

 **Inequity and
diversity in school:
histories in time**

Denise Trento R. Souza
Daniele Kohmoto Amaral
University of São Paulo- Brazil

*Three Ethnographic researches :

1) PATTO, M. H. (1990): research assistant, 2 years long study from **1983-1985**, one school, two classrooms, 4 in depth case studies with 4 pupils (**'the most difficult kids in the most difficult class'**)

case studies (home visits): to know the kids and their families. 2-4 months, 2-3 times week

2) SOUZA, D.T. (1991): Mphil research. One year long study (**1990**), one school, two classrooms (same borough as PATTO's research).

3) AMARAL, D.K. (2010): supervisor. 6 months (**2007 and 2008**). Life narratives- Interviews, internet searches, visits in the borough.

- * same borough, same subjects
- * 25 years → longitudinal perspective

So, after nearly 25 years, how have these people's school, and life, histories unfolded? How have they dealt with the experience of school failure throughout their school lives? What place did the school occupy in their lives?

This presentation:

- Reflections on schooling and place of school, teachers, parents and relatives, and work on the life paths of this segment of popular groups. Depart from Angela's case.
- Comments on the transformations in the conceptions entertained and challenges experienced by the researcher herself.

* Methodological challenges:

* How to locate the four subjects, after so many years?

- * Good strategies and a lot of luck:
- * field work diary; contacts with long term locals and local associations, searches on school archives and websites; *coincidences*.

- * Angela and Nailton: found and interviewed.
- * Augusto: information from neighbors and colleagues
- * Humberto: few information, website and colleagues.
- * Alex: colleague of them, we coincidentally met as University student.

Four kids and their families-

- parents migrants from northeast of Brazil, small towns;
- traditional' role division: mothers at home, fathers low-qualified workers in industry and services;
- lived own property;
- parents education: zero to two years of schooling (only one family 6 years, both parents)
- born in Sao Paulo
- large families (3 to 6 children)
- School early experiences: prejudice, professional incompetence and particularly inadequate teacher. → three years in the same grade (1st)
- Teacher pointed them as the most difficult pupils of the most difficult group. 3 boys and 1 girl

Children, according to teachers

Angela: immature, not interested in school matters, preoccupied with taking care of her house and siblings.

Nailton: too anxious, immature, he was sent to a psychiatrist to find which case of his. He was considered needy, emotionally damaged, prescribed medication: heavily medicated.

Augusto: mother incapable of taking care of her children: let them by themselves, the elderly daughter take care as better as she could. Stigmatized as dirty and pre-delinquent, not frequent at school.

Humberto: already in a special class for handicapped children. Regarded as 'deficient', 'immature and not intelligent'.

Angela

Elderly daughter of a large family.

Mother and her personal wishes:

Implications for the relation she established with Angela.

Other adults, new encounters, new possibilities:
teacher, aunt, researcher.

- father died in **1986**; disruption in the family, she went **to live with her aunt**: encouraged to be “an intelligent woman”
- Pregnancy first child, end of secondary school → marry elder man
- Pregnancy second child: resume and conclude SE, as **‘good student’**
- teacher(SE) encouraged her to carry on... “you can!”
- Plans to enroll in higher education, postponed...
 - New meaning for school and learning.
 - concluded Secondary education, without ever failing a grade again.

Early experiences of failure... impact on their lives :
the interviewees perspective (in short)

Angela: she does not see it this way.

Nailton: it is past. Belongs to the past. (world of work:
greater impact)

Humberto and Augusto: ??

(probably the most stigmatized ones: deficient and
delinquent)

Alex: Historian graduated by USP. Saw himself as
“average student” as a child.

(world of work, also crucial, in addition to incentive of mother
and some teachers)

non-linearity of the life paths

It was possible to observe that the troubled school experiences did not determine in a linear mode the life paths of the interviewees. Their trajectories resulted from a complex combination involving relationships and experiences with people and institutions, including school-related ones, which are interpreted as (im)possibilities for support or incentive. Situations sometimes imponderable, that resulted from relations with the world, with other people and with themselves. Life is, therefore, filled by a multiplicity of instances of belonging and interferences, each subject constitutes him/herself from such complex of relationships with various social and cultural groups. In this way, the school turned out to be, in the individuals' own view, one among the many institutions that concurred to build them.

Thank you for listening!

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Denise Trento
dtrento@usp.br

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