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SCHOOL CAREERS OF INDIVIDUALS FROM DISADVANTAGED SOCIAL CLASSES: THE CASE OF SABINO AND RAUL

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Abstract: This article aims to present the educational trajectories of two individuals, Sabino and Raul, from disadvantaged social classes who experienced turbulent times throughout their schooling. The overall objective of this study is to analyze the educational trajectories of these individuals from a socioeconomic and family perspective. The specific objectives are: to characterize their educational trajectory; to identify the factors that influenced their educational trajectory; and to explain the sociological aspects that impacted their schooling process. For this research, the following question was posed: to what extent can individuals from a disadvantaged social class have a successful educational trajectory? The article is based on a qualitative approach, associated with the interpretative paradigm and supported by descriptive and bibliographic research.

Data collection was based on in-depth interviews, which enabled the narration of facts related to family configurations, the presence of family and school in the lives of the interviewees, the progress achieved, and the setbacks encountered along the way.

The stories of Sabino and Raul show that both experienced a bumpy educational journey marked by socioeconomic and family difficulties that had a significant impact on them. Despite the constraints encountered throughout their school careers, both managed, with a lot of effort, dedication, and above all focus, to turn the situation around and achieve success.

Keywords: Educational trajectory, cultural capital, educational capital

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to describe and analyze the school trajectories of two individuals who, despite the difficulties they faced

during their schooling, managed to progress to higher education and achieve good professional positions.

To carry out this work, we drew on the theoretical framework of authors who have written on this subject, highlighting issues related to the social origin of the family, the presence of the family in school life, the parents' education, the role of the school and teachers, school performance, interruptions throughout the trajectory, and other factors that contributed to the academic success of these individuals. The works of Piotto (2008), Dias (2017), and Lahire (1997) formed the basis for this study.

There are studies on this subject, particularly at the international level, which contribute to a better understanding of prolonged school trajectories in the lower socioeconomic strata. However, at the national level, there is still little research that portrays the situation of students from this social group who have been successful in their school careers and have reached higher education.

FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

Sabino and Raul are two individuals from peasant families, whose social class is considered disadvantaged. They started school late in terms of age. Despite the conditions imposed by their socioeconomic situation, they were enrolled and attended rural schools, studying in deplorable conditions. It is known that these individuals lived in dysfunctional, low-income families. Educational practices in these families were very limited due to their poor educational background, particularly Sabino, who lived with his grandmother, but also due to the absence of family involvement in their children's schooling. This foreshadows the difficulties these families face in supporting their children with homework, monitoring their school progress, and participating in school meetings.

In these families, children were sent to school because their parents believed that by being there, they could easily secure their future and “get on in life.” There was virtually no relationship between families and the school.

The above table raises the following question:

To what extent can individuals from disadvantaged social classes achieve academic success?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To answer this question, the following objectives were defined:

General: To analyze the educational trajectory of individuals from disadvantaged social classes from a socioeconomic and family perspective.

Specific:

1. To characterize the educational trajectory of individuals from disadvantaged social classes;
2. Identify the factors that influenced their educational trajectory.
3. Explain the sociological aspects that impacted their schooling process.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is important in this study because it will bring together ideas from different authors, with whom we intend to establish a dialogue that will allow for a comparative analysis of their discourses, seeking to highlight their commonalities and differences.

Access to school for many individuals from lower socioeconomic classes has been fraught with obstacles, and their educational trajectories are notoriously marked by interruptions in their studies, usually to meet economic demands. This issue, combined with others intrinsic to educational processes, has led to the exclusion of many young people and adults

from regular school (Nienchoter et al, 2013, p.17). Young people and adolescents in Mozambique have been excluded from the education system due to adverse factors, some of which are described above by the author. This reality may help to understand the longevity of our interviewees' schooling, as well as the role of school in this journey.

Lahire points to “the existence of cases ranging from **predictable** ‘failures’—that is, difficult school realities experienced by students whose parents have low levels of education, unskilled professions, and low cultural capital—to stories of **unlikely** ‘failures’—that is, children who, despite living in conditions more favorable to schooling (parents with higher levels of education, for example), perform very poorly academically – to cases of brilliant ‘successes’ of students who, despite being subject to extremely difficult conditions in terms of academic work, perform exemplarily at school.” (Piotto, 2008, p. 703)

Analyzing the author's idea, academic failure can be found both in individuals from disadvantaged families and in families living in favorable conditions. Therefore, during the course of a school career, various factors can negatively influence the lives of individuals, whether they are socioeconomic, political, military, demographic, or even physical and natural. By recognizing and encouraging dedication, effort, and academic performance, teachers contribute to building autonomy, security, **and** self-esteem in these students. The school's participation in building pathways that lead poor students to higher education. (Piotto, 2008, p. 711)

In agreement with the author, teacher support is paramount in an individual's school performance. It is well known that the teacher's personality is projected onto the individual, thus contributing to their transformation. In the cases analyzed by both Sabino and Raul, the figure of the teacher was decisive in

their lives, although other factors (economic, social, and political) may also have exerted their influence. For a better understanding, Dias indicates that:

“Even in families with limited economic, cultural, social, and educational capital, or even in the absence of educational capital, such as in cases of illiterate parents, some children were successful because the configurations of these families engendered a student profile that is expected by primary schools.” (Dias, 2017, p. 215)

If, on the one hand, the student’s trajectory is marked by enormous effort, fatigue, and difficulties, on the other hand, admission to a public university brings possibilities that completely transform the young person’s outlook on life. (Piotto, 2008, p.724).

The context in which these individuals live makes their school career difficult and quite bumpy, but even so, when there is determination, the goal is achieved and, as Piotto suggests, opportunities open up that will influence their education for the future.

Lahire points out that discourse about parental “omission” is mainly expressed by teachers when parents are absent from the school environment. They are not seen, and this invisibility is immediately interpreted—especially when the child is struggling at school—as indifference towards school matters in general and the child’s education in particular. Some teachers even seem to think that the absence of relationships, the absence of contact with some families (working class, of course), explains the “school failure” of children. (Lahire, 1997, p. 335).

The school failure of children pointed out by Lahire (1997) cannot always be explained as described above. However, it is common among teachers to justify failure due to a lack of parental supervision, especially when it comes to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It is also worth noting that “cases of school ‘failure’ are cases of loneliness among students in the school environment: very little of what they have internalized through the structure of family coexistence enables them to face the rules of the school game (the types of cognitive orientation, the types of language practices, the types of behavior... specific to school. When they return home, they bring with them a (school) problem that the people around them cannot help them solve: they carry unsolvable problems alone.” (Lahire, 1997, p.19).

This statement by Lahire (1997) shows that there are situations in which individuals, during their schooling, need family support to help them understand content that is misunderstood at school. This theory can only be applied to families with educational capital, an organized family structure, and a well-defined study program.

The scenario described above is explained by the relationship these families establish with the school, which values this institution as a means of social mobility, investing in education mainly in terms of energy and time, and not necessarily financially, and monitoring their children’s schooling, believing in the partnership between family and teachers, with a focus on pedagogy, and on the family as the holder of information about the school system, supported by a network of contacts with other parents of students. It is the possession of this informational and social capital that favors the choice of school, as well as the development of family practices that encourage behaviors in children, in terms of attitudes, learning, and cultural tastes that are also favorable to the choice of type of education and the prolonged process of schooling. (Passos, 2018, p. 40).

According to Silva & Dias (2018), there are families who, even without sufficient cultural or economic capital, are able to provide moral, financial, and emotional support,

either explicitly or implicitly, that enables children to develop the disposition to face the rules of the school game and succeed in meeting school demands. This approach, which emphasizes the issue of cultural and economic capital, is important for analyzing the phenomenon and will contribute to a better understanding of the longevity of Sabino and Raul's school careers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This section will present the methodology used, seeking to highlight all the elements that were employed to carry out the research. Therefore, methodology is the application of procedures and techniques that must be observed to construct knowledge, with the purpose of proving its validity and usefulness in various areas of society, as stated by Prodanov & Freitas (2013, p. 14).

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research developed here is basic in nature and aims essentially to seek new knowledge that is useful for the advancement of science, with no practical application envisaged. It involves universal truths and interests (Prodanov & Freitas, p. 51).

From the point of view of objectives, this is descriptive research, which records, narrates, analyzes, and interprets the school trajectory of Sabino and Raul, two individuals from disadvantaged social classes, based on Almeida (2021), who states that this type of research is linked only to the description and recording of facts without intervention. In other words, it describes, records, observes, analyzes, and relates data on the characteristics of a social group, a population, a phenomenon, or the relationships existing in the study.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For the present study, two male individuals aged between 45 and 60 years old from disadvantaged social classes were selected. They constitute the sample chosen by collusion, as explained by Prodanov (2013), who states that these types of sampling are devoid of any statistical rigor. The researcher selects the elements to which he has access, assuming that these may, in some way, represent the universe.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

For data collection, bibliographic research was used, which, according to Almeida (2021), is developed from published materials, such as books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, monographs, scientific articles, dissertations, theses, cartographic material, periodical publications, and the internet, where the researcher seeks information about a specific content of their research. (p. 32).

The bibliographic research allowed us to search for important information regarding the educational background of individuals from disadvantaged social classes. The cross-referencing of ideas from the different authors consulted led to an understanding of the phenomenon under study and a more in-depth analysis of the factors that interfered with Sabino and Raul's schooling. The knowledge collected was properly structured to better outline the research approach.

Also in the context of data collection, priority was given to in-depth interviews, which, according to Richardson (1999), consist of seeking elements in a face-to-face interaction situation, as this has an unquestionable character of closeness between people. (p. 207)

The use of this technique was important because it allowed us to gather as much information as possible about Sabino and Raul's school trajectories.

In the process of obtaining information, a conversation was established, based on a narrative question, with the aim of gathering participants' opinions, as explained by Flick (2009), who states that qualitative research uses text as empirical material (rather than numbers) based on the notion of the social construction of the realities under study. It is interested in the perspectives of participants, in their everyday practices, and their everyday knowledge of the issue under study (p. 16). Therefore, for Flick, the fundamental aspect here is not the questions, but rather that the interviewees are invited to present longer and more coherent accounts. Thus, they were asked a generic question that encouraged narrative, where they could share their experiences of school life, the presence of parents, uncles, grandparents, teachers, and others who directly or indirectly influenced their academic path. This initial question aimed to stimulate conversation about their school trajectories in the form of a narrative and allow the interviewees to take their time on the topic. It was therefore a long, qualitative, unstructured conversation, in which the interviewee freely presented the most relevant aspects related to the research topic. It was a two-way conversation conducted in a friendly manner. It should be noted that these interviews took place in a domestic, private setting, without interference or external disturbances that could compromise the informants' statements and the flow of ideas. Time was not an issue for the duration of the conversation, allowing the interviewees to narrate their school experience in a relaxed manner, sharing interesting, consistent, and very productive testimonies.

Qualitative research was used to analyze and interpret the data, considering the environment as a direct source of data. In this case, the researcher maintains direct contact with the environment and the object of study in question, requiring more intensive fieldwork.

In this case, the issues are studied in the environment in which they arise without any intentional manipulation by the researcher (Prodanov, 2013, p. 70).

Qualitative research considers the interpretation of phenomena and their relationships with numerous meanings, which, according to Gil (2002), seeks to give the broadest meaning to the results obtained through analytical reading. Data analysis related qualitative research to an interpretive paradigm which, according to Keiler (2023), is associated with an emphatic appeal for qualitative methods in data collection procedures, which may include, for example, long interviews and data recording. Thus, the qualitative approach, triangulated with the interpretive model, allowed us to describe the phenomenon related to Sabino and Raul's school career in a joint and detailed manner.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In this section, the collected data are presented and analyzed. The discussion took into account the opinions of different authors who agree and disagree based on scientific knowledge, identifying those that best meet the research objectives (Almeida, 2021, p. 41). Thus, the school trajectories of Sabino and Raul are presented below.

CASE 1: SABINO

Sabino is the son of assimilated parents. His father had finished 4th grade at the Anglican mission and then took a teacher training course in Alvor. His mother was a housewife but had completed 4th grade at the São José de Lhanguene mission.

Sabino was born in Maputo and lived with his parents in the Chamanculo neighborhood

until he was 5 years old. He was enrolled in the São José de Lhanguene primary school, where he attended preschool but did not graduate. His parents separated, and he went to live with his maternal grandparents in the province of Inhambane, his mother's homeland.

During his time in Inhambane, he was always ill with skin infections that were difficult to cure. His mother tried treatment at several hospitals without success. Sabino returned to the same class, having interrupted his studies due to illness. The reality described here is explained by Lahire (1997) as follows:

(...) without a doubt, a relatively stable family structure that allows the child to have frequent and lasting social relationships with their parents is a necessary condition for the development of a relationship with the world that is conducive to "success" in primary school. Through constant presence and stable moral or emotional support at all times, the family can monitor the child's schooling in some way (for example, through meticulous authoritarianism or benevolent trust). (p. 26).

Therefore, the separation from his parents greatly affected Sabino's schooling. His relatives, on his mother's side, advised her to return the child because his illnesses were related to his father's family's dissatisfaction with the mother for taking the child into her care. In African tradition, particularly in patrilineal societies

This attitude clashes with cultural traditions. But due to pressure from her paternal family, his mother had to take him back, and he was sent to Xinavane, where he went to live with a paternal aunt married to a teacher at the local Catholic mission. He was enrolled in a Catholic mission school once again, but due to illness, he was forced to interrupt his studies without finishing the school year.

When his grandfather died in 1965, Sabino was six years old. His grandmother returned to the rural community of Xifungue (his gran-

dfather's homeland) and the family decided to take Sabino to live with his widowed paternal grandmother, as he was sickly and needed her care and warmth.

In the nest of his ancestors, his health improved, treated with local medicines abundant in the natural pharmacy that the forest offered, with local knowledge. In this space, Sabino found healing for his body and soul, which brought him into harmony with his ancestors. That is, he was reconciled with his ancestors.

Once his health was restored, Sabino resumed his studies, enrolling in first grade at a local Catholic mission, typical of rural areas, which was about 10 km from his home. He walked 20 km every day on open paths in the dense savannah of the Xifungue lands.

He was placed in a mixed class of about 40 boys and girls, taught by a catechist. The initial classes were held under a fig tree, while the more advanced classes shared the chapel, divided into two groups arranged in opposite positions.

Sabino was a boy dedicated to his studies, intelligent despite his grandmother's inability to support him in his studies due to her lack of financial resources. However, she encouraged him to go to school even though she recognized the distance and the harshness of winter and summer, always barefoot on paths crossed by reptiles, mainly snakes. His grandmother never discouraged him because of his young age, but encouraged him constantly.

In his free time, Sabino helped with household chores such as carrying water, gathering firewood, and helping in the kitchen. He had time to play with his friends, hunting birds and searching for wild fruits. Sabino only ate two meals a day: a heavy meal in the morning consisting of leftovers from dinner, and another at sunset.

In the early grades, teaching was bilingual, covering reading, arithmetic, morals, and reli-

gion. Sabino already had a good command of Portuguese, having learned the local language from his grandmother and perfected it at school.

The students wrote on the floor with their fingers and occasionally on slates. There was no possibility of repeating the material, which made it difficult for the students to understand.

The reading texts covered various topics on nature and society and contained many moral lessons that contributed to the formation of the students' personalities. When translated into the local language, they had an impact on the students' lived experience. It was in the second grade that Sabino's mastery of Portuguese became apparent, and he stood out as the best student. On Saturdays, there was catechism and cleaning of the school and weeding in the teacher's field, at the Nossa Senhora das Mercês mission. They also collected firewood for the teacher's house and took part in cultural activities where they practiced dances with instruments made by the students themselves.

Sabino's good behavior and outstanding academic results led the teacher to entrust him with the leadership of the class. This reinforces the idea that some families from the lower classes may attach great importance to this, as Lahire (1997) points out:

(...) affirming "good behavior" and respect for the teacher's authority. Since they are unable to help their children academically, they try to instill in them the ability to submit to school authority. By behaving correctly, accepting what is asked of them, that is, being relatively docile, listening, paying attention, studying, and not playing around. (p. 25).

By third grade, Sabino was already an outstanding student. He stopped working in the fields and began helping the priest clean the sacristy and assist with Sunday Mass. Sabino was a model student in the sense that he was very dedicated to his studies and earned the

trust of his teacher and the priest. He became a sacristan, accompanying the priest on visits to the sick, at funeral ceremonies, and at Masses in the localities. Nogueira & Oliveira (2019) emphasize this aspect, stating that:

(...) the existence of a good relationship between these students and their teachers can be inferred either through teacher encouragement, acting as a support for obtaining knowledge about the educational system and encouraging them to remain in it, or through influence on personal aspects of these students, such as recognition of their ability and good performance, which ultimately led them to believe in their own abilities. (p.9).

Sabino was a boy who had learned to be methodical and knew how to divide his time without harming his school performance. This was despite the many activities that were part of his daily schedule.

It should be noted that Sabino's father was absent until the third grade, as was his mother. Therefore, Sabino was always with his grandmother.

Sabino, at the mercy of his education, accompanied his grandmother during the holidays to the market to sell some surplus agricultural and fishing products. With the money he earned, he bought food, clothes, notebooks, and household items.

In fourth grade, Sabino was reunited with his father and moved from the countryside to the village, reducing the distance to about 2 km round trip. This change was the result of Sabino's school performance, which led his teacher to seek out his father to ask him to pay more attention to his son. Thus, Sabino began living in a new family environment with his three sisters, his father, and his stepmother. Living here, he benefited from a better diet, reduced the distance between school and home, and enjoyed community and urban life with relatively better socioeconomic conditions.

All religious activities continued every day, and in his free time he liked to gather the you-

nger children from his class to give them extra lessons. Sabino also liked to play and organize soccer tournaments in the neighborhood.

In his new home, Sabino had domestic chores and, as a stepson, was treated as a subordinate, receiving little affection from his parents. This created a feeling of marginalization compared to his sisters, his stepmother's daughters. Despite this differential treatment, Sabino never lost focus on his studies and continued to be the best student in the fourth grade in all the local schools (mission and official).

The fourth grade exam was held at the official school, where all students, including those from the mission, took their exams. In the 4th grade exams, Sabino proved to be an excellent student, ranking 1st, much to the despair of some white boys who were punished by their parents for not accepting that a black boy from the mission had stolen their place on the honor roll.

Sabino's devotion, Christian faith, and religious work influenced his decision about his future. Sabino revealed that during the 4th grade oral exams, when asked by the external examiner what he wanted to be, he replied that he wanted to be a priest. The examiner was astonished by the boy's answer and wanted to know the reason for his choice. Sabino said that he did not want to get married and wanted to follow a religious life. The teacher insisted on further explanations for this choice. Sabino, influenced by his bitter family experience, decided that it would be better to opt for a career in the church.

Contrary to Sabino's dream, his father enrolled him in preparatory school in the capital city, where he successfully completed the cycle. Studying at this level was not easy because Sabino had many difficulties due to the distance. To get to school, he had to take three different forms of transportation, leaving early in the morning to attend classes in the afternoon

and only returning home at night. He had to balance his studies and his household chores.

In the morning, before going to school, he had to accompany the priest to do work in the sacristy and also do some household chores, and only then did he go to school.

Sabino enjoyed sports and proved to be a good athlete at school, joining teams and spending his Saturdays playing sports. His schedule throughout the week was very full. He was an intelligent and very dedicated student who did not repeat subjects very often but paid close attention to his teachers' explanations.

The end of his schooling coincided with the fall of the colonial regime, leading Sabino to become involved in political mobilization, supporting activist groups and the Mozambican Women's Organization (OMM). In the communities, the secretaries of the dynamic groups had little literacy, and Sabino provided support in the secretariat, produced reports, mobilized youth, made wall newspapers, and served as a Portuguese/Ronga interpreter. He was also a literacy teacher. Combined with the above, it can be inferred that Sabino was influenced by other reference groups outside his family circle, who served as role models and provided opportunities for further education.

He read Marxism-Leninism books extensively to educate himself politically and master the language used in political propaganda. Because of the revolution, he gradually became disengaged from religion. He led cultural and sports programs. Despite his busy schedule, he remained a good student. Under the influence of a friend of his father, Sabino enrolled in an industrial school to study chemistry.

As he did not attend school, his father decided to enroll him in a commercial school where he studied administration and commerce. Classes were held in two shifts with little time for other activities, but he still managed to balance his studies with his revolutionary activities, as well as working to earn some money

to buy school supplies and clothes. Due to this heavy workload, Sabino began to perform well enough in school, reducing the activities that were almost hindering his learning. However, Sabino successfully completed the third year of Administration and Commerce.

The improvement in his academic performance in his final year was related to his dedication to reading, participating in debates, the experience he gained in political work, and reading books on Marxism, which helped him greatly in understanding subjects such as political economy, history, and geography. He also did practical accounting work, supporting commercial units that were in the hands of the workers after their employers abandoned them.

Sabino was invited to work at the Bank of Mozambique but declined the offer in order to continue his studies. However, instead of continuing his studies in accounting, he was invited to join the March 8 group and train as a history teacher, which Sabino accepted with enthusiasm and political awareness.

Sabino lived in the center of 8 de Março, which had a better academic environment, and proved to be an excellent student on the course, despite the intensive workload, as he continued to be involved in politics and sports. After completing his course, he was placed in the province of Inhambane for two years as a teacher and education official responsible for coordinating pedagogical support. He was trained to teach 5th and 6th grades in the old education system. He had more responsibility because he was responsible for the History department at the provincial level and taught 11 classes for a total of 22 hours per week.

Sabino returned to college two years later to continue his studies in history and geography teacher training, where his performance was once again excellent. It should be noted that from the moment he entered the center on March 8, he was practically separated from his family.

He successfully completed the course and, as the best student, was invited to continue his studies at bachelor's level on an intensive basis, attending the first and second years simultaneously, while also working as a monitor and teaching on teacher training courses.

He proved himself to be excellent once again and was invited to be a trainee assistant, teaching directly on the same courses while attending his bachelor's degree. At this point, he took on the roles of course director and head of department. Despite this intense workload, he completed his bachelor's degree with distinction.

After completing his degree, he was promoted to second assistant and continued to work at the faculty and at other higher education institutions at their invitation.

Sabino applied for a master's scholarship and was awarded one by the Ford Foundation to study in Zimbabwe, which did not happen because Sabino, being a lecturer and course director, had no one to replace him in his duties. Sabino did not lose heart, however, and became involved in research activities and participated in international seminars. With this experience, Sabino applied for a PhD course in England and was admitted to the MPhil/PhD program at the University of London, where he successfully completed his PhD in record time. Throughout his training, he participated in several international conferences and colloquiums and established contacts that allowed him to join networks of researchers (USA, England, Portugal, France, Zimbabwe, Brazil...) that were important for his post-doctoral academic life.

CASE 2 RAUL

Raul, the son of working-class parents, was born on January 1, 1962. He had eight siblings, four sisters and four brothers. In the 1960s, he lost two sisters, and two are still alive. His brothers all died. He was born between two

brothers whom he followed and another who followed him; they are the only ones who lived with Raul until their deaths.

Raul began his studies in 1968 at the same school as the brother he looked up to. He attended preschool that year and then moved on to first grade. By then, his father had left South Africa and returned to Lourenço Marques, and his children had to join him in 1969.

He studied at the primary school in Chibuto, where there was only one teacher who taught pre-school, first, second, and third grades alone. There was a church where he studied, and on Sundays he attended services, and on Saturdays he cleaned the school and the church.

The more advanced classes studied in classrooms, while those in pre-school through third grade studied under trees. Raul does not know how, but he learned to read and understand math early on. He was an excellent student and taught others by singing multiplication tables and arithmetic, and the class repeated Raul's words in unison. He made up songs with his cousin. At school, they were beaten badly, and there was another group that kidnapped the boys and took them to the pasture. It was very painful, and they didn't go to school.

Raul was lucky because he had a brother who was in a more advanced class and he used his brother's books, clothes, and shoes.

After finishing first grade, he came to Maputo. He had not yet been registered, did not have an ID card, and was not given a certificate for passing first grade.

In Maputo, he went to study at the Baptist Mission but was not enrolled, and he does not know why.

His cousin took him to be enrolled at the Santo António da Malhangalene Asylum, but to enroll he needed a document confirming that he had passed the previous grade, and Raul did not have this document, so he returned to preschool.

He lived with children from Madeira and learned to sing and dance songs from Madeira. He also wrote poetry. Raul was greatly influenced by his third and fourth grade teachers, who saw him as an intelligent and dedicated boy.

He attended fourth grade, but in 1974 there was an interruption in classes and he only finished in 1975 during the transitional government period. In 1976, for financial reasons, Raul was unable to study. His older brother was at technical school studying carpentry. Raul was a dedicated and intelligent boy. At home, with his brother's help, they made benches, chairs, and tables to sell. Regarding these activities, Lahire (1997) points out that there are cases in which children develop dispositions, knowledge, and skills in situations that are not consciously organized by adults, without there having been any real voluntary transmission of knowledge. (p. 341).

In the Maxaquene neighborhood where he lived, there was a bakery that sold arrufadas and scones (cakes with a dense and compact texture) that they bought to resell, and Raul ran this business. He had a notebook where he recorded the orders and, on a master sheet, he wrote the name, the product, the quantity, and the change.

He kept the money he collected from his customers in an empty milk can with a small opening to insert the coins, which he used as a safe. After the sales, Raul would take out the money for new expenses. This procedure probably instilled in Raul a taste for mathematics, as he was already capable of managing a simple business in an organized manner.

Raul grew up in the Polana Caniço neighborhood, Kachibotana (the landowner) was what the neighborhood was called, whose road was loose and very sandy, where cars often skidded, much to the delight of Raul and his friends, who helped push the cars in exchange for a 5 escudo coin. Raul supported a

family that sold firewood, where he helped in exchange for a bundle of wood that he used for cooking. On this point, Nienchoter et al. (2013) note that:

(...) it can be observed that many individuals from lower socioeconomic classes have gained access to school in a scenario fraught with obstacles, and their educational trajectories are notoriously marked by interruptions in their studies, usually to meet their economic demands. This issue, combined with others intrinsic to the educational process, has led to the exclusion of many young people and adults from regular schooling.” (p.17).

Although this was not the case with Raul, the author seeks to show that individuals from disadvantaged social classes who have experienced adversity throughout their school career tend to find ways to survive by engaging in precarious economic activities to meet their immediate needs or even to buy school supplies.

His sisters were already married and Raul did practically all the housework, cooking, washing dishes, and carrying water. He lived here with his father and only visited his mother during the holidays. She was in Chibuto, in the province of Gaza, and sent food to her children, a practice known as Kupossa (sending parcels). She would place products such as cassava and sweet potatoes in a large basket. Here he benefited from an integrated education because they learned a lot.

In 1976, his cousin wanted to enroll him in Namaacha, but was unable to do so, and he ended up spending a year without studying. Since he had nothing to do, he started supporting the youth group in the Polana Caniço neighborhood, raising the flag and participating in various activities, including singing and dancing.

When Adult Literacy and Education was introduced, they registered people who had completed fourth grade. Raul was a small, thin, frail boy and was underestimated because

of his appearance. Raul was one of the boys who dedicated himself to this activity; at the time, he was in fourth grade. In his classes, he taught vowels, the alphabet, and consonants, combining these elements to build sentences. He taught arithmetic using the chopstick method, where the students could visualize what they were learning because when he wrote on the board, they didn't understand anything, but with the chopsticks, they grasped the concept quickly. Raul taught from the concrete to the abstract and thus grew in his teaching of mathematics.

In 1977, Raul received support from some people to return to school. They went to the school and the community group and asked that Raul be allowed to study at the Malhangelene Secondary School.

Raul was an intelligent boy and very dedicated to his studies. He taught Portuguese and mathematics and stood out as the best student in his class. In 5th grade, he was exempted from exams. The teacher liked Raul very much because he was an intelligent student and supported him a lot. He was encouraged to continue his studies and was even offered snacks. This teacher went to Portugal and was replaced by a teacher who had studied engineering. He discovered that Raul was passionate about math and was far ahead of his classmates, so he began to teach him things that were unfamiliar to them, solving problems using prepositions, because he liked math.

Throughout the narrative, we can see the support that Raul received from his teachers, which is interpreted by Piotto (2008) as recognition and encouragement of dedication, effort, and academic performance, contributing to the development of autonomy, security, and self-esteem in these students. (p. 711). Therefore, the healthy relationship between the interviewees' teachers was decisive for their learning, as they felt more valued, thus contributing to raising their self-esteem and becoming more confident and able to freely make their own choices.

In 1978, he was again exempted from exams, and his dedication to his studies meant that he always appeared on the honor roll. For this reason, his teachers trusted him so much that, at the invitation of his teacher, he gave extra lessons to students in his class to help them solve numerical expressions. He was always close to his teacher, supporting him in remedial classes.

Raul was a poor boy living in difficult economic and social conditions, and some of his white teachers advised him to go to work when he was 16. However, despite this advice, they decided to encourage him to continue his studies at high school, where he had a good teacher who influenced him greatly during his school life. He mentioned his biology teacher, who was also a milestone in his life, giving him advice that has stayed with him to this day.

Raul was a black boy, studious and always stood out as the best student in the class. His classmates mocked him for being of the Machope ethnic group and questioned how the money from the bucket¹ would get him to university.

The support of the teachers was remarkable, as they sympathized with him because he was very poor and supported him with clothes and shoes. Raul was criticized by his classmates, who thought that the prizes meant poverty, as he had always been a good student.

This attitude is criticized by Alves & Piotto (2011) because it is related to what she understands:

(,,) as an investment made by teachers in students who perform well, to the detriment of those who have learning difficulties. To illustrate her point, she cites the gifts given to good students, such as those she received, the concern of teachers to keep her in the most advanced classes, and the unequal treatment given to those considered good and bad students. (p. 85).

In 1980, he was assigned to teach remedial classes to 6th graders in the second semester, and he did so alone, without the presence of the teacher. Raul's life began to change. He studied in the morning and taught in the afternoon. He was not paid for this work, but in exchange he received free lunch and snacks.

His students performed well, and the teacher who was supervising him at the time said she would write a letter to the city authorities where he would register to take the exam that would qualify him as a salaried teacher. He was successful and was placed at the Northwest School, where he taught mathematics while studying in the 9th grade.

Raul mentions a teacher who had never worked with him but was very pleased with his performance, so the teacher would leave Manyanga for Noroeste in the afternoon during the snack break to teach him math and tell him that he had to be a mathematician. Therefore, Raul was greatly influenced by his teachers to like math and learned other things that were not taught in his class.

Raul is the only child in his family who has succeeded in his studies; the others were not so lucky. Regarding this reality, Massi et al (2017) highlight that "there are no general rules to define the educational status of a class, since within the same family, variations in educational paths and practices were found, and the same situation was also identified in Raul's story. (p. 10)

A teacher asked Raul what he wanted to be, and he replied emphatically that he wanted to be a teacher.

Raul's academic success can be explained by his strong desire to study and the moral and material encouragement he received from his teachers. Nogueira & Oliveira (2019) emphasize that policies that value good performance and behavior among students from

1. Bucket refers to the container placed in latrines, where municipal workers (Machopes) collected human waste on a weekly basis.

lower socioeconomic backgrounds, making them believe in their potential and giving them a prominent place in their family and educational environment, can contribute to their commitment to their studies. (p. 8).

The father had little education but always encouraged his son to study. This approach is emphasized by Lahire (1997) in the following terms: Even if this “success” occurs without excessive investment in education by the parents and they rely on their children’s self-discipline, this does not mean that the parents are completely exempt from the issue of schooling. (p. 296).

When Raul finished 9th grade, his father was very happy and, despite his poverty, threw a party to express his joy at Raul’s performance. His father did not know how to speak Portuguese, but in the local language he told those present that the teachers had praised his son, saying that he knew more than the “exam.”

Raul enrolled in the Faculty of Education, once again influenced by a math and physics teacher. After two years of college, he successfully completed the course without any learning difficulties, as he already had a basic knowledge of mathematics from the teachers who had given him extra lessons.

Raul was referred to the Maputo City Education Department, where he received instructions to report to Manhiça. There, he started teaching 7th, 8th, and 9th grade classes in math and physics, where he worked until 1984.

In 1985, he was appointed Deputy Director of Education. While performing his duties, he received a call to report to the Higher Institute of Education (ISP) to take a course in mathematics and physics. That year, he made his first publication, an article on how to calculate percentages in classrooms.

Back in Maputo, his mother was kidnapped by armed bandits. This situation left Raul in total despair, and he went through difficult times of great anguish knowing that his

mother was not around. When he left college, Raul would go looking for his mother and was no longer able to concentrate on his studies, which led to a decline in his academic performance. He received failing grades on a scale of 1 to 5, scoring 1. Due to this decline in his academic performance, his classmates, concerned about him, gave him all the support they could, but Raul did not immediately accept it.

Later, he was informed that his mother was alive and living in the district of Vanduzi, Manica Province. This news calmed Raul, who had come to terms with his mother’s disappearance. He got back on his feet and returned to classes at the ISP. Having missed some classes, Raul asked his classmates for their notebooks to study. He worked hard and in the first assessment he achieved the highest mark of 5. The teacher praised him and promised to give him positive and high marks if he improved, and would delete the negative marks. And so it happened: Raul improved. As Nogueira and Oliveira (2019) point out, individual mobilization can be understood as inherent to the individual, such that the child-student plays a specific, active role in building their school longevity. (p. 5)

In his second year at ISP, Raul was a monitor and participated in scientific conferences, where he won an award, in the preparation of the Mathematics Olympics for the 11th and 12th grades, and in the ISP entrance exams, in addition to providing exam preparation tutoring.

On June 5, 1992, Raul completed his bachelor’s degree, defending his thesis entitled “Some Aspects of Projective Geometry,” a topic that arose from a question raised in class.

In 1992, he already had some connection with Telecomunicações de Moçambique (TDM), as he had been asked to teach mathematics and physics on the Satellite Transmission course. In 1998, TDM offered him a scholarship to study in Australia. While working,

he solved in record time a telephone problem at an institution that had been troubling the company for more than three years. The issue was resolved immediately.

In a meeting with his boss, he recognized Raul's natural effort and gave him the opportunity to pursue a master's degree in marketing. However, Raul expressed his desire to study Mathematics and Physics, as these were his strengths. He did not turn down the offer and ended up accepting the company's proposal after successfully completing his master's degree.

Back in Maputo, he returned to work and then enrolled at the Catholic University of Mozambique, where he completed a PhD in Communication and Marketing without much difficulty, as he already had work experience in the field. He says he would like to do postdoctoral studies but is writing a lot because he has ambitions to reach all the categories set out in the teaching career regulations. He has books and articles published in scientific journals.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The stories about Sabino and Raul's school careers are very similar. Raul comes from a working-class rural background, while Sabino is a boy who spent the first years of his life in the city but then went to live in the countryside with his grandmother.

Both Sabino and Raul had a difficult school career, marked by moments of turbulence that affected their schooling.

Their academic success was the result of a lot of effort, dedication, and above all, focus. Their school careers were influenced by teachers, but in Sabino's case, also by the priest with whom he prayed at mass. The self-discipline and self-teaching of the interviewees explain their academic success.

Despite the adverse situations they faced throughout their schooling, they were always good students and stood out academically. As a result, Raul was always on the honor roll. Sabino and Raul completed their doctoral degrees.

The stories also show the development of income-generating activities, which means that both began their professional lives before reaching adulthood in order to meet their immediate needs, whether for food or school supplies, or to support their parents or grandparents.

Both interviewees had outstanding academic performance. From an early age, their future profession was clear, beginning with tutoring and literacy classes. From there, both pursued teaching careers.

Throughout their school careers, Sabino and Raul increased their social capital by getting involved in social activities such as sports, culture, and others linked to the ruling party.

An analysis of the educational trajectories of Sabino and Raul, who come from disadvantaged social classes, allows us to understand the countless difficulties they faced throughout their schooling and the strategies they used to overcome them, which enabled them to access higher education and achieve success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop support programs for all students from disadvantaged backgrounds to encourage them to stay in school until they reach higher education and prevent their trajectories from being interrupted and/or disrupted.

Create admission quotas for individuals who demonstrate commitment, dedication, and interest in academic knowledge and are recommended by teachers as good students throughout their school career.

Prepare teaching professionals to work with individuals, regardless of their social class, motivating them and showing them the

paths to follow, and ensure that they remain in education until they reach higher education.

Communication between educational institutions, schools, parents, and/or guardians and the community should be healthy, in or-

der to ensure the active participation of all those involved in the education of individuals from disadvantaged social classes.

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