

Family, school, vulnerable areas¹

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Abstract: This article aims to gather elements to understand how families living in vulnerable areas relate to their children's education. To that end, we conducted an ethnographic study with 12 families living in a peripheral neighborhood in the city of São Paulo. The mothers were the main informants. The methodology of data analysis consisted of building sociological portraits of each of the mothers and conducting a transversal analysis of these portraits. Results show that the mothers surveyed value highly their children's education, although their degree of involvement with it depends on the families' degree of vulnerability. The study also describes the types of such involvement, the meanings attributed to school and the nature and types of efforts made to ensure that children remain in school and have a longer school life, though usually limited to concluding secondary education.

Keywords: Territory effect. Socio-spatial inequality. Family-school relationship.

¹ This article resumes and goes further into part of the results of the study published in Batista e Carvalho-Silva (2013).

PRESENTATION

How do families living in vulnerable areas in large cities relate to their children's education? Gathering information to answer this question was the goal of this study. It emerged from a set of wider questions organized around an investigation on the relationship between school and socio-spatial segregation in large cities. Given the phenomenon of social segregation in metropolitan areas, this study found, in the context of the city of São Paulo, the neighborhood or territory effect: a restriction of learning opportunities offered by schools located in segregated areas due to inequalities determined by the social, cultural, and spatial isolation of its population. Other investigations have found the same phenomenon in similar contexts².

The resulting territory or neighborhood effect in the case we studied also finds explanation in dimensions related to:

- characteristics of the offer (of public facilities, preschool enrollment and the interdependence relationship between nearby schools, for example);
- characteristics of the demand (the profile of students and their families, the territory's culture, for example).

Among the demand-focused investigations of the socio-spatial segregation effect on school inequalities are those related to the characteristics of families, particularly their ethical and cultural dispositions and their expectations concerning their children's education. Since we have already examined the offer dimensions in previous investigations, it was our intention to turn our attention to the dimensions of demand, i.e., families and their relationship with their children's education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We have chosen to develop a qualitative, ethnographically based investigation focusing on the viewpoints and – where possible – practices of mothers living in a highly socially vulnerable area with regard to their children's education. The expression “socially vulnerable” is not employed here as “poverty”, though it may include this dimension:

² The first summary of our conclusions can be found in Ernica and Batista (2012). For other empirical or theoretical investigations on the subject, see Ribeiro and Katzman (2008), Bourdieu (1997), Maloutas (2011), Ben Ayed and Broccolichi (2008). About the contextual nature of the phenomenon, cf. the analysis of our team regarding the city of Teresina (Piauí) in Ernica (2012).

In a broader sense, the “vulnerability” category encompasses two conditions: the “already vulnerable”, identified with a condition of poverty, i.e., those already in need, thus implying their present impossibility to support and develop themselves, as well as a future condition of weakness therefrom; and the “potentially vulnerable”, whose decline in standards of living is not yet a fact, but looms as highly likely in the near future due to conditions of weakness that may affect them (PERONA; ROCCHI, 2001).

Given our research interests, the term vulnerable areas is to be taken here as those spaces created in metropolises by socio-spatial inequalities which combine, in the case of the city of São Paulo, a peripheral location, spatial isolation, and a major concentration of low income and education rates, thereby implying socio-spatial segregation, as well as a restricted access of the population to basic rights. These characteristics result in the reproduction of inequalities and poverty.

The study was conducted with 12 families living in a segregated area where we had already been conducting a broader investigation intended to explore the hypothesis of territory effect on educational opportunities. The families were selected among the participants of a mother support program developed by a local institution. That program aims to enhance the autonomy and quality of life of highly vulnerable families through discussion groups and vocational meetings with mothers.

These mothers live in the same area. However, in a microsocial scale, their families present different levels of social vulnerability determined by factors such as income, ethnic/racial origin, education, the number and life cycle of its members, among others. Chart 1 describes the mothers of the selected families.

Chart 1: Characteristics of selected families by mother education, family income, number of children and number of school-age children by school

Mother's name	Mother's education	Income – minimum wages	Number of children	Number of children enrolled by school					
				Preschool	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Ana	8th grade	1,2	2	-	-	1	-	1	-
Célia	None	1,0	4*	-	-	1	-	1	-
Cleide	3rd grade	2,4	5	1	4	-	-	-	-
Edna	Secondary Education	3,3	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Fabiana	4th grade	1,4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-
Ivone	8th grade	Não consta	2**	-	1	-	-	-	-
Júlia	8th grade	1,5	5	1	2	-	-	-	1
Lúcia	4th grade	2,6	2	-	-	1	1	-	-
Marta	None	1,6	4	-	2	-	1	-	-
Rosa	5th grade	1,0	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
Vanda	4th grade	2,4	3	-	1	1	1	-	-
Zoraide	8th grade	1,7	5	2	2	1	-	-	-
Totais	-	-	37	5	15	5	4	2	1

A. State school situated in the neighborhood where families participating in the study live.

B. Municipal school near the neighborhood's commercial area.

C. Municipal primary and secondary school situated near the neighborhood's commercial area.

D. State school far from the neighborhood – only children enrolled in secondary education attend it.

E. State school in another district.

* Célia does not know how many children she has, but she mentioned two who are living in northeastern Brazil and two living with her.

** Only one of Ivone's two children lives with her.

With regard to mother education, two mothers never attended school, five dropped out during the first years of primary education, four completed primary education, and only one completed secondary education. Only three – Ana, Cleide, and Rosa – enrolled in youth and adult education programs after becoming adults.

As regards family income, only in one case was it above three minimum wages. The majority of the families (seven) have a total family income below two minimum wages. The number of children supported by this income also varies from one to five, but half of the mothers has up to two children. All of them have children attending public school at some level, and are connected to at least one school. But for one (Edna), all have children enrolled in at least two different schools.

Because enrollment in São Paulo is geographically organized, students are generally allocated to a school close to where they live. Despite that, we managed to get some diversity of schools since many mothers try, though not always successfully, to transfer their children from the school they were mandatorily enrolled in. As will be seen later, this variety shows that mothers hierarchize schools in the area according to certain criteria and information collected in the neighborhood.

Field work was based on visits to the mothers which ranged from one to three days. During those visits, the mothers were informally interviewed while doing their chores. Observation – also ethnographically based – helped to provide information about their home, family life, and neighborhood characteristics. Information about a few aspects of the area's everyday life were also obtained after visiting sociability places and educational facilities, among which two schools, and the cultural venues available. We conducted a total of 25 visits to the homes of the twelve families, from March to October 2011. An important methodological decision was to resume visits one and a half year later. Since instability and uncertainty are part of the lives of many of these families and a characteristic of the area, investigations of this type must take into account the temporal dimension when collecting data.

The mothers eventually became our main sources of information, so that the study became one about the relationship between them – rather than the families – and their children's education. Although we had planned to interview the fathers, they did not spend much time at home.

When the children were home, which depended on what time the mothers agreed to be visited, they too were interviewed. With the children, we would start by exploring their school material or from the conversation we had already started with their mothers. Their accounts enriched our interviews, observation and data collection about family dynamics and – in Bernard Lahire's (1997) words – about the consonances and dissonances related to the school world. In the dialogues between mother, children and siblings, we apprehended elements of family socialization omitted from or in contradiction with what mothers said. Therefore, our study oscillates between, on the one hand, what the mothers say about their relationship with the school and their family socialization practices, and on the other, their actual relationships and practices, which were apprehended in the dynamics of interaction with their children and in the contradictions between their statements and those of their children.

In addition to the visits, we held six meetings with the local institution's social worker, and three meetings with employees at the same organization to complement and cross-check information. Cross-checking was also employed with the mothers: since they knew each other, many times we asked one of them whether she had been hearing from another, in order to gather their viewpoints on each other. This checking was important as a ratification – or lack thereof – of our interpretation of the interviews and observations, making us more confident in analyzing them. To collect data, we had structured scripts which we changed as the study advanced.

We analyzed data by means of two combined procedures. Based on Bernard Lahire (1997, 2002, 2004), we chose a case study methodology, using sociological descriptions as an initial analysis procedure. Such descriptions primarily take the micro-sociological level – mainly the individual one – as the analysis scale of the social world, and consider it in its singularity, yet without rejecting the possibility to sociologically explain the individual and the singular, or the possibility to find similarities between the different cases considered. To that end, however, the analysis renounces the logic used to approach macro-sociological phenomena, which is based on selecting factors and trying to establish causal relationships. Based on Norbert Elias' (1999, 1991, 1994) work, sociological descriptions aim to apprehend the complex interdependence relationships and social configurations that made a biography or trajectory possible. Therefore, such a description is not tied to the plot of a life or to a set of facts, but is based on apprehending, for each singular life, a set of qualities and social processes in their interrelations. Thus, such descriptions are not anecdotal cases, but accounts supported by a structure based on principles and assumptions of a sociological analysis of the individual reality it aims to render intelligible. Their overall goal is to provide a response to the way social becomes individual and, in our view, is expressed in an individual's unique action.

Such unique actions, which result from specific social configurations, are certainly unrepeatable. But part of them is similar to other actions, which allows a “transversal” analysis of these descriptions (COSTA; LOPES, 2008). That was the second procedure we used: seeking similarities between the descriptions of the mothers to create categories that might describe shared processes and conditions connected to their relationship with the school and their children's education, depending on the effects of socio-spatial inequalities.

THE AREA

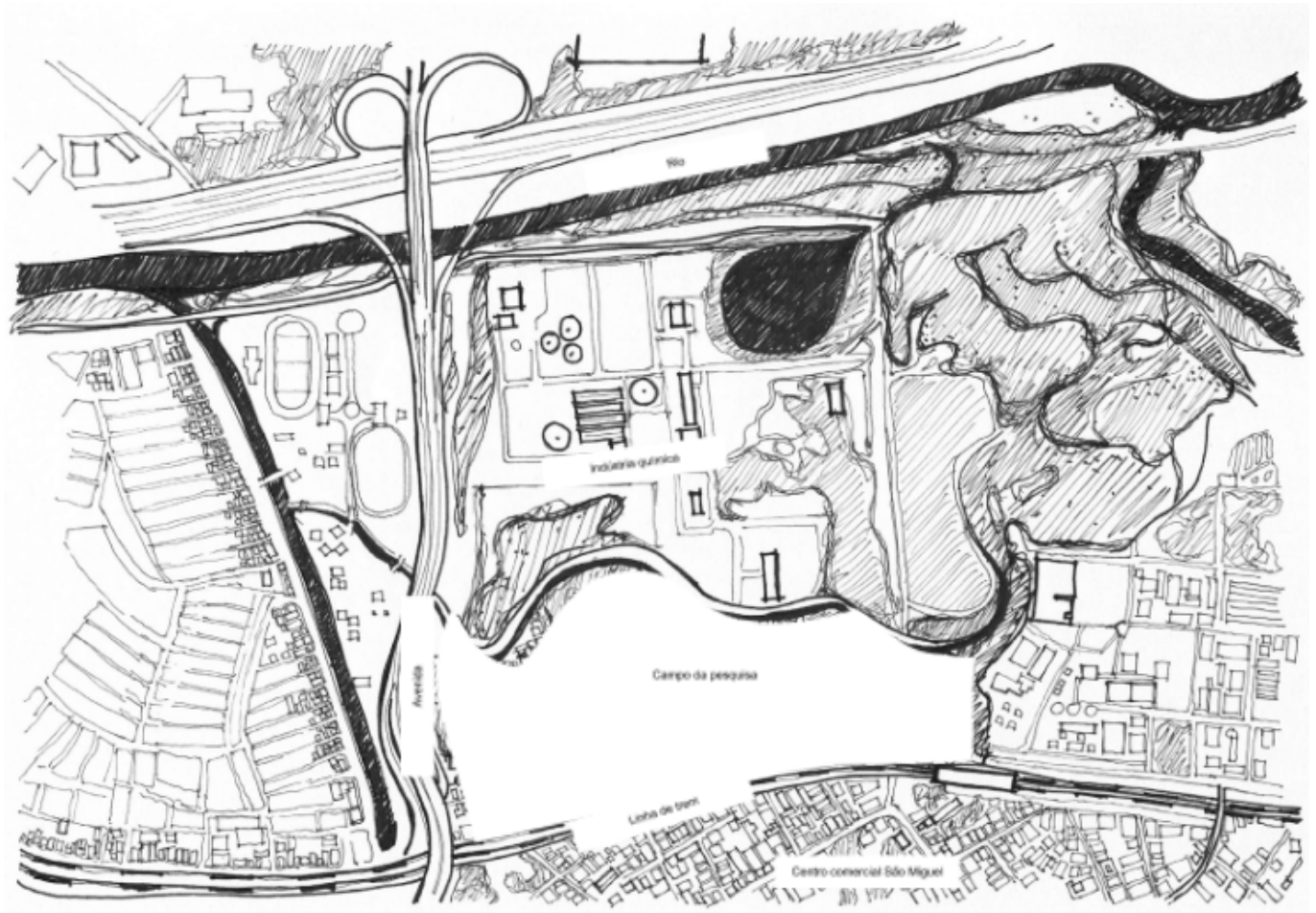
The neighborhood is near the well-structured commercial center of one of the main districts of São Miguel Paulista, in the city of São Paulo, and is also near a train station. Despite that, for those who must walk to get around, this vicinity was ensured by a provisory wooden footbridge over the walls enclosing the railway track, until it was recently removed.

Without the footbridge, people have to take a long detour along the track and then walk a long way to get to the commercial center. Today, this is the only way to access the neighborhood. There is a bus line which serves only the area of the older occupation (more details further in the text).

But for this access, the neighborhood is enclosed and isolated, as shown in the map: on the left, by a long merging lane; above, by the branch of a river, a sewage treatment unit and the Tietê river; on the right, by a chemical plant; on the front, by the railway track. Due to the sewage treatment unit and the rivers, as well as the plant, a heavy smell of chemicals is always present in the neighborhood.

Frequent summer floods, which increased with the population densification, determine a way of life with many concerns and challenges to locals. Houses have floodgates at the door, and furniture and more valuable appliances are placed on provisory platforms, or even brickwork ones. In the wet season, everyday tasks like shopping for groceries or going to school become real challenges. One of the mothers participating in the study summarizes the difficulties they face: “Can you imagine, on a rainy, floody day, having to cross a flooded area to go to school? You’ve got to really want to go to school.” (Lúcia).

Figure 1: Map of the area studied



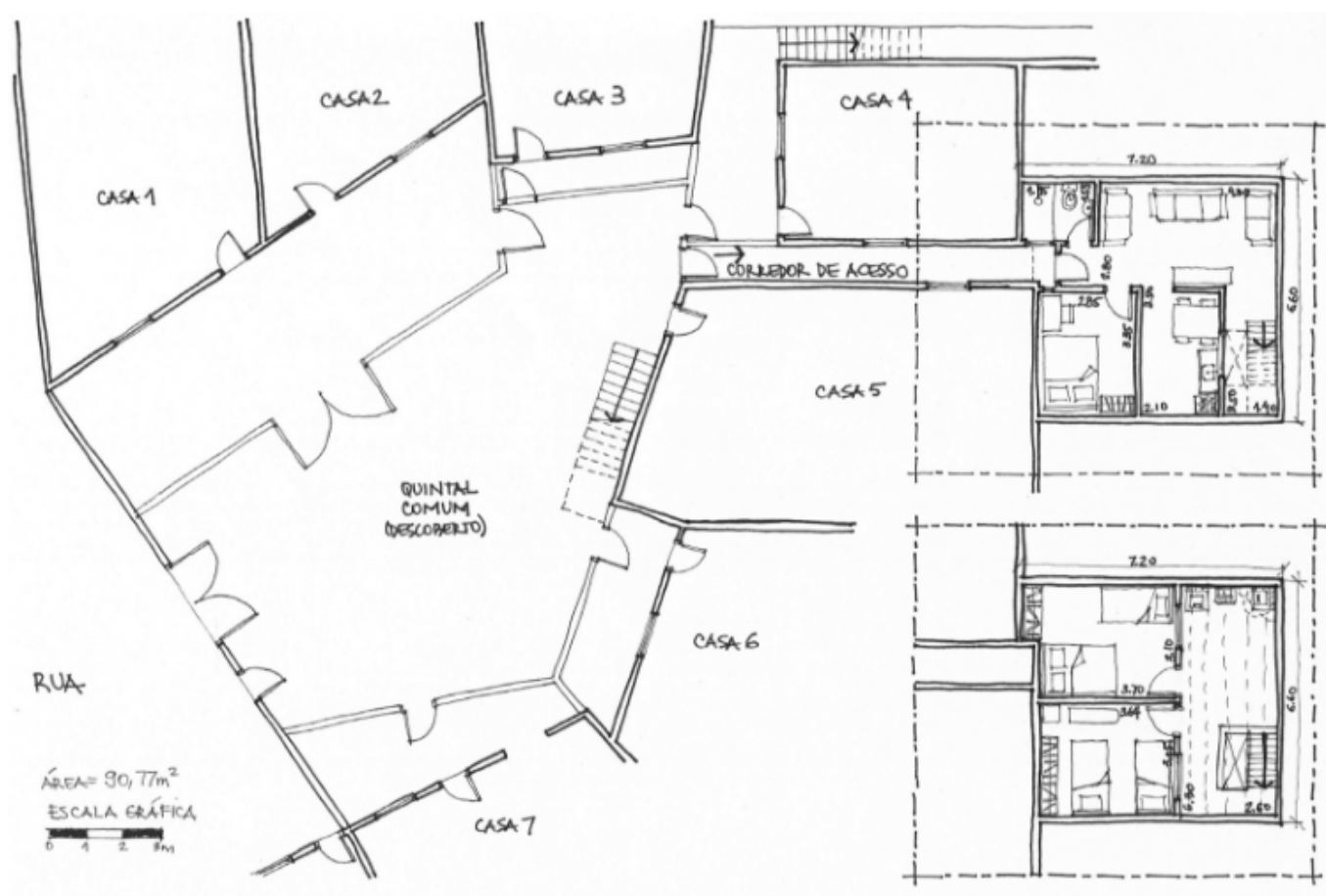
Source: Prepared to order by Vânia Tramontino.

During field research, it was possible to observe and describe three different areas forming the neighborhood: the older, more urbanized occupation; a set of alleys and narrow streets in the center; and a third, more recently occupied and precarious part. The older occupation, closer to the railway track, is more urbanized than the others and situated on a higher part of the neighborhood, therefore not so badly affected by floods. It has paved streets, public lighting and sanitation, and is served by a bus line. It is also less affected by drug trafficking, which concentrates in the two other areas. The appearance of streets and houses in this area shows it is inhabited by families with better socioeconomic conditions compared to the other parts of the neighborhood.

More recently occupied, the central part of the neighborhood is characterized by a concentration of alleys and narrow streets and the lack of public sanitation and lighting. It is a flood-affected area. Observation suggests that its population is expanding continuously. An evident feature is the enlarged and new dwellings built on top of one another. Brickwork dwellings, usually

unfinished on the outside, are built on shared lots where, in some cases, though not very distinctly, five or more dwellings can be found. Some of these sets of houses have small common areas or corridors protected by a gate. These areas are usually called “yards” by the mothers we interviewed. As will be seen in the descriptions below, this way of building homes may foster solidarity networks among neighbors in the same lot, who share the “yard” and take turns in looking after each other’s’ children.

Figure 2: Sketch of a set of houses with a common yard and details of two residences – central part of the neighborhood.



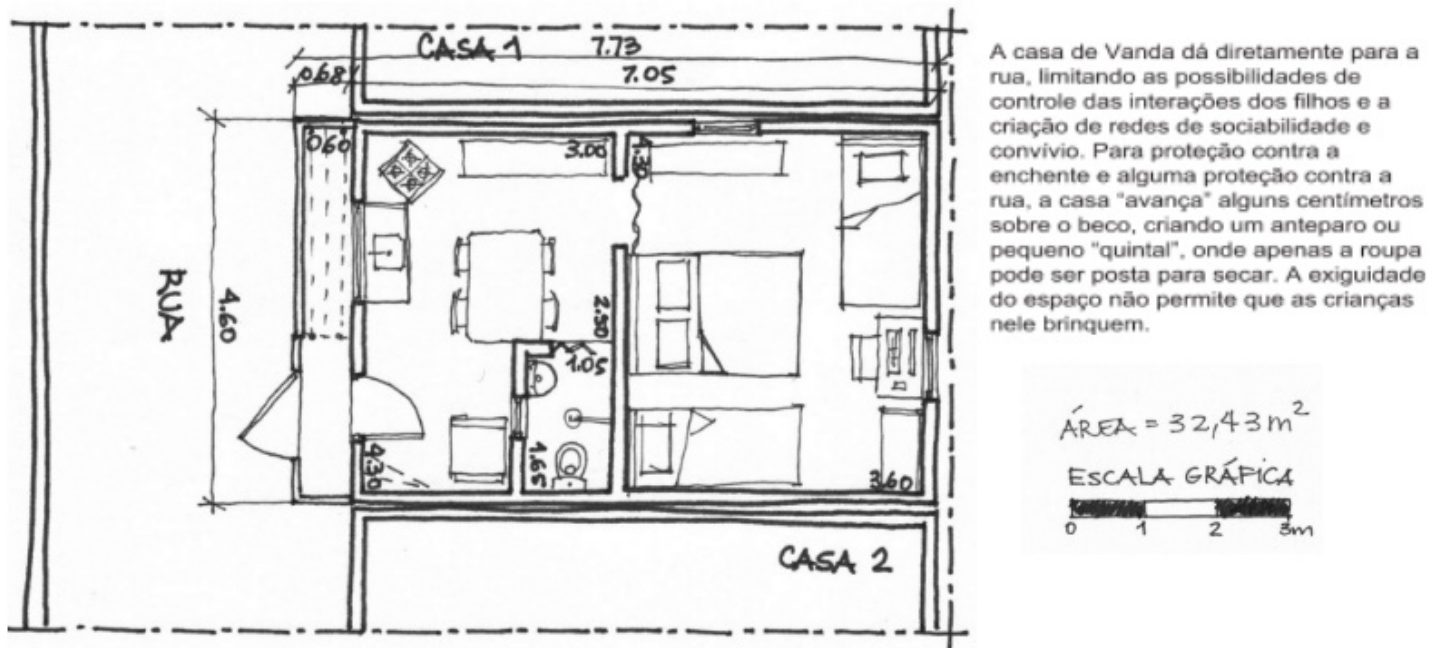
Source: Prepared to order by Vânia Tramontino.

A circulation space and an access to different houses sharing the same lot, the “yard” may foster solidarity networks among mothers and protect children from the risks in the “street”. Houses converge to the yard, and a locked gate is the access to it from the alley.

The third area was also occupied more recently. It is situated in the neighborhood’s “back side”. It is more precarious regarding access to public services, and more affected by floods, as besides being on the lowest part of

the site, it is also where the sewer discharges into. Here, brickwork houses without external finishing coexist with wood shacks usually built on the river bank. Drug trafficking is heavier in this part of the neighborhood, and takes place in a vacant lot called the “little soccer field” by locals. Moreover, most of the houses are exposed to the street, since unlike the central area, they lack the protection of a “yard”. Therefore, families feel less protected in this part of the neighborhood.

Figure 3: Floor plan of a residence in the area more recently occupied.



Source: Prepared to order by Vânia Tramontino.

The characteristics of these three areas directly affect families’ daily life and living conditions. Living on the neighborhood’s central part or back side in houses at the street level exposes these families to the risk of “losing everything” in the floods. Having a shared space like a narrow corridor protected by a gate – the “yard” – may reduce exposition to violence and foster the creation of solidarity networks, including care for the families’ children. Therefore, dwellings’ location and conditions can produce different feelings in dwellers about their neighborhood and help some of the families to adopt protection measures.

SCHOOLS

The administrative area of São Miguel Paulista has 64 primary schools³, 23 of which are in the municipal system, while 41 are state schools. In 2010, these schools had more than 52,000 students in primary education, divided in 1,652 classes. The mothers interviewed were connected to five of these schools⁴, i.e., the ones their children are enrolled in. One of them is municipal and offers primary education only. The other four offer both primary and secondary education, three of which in the state system and one in the municipal system.

During the interviews, the opinions of the mothers about the schools referred almost exclusively to primary school.

At the time of the study, the mothers we interviewed had 32 children (children or adolescents) enrolled in some public school: five in a preschool facility situated beside the state school (D); fifteen in the neighborhood's state school (A); five in the municipal primary school (B); four in the municipal school containing both primary and secondary education (C); two adolescents enrolled in this school's secondary education section (D); and one enrolled in the state school's primary section (E). This last is situated in another district. In 2012, there were 5,992 students enrolled in these schools.

Because of the enrollment system (i.e., enrollment "by sector", in which a child is allocated to a school near his home) and the implementation of a computerized allocation system in 2009, the control of enrollments by the central management agency became stricter. Therefore, almost all children of the mothers interviewed should be allocated to school (A) for enrollment in primary or secondary education. However, we found enrollments in other schools in the area, even though the home-school distance in these cases exceeded the 2-kilometer limit established by the regulation.

Here, we will only examine four of the schools listed above: (A), (B), (C) and (E). The mothers did not provide much information about school (D). Some of the adolescents enrolled in secondary education in it completed primary education in school (B). This is a relevant piece of information. As will be seen later, after the initial years, the mothers' ability and even possibility to follow their children's school life – given the level of independence reached by the youths – decreases significantly.

³ Part of these schools may also offer secondary education.

⁴ Besides schools providing primary education, the mothers are also related to two preschool facilities in the area, a contracted day care center and a municipal school.

Opinions about these four schools show there is a hierarchy based on certain criteria. These were more clearly described by mothers whose children were acquiring literacy skills. At the top of the hierarchy is the municipal primary and secondary education school (C). This is the school almost all mothers interviewed want their children enrolled in.

Although state school (A) is the one attended by most children in the neighborhood as it is situated there, it is considered the worst school: “I didn’t want them to attend [state school (A)]; there’s a lot of drugs, fighting, violence over there, they beat each other. Mothers don’t like [state school (A)].” (Célia).

Municipal school (B) and state school (E) share the center of the hierarchy, and appear as the best alternatives when it is not possible to enroll children in the school at the top position (C). It is worth noting that state school (E) only has places available for the final years of primary education and for secondary education. Therefore, it is not an option for mothers enrolling their children in the initial years of primary education.

The accounts of the mothers show that, before the greater strictness of the sector enrollment system, they could express their school preferences according the hierarchy above in a registration system that required them to list three schools as options. When the sector system was implemented and places began to be distributed through a computerized system, it became more difficult to avoid state school (A). From then on, efforts to enroll children in schools of choice occur mostly after the enrollment is confirmed, through attempts to transfer children, usually in the second year. According to Ana, such efforts are often unsuccessful: “It’s very difficult to get a transfer, only a few mothers do. The young ones all go to [state school (A)] now.”

Avoidance of state school (A) by trying to enroll children in, or transfer them to, another school in the area is a common practice with the mothers participating in the study. A school’s “reputation” in the neighborhood is one of the first criteria when they do not know schools’ daily life. Vanda used that criterion: “I chose [municipal school (B)] because I heard it was a good school.” Ana said she tried to avoid state school (A) because of the comments she heard.

Shortly before we began our study, this school had gone through a very disturbed period as it had scored one of the worst results among state schools in the IDEB test, a fact widely disseminated in the press. The search for an explanation for this result, as well as the efforts to improve it, revealed major difficulties in dealing with families and the neighborhood. One agent at

the Subprefecture Education Office once referred to the neighborhood, in a conversation with the researchers, as “my Gaza Strip”.

The main interpretation for this school’s failure fell on the children and, in particular, their families. With regard to the students, “because they’re worthless, no one can learn anything, that’s why we got such a bad rating”. With regard to the families, because they are “violent”, “unstructured”, “unable to raise a child”, “illiterate”, “are always traveling to Bahia [from where they migrated], and when they’re back, their children are thrown in at the deep end in school”: “we don’t get their support, for all their good intentions... they just can’t help you, because they have nothing to add”⁵.

EDUCATION EFFORTS OF MOTHERS LIVING IN A VULNERABLE AREA

Contrary to the idea that connects families in segregated areas to indifference towards school or to strong alienation from school life, our investigation identified a group of families that, guided by mothers, usually places great expectations on school, making efforts to ensure their children’s education with the resources available to them.

However, it is necessary to look into these expectations and efforts.

Efforts

Indeed, the word ‘effort’ seems most appropriate to describe what these mothers do. It is a different action than what is done by middle class families, which, as the literature has described, tend to develop a regular, systematic and coherent set of strategies to optimize their children’s education. Most times, these families deliberately mobilize to make sure their children succeed in school and accumulate distinguishing characteristics on their educational trajectory, aiming at a difficult conciliation between their personal development, their “happiness” and their “identity” building, as well as the reproduction or improvement of their family’s social status. To that end, they tend to invest early and ambitiously, and adopt an educational logic that is often an extension of the school logic.

While the term “investment” – used to express ways in which middle classes get involved in schooling – designates the use of resources to ensure profitability and necessarily assumes the existence of resources available to be invested, the word “effort”, on the other hand, expresses the intensification

⁵ Bahia is a state in the Northeastern region of Brazil where many of the neighborhood’s inhabitants come from. It is the poorest region of the country.

of a given resource, energy or ability that is neither a surplus nor something accumulated, but rather something that is spent. The investments of middle class families in schooling are aimed at improving a pre-existent family capital – according to Pierre Bourdieu’s sociology – by using it in more profitable school possibilities: e.g., choosing good schools and good peers, student exchange programs, the acquisition of prestigious foreign languages, in sum, anything that might increase the value that education can add to a child’s cultural and social capital.

None of this could be further from the efforts of the mothers we analyze here. Besides not being based on a set of resources accumulated, but on spending non-surplus resources, these efforts tend, by nature, to unevenness, to non-systematicness. They are more tactical than strategic, since far from being organized according to long-term planning, they are a response to the needs and difficulties posed by everyday life – be they demands presented by the school, imperatives of the family’s living conditions and the area they live in, or the relationship between what the family knows about school and the problems their children face in it. Moreover, these efforts can vary greatly according both to families’ changeable living conditions in segregated areas and to the heterogeneity of families themselves.

Efforts to Ensure Attendance

The efforts are primarily made to ensure conditions that the school – which, as an institution, is not used to dealing with social groups living in these areas – assumes to be already ensured, because with other social groups, such conditions are so. These conditions are invisible to school agents and policy makers as they are taken for granted. For example, Lúcia’s great efforts to make sure her children attend two different schools far from their home, after she decided not to enroll them in the neighborhood school, are not visible. Her eldest son is severely handicapped and requires a wheelchair for longer distances; this made their already long way to school a slow and difficult one, not only in the neighborhood’s alleys – many of which unpaved – but also when crossing the merging lane to access the district’s central region.

Indeed, ensuring school attendance – something “natural” to many families from other social groups – does not seem an easy task to many mothers in the area: Ivone’s severe depression and her being connected to few people in São Paulo make it painfully difficult for her to look after herself. Zoraide’s son, Jonathan, has to be forced to go to school everyday, which often involves some slapping. In a survey conducted by the local NGO about children with major

absenteeism or non-enrollment problems, Ivone's son, Vinicius, was only mentioned due to an age-grade distortion, not because he was not attending school. He does not miss classes, and neither does Jonathan.

This survey, conducted in 2012 by the institution (PRADA; KLEPACZ, 2012) with 56 families who were then participating in the program, identified fifteen children and youths out of school. Only two children, who should be enrolled in the initial years of primary education because of their age, were not attending school: one dropped out as he did not want to attend classes anymore; the other had never been enrolled. Among youths, however, the number was greater: six dropped out during the final years of primary and secondary school. The other seven cases were children who did not get a place in day care or preschool. However, the same survey shows that absenteeism is relatively common and, therefore, difficulties to ensure attendance are significant: twelve children and youths had missed classes for the five previous days, approximately, because they were ill or just did not want to go to school. Five others were absent for a period from eleven to twenty days for the same reasons. Apparently, there is some pressure from children not to attend school, frequently associated to health-related issues. Still, as we have seen, there were not many students dropping out of school in the initial years. Therefore, it seems that the mothers are making an effort to keep them in school and ensure their attendance. If we consider data about youths, everything suggests that this effort is not as successful with this age group.

Efforts During the School Trajectory

Moreover, the efforts of the mothers seem to be more necessary or possible – and therefore more present – during certain periods of children's school trajectory. Hence their more episodic or asystematic nature.

Efforts to avoid the neighborhood school

One of these efforts certainly occurs in the allocation of primary school enrollments. As shown earlier when we described the schools the mothers relate to, they tend to try to avoid state school (A), situated in the area, and therefrom to choose one of the two nearest schools: municipal schools (B) and (C). This is rather an act of avoidance – refusing a school compulsorily designated by the sector enrollment system – than one of actually choosing.

A school's quality is primarily indicated by its good or bad "reputation". That "reputation", however, combines the perception of a set of characteristics that constitute the object of evaluation of a school and, at the same time, reveal

mothers' aspirations about school quality in the context they live in.

In this act of avoidance and attempt at choosing, mothers express, albeit not always in a uniform way, expectations to find a school that:

- ensure their children's safety, whether through a disciplinary order that protects them from conflicts within the school, or through mechanisms that protect the surroundings from drug trafficking and violence by groups external and internal to the school;
- have programs and projects that can move children and their families closer to social benefits like free distribution of milk, school uniforms and notebooks;
- have a less homogeneous set of students in terms of their socio-economic, cultural, and geographic profile in order to reduce the negative influence of peers living in the same community or to prevent it from becoming the very expression of the area and its problems; this perception appears in mothers' statements about the neighborhood school when they say that what is "no good" about it is the students, not the school itself, or that it is a favelados' [favela dwellers] school; while these statements reveal the perception of a real problem, they also show the internalization of a stigma and its projection on the children of others;
- provide primary and secondary education, making it easy to move from one basic education phase to the next (hence the preference for schools that provide both);
- be relatively near their home, making children's school commuting easier;
- listen to their aspirations and demands for a quality education that requires students to work hard, while keeping parents informed of their children's development, as vehemently expressed by Fabiana, rather than just calling them to school to complain about their children – Cleide is aware of how undemanding the school is on their children as they have difficulties to read and write but keep getting good grades; as the mothers tend to have little mastery of the school culture, their expectations of quality are focused on the learning of written language and mathematics, as well as the following items:
 - using homework systematically, a key piece of evidence of quality school work – recognized even by Ivone, despite her distance from her son's school routine due to her depression –, and also an important means through which mothers can organize

their children's daily routine (watching TV is only allowed after homework is done) and relationship with the outside environment (playing with friends, going out in the street or to the backyard, after homework only), as we found in the statements of various mothers, like Fabiana. Having noticed that her son usually had little homework, she said: "I ask the women around here, 'Does your son have any homework?' And they say their kids never have any. He never brings any homework, and I ask him, 'What did you learn in school today?' And he'll beat around the bush and won't say much";

- keeping a faculty with a low absenteeism rate, little vacant class time and a strict student early leave policy. In Vanda's words: "[state school (A)] has too many vacant classes now. Teachers are absent too often. So how can they evaluate whether the student can pass to the next grade?";
- providing a curriculum with diversified educational activities (excursions, walks, extra activities) that promote experiences their children would hardly get to have in the neighborhood;
- actual interaction with families, without discrediting them directly or through their children.

Obviously, this summary does not reveal the heterogeneity of reasons why mothers try to avoid the neighborhood school. Indeed, if almost all of them avoid it, it is not for the same reason. The only recurring reason is their search for a safer school, one that provides more protection for children. The emphasis on quality-related factors, as well as the ways of expressing them, however, are not common to all mothers; they tend to define these around student support practices they have developed and around a broader logic that organizes family socialization.

Student support efforts

We found a series of student support practices adopted by mothers. However, these only seem possible during the initial years of primary school, as their own knowledge does not allow them to go much further than helping with simple questions in reading, writing, and mathematics. The other reason is that as children progress in primary school, they become more independent, thus restricting the possibilities of control by mothers.

However, our study identified, with regard to this education phase and in more or less autonomous ways, the following practices on their part: (i)

intensifying school work through activities that aim to repair, anticipate and improve children's school learning; (ii) participating in the schools' everyday life, in order to learn about their children's development; and (iii) regulating interactions with the area.

These practices differ primarily according to mothers' living conditions, which are not common to all of them and are seldom identified in the cases of Júlia, Ivone, Zoraide and, partially, in that of Cleide. Ivone faces great difficulties which are aggravated by psychological disorders. Zoraide and Júlia face difficulties due to their living conditions; and, in Júlia's case, there are forms of socialization which differ greatly from that of the school. In contrast, some mothers become more involved in their relationship with the school – in these cases, these practices become more regular and constant.

One of them is participating in the school's everyday life, particularly at meetings. Some mothers make efforts to attend not only when encouraged – in the case of parent meetings –, but also to offer their help and present questions about the quality of education and the way the school is treating their children: “I always ask about my son and they [the teachers] say he does nothing but chat. Then I ask about his development and they say he's fine, but I don't know why they say he's fine. I don't think he's fine in school” (Fabiana's statement).

Therefore, while the school is concerned with discipline problems, the mother (showing adequate knowledge of school language) is concerned with “development” or “learning”. According to her, that is a complaint she often brings to parent meetings.

As we can see, the mothers' expectations of building a successful trajectory are not always satisfied. Fabiana worries because her son is not progressing and the school is failing to realize this. Marta, one of the two in the group who has never had any school experience, relies on comparisons between her children's performance by the grades they get, as well as information collected at parent meetings. Based on these, she concludes that one of her children is not doing well in school: “Jade and Adriana have developed well in school. They got good grades. But Alex wasn't learning anything in school.”

Criticism towards school repeats in many families participating in the study, but the mothers with better conditions to become involved are able question teachers and principals about the problems they notice. Such questioning is not always accepted by school agents. For example, during a parent meeting,

Fabiana tried to check with her son's teacher why there was no homework. According to her, the answer came as a threat: "Are you complaining that I'm not giving them homework? Just you wait."

The way teachers and other school agents deal with the participation of mothers can apparently change depending on the mother's prestige. The only mother whose interactions with the school seem to be well accepted by it is Edna. In the area she lives in, she plays an important role in children's education. This role is linked to another effort of mothers, which is related to supporting student performance. Edna tutors children, particularly in literacy acquisition, and she guarantees she can teach "[...] anyone [to read and write], in three months. I have students in grades one to four. Here I'm known as aunt Edna. I have a waiting list to accept children. But I have to teach these ones to read and write first" (Edna's statement).

Edna is one of the alternatives in the neighborhood to address learning problems common to many local children. However, this is only possible for families who can afford tutoring. Marta, who works in the neighborhood as a cleaning products saleswoman and relies on financial support from her two older daughters and husband, checked the achievement of one of her children and decided to invest in Edna's classes: "Alex wasn't learning anything in school. So, I sent him to aunt Edna. Then he started to improve. Before, I used to ask my girls for help, but they didn't like it. I can't teach, so I paid aunt Edna for the tutoring" (Marta's statement).

According to Edna, when teachers in the area realize that students are having difficulties to master reading and writing skills, they will tell parents to hire her services. These seem to be effective according to a quick analysis of their notebooks, which show a progress between the initial and later works, a progress that the school is unable to ensure.

To explain why qualified teachers suggest seeking the help of someone without specific education, Edna mentioned structural problems facing public school – "How can you give attention to forty students at once?" – and parents' limited participation in children's school life. However, she also refers to teachers with serious shortcomings. The passage below shows her view of the problem:

Teachers are willing to teach, but indiscipline won't let them. [...] Many kids are troublemakers, and the mothers do nothing but criticize; but there are many good teachers around. I can see they're teaching. I'll check kids' notebooks and I can see the teachers are trying, but they can't give attention to everyone. Mothers won't even look at their children's notebooks." (Edna's statement).

Besides the efforts to repair underachievement, we found in some of these mothers' practices – albeit in a small number – efforts to anticipate and intensify school work, direct or indirectly. Edna says she taught her four-year-old daughter to read and write. Lúcia, in turn, took advice from a teacher and started to require her daughter to practice reading, and encouraged her to do so.

Another relatively common practice with most mothers in the group is to encourage their children to read, which has a prominent role in some families' everyday life. It's worth noting that, except for the children of Fabiana, Rosa, Cleide, and Marta – who attend the least prestigious school –, all children are encouraged to borrow books from the school library. However, even without school encouragement, they try to encourage this in the daily routine at home, as in Rosa's case: "Alanis is bookish, she'll get books at school. Simone likes books with pictures, and she likes her sister to read to her." This practice, i.e., the older sister reading to the younger one, also seems frequent in the family: "Alanis always reads stories to her sister." However, it is noteworthy that the mothers never read to their children – neither do the fathers, the mothers say. In one case, reading appeared as a form of punishment imposed by the father for the children's indiscipline. However, our observation of this family's routine suggests that reading as punishment had positive effects on the eldest daughter, as "Laiana will get books at school to read":

The acquisition of materials and a spatial organization of the home can be seen in nearly all houses. In them, there are always textbooks, a place dedicated to children's homework – most times, the kitchen table –, and part of the budget is set aside for materials and tours suggested by the school. The acquisition of materials allows identifying another education effort, one of a financial nature, which helps with school work.

Families' living conditions make financially based efforts more difficult, particularly to low-income families living on rent. Still, Rosa and Vanda were the only ones who did not have a computer with an internet connection, though acquiring one remains a plan to be realized. However, despite not having it at home, they encourage their children to use it elsewhere. Rosa uses the internet services available at the neighborhood's telecenter: "Alanis goes to the telecenter about three times a week. She'll research on the Internet, do her school work and help me with my own work." Although Vanda encourages the use of computers, she still criticizes the school's position of requiring children to use them for school work, which evidences the school's unawareness of student's real living conditions.

Mothers in this group view computers as a double-purpose resource. On the one hand, they can be a tool for researching and doing school work (therefore related to school work intensification); on the other, they play the role of filling the neighborhood's leisure gaps, becoming an ally in controlling children's free time (though mothers do not seem concerned about controlling the content their children access on the web) and interactions with the area.

The acquisition of books follows the logics and recommendations of the school, therefore the printed material purchased is usually textbooks. Only at Ana's home they have a prominent place in the bookshelf in the living-room – they are, therefore, a symbolic good displayed along with other goods.

Following children's school routine is also part of these mothers' education efforts. This is, in most cases, a constant practice and ends up making the school quite present in the family routine and organization. Most mothers talk to their children about their school day when they return, and systematically check notebooks, whether by themselves or with the help of their older children, to track children's performance and development in school work: "I check his notebook every day." (Fabiana)

Homework and its supervision are treated as a priority, since the mothers often make it the children's duty to do their school work before being allowed to play or watch TV

[Vanda] shows an effort to provide a good education for her children, particularly by checking their homework and supporting them in doing it. She said she will often "check their notebooks", and she will have them do homework at the kitchen table, with the TV off: "They don't always have homework, and I always check their notebooks. Evandro's notebook is the only one I don't check so often, because he's in high school already." She said she keeps close to their children as they do their homework to make sure they will not do a "sloppy job" to get it over quickly, since only after finishing it are they allowed to go out. She also emphasized she demands "extra care" with the handwriting [Vanda]

Two mothers – Ana and Rosa, who resumed their education – conciliate their house chores and their own homework by trying to do it at the same time as their children.

When [her children] arrive, the three will have lunch together, then Ana does the dishes while their children take a rest. Once the kitchen is clean, the three of them will seat at the table again to do their homework. When they are done, the children can go to the yard, watch TV or use the computer (a passage of Ana's description).

The practices of the mothers in supervising their children with their school work can vary significantly according to each mother's education and perceptions of what helping means. To some of them, "helping" is a form of emotional and affective support for their children. From this perspective, sitting by the child as he does his school work, saying encouraging words about his ability to do it, or keeping some silence and a domestic organization adequate to studies are seen as help strategies. To others, "helping" means, for example, contributing to solve problems and challenges related to school work. From this viewpoint, the mothers' ability to supervise and support their children relies heavily on their school experience or their efforts to internalize the school ethos, thus creating conditions for their children to perform successfully. Mothers with short school trajectories and little mastery of school knowledge face more difficulties to help their children – difficulties which increase as their children advance in school. In these cases, some mothers delegate this role by asking the help of an older, more schooled child of theirs or an institution that can provide some assistance:

When I can help them with homework, I'll keep close by. Their teacher teaches them a lot of things that I don't know. To avoid confusing their minds, I'll ask the ladies to explain it to them. I take their notebooks and bring them to the Reading Spot [a kind of library and study center sponsored by the neighborhood's NGO] so the ladies can help them. When there's homework, they'll do it there (Cleide's account).

Some things I know better than they do, and others they know better than I do, so it's like, we help each other [this mother resumed education]. We'll do homework together at the same table to this day. Before, I'd just be close by. Now, I have my homework too. They'll ask my opinion, and I give my opinion a lot. When the subject is tough, I tell them: "Wait a minute, I'll just finish mine." Then I finish it and help them (Ana's statement).

It is worth noting that, according to mothers, when the school does not provide a routine of activities, not only does it limit children's learning possibilities, it also reduces the resources and scope that mothers would have for supervising and controlling their children. The same holds for school notes to mothers about children's progress and behavior. Those notes were allies in guiding their actions: "Before, I knew he wasn't behaving well, so I could say: "no soccer!", "you can't use the computer", "no TV". Then I'd have him study. Now I don't know that. I can't say those things to him" (Fabiana's statement).

Besides school work as a means for controlling everyday routine, two of these mothers adopt practices meant to limit in a direct, explicit way the non-institutionalized interactions between their children and other children in the

area. Lúcia and Edna stand out in the group for employing this interdiction most firmly.

Edna does not allow her daughter to play in the street, encouraging her to do other things during the day, such as drawing, watching TV and using the computer: “Paula doesn’t play in the street, I’d rather she stays indoors.” For the same reasons, Lúcia keeps her children indoors, and organizes the routine so that they will sleep in the afternoon, when not attending school.

Rosa, Ana, Vanda, Cleide, and Fabiana also made it clear they control their children’s interactions with the area, albeit in a less radical way. Ana only allows them to play in the “yard” with their friends, because “[...] I don’t want them to play in the street. Since they were small, I’d tell them to bring their friends over. When they are out, you can’t see what’s going on, what if someone hurts your child, or your child hurts someone” (Ana’s statement).

Rosa, in turn, while not considering the neighborhood a dangerous place as she lives in a more urbanized part of it, only allows her daughters to play in the yard, under her own or the neighbors’ supervision. The same holds for Cleide, who only allows her children to play in the yard with children who live in the same lot. Only Vanda and Fabiana, with little space at home, allow their children to be in touch with other children outside the lot’s protected area. In Fabiana’s case, these interactions are restricted to letting her son play soccer with friends. However, she adopts measures to supervise those interactions. Vanda tries to negotiate with her children so that they will describe to her their routes around the area and let her know when they leave and return home. “How can I lock him up at home? There’s no room. [...] He needs to walk around a little. I let him play soccer. Sometimes, he goes to play soccer, I wait a little while... then I go see if he’s really in the field” (Fabiana’s statement).

According to this mother, before being allowed to go out, her children must: finish their homework; tell her where they are going; with whom they will be, and what time they will return. This permission to stroll around the neighborhood cannot hide a clear concern with violence. Many times during our interview, Vanda acknowledged the “dangers of street violence”, as well as drug use and trafficking in the neighborhood. However, she stresses her “confidence” in her children, saying that “they know how to protect themselves”, and, confident in the way she is raising them, she adds, “I talk with them a lot”. According to this mother, the most significant and recurring spaces where her children circulate and interact are limited to the neighborhood’s NGO, the telecenter and their friends’ places: “Mostly, they stay home. Evandro is more the homebody type,

but he goes to the telecenter a lot. Elaine is lazy, but she plays handball on Mondays. Wellington loves strolling around, he goes out to play soccer, hang around with his friends. [...] I don't care that they go out, as long as the time for them to be back is set. When they're home, they watch TV or play videogame" (Vanda's description excerpt).

While the mothers' education efforts are very similar, the way they regulate their children's contact with the area tends to vary to some extent according to the children's gender and mothers' goals of control. Families with girls tend to forbid contact with the area, while families with boys tend to allow some supervised interaction with other children in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, to the mothers of some boys this interaction is – less frequently – forbidden, or – more frequently – restricted to children they know, and limited to the "yard" in the lot they live in.

Although we were not able to observe at length the role of fathers in these efforts as a whole, we could, in two cases, recognize their presence. Vanda's husband, Dimas, envisions with her a future for which the school has a central contribution to make. Both also seem to share the same educative style, i.e., one based on clear rules and trust. Rosa's husband, André, participates in the leisure activities of his wife and daughter, and helps them with their extra-class activities. In the other cases, there is a silence about the fathers' presence, or negative accounts of it. However, further research about the presence of children's fathers in their education is necessary – a presence which is, moreover, scarcely explored in studies on family and school, as shown by Geraldo Romanelli (2013).

In sum, the mothers' educational efforts as a whole reflect their concern with ensuring for their children a successful education in which they can actually learn. They also reflect a concern with preventing children from being exposed to the risks existing in the area. Such efforts aim at intensifying school work by incorporating reading routines, always providing homework supervision (whether by the mothers themselves or someone else), catch-up classes when necessary, and purchasing educational material. They are also aimed at regulating the children's interactions with the area and controlling their free time – which is occupied primarily as an alternative to controlled or uncontrolled relations with the area.

ASPIRATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

When asked to talk directly about their expectations concerning their children's education, these mothers primarily revealed that they wish their children to have the necessary education to ensure they can enter the job market: "These days, if you have no education, you won't get a job. I want my children to study. This way, they can get a good job and have an easier life than ours now. Without education, everything is more difficult" (Vanda's statement). This expectation may be a little more ambitious in some statements. Vanda's husband expects his children to have access to university. Vanda herself says her daughter wants to be a "veterinarian". Mauro, according to his mother Célia, also wants to have access to higher education.

Despite that, only a few mothers specified, like Vanda – her daughter wants to be a veterinarian, one of her sons wants to be a firefighter, the other wants to "work with electronic things" –, a professional area or, particularly, an education level that marks that expectation. Many of the children had already finished or were about to finish high school. Nothing seems to allow us to infer that it is just a lack of information about the education system. It is as if these mothers, in summarizing their expectations on "education", did not allow themselves to make a concrete plan for the future regarding their children's education, even the ones more closely involved and making great efforts. It is as if they expected their children to go as far as possible without establishing a final target.

In their statements, these mothers show another aspiration. Some, like Rosa, Lúcia, and Edna, think that "education" is not just a way of getting a certificate to enter the job world, but also achieving something else – "wisdom" for Rosa, or something fundamental "to life", as Lúcia and Edna emphasize. Education can bring something important, regardless of the practical gains it will bring or its instrumental role.

Finally, the expectation these mothers place on school and their children – or, rather, on a successful relationship between their children and school – is a difficult one. Difficult because they explicitly ask their children to surpass them, exceed them, rather than be like them. This is because their exhortation of school success is usually accompanied by an implicit or explicit self-deprecation:

I want to give my children what I didn't have. I didn't go to school, I know that if you have no education, you have nothing. I know this because I have no education, so I want them to study. (Cleide's statement)

If I hadn't quit school, I'd have a better life. My husband had no education either, so he'll only get temporary jobs. I tell my children they must study so they won't be like me. So they can get a good job. So they can have a better life. Another life, you know? (Zoraide's statement)

Therefore, to many children and youths, accepting their mothers' expectations and aspirations may be a hard task. It means accomplishing what Jean-Yves Rochex (1995) calls the "triple authorization" as an important condition to succeed in school among the lower classes: since long-term education will imply cultural and social detachment from their parents, children must authorize themselves to separate from their parents, and parents must also authorize them to do it; but children must also acknowledge the legitimacy of their parents' history.

It is this acknowledgment that becomes hard in the case studied: because children are assigned the task of not being like their parents – who "are nothing" –, success in school or even their permanence in it may imply recognizing their own parents' failure, recognizing that they are nothing. This can make a successful school trajectory difficult or even impossible as it implies denying those one loves.

A compromise that is possible to youths and children is that their exceeding their parents would mean a reparation: their parents got justice. In this case, chances of a happier relationship with school would be greater.

FAMILIES LESS COMMITTED TO SCHOOL

Three mothers showed, for different reasons and in different ways, less commitment to their children's education. However, all three kept their children's attendance to school and tried to solve the problems their children had in their relationship with the school over the course of their schooling.

The first one is Ivone. Her illness, by itself, makes looking after herself a hard if not impossible task. Connected to few people in São Paulo, and without a network of family and friends to support her, she depends completely on her partner. She does not know the city, or even São Miguel Paulista's central area. With no stable links, consumed by idea of being crazy, by the desire to run away, and by the interdiction of living in sin, there is little room in her daily

life for Vinicius' school problems or his needs in general. However, his son's problems do emerge in the flow of her speech: he is not learning to read, has bowel incontinence, has been untalkative, his only interest is fighting games, his stepfather does not get along with him, he wants the boy to learn to read by reading the Bible, and wants him to be a polite boy, using formulas of good manners and politeness – “thank you”, “please”, “would you like?”

The other two are Zoraide and Júlia. It is on them that the effect of the area is more acutely felt, i.e., how the area restricts their relationship with the school.

Zoraide lives in a 25-square-meter house with her five children and her husband. During the day, she looks after two nephews and helps neighbors supervise 25 children who live there and play in the yard. Unlike other shared lots where close relationships of trust and solidarity develop, the lot Zoraide lives in is threatened by drugs and violence. Her family income is one of the lowest among the families we interviewed. The children cannot stay indoors because there is no room for them, but she cannot leave them by themselves in the yard because of the risks. In one visit, there were ten children inside the house and no conditions for school work. It is Zoraide who always takes the children to school and picks them up. They are enrolled in different periods of the day to avoid overloading the use of space. She recognizes she has neither the time nor the knowledge to supervise their school life.

Júlia lived (at the time of the study) in even more difficult conditions than Zoraide. She was the household's main income provider as her current partner did not have a stable job. Her previous partners did not help her provide for the children. She had a total of seven children. Five were living with her and her senile father, as her eldest had been killed and the second eldest had formed his own family. Her third eldest is under juvenile probation supervision.

To provide for her family, Júlia resorted to several sources: she knew all income support programs and relied on her father's pension. She had temporary jobs. When she died, almost at the end of our study, she was handing out political leaflets in the streets. She knew the area, its power games, and the alliances she could make. She participated in rights advocacy organizations and in the neighborhood's association. She knew everybody. She knew the neighborhood's NGO well. She was admired. However, of all families we studied, her home was the most exposed to the risks of the area. It is situated just by the drug hole, without any form of protection from it. Her children play in the street. Even though she said she supervised them, it is an impossible task on an everyday basis. She knew little about her children's everyday

life in school, and the reasons she gave for transferring her daughter to a better school are related to an unexplained violence episode she supposedly suffered.

But what differentiates Júlia most from the other mothers and separates her furthest from the school world is the logic under which socialization occurs in her family. If the other mothers tend to protect their children from the “street” and its dangers, the logic that seems to guide the education of Júlia’s children is the very logic of the “street” or the area, which is marked by a great detachment from school values. It is as if Júlia were raising her children for life in the area, for its hardship, while the other mothers, for a life out of it or resisting to it, to its risks, and against its values.

In Júlia’s case, one could hardly fail to see the discrepancy between the way socialization occurs in the family and the way it occurs in school. To realize the extent of the distance between the two logics, it is worth remembering the practices present in the mode of socialization in other families in which they defend themselves from the culture of the “street” or the area: although the electricity at Rosa’s home is supplied by an illegal connection, she will have her daughters save electricity in their baths because they will have to do that in the future. She and her husband plan their trips to Bahia, including the places they will visit and the amounts they will spend. The whole family goes to Tietê Park for bicycle rides. They have strong ties of solidarity with their neighbors and participate actively in the Catholic community. The children play in the yard, usually by themselves, since Rosa does not want them to play with schoolmates from the neighborhood. The education style seems to be based on negotiated authority.

It is true – the study shows this – that these mothers predominantly guide their children’s education based on the mode of socialization that Anette Lareau (2007) called a “natural growth”: parents provide basic care for children and watch over their growth. But it is also true that the area and its risks – the study also allows inferring this – determine, according to most of the mothers we studied, changes in this way of socialization, imposing the need to supervise the sociability and interaction with other children by creating routines, establishing and negotiating rules; and these practices are not so common in the lower-class families studied by Lareau. It may be that the families who are most sensitive to the negative influences of the area, and most willing to internalize these practices in their socialization processes, are the ones relatively most willing to use the school as a protective shield, and

more or less inclined – in the long term or in the next generation – to break with the area.

Maybe in this social and territorial upward disposition, in this hope of mobility – in both its meanings – resides the hope placed in school.

That does not seem to be the case with Zoraide, Ivone or, particularly, Júlia. These three women basically react to the hardships and urgencies of the present, and that is why it is so difficult or even impossible for them to envision a more distant future in which the school might be integrated. Maybe that is why Júlia, with the sense of reality that is typical of her, knew that the school would not educate her children so they could take care of themselves in the area's harsh reality: it would not give them the quick, sharp tongue, the cunning, the sense of opportunity, the toughness to endure aggression, the resistance to authority, a certain anger mixed with tough resentment. This – it seems – she was able to transmit to them.

Thus, the relationship with the school seems to be organized around the vulnerability of both the area and the families. Both elements matter, along with a configuration of elements that can only be described case by case: certainly, among the mothers most involved in schooling are the ones with higher income and who have spent more years in school; but among them are also lower-income, illiterate mothers; apparently, the number of children is an important factor, but not when there is a generation gap between siblings. Finally, in a microsocial scale, the dispositions of mothers can hardly be reduced to one factor or even a set of factors.

However, most of the group studied tend to be distant from Júlia's characteristics and closer to Rosa's. On the other hands, the descriptions made by educational agents about the families in the area are closer to Júlia than Rosa. It is possible that the selection of our group, i.e., through a mother support program, has led us to women with a more positive disposition towards school and closer to the school world. Other selection processes might have led us to more "Júlias", with the same straightforward, non-euphemistic language, her resistance to authority, her sense of humor, her opposition to school values.

In any case, families in vulnerable areas – and this is what our investigation shows – are not formed only by Júlias, nor only by Rosas. From a distant viewpoint, in a macro-sociological scale, families are very similar to each other and look homogeneous with regard to their living conditions and ownership of cultural resources; but in a closer examination, in a micro-sociological

scale, they are very different and heterogeneous regarding both their living conditions and ownership of cultural resources, and, in particular, their dispositions towards school, which translate into their efforts and aspirations for their children's education.

Perhaps, seeing these families close up, getting to know them without considering them always similar to others or unique, is the great lesson we learned in this study. Because only thus can we actually make their involvement in their children's education, their efforts and their aspirations visible, thereby strengthening them so that, unlike the investigation showed, they will not fall apart against the wall of indifference or ignorance there is in public policy and in the school institution.

Família, escola, território vulnerável

Resumo: Este artigo busca trazer elementos para compreender como famílias residentes em territórios vulneráveis se relacionam com a escolarização de seus filhos. Para tanto realizou pesquisa de inspiração etnográfica junto a 12 famílias moradoras de um bairro de periferia da cidade de São Paulo. As mães foram as principais informantes. A metodologia de análise dos dados consistiu na construção de retratos sociológicos de cada uma das mães e numa análise transversal desses retratos. Os resultados permitem concluir que as mães pesquisadas atribuem um grande valor à escolarização de seus filhos, embora o grau do envolvimento com essa escolarização seja dependente do grau de vulnerabilidade das famílias. Permitem também caracterizar esse tipo de envolvimento, os significados atribuídos à escola, e a natureza e os tipos de esforços realizados para assegurar a permanência na escola e uma escolarização mais longa, limitada, porém, em geral, pela conclusão do ensino médio.

Palavras-chave: Efeito território. Desigualdade socioespacial. Relação família e escola.

Familia, escuela, territorio vulnerable

Resumen: Este artículo busca proporcionar elementos para comprender cómo las familias que residen en territorios vulnerables se relacionan con la escolarización de sus hijos. Para ello, se realizó una investigación de inspiración etnográfica con 12 familias residentes de un barrio de la periferia de la ciudad de São Paulo. Las madres fueron las principales informantes. La metodología de análisis de datos consistió en construir retratos sociológicos de cada una de las madres y realizar un análisis transversal de tales retratos. Los resultados permiten concluir que las madres consultadas atribuyen un gran valor a la escolarización de sus hijos, aunque el grado de implicación en tal escolarización dependa del grado de vulnerabilidad de las familias. Asimismo, estos resultados permiten caracterizar este tipo de implicación, los significados atribuidos a la escuela y la naturaleza y los tipos de esfuerzos realizados para garantizar la permanencia en la escuela y una escolarización más larga, limitada, sin embargo, en general, por la conclusión de la enseñanza media.

Palabras clave: Efecto territorio. Desigualdad socioespacial. Relación familia y escuela.

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