity. They appropriated and defended the idea of vocation (so associated with the feminization of teaching), but at the same time they resignified it.

Although they continued to consider the relationship with children as part of femininity, aspects of this femininity seem accessible to men, according Carvalho (1998), thus breaking “[...] in an innovative way, the superposition that predominates in common sense between femininity and women, masculinity and men and feminine characteristics are attributed to men without their masculinity being called into question” (Carvalho, 1998, p. 9).

As Galbraith (1992) also found in his research, that men in non-traditional occupations (nurses and primary school teachers) placed more importance on relationships in their careers. This shows that men can expand their sex role options by adding of dimensions in their life that are not seen as traditional male roles rather than abandoning their masculinity. The author shows that if women can retain their feminine perspective and benefit from a masculine career, men can also retain their masculine perspective and add dimensions of traditionally feminine components to their occupational experience (such as communication and relationship factors).

The narratives and the large number of responses in the questionnaire surveys that we collected make it possible to analyze that gender issues have changed (at least a little) in our society, as men demonstrate their sensitivity, patience without fear of being stigmatized.

Changing society and children – an educational utopia?

The third most significant value in the choice for teaching praises a search for the transformation of society, justified by the possibility of changing the world from “its future” (children), in the very transformation of these children's lives and inequalities, motivating them and providing information opportunities. Williams (1995) also describes that social concerns motivated many of his respondents who were drawn to “help or serve”.

As happened previously with the like for the profession and for children, the motivation of the professional choice to bring about transformations was usually associated with other motivations.

However, it was the one that had the highest percentage of written answers that justified this motivation in the professional choice in the surveys (25% of respondents from RJ-BR and 15% of respondents from AV-PT).

They cite aspects such as: belief in education and in the teaching profession as a potentiator of social changes. Sometimes this aspect as the only way or the most important in this aspect both in society and in the lives of children, promoting equality, criticality, citizenship, solidarity, helping others, honesty, among others aspects.

As indicated by Alves (1997), we verified the weight of the altruistic aspect in the decision to choose education, which can be summarized in the desire to be useful. To contribute to the benefit of humanity, to work with people and provide them with a service (in the moral sense) and a source of stimulation (stimulator of personal growth).

Sarmiento (2000) calls this representation that associates the teacher with an agent of social transformation a “militant metaphor”. Such representation is more used in periods of great social transformations (in Portugal it appears more in the 1st Republic, and in the beginning of the post-25th of April). But teachers can also assume for themselves this representation of transformation agents and education activists. In this case, the primary school teacher is the fighter of a historically situated cause. Because he has no profession he embraces a cause, thus he is the center of hope for social redemption makes education the mythical space for social change.

It is noteworthy, however, that this was the professional option where we found the greatest differences between the RJ-BR and AV-PT (with a 31.7% higher percentage in the RJ-BR). Why was there such a big difference? Have the Portuguese softened the belief in the potential for change in education?

Stoer (1982) explains that in Portugal such a conception of the teacher, as an agent of social transformation has been used by the Portuguese left since the 25th of April 1974. But the problem is that it was based on a notion of practice that rejects theorism of “academic culture”, so the teacher's practices turned to a “child-centered education”, without transmitting the “bourgeois” cultural capital. For the author, instead of challenging the existing social structure, “child-centered education” merely provides the legitimation of the reproduction of this same social structure (to believe that Western culture is irrelevant to the working classes is to confirm the school as hegemony for the social status. quo), as teachers inevitably resort to methods that give rise to forms of hierarchy and differentiation.

The author relies on Gramsci to argue that there can be no education without instruction, as this process prevents students from having access to the possible process where hegemony in the world of ideas could be achieved. Education provides the tools for the individual to become critically aware of the society in which he lives, which is essential for achieving social change (which is not simply the denial of everything that has gone before, but can articulate what is good about it).

Perhaps the awareness of the limitations of the belief in the school's potential for transformation has led to a disbelief on the part of the teachers. As Nóvoa (1988) explains, the beginning of the 20th century was a time of many certainties and an almost unlimited belief in the potential of the school, a time

of somewhat naive, somewhat simplistic beliefs about the role of the school and teachers. During this period, teachers felt good about themselves and were able to minimize some of the shortcomings of their economic and professional status.

Probably because they were secure in the high social mission entrusted to them (where the school held the knowledge). However, in today's society, the author points out that these ideas no longer make sense, which has made teachers reflect on what their role would be, what role is reserved for teachers, this has led to a bewilderment as great as their ambitions of yore.

For Nóvoa, times are different, as are the realities of the teaching profession. The school can no longer be considered the only institution where children's education takes place, but the tasks of the teacher's professional life are not less important, and less “passionate”, than before. The main function of the teacher in contemporary societies is not the transmission and diffusion of knowledge, but rather the preparation of children for a critical appropriation of this knowledge. In this way, and according to Nóvoa “[...] teachers cannot change everything, but they can change something. And this something could one day be an ‘important thing’” (Nóvoa ,1988, p. 14-16).

Thus, the reflection on the new role of the teacher and his sense of loss of status, which Nóvoa presented may have shaken the belief in promoting change through teacher education in Portugal. However, 20% of respondents still justified that their professional choice was motivated by the transformation of society, this is still a large number of teachers.

Anyway, is it possible to change society through education or is it just a utopia? In this sense, we agree with Paulo Freire when he says that “It is quite true that

education is not the lever of social transformation, but without it this transformation does not take place” (Freire, 1997, p. 35-36). Believing that “only” with education we will change society is an illusion, but as social transformation does not take place without education, education can indeed promote change (with the help of other factors).

But this is not easy, Freire also describes to us that it is not enough to want to change the world, it is necessary to learn to know how to want, to fight politically with adequate tactics and coherent with our strategic dreams. What can't be done is to do nothing in the face of the terrible mismatches that mark us: “[...] everything that can be done with competence, loyalty, clarity, persistence, adding forces to weaken the forces of lack of love, selfishness, meanness is important [...]” (Freire, 1997, p. 47) , which includes teaching practice^{xvi}, but is not limited to it.

For Freire (1997) it is necessary to unmask the ideology of the neo-liberal/“modernizing” discourse that tries to convince us that life is like this form without changes possibility, that the most capable organize the world and the least, survive. And that this “conversation” of dreams, utopia, radical change, only gets in the way of the work of those who actually produce, if we let them work in peace (without disturbing them with our dreamy speeches), one day there will be a big surplus to be had. be distributed.

Therefore, teachers are not pure teaching specialists, they also need to be political activists. Because the teaching task implies seriousness and competence in teaching content, but above all, it requires commitment and engagement in favor of overcoming social injustices (agreeing with Freire, 1997 and Zeichner, 1993).

The internalization of models: family, friends and teachers

As Pardal and Martins (2006) conclude, students' professional choices are marked by the most typical representations of their group, so close people interfere and influence each one's options. We noticed in the surveys that the choice is strongly influenced by their close ones: an example of a teacher, the family (or the example of the family), or a friend^{xvii}.

In the interviews and surveys, we noticed that the fact of having had a good teacher marks the respondents and exerts a great influence on the choice of the teaching profession^{xviii}. Only one of our interviewees did not narrate having a teacher influence in his choice. Teachers who even leave their marks in the choices of pedagogical performance, as examples to be followed.

Joy, playfulness, seriousness, sweetness, meekness, dedication, difference, friendship, encouragement: characteristics venerated in their favorite teachers that become characteristics desired for themselves. Incentives and models that influence professional choice and professional performance. As Kenski describes the student has the most varied styles of “teachers” throughout the history of school life, many were forgotten, but others were “[...] professionals, became models, myths, legends” (Kenski, 1997, p. 94).

Jesus (2002), based on studies carried out in the USA, shows that teachers considered “exemplary”^{xix} were influenced by the high motivation perceived in teachers who had a significant role in their education (“model teachers”). This identification influenced them in the choice of teachers. of the profession and continues to influence them in their professional performance, seeking to transfer enthusiasm and a like for teaching to students.

Thus, this author considers that the example provided by motivated former teachers is one of the relevant factors to develop the project of following the teaching profession and exercising it in a committed and enthusiastic way.

This is why the motivation of current teachers is fundamental to motivate their students to study. But the motivation is fundamental also for to identify with and admire their enthusiasm, developing the project of following the teaching profession (Jesus, 2022).

These teacher models, as defined by Catani, Bueno and Sousa (2000), also influence the conception of what it means to be a good or bad teacher. As these representations are based mainly on their own experiences as students. This experience can be imbued with frustrations, and also feelings of pleasure and admiration for a teacher and for their work that influence the perception of the changes made in themselves. This is manifested in in contradictory ways, or marking a very special way of being a teacher.

As for the issue of gender that may arise from this admiration of “model teachers”. Galbraith (1992) concludes in his investigation in the USA that 16% of primary teachers had their career choice influenced by a male model in early education. We found only 2 teachers (one respondent and one interviewee), both in AV-PT, which highlighted the importance of this male reference. We can consider, as Fávero and Salgado (2006) point out that there is an articulation between the representations of the areas of knowledge, and the representations of gender, which brings a serious implication to the question of the professional choices of men and women. Thus, seeing men in primary education can influence other men to choose such a profession.

Williams (1995) describes that in his research, many men in traditionally female occupations find a career through a friend or relative, who gives them the idea, but concerns about time and money are decisive for entering these fields.

Finally, as Moita exposes different spaces of life (such as the family and social space) “[...] they can be a 'limit', a 'contribution', an 'accessory', in relation to the professional life. But if these “roles” can have a dominant character, at least in certain stages of life, they are never exclusive. They do not have a one-dimensional character” (Moita, 1995, p. 138). In other words, the groups to which individuals belong can interfere and be crucial. For example, as a professional choice, but they are not unique or decisive, as we perceive in the surveys and interviews several factors interfere.

Minority options for career choice

Although in a minority way, or little assumed, other options for choosing teaching were also demarcated (3.3% of AV-PT and 5.4% of RJ-BR respondents indicated other reasons for their professional choice). Among these not-so-frequent options there is the motivation for the freedom to manage their work. The fact of having had a previous experience as a teacher that motivated them, as well as the desire to exercise authority (1.3% of the RJ-BR teachers and none in AV-PT).

Such options, despite being in the minority as Esteve (1992) mentions, the least preferred motivations are equally interesting. “Freedom” appears as the main motivation for choosing to teach only in one survey.

Esteve (1992) shows that such an option is more chosen when it appears as a multiple-choice item and much less when it appears as an open question. This happens because the tendency is to answer the surveys choosing the answers

closest to the stereotype of the ideal teacher. Freedom and autonomy in teaching is defended by several authors, but we know that in education (despite many achievements) it is limited.

It is worth noting, according to Nóvoa, that in teaching, “[...] autonomy is built by the collective action of a professional body and forces the occupation of new spaces of power and intervention [...]” (Nóvoa, 1989, p. 454-455), that is, the autonomy of teachers does not mean that “each one does what he wants”, on the contrary, productive autonomy should not be individual, it requires the creation of professional solidarity.

The sense of autonomy seems to contain tensions and ambiguities, but it is also a form of power as explained by Fonseca and Araújo (2007), in respect to the liberation from oppression.

Some teachers cited as the main motivation for their choice the fact that they had performed some previous teaching activity – not only in the school institution, but also in the army or with private tutoring classes. One of our interviewees (AV-PT) taught music education, enjoyed teaching and finished the 1st CEB teacher course to acquire more knowledge and teach these years as well. Some respondents also showed that the exercise of this activity made them acquire a like and choose the teaching profession (6.6% from AV-PT and 2% from RJ-BR).

For these men who had doubts about teaching or who did not even think about such an activity (an area that was not so publicized for men. As another interviewee, from RJ-BR, pointed out), the choice was often late and the practice was the trigger for this discovery/affirmation (which is also highlighted by (Carvalho, 1998; Catani; Bueno; Sousa, 2000)^{xx}.

The option for teaching to exercise authority in the investigations was marked only by two professors from the RJ-BR^{xxi}, but in their justifications they did not make this like very clear. Do they not wish to assume this preference? Maybe so, but we believe that as much as this is a characteristic socially attributed to men, it is not so important for the professional choice.

Extrinsic factors that make teaching the best option

The motivations for professional choice associated with issues of employability, profitability, need for employment and lack of opportunities^{xxii}, when we count at least one of these options. They also appear as important (a fact mentioned by 28.3% of Portuguese and 35.5% of Brazilians). In addition, four of our interviewees demonstrated these aspects in their narratives, that is financial viability also counts for them, as well as the opportunities that are presented to each one's life: ease of insertion in the course, a cheap course, close, quick and easy to get a job.

As Williams (1995) puts it, traditionally female fields for men are cheap and are more reliable career alternatives than male fields, so a cost-benefit analysis convinces that they are reasonable substitutes. Abreu (2002) also concludes that the small increase in the rate of men who entered the Normal School at the end of the last decade and the increase in demand for public competitions for primary teachers is more related to growing unemployment in the country than to the desire to teach. for kids.

Pincinato and Bueno (2008) point out in their study that practically all of their interviewees, upon completing their high school studies had the only possible option to be a teacher, as they needed to help with household expenses or assume their own bills from that moment onwards.

However, we remember that the professors in our investigation generally associated these issues of employment, profitability and financial viability to a like for the profession, that is this choice was not only guided by economic and social issues (because otherwise they could have taken other technical courses, for example).

In the surveys, the vicissitudes of life, and the economic and social issues that are presented to the teachers. This also appeared as important in the teachers' justifications. In RJ-BR, the choice for the teacher education course also appears as:

- the most accessible, the best or the only one available (mainly outside large urban centers);
- the one that allowed greater, better, easier employability (even greater outside large urban centers) than other possibilities, especially when compared to profitability^{xxiii} and workload (which also allows the exercise of other activities, as the workload most common work of teachers in Brazil is between 4 and 5 hours a day);
- and even the fact that the course provides stability and professional advancement;
- therefore the lack of option or best available option is highlighted.

Sometimes the answers given cite more than one of these factors, as: the ease of getting a job; of being able to take a professional course or graduation; of achieving stability and the security that the situation of civil servant grants (which is also highlighted by Esteve, 1992); the lack of resources to take another course; the greater affinity for this course than for others available (being one of the options that I already liked or despite not being the most desired); the like acquired by the area; the like by children; among others.

In AV-PT, no teacher mentions the issue of professional stability in their answers, probably because this is not an initial motivation for teachers to choose this profession. As this stability in Portugal is only achieved when one becomes an “effective teacher”, that is sometimes this takes time and the teacher has no guarantee of a job or a place of work. Also, no teacher cites a motivation because of an “ease of professional advancement”, and only 1 teacher cites in his answer among other reasons the profitability with an incentive for this professional choice.

The reasons for their professional choice was the ease of professional insertion for 8.3% of the respondents. But none of them justify this option in their answers. Only one interviewee mentions that this facility used to be available in Portugal (today it would no longer exist) and that this also motivated him.

This was one of the alternatives that had the greatest difference between RJ-BR and AV-PT in the options highlighted in the surveys (greater about 9% in RJ-BR), which leads us to realize that Portuguese teachers do not consider insertion as easy as possible.

In most of the respondents' answers that justify choosing the best option among the existing ones, due to the lack of option and because it is the course for which they obtained an entrance average, these justifications are related to:

- the lack of conditions to pay for the course and/or better profitability;
- the lack of other courses nearby;
- the only/best possibility to continue studies;
- some also indicate that it was not the option they wanted.

These justifications seem to agree with what Alves (1997) says that before teaching provided prestige and authority, especially in rural regions and small villages, this is now no longer the case.

Many professors, resign themselves to being a professor (as described by Sarmiento, 2002), especially when they cannot find another university destiny. Who states that this selection, in many cases, was made to the detriment of other possible options, in a reduction of ambitions, the teaching profession ends up becoming a refuge profession.

Sarmiento (2002) cites that the Coordination Commission of the Northern Region of Portugal in 1986 states that many teachers chose this profession more driven by necessity than by like or vocation and many would willingly exchange teaching for another occupation if it appeared.

Serra (2004) also explains that the ESEs were criticized by some authors (which aimed to combat cleavages in teacher education and their statute, in addition to providing integrated education, homogeneous specialization and in the same institution). The authors demarcate that these courses would be sought after by students who finished high school and wanted vocational education that was less expensive than university education (even with a less attractive career), as it would require travel only within their district.

As we have seen above, this may actually have motivated some of the surveyed and interviewed teachers to have chosen teaching as the accessible profession, even when this was not the desired area.

But we can also analyze the gender issues that can influence men to choose this profession “by chance”. Carvalho (1998, p. 10) analyzes that some teachers

seemed to seek “[...] to distance themselves and differentiate themselves from their female colleagues, refusing to justify their vocation and attachment to children and placing themselves within the profession in a distinct, more independent and less sentimental” (Carvalho, 1998, p. 10).

Perhaps this happened in an effort to reaffirm his own masculinity, in terms of hegemonic masculinity according to the strategy described by Williams (1995) of dissociating himself from his work. In this case, male teachers claim an almost casual choice for the teaching profession, presented as an option among others, the result of forces outside the will.

Catani, Bueno and Sousa also state that “[...] men narrate a later, more tortuous and often shameful process. Or, possibly, more realistic, as they are less pressured to idealize their choices and can present with equal emphasis the practical dimensions of their decisions” (Catani, Bueno and Sousa, 2000, p. 61).

Although the narratives collected by the authors show the need to:

- change housing;
- to start working early;
- to move to the city;
- the desire to be able to attend a “paid school” also stories;
- they also show a great desire to become a teacher;
- meaning becoming someone in life (a certain social status;
- winning in the big city (recurring goals in the imagination of some people who were born and raised in the countryside and whose childhood was lived with difficulties and limitations);
- in addition to the pleasure of being called a “uncle” for the possibility of transmitting knowledge;

- and the pleasure of learning with women.

With all this, we realize that the economic and social conditions are important for individuals (both in the RJ-BR and in the AV-PT) and we cannot deny that these factors interfere in the choices of each one. However, in our research, these were not mostly mentioned as a reason for choosing a teacher.

Here, Paulo Freire's statement should be highlighted when he says that the "beauty and importance of the educational practice" that he so often refers to does not allow it to be:

[...] a kind of marquee under which we wait for the rain to pass. And to spend a rain in a marquee we don't need education. [...] Obviously, recognizing the importance of our task does not mean thinking that it is the most important of all. It means recognizing that it is fundamental. Something else: indispensable to social life. I cannot, however, train for teaching just because there hasn't been another chance for me, still less just because, while I'm 'preparing', I'm hoping for a marriage. With these motivations, which more or less suggest the profile that I make of the educational practice, I stay in it as if it were raining. Hence, in most cases, possibly, you don't see why you should fight (Freire, 1997, p. 32).

The importance of teaching, as well as other jobs, means that you have to like what you do so that you can fight for better conditions, for better education, for better performance. Therefore, it is important that there are options (and there are no shortage of options), so that you choose a certain activity because you want to and not because this is the "least worst".

Considerations on the professional choice of teachers

With the work of Jesus (2002) we realize that the motivations change: until the 1970s in Portugal, the availability allowed for teaching work was a

reason for choosing the profession, currently they are no longer^{xxiv}, when on the contrary: “[...] it is above all factors intrinsic to the teaching activity that most influence the choice of this profession, namely the enjoyment of teaching and contributing to the development of students” (Jesus, 2002, p. 74-77).

Several authors refer that most teachers choose this profession because they expect to obtain satisfaction from the intrinsic factors of the work; thus, most of the measures that are identified as being able to contribute to the motivation of teachers are intrinsic to the teaching activity. But the emphasis on intrinsic incentives does not mean that extrinsic ones do not contribute to teachers' commitment, one cannot analyze these incentives in a decontextualized or depersonalized way.

We also identified in our investigation a predominance of intrinsic factors as motivators of men's choice of primary teaching, as we realized that: although men also choose teaching due to lack of opportunity or because it is the best option (in AV-PT 35% of teachers choose for these issues and 51% of the RJ-BR), the vast majority choose by like or integrate a desire to be a teacher to these economic-social-family issues (78.3% of the Portuguese and 80.5% of the Brazilians).

Teresa Sarmiento (2002) also discovers, in relation to early childhood education, that “[...] the reasons given by the educators are of the same content as the reasons presented by the educators, that is, the pleasure of working with children [...]” (Sarmiento (2002, p. 11) , we can see that there are no major gender differences in the professional choice of men and women for teaching (but there may be differences that affect, for example, the greater “non-choice” of men for teaching).

This option confirms one of Carvalho's (1998) observations about some teachers who chose the profession for their vocation and like for children. On the contrary, this contradicts Abreu's (2002) explanation that the choice of men is more associated with the lack of employment in other areas.

And also contradicts the consideration by Catani, Bueno and Sousa (2000) that men who go into teaching go through a process different from that of women, who would be more guided by a logic of “destination”. Unlike, men would have their choice revealed later, more associated with the relationship with the knowledge established in the university environment “[...] and not by reference to ‘vocations’ or tendencies to ‘like children’ as reasons that for are sometimes invoked by women to justify/explain the choice for education” (Catani, Bueno and Sousa, 2000, p. 54-55).

Some scholars show that the lack of professional alternatives for women was remarkable for the professional choice of women in the past (Araújo, 2000; Almeida, 1998; Benavente, 1990). According to Alves (1997) this no longer happens in Portugal, this has even been one of the factors for the disappearance of the motivation for choosing teaching, which has generated the lack of entry of young people into the teaching profession.

For men, teaching was never one of the only professional alternatives (which has been demarcated as one of the reasons for their withdrawal from teaching), which may have been the biggest gender difference in the motivations for the professional choice of male and female teachers. However, we cannot deny that the like for the profession is broadly demarcated by our interviewees and inquired, which does not contradict the associations with the needs and the choice associated with the feasibility of this in the face of its contextual possibility.

Therefore, we cannot fail to highlight, as explained by Jesus (2002) that a potential teacher who chooses teaching “[...] by vocation or the professional tasks characteristic of this profession presents a greater initial motivation for the profession teacher than the one who chooses this profession for lack of other professional alternatives [...]” Jesus (2002, p. 360) , that is to present greater motivation for the teaching profession, it is important that the potential teacher enters the desired higher course.

Thus, we agree with Almeida when she states that:

If, on the one hand, educating and teaching is a profession, on the other hand, there is no better way of teaching and learning than that which is exercised from one human being to another, and this is also an act of love. Liking this work, believing in education and investing in it as an individual, is also configured as an act of passion, the passion for the possible, a feeling derived from the sense of being and existence, which incorporates desire into the concrete possibilities of its realization. Perhaps therein lies the extreme ambiguity of the act of teaching and the presence of women in the teaching profession (Almeida, 1998, p. 208).

However, we would say that the extreme ambiguity of the act of teaching and the presence of “men and women” in the teaching profession is in the like/love for the profession, in the incorporation of this desire to the possibilities of its realization; in the association of the vicissitudes of life with the passion for teaching; in the struggle despite neglect and low status; in investing your “sweat”, your “tears”, but also your “smiles” and “charms” in this profession.

Notes

ⁱ 113 questionnaires were distributed in AV-PT and 328 in RJ-BR, which is equivalent to a return rate of 53% and 45%, respectively.

ⁱⁱ We used Nud*Ist and Statistic software to analyze these data.

ⁱⁱⁱ The choice of regions was motivated by their easy access. Both regions serve different social classes and have urban and rural sections. We know that we cannot generalize, but we found data that are pointed out by teachers and in other surveys as being national.

^{iv} Teachers could check more than one option if necessary.

^v As Fernandes (2004) also concludes in his investigation.

^{vi} We know that the data alone do not allow us to understand how the professional choice is made by these teachers, however, we were not able to present the narratives that would allow us to show the details of the similarities and disparities arising from them.

^{vii} Present in the next options: teaching as the best possible choice; ease of professional insertion; lack of option; obtaining approval/entry average for this course and ease of ascent; possibility of reconciling with other activities.

^{viii} Answers to open-ended survey questions.

^{ix} Of the 167 responses to the surveys that marked the taste for the profession, there were 35 reasons for choosing (about 20%) that related this taste for the profession with the taste for school, for teaching, training, transmitting and sharing knowledge (liking school appeared in 1 answer by AV-PT, enjoying teaching appeared in 11 answers AV-PT and 17 answers by RJ-BR, enjoying transmitting and sharing knowledge appeared in 2 answers in AV-PT and 4 answers in RJ-BR).

^x This is very low in other professions, as shown by Esteve (1992, p. 138).

^{xi} Soratto and Olivier-Heckler (2006, p. 109) evaluated the working conditions that the school in Brazil offered and concluded that “[...] it is one of the 'worst' work organizations possible to find [...].]”, but evaluating the teachers and concluded that he is a satisfied professional, that is, they found “[...] one of the 'best, workers available in the market.” This may seem impossible to any specialist in human resources, but it is only feasible because teachers like what they do, feel fulfilled with the results, and can feel pleasure in the development of their work.

^{xii} Sarmiento (2000) explains that this metaphor belongs to confessional, repressive political regimes that seek to make education the agency of ideological inculcation of hegemonic values and beliefs, it is a structurally totalitarian metaphor, but the institutional strength it acquired is shown in the its continuity in a democratic regime.

^{xiii} Contrary to what Catani, Bueno & Sousa (2000, p. 54-55) find in their research with male teachers, as they report that it seems “[...] that men who go to teaching, currently, go through a process different from that of women. As women's choices reveal to be largely guided by a logic of “destination” of women to education, male choices in this path reveal themselves much later. In addition, they are in many cases made explicit by reference to the relationship maintained with the knowledge that these students establish within the university, and not by reference to “vocations” or tendencies to “like children” as reasons that are sometimes invoked by schools. women to justify/explain the choice for education.”

^{xiv} Both when we asked them to justify their professional choice and when we asked what it was like to “be a teacher”.

^{xv} That both originates and feeds the representations that associate motherhood and teaching.

^{xvi} Education does not do much before society is radically transformed in its infrastructure, but it can do ideological propaganda for the mobilization and organization of the popular masses. “None of this is easy, but it all constitutes one of the fronts of the greater struggle for the profound transformation of Brazilian society.” (FREIRE, 1997, p. 61).

^{xvii} When checking the respondents who marked one of these options, we found 31.6% of the Portuguese and 38.3% of the Brazilians.

^{xviii} As also indicated by Goodson (1995, p. 72).

^{xix} Such teachers are happy to contribute to the development of students and some have already rejected better paid professional opportunities. But they demand an adequate salary for greater commitment, sabbatical leaves to “recharge batteries”, that is, “[...] the intrinsic factors are essential for these teachers, both in choosing the teaching profession and for their continuation in this career”. and for your professional commitment.” (2002)

^{xx} Cruz (1988) and Carvalho (1998) point out that men lately opt for a teaching career, often having pursued other professional options (in a higher percentage than women). But in our investigation, most of the teachers surveyed in AV/PT have always worked as a teacher (more than 50%), although

there is a large proportion that have already worked outside teaching, but in RJ/PT the majority (more than 70%) have already performed some other activity.

^{xxi} 1.3% of teachers from RJ-BR and none in AV-PT.

^{xxii} Teaching as the best possible choice, ease of professional insertion, lack of option, obtaining approval/entry average for this course and ease of advancement.

^{xxiii} As Galbraith (1992) demonstrates, the problem of low status and low pay traditionally associated with “women's jobs” has not been limiting for men to violate gender boundaries in the job search, as men working in these professions suggest that status and money can be part of your career choice.

^{xxiv} As the schedule, vacations and the time available to carry out another activity at the same time (Jesus, 2002).

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