

DOSSIER

The sociology of family-school relationships: social reconfigurations and new analytical and methodological perspectives

Contemporary family-school relationships: new social configurations and the challenges of changing educational contexts

*Las relaciones familia-escuela en la contemporaneidad:
nuevas configuraciones sociales y desafíos de los cambiantes
contextos educativos*

*Relações família-escola na contemporaneidade: novas configurações
sociais e os desafios dos contextos educacionais em transformação*

Maria Alice Nogueira^a
malicen@terra.com.br

Priscila de Oliveira Coutinho^a
prioliveiracoutinho@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The unavoidable social bond between school institutions and families has not always been a privileged object of analysis for the sociology of education. It was not until the 1950s that the family was widely considered in the field's research, which focused on finding the social causes of inequalities in school performance. Subsequent studies in the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a progression in the sociological understanding of the role of family in transmitting social structures, which were determined by class factors and the congruence of these structures with the principles, practices, and attitudes demanded by the school and academic environment. While the relationship between family and school has been a subject of scientific study since the mid-20th century, it has only recently become the focus of specific public policies, particularly in the 1990s. In Brazil, since the early 2000s, the much-vaunted "family-school partnership" has been the focus of various regulatory instruments, government incentives, and private investments. This issue has seen a marked rise in prominence over the past two decades, as evidenced by the intensification of discourse surrounding the functions of the school, particularly in regard to the educational contributions of the family. This dossier presents analytical perspectives and methodological constructs that have not yet been mobilized by research in the field, as well as investigations into topics that have not yet been studied. It offers a series of fruitful reflections for understanding educational inequalities, the dynamism and diversity of family configurations, and the transformations of school markets.

Keywords: Family-School Relationships. Sociology of Education. Family Configurations. School Market.

^a Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

RESUMEN

El ineludible vínculo social entre las instituciones escolares y las familias no siempre ha sido el objeto de análisis preferido de la sociología de la educación. No fue hasta la década de 1950 cuando la familia se tuvo en cuenta ampliamente en las investigaciones del campo, que se dedicaban a encontrar las causas sociales de las disparidades en el rendimiento escolar. Posteriormente, en las investigaciones realizadas en las décadas de 1960 y 1970, el campo sociológico avanzó en la comprensión de los factores de clase que, transmitidos por la familia, determinaban la conservación de las estructuras sociales al ser más o menos congruentes con los principios, prácticas y actitudes exigidos por el mundo escolar y académico. Aunque la relación entre la familia y la escuela ha sido un tema destacado de estudio científico desde la segunda mitad del siglo XX, la cuestión se ha elegido como objeto de políticas públicas específicas principalmente a partir de los años 1990. En Brasil, desde principios de la década de 2000, la tan cacareada “asociación entre familia y escuela” ha sido objeto de diversos instrumentos normativos, incentivos estatales e inversiones privadas. El tema ha ganado aún más protagonismo en los últimos veinte años, cuando hemos visto, en diferentes ámbitos (académico, escolar y político), la intensificación de los debates sobre las funciones de la escuela, especialmente en relación con las funciones educativas de la familia. Creemos que este dossier, al presentar perspectivas de análisis y construcciones metodológicas que no han sido objeto de investigación en este campo, así como indagaciones sobre temas no estudiados anteriormente, ofrece un conjunto de reflexiones muy fructíferas para comprender las desigualdades educativas, el dinamismo y la diversidad de las configuraciones familiares y las transformaciones de los mercados escolares.

Palabras clave: Relaciones Familia-Escuela. Sociología de la Educación. Configuraciones Familiares. Mercado Escolar.

RESUMO

O inescapável vínculo social entre instituições escolares e famílias nem sempre foi objeto analítico privilegiado pela Sociologia da Educação. Somente a partir da década de 1950 a família foi amplamente considerada nas pesquisas da área, que se dedicaram a encontrar as causas sociais das disparidades de rendimento escolar. Posteriormente, em investigações realizadas nos anos 1960 e 1970, o campo sociológico avançou no entendimento dos fatores de classe que, transmitidos pela família, determinavam a conservação das estruturas sociais por serem mais ou menos congruentes com os princípios, práticas e atitudes requeridos pelo universo escolar e acadêmico. Se a relação família-escola tem sido objeto proeminente de estudos científicos desde a segunda metade do século XX, a eleição do tema como objeto de políticas públicas específicas tem ganhado terreno principalmente a partir dos anos 1990. No Brasil, desde o início dos anos 2000, a tão propalada “parceria entre a família e a escola” tem protagonizado diversos instrumentos normativos, incentivos estatais e investimentos privados. A temática ganhou ainda mais destaque nos últimos 20 anos, quando assistimos, em diferentes ambientes (acadêmicos, escolares e arenas políticas), à intensificação das discussões sobre as funções da escola, notadamente em relação aos papéis educativos da família. Acreditamos que este dossier, ao apresentar perspectivas de análise e constructos metodológicos ainda pouco mobilizados pela pesquisa da área, assim como investigações sobre temas incipientes, oferece um conjunto de reflexões bastante fecundas para a compreensão das desigualdades educacionais, do dinamismo e diversidade das configurações familiares, e das transformações dos mercados escolares.

Palavras-chave: Relações Família-Escola. Sociologia da Educação. Configurações Familiares. Mercado Escolar.

Introduction

The unavoidable social bond between the two fundamental agencies of socialization in contemporary times — school and family — has been treated in different ways by the sociology of

education throughout the development of this scientific discipline. Indeed, this process has already been studied by several researchers in the field (Terrail, 1997; Van Zanten, 1998; Nogueira, 2005). However, a concise overview of the salient features of this temporal evolution is believed to offer greater insight to the reader.

Firstly, it is noteworthy to mention that the Sociology of Education was established as a field of research and gained scientific legitimacy in the 1950s and 1960s, with the initial empirical research conducted in England, France, and the United States of America (USA), largely financed by the governments of these countries, to comprehend the national education systems which were undergoing substantial expansion in their school enrollment rates during the immediate post-World War II period (Nogueira, 1990).

Given their macroscopic and quantitative nature, these studies were later incorporated into a line of research that came to be known as “methodological empiricism”. Produced by the first generations of sociologists, whose primary interest was to unravel the logic that governs the phenomena of social stratification and mobility, these pioneering studies focused on the relationship between education and social class to comprehend the factors responsible for inequalities in educational opportunities among different social groups. The researchers operating within this paradigm posited that the socio-family environment, characterized by its social characteristics (parental income, occupation, and education; residential location) and demographic characteristics (family size, family structure), served as a potent explanatory factor for the observed educational disparities. This hypothesis was repeatedly substantiated by the statistical data collected during the course of their research¹.

Through extensive quantitative surveys of large segments of the populations of these countries, researchers were led to observe what became (and remains) a kind of “iron law” of the sociology of education: the strong and persistent statistical correlations between school performance and the environment (social and family) to which the student belongs. This demonstrated the social (not individual) nature of inequalities in school.

Their results also indicated that sociocultural factors in the family environment (parents' educational level, language habits, family climate, attitudes, and aspirations towards the school world) had a major impact on children's academic performance than the family's economic situation. In this sense, Jean-Claude Forquin (1995, p. 33) states that these studies have “converged” on a “culturalist model”.

Later, a new generation of sociologists – working in the late 1960s and 1970s – led the field of sociology forward in its study of the influence of characteristics related to social origin on educational outcomes. In a theoretical context dominated by structuralist thinking and the reproduction paradigm², these new researchers began to denounce the fragmentary and descriptive (poorly explanatory) nature of the data produced by “methodological empiricism” in an attempt to develop

¹ Read Forquin (1995) for a detailed review of this line of research.

² We are referring here to the reproduction paradigm both in its Marxist aspect - with the work of Baudelot and Establet (1971) in France and Bowles and Gintis (1976) in the USA - and in its “culturalist” aspect, with the famous work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1964; 1970) in France.

a more holistic theory that sought to account for the complex relationship between educational systems and major social structures (the social division of labor, the concentration of economic and cultural assets). Also fighting against the ideology considered "reformist" by the previous generation, the new studies did not believe in the democratizing power of the school and defended the thesis that its full functioning worked for the preservation (reproduction) of social structures since the school institution - in the content transmitted (curriculum), in the pedagogical practices (evaluation/selection), in short, in its modes of operation - adopted the cultural arbitrariness typical of the dominant classes and thus produced the academic failure of students from the working classes.

It is the school itself that is largely responsible for the academic failure of working-class children, because it imparts a culture and symbolism that is fundamentally alien to their culture, destroys their identity, and disqualifies them by trying to "save" them (Forquin, 1995, p. 47, our free translation).

As we know, this analytical perspective finds its greatest exponent in Bourdieu's work. In the famous words of the French sociologist:

if the most privileged students are to be favored and the least privileged ones are to be disadvantaged, then it's necessary and sufficient for the school to ignore the cultural inequalities between children of different social classes when teaching content is being developed and when assessments are being carried out. In other words, when all students are treated equally, even though they may be unequal in other ways, the school system is essentially giving the green light to the *initial inequalities* before culture (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 53, emphasis added, our free translation).

These works from the 1960s and 1970s questioned whether schools were contributing to or maintaining social inequalities. They had one major thing in common. On the one hand, they put the family at the center of the analysis (since they talk about "initial inequalities," which start at home and exist at school before students even enroll in school). On the other hand, the family's actions were never observed empirically but inferred from its class position. Jean-Pierre Terrail (1997, p. 69-70, our free translation) writes about this:

Thus, when theories of reproduction advance the idea of differentiation in the nature of families according to their class affiliation, they remain at the level of principle: families are not questioned for themselves, nor for what they make of the determinations inherent in their class affiliation. In the end, they are asked to do no more than personify the various social milieus (the real subjects of social life and school activity).

Therefore, these studies did not examine the internal functioning of families concerning the school world. The family remained an abstract institution seen from the outside, functioning as a mere transmission belt for its social class of origin.

It was only in the 1980s, in the wake of an internal movement to reorient the sociology of education³ itself, that the sociological perspective shifted from macrostructures to microstructures, or in other words, to small units of analysis (the educational institution, the classroom, the curriculum, family-school interactions). We then saw the emergence of a significant number of works that

³ Read Nogueira (1990) and Van Zanten (2007).

[...] invite us to take a closer look at what happens within families in relation to school. On the one hand, it is a matter of understanding how class conditions are transformed into relationships with the school, into school activities, and this presupposes that forms of family life are studied in and of themselves. But it is also a matter of recognizing the variety (at least relative) of possible school destinations for a given social origin, of identifying the variety of forms of family life that are capable of making it explicit (Terrail, 1997, p. 70, our free translation).

In other words, this new theoretical framework will lead sociologists to change their scale of observation and open the “family black box” to decipher what is happening inside. This means that research will begin to take into account intrafamilial processes and dynamics, socialization practices, and parenting strategies within the family microcosm in an attempt to better understand the chains of mediation between children’s academic performance and their parents’ social position.

In this sense, the concept of the family group itself is undergoing a change. Without ignoring the external conditions, it is no longer conceived as a mere reflection of social class but rather as “a system of action with an autonomous project and resulting from an internal normative dynamic” (Boyer; Delclaux, 1995, p. 11, our free translation). In this way, family functioning and orientations would act as a mediator between the family’s position in social stratification on the one hand and its educational aspirations and behavior, as well as its relationship to children’s schooling, on the other.

In this context, a new field within the sociology of education has emerged, focusing on the academic trajectories of individuals and the strategies employed by families during these educational journeys. This development has given rise to a new framework for analysis. Agnès Van Zanten (1988, p. 188, our free translation) has articulated the movement to redefine the problem in the following words:

to describe the evolution of the problems related to the relationship between families and schools, we can, in a simplified summary, note the transition from a sociology of educational inequalities, focused on the analysis of social and cultural determinisms, to a sociology that is also interested - but not necessarily exclusively - in individual strategies related to schooling.

If the relationship between family and school has been a prominent object of research since the second half of the twentieth century, although in different ways and with more or less explanatory results, the choice of the subject as the object of specific public policies has gained ground, especially since the 1990s. In Brazil, since the beginning of the 2000s, several initiatives have shown that the much-vaunted “partnership between family and school” is the object of various normative instruments, public incentives, and private investments.

In recent years, we have witnessed an intensification of the debate on the functions of schools in a variety of contexts (academic, educational, and political), especially about the educational role of families, as demonstrated by movements such as *Escola sem Partido* (Unpolitical School) and the debate on homeschooling, which reached the Federal Supreme Court (STF, as it is called in Brazil). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused profound damage to school performance and has exacerbated educational inequalities. Its effects have also led to the restructuring of school markets (with increasingly complex implications for the act of choosing an educational institution for children)

and to lasting changes in families and educational institutions. These are all issues that need to be better studied and understood.

On the other hand, the presentation of new analytical perspectives and methodological constructs that have not yet been widely used in research in this field, as well as the attention given to sub-themes that have not yet been sufficiently explored, such as the universes of private schools and the schooling processes of the most privileged social groups, can contribute to the enrichment of the field of study and to the clarification of the sociological factors and processes that must be taken into account in the design and implementation of public policies.

For all these reasons, we believe that this dossier could be a fruitful space for academic reflection on the reconfigurations and specificities of the family-school relationship in our time, always taking into account the different social strata and/or the position of the educational institution in the educational market.

The opening article (and with a flourish!) is written by Pedro Silva (from the Higher School of Education and Social Sciences of the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria), a Portuguese researcher and great specialist in the subject of school-family relations, which he combines in this order, as the title of the text itself attests: "For a sociology of the school-family relationship". The author defines it as a "personal essay" in which he defends the expression "sociology of the school-family relationship" to designate this field of study. To justify the use of this term, he argues that, in recent decades, the large corpus of publications (in different formats), the emergence and institutionalization of several laboratories and research groups, the high number of academic and scientific events on the subject, as well as the recurrence and consolidation of a specific research problem, substantiate and legitimize - socially and theoretically - the existence of a field of knowledge (and of a "consolidated practice" of sociological analysis) that has been progressively expanded and strengthened. Pedro Silva presents us with a work of reflexivity on our daily research practice, which, precisely because it is continuous and permanent, does not always leave room for an interrogation of the very epistemological foundations of our practices. Thank you, Pedro!

Next, we have two texts that offer interesting methodological reflections. The first, "Methodological challenges in studies on the family-school relationship: how to research an intimate space", develops, on the basis of a narrative bibliographic review, an in-depth reflection on an issue that is as delicate as it is fundamental for the field of studies to which this dossier is dedicated: the ethical requirements and methodological adequacy of research in the domestic environment. Essential for capturing the dynamics, temporalities, languages, and normative orders of families, the study of the space of privacy can lead to interactional (related to mutual trust), contractual (formal consent), and epistemological (combination of different empirical elements that serve as support for a consistent interpretation of behaviors, values and attitudes) challenges. In discussing the complexity of this type of research, Cibele Noronha de Carvalho and Maria Amália Cunha present the limitations of using interviews as a methodological tool and also offer, through the examination of different research studies, an inventory of strategies to mitigate these limitations and to qualify research that combines discursive and observational methodologies. Among these are the knowledge of the family ethos, the support of mediators (the "informants", in ethnographic vocabulary), the use of specific tools in interacting with children (always paying attention to ethical concerns, especially in

identifying what constitutes spontaneous participation and what constitutes adult coercion), and the “ritualization” of the researcher’s entry into the home in order to mitigate any discomfort caused by his/her presence. Finally, the authors show that recognizing the sociological specificities of the intimate spaces of different social groups determines not only the interpretation of the results but also the conditions under which research is possible and how it is conducted.

Continuing on the path of methodological challenges, we have the text by Rosa Seleta Xavier and Mariane Koslinski. After noting the hegemonic role played by the variable SEL (socioeconomic level) of the family as a largely dominant category among the explanatory factors triggered by the sociology of education, the authors of the article “The pandemic and the bonds between families and schools in Early Childhood Education: an analytical proposal beyond Socioeconomic Status (SES)”, suggest that we add to this powerful analytical key another variable that they consider very important for the study of family-school relations in early childhood education, namely: the kind of school attended (public, private, non-private) and their different patterns of action, resulting from both state and market logics. To this end, they used empirical data from a more comprehensive longitudinal study developed by the Educational Opportunities Research Lab (LaPOpE - as it is named in UFRJ) of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, in two Brazilian cities, Sobral-CE (municipal preschools) and Rio de Janeiro-RJ (private and non-private preschools), from which a sample of eight schools in Sobral-CE and nine in Rio de Janeiro-RJ was selected. The study was conducted through interviews with preschool teachers and field records kept by one of the research coordinators. The data obtained revealed “practices that required more than SEL to understand” since educational institutions that received a fairly homogeneous public from the point of view of SEL - but that belonged to different networks and kinds of schools (for example: public and private schools) - showed important differences in the interactions between parents and educators. The article invites us to “look beyond social class”, and therein lies its great merit and main contribution to future research.

Next, we present a second block of works that focus on: 1) the impact of the social reconfigurations of recent years and the different dimensions of family-school relationships; and 2) issues that are still present in the field of scientific-academic production that we are concerned with in here.

The article entitled “Family-school relationships in new family configurations: the role of grandmother’s caregivers in their grandchildren’s schooling” brings something new to the theme of this dossier by focusing on family configurations in which grandparents are the main people responsible for the child’s upbringing (and education), thus broadening the scope of sociological research, which is usually limited to the role of parents. Its relevance lies mainly in the fact that the strong demographic trend of increasing life expectancy and longevity (in all social settings), together with the strong diversification of contemporary family arrangements, relativizes the role of traditional caregivers (parents) and forces researchers to turn their attention to the role of older generations within the dynamics of contemporary families. Tatiane Carvalho, Rosa Coutrim and Núbia Moreira show us that, even in the case of low-income and low-educated elderly people, these grandparent caregivers – through their relationships and daily interactions with their granddaughters – represent

a fundamental intergenerational support for the development of long-term educational trajectories, enabling them to enter higher education.

The article “Schools, families and religious institutions: tensions and resistances” addresses a central issue in understanding the boundaries between families and educational institutions in a context of growing cultural and religious diversity. Fernando Seffner, Carin Klein and Juliana Ribeiro de Vargas also collaborate to deepen the debate on public policies for basic education, targeting the dimensions of school coexistence and family-school relationships. Using news from five major Brazilian free portals, collected between 2022 and 2024, the researchers built a collection from which two thematic axes of analysis were extracted for the article presented in the dossier: one involving disputes over school parties and one involving disputes over the censorship of books that deal with race, gender, and sexuality. The text shows how the agents of such conflicts -families, politicians, teachers, and religious leaders - seek to defend their values and ways of organizing in the process of “governing” children and youth. By problematizing religion as a cultural practice, a “social marker of difference,” and a political and evaluative territory, the text contributes to a deeper discussion of the reciprocal influence of domestic and public spaces in contemporary times. Furthermore, based on interesting and revealing empirical elements analyzed in the light of educational legislation and the Foucaultian framework, it offers interpretive resources for the crucial and complicated issue of secularism in Brazilian public education.

Based on a fascinating and innovative study, Viviane Coelho Caldeira Ramos and Maurício Érnica — “[...] Be good students to be good parents”: parenting schooling” — elaborate a skillful analysis of the phenomenon that Phillip Brown calls parentocracy. To do so, they examine a range of materials (books, magazines, and Instagram profiles) that focus on parenting, parental education, motherhood, and childhood. The authors show how parental education is constituted both as a “conscious pedagogical work of mothers/fathers in themselves” and as a pedagogical strategy of fractions of the educated elite. As far as the relationship of this public — formed by mostly white, heterosexual fathers and mothers, with biological, neuro, and physically typical children, and residents of urban areas — to schools is concerned, the effects of the normative discourse on parenting are twofold. On the one hand, the “parenting curriculum” analyzed is similar to the formal curriculum of schools, which can contribute to the adaptation of family socialization to contemporary cognitive and behavioral demands, especially in elite schools. On the other hand, the acquired parental knowledge works as an asset for the presentation of the most diverse demands directed at the educational institutions involved in the formation of offspring.

Dealing with an issue that has strongly challenged the field of education, the article “The family-school relationship and Special Education: an overview” presents a revealing scenario of the relationship between families and schools in the schooling process of special education students. Sirleine Brandão de Souza does so by analyzing data from a survey of the catalogue of theses and dissertations of the Coordination of Superior Level Staff Improvement (CAPES) between the 1980s and 2021. After historicizing the process of consolidation of both the field of special education and the discourse, in the same field of knowledge, in defense of school inclusion, the author offers us a series of routes for future research on this topic that is as urgent as it is necessary. The most important of these points to the need for research that advances the sociological characterization

of families and educational institutions. Thus, while the sociology of family-school relationships has already produced a significant corpus of research that problematizes different family arrangements and social groups to relate them to social processes related to the choice of educational institution, schooling strategies, expectations of school outcomes, and others, the same has not happened when we enter the field of special education. This article, therefore, invites us to construct a research agenda in which the articulation between the sociology of family-school relationships and the various pressing issues of special education is made more effective.

The article "Family participation in educational management: the place of parent-teachers", by Guilherme Alcantara and Tania Resende, is located in the still limited field of studies focused on the formal participation of families in the educational system. Although widely defended by the public agenda, the empirical contours of this type of participation, especially those related to the conflicts in these political spaces of discussion and deliberation, are still little understood. The reflections presented in this article led to a study in the context of the Municipal Education Council (CME) of Belo Horizonte-MG, whose methodology included observation of meetings and other actions of the Council, application of questionnaires, conducting interviews, and informal conversations with participants. One group of conflicts caught the researchers' attention, the one limited to "the relationship between those in charge who are also professionals in the public network (responsible teachers) and the others". The latter claimed that the responsible teachers had power resources that gave them an advantage in presenting and satisfying demands that benefited the interests of the professional teaching class more than those of the families. The analysis of the sociological aspects that generate these conflicts shows that the rhetorical defense of family participation in the democratic management bodies of the educational system often hides the obstacles to be overcome for its implementation.

The last text of this second block, "As Our Parents: Extracurricular Activities and the Transmission of Cultural Inheritance", belongs to a series of studies called "shadow education" because it takes as its object of study the educational activities that take place outside of school and in its shadow, such as private language, art, and sports courses, or even preparatory courses for entrance exams or highly selective courses. Since this is a subject that is still very little studied in Brazil, although it is of great relevance for understanding our educational inequalities, the initiative of the author, Fernando Vizotto Galvão, to include it in our dossier is very welcome. He does so through an empirical investigation that, between 2018 and 2021, interviewed a group of 13 young people from São Paulo, aged 19 to 23 and with different socioeconomic profiles, in which he asked them to reflect on their extracurricular educational experiences developed during childhood and adolescence. The article starts from the premise that today's schools "are not sufficient to guarantee the transmission of cultural heritage" because they can contradict both the educational trajectories that parents want for their children and their desires regarding the cultural values and practices that the family does not want to give up transmitting and that shape their lifestyle. The originality of the approach lies in this last point. While most studies on shadow education deal with its economic dimension, that is, with the extracurricular market (data on supply and demand) and the increasing commercialization of these services, the researcher focuses his attention on the role of extracurricular activities in the processes of intrafamilial socialization and "sharing of tastes and lifestyles" between

parents and children. But he does so without losing sight of their function as preparation for the “competition for the best educational positions”, which increases the gap between those who can enjoy these advantages and those who do not have access to them. Finally, his attempt to relate the type of activity “chosen” by young people (and their dispositions towards it) to their sociocultural profile is also very interesting, an attempt that ends up confirming the well-known theses that place pragmatism and cultural goodwill on the side of the disadvantaged and a certain dilettantism on the side of the upper classes.

A third set of articles contributes to two classic themes in the sociology of education that are closely connected: the dynamics of domestic capital transmission and the ways in which trajectories are adjusted to the social properties of the school and academic contexts attended.

Débora Cristina Piotto, in her article “School success trajectories in working classes: rupture or conformism?”, provides an excellent overview of research in the field of trajectory studies that deals with the sociology of unlikely cases of school/academic success. The author compares pioneering research in the sociology of education with research based on quantitative methodologies predominantly located in political science. In this comparative effort, she points out differences in the analytical treatment of the relationship between the worlds of origin (family and related environments) and those of destination (school, university, and related contexts). In the pioneering research, the experience of unlikely school success and social mobility would be understood as a rupture, a split (the Bourdieusian notion of habitus is exemplary), and a cultural shock. Among the effects of trajectories understood in this way, the suffering caused by uprooting and the feeling of inadequacy in the destination contexts stand out. On the other hand, the studies of the second strand would tend to emphasize identification with the destination group, so that “superconformity” or “acculturation” would be the result of the tension between the two worlds. Once these two contrasting perspectives have been characterized, the researcher proposes to problematize them by bringing in reflections resulting from empirical research conducted by herself and other scholars on the subject, such as Jules Naudet and Jean Yves Rochex. Such research points to “different ways of understanding school success in popular settings”. The most refined understanding of these possibilities would be to examine in depth the issue that unites these myriad theoretical perspectives: the tension between the contexts of origin and destination. Thus, it is through the investigation of the processes of adjustment to both worlds that the combination of different senses and experiences would gain intelligibility. Finally, in order to advance research on academic success in popular environments, the researcher advocates a more productive dialogue between the Psychology and the Sociology of Education.

The next-to-last text in our collection is the result of research using a multi-method approach, with an emphasis on close ethnographic observation. Ricardo Boklis Golbspan and Luís Armando Gandin, authors of the text “The Tiger on the Raft: exclusion and contradiction in the routine of a scholarship student at a private school”, provide us with a detailed observation of the mechanisms of exclusion experienced in the classroom by a student from a working-class background who, thanks to a scholarship, attends high school in a private, upper-middle-class religious school located in a large Brazilian urban center. In the Brazilian sociology of education, we know very little about the educational universe of highly privileged social groups, especially about their schooling processes,

and even less about what happens when students from these social backgrounds interact in the same educational institution with peers whose social origins are located at the opposite end of the social scale. In a country where school segregation (but also housing segregation) between social groups is the rule, it is no trivial matter to try to “take an X-ray of the daily school experience of someone ‘excluded from the inside’” from a high-tuition private school in one of the “most unequal school systems in the world”. In doing so, the authors reveal the process of isolation and low integration into the classroom, the attitudes of subservience and cultural docility, and the lack of understanding on the part of certain teachers. They also show how the scholar responds in his/her way to the process of exclusion, which can even lead to illness.

To conclude this dossier, we were pleased to receive a thought-provoking text by Sara Lindberg, a researcher at Stockholm University. The author develops a valuable analysis of the new forms of social differentiation of European elites through an investigation of the composition and distribution of international capital (qualified as a type of cultural capital) among postgraduate students at the College of Europe, located in the city of Bruges, Belgium, and founded by the Declaration of the Hague Conference in 1949. Considered both a training school for the European administrative elite and an intellectual center of the continent, the institution enrolls approximately 350 students of 50 nationalities each year. Through research based on data from the profiles of 270 students (year 2017-2018) on LinkedIn and 27 semi-structured interviews, in addition to secondary data collected from other research, Sara Lindberg reveals the different dynamics of appropriation and reconversion of international capital. On the one hand, international education has become more accessible to the European middle and upper-middle classes in recent decades; on the other hand, the benefits derived from international experience depend on the previous trajectory (in particular, attendance at national or international schools) and the relationship with other capitals. Based on the analysis of the trajectories of the students, the author constructs three profiles: the “heirs of international capital”, for whom attendance at the College of Europe functions as a strategy for social reproduction; the international aspirants (the majority of those enrolled), who sought to transform their national academic capital into certified international capital; and a minority of “international social climbers” (around 3%), students from working-class backgrounds who saw the institution as an opportunity for upward social mobility. The article provides us with relevant nuances on a crucial topic for the sociology of family-school relations: the importance of school investment strategies for the system of social reproduction strategies.

We would like to conclude by expressing our gratitude for the support of the entire *Educar em Revista* team. We would also like to thank the authors who have contributed their texts to this dossier. We hope that the works collected here will contribute to new research and deepen the reflection on this field, which has always been fundamental for understanding educational inequalities, the dynamism and diversity of family configurations, and the transformations of school markets.

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MARIA ALICE NOGUEIRA

PhD in Education, Paris Descartes University (Paris V), Paris, France. Retired Professor, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

PRISCILA DE OLIVEIRA COUTINHO

Phd in Sociology, Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Professor, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

COMO CITAR ESTE ARTIGO

NOGUEIRA, Maria Alice; COUTINHO, Priscila de Oliveira. Contemporary family-school relationships: new social configurations and the challenges of changing educational contexts. *Educar em Revista*, Curitiba, v. 41, e98626, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-0411.98626>

This article was translated by Rodrigo Gouvêa Rodrigues – E-mail: rgrformatacaoerevisao@gmail.com. After being designed, it was submitted for validation by the author(s) before publication

Received: 12/04/2024

Approved: 01/16/2025

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