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POLSKIE TOWARZYSTWO PEDAGOGICZNE

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Ethnography and education in Portugal: a brief look

*Teaching and ethnography are similar forms of art.*¹

1. Ethnography, education and the ethnographer-teacher

Several authors have looked into possible ways in which ethnography and education are articulated, particularly with regard to education in schools. Peter Woods, in his work *Inside Schools* presents us with several possible connections. For him "ethnography, like teaching, is a blend of art and science."² And he adds: "In fact, in teaching many methods of ethnography are practiced, and it could even be said that teaching and ethnography are similar forms of art."³

Woods suggests ten distinct school contexts that can be studied ethnographically⁴. Still, he sees the highest possibilities of articulation in the relationship between ethnography and the teacher. According to him, "Teachers have notable experience as participatory observers and as interviewers on this base."⁵ And more explicitly: "Teachers can use ethnographic techniques in the evaluation of their work, in students' motivation and learning or in their own career and development. This points to another advantage of the approach. Ethnography offers researchers enormous control over the work carried out. The researcher is the main research instrument."⁶

Graham Hitchcock and David Hughes as well share the same idea when they state: "We argued that the interpretative, ethnographic tradition was for a number of reasons best suited to school-based research conducted by the teacher."⁷

I have commented on this particular connection between the ethnographer and the teacher in another work, a comment that I reproduce here:

Teachers work in a localized social context, in both the school and the classroom. They are, simultaneously, observers and participants in that context although at this juncture they give an uneven weight to each of these conditions. They need to know not only how to *describe* the social reality in which they are interacting and of which they are part, but also, *at the same time*, to know how to *interpret*, so that they can *act* accordingly and timely (which, usually means simultaneously). Teachers still deal, sometimes continuously, with multicultural

¹ P. Woods, *La Escuela por Dentro – La Etnografía en la Investigación Educativa*. Barcelona 1987, Ediciones Paidós Ibérica.

² *Ibidem*, p. 20.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 24-29.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁷ G. Hitchcock and D. Hughes, *Research and the Teacher – A Qualitative Introduction to School-based Research*. London 1991, Routledge, 2nd ed.

situations (in the relation, for example, between the school culture and the local cultures which students and their families represent). This points to an intercultural pedagogical posture, to a dialogical cultural action, for which the ethnographic method seems particularly suited given its ability to put cultural translation into practice.

Ethnography seems, thus, to appear as singularly adequate to the teaching profession. Moreover: I believe that it is not too much to say that all reflexive teachers are, in some ways, ethnographers, as far as they show an ability to listen and to be empathic towards the *other* (students, colleagues, families or others) and of understanding others' ways of understanding, of decentring; as well as an ability to reflect on their own action in order to change it whenever they consider it necessary. The privileged alliance between theory and practice, between reflection and action, is, finally, a synonym for any *reflexive* practice of teachers, researchers or others.⁸

This alliance raises the possibility of any teacher being a practitioner ethnographer, a *practitioner researcher*, i.e. someone that studies the same context in which s/he is inserted on a day-to-day basis, at least professionally. The connection with ethnography goes beyond this binomial, but it cannot be ignored.

2. Between fashion and orthodoxy

"Ethnography risks being fashionable", says Luís Fernandes⁹. This statement may have different interpretations depending on the discipline to which the social scientist belongs. For an anthropologist it may sound odd since ethnography has always been structural to the definition of that domain; for a sociologist or a psychologist (like Luís Fernandes) it may sound strange for the opposite reason.

In sociology's case, particularly in sociology of education, perhaps it can be said that there no longer is any reason to find this odd, given the importance this method is assuming, even if it is exaggerated to say that it is in fashion.

We know that 20th century sociology, except for the period of the 20s and 30s with the so-called Chicago School¹⁰, found in quantification a way of strategically affirming the discipline's scientific status and of standardizing procedures at a time, mainly after World War II and more starkly in the United States, when the profession of the sociologist was affirming itself. Only after the 80s, roughly, qualitative methods began, for different reasons, to (re)affirm their place, which became visible in the sociology of education, for example, in the new agenda proposed by the British self-proclaimed *New Sociology of Education*, that had been surfacing since the previous decade.

It can be said that quantitative and qualitative methods are entering a mode of pacific coexistence, even giving rise to many mixed studies, in which new theoretical concerns are

⁸ P. Silva, *Etnografia e Educação – Reflexões a Propósito de uma Pesquisa Sociológica*. Porto 2003, Profedições, p. 115-116.

⁹ L. Fernandes, *Um diário de campo nos territórios psicotrópicos: as facetas da escrita etnográfica*. In: T. Caria, *Experiência Etnográfica em Ciências Sociais*. Porto 2003, Edições Afrontamento, p. 23.

¹⁰ I write 'so-called' taking into account the observation made by Madureira Pinto: "Contrary to what is suggested when referring to the «Chicago School», among the protagonists of the sociological studies conducted from the 20s till the mid-30s in the University of Chicago, there was not any notion that they formed an intellectual perspective with identity and autonomy." (J. M. Pinto, *Indagação Científica, Aprendizagens Escolares, Reflexividade Social*. Porto 2007, Edições Afrontamento, pp. 81-82, footnote 105).

not absent, namely the search for the articulation of macro and micro levels, as well as the 'discovery' of the *meso* level.

What is maybe notable is how fast qualitative methods are gaining space, also those of an ethnographic kind. So much so that only a decade later we see authors such as Steven Jordan and David Yeomans¹¹ warning against, in the sociology of education field, the eventual danger of a 'new orthodoxy' of an ethnographic order!

Removing some of the exaggeration of this warning, it still is, like Luís Fernandes' sentence, a clear sign of how the ethnographic method does not deal much with the, now increasingly out of date, problem of its legitimacy amidst the socio-scientific community, including in Portugal.

A short note to relate that in Portugal only after the establishment of a democratic regime, in 1974, we see a "refounding of sociology"¹². Its evolution was fast and fruitful, though. The same can be said about sociology of education¹³, where we find the publication of ethnographic studies consistently emerging from the early 90s, which means that some of the fieldwork was conducted or began being developed in the previous decade.

3. On the criteria used

In this section I try to present a brief overview of works of an ethnographic nature, in the field of education, in Portugal. The intention is not to be exhaustive but more to present different kinds of works. To arrive at the sample below I used three criteria, though: 1) book format; 2) research conducted and published in Portugal; 3) works on ethnography by Portuguese authors. The first criterion is, I acknowledge, reductionist, to the extent that it does not include, for example, scientific papers or unpublished academic dissertations (namely masters and doctoral theses). It was, still, the criterion possible given the existing circumstances. The second criterion allowed the inclusion of works from foreign anthropologists, in one case, the work of the Chilean Raul Iturra, for many years now living and working in Portugal, and in another case, the work of the Brazilian Neusa Gusmão, who in fact also published the work referenced here in her native country. With the final criterion I avoided translations of works from foreign authors, even though there are some which are quite interesting.¹⁴

¹¹ S. Jordan and D. Yeomans, *Critical Ethnography: Problems in Contemporary Theory and Practice*, "British Journal of Sociology of Education" 1995, Vol. 16, N° 3, 389-408.

¹² J. M. Pinto, *Indagação...*, op. cit.

¹³ S. Stoer, *Notas Sobre o Desenvolvimento da Sociologia da Educação em Portugal*. In: A. J. Esteves e S. Stoer (eds.), *A Sociologia na Escola – Professores, Educação e Desenvolvimento*. Porto 1992. Edições Afrontamento, 23-52.; S. Stoer and A. J. Afonso, *25 anos de sociologia da educação em Portugal: alguns percursos, problemáticas e perspectivas*. "Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais" 1999, n° 52-53, 307-331; A. J. Afonso, *A sociologia da educação em Portugal. Elementos para a configuração do «estado da arte»*. In: A. Teodoro e C. A. Torres, *Educação Crítica e Utopia – Perspectivas para o Século XXI*. Porto 2005, Edições Afrontamento.

¹⁴ For example, R. Bogdan and S. Biklen, *Investigação Qualitativa em Educação*. Porto 1994, Porto Editora; M. Lessard-Hébert, G. Goyette and G. Boutin, *Investigação Qualitativa – Fundamentos e Práticas*. Lisbon 1994, Instituto Piaget; M. Zabalza, *Diários de Aula*. Porto 1994, Porto Editora; R. Burgess, *A Pesquisa de Terreno*, Oeiras 1997, Celta; P. Woods, *La Escuela por Dentro – La Etnografía en la Investigación Educativa*. Barcelona 1999, Ediciones Paidós Ibérica; G. J. S. Dei and G. S. Johal, *Metodologias de Investigação Anti-Racistas – Questões Críticas*. Mangualde 2008, Edições Pedagogo.

4. Some ethnographies

In 1987 *Do Outro Lado da Escola* (The Other Side of School) was published, a collective work by Ana Benavente, António Firmino da Costa, Fernando Luís Machado and Manuela Castro Neves¹⁵. The work results from the intervention carried out by the team of authors in the ECO (*Escola-Comunidade*; School-Community) Project, a project that included research and intervention and that happened in several places, in different kinds of areas (both rural and urban)¹⁶. In this case, it was conducted in a traditional neighbourhood in Lisbon. The book's format is innovative, integrating short accounts of varied episodes that occurred during the research, and using language that is as accessible as it is rigorous, sometimes even poetic. At the same time, it integrates several pages in a different colour where information and theoretical and methodological reflection on several aspects of the research are put forward, including some of the narrated episodes, always using clear and precise language. The team comprised three researchers from higher education institutions (two of them with formal training in sociology; the third one also having a career in this area), and a primary school teacher. This work is, in some ways, singular and precocious.

Maybe it is not accidental that the two works that are reviewed next come from anthropologists. On one hand, it was within this discipline that ethnography developed, thus leaving a considerable trail; on the other hand, and unlike sociology's interregnum during the five decades of dictatorship (1926–1974)¹⁷, anthropology continued to develop during this period, both with fieldwork being carried out in the former colonies, mostly in Africa, and, later, with fieldwork being carried out in Portugal's rural inland.

It is, in fact, in this rural inland that the works of the first two selected authors are situated. Still in the 80s, Raul Iturra coordinated a team conducting an ethnographic study in a village in Beira Alta which gave rise to multiple objects of study¹⁸. Iturra was concerned with educational issues, and published two books, with distinct but supplementary features. The first one, *A Construção Social do Insucesso Escolar – Memória e Aprendizagem em Vila Ruiva* (The Social Construction of School Failure – Memory and Learning in Vila Ruiva), corresponds to the ethnography itself; the second one, *Fugirás à Escola para Trabalhar a Terra* (You Will Run from School to Work the Land)¹⁹, is a set of two essays. In both of them he reflects on the fracturing distance between the educational institution's

¹⁵ A. Benavente; A. F. Costa; F. L. Machado and M. C. Neves, *Do Outro Lado da Escola*. Lisbon 1987, Edições Rolim/IED.

¹⁶ In this respect, see R. D'Espiney and R. Canário (orgs.), *Uma Escola em Mudança com a Comunidade – Projecto ECO, 1986-1992: Experiências e Reflexões*. Lisbon 1994 Instituto de Inovação Educacional, Ministério da Educação.

¹⁷ It is José Madureira Pinto who labels it interregnum, characterizing this period as it follows: "With the military coup of 1926, Portuguese intellectual history knows a decisive break. For almost five decades of a dictatorial regime, any sociological reflection was confronted with the ideological-repressive installed apparatus as an activity potentially contrary to the security of the State, which should then be watched, censured and repressed." (J. M. Pinto, *Indagação...*, op. cit.).

¹⁸ Cf. N. Porto, *O Corpo, a Razão, o Coração – A Construção Social da Sexualidade em Vila Ruiva*. Lisbon 1991, Escher; P. Raposo, *Corpos, Arados e Romarias entre a Fé e a Razão em Vila Ruiva*. Lisbon 1991, Escher; F. Reis, *Educação, Ensino e Crescimento: O Jogo Infantil e a Aprendizagem do Cálculo Económico em Vila Ruiva*. Lisbon 1991, Escher.

¹⁹ R. Iturra, *A Construção Social do Insucesso Escolar – Memória e Aprendizagem em Vila Ruiva*. Lisbon 1990, Escher; R. Iturra, *Fugirás à Escola para Trabalhar a Terra*. Lisbon 1990, Escher.

literate culture and what he calls *cultural mind*, i.e., the local rural culture. Iturra shows us how we are in the presence of a difficult relationship, where a considerable amount of rural children's school failure can be read as a form of resistance, or as a way of affirming their culture of origin, as an attempt to preserve their social and cultural identity. Iturra furthermore shows us how the internal social stratification of the village produces effects in terms of the school progression, children of shopkeepers being those who manage a less painful progression, following a strategy of instrumentalization of the schooling process.

It could be said that Iturra lays the ground in Portugal for an anthropology of education, having, in Ricardo Vieira, one of his followers. And Vieira is precisely the author to be presented next, with a work published in 1992, *Entre a Escola e o Lar* (Between School and Home)²⁰, where he is also concerned with analysing the mismatch between school culture and local culture, in an inland village of the central region of Portugal. As he states: "education in schools aims at cultural homogenization, demanding knowledge as understanding and disregarding the know-how acquired before schooling. (...) There is a mismatch of cognitive styles, logics, between rural world children and those who easily learn the abstract, decontextualized knowledge reproduced by the school."²¹

As we see here, Iturra and Vieira focus on the problematic relationship between the school and cultural diversity, revealing a set of concerns and concepts that point towards a reflection that is also sociological, even though it comes from anthropology.

With a similar group of concerns, and published in the same year as Vieira's work, we have *Escola e Aprendizagem para o Trabalho num País da (Semi)periferia Europeia* (School and Learning to Labour in a (Semi-)Peripheral European Country), by Stephen Stoer and Helena Araújo²².

It comes from research conducted in the north of Portugal, in a semi-rural area, on the relationship between a school (of the elementary and junior-high school level [grades 6 to 9]) and its respective community. This study has several particularities. One of them is that it explicitly assumes a *critical ethnography* approach, i.e. it joins research with intervention, which is rare²³. A second particularity has to do with the strategy employed by the authors, materializing in an abundance of transcripts of the spoken words of students. Another particularity points to the methodological imagination shown by the authors. One example is their use, with the students, of devices such as genealogies and journals, which by involving the students themselves, allowed them to cross a diachronic perspective (through the use of genealogies constructed by the students and their families) with a synchronic one (through the use of journals, written by 9th grade students for seven consecutive days). The interesting methodological work carried out brought forth an equally interesting book by Araújo and Stoer²⁴. *Escola e Aprendizagem para o Trabalho...* (School and Learning to Labour...) borrows the title from the classic *Learning to Labour*, by Paul Willis. Like

²⁰ R. Vieira, *Entre a Escola e o Lar*. Lisbon 1992, Escher.

²¹ Ibidem, 133.

²² S. Stoer, H. Araújo, *Escola e Aprendizagem para o Trabalho num País da (Semi)periferia Europeia*. Lisbon 1992, Escher.

²³ It is rather more frequent to find studies that assume an action-research approach than studies assuming a critical ethnography approach (the issue regarding the relationship between these two concepts and some other related ones will not be discussed here).

²⁴ It should be noted that the use of genealogies and journals, together with other devices such as games, plays and stories told by children about their day-to-day lives, is what a research team –

Willis, Stoer and Araújo debate the existing relation between school culture and local culture and the problem of social and cultural reproduction.

Still in that same year, Licínio Lima's book, *A Escola como Organização e a Participação na Organização Escolar* (The School as Organization and Participation in School Organization)²⁵ came out. It is a study with distinct features, either in terms of its object, or in terms of the methodology. Substantively, it is a reference work that marked the field of organizational studies in the educational domain in Portugal²⁶. Focusing on the study of a high-school from a city in the north of Portugal, where the fieldwork was conducted, the text – a dense text, filled with theoretical reflections and a historical perspective, particularly regarding the various standards referring to school organization – dilutes the usual 'external signs' of ethnographic research texts, such as fieldnote transcripts, or giving a voice to the actors by using first person spoken word accounts. This may lead to more easily forgetting that we are in presence of a study that included ethnographic research as is more than once made explicit by Licínio Lima.

In the following year, we witness the publication of another organizational study, now conducted in two different high-schools of Lisbon, where Rui Gomes relates the concepts of organizational culture (of the school) and professional culture (of the teacher). Hence the title: *Culturas de Escola e Identidades dos Professores* (School Cultures and Identities of Teachers)²⁷.

Coincidentally, the next study to be presented, *A Parceria Professores/Pais na Construção de Uma Escola do 1º Ciclo* (The Teacher/Parent Partnership in Constructing a Primary School)²⁸, from 1997, is still centred around analysing a school, although, especially focusing on the relationships between the school and the families and community. Rui Canário, Clara Rolo and Mariana Alves selected a school in an area of Lisbon. It is an area with a considerable population density, made mostly of blocks of flats. The majority of the population is, this time, close to the new middle class, 60% of the parents having a higher-education degree. Sociologically, it thus raises issues that are different from those faced by the previous studies, since here there is a relative cultural continuity between school culture and local culture.

Still in 1997, João Teixeira Lopes publishes *Tristes Escolas – Práticas Culturais Estudantis no Espaço Escolar Urbano* (Sad Schools – Students' Cultural Practices in the Urban School Space)²⁹, a work that unveils students' practices in high-schools in Porto "through direct prolonged and systematic observation" (p. 32) and that has the particularity of breaking with the dominant tendency of educational research of over-representing the points of view of teachers and students.

including, besides Stoer and Araújo, Luiza Cortesão, José Alberto Correia and Maria José Casa-Nova, among others – has called *pedagogical devices* or *devices of pedagogical differentiation* aiming at the construction of knowledge on local culture and at moving from the monocultural to the intercultural (cf., for example, also Cortesão *et. al.*, 1995).

²⁵ L. Lima, *A Escola como Organização e a Participação na Organização Escolar*. Braga 1992, Universidade do Minho.

²⁶ Coincidentally, these latter two works reviewed here (Stoer and Araújo, 1992; Lima, 1992) were given *ex-aequo* the Rui Grácio Award from the Sociedade Portuguesa de Ciências da Educação (Portuguese Society of Sciences of Education), as would happen with another work by Ricardo Vieira (1999), that will be reviewed later in the text.

²⁷ R. Gomes, *Culturas de Escola e Identidades dos Professores*. Lisbon 1993, Educa.

²⁸ Ministério da Educação, Lisbon.

²⁹ J. Teixeira Lopes, *Tristes Escolas – Práticas Culturais Estudantis no Espaço Escolar Urbano*. Porto 1997, Edições Afrontamento.

Also in 1997 Teresa Vasconcelos saw translated her doctoral dissertation (originally written in English given the fact she got her academic degree in a university from The United States of America). In *Ao Redor da Mesa Grande* (Around the Large Table)³⁰ we are before a mix of an ethnographic and biographical study, conducted in a public kindergarten from Lisbon outskirts, where it is analyzed the reflexive practice of a pre-school woman teacher that departs from the pedagogy of the Movement of the Modern School in order to build a singular educational practice. The daily interaction with this teacher and her children during almost two years made possible to Vasconcelos to put in practice a reflexive ethnography that allowed her to state that "I believe that the research I made is one of the most democratic forms of research."³¹

In 1998, José Diogo³² returned to the issue of the relationship between schools and families, now based on a study conducted in a 6th to 9th grade school in the southern margin of Lisbon's Metropolitan Area, a region with a heterogeneous population, including middle class, lower class and ethnic minorities. Diogo has the particularity of, while describing the methodology used, offering elements indicating the inclusion of ethnographic methods even though he does not, at any point, call it that. We are here, to some extent, in a symmetrical position to that of Licínio Lima (1992). Substantively, though, he assumes some of Lima's concerns, namely those relating to *participation*. Thus the subtitle: *Parceria Escola-Família: A Caminho de Uma Educação Participada* (School-Family Partnership: Towards a Participatory Education). Diogo deals still, although not centrally, with the sociological splitting of ethnic order.

In that same year *O Trabalho das Crianças – De Pequenino é que se Torce o Pepino (e o Destino)* (The Children's Work) Graça Alves Pinto's work appears³³. It is a study conducted in a rural area, in the north-east region of Trás-os-Montes. The author reflects on the life conditions of these children, including their relationship with school. Being a theme with notorious social visibility, it is curious to note that it was not the focus of attention of a sociologist or of an anthropologist, but instead of a geographer.

In 1999 Ricardo Vieira publishes *Histórias de Vida e Identidades – Professores e Interculturalidade* (Life Stories and Identities – Teachers and Interculturality)³⁴, a work also containing an ethnographic component where the author offers an interesting theoretical and conceptual reflexion (through the notions of the *deserter* [*trânsfuga*] and *oblate* [*oblato*] teacher, inspired by Bourdieu) on the professional and personal routes of teachers from various teaching levels and the, sometimes symmetrical, ways in which they deal with the issues of cultural diversity, even when having similar trajectories.

Speaking of teachers' identities, in 2000 Telmo Caria published *A Cultura Profissional dos Professores* (The Professional Culture of Teachers)³⁵, where, through an ethnography

focused on a northern region city school, he analyses "the use of knowledge in a work context" during a period of school reform. It is an extensive work, a 'two-in-one', since it also thoroughly presents his conception of ethnography as a method.

In that same year, *Lógicas de Acção nas Escolas* (Logics of Action in Schools), by Manuel Jacinto Sarmento³⁶, arrived on the bookshelves, a work defined by the author as "an ethnographic case study" on "the logics of organized action" in three primary schools. It also contains an interesting reflection on the ethnographic method, specifically on the "collaborative dimension" of the ethnographic text.

In 2002 Maria José Casa-Nova publishes *Etnicidade, Género e Escolaridade – Estudo em Torno das Socializações Familiares de Género numa Comunidade Cigana da Cidade do Porto* (Ethnicity, Gender and Scholaryity – Research around Familial and Gender Socialization in a Gipsy Community in the City of Porto)³⁷. In this work, explicitly assumed as a 'reflexive ethnography', the researcher reflects, at a conceptual and theoretical level, on how the issues of ethnicity, social class and gender are articulated, as well as on the relationship between Gipsies and school. For example, it reflects on the use of concepts such as *place of ethnicity*. This then is a work that became essential to deepen the debate on these issues in Portugal.

In that same year Maria Luísa Homem published *O Jardim de Infância e a Família – As Fronteiras da Cooperação* (Kindergarten and Family – The Borders of Cooperation)³⁸, an ethnography with two particularities: a) it focuses on the problematic family-school relationship in the context of kindergarten education; b) it does this through studying a private institution. These two situations are relatively rare.

In 2003 I published *Escola-Família, Uma Relação Armadilhada – Interculturalidade e Relações de Poder* (School-Family, A Trapped Relationship – Interculturality and Power Relations)³⁹, where I seek to problematize this relationship, articulating simultaneously macro, meso and micro sociological perspectives. The fieldwork took place in three public primary schools and in their communities, during two school years. In this work I adopt the school-family-community perspective as a relationship between cultures and crossed by a structural sociological break organized around social class, gender and ethnicity. Aiming at writing a study of the school-family interface, I sought to grant visibility to the meanings of the intervention of a plurality of social actors, central and peripheral: children, parents, teachers, parents' associations, school directors, parents-teachers, communities...

Also in that year, Pedro Abrantes goes back to the issue of student/juvenile cultures in *Os Sentidos da Escola – Identidades Juvenis e Dinâmicas de Escolaridade* (The Meanings of School – Juvenile Identities and Dynamics of Scholaryity)⁴⁰, listening to the points of view of the young and their practices.

³⁰ T. Vasconcelos, *Ao Redor da Mesa Grande*. Porto 1997, Porto Editora.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 251.

³² J. M. L. Diogo, *Parceria Escola-Família – A Caminho de uma Educação Participada*, Porto 1998, Porto Editora.

³³ G. Alves Pinto, *O Trabalho das Crianças – De Pequenino é que se Torce o Pepino (e o Destino)*. Oeiras 1997, Celta Editora.

³⁴ R. Vieira, *Histórias de Vida e Identidades – Professores e Interculturalidade*. Porto 1999, Edições Afrontamento.

³⁵ T. Caria, *A Cultura Profissional dos Professores*. Lisbon 2000, F. C. Gulbenkian/F.C.T. - Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia.

³⁶ M. Jacinto Sarmento, *Lógicas de Acção nas Escolas*. Lisbon 2000, Instituto de Inovação Educacional, Ministério da Educação.

³⁷ M. J. Casa-Nova, *Etnicidade, Género e Escolaridade – Estudo em Torno das Socializações Familiares de Género numa Comunidade Cigana da Cidade do Porto*. Lisbon 2002, Instituto de Inovação Educacional, Ministério da Educação.

³⁸ M. L. Homem, *O Jardim de Infância e a Família – As Fronteiras da Cooperação*. Lisbon 2002, Instituto de Inovação Educacional, Ministério da Educação.

³⁹ P. Silva, *Escola-Família, Uma Relação Armadilhada – Interculturalidade e Relações de Poder*. Porto 2003, Edições Afrontamento.

⁴⁰ P. Abrantes, *Os Sentidos da Escola – Identidades Juvenis e Dinâmicas de Escolaridade*. Oeiras 2003, Celta Editora.

In 2004 we have several works. Manuela Ferreira's "A Gente Gosta É de Brincar Com Os Outros Meninos" – *Relações Sociais Entre Crianças num Jardim de Infância* ("What We Like Is to Play With The Other Kids" – Social Relations Among Children in a Nursery School)⁴¹, has the particularity of focusing on children, analysing, as social relations, the various kinds of interactions they establish in the kindergarten – either among themselves or with different adults. It is a work that claims the perspective of Sociology of Childhood and that, as such, approaches the specificity of ethnographing children, including the particular epistemological obstacles this situation creates.

Irene Santos, with *Quem Habita os Alunos? – A Socialização de Crianças de Origem Africana* (Who Inhabits the Students? – The Socialization of Children of African Origin)⁴², tries to make us understand the everyday lives of children – most of them of African origin – living in ethnic minority neighbourhoods – Alto da Cova da Moura, Outurela, Portela – around Lisbon. Besides the children's perspective, she also emphasises their relation to school and families.

Neusa Gusmão, in *Os Filhos da África em Portugal – Antropologia, Multiculturalidade e Educação* (Children of Africa in Portugal – Anthropology, Multiculturality and Education)⁴³, develops an ethnographic work in a black neighbourhood around Lisbon, where she tries "to look into the reality of black African people in Portugal" (p. 20), a reality that cannot be considered 'unlooked at' in terms of research, but where it seems a deficit of attention persists, and regarding which it is curiously a Brazilian anthropologist that comes to offer this interesting contribution to the deepening of the knowledge on this aspect of Portuguese social reality.

Virgínio Sá, in *A Participação dos Pais na Escola Pública Portuguesa – Uma Abordagem Sociológica e Organizacional* (Parents' Participation in Portuguese Public Schools – A Sociological and Organizational Approach)⁴⁴, deepens and problematizes the complex reality of parents' participation in three public schools from the north of Portugal, in an approach that blends the macro, meso and micro sociological levels.

In 2005 Fernando Ilídio Ferreira publishes *O Local em Educação – Animação, Gestão e Parceria* (The Local in Education – Animation, Management and Partnership)⁴⁵, another ethnographic study conducted in the north of the country, with some emphasis on the preschool and primary school levels and bringing together collaboration between projects of animation and local development in a rural area – research that goes beyond the mere domain of school education. In fact, the author tells us from the beginning that "studying the local in education implies acknowledging that local is not only the place and that education is not only the school." (p. 20)

The next two books of this grouping present some peculiar and common features: they are collections of texts from various authors (some of them foreign) and they focus on the

⁴¹ M. Ferreira "A Gente Gosta É de Brincar Com Os Outros Meninos" – *Relações Sociais Entre Crianças num Jardim de Infância*. Porto 2004, Edições Afrontamento.

⁴² I. Santos, *Quem Habita os Alunos? – A Socialização de Crianças de Origem Africana*. Lisbon 2004, Educa.

⁴³ N. Gusmão, *Os Filhos da África em Portugal – Antropologia, Multiculturalidade e Educação*. Lisbon 2005, Imprensa de Ciências Sociais.

⁴⁴ V. Sá, *A Participação dos Pais na Escola Pública Portuguesa – Uma Abordagem Sociológica e Organizacional*. Braga 2003, Universidade do Minho.

⁴⁵ F. I. Ferreira, *O Local em Educação – Animação, Gestão e Parceria*. Lisbon 2005, F. C. Gulbenkian/ F.C.T. – Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia.

problematic School-Family relationship⁴⁶. I am referring to the works *Escola-Família. Uma Relação em Processo de Reconfiguração* (School-Family, A Relationship in a Process of Reconfiguration)⁴⁷, organised by Stephen Stoer and Pedro Silva, published in 2005, and *Escolas, Famílias e Lares, Um Caleidoscópio de Olhares* (Schools, Families and Homes, A Kaleidoscope of Perspectives)⁴⁸, organised by me, in 2007.

I think it is pertinent to add some notes.

- a) In the first work three kinds of texts can be found: texts problematizing the relationship; case studies; and "Dialogues on the Lived". The problematizing texts, being theoretical, are also based on empirical research, some of it ethnographic research; the case studies, with an intervention component, are close to ethnography; the "Dialogues on the Lived" are ethnographic transcripts of various dialogues, including those of parents, teachers and leaders of parents' associations. The inclusion of this type of ethnographic material is uncommon outside the ethnographies themselves. In this case, the two groups of dialogues are followed by the comments of specialists⁴⁹.
- b) The second work compiles 13 articles on different objects of study, within the theme defined by the title. The articles blend conceptual and theoretical reflection with empirical research. It includes articles using various methodologies and techniques, including sophisticated statistical analysis (one), ethnomethodology (one) and ethnography (three)⁵⁰.

The last book, *Entre Educativo e Penitenciário – Etnografia de um centro de internamento de delinquentes* (Between Education and Imprisonment: An ethnography of a young offenders' centre), published in 2008 by Tiago Neves⁵¹, consists of an ethnography that crosses the school boundaries and focus on a group of institutionalized young boys.

5. Works on ethnography

Besides the books I reviewed, I believe it makes sense to also include a mention of works – again, in book format – by Portuguese authors reflecting on the ethnographic method.

I begin here as I ended in the previous section, i.e., referring to collected works, in this case three of them. In 1987 *Metodologia das Ciências Sociais* (Social Sciences Methodology) was published, organised by Augusto Santos Silva and José Madureira Pinto⁵². With contributions by various authors, it presents us with a vast panoply of methods

⁴⁶ I am co-author of both, co-organiser of the first and organiser of the second one.

⁴⁷ S. Stoer, P. Silva (orgs.), *Escola-Família, Uma Relação em Processo de Reconfiguração*. Porto 2005, Porto Editora.

⁴⁸ P. Silva (org.), *Escolas, Famílias e Lares, Um Caleidoscópio de Olhares*. Porto 2007, Profedições.

⁴⁹ The authors of this book are: Cristina Rocha, Don Davies, Dulce Costa Pereira, John Stanley, Luiza Cortesão, Michael Wyness, Pedro Silva, Ricardo Vieira and Stephen Stoer.

⁵⁰ The authors of the book are: Ana Matias Diogo, Ida Wentzel Winther, Joaquim Marques, Maria Eulália de Faria Henriques, Maria Gracinda Sousa, Maria José Casa-Nova, Maria Manuel Vieira, Maria Manuela Ferreira, Maria Mendel, Pedro Silva, Susana Faria, Teresa Sarmento, Teresa Seabra and Virgínio Sá. It includes a preface by Ramiro Marques.

⁵¹ T. Neves, *Entre Educativo e Penitenciário – Etnografia de um centro de internamento de delinquentes*. Porto 2008, Edições Afrontamento.

⁵² A. S. Silva, J. Madureira Pinto (orgs.), *Metodologia das Ciências Sociais*. Porto 1987, Edições Afrontamento.

and techniques, from the 'classic' questionnaire survey to content analysis, action-research, field work and field research, among others. In these last-mentioned cases we can make reference to the texts "A Pesquisa de Terreno em Sociologia" (Field Research in Sociology) by António Firmino da Costa, and "Trabalho de Campo e Observação-Participante em Antropologia" (Fieldwork and Participatory Observation in Anthropology), by Raul Iturra. It is a broad collection that proved to be ahead of its time by including qualitative methods and techniques when their weight and legitimacy were still quite small.

The second anthology entitled *Metodologias Qualitativas para as Ciências Sociais* (Qualitative Methodologies for the Social Sciences) is organised by António Joaquim Esteves and José Azevedo⁵³, and was published in 1998. In it we find texts regarding various methods and techniques, including some on qualitative methods in general, and a section composed of four texts, on the ethnographic method in particular: a) "Metodologias Qualitativas: Análise Etnográfica e Histórias de Vida" (Qualitative Methodologies: Ethnographic Analysis and Life Stories) by António Joaquim Esteves; b) "Etnografia e Histórias de Vida na Compreensão do Pensamento dos Professores" (Ethnography and Life Stories in Understanding Teachers' Thinking) by Ricardo Vieira; c) "A Observação-Participante na Fábrica – Notas sobre uma Experiência" (Participatory Observation in the Factory – Notes on an Experience) by Elísio Estanque; and d) "A Construção do Lugar Científico e o Real como Citação" (The Construction of the Scientific Space and the Real as Citation) by Álvaro Campelo.

In 2003 the third collection appeared, one that I have referred to before. It is *Experiência Etnográfica em Ciências Sociais* (Ethnographic Experience in the Social Sciences), organised by Telmo Caria⁵⁴. We are now in presence of a volume that is exclusively dedicated to ethnography, which is a novelty. As I have already noted, it includes a whole group of texts where various authors reflect on their own practice of ethnographic research, sometimes in a somewhat confessional style and with a remarkable sense of humour. Above all, it is a reflexive exercise⁵⁵.

Still in that year was published *Etnografia e Educação – Reflexões a Propósito de Uma Pesquisa Sociológica* (Ethnography and Education – Reflections Apropos a Sociological Research)⁵⁶, of which I am the author. In it I disseminate my conception of the ethnographic method, trying to show how it is anchored in ontological and epistemological presuppositions. As I have said, I also make an attempt at what I have called an *approximation to a self-ethnography* where I try to describe and reflect on the course of my ethnographic research on the relationship between schools and families (2003).

In 2005, Natércio Afonso published *Investigação Naturalista em Educação: Um Guia Prático e Crítico* (Naturalistic Research in Education: A Practical and Critical Guide)⁵⁷,

⁵³ A. J. Esteves, J. Azevedo (orgs.), *Metodologias Qualitativas para as Ciências Sociais*. Porto 1998, Instituto de Sociologia, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto.

⁵⁴ T. Caria (org.), *Experiência Etnográfica em Ciências Sociais*. Porto 2003, Edições Afrontamento.

⁵⁵ It includes texts by Amélia Frazão-Moreira, Elísio Estanque, Luís Fernandes, Luís Silva Pereira, Manuel Carlos Silva, Manuela Ferreira, Manuela Ribeiro, Paulo Raposo, Ricardo Vieira and Telmo Caria.

⁵⁶ P. Silva, *Etnografia e Educação – Reflexões a Propósito de Uma Pesquisa Sociológica*. Porto 2003, Profedições.

⁵⁷ N. Afonso, *Investigação Naturalista em Educação: Um Guia Prático e Crítico*. Porto 2005, Edições ASA.

a work about qualitative methods and techniques that contains a section explicitly dedicated to ethnographic research.

In sum, we are here presented with five books – three of them collections – by Portuguese authors focusing on ethnography⁵⁸. The first of them appears in the 80s, the second in the late 90s and the last three in the first decade of the 21st century. The outlook should not make us happy at least in terms of quantity, which, however, seems to be increasing, if we consider that four of these five works appeared between 1998 and 2005, i.e. in a period of seven years. It is also in this first decade of the 21st century that we find works – two of the three found in this period – that are focused exclusively on ethnography. In other words, the reasonable amount of ethnographies by Portuguese authors seems to be stimulating a need to reflect on the different aspects of the ethnographic method, without disregarding the existence of works by foreign authors (already mentioned), as well as books by Portuguese authors on qualitative methods that, meanwhile, ignore ethnography.

6. Synthesis

As I have said above, concerning the criteria used, in this part, I limited my characterization to ethnographies in the educational domain, conducted in Portugal and published in book format. I did not intend to be exhaustive. I believe, though, that the review I made gives a portrait that represents the ethnographic production that exists in the Portuguese educational domain. I mapped twenty-five works which allows me to try and put together some key-ideas.

- a) I reviewed twenty-seven books that were published over a period of twenty-one years (between 1987 and 2008). Not being many, it is still not a negligible amount. Even if it is not in fashion, ethnography in Portugal in the educational field is, it can be said, a reality!;
- b) Only one work from the 80s was reviewed (and then only from the second half of this decade), twelve from the 90s and fourteen from the first eight years of the first decade of the new millennium. Educational ethnography is thus growing, having undergone a quantity leap after the 80s, in which it accompanies, maybe with a slight delay, the movement in the central countries;
- c) There is a great variety of themes. Among them we can note:
 - i. School and social and cultural diversity, including:
 - School and rural context;
 - School and ethnic minorities;
 - School and social classes;
 - ii. Children and young people as social actors;
 - iii. School organisation;
 - iv. School-family-community relationship;
 - v. Teachers' personal and professional identity;

⁵⁸ I should add that as I write these lines, there is due from the press an interesting book by Maria José Casa-Nova: *Etnografia e Produção de Conhecimento. Reflexões críticas a partir de uma investigação com Ciganos* (Ethnography and Knowledge Production. Critical reflections from a research with gipsies). Lisbon: ACIDI – Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e o Diálogo Intercultural.

- vi. School, cultural animation and local development;
 - vii. Different educational levels, from pre-school to high school;
 - viii. Public/private education.
- d) The reviewed works bring together various methods and techniques, promoting a bigger or smaller triangulation of the data, with the weight of the ethnography varying, but always identifiable, when not explicitly being the only method, or assuming the central position;
- e) Twenty out of the twenty-seven works come from academic dissertations, eleven of them from doctoral theses and nine from masters' theses;
- f) Of the remaining authors only two of them are not higher education teachers (one of them is a primary school teacher and the other one a high-school teacher). It is thus very clear that ethnographers are mostly professionally integrated in higher education;
- g) In terms of the disciplines, most authors and ethnographies reviewed above, at least around 15 of them, could be included in sociology (particularly sociology of education, of childhood, of youth, of culture, of family and of organisations), followed by anthropology (specifically, anthropology of education). Most of the works, though, are multi/inter-/disciplinary hybrids.

I would like to state clearly that, in Portugal, the ethnographies in education have, naturally, lived together with ethnographies in other domains of the social sciences. Besides the necessary reference to anthropology, sociology has also ethnographically been studying other areas of the social.

We have the instance of works, some of them reference works, such as a) *O Trágico e o Contraste: O Fado no Bairro de Alfama* (The Tragic and the Contrast: Fado in the Alfama Neighbourhood) by António Firmino da Costa and Maria das Dores Guerreiro⁵⁹, and *Sociedade de Bairro* (Society of Neighbourhood) by António Firmino da Costa⁶⁰, regarding urban popular culture in an old neighbourhood of Lisbon; b) *Estruturas Sociais e Práticas Simbólico-Ideológicas nos Campos: Elementos de Teoria e Pesquisa Empírica* (Social Structures and Symbolic-Ideological Practices in the Fields: Elements of Theory and Empirical Research) by José Madureira Pinto⁶¹; *Classes Sociais nos Campos* (Social Classes in the Fields) by João Ferreira de Almeida⁶²; and *Tempos Cruzados: Um Estudo Interpretativo da Cultura Popular* (Crossed Times: An Interpretative Study of Popular Culture) by Augusto Santos Silva⁶³, three studies conducted in rural contexts; c) *Família Rural e Indústria* (Rural Family and Industry) by Nelson Lourenço⁶⁴, on social change and the transformation of families, and the subversion of the dichotomies rural-urban and agriculture-industry; d) *O Sítio das Drogas – Etnografia das Drogas numa Periferia Urbana* (The Place of Drugs – The Ethnography of Drugs in an Urban Periphery) by Luís

Fernandes⁶⁵; or e) *Entre a Fábrica e a Comunidade* (Between the Factory and the Community) by Elísio Estanque⁶⁶, about the workers of the shoe-making industry.

In sum, ethnography has been spreading through diverse areas of the social, even through studies of non-professional researchers⁶⁷.

Summary

Ethnography and education in Portugal: a brief look

In this paper I shortly consider the relationship between ethnography and education and the ethnographer and the teacher. Most of the paper, however, is dedicated to a description and analysis of what has been done in Portugal in what concerns ethnographic research on educational issues. I also point to some works on the ethnographic method made in Portugal.

⁵⁹ A. Firmino da Costa, M. das Dores Guerreiro, *O Trágico e o Contraste: O Fado no Bairro de Alfama*. Lisbon 1984, Publicações Dom Quixote.

⁶⁰ A. Firmino da Costa, *Sociedade de Bairro*. Oeiras 1999, Celta Editora.

⁶¹ J. Madureira Pinto, *Estruturas Sociais e Práticas Simbólico-Ideológicas nos Campos: Elementos de Teoria e Pesquisa Empírica*. Porto 1985, Edições Afrontamento.

⁶² J. Ferreira de Almeida, *Classes Sociais nos Campos*. Lisbon 1986, Instituto de Ciências Sociais.

⁶³ A. Santos Silva, *Tempos Cruzados: Um Estudo Interpretativo da Cultura Popular*. Porto 1994, Edições Afrontamento.

⁶⁴ N. Lourenço, *Família Rural e Indústria*. Lisbon 1991, Editorial Fragmentos.

⁶⁵ L. Fernandes, *O Sítio das Drogas – Etnografia das Drogas numa Periferia Urbana*. Lisbon 1998, Editorial Notícias.

⁶⁶ E. Estanque, *Entre a Fábrica e a Comunidade*. Porto 2000, Edições Afrontamento.

⁶⁷ As a recent example, note the interesting ethnography conducted by Emília Bártolo, a nurse, in an intensive care unit of a paediatric hospital in Lisbon (*Formação em Contexto de Trabalho no Ambiente Hospitalar – Um Estudo Etnográfico numa Unidade de Cuidados Intensivos Pediátricos*. Lisbon 2007, Climepsi Editores).