

Rural young in High School: schooling experiences and youth expectations

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ABSTRACT. This article presents the results of a research that sought to analyze the schooling process of young students in their first year of Higher Education from a rural school. We try to highlight the most significant facts of the school experiences brought by students and their expectations for the future with the aim of understanding the meaning they attribute to the experiences in a school located in countryside. The research procedures were establishment observations, individual semi-structured interviews, questionnaire and documentary study. The survey data suggest that teenagers are able to express their opinions about classes, content and school. From the research data, we can say that youngsters are able to express their opinions about classes, content and school. From the interviews, we realized that the meanings attributed to the school in the schooling process are positive, since young people feel confident in this institution.

Keywords: rural youth, high school, schooling.

Jovens rurais do Ensino Médio: experiências escolares e expectativas juvenis

RESUMO. Este artigo apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa que buscou analisar o processo de escolarização de jovens do 1º ano do Ensino Médio de uma escola pública rural. Procuramos destacar os fatos mais significativos da experiência escolar trazidos pelos alunos e suas expectativas de futuro, com o objetivo de compreender os sentidos que eles atribuem às vivências em uma escola localizada na zona rural. Os procedimentos de pesquisa utilizados foram observações de estabelecimento, entrevistas individuais semiestruturadas, questionário e estudo documental. Os dados da pesquisa sugerem que os jovens são capazes de opinar acerca das aulas, dos conteúdos ministrados e da escola. A partir das entrevistas, percebemos que os sentidos atribuídos à escola no processo da escolarização são positivos, já que os jovens se sentem confiantes nessa instituição.

Palavras-chave: juventude rural, ensino médio, escolarização.

Jóvenes rurales de la Escuela Secundaria: experiencias escolares y expectativas juveniles

RESUMEN. Este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación que buscó analizar el proceso de escolarización de los jóvenes estudiantes del primer año de la secundaria de una escuela rural. Tratamos de resaltar los hechos más significativos de la experiencia escolar aportados por los estudiantes así como sus expectativas para el futuro, a fin de comprender los significados que atribuyen a las experiencias en una escuela secundaria ubicada en zona rural. Los procedimientos de investigación utilizados fueron: observaciones del establecimiento, entrevistas individuales semiestructuradas, cuestionarios y análisis de documentos escolares. Con los datos de la investigación, podemos decir que los jóvenes son capaces de expresar sus opiniones sobre las clases, el contenido y la escuela. A partir de la entrevista hecha a los jóvenes, nos dimos cuenta de que los significados atribuidos a la escuela en el proceso escolar son positivos, ya que ellos se sienten confiados en esta institución.

Palabras clave: juventud rural, escuela secundaria, escolaridad.

Introduction

This paper¹ presents the results of a research that aimed to analyze the schooling process of rural high school youngsters in Rio das Mortes, district of São João del-Rei, Minas Gerais, in a school located 8 km from this city. The aim of this study was to identify the role of school in these people's lives, as well as their life perspectives in a context of social, cultural and economic transformations in which the differentiation of urban and rural spaces is reconfigured and becomes increasingly tenuous.

The research subjects were rural youngsters from the 1st year of high school in a public school. The research sought to highlight the most significant facts of the school experience brought by the students and, to this end, the researcher undertook an investigation with a plurimethodological approach – qualitative and quantitative at the same time. The questionnaire, as well as semi-structured individual interviews and observations were the primary sources for data collection, while medical records, files, among other student documents, were configured as a secondary source of data collection. The questionnaire dealt with the socioeconomic characterization of students and their families, on school activities

inside and outside the establishment, and on youth schooling in its relations with urban and rural areas. This collection instrument was designed to cover all students in the class, unlike the interview, whose purpose was to address the meanings of the school experience, through attentive and dialogic listening – that why it should reach a small number of teenagers, and ensure the same proportion among boys and girls.

This class is made up of 33 students: 17 boys and 16 girls. When the questionnaires were filled out, 10 students were absent; among the 23 present, three refused to participate. One of the youngsters who did not want to answer the questionnaire was the one who was more aloof and suspicious. Considering all the classes observed, he was the most distant with regard to teachers and subjects. The other two who didn't respond are apparently influenced by that one. Regarding the girls, they readily wanted to answer the questionnaire and did not have much difficulty in doing so. All showed interest in collaborating with the research, and some of them established a closer relationship of friendship with the researcher.

Individual interviews were conducted with 12 teenagers who agreed to participate, 6 girls and 6 boys. In order to

get a greater number of young males – with the aim of making the number of interviewees between the sexes more equal – the researcher had to insist a lot on the invitation to young men, as some of them did not really appreciate giving interviews.

We assume that the school is a place where many teenagers spend a large part of their lives. In fact, it is not new that many schools are unable to attract and retain teenagers, but it is usually in this space of encounters and experiences that they begin to build their life project. We share with Leão, Dayrell and Reis (2011) the conception that the expectations for the future of young people refer to the idea of achievements in the professional, affective and school context. Such expectations depend on a field of possibilities given by the socioeconomic and cultural context in which the young person finds himself/herself. Understanding the expectations of these youngsters allows, above all, to comprehend the different anxieties of those in this age group of schooling and, at the same time, to reflect on significant aspects of the social world in which they are inserted (in and out of school) in their relationships with the prospects for the future they envisioned.

Thus, it is at school that youngsters establish relationships that greatly influence their life, their choices and their

school trajectory. To better fit the teenager's needs, the school must focus on aspects related to the permanence of the student and the quality of services offered. To this end, it is necessary to be aware of the institution's operating conditions, the training of teachers, the quality of teaching materials, the reading in school work, the participation of parents in school and at home, and the quality of school meals (Dayrell, 2007).

For rural young people, the school establishment is a very important relational territory, which allows them to experience various exchanges, the elaboration and redimensioning of social norms and the constitution of ways of living life as teenagers and students at the same time, from sociocultural references that are simultaneously rural and urban that are modulated in the here and now of the social interaction among them.

The global and the local are probably mixed in the lives of rural young people who managed to reach high school and affect their immediate and immediate projects. In this way, we seek to identify the role of school in the lives of these subjects and the perspectives of life in a context of social, cultural and economic transformations in which the differentiation of the borders between urban and rural is reconfigured and

becomes increasingly tenuous, to the extent that these new dynamics in rural areas should have more impact on the younger population and those with a longer schooling path provided by high school. One way to investigate the teenagers' experiences of students living in the rural world today is to analyze how they perceive the impacts of schooling in their fields of possibilities in the present and in the future. Currently, they live a trajectory less common for the previous generation, that is, attending high school and having a later entry into the world of work.

Schooling of rural teenagers: contexts and challenges

When it comes to reflecting on the Brazilian educational system, there is a consensus in the perception that secondary education is the level of education that provokes the most controversial debates, whether because of the persistent problems of access and permanence, or because of the quality of education offered, or by the discussion about its identity (Kuenzer, 2007).

The inclusion of secondary education in the context of basic education and its mandatory nature demonstrate the recognition of its political and social importance. This is a growing demand for schooling in a context of devaluation of

diplomas due to the expansion of access to all levels of education, including higher education, and the economic imperative of expanding the training of young people for competition/insertion in the market formal work. Secondary education represents only the last three or four years of basic education, but it presents difficulties when defining policies for this stage of schooling that has never had a very clear identity, both in terms of access to university and professional training (Krawczyk, 2013).

For most teachers and researchers, young people who attend high school are understood only in terms of their student dimension. In this way, the condition of student appears as a natural fact, and not as a social and historical construction. Regardless of gender, age, social origin or social experiences, it is the student's condition (almost always in its cognitive dimension) that informs the understanding that the teacher or researcher builds on these actors. The stage of life and its peculiarities, social origin, gender and ethnicity, among other dimensions that constitute him/her as a young person, should be placed in parentheses in the name of the student's cognitive progress. That is why these elements of the youth experience are not taken into account and, when approached outside the school, the student's life appears as a time empty of

meaning in the definition of the teaching-learning process. In this understanding, little is learned about the real subjects who attend school, the multiple dimensions of their social experience, their demands and expectations (Leão *et al.*, 2011).

According to Castro (2005), for adolescents from the rural youth universe, a challenge is the uncertainty between “going out and staying” in the countryside, due to the difficulties of remaining in agriculture, the limits imposed by the scarcity of land, the low income of families and, consequently, the meager investment in production. Young people live in a dilemma between the possibility of becoming owners of land (or of some property) and the aspiration to live in cities.

According to Matos (2002), the departure of youngsters from the countryside to the city is also due to the search for the “modern”, which, according to the author, characterizes the view of the rural as backward or primitive. This vision leads rural teenagers to desire the “moulds” of “modern” urban youth so as not to be seen or see themselves as “backward” or “inferior”.

To counteract this image of inferiority, young people often seek to appropriate new technologies and academic knowledge. Part of this new

appropriation of ways of being in society is also a reflection of the loosening of territorial boundaries, as shown in the study by Carneiro (1998). This author suggests that countryside and city are increasingly interconnected, which contributes to redefining the dynamic between these two poles.

Carneiro (1998) also reminds us that the media are strong influences in this narrowing of borders, since they have an important impact on the redefinition of values and this can lead to difficulties in defining the particular characteristics of a given space. However, the author observes that the increasingly intense exchanges between countryside and city do not eliminate their specific social and cultural characteristics.

According to the study by Breitenbach and Corazza (2019), the issue of rural youth gained centrality, especially because it is a category associated with the future of the rural environment. In this context, the social identity of the Brazilian rural youth is built in a process of dialogue between the rural universe and urban spaces. Subjective aspects such as emotional attachment and family ties have an important influence on the permanence of young people in rural areas. In addition, the difficulties and uncertainties found in rural areas and the existence of more than

one generation on the same property compromise the transfer of heritage and the succession of inheritance between generations. These factors that still figure today as the main responsible for the departure of young people from the world rural.

According to a survey carried out by Santos (2017), the rural exodus, especially of young people, has been constant in recent years. There are several reasons that drive young people to the city, among which is the lack of incentives for these young people to remain on the family property and develop activities there.

Methodology

To understand the school experiences and expectations of young people, we carried out observations of the first-year high school classroom, in order to obtain a more global understanding of the subjects' interactions in the classroom, as well as their relationship with the school in their schooling process.

The observations were descriptively recorded in the field diary, with the aim of storing the impressions of everyday school life. In some situations, the recording of impressions after leaving the classroom was used. The observations generated an initial discomfort for some teachers, who feared they were being evaluated or

judged, and for some students, because they thought that the researcher could be a school employee.

The questionnaire applied helped us in the task of drawing a profile and better characterizing the universe of research subjects by containing the opinions, beliefs, feelings, interests, expectations, social origin, monthly family income and relationship with the work and with the school. This allowed us to bring together school and extra-school experiences.

According to Gil (2008), a positive feature of the questionnaire is its ability to cover a large number of people in a short period of time, in addition to guaranteeing the anonymity of the subjects who answer it. This can give more freedom in the elaboration of responses, since there is no concern about the possible consequences of their statements.

We conducted individual interviews with 12 teenagers, 06 (six) girls and 06 (six) boys. All students in the class were invited, but in the second round a girl had left the district to live in São Paulo. We also carried out a semi-structured interview, that is, one directed through a previously established script, consisting of open questions. Even elaborated in advance, this script allows for flexible organization, which gives the researcher the possibility to expand the questions as

the respondent offers information and expresses himself with some freedom on the topics indicated. With this type of interview, we assume a less directive role in the search for an open dialogue with the intention of understanding under what perspective the interviewee speaks and of bringing out significant aspects about the research topic.

General characterization of the School, the socio-economic conditions of the young people, their families and the schooling of the surveyed teenagers

The school used as the empirical basis for this research was the Evandro Ávila State School, located in Rio das Mortes, district of São João del-Rei, Minas Gerais. There is no exact definition of when this school was founded, only accounts of various possible dates. No records were found referring to the Evandro Ávila State School, nor in the school itself, nor in the Regional Teaching Superintendence (SRE) or even in the Municipality of São João del-Rei. Therefore, all information was materialized by reading blogs (from the school and the Minas Gerais government), from the School's Political Pedagogical Project and information from oral history.

At the time of the research, the school had 423 students. Elementary I (1st to 5th grade) had 112 students in the

afternoon, Elementary II (6th to 9th grade) had 177 students with one class in the afternoon and five classes in the morning. High School had four morning classes, with 110 students, and an evening group of Youth and Adult Education (EJA), with 24 students. There was also an Acceleration Class (TA) from the 9th grade of Elementary, with a view to moving to the 1st year of High School, whose objective is to correct the age/grade distortion and reduce school failure – a government program called “continuous progression”. Most of the students at the school belonged to the district of Rio das Mortes, but most of them lived in other villages. The distance between school and villages is also variable, such as the village of Goiabeiras, which is 4 km from Rio das Mortes.

The school's team of workers totaled 43 people, including teachers (permanent and contracted), supervisors, pedagogical coordinators, technical assistants in basic education (secretary assistant), secretaries, basic education service assistants (*cantineiras*), technical assistants in education basic (financial/accounting part), librarians, director and deputy directors.

Regarding the position in the ranking of reference schools in the state of Minas Gerais by the Basic Education Development Index (Ideb) of 2009,

Evandro Ávila School occupied the position number 492 among Minas Gerais public schools, in a list with one total of 3,497 positions. Regarding the school's IDEB, in 2013 the educational institution reached the goal of 7.6 in the initial years of the state network, with the goal being 5.2. In relation to the final years, it also reached the target set by the government of 4.5, but did not maintain the previous score of 6.0, as it obtained 5.3, which means a significant drop. In addition, the school registered a percentage of 68% of students who learned the proper skills in reading and interpreting texts by the 5th grade.

Students who attended this school arrived at 7:20 am, on foot or by school bus. They found the gates open, entered the school and chatted with groups of friends in the school yard while waiting for classes to start at 7:30 am. The school atmosphere was relaxed, with little conflicting social relations between students and school staff.

A large part of the families with which young people live is nuclear, that is, they are made up of the father and the mother. In general, the students who participated in the survey belong to relatively small families (4 to 7 members) and the vast majority are parents and two children, live in the rural area, in the home of their parents or grandparents, are aged between 15 and 17 years old and all live

with family, and no young person is married.

The analysis of the interviewees' family situation suggests that only 10% of the students' families do not live in their own home and just over half of them (55.6%) have rural properties (land destined for cultivation). The level of education of the parents or guardians is predominantly complete elementary school and only in one case the father has a university degree. The level of education of mothers has an average of 28.6% in each of the following levels: incomplete 1st degree, complete 1st degree and complete 2nd degree. Only two mothers have completed higher education.

The family income of 81.8% of respondents, considering all working adults, is no more than three minimum wages. It is noteworthy that in none of the valid answers the family income was above 06 minimum wages.

Regarding the mother's or guardian's profession, nine categories were listed by the interviewees. Of the total number of mothers who work outside the home, 21.4% work as domestic servants. Furthermore, 21.4% are housewives. A nursery helper mother and another cook were also mentioned. As for the profession of the father or guardian, eleven categories were listed, with "retired" having 21.4%.

Professions such as bricklayer, pensioner, farmer and rural services make up the activities performed by the interviewees' parents.

Laura, one of the interviewees, takes courses at SENAI, as well as private lessons and writing lessons. Her family is the only one that guarantees extracurricular courses for the student's better academic and professional performance. Lucas and Afonso have also taken extracurricular courses at SENAI and say they are interested in attending others.

In this context, it is important to highlight that in the community even young people who seek a more advanced level of education from technical/professional education in São João del-Rei continue to live in Rio das Mortes, thus maintaining a relationship with their family and with the rural environment where they live.

It can be observed that the encouragement of parents to study is unanimous in the research. For families, studies are of great importance to guarantee that young people will have a better future. It was also possible to conclude that participation in meetings at school are recurrent attitudes among the parents of these youngsters.

Another issue to be considered is the access of young people to school,

considering that each person has a particular need according to the spatial location of their home or work. Not everyone has a car or motorcycle, and commuting by public transport becomes very important, as it directly influences the quality of life of young people.

In rural areas, public transport is important for families who live or work outside Rio das Mortes, as, for some, it is the only way they have to come and go. In Rio das Mortes, this displacement is made by an urban bus company that has some units of its fleet specifically for the direct route between São João del-Rei and Rio das Mortes. The same company also has buses that circulate around São Sebastião da Vitória, Goiabeiras and Rio das Mortes. These buses have specific schedules and run every hour from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm. On weekends, there are itineraries until late afternoon.

In many parts of the country, transport companies face many limitations in serving the rural population, the main one being the structure of the roads, which, for the most part, are precarious and wear out the vehicle a lot. The stretch between São João del-Rei and Rio das Mortes is a highway. In this way, it is possible to see that young people in Rio das Mortes are not necessarily physically and spatially isolated and that their life trajectories take

place between the rural and urban worlds. Thus, it is possible to conclude that they are influenced by values from the two cultural universes, which makes it difficult to establish boundaries between urban and rural elements in their ways of living their youth.

According to the students, the distance from the interviewees' homes to the city of São João del-Rei is 10 to 14 kilometers. When asked to project the future, most youngsters (83.3%) responded that they intend to go to college. Among the greatest difficulties of rural youth listed by the interviewees are the roads and their poor conditions (within the district) and the limited hours of public transport.

Schooling of surveyed you people

Most students (76.5%) entered school between four and five years of age; 70% of respondents said they did their schoolwork always or almost always and 30% sporadically. In this question about performing the tasks, one student claimed "laziness" as a reason for not fulfilling the obligation and another stated that he fails to do the task when he has doubts about it. On a school day, 55.0% of students do household works in an hour or less.

When asked about the reason for going to school, 72% of young people answered that they consider school

attendance important for their professional future. Regarding the content taught at school, 47.8% believe there is a balance between useful and useless knowledge. In addition to regular classes, students show interest in the computer science and cultural activities; however, most do not participate in any extracurricular courses. Invited to reflect on their possible choices, 47.6% of respondents answered that they would study at a public school in the city, 23.8% would study at a private school in the city and 28.6% would continue at Evandro Ávila School. This seems to signify the strong attraction that the city exerts on many of them, more than a derogatory judgment of the school, in terms of the quality of education and the social relationship within it.

Data from the 12 students who answered the questionnaire show that the percentage of young people who do not consider themselves rural is 38.9%, as they believe that young people are young people, no matter the place. Already 33.3% of these youngsters consider themselves rural youngsters because they live in rural areas. One of the young people who do not consider themselves rural for other reasons claimed that he "identifies" himself with the rural area and another does not live in the countryside.

Regarding media and access to culture, the average number of books that young people have at home, in addition to school ones, is less than twenty books, in most answers. There were no responses greater than a hundred books or less than one. From the point of view of access to new information and communication technologies, it was possible to notice, in the moments of interviews and in field work, that television and the internet are the media most used by young people. In most of the observations, it was possible to notice that almost all young people always had their cell phone in their hands in the classroom, although the school's management team had prohibited the use of cell phones due to excesses and lack of attention in the subjects.

The presence of cell phones was a constant feature. Like Silva and Pereira (2015), we observe that, similarly to the young people researched by these authors, the young people from the rural school investigated in this work also demonstrated that this technological communication device is very widespread in daily school life as a mark of being young in current society. Thus, it is impossible not to associate the image of young people with the use of these new communication and information technologies.

The internet is also seen as a form of entertainment. Facebook is the most used social network, especially for conversations, dating and entertainment. Other media resources were also present in the speech of young people. Marina, for example, sometimes accesses the internet on her cell phone, but commented that the connection is very bad. Pedro explained that, in his free time, he enjoys visiting social networks and playing online games. Josiane, in turn, reported that she likes to stay at home “touching” the computer. Lucas has already stated that he likes to watch television. Of the young people investigated, all had internet access, although Vitória and João did not have a computer and, therefore, Vitória used the computer at her grandmother's house and João used the computer at school. João, Laura and Vitória reported that they searched for information on the internet for school research.

Based on these data on the usages of these media devices, it is possible to consider that the fact of having books at home and/or internet access does not necessarily mean an increase in school knowledge and culture in general. The media allow the insertion of young people into the technological world and provide skills for the general use of technologies, which can be directed towards cultural

targets unrelated to the knowledge valued by the school. According to the teenagers, during the week, time is spent “from school to home, from home to school”. The life of young people outside of school during the period they are attending High School also involves work inside the home, where they help parents with housekeeping activities – this cannot be considered an impediment to the execution of school tasks, since it consists of a short period of time compared to the daily time spent on TV and computer. The use of social networks, online games, television and also the dedication to school tasks are some very common statements among the young people surveyed.

The average time that these students spend watching TV and using the computer, in a school day, was more than four hours in more than 30% of the answers in both cases. When asked about how much they study at home, 45% consider it sufficient, 25% insufficient, 20% would like to study more and only 10% consider the time they spend studying more than enough. Those who answered that they would like to study more and those who think that the study time is insufficient were asked what prevented them from studying.

However, a part of their free time is generally occupied with activities

developed in the community itself and, although this does not offer many options, young people seek to participate in everything that is offered. Here are included cultural events traditionally organized there and the tours promoted by the school. In the first year of the research, for example, it was possible to witness a march by the school with all the students in the surroundings of Rio das Mortes. The march was a request for “Peace” from the school and the community due to the death of a young man in the vicinity of the institution. In addition, in the reports of young people, we can see that the multi-sport court is frequently used by the population of this location, even in extra-school times.

The search for cultural activities outside the district is also a common practice among young people looking for alternatives such as bars and dating in neighboring cities. In informal conversations with the teenagers, it was possible to notice that they like to attend the festivals in São João del-Rei, due to the visibility between them, as well as the traditional festivals in the neighboring cities.

In relation to work, 47.8% are not working and 30.4% are looking for a job. When asked to choose alternatives about future expectations, 68.4% responded that

they would like to combine university and work. Only one youngster would just like to work, which corresponds to 5.3% of valid answers. In other options, one student would like to finish their studies and pursue a degree, while another would like to be independent and have more knowledge.

Meanings of School experience and future expectations

To understand the meanings that young people attributed to school, it is essential to consider that they produce their own way of seeing and valuing school, which does not necessarily correspond to the vision of their teachers and family members. School life or even the “motivation” for studies depend a lot on individual experiences, interests and identities that were built from the lived reality and interactions with other people and with the school itself.

The research presented here reveals that, while for some students the school represents, above all, an obligation that parents or society impose, for others, studying is directly related to insertion in the labor market. In an individual interview, Leo argues that he goes “...to school to find a good job”. Leoni, in turn, explains that she wants to graduate “... and have a good job”. Thus, young people

draw plans for their professional future and hope that the school will contribute to a good placement in the labor market. For many, the value of the school lies in the fact that it is a place where they meet friends, make friends and interact, which is indicative of the value of the school in youth sociability in the society in which we live. The most common expressions of this sociability are the games that occur in the class-group as a whole (with or without teacher participation) or within groups of mixed or gender-different peers (male or female). It is a youth culture that is constituted in youth social relations inside and outside the school, and that in the school space signals the affirmation of what it means to be young, according to the “student’s craft” or in opposition to it. It presents itself in the classroom as a tension between the demands of this “craft” and the youthful games and “jesting”. In the researched class, the relational atmosphere was calm, as teachers and students showed themselves capable of managing this tension in daily school life when it manifested itself openly.

The young people investigated believe they have had many significant experiences at school and make it clear that they could have dedicated themselves more, as in Marlon’s speech: “I could have

studied more”; and in Marcos’ testimony: “I could have studied more, but I can’t study at home, then I don’t do good exams”.

Regarding the reason for attending school, they more frequently highlighted the importance of studying to ensure a better future, as pointed out by the young people in an individual interview (E.I).

For a better future. (Afonso, E.I).

Because I like to study; here I take care of myself, I acquire knowledge that I can use later for exams, and it gives me a basis for the job market. (Vitória, E.I).

The survey indicated that young people demand a school that makes sense for life and contributes to their understanding of reality. They claim to link what is taught at school to their daily lives:

I prefer more dynamic classes, more in practice, not just much in writing. (Josiane, E.I).

Maybe teachers can conduct a class to interact more with staff. (Felipe, E.I).

I think the quality of teaching, textbooks, literary books should be improved, and the classes should be more dynamic, because just using the blackboard and books is very tiring. (Vitória E.I).

These young people who attended Evandro Ávila School built positive representations about the school. Most of

them placed the hope of achieving better social status and better jobs in school and education. There is a belief that school offers better opportunities to “be someone in life” or to enter the labor market. In addition, all young people show satisfaction in studying High School in the same institution where they started their school careers.

According to Laura, the rural school is not inferior to the urban schools of São João del-Rei. In this regard, most young people believe that the school would help them to stay in Rio das Mortes, but the lack of prospects for work in rural areas drives them to create expectations of having greater success in obtaining it outside the district, as Laura illustrates. in an interview in November 2015: “Staying in Rio das Mortes is difficult because of the career I want to pursue. Many young people leave rural areas because they don't have a guaranteed job throughout the year, which leads to them leaving for lack of options”.

Regarding parents and the value attributed to their children’s schooling process, young people declare that parents participated in their children’s school life through meetings at school, asking about schoolwork and seeking to know about school performance, as Vitória points in EI: “My parents try to find out about my

grades and how I am in my work". The young people indicate that the diploma is very important for them and for the family, since the parents believe that, without studies, the person is "nobody", as Josiane points out in an interview: "... without studying, we are not nothing".

Laura was one of the young people who attended activities that expand school education, such as the writing course and courses offered by SENAI in São João del-Rei. She stands out for having the mother's support and encouragement to attend such activities. According to the girl, being successful in the tests is not enough and, therefore, she seeks complements for her training outside of school:

Laura: In the morning I have class, right? In the afternoon there is class, in the evening *cursinho*, Thursday I have writing class in São João; then I stay there.

Researcher: Do you do SENAI in São João?

Laura: No, I've already stopped; it was just a vacation course; as I had nothing to do on vacation, so I went and did it.

Researcher: What do you do in the afternoon?

Laura: I do the assignments; I review the contents and write the compositions I have to do.

The students stress their desire to finish high school and continue their studies, as this is an achievement for them and for their families. Learning new things, understanding the subject, applying and

relating what they have learned, leaving the routine with more practical classes, being able to do the tasks and calculations and being valued, these are aspects the young people most mentioned to justify their taste for school life.

Learning biology. Practical biology classes are pretty cool. (João E.I)

We've got the same teacher for Philosophy and Sociology. This is excellent because he talks to the whole class, so he listens to what we think. (Luana E.I).

The teenagers aspire to continue their studies at universities, but representation about the role of the school is also linked to another type of expectation: making friends and getting along with people. These young people state they like going to school because of their friends and express dissatisfaction with the boring dynamics of some classes. They want a change in the curriculum, with insertion of more practical classes that arouse a taste for study, and claim for teachers able to interact with the youth universe.

University level education was shown to be a more present expectation among the young people investigated (83% of the students); however, there are exceptions, as in the case of Afonso, who intends to attend a professional course before and does not know if he will attend university; and Vanessa, who, at first, does

not want to go to university, but to take courses related to theater and cinema. None of the young people investigated declared that they are at school because they were forced or at the insistence of their parents, except for one who declared he “comes to school because he has to do”.

Of all the students interviewed, most would like to combine work and studies after high school. Some students would like to work after completing high school or graduation.

When asked to reflect on their expectations for the next ten years and on what students would do to be professionally successful, the teenagers argue that they want to study more, attend college and get a good job.

For the future, the young people aspire to leave Rio das Mortes and study in São João del-Rei or other neighboring cities, in order to graduate from a college, guarantee a good job, have better living conditions and, therefore, help the family. When asked what they would like to do if they stayed in Rio das Mortes, one young man says he would like to open a store near his home in Goiabeiras, and another would like to play soccer in the rural championship. The rest intend to build careers outside the district. The young Vanessa, during our research, moved to

São Paulo in search of her dream of being an actress.

Conclusion

This research ratified trends or dynamics identified by other research on rural and urban youth. In addition, this study sought to broaden the focus, identifying that certain segments of rural youth have characteristics much more of their age group than of their specific rural group, as they consume goods and products common to urban youth, advance in schooling in relation to their parents and have access to the new communication technologies of the computerized world.

In fact, we are witnessing today the non-agricultural rural world. This perspective introduces new elements in the way of looking at the rural and urban worlds and the way in which they relate. Between urban centers and rural areas, the trend of relationships of complementarity continues (Ferrão, 2000).

The blurring of boundaries between countryside and city and the departure or permanence of young people in rural areas are issues that go beyond the desire to “stay or leave”: they are also linked to an assessment that young people make about the countryside and that leads them to see their perspectives, conflicts, difficulties and challenges.

The district is just a few kilometers from the city. The school is well-regarded and offers a good structure, good teachers and adequate materials, unlike perhaps most schools in various regions of Brazil. This shows the effort of the state of Minas Gerais to increase access to basic school through high school for a public relatively far from the urban perimeter.

One of the central concerns of this research was listening to these young people and identifying points of view about their lives inside and outside school, in relation to the immediate and immediate social and geographic context that reference their daily experiences. This allowed us to understand a way of living youth composed of generalized leisure activities in Brazilian society, such as the use of the internet to participate in social networks, the habit of watching television programs and attending a rural school establishment, youth territory where properly school learning intersects with diverse youth sociabilities, constituting over there a way of appropriating the school that does not differ from the urban world.

The conversations with the young people made it possible to identify that their expectations fluctuate, as they say they want to “improve their lives” and “be someone in life”, but they do not see how

to make this happen in rural areas; they show commitment to the family and the feeling of belonging to their place of origin, but they do not fail to express that they feel attracted to life in the city. This shows the general difficulty of Brazilian society in guaranteeing well-defined programs for the insertion of young people from popular sectors into the world of work, and the specific form taken by this lack of programs in the lives of rural young people, who, throughout the history of Brazil, live the tension between “leaving or staying”.

From the speeches of the young people, we realized that the process of schooling in high school is positive, as they feel comfortable at school and are eager to enter university. The survey data also suggest that young people are able to talk about classes, contents, school and could be important partners in reflecting on the educational project intended for them.

Most of the young people interviewed demonstrated to be satisfied with the public school where they studied. In addition, the students established a trusting relationship with the professionals' efficiency, with the quality of teaching and with the curriculum. However, they would like the teaching method adopted at the school to introduce more practical and stimulating lessons.

Despite demonstrating satisfaction, many students, when reflecting on how much they studied during their school career, stated that if they could change what they experienced at school, they would study more, make less mess and try to achieve better performance in the subjects. In addition, young people still face difficulties in the schooling process: in the domestic space, they feel attracted to the computer, to the detriment of books and notebooks.

The young people interviewed also feel the challenge of combining the needs of the present with the prospects for the future, and this is intertwined with the tensions of school life: studying and not studying, paying attention in class and expressing themselves through conversation or mess. The clash between the long-term objective and the more immediate strategies is common, so that, at times, they oscillate and turn now to this priority, now to that one.

On the other hand, young people claim that many hours are dedicated to TV and the computer, but they use it more as a form of entertainment and, in few cases, to seek information related to knowledge valued by the school and that the time dedicated to studying at home is insufficient. When presenting the reasons to justify the restricted time in studies, the

students explain that they find it difficult to understand the statements of the activities and that they are unable to develop what is requested, in addition to facing the lack of meaning in some subjects. The presence of the computer at home allows this media resource to be used for entertainment and virtual sociability, while young people seem to resist its use for specifically school purposes. In this way, the school, which in the past had to compete with television, must now also compete with the computer and the cell phone. This leads us to reflect that current society seeks to make more time available to young people from popular sectors, protecting new generations from premature entry into the labor market, but they are unable to use part of the time available at home for school learning. This indicates that solving the problem of low performance involves offering a full-time and quality school, and encouraging the use of these media for scientific and philosophical knowledge.

The most significant experiences in the school career were the teachers, the friendship relationships, the income in the subjects, the jokes made by friends and the skills and learning acquired. Young people perceive the value of a dialogical relationship of friendship and respect between students and teachers as a gain in school life.

The issue of friendship was mentioned as being fundamental to the schooling process. At times, the school

enabled and encouraged the students to get connected through gymkhanas, cultural and literary fairs and group work. However, at times, there was a certain separation of groups of friends due to the students' disposition or the affinities in the classes.

We know, however, that school is not the only place for young people to socialize, as they attend other spaces linked to sports, religion and the representative community council, in addition to socializing with friends.

The relationship with teachers is another issue strongly remembered by young people. Participants say they have positive and negative experiences with teachers. About positive relationships, they mention the teacher's efficiency in promoting learning and good relationships with students. Regarding negative experiences, they point to situations of punishment and embarrassment.

Factors such as generational differences and relations of affirmation and power are intertwined in the teacher-student relationship. It is noticeable that the teenagers value dialogue with teachers very much. In some moments, young people demonstrate that they need someone to listen to them or give them advice, but in others they ask for a delimitation for the definition of spaces.

Our impression is that teachers feel compelled to maintain order in the classroom when students push the boundaries. As a result, they end up putting pressure on students (sometimes with threats or taking concept points) and excessive pressure and exaggeration of these lead to a rupture in the dialogue.

Almost all of the 1st year students continued at Evandro Ávila School. For them, completing high school can represent a moment of victory and conquest. This moment is seen by them as the passage to yet another stage, configuring itself, then, as the possibility of progressing to university.

The school-effect is more easily revealed in the relational climate that animates the investigated school. We did not find any youngster hostile to it, as an expressively dialogic climate was noticeable during the observations. Although with differences in relational dynamics inside the classroom, the school seems capable of dealing with everyday tensions, solving and containing the conflicts that may arise.

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