

**The domestication of primary school teaching:
a Brazilian study case**

by
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To

Mauro

For his respect, support, encouragement and love.

To my son

Daniel

who rescued me.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which the work of women teachers in primary schools in one region of Brazil has been re-defined by agents within the school itself.

The investigation was pursued through semi-structured interviews with 48 women teachers and 14 school managers working mainly in poor communities. It reflects the experiences of teachers from Municipal schools in one of the developed cities: Belo Horizonte. Informal talks with teachers involved in activities outside classroom, other school staff such as secretaries and door-keepers, and parents encountered at the school entrance (some parents agreed to participate in tape-recorded interviews) also provided useful information for the study. Among the secondary material collected during the field work were visual and written didactic texts used inside schools, the school files relating to discipline problems between pupils/parents and teachers, and the school files of "Colegiado" meetings. Also inside schools, observations were made of school meetings with parents; pedagogical meetings and a extra-school activities such as parents' and pupils' preparation for a party and showing of a school video. A search of written material from local newspapers archived by the Teachers' Union related to teachers was conducted. Visits to, and contacts with, the Municipal Secretary of Education provided material on extra-school administration. Study at the local University, with its extensive archive of recent studies on the history and conditions of work of women teachers in Brazil, in the State of Minas Gerais and specifically in the Municipal schools of Belo Horizonte, was a rich source of academic material for this study.

It is suggested that the domestication of teachers' roles has been promoted within schools by teachers, the school managers and others involved in school life (parents, pupils and other school staff). This has led to a considerable increase in the number of roles schools and teachers are required to fulfil in communities with serious economic and social limitations. In a society where state social support is insufficient, schools provide palliative solutions for a range of needs. However, as schools become increasingly involved in business other than formal education, teachers' roles have changed and thus are judged through a gendered filter

which stresses femininity over professionalism.

Women's acceptance of poor working conditions and their involvement in the immediate social problems of pupils and local communities has been beneficial for the Brazilian and State governments, as well as for the local community. However, there have been negative consequences for the development of better ways to teach children from these communities and the status and socio-economic position of teachers themselves. The domestication of the roles of women in teaching has thus had long-term negative consequences for the education of the poor.

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Chapter 1

1.1- Introduction

In Brazil, the government has made many attempts to improve the quality of primary education available to the poor. Most have represented a “top-down” approach to decision making and many have failed - completely or partially - to elicit a satisfactory response from schools. More recently, the Brazilian government has attempted to implement administrative decentralization in schools by inviting the school community (parents, teachers, school managers, and pupils) to participate more actively in education. However, the potential contribution of these agents is still restricted to internal school decisions. For instance, while teachers are frequently identified as “fundamental agents” of education¹, in reality their space for action has been restricted to daily planning and minor, harmless matters. They have not been invited to effectively participate in educational decision making through. As a matter of course, teachers are expected to implement changes imposed by others. On the other hand, blame for the failure of education is often placed squarely on teachers.

In Brazil (Costa, 1995), as elsewhere, education has become the “scapegoat for and a remedy to economic problems” (Beresford, 1994). Schools are expected to prepare “well-behaved and well-adjusted citizens”, and at the same time to select and to train these citizens to serve the needs of the labour market (Ball, 1987). When these expectations are not fulfilled, all problems in society are seen to be a consequence of an inefficient system of education, for which teachers are often blamed. And because women are usually responsible for education both in the private and public spheres, they receive all the blame. Blaming teachers or schools for social and economic problems is a good way to take attention away from the responsibility of the government for education and for meeting social demands. Women’s acceptance of poor

1- See government document: Conference of Education in Minas Gerais, 1991, Secretary of Education of Minas Gerais; Mr. Walfrido Marcos Guia. “A REALIDADE DA EDUCACAO EM MINAS GERAIS” (The Reality of Education in Minas Gerais, p. 3 and 8).

conditions at work and the involvement of women teachers in solving the immediate social problems of pupils and local communities benefit the government as well as the local community (Novaes, 1984; Bruschini, 1996). The community also appears to gain when women teachers assume responsibility for family life. In the end, the community leaves to others (in this case women teachers) its family roles.

The poor in Brazil are conditioned to paternalistic relations, in which there is a system of “favours” between those with power and those with little or none. In this manner, the poor receive protection and favours from those in a better economic position, in exchange for their votes or eternal thankfulness (Romanelli, 1991). Schools have been used traditionally in these transactions by politicians, to “buy” their people. People are so used to this system of “favours” that they seem to expect teachers and schools to behave in similar ways towards them; which means to assume paternalistic responsibility in exchange for their gratitude. Yet these expectations may have negative consequences for the professional development of women in teaching and for the quality of teaching, once schools and teachers change their focus to developing better ways to teach the children of these communities to social work.

Little consideration has been given to the fact that the work performance of teachers is deeply affected by the conditions under which they work. The fact that most teachers are women seems to be an important element in their work. The perception of teaching, specially in primary schools, as a woman’s job has become a powerful image in Brazil. For this reason, as stated by Assunção (1996), it is necessary to understand the “resonance” of teaching as a female profession inside school and the “symbolic and subjective dimensions around women/teachers in primary schools”.

In this study, I will not deal primarily with the issue of poverty and education in Brazil, because numerous other studies have concentrated on this subject (eg.: Paiva, 1992; Ribeiro, 1992). Instead, I will focus on how women teachers interact with poor communities, and how their work roles have been modified by this interaction. Schools and their agents contribute to teachers’ professional socialisation (eg.: Lelis, 1997). It is hoped that this thesis will provide a more complete understanding of the work of teachers in primary schools in Brazil. It does so

by investigating the relations inside schools. Understanding how the predominantly female teachers in primary schools have their work roles determined in a gendered manner offers insights into how women teachers can become better educators. Additionally, this study may also provide insights into how the quality of teaching and, most important, the quality of education offered to the poor can be improved.

Reay (1995) states that the “current circumstances (of teachers) are not just there to be acted upon, but are internalised and become yet another layer to add to those from earlier socialisation”. It has already been stated that the structure of primary schools, with their “daily disasters” and “routine demands”, leads female teachers “into the stereotypical role of the effortlessly caring mother-figure” (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989). I would define this as an attempt to domesticate the roles of women teachers. Indeed, the “habitus”² which is acquired by agents in the family is transported to “school experience”, making it “the basis of subsequent experiences” (Bourdieu and Wacquant cited in Reay, 1995). All experiences inside school necessitate negotiation between agents. These negotiations limit the freedom of action of individuals working in the school environment. In this manner, investigation of the schools permits the identification of how teachers’ work has been negotiated in this micro social structure. Conditions of work in government schools and the social and economic background problems of the clientele have been addressed by women called upon to engage in what might be termed traditional women’s roles. Women teachers are expected to be emotional and caring and to excel at pastoral and charitable work. Thus, the teaching responsibilities of women are increased by these other “extra-tasks” considered to be natural to women.

The domestication of the roles of women in teaching may have negative consequences for the education of the poor in the long term. It may lead to an increase in the educational gap

2- According to Bourdieu, “habitus” does not determine an individual’s behaviour. It only indicates possible actions that can be expected from an individual. He states that certain practices are not performed by an individual because these are unknown to his/her original cultural grouping.

between the elite and the working-class³ since teachers and schools for the latter privilege pastoral and emotional issues over a solid education. As Ribeiro (1992) has stated, “cheap education” (both of little cost and of bad quality) has always been provided for the poor in Brazil. The quality of education provided for them has been historically neglected, with schools and teachers working under severe material difficulties because of the lack of government interest in spending funds and in educating its people. The paternalistic position assumed by administrators and teachers towards economically disadvantaged people who attend government schools does not alleviate this situation. The solutions that administrators and teachers can offer are palliative, and they take attention away from the negligence of the government in dealing with the social needs of the population.

Studies by Cunnison (1985) and Ball (1987) have suggested that women teachers are powerless in school due to school structure and not due to their gender (“being women”). However, it is helpful to understand schools as arenas where individuals or groups act in a manner which maximizes their own interests and needs. In Sirota’s words (1994) “each class negotiates a discrete relation to other classes inside schools”. In this manner, women teachers are not victims. They also take part in a struggle to have their interests and satisfactions maximized (Ball, 1987). Nelson (1992), for example, noticed that women teachers can be a “potential threat” to the community, since they have access to information in the community which is veiled.

Other forms of power of teachers over pupils have been noticed. Connell et al (1995) for example, indicate that teachers’ relationships with pupils are class-based. By using their (teachers’) power deriving from being in a “better-educated” position, teachers impose a culture from a certain social group over pupils and, consequently, over their (pupils’) communities. This powerful position is, however, usually camouflaged by paternalistic sentiments about giving pupils a better life. By taking a paternalist approach to pupils, - in

³- Here, the terms “elite” refers to that part of the Brazilian population who can afford to pay for their education and “working class” refers to those who cannot afford it and have to attend state schools.

which they will teach pupils the “right” way of living - teachers are perpetuating the values of a certain social group, giving no space for pupils to make valid their class’s or group’s style of living (culture).

Thus, if teachers also exercise power through other avenues, questions may be raised about whether women have been active in perpetuating the domestication of teaching roles in schools. In this manner, the domestication of the work of women in primary teaching could be a result of the actions of the different agents inside schools, including women teachers themselves. Even when school agents are denied a role in educational decisions, they still can resist what has been decided, and their non-compliance can sabotage educational plans.

“... hegemony itself is not static or singular ... does not just passively exist as a term of dominance ... it is also continually resisted, limited, altered and challenged by pressures not at all its own” (Williams in Deem, 1987, p. 113).

This perspective shows teachers behaving according to their own “system of attitudes” rather than merely conforming to a bureaucratic determinism. But teachers’ behaviour should be seen as a product of their own actions as much as a response to the daily demands of school routine. The immediate demands of general school routine as defined by all school agents active in a school (teachers, pupils, parents, school level authorities and other school staff) require teacher response, and being a woman teacher makes the expectations different.

1.2- Origins of the Research Question

This research was initially motivated by my own perceptions and the dissatisfaction I felt when teaching in primary schools in the system of education under investigation here. I worked with children from a “favela” (slum) in the Northeast of the city of Belo Horizonte for four years (1988 to 1991). At the time, I experienced many difficulties in working in these municipal schools, and these problems still exist. My dissatisfaction stemmed from restrictions deriving from the physical conditions of work, from low salary and minimal career potential, and also from the difficulties encountered in teaching pupils, the majority of whom came from

severely impoverished backgrounds. Teaching in these schools required more than a teacher's commitment or professional skills: it was necessary to become personally involved with pupils' homes and physical circumstances.

Over the years, my chosen profession became a source of dissatisfaction. My attempts to develop solutions to teach the pupils took time and resulted in problems with school managers and colleagues who preferred to "play it safe". My age did not help, nor did the "fresh ideas" I had brought from training. At the time, I avoided using didactic texts to teach my pupils, because they only learned to "read" them by memorization. Instead, I initiated work centred on the pupils' lives. From my readings of Freire's ideas, I developed texts based on their drawings and their own speech. Rather than "disciplining" them, I let them establish their own norms of behaviour inside classroom. We discussed rules so they could understand the logic of those that operated inside the school. My pupils were given the opportunity to judge the actions of school managers and to develop ideas about their own responsibilities and rights. My work antagonized some colleagues, especially when pupils reacted against the treatment they received from teachers who intimidated them verbally or even physically.

After a few years, I felt tired, stressed and extremely unhappy as a teacher. It was lonely work and the opportunities for promotion seemed remote, unless I had political connections. Ideas of promotion were also unrealistic, considering my challenges to the authorities inside school and my participation in the teachers' union. It was terrifying to imagine myself retiring from the same post after 25 years, having spent all the intervening time doing the same thing.

As a result of many small incidents (persecution and criticism), I learned to play it safe at school, be obedient and "dedicated". No one wants to be the "bad" teacher who leaves beloved children without classes. It would be akin to the mother who left her own children at home while she fulfilled her career dreams. School culture seems to protect the pupils' rights,

but it does this through a constant process that “re-skills”⁴ women teachers in a way which I shall argue is not in the children’s real interests.

At the time, all I thought was that the salary and the feed-back to my work was not at all proportional to the efforts I was putting into my teaching to achieve quality. I felt that I was changing, but all that I had learnt had no place inside school. At the same time, I despaired at the difficulties at work, particularly material shortages. Like many colleagues, I began to involve myself in pupils’ lives. I found myself taking pupils to hospital, helping and counselling them and their families (usually mothers) when they came to talk to me and to ask my opinion on the most unusual aspects of their private lives. Initially, I felt I could belong to that group of teachers which experience pleasure in feeling I was able to help people. Later, this feeling of being helpful was replaced with doubts as to my fitness for that work. I ended up asking myself what right had I to tell these people what was right or wrong? What were my roles as a teacher?

I had then begun to participate in a research project about the views students undertaking a degree in psychology at the Federal University of Minas Gerais had about their future profession as psychologists. This study led me to think about teachers in relation to their work.

I continued my teaching, but I came to believe that the last thing the schools wanted from me was giving children an education. Certainly, they wanted pupils to be up-graded and disciplined, but that was something different from teaching to read and write. I felt I was required to set a moral example for pupils, but I had no wish to be an example to be followed. To live out the romantic myth of the primary school teacher, as someone who is kind, caring, loving, and religious, was far from my ideal, and I could not help but wonder if this was the case

4- The terms “re-skill” means the process in which teachers are forced to change their work according to school context. This change is necessary. However, in the case of this study, what has been criticized is the fact that women teachers have had their roles and work changed to cover the roles families have not been able to fulfil for any reason.

The American literature (see eg.: Apple, 1986) has identified a process in which teachers have been deskilled by federal, state and local mandates. This has been also stated for British teachers (see Acker, 1994). Teachers have been demanded to understand and implement so many innovations that there is a fear that teachers will be exhausted for “optional innovations”.

for everyone. Pressures inside work almost made me believe that teaching was no more than an endless collection of tasks and domestic roles. However, the feeling of inadequacy and lost identity in terms of roles continued to bother me. My transformation into a first-aid resource for the community gave the short term satisfaction of being in control - of being important to those people. But the more we teachers accepted those roles and conditions of work, the more new roles came to us. What initially was an act of solidarity and expression of love eventually became central in our work. And we were not even asked first if we wanted to participate in such social care.

1.3- Refining the Research Question

Brazilian studies (ie.: Novaes, 1984; Louro, 1987, 1992; Lopes, 1987, 1991) in the area of women and education have understood the image of women in teaching and their present situation as workers as also a consequence of their history in a class, in a gender and in a race (Hypólito, 1994; Rocha, 1997) as well as in a generation (Louro, 1997). In this manner, a person's experiences define to a great extent his/her opportunities and behaviour in society. In the case of women, their past experiences also shape their perception of work and their behaviour in the work place (Kob, 1961; Hoyle, 1969; Harris, 1990 and in Brazil by Mello, 1982). Thus, their occupational choices⁵ "are bounded by the framework of opportunities and constraints" these people find themselves in, their "external circumstances" (Reay, 1995). Thus, the relationships, the events, the incidents in the work context are also important elements which influence people's behaviour at work.

During the 1980s, educational research started to pay more attention to school routine, especially within the classroom, and to the school as an institution: ie. the forms of organization of pedagogical work and the relations of power in the institution. Some

⁵- Choices are also "circumscribed by an internalized framework which makes some possibilities inconceivable, other improbable and a limited range acceptable" (Bourdieu rev. in Reay, 1995).

studies combined these two approaches (Caporalini, 1991). It was, in Caporalini's words, review of the "black box" of the system of education - "what happens inside schools" - giving visibility to elements which are important in school practice.

Research on women has faced many difficulties in Brazil. Early empirical studies of the system of education tended to view this workplace as fair to women, since they were the majority (Assunção, 1996). But in the 1980s, the education system was seen as responsible for creating barriers to women's access to education. Studies about women in Brazil have been influenced by French authors, but still seek to consider other international contributions which associate education with class and gender, and reflect on categories like family and domestic work (Rosemberg et al, 1990)⁶. Scott's conception of gender as a social construction has been a reference to most Brazilian authors in the area. Here it is believed that "what men and women are, and what types of relation they have are not much the products of biological 'givens' as of social and cultural forces" (Lather, 1994, p. 248).

Encounters with the national and international literature introduced me to the specific history of women's education and to the entrance of women into teaching. I abandoned the narrow view of class division as the explanation of all the problems in society, which had as a reference the study of male labourers and neglected the specificity of other categories such as women teachers. The system of education should be understood from a perspective of class and gender (see Louro, 1989; Hypólito, 1994; Assunção, 1994; Bruschini and Amado, 1988; Amado, 1989; Rosemberg et al, 1990).

Studies in the area of gender were also helpful to understand how women, particularly women teachers, share a similar history of exploitation in societies. However, the analysis of women and education has to consider that inside Brazil, women's experiences vary immensely from rural to urban areas, between rich and poor areas of the country, between social classes and between generations.

⁶- Lopes (1987) noticed the existence of a fear in studying the history of women teachers. Studies which relate education and women have been seen as lacking theoretical reflections (Rosemberg et al, 1990).

The contributions of Michael Apple in this research were very important not only because he is frequently cited by Brazilian authors, but also because of his ideas that teachers are responsible actors in the process of teaching and must be listened to when attempting to understand and change the educational system. Apple (1987; 1988) breaks with the myopic class analysis and gives visibility to gender and race in the analysis of teachers' work.

Among feminist writers in the area of education, Acker greatly contributed to better understanding of the situation of women teachers inside schools. She took into consideration the pressures inside school on women teachers. In this manner, as noted by Hoyle (1986), Ball (1987) and Blase (1995), schools are places "in which individuals and groups compete and manipulate events, using whatever power resources they possess to try to maximize their own interests and satisfactions" (Acker, 1994, p. 101). Stephen Ball has especially influenced this research in his call for attention to the need to consider schools as spheres of power allied to the macro influences over schools and teachers. Such a connection - micro and macro - could not possibly be ignored, since in Brazil the feminization of teaching is connected to the transformation of teachers into state workers and increase of control over education by the government (Hypólito, 1994; Louro, 1997)⁷. Teachers' conditions had to be understood as under the influence of "multiple causes and effects interacting in complex and nonlinear ways, all of which are rooted in a limitless array of historical and cultural specificities" (Lather, 1988).

As said here, most certainly, Brazilian educational problems are dependent upon, and suffer the consequences of, events in the national and international context⁸. Nevertheless, in the last few years, interest has turned towards understanding phenomena at the micro-level of the educational system. In particular, a great deal of interest has been shown in understanding "teachers' perceptions and expectations in the perpetuation of a problem, and the importance of challenging wrong assumptions and stereotypes ..." (Canen, 1995, p. 227). However, a

7- This transformation is discussed in chapter 3.

8- The American government had always been interested in the definition of Brazilian life - See for example Verhine (1995) about the U.S. State Department "using the media and cultural exchange programs in Brazil during the 1950s to sell a positive image of America".

micro-political analysis of a school has to include agents other than teachers. Teachers' perceptions and expectations can not be fully understood as simply resulting from their own free will. Teachers work in a context of exchanges, competition, and struggles for power between different groups. Schools have their own "personality", which changes from time to time as a result of the agents who participate in them. Teachers, school managers, parents, pupils and sometimes other members of the local community contribute to the temperament of a school. As Talbert and MacLaughlin (1996, p. 127) affirm, "school-is-not-a-school" only, and teachers have their "daily worklives ... framed by local school traditions and norms".

It has been suggested that many educational plans fail because school agents are not invited to contribute to them (Santos, 1990). This is especially important considering that these agents are expected to implement, and so have the power to change, decisions made externally. Failure results in the loss of public money and may compromise the education of generations.

As pointed out by Teixeira (1962 cited in Paixão, 1991, p. 4) a "distance" exists between "proclaimed values" and the "real values" at play in educational institutions in Brazil⁹. Such "distance" leads us to Ball's question: "How autonomous is the organization and its actors from its clients, publics, superiors and audiences or the basic social and economic structures of the society?" (Ball, 1987, p. 247). As Ball states, organizations enjoy a "relative autonomy". This has been stated more fully by Clegg and Dunkeley, referred to in Ball:

"As systems theorists ... point out, organizations are not independent or self-sufficient phenomena. However, the emphasis within the system's perspective has been straightforwardly upon the adaptation of the organization to its environment; interactive and dialectical relationships have not been widely considered (Clegg and Dunkeley ref. in Ball, 1987, p. 247)".

Thus, schools are not independent from their environment and "cannot be analyzed simply in terms of adaptation to that environment" ... "the national and the local state may operate to limit the range of possibilities available to teachers, but ... they certainly do not

⁹- Meaning that what is defined outside schools is not always understood or put into practice inside schools.

exercise absolute control within that range” (Ball, 1987). Seen in this way, the success or failure of educational plans can also be seen as dependent on the will of school agents. They must be convinced of the advantages of such changes. In the educational system, the micro-sphere must be considered as an important element in the implementation of any educational proposal. Schools with their individual realities must be understood, before any changes are contemplated (Paixão, 1991, p. 4).

Barr-Greenfield’s argument (ref. in Ball, 1987, p. 3) that a school is not a “single abstraction called organization” but “... varied perceptions by individuals of what they can, should, or must do in dealing with others within the circumstances in which they find themselves” is adopted in this study. The view of schools as formal organizations “illuminates less important aspects of the school workplace as a professional community ... The school workplace is a physical setting, a formal organization, and employer. It is also a social and psychological setting in which teachers construct a sense of practice, of professional efficacy, and of professional community. This aspect of the workplace ... appears more critical than any other factor to the character of teaching and learning for teachers and their students” (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 99).

Thus, this is not to underemphasize the importance of a macro approach to understanding schools, but it is also vital to understand first what is going on inside schools and how schools work “day-to-day” (Ball, 1987) and then understand which changes can be carried out at this level and how they can be implemented. Then innovations coming from the macro level can be evaluated and implemented. This micro-political approach to the Brazilian situation gives visibility to the fact that schools are an all-women environment. In this manner, gender is an important determinant which warrants consideration.

From these point of views, women teachers are also agents and not only victims of the “system” (government) as initially believed. In this manner, schools were seen as “reproductive” and with its “contradictory trends” (Gitlin, 1983). Teachers were not only suffering pressures inside school because of their gender, but they could also be using their own gendered values (as well as the values of other school agents) about women in teaching to

achieve power and status.

1.3.1- Stereotypes¹⁰ about Women in Teaching

Teaching, especially primary teaching, has been an occupational female ghetto, with a history of a gendered work force (Apple, 1983). However, there have been relatively few studies which focus on the gender of teachers (Apple, 1983; Lather, 1987; Blackmore, 1993; Bailey, 1996) and these usually have a preconception of women teachers as “damaging, deficient, distracted and ... dim” (Acker, 1987, p. 124). Moreover, in Brazil, discussions about sexism in education, in teachers' training courses or in the work context of teachers are rare (Lelis, 1997).

Teachers have a tradition of dedication and sacrifice (Lather, 1994; Miller, 1996) working under difficult conditions and low salaries. This image of dedication and self-sacrifice has its uses for dominant groups such as the Church, the State, in specific historical conditions, to maximize their own-interests (see Stone, 1994; Talbert and MacLaughlin, 1996; in Brazil, Arroyo, 1985, Costa, 1995). In Brazil, the image of self-sacrifice certainly was useful for governments trying to implement mass education at a low cost, since “dedicated” teachers would not let their low salary stop the work of educating a nation (Arroyo, 1985, Costa, 1995). The personal lives of teachers as well as their professional features appear to have been limited by romantic and heroic ideas about their roles. Like a “patchwork quilt”, the professional identity of teachers is a collection of the expectations demanded of teachers and women by different groups over the years¹¹.

¹⁰- Stereotypes “seems to be an ideological phenomena and should therefore be capable of being accounted for by any theory of ideology; conversely as ideological phenomena of a peculiarly ‘public’ and easily identifiable kind they may provide a useful means of studying the practice of ideology ...” (Perkins, 1979, p. 135).

¹¹- See Brocks (1985) about Latin America teachers' lack of professional status and identity.

In many countries, at different times, the entrance of women into teaching has been seen as an emancipatory step in terms of the participation of women in the labour market (Seppo, 1988; Apple, 1988). Studies have noticed that while there exist a large number of women engaged in teaching, women teachers appear to have their work organized within a male-dominated bureaucratic and patriarchal model of organization (Densmore, 1987; Adler et al, 1993; McKellar, 1994; in Brazil, Demartine and Antunes, 1993). In addition, the history of women in teaching is very much related to the removal of youth from the private sphere (their homes) to the public sphere (schools) for their formal education. This process presents difficulties for their families in terms of trusting their children to a third - unknown - person. The fact that women have always been more involved in the education of youth than have men (Densmore, 1987; Evetts 1989; in Brazil, Rocha, 1997) may have persuaded families to leave their children to the influence of strangers. Commonly held views about the “nature of women” in relation to children might have facilitated the acceptance of women in this professional sphere (Densmore, 1987; Lyon and Mignioulo, 1989; in Brazil, Louro, 1989). The female presence inside schools seems to incarnate the “motherhood” figure - one who cares for youngsters in all senses - thus helping the child make the difficult transition from home to the public world.

1.3.2- Studies in the Area of Women in Teaching

Feminist studies have introduced researchers to the importance of gender as a category of analysis in the educational sphere. These studies on women in teaching have explored different issues, among which are: the “difficulties of studying the meanings of gender through the work of teachers”; “studies of women teachers who are also feminists’/teachers’ voice” (Casey, 1993); “gender and cultural construction of teaching” (Biklen, 1995); women teachers as conscious of their position as “gendered subjects” (Weiler, 1991); the relationship between women teachers and male pupils (Walkerline, 1981; 1990); teachers’ careers (Acker, 1989; Miller, 1990); the importance of gender to teaching (Altenbaugh, 1993).

Studies have indicated that the entrance of women into teaching changed the professional

status of educators and the organization of work in schools (see Apple, 1987; Densmore, 1987; in Brazil, Hypólito, 1994)¹². Some studies go beyond the accusation that women teachers are responsible for their low status and salary. For example, Lieberman (cited in Acker, 1989) points to the “huge reserve supply of female labour” as the element which makes it difficult for women teachers to improve their work conditions and salaries when negotiating with school boards. Traditionally women’s work has been considered somehow inferior to that of men (Apple, 1986; Scott, 1986; Seppo, 1988; Acker 1989, in Brazil, see Louro, 1989; Demartini and Antunes, 1993). For example, Sullerot (cited in Seppo, 1988) has also indicated a correlation between certain types of work with prestige and status. He also analyzed these jobs based on the percentage of females involved in each occupation. The study confirmed that primary school teaching is normally defined as a female task; it is less well-paid work that is not perceived as requiring many years of training. In this manner, the gender of teachers, the dynamics of patriarchy and class, have become important markers in understanding the inter-relationships in schools (Acker, 1989; 1994).

“Gender differentiation is produced and reproduced through the operation of patriarchal ideologies in places of work ... in family life and cultural forms and practices - all of which are themselves necessary class specific and differentiated” (Walker and Barton, 1983, p. 4).

A certain literature has explored the negative descriptions given to women educators, such as women’s lack of commitment to work (Casey and Apple, 1989; Grant, 1989; Acker, 1994); and women teachers as deficient workers (Casey and Apple, 1989; Acker cited in Grant, 1989; Acker, 1987; 1994). These deficiencies have been blamed for the failure of women in teaching careers, and for problems teachers have faced in developing professionalisation and achieving better work conditions. Other issues ought to be considered. One of these is

¹²- Dominelli (1996) says that women (referring to social workers) have “limited direct access to the large-scale resources necessary to establishing an independent profession”. According to this author, social resources available have been monopolised by men or the state, who then established policies. This is an arena to which women still do not have access (Walton cited in Dominelli, 1996, p. 154).

investigated in this thesis - the way women are treated in schools and the outcomes of their work experience.

1.4- The Final Research Question

In Brazil, primary school teachers are mainly women. It is clear that the macro structures of society, such as the government (official demands), influence the behaviour of teachers and the functioning of schools. It is not my intention to disregard these important aspects, but the emphasis of this thesis is to investigate which elements inside primary schools may be shaping the roles of women teachers along the lines of the roles of women in the “domestic sphere”. “... Micro political processes in the organization operate to inhibit change, to maintain the status quo ... organizational domination is not ‘naturally preordained ... (but) something that is won or lost in particular conflicts and struggles’ (Apple, 1982, p. 264). Micropolitics recognizes constraints, but it also focuses upon what people do by way of shaping the social relations they live in” (Ball, 1987, p. 279).

“it is precisely because there is room for struggle and contestation in schools around cultural and ideological issues that pedagogies can develop in the interest of critical thinking and civic courage” (Aronwitz and Giroux cited in Ball, 1987, p. 280).

Despite external interference, there exist in schools agents directly involved in school development. This explains why despite any changes in educational law, certain “values” and “behaviour” appear to persist inside schools. From this point of view, in this study, it was considered important to listen to teachers and school managers about their views and expectations related to teaching and schooling. I have tried to identify the ways in which such groups pursue their interests. Here, special attention was given to the voices of women teachers, treating “them as subjects in control of their own activities”, and exploring “an educational event from the perspective of the teachers involved” (Quantz, 1992, p. 139).

Thus, the main concern of this research is to understand how teachers (mostly women) in municipal schools in one area of Brazil have their roles at work modified towards the

“ideology of domesticity”¹³ in which supposed female characteristics and certain traditional roles of women in the society are demanded. Such features and roles include kindness, child-care, emotional support, the inculcation of habits and values. The initial hypothesis was that inside-school agents expect and require women teachers to act and to engage in certain roles which parallel traditional female roles in society and especially in the family. My interest was in ascertaining how far these women teachers who worked with popular classes (where there are serious social and economic problems) were being led to extend their services beyond teaching. Furthermore, I thought to describe the nature of the tasks which fall outside a narrow definition of teaching. My initial argument is that women teachers were suffering a “deskilling” (or reskilling) when their roles were extended beyond teaching. My supposition was that this behaviour of female teachers contributed to a lowering of the quality of education offered to the pupils from a disadvantaged economic background. The gap in education offered to the “elite” (those who can pay for their education) and “poor” pupils (those who can not pay for their education) was widened due to paternalistic beliefs held by school agents and their association of female work with poor students.

1.5- Development of the Thesis

This study attempt to understand the work of women teachers from a micro-political perspective through an analysis of the accounts of individuals who participate directly in school life. In agreement with Ball (1987), the micro-politics of a school is “a dynamic process dependent upon the skills, resources and alliances of its participants”. In various situations, individual school agents might variously find themselves either exercising power over others, or having power exercised over them. School agents are constantly engaged in a process of negotiating to protect their own interests, even though their strategies are not always visible. It

¹³. Blackmore (in Blackmore & Kenway, 1993, p. 31) reports “the cult of domesticity” in which women “followed their traditional female caring functions into the public domain in schools”. The “nurturing” side of women i.e. : “moral, spiritual, interpersonal” are brought to their work as teachers.

is a dynamic process, where agents exercise power and are also deprived of it. How is domesticity used by these agents as a tool to promote (and negotiate) their status and power inside school?

In **Chapter 2**, an attempt is made to provide an overview of the educational system being studied (municipal schools of the city of Belo Horizonte). This chapter tries to situate the context in which (educational policy and social conditions) the field work was developed.

Chapter 3 is an attempt to provide an overview of the conditions of women in the labour market in Brazil on the basis of academic studies in the area. It also deals with the history of women in teaching in Brazil. This past is important to understand the circumstances which have brought women into teaching.

Chapter 4 explores methodological issues and the implications of the methods used in this study. Here, a micro-political approach in a few schools was chosen as an appropriate tool to investigate the implications of gender in teaching. The “micro-political processes in the organization operate to inhibit changes in order to maintain the status quo” ... “attention to micropolitical processes also highlights the degree of ‘tenuousness, dysfunction, interruption and possibility’” (Whitty cited in Ball, 1987, p. 279) that is inherent in educational context (Ball, 1987, p. 279).

Chapter 5 attempts to characterize teachers and the importance of their background in choosing this profession. The past experiences of teachers - women teachers especially - are important to how they “choose” to practise their profession. The process of socialization which women undergo (under the influence of their family and/or in their current contact with immediate social groups and partners) merits consideration when attempting to understand their behaviour when teaching. Their values and their world view will affect their view of their profession and their practice as educators.

Although socialization - what women bring to school - is a key issue to be considered, it does not provide a full explanation of the professional behaviour of teachers. This being the case, it was necessary to further investigate the other agents inside schools. These agents appear to influence women teachers once they are in a school, to centre their practice of their

profession on social aid, rather than focusing their attention on its educational aspects.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 all address issues of power relations inside schools, and investigate how these affect the work of women teachers: **Chapter 6** explores teachers' actions and their attempts to maximize their interests through promoting themselves and their work. This struggle takes the form of an attempt to raise their status in the school community by affirming the importance of traditional values about women and women in teaching. This chapter attempts to show how women teachers are active agents in perpetuating ideas of femininity in teaching. Their 'altruistic' actions hide a competition between teachers for power and status. This chapter also explores how teachers depend on the approval of their colleagues, and how they fail to resist the school culture of domesticity when at work.

Chapter 7 explores the ways in which women teachers have been affected by the communities in which they teach. The main focus of this chapter is to show how a feminine approach to pupils and parents can be understood as an attempt by teachers to establish power and influence over these communities.

Recent changes in the municipal schools in Belo Horizonte, including democratic elections for school heads, and the implementation of incentives designed to establish stronger links between school and community, have made school managers change their approach to teachers. If, in the past, school heads imposed their will in a more direct way, they continue to assert power but have adopted new strategies to pursue their interests. **Chapter 8** discusses the recent changes (from the 1990s), introduced by the city government in municipal schools, which have affected the relationship of people inside schools, and how school managers¹⁴ have managed to maintain control over teachers. This chapter highlights how aspects of domesticity in teaching are used by school managers - all women - to maximize their interests. In this manner, elected school heads - in order to promote themselves in the community¹⁵ - manage

¹⁴- School managers are the school head, deputy head, supervisors and counsellors. More details on these school managers are given in chapters 4 and 8.

¹⁵- As will be seen in chapter 8, school heads of municipal schools in Belo Horizonte are elected by school staff, parents and pupils older than 16.

their schools using a “mothering” approach or a “feminine mission statement”. As a way to achieve popularity within their community - their main voters - they also evoke caring responsibilities of the school as a whole. Thus, they emphasize a patronizing, charitable role for schools and, consequently, force women teachers to participate in roles outside the educational sphere. However, when dealing with school staff, these women school heads (as well as educational specialists) adopt a management style based on an authoritarian or a protectionist attitude towards the staff, depending on how the staff resist or support their decisions. These women school heads appear to have a “feminine mission statement” but not a feminine management style.

The cult of domesticity existing inside schools seems useful for some women teachers. However helpful and appreciated their actions might be, it is suggested that they have also resulted in negative consequences even for teachers and for education itself. **Chapter 9** briefly summarizes the main findings of this present study and points to possible actions that can be taken inside schools. It is also important to understand the underworld of schools to then improve education.

Chapter 2

Educational Structures and related Social Conditions

2.1- Introduction

This thesis is about women teachers who work in schools which serve poor communities in Brazil (ie. government schools). The new data it contains were collected from selected schools in one city of one Brazilian municipality, but the results of this field work must be situated in a wider context.

Brazil consists of 26 states and a Federal District (Brasília - the capital). The states form five regions: North, Northeast, South, Southeast and Central West regions. There are 4,974 municipalities. "Brazil is a federation and power is divided territorially", but "division of attributions as far as the functions of accumulations and legitimization" are not clearly defined (Siqueira and Barreto, 1994).

This study was carried out in the city of Belo Horizonte (capital of the state of Minas Gerais). This state is located in the Southeast region and is the second most developed state of the country. It is 927,286 square km, almost the size of France. It contains 756 municipalities.

Brazil has the largest Gross Domestic Product in Latin America and is among the ten largest economies in the world, but pays the lowest minimum wage: 16 million Brazilian have incomes on or below the minimum wage. Twenty-nine percent of its economically active population live in a "situation of indigence" and cannot afford a minimum diet (Gatti et al, 1996). However, recent changes in the Brazilian economy (mid-1990s) have been seen as having slowed inflation and led to economic growth (Birdsall et al, 1996).

Brazilian society is "a nexus of corporatist elites, of wild inequality, of opportunities denied to many, the enterprise of some half-chained" (The Economist, 1995; Gatti et al, 1996). In 1995, there were "155 million people, 80% of them urban; 1% stinking rich and 20%

stinking poor” (The Economist, 1995)¹⁶. In Brazil, urban poverty has increased with the internal migration of people living in rural areas and in small cities to big urban centres in order to find a better life. These people brought their “values and patterns of a rural world” to the industrial world (Romanelli, 1991, p. 58). Coming from small areas where the dominant class is made up of “coronéis” (ie. large landowners) and politicians who exercise great power, these people were used to paternalist relations with local authorities, with “ mysticism, violence and conformism as traditional solutions”. The portrait of these workers allowed a “politics of mass” to “flourish”, creating “charismatic links” between working class and politicians (Romanelli, 1991, p. 58). This “populist” politics seems to be a reality at many different levels of Brazilian society. The “popular classes” are “conditioned” to expect all kinds of “favours” from people in better economic positions.

2.2- Brazilian System of Education: Some Features

“The organization of the Brazilian educational system and its corresponding public policies are not merely administrative matters oriented by technical decisions. On the contrary, they depend upon the correlation between social forces and are tied to regulations of the State’s institutional apparatus where dynamic power schemes are linked to diverse, often conflicting social and economic interests. Therefore, the organization and ruling of official educational policies are not only aimed at the common good” (Siqueira and Barreto, 1994, p. 7).

The school system in Brazil includes municipal, state, federal and private institutions. Historically, each Brazilian state has been responsible for its own primary education, while the federal government looks after the secondary and higher levels of education. The latter is concerned with “training an elite” (Mello and Silva, 1996; Gadotti, 1993).

¹⁶- Brazil has experienced a rapid urbanization which led to changes of its population from predominantly rural to predominantly urban (Verucci, 1991). In the early decades of this century, 80% of the Brazilian population was rural. Today, approximately 80% of the Brazilian population lives in urban areas.

Private elementary schooling in 1984 served 13% of the population in Brazil (Gatti et al, 1996). Private schools are chosen by white and oriental families rather than by blacks and “browns” (Mello and Silva, 1996). Enrolment in private schools has been related to level of education of family head, family income and family size and colour. “Better-off students are ... those more likely to attend a public (and free) university” (Mello and Silva, 1996). This level of education has usually been favoured by public spending, leading to low public spending on primary and secondary education, denying to middle and low-income students a better public education and opportunities to “do well in meritocratic testing for access to subsidized public universities” (Birdsall et al, 1996)¹⁷.

According to article 210 of the Brazilian Constitution (1988), “the minimal contents to be administered in elementary and secondary schools are set by the Federal government, to ensure a common basic knowledge and obey the national and regional cultural and artistic values”. Both public and private schools have to respect article 210 with respect to “the minimal content to be administered”.

The Brazilian education system is large and bureaucratic, which makes control difficult. Numerous proposals to improve primary education both qualitatively and quantitatively have been made (Santos, 1990). Explanations for the poor performance (high dropout and grade repetition rates) in Brazilian education point to “low teachers’ salaries and a consequent shortage of qualified teachers, especially in rural areas; scarcity of textbooks and instructional material; abbreviated school days; decaying and ill equipped school buildings; administrative inefficiency; and curricular and pedagogical rigidities”. Thus, despite the poor performance, the lack of improvement in the Brazilian educational system is seen as a consequence of “scarcity of financial and human resources ... as well as any number of material, institutional and political obstacles in the process of policy implementation that prevent achievement of clearly defined and universally approved educational objectives” (Plank et al, 1996).

Improvements in Brazilian education have been seen as dependent on changes in

¹⁷. The language of instruction is Portuguese; there is no second language in the country.

economic and social affairs (Birdsall et al, 1996). In these authors' opinion, the economic and social environment in Brazil "discouraged educational investments". They point out that:

1- "unequal income distribution concentrated wealth among the elite, who resisted paying the additional taxes necessary to increase the supply and quality of subsidized education for children from poor families. Poor families had such low incomes that they had difficulty keeping their children in school and out of the workforce. They had little reason to do so, because of the low quality of available schools, (and because) success in school was unlikely and the economic payoff of schooling was not high".

2- "because Brazil adopted an inward-looking development strategy, the demand for educated labour ... was not as high as it might have been had Brazil's economy been more open and more oriented towards exports".

3- "Brazil's political system often made the school system more a source of jobs than good public education efficiently administered for children";

4- "public spending on basic education per eligible child in Brazil rose slowly during the 1970s and 1980s, ... but slowed down with population growth" (Birdsall et al, 1996).

Since 1971, official educational policy has aimed at administrative decentralization. But state and federal officials still do not delegate responsibilities for schools to authorities at the local level. Tax bases are centralized and unequal (Plank et al, 1996). These authors see decentralization as a possibility in the present context, since the new Constitution required "tax changes" which reduce the control of federal government over "quantity of revenues", and "shifts in administrative responsibility" might lead to a "shift in resources". This decentralization would give states and municipal governments opportunity to "control their own school systems". Political disagreements are not so much about the goals of the educational system as about "how they should be achieved" and "who should be entrusted with the task of achieving them", and disagreements be expected to be reduced with such decentralization (Plank et al, 1996). Birdsall et al (1996) indicate that there is evidence that decentralization "can improve the accountability of education systems and the efficiency of educational spending", however decentralization can lead to "high variance in quality, usually to the detriment of the poor" if

“school quality depends on local financing and if revenue-raising capacity varies markedly across localities” (Birdsall et al, 1996).

2.2.1- Illiteracy

Literacy levels in Brazil have risen slowly since the beginning of this century (IBGE - Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute, 1996): from around 80% illiterate people in the early decades of the century to approximately 26% today¹⁸ (Gatti et al, 1996). While illiteracy has decreased by 5% in each decade, the total number of adult and young illiterates has increased from 18.7 million in 1980 to 19.2 million in 1991. The forecast for the 21st century is that the number of adult and young people “without the ability to read and write” will be 16% (Gatti et al, 1996).

The new Brazilian Constitution of 1988 gave priority to universalising elementary education and overcoming illiteracy through a ten year plan for education. This is in line with article 205 of the Brazilian Constitution, which states that “education is the right of everyone and a duty of the State”, and article 212 which guarantees the allocation of “no less than 18% of the Federal budget and not less than 25% of the state and municipal budgets” to education. This Constitution also states that education should be compulsory from ages 7 to 14, the eight years of primary education (Mello and Silva, 1996). This does not mean that people have access to an uniform quality of education (Gatti, 1990). Despite government claims for universalized education, little has been modified in terms of public expenditure, and emphasis is given to the ‘better’ use of existing funds. Some authors (eg. Cury, 1998) have denounced the fact that in the recent National Plan for Education, the government has attempted to transfer the responsibility for the school budget to communities. Moreover, teachers are seen (by

¹⁸- Gatti et al (1996) define literate people as those who “manage to read or write a simple note”. If the definition of literate people refers to those “who had completed the first four years of elementary schools and who were not subject to a regression in their process of becoming literate to be literate” than around 43% of the population aged 10 or more would be considered illiterate in 1987.

government) as the major agents for ensuring the success of the plan.

In addition to having many illiterate people, Brazil has faced chronic problems of a high number of “functionally illiterate people”¹⁹, in addition to serious problems caused by pupils, especially among the poorest, who are forced to repeat years of schooling and who have high drop-out rates (Gatti, 1990; Santos, 1990; Canen 1995; Wong, 1995). Only just over half of the children in Brazilian schools complete their fourth year of primary school, which is the point when they are expected to know how to read and write properly and have acquired basic mathematical knowledge (Ribeiro, 1992). Undoubtedly, these figures provide a negative picture of Brazil, and are especially important because of the influence potential on external investors²⁰. More recent studies indicate that today’s main challenge in Brazilian education is not access (although this is still a real problem in some areas), but grade repetition in the first grades. Despite educational growth over the last three decades, 80% of the Brazilian population does not complete secondary education²¹. This situation is seen not only as a “mere reflection of infra-structural determinants” but also as a consequence of the “social, economic and political context” (Gatti et al, 1996).

19- According to Santos (1990), there were around 20 million Brazilians who did not have access to education at the right age (7-14 years old) or who went to school but were “functionally illiterate” people. These ‘functional illiterates’ are usually those with uncompleted primary schooling, who are unable to write or read properly.

20- The state will have been the subject of industrial investment of over 10 billion US dollars by the year 2000. Education seems to have been an important factor when these decisions were made (Veja, 1997).

21- 60% of children enrolled in elementary school complete it. Among those, only 3% complete elementary school without repeating some grades (Silva and Davis, 1996).

2.2.2- Levels of Schooling and Access

Table 2.1: Levels of Schooling and Age in Brazil (1996)

Level of schooling	Ages	Number of years
Primary schools	7-10	4 years
5 ^a a 8 ^a séries do Primeiro Grau*	11-14	4 years
Secondary school	15-17	3 years

* Last four years of elementary school

Table 2.1 shows the levels of schooling and the number of years at each level in Brazil. However, this should be seen as the “normal” age for pupils to enter and leave: if an individual pupil does not pass a year’s final examination, he/she is required to repeat the entire year of schooling to master the pre-requisites for the next grade.

As Plank et al (1996, p. 117) well explained, Brazilian politicians do not respond to the public interest by :

“developing and implementing policies that benefit society at large ... and often find that their electoral prospects are best served by concluding private agreements with particular voters or groups of voters ... Clientelism in education comprises a variety of practices, including the provision of jobs for clients and supporters, the awarding of public contracts to political allies, and the distribution of public resources in accordance with the needs of electoral politics”.

These politics include, for example, “school construction contracts which are awarded to political supporters, a practice estimated to inflate costs by as much as 40 percent”(Birdall et al, 1996, p. 121). The Brazilian educational system “has been hampered by the political system: teaching and administrative and maintenance appointments have been treated as political spoils” (Lawlor, 1985; Birdall et al, 1996 p. 118).

School attendance rates have improved in all classes of family, but not uniformly; it is still the case that 98% of children from the richest families attend schools, while 25% of poorest children do not. In the Southeast and South regions of the country, 95% of the individuals of each age group have access to elementary education, while in the Northeast region the rate is 79%. Seventy percent of people without access to elementary education live in the Northeast region of Brazil (Gatti et al, 1996; Lawlor, 1985). Moreover, since 1965,

there have been high primary school enrolment rates and a relative small gender gap at both the primary and the secondary levels (Behrman and Schneider, 1996). These authors indicate that by 1987, Brazilian investments in female schooling had been favourable, compared to other developing nations, despite the country's losses in its primary and post-primary schooling²².

In the 1980s, children in the age group 10 to 14 years had the highest rate of school attendance (78.7%). In 1990, the highest rate was that of children between 7 to 9 years of age (85%) (IBGE, 1996). These results demonstrate the interest of the government in increasing the availability of primary education to all young children in the country. However, due to repetition, pupils on the average now stay longer in each school year, which leads to increased expense per child and lack of vacancies for newcomers. As mentioned earlier, the greatest challenge for Brazilian education is not access but grade repetition.

Many pupils do not enter the system of education at the age of 7. A recent study in an urban area in Brazil indicated that the level of education of the family head, the family size, the existence of female-headed households (a negative factor) and skin colour influence this delay of entry in school. School completion was also related to education of the family head, family size, and income. Pupils' sex, in this case female, has a positive impact on the completion of the first grades. First grade completion (and dropout) is also related to the location of schools in urban areas where promotion criteria are more rigid than in rural schools because of "socio-economic differences" and "age/grade fitness (younger students are likely to succeed in these first grades) (Mello and Silva, 1996).

22- In 1985, the Brazilian rate of illiteracy was 22%, which was below the 26% on average of middle-income countries. Note that the definition of literacy was different from the one used in this thesis and by Gatti et al (1996). The number of illiterate women was 24%, below the 31% in middle-income countries. Behrman and Schneider (1996) affirm that "the relatively strong investment in basic schooling (primary schooling) in Brazil apparently resulted in somewhat below average illiteracy by the mid-1980s, with a smaller than average gender gap in illiteracy". The proportion of male and female Brazilian population with no schooling differs in each area of the country. For instance almost 33% of males and females in Northeast have no schooling against 16.6% of females and 12.5% of males in the South. Still in the Northeast, 18% of male and 16.5% of females have more than primary schooling (8 years of schooling) against the South with its 23% male and 20% females (Strauss and Thomas, 1996).

2.3- The Minas Gerais System of Education: Some Features

In 1991, 3.4 million pupils attended the pre-school, elementary and secondary schools run by the state, municipal and federal education organizations of Minas Gerais. The private schools had in attendance a further 400 thousand pupils. Thus, there was a total of 3.8 million pupils aged 7 to 18 years in school²³. There were 1,861,000 children aged 15 to 18 who should have been attending secondary schools, but only 230,000 could be accounted for in both the public and private systems. Eighty eight percent (88%) of pupils aged 15-18 were out of school or remained at the elementary school level. According to the Secretary of Education in 1991, this situation forced the government to give priority to the “Educação Básica” (elementary school) (Guia, 1991²⁴).

In response to these demands, in 1993, the State of Minas Gerais implemented a ten-year plan for education. It involved cooperation between the representative institutions and organizations in the area, including the state universities, governmental institutions dealing with education, the teachers’ unions and the representatives of school heads. The government stated that this plan had input from the municipal level, and that schools’ suggestions were considered. It implied that a process of administrative decentralization of decisions would result in schools having the opportunity to discuss their own needs (see Guia, 1991). The idea of decentralization of decisions was to give autonomy to schools in terms of administrative and financial decisions that in the past had been set by one of the central agencies of education. In the words of the Secretary of Education of Minas Gerais:

23- The Brazilian Constitution gives priority to the education of children between the ages of 7 to 14 years. According to the government, in 1991 the state of Minas Gerais had 3,050,00 children in this age group, and of this number, 2,700,000 were in schools. Thus, 10% of this population was missing, meaning that of every 10 children in the elementary school age in the state 9 are attending these schools. These numbers do not provide information as to the quality of education provided, nor the productivity of pupils (Guia, 1991).

24- Conference: “A Realidade da Educacao em Minas Gerais” (The Reality of Education in Minas Gerais”) by Mr. Walfrido Silvino dos Mares Guia Neto in the Seminary of Education: “A Hora Marcada”. This event was promoted by the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais in October, 23rd 1991.

“Our commitment to schools is very simple; the commitment that we are making with pupils, parents and professionals of education must be implemented inside the school. Thus, the school must have autonomy to proceed in cases as simple as changing a broken window, or as important as substituting a teacher who is not acceptable to the families or in the school” (Guia, 1991, p. 9).

Community involvement was seen as necessary for improving the quality of education. Interests in “revitalizing the educational practice” were expressed. It was thought important to allow for time during the school day for teachers’ professional development: they could study, debate and develop projects as needed. Further, the ten-year plan intended a “continuous evaluation” to be maintained, as well as cooperation between the educational systems and institutions specializing in “qualification of teachers”. There were also plans to have a decentralized administration of educational resources: no less than 35% of the State resources were to be spent on Education, to cover provision of materials to schools as well in the evaluation of results (Conferência Nacional de Educação para Todos. Plano Decenal de Educação para Todos 1993-2003 , Relatório-Síntese, Minas Gerais. Anais - Brasília - 1994).

There has not been a formal study to evaluate the impact of implementation of the ten-year plan. A report by the secretary of Education is expected by the end of 1998. However, there is an overall impression of improvement that needs to be confirmed scientifically.

2.4- The Municipal System of Education in Belo Horizonte

Municipal schools in Belo Horizonte use a two to three shifts a day system to optimize the usage of classrooms²⁵. The shifts are: first shift, 7 am to 11:30 am; second shift, 1:00 to 5:30 pm and third shift, 7 pm to 10:00 pm. However, 10% of these schools operate more than three shifts, with a reduced duration for each shift (Rocha, 1997). There are also cases of more

25- In Brazil, during the 1930s and 1940s, immigration from rural areas to urban centres created education problems. In order to accommodate the educational needs of these populations, the system of full-time schooling was abandoned, giving place to two, three or even four shifts per day in schools (Ribcero, 1992).

than one school (each with their own school managers and staff) sharing the same building. For example, there is an agglomerate of six schools using a single building in the centre of Belo Horizonte. Each school operates on one floor while they wait for their own physical space. Pupils are from different areas of the city and taken to school by buses provided by the municipal government. These schools were contacted - on several different occasions - and asked to participate in the field work of the present study. They initially agreed to visits. It would have been interesting to see them; however, during the field work period the teachers refused to participate.

There is no promotion. Those who enter the system as teachers will retire as teachers after 25 years of work. Despite this, some teachers manage to move to other sectors of the system, usually through political contacts or influential friends. Some manage to take on administrative posts (outside schools) and then to keep the increased salary, even after returning to teaching. The return of teachers to the classrooms is common, especially after elections for city mayor are held, when the newly elected party usually introduces new people and removes old ones. It is also common for teachers who have worked their whole life in the secretariats²⁶ of education to return to schools and retire with the full benefits of a “bona-fide” teacher. Thus, teachers are limited to small increases in salaries over time. Other benefits, such as “maternity leave” or leave to accompany sick relatives, are also granted. In the last few years, the city government has given incentives to teachers in primary school that have a university degree. In 1995, the salary of a “P1 Habilitada” (Primary school teacher with a university degree) was almost twice the salary of a P1 (primary school teachers with secondary school only). This has led many teachers, including older ones, to enter universities.

Lately, with the introduction of competitive elections for school heads by the school community, as a reflex of the democratic movement in all sectors of the country, some teachers have managed to be elected, achieving a temporary promotion. Competitive elections for school heads were introduced in municipal schools in 1989. Parents, pupils (older than 16

26. At national level in Brazil there is the Ministry of Education. At the State and Municipalities there are the Secretaries of Education.

years of age) and all school staff are invited to choose the school head and deputy head by voting. Only teachers and school managers (heads, deputy heads, supervisors and counsellors) can be candidates for this post. Their salary will increase as their working hours. Working hours double when one becomes school head and deputy head²⁷. A school headship is a temporary post, with a minimum tenure of 2 years and a maximum of 4.

School managers are the school head, the deputy head and educational specialists (educational supervisors and educational counsellors). Each school shift should have a certain number of supervisors and counsellors, varying according to the number of classrooms in the school. Traditionally, the roles of educational specialists (educational supervisor and counsellors) have been to supervise the work of teachers, to make sure that the National Curriculum is being followed inside schools and to deal with problems of teachers and pupils related to the learning process. Educational counsellors address the problems of pupils experiencing learning difficulties, and supervisors focus on the curriculum. Lately, effort has been made to encourage these professionals to work together, to avoid fragmentation of the pedagogical work. Educational specialists have a four year degree in "Pedagogy". They commonly leave the course with two specializations: as teachers' trainers, plus another specialisation in either supervision, counselling or inspection. All these specialisations have education as the focus. The educational counsellor does not engage in "pastoral" work. His/her work is supposed to focus on the psychological aspects of learning difficulties, and not the special needs of pupils. Educational specialists appeared in schools in the 1960s, when Brazil was ruled by a dictatorial government. At that time, the country also experienced an "accumulation of capital, more bureaucratization, and impoverishment" of its population, increased urbanization and industrialization. The dictatorship increased its control over organizations such as schools. Many laws and regulations were passed to control schools' work. The introduction of educational specialists (supervisors and counsellors) in schools created a

27- However, as seen in the field work, these people usually make special arrangements so they do not have to stay so many hours at school. Heads and deputy heads negotiate this time without problems, since their hours of work are not easily controlled by staff.

separation between the “conception” and “execution” of work in education. Teachers lost control over the process of what should be taught, and how and when it should be taught, and became oriented by these educational specialists (Cunha, 1988; 1989). This has reinforced the process of proletarianization of teaching in Brazil (Louro, 1989)²⁸. In the history of Brazilian education, we see school managers (school head, deputy head and educational specialists) enjoying much better salaries than teachers, and at the cost of the teachers’ salary (Novaes, 1984). These individuals had great importance for the government in terms of helping them control education. Their better salaries were necessary to guarantee that these educational specialists would follow government demands. Nowadays, these educational specialists appear to have lost their unique status and comfortable position in terms of salary and authority inside schools. This has been partially caused by the recent changes introduced by the government in schools.

2.4.1- Recent Changes Introduced by Government in Municipal Schools in Belo Horizonte

In the last few years, the Brazilian political system has become more democratic. These changes started during the 1980s, with the end of the dictatorial government. This democratization of the country was not restricted to the central political sphere but was also reflected at many different levels of political organization. In the state of Minas Gerais, state and municipal schools were prepared for participating in this democratic movement by introducing competitive elections for school heads by those with an interest in schools,

28. Arroyo (cited in Louro, 1989) describes this as a process where teachers suffer devaluation. First, he describes the depreciating value of those teachers, who from the beginning of the century did not have “Normal course”, and that their lower salary was justified in this manner. Then, when the number of teachers who had completed the “Normal course” was higher, the government created educational specialists which again helped to justify the low salary for the teachers. The author sees this introduction of specialists as an attempt by the government to decrease spending on education.

including parents, pupils²⁹, teachers, school managers and other school staff. The introduction of democratic elections for school heads will be fleshed out in Chapter 8, once its great impact on teachers' behaviour and on the micro-politics of the schools visited has been discussed. Moreover, there has been a trend towards increasing participation in school decisions through "Colegiados"³⁰ and "Assembléias"³¹. As noticed earlier, certain key decisions, such as setting the curriculum, remain under the control of the central government.

In addition, specific changes have been made in municipal schools in Belo Horizonte. The most notable was the so called "Escola Plural" which was a political-pedagogic proposal from the government of Belo Horizonte, implemented at the end of 1994, addressing the needs of the municipal system of education. According to Rocha (1997), this educational proposal took into account "the experiences of municipal schools" in previous years. The intent of the "Escola Plural" was to: transform school organizations into more "democratic and egalitarian" organizations. The document issued by the Municipal Secretary of Education instructed "to look for practice and actions from schools" aiming at the "*whole formation of the human being*"; and consider "school as a time of cultural experience, opening the space to cultural manifestations of the community". There were additional plans to attend to the "material" needs of schools; pupils were to be taught in groups of the same age, emphasizing the "socialization" role of the school for each age³². Finally, the project aimed "to recognize the role of the

29-By pupils I mean girls and boys; co-education is the norm in Brazil.

30- "Colegiado": This organization is composed of representatives of each sector of the school: parents, pupils, teachers, inside-school authorities and staff employed in the cleaning of the school. Periodic meetings take place to discuss and vote on decisions related to the running of the school. Some schools in this study already had their own "Colegiado"; others were in the process of organizing one.

31- Here, the entire school community is gathered in periodic meetings to be informed about and participate in decisions made by the "Colegiado" or by a certain segment of the school. For example, this can happen during a teachers' strike, when parents are called to the school to be informed about reasons for the strike. Meetings might also make decisions about school activities, including school days, Saturday classes, parties, etc. Holidays in municipal schools comprehend the months of January and July.

32- From 1996, pupils' grade repetition was also eliminated from these municipal schools.

educational professionals ... as socio-cultural agents ... in the implementation of the Escola Plural ... (Rocha, 1997, p. 85-86).

The “Escola Plural” certainly did introduce changes in the organization of schools, but not all schools accepted them. The “Escola Plural” is discussed in some detail in Appendix 2 because I have not been able to assess the full implications of this educational reform on the system of education evaluated here. It was only introduced shortly before my field work was conducted, although teachers mentioned this project during the interviews and many expressed their dissatisfaction with how it was being implemented. It seemed to be a good example of how school staff can resist and sabotage top-to-bottom (governmental/external to school) decisions.

2.4.2- Types of Teachers in Municipal Schools in Belo Horizonte

This municipal system of education has 11,226 staff in various jobs. Teachers are distributed into 9 areas of the city (“Regionais”). They are: Barreiro, South-centre, East, Northeast, Northwest, North, West, Pampulha, Venda Nova. The majority of primary school teachers in the system of education under investigation are women (see Table 2.2). In primary schools (P1 teachers - Primary school teacher) the number of women is strikingly greater than the number of men. Women also comprise the overwhelming majority of administrative post holders at municipal schools in Belo Horizonte³³. Male teachers are concentrated in the last four years of elementary schools and in secondary schools.

³³. Municipal schools of Belo Horizonte have 607 school managers - 606 women and 1 man (Rocha, 1997).

Table 2.2: Distribution of Teachers in the Municipal Schools in Belo Horizonte, by post and sex -Belo Horizonte, 1996

Post	Male	Female	Total
P1	12	5,656	5,668
P2	1,147	2,088	3,235
Total	1,159	7.744	8.903

Source: Department of School Organization/PBH³⁴ - Dec./95 to mar/96 - Relatório de Pesquisa: Teachers from Municipal schools in Belo Horizonte: sex. Courtesy of Maria da Consolação Rocha, 1997, MA thesis, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte.

*P1 - Primary school teacher (first four years of primary school)

*P2 - Secondary school teacher (last four years of elementary school and secondary school teachers).

The number and level of education of teachers in primary schools (municipal of Belo Horizonte) were:

- 2,696 P1 (those who have teachers' training qualification at secondary school level only);
- 85 P1 with "licenciatura curta" (a partial university degree with no specialisation in areas such as counselling, supervision, administration or inspection);
- 2.887 P1 with "licenciatura plena" (a full four year university degree)³⁵.

³⁴- PBH means "Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte" - Local government of Belo Horizonte. Thus, teachers from PBH.

³⁵- Prior to 1996, teachers' training for primary teaching took place in secondary schools. The length of the course was usually three years (Table 2.1) and students usually started at around their 15th birthday. As in other secondary level courses, the successful completion of the teachers' training course granted access to a university degree course. However, people taking the teachers' training courses have generally not been as well prepared for the examination for entrance to an university degree as those attending regular secondary schools.

There are still teachers with no qualifications in Brazil. However, they are concentrated in the rural areas where the "greatest levels of political clientelism and pockets of poverty" are located (Gatti et al, 1996; Plank et al, 1996).

In the education system in Belo Horizonte, only teachers who pass an entry examination can teach. To participate in this examination, teachers must have successfully completed the "Magistério de 1º Grau" or "Normal" (ie.: the teachers' training course for primary school teaching only). Once they have passed the entry examination, they achieve job security for life, and only in very exceptional cases can they be dismissed.

All this data relate to the years before 1996, when the National Education Law 5692 of 1971 was in force. From December 1996, a new National Educational Law, number 9394, came

A recent survey of primary school teachers from the Municipal schools of Belo Horizonte found that most teachers were 25 years old or more (Rocha, 1997)³⁶. The distribution of teachers according to their age group in Municipal schools in Belo Horizonte was: those aged between 25-35 years old encompassed 43.5% of all teachers, while 39.7% were 36-45 years old. This data challenges the traditional image of primary school teachers as a “young little teacher, just out of the teacher’s training course, who teaches for a while to wait for a husband” (Rocha, 1997).

Sixty-one percentage (61%) of the municipal teachers in Belo Horizonte were married, 10.3% divorced or widowed and 28.7% single. Overall, primary school teachers in the municipal schools in Belo Horizonte are mostly more than 30 years old, are married and have children (Rocha, 1997).

2.4.3- Level of Education of Teachers in Municipal Schools in Belo Horizonte

In Brazil, primary school teachers have on average 12.6 years of schooling, which corresponds to secondary education; only 8.5% have just elementary education (MEC³⁷-Saeb, 1995 and 1995 Census in Rocha, 1997). Teachers at the municipal schools of Belo Horizonte have higher professional qualifications generally than do most primary school teachers in the rest of the country. One of the reasons why these teachers have higher professional qualifications was the salary increase in the 1990s, when the municipal government of Belo

into place with changes in the system of education. The new law determines that primary school teachers should be trained at the universities or institutes of higher education. However the teachers’ training course at the secondary school continue to exist (1998). Teachers with only secondary teachers’ training qualification will have to obtain a qualification in a university or institutes of higher education within 10 years.

36- Chapter 3 gives more information about childcare and entrance at school and also Brazilian women’s level of schooling, married status and location in the labour market (see eg.: Bruschini, 1996).

37- MEC = Ministry of Education and Culture.

Horizonte decided to pay its teachers according to their level of education. This fact suggests that salary increases have been an important factor responsible for women teachers entering university in the last few years (Rocha, 1997).

Most primary school teachers have a university degree or are in the process of getting one. In 1997, those with degrees will correspond to 73% of the total. Most teachers have taken “pedagogy” and the rest (42.0%) have other university degrees. Of teachers who are still at the university, most are taking “pedagogy”, and 37.8% are in the area of “Human Sciences”: literature, history, Geography, Psychology, Physical Education, Philosophy, etc. The reasons given by teachers for pursuing a university education were their desire to continue studies, plus also a desire to guarantee a better salary when retired (Rocha, 1997)³⁸.

2.4.4- The Share of Teachers’ Salary in the Family Income

In Belo Horizonte, women teachers who work in municipal schools seem to make an important contribution to their family income³⁹. The total income of teachers’ families was around 5 to 30 times the minimum national wage (Rocha, 1997)⁴⁰. By comparison, only 15.7% of the families of the city of Belo Horizonte had an income greater than 5 minimum national wages in 1990 (see PNAD - National Research based on a Sample of Households as well as saying its in Rocha, 1997). Although other categories than income contribute to denoting social class, the level of teachers’ income positions them among the middle class of

³⁸. Overall, women teachers in Municipal schools of Belo Horizonte had obtained a higher level of schooling than did their parents or husbands.

³⁹. In Belo Horizonte, women were head of the family in 17% of families in 1994. In Brazil, this number was 20.3% in 1980.

⁴⁰. At the time my research was done, the minimum national wage was 70 reais which corresponded to 70 american dollars per month. Rocha (1997) does not give the value of minimum national income. Thus, I will consider the present minimum national wage (in may, 1997) which is 124 reais and corresponds to approximately 124 american dollars per month.

Belo Horizonte, given that 98.6% of these teachers receive more than 5 times the minimum national wage (Rocha, 1997). In her study, Rocha (1997) also considered teachers' opinions and life styles indicative of their being middle-class. In a review of studies evaluating the class background of teachers in Brazil, Hypólito (1997) indicates that most Brazilian teachers cannot be considered from middle-class sectors throughout the country. He, himself, sees teachers as working class. This difference is because that there are no sufficient variables to define class location, and also teachers differ from context to context (regionally and professionally). Hypólito's classification has been criticized because teachers are seen as different from working class since their work is still intellectual. Thus, there has been disagreement about the class location of teachers. Many have seen teachers as situated between the working class and the elite (reviewed in Costa, 1995). In this manner, teachers have the working conditions of the working class but share values and show behaviour similar to groups of the elite.

Some teachers also engaged in other activities. According to Rocha, many teachers taught in other education systems: in state schools (58.7%); some worked in private schools (16%); or in municipal schools in other cities around Belo Horizonte (17.3%), and 8% gave private classes (Rocha, 1997). Other activities included selling various products such as clothes, jewellery and beauty products. Some also worked in their own offices, giving consultations in their area of qualification (Rocha, 1997).

2.5- Ethnicity in Brazil

Although racial concerns were not included as a main theme of this research initially, racial issues were brought up during interviews with black female teachers in the schools visited. Racial issues need to be considered, though they are difficult in the Brazilian context. Throughout Brazilian history, poverty has been closely associated with race. State education is for all, but attended mainly by people from disadvantaged economic and social backgrounds, and these individuals commonly have darker skins (Ribeiro, 1992, 1995). This was clearly noticed in the schools visited. See photographs of each school attached at the end of chapter 4.

Interestingly, in the school which was attended by pupils from a middle-class background (school 2) the majority of pupils had “whiter” skins than pupils from the other schools⁴¹.

Race definition in Brazil is very problematic. This can be understood when taking into account the way attitudes towards “race composition” was faced in Brazil in different historical contexts with their own ideology: first “the destiny to be given to the free black (“negro livre” in Brazilian Portuguese), then the preoccupation with the high levels of miscegenation amongst the Brazilian population, the preconization (desire) of “whitening” the population and immigration policies” (Ribeiro, 1995; Pinto, 1996). Gomes (1995) describes race more completely as resulting from a historical and cultural process immersed in the social relations of each society. In Brazil, discrimination in terms of race is based on physical attributes (phenotype), rather than on ethnic origins (ancestry) (Ribeiro, 1995; Pinto, 1996). In this way, it is possible that, using her own words, “... phenotypically, many blacks are considered whites in Brazil” (Gomes, 1995, p. 50). It has been said that racists in Brazil associate “everything that comes from black” as “inferior or ... evil”. This includes elements of culture such as religion, rituals and personal habits (Bentes, from Black Movement in Brazil, cited in Gomes, 1995, p. 51; see also Ribeiro, 1995; Pinto, 1996).

Immigration began with the Portuguese in 1500; then Africans slaves were introduced to the region (1.5 millions up till 1822⁴²); and more recently, especially during and after the two world wars, other Europeans immigrated. The Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Economia (IBGE) provides the following numbers for the ethnic groups in Brazil in 1991:

41- The description of the schools will be given later in chapter 4. By “whiter”, I mean pupils were considered white in Brazilian culture (with a white phenotype).

42- In *The Economist: A survey of Brazil*, 1995.

White -	75.704.922	(51.94%)
Parda -	62.316.085	(42.76%)
Black -	7.335.658	(5.03%)
Oriental (Yellow) -	630.658	(0.43%)
Indigenous -	294.148	(0.20%)
Not declared -	534.872	(0.37%)

Total: 146.816.343

(Source: Demographic Census/1991 -IBGE,1996).

Obs.:

White: European descendants;

Black: African descendants

Parda: racial mixture of African and European phenotypes. Pardo (darker colour) referring to "mulattos" (Pinto, 1996);

Indigenous: Native Brazilian indians;

Yellow: East Asian people, mainly Japanese.

In the State of Minas Gerais (1991) the ethnic groups break down as:

White -	8.090.974	(51.39%)
Parda -	6.541.882	(41.55%)
Black -	1.057.372	(6.72%)
Oriental (Yellow) -	13.353	(0.08%)
Indigenous -	6.112	(0.04%)
Not declared -	33.843	(0.21%)

Total: 15.743.536

(Source: Demographic Census/1991 -IBGE,1996).

In the city of Belo Horizonte (1991) the size of ethnic groups were:

White -	1.019.422	(50.46%)
Parda	865.874	(42.86%)
Black -	127.017	(6.29%)
Oriental (Yellow) -	2.353	(0.12%)
Indigenous -	1.376	(0.06%)
Not declared -	4.117	(0.20%)

Total: 2.020.159

(Source: Demographic Census/1991 -IBGE,1996).

The numbers presented above provide an overview of the distribution of ethnic groups in Brazil in 1991. In the survey by IBGE (see above), people were asked what their colour was and given the possibility of an open answer. Thus, the largest percentage of people classified themselves as "white". Overall the ethnic distribution of the city of Belo Horizonte is very similar to the distribution of the State of Minas Gerais and Brazil.

As Costa (cited in Pinto, 1996) indicates, classification in terms of race presents problems when it is applied to individuals from "intermediate groups" (mestizo or mulattos).

“... an individual can enter and leave the (ethnic) group with a certain facility; these movements are influenced by the social significance attributed to colour” (Piza and Rosemberg cited in Pinto, 1996). “The criteria, procedures and language used in the different Brazilian censuses that consider the colour variable demonstrate many of these problems” (Pinto, 1996).

Curiously, Brazilians gave one hundred and thirty six (136) different answers when inquired about their skin colour in the 1980 census (IBGE, 1996)⁴³. They often used unscientific but picturesque terms to describe themselves, such as the ‘colour of a donkey which had escaped’ (probably muddy), ‘coffee colour’, ‘coffee with milk’, ‘firm colour’, ‘brown’, ‘pink-white’, ‘yellow’, ‘burned-yellow’, ‘blue’, ‘very white’, ‘white-brown’, ‘pallid-white’, ‘freckle-white’, ‘dirty-white’, ‘white-blond’, ‘morena’, ‘negro’, ‘pallid’, ‘tending to white’, ‘pink’, ‘purple’, ‘burned’, among others. According to Moura (1988 cited in Gomes, 1995; p. 64), this means of describing colour - ie. very varied but with fine gradations - indicates that the groups in power (elite) have been successful in inculcating their values into the “non-white” population in Brazil. In addition, so-called equality in terms of race in Brazil⁴⁴ has led to a “differentiation, a hierarchy and an inferiority of non-white people in society” (Gomes, 1995; Ribeiro, 1995). As the same author suggests, these 136 definitions of colour in Brazil show how black people have learned to value whiteness, dismiss their “identity” and their “ethnic/racial” background, and attempted to align themselves as closely as possible to the “white pattern” (Gomes, 1995; Ribeiro, 1995). In Brazil, whites are seen not

43- In 1970 census made by PNAD respondents used 190 terms to define race (Pinto, 1996). Maggie (ref. in Pinto, 1996) indicates that these answers result from Brazilian social myths about race and colour in which is believed that Brazilians descend from three races and that there is a racial democracy in Brazil (where “segregation and racism do not exist”). In addition, this author points to the “whitening myth” in Brazil that “avoids opposition between blacks (pretos) and whites and founds a society which one day aims to be totally white, without differences” (ref. in Pinto, 1996). Pinto (1996) indicates that the variety of terms can signify the attempt to explain the “unequal position of blacks and whites”.

44- Equality was said to occur because of the “miscegenation” of races in Brazil.

only as superior, but also as “a model to be followed” (Gomes, 1995)⁴⁵.

Despite recent efforts by Brazilian researchers to make race a visible category of analysis in educational studies, they seem to make the same mistakes as previous attempts to define race in Brazil. For example, Gomes over-emphasizes black influences in Brazilian culture and neglects contributions from the white or the indigenous portion of the population (such overcompensation is understandable in the context of the history of Brazil where non-white culture has been overwhelmed by white culture). It is also difficult in Brazil to differentiate the non-white from white culture, and this should not be ignored.

Another aspect that makes race classification in Brazil difficult is the relation of class and race, in which the individuals' race/colour is defined not only by considering their phenotypic features but also by their social and economic position (the “social race” of Wagley cited in Pinto, 1996)⁴⁶. Also, information on ethnicity has only recently begun to be “systematically investigated” in 1987 by PNDA (National Research by a Sample of Households cited in Pinto, 1996). Prior to this, according to Pinto (1996), information about colour in Brazil was not “regularly collected” and it presented a “great deal of variation concerning the choice of questions and their significance, as well as the collection method used for this data”: “the interviewer makes the classification or the interviewee responds to an open or closed question”. Piza (cited in Pinto, 1996) says that “historical circumstances” must be observed, since they influence the “characterization of the population by government agencies” and “at a given moment, individuals can self-classify as or be attributed to a certain

45. In our history, we have seen how the white stereotypes were reinforced by the elite. Miscegenation and immigration were seen as ways to “whiten” the race in Brazil and, consequently, to eliminate the blacks (Gomes, 1995).

“The white European was considered to be the ideal type of worker and citizen who would come to teach the Brazilians the virtues of regular work and the organized family (Alfredo d' Escragnolle Taunay, 1888 cited in Pinto, 1996) and who would give intelligent guidance to the black population” (C. E. Amoroso Lima, 1888 in Azcredo, 1987 cited in Pinto, 1996, p. 195).

46. It has been shown by (Pinto, 1996) that the “higher the socio-economic level of the individual when he is classified, the closer the category used to classify himself will be to white”.

'race/colour'"⁴⁷. As Pinto (1996) says, censuses on race issues in Brazil have to take into account the "specific historical and ideological" context⁴⁸. In conclusion, the racial identity and colour of an individual are not "static", but rather dependent on his/her social and economical position and "other variables", such as "age, spatial, temporal and even social contexts: educational level, income and the degree of contact with whites" (Pinto, 1996). There are many difficulties in defining race in Brazil, since there are options other than just black and white. Racism in Brazil is experienced differently by black people and "not-so-black" people ("pardas") (Gomes, 1995; Ribeiro, 1995).

2.5.1- Teachers' Race in Municipal Schools of Belo Horizonte

Rocha (1997) encountered embarrassment from teachers when asked to define their racial background⁴⁹. Half of the teachers interviewed declared that they were "pardas" or black. This author identified the presence of black women in teaching as a sign of social movement for these women. Indeed, black teachers from Municipal schools in Belo Horizonte have on average a better salary than other black women in the labour market in Brazil. At one time, most black women were found in low qualified, low status and low paid occupations in Brazil - usually manual labour. However, by comparison, the income of the family of a black teacher is lower than that of her white female colleagues (Rocha, 1997). Teaching is an occupation which requires professional qualifications, to which, historically, black women

47- Such considerations have not yet been made in Brazil (Pinto, 1996). Teixeira's study (cited in Pinto, 1996) on declarations from black adults in Brazil, shows the "painful process" for such interviewees of assuming their "blackness".

48- The United Nations indicates that "ethnic, racial and national characteristics is subject to nations particularities". They suggest not an "universal criteria" but an "adoption of the auto-classify system" (Pinto, 1996).

49- Indeed, as Oliveira (cited in Pinto, 1996) pointed, the investigation of race classification in interviews is problematic because this is a sensitive issue in Brazilian society, where race relations are not "treated in an open manner".

have not had access. However, now that teaching qualifications are available to them, possession of one dissociates black women from their historical position in slave work and allows them to assume a more powerful position than was possible previously - but still not as high as similarly qualified white teachers. This appears to be a reality observed outside Brazil. For example, Weber and Michell (1989), referring to the Canadian context indicated that the views about teachers tended to correspond to the figure of a white middle class person.

Rocha's decision to group "parda" women with black teachers creates confusion in terms of race identity and represents a North American way of analyzing race⁵⁰. I disagree with this grouping, since "parda" women tend not to identify themselves as belonging to the black population. This category is in itself prejudice, in which the "purity" of the race is the central issue. My position is that an individual from a mixture of races will have his/her reference in terms of race greatly defined by his/her environment. Thus, if this person lives in a predominantly black group or instead in a predominantly white group (or whatever race), his/her behaviour and values will vary in accordance to the experiences and references of this environment.

⁵⁰- According to Rocha (1997) the decision to include "parda" people with black people was made by the IBGE (Brazilian governmental Institution).

The use of mixed criteria by considering the individual phenotype as "though these people expressed their ancestry" was considered in Brazilian censuses from 1872 and 1890. The censuses from 1940 and 1950 also emphasized the individuals' phenotype, which according to Pinto (1996) has not always been the case.

Chapter 3

The Recent History of Women and Teaching in Brazil

3.1- Location and Segregation of Women in the Brazilian Labour Market

Today Brazilian women enjoy a very different status and condition of life from those of a few decades ago. However, some values about women within the family and at work still persist.

The transformation of the social roles of women in Brazilian society has its roots in the relatively recent past. In the 19th century colonial Brazilian family, women were limited to the domestic sphere (home, farm). The public sphere (“the street”) in Brazil was considered as “inappropriate” to “respectable” women, because it was only frequented by women from poor economic backgrounds and men. Work was associated with slavery and poor women, which led many women to desperate attempts at a “rich a marriage to avoid the embarrassment of having to work” (Verucci, 1991). Later (early 20th century), women, especially from the upper class, had their position and roles changed under the influence of urbanization and changes in society (Almeida, 1991). These women were finally allowed to participate in the public sphere, required to be socially active and expected to organize social events. In addition, the maternal role of women became highly valued, since mothers were seen as responsible for the education of the “future citizens”¹.

During the 1960s there was intense industrial development in Brazil and a consequent increase of job offers. In the 1970s, women who worked outside their homes were associated with prostitutes. Women were still expected to cope with domestic and family affairs (Marçal, 1994). Seventy-four percent (74%) of female workers were in domestic work, in rural

¹- According to Almeida (1991), this new position facilitated the entrance of Brazilian women into teaching jobs.

labour, with clothing (for those with less education) and as secretaries, as saleswomen (for those with “middling education”) and with teaching (the best educated) (Bruschini, 1996).

In the 1980s, 70% of female workers in Brazil continued to be segregated mainly into the so-called “feminine jobs” (Rocha, 1997). Today, this rate has not decreased (Bruschini, 1996). Female workers are still segregated in some areas of the labour market: “18.6% domestic workers; 11% sales-women or autonomous trades-women; 9.6% administrative workers; 6.7% seamstresses and 4.8% elementary school teachers” (Bruschini, 1996; Rocha, 1997). However, women’s participation in domestic work, agriculture and teaching has decreased, while there have been increases in their participation as secretaries and in commerce. During the 1980s, women managed to get places in management or in jobs which demanded a higher education².

Brazilian male workers are mostly in agricultural and “stock-raising” activities and industry. Brazilian female workers have significant participation in the agricultural sector, but they predominate in the service industries. They are almost absent in transport and communications services. The higher number of women than men in technical, scientific and artistic sectors is explained by women’s predominant presence in the educational and health professions (Bruschini, 1996). Women’s participation in the labour market is higher in urban and in the most developed areas of Brazil.

Despite increases in their employment in the formal sector, women’s participation in the informal sector of the economy is still high (Bruschini, 1996)³. In reality, half of all female workers are found in activities which “pay badly, are unprotected by existing worker and pensions’ legislation and that are often performed either in the home or in the street and are only part-time”. Brazil has experienced substantial economic growth, which has had a positive effect

2- Studies showed that in 1991, women had 3.5% of executive posts in the 300 largest private Brazilian companies (Puppim ref. in Bruschini, 1996). Women represent 0.94% executive posts in the 40 largest state companies and 0.40% in the 40 largest foreign corporations in Brazil.

3- The Brazilian Constitution certainly improved the life of many female workers. However, it has led to increases in the cost of social taxes. These increases have been accused of “inhibiting job creation”(cited in Bruschini, 1996). Thus, women have become “less attractive” workers.

on the labour market. The rate of employment of men is still much higher than that of women, but the proportion of women in the labour market grew considerably, from 37% to 44.8% between 1981 to 1990 (IBGE, 1996), while male participation has remained stable at 86.5%. This increase has been officially explained as a consequence of the reduction of fertility rates and “higher educational attainments of women allowing them better conditions to enter and compete in the labour market” (IBGE, 1996).

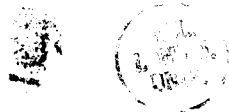
There has been scepticism about the government measures of economic activity, especially in terms of the informal labour market. Such understanding of the informal labour market is essential, considering that the Brazilian economy in the 1990s had grown with “sub-contracted” or “unregistered workers” (Bruschini, 1996). This part of the labour market, still invisible because it is not measured by the “traditional censuses”, enrolls many of the female workers (Bruschini, 1996).

3.1.1- Participation of Women in the Labour Market in Brazil

The understanding of the participation of Brazilian women in the labour market has been interpreted through different theories over the years. In the 1950s and 1960s, studies saw the entrance of women in the labour market as a result of economic interest. In this manner, women were a “reserve army”, and their entry into or exclusion from the labour market was dependent on the demands of production. Others saw the modernization of the country as having had a positive impact on the increase of schooling, which allowed women to have access to education and then to enter the labour market (Marçal, 1994; Castro and Lavinias, 1992). These two positions are claimed to be a-historical, locating the female labour force as a subject of the accumulation and re-structuring of capitalism (Rocha, 1997).

The feminist movement during the 1970s gave visibility to women in society. Women sought equal political and human rights with the aim of entering the labour market (Assunção, 1994; Marçal, 1994; Rocha, 1997). The movement intended to eliminate the oppression of women but failed to associate oppression with the cultural division of the social roles of men and women (Marçal, 1994). Studies from this period viewed the specific position of women in society (ideological and cultural conditions) as influencing their entry in the labour market. The private sphere (domestic work and family relations) was privileged in these analyses. D’Álvora (cited in Rocha, 1997) condemned analysis from this period for locating patriarchy as a system apart from the relations of production.

The dichotomy between the private sphere (family, home, domestic) and the public sphere (work, production), allied to the feminist movement from the 1970s, contributed to the analyses made in the 1980s about women and work. Today’s studies on women’s participation in the labour market have considered the ideological and cultural dimensions of society as key elements which have influenced gender segregation in the labour market (Rocha, 1997). It has been said that the increased participation of women in the labour market has transformed society in the last three decades, and that this has led to changes in gender relations in all other parts of society (D’Álvora cited in Rocha, 1997). Bruschini (1996) sees the changes in



the behaviour of Brazilian women as a consequence of cultural, demographic and economic changes. This author indicates that the changes in the “identity” of Brazilian women culminated with the feminist movement (developed especially by educated and middle-class women), but were also a consequence of their entry into public services⁴, drop in fertility rates (especially in cities and in the most developed areas), and increases in women’s schooling and access to university.

The fact that Brazilian women were segregated in some jobs in the labour market helped them to continue in their jobs despite the economic crises during the 1980s. Brazil had intense growth in its industry/factory sector, and the fact that this part of the labour market is usually “dominated by and of easy access” to women protected them from unemployment (Bruschini, 1996; Rocha, 1997). However, despite some conquests, Brazilian women continue to be excluded from certain areas of the labour market (Marçal, 1994). Economic needs, the “expansion and diversification of family consumption⁵” and transformations in the social role of women in Brazilian society have all been seen as reasons for bringing Brazilian women into the labour market (Castro and Lavinias, 1996; Rocha, 1997). For Castro and Lavinias (1992) the “discontinuity and the occupational location” of Brazilian women in the labour market result from women’s “position in the family and their social class origins”.

Hitara has a different analysis of what defines the participation of women in the labour market. She rejects the paradigm of family and indicates that it is indeed “the relationship between men and women inside home and the salary relation” that define the relations of

4- Studies of women in public services also indicate the “domestication” of these jobs. Women transform them into an “extension of domestic work” thereby reconciling home and work (see Machado cited in Castro and Lavinias, 1992). However, as Castro and Lavinias indicated, Machado’s analysis is criticized because it gives the impression that women are located in state jobs for “domestic reasons” and not because of “their selective use in the labour force”.

West (cited in Abbot and Sapsford, 1987, p. 13 - referring to the British context) stated that women’s place in the labour market is not only a consequence of domestic labour, but also a consequence of division of labour outside the home. This also appears to be the case in Brazil (Hypólito, 1997).

5- Which includes “food (essential ration), accommodation, domestic equipment, transport, clothes, education and books, health, entertainment, personal expenses, diverse expenses” (“Cesta de Consumo” by DIEESE ref. in Rocha, 1997).

women at work (cited in Castro and Lavinias, 1996, p. 224). In Bruschini's opinion, "asymmetrical and hierarchical gender relations predominate" in Brazil. She states, that despite changes, women's roles continue to be related to reproduction, family care and domestic duties, while men's are as "providers" (Bruschini, 1996). She sees the definition of roles for men and women in the family as having different impacts on the participation of each sex in the labour market. Bruschini (1996) suggests that there is a need to change the sexual division of roles within the family, so that men and women will share the domestic tasks. She sees this change as prior to changes in women's organization and to making the unions and other women's organizations committed to changing gender inequalities at work.

According to Safa (1992), in Latin America, the participation of female labour has been seen as determined by family affairs: reinforcing or restricting their participation in it (Safa, 1992). She also indicates that despite changes in Latin America families, the roles for men and women are still determined by "family cycle, family composition, economic contributions of husband and wife". In Brazil, as stated by Stolcke (cited in Safa, 1992), the participation of women in the labour market did not change their "personal dignity or autonomy". In this author's opinion, Brazilian women show dissatisfaction at the fact that their husbands do not earn enough to keep them away from a double shift of work (home and outside job).

Moraes (1994) also states that the traditional family model which positions women in the reproductive roles and men as providers (in economical terms) must change in order to then change the roles of women and men in society. This author indicates traditional values between sexes are more persistent among families living in poor material conditions. Safa (1992), referring to Latin American families, indicates that despite increases in families headed by women, men are still seen as the "major providers" of the family (in Brazil, Bruschini, 1996). Like Moraes (1994), she explains that the high poverty level of these women led them to hope that their male partners would solve their problems.

3.1.2- Marital Status and Childbearing

Most Brazilian female workers are single or divorced and more likely to be working between their 24th and 29th birthdays, after which women tend to leave their jobs to assume their maternal duties and child birth (Rocha, 1997). However, more married, older, higher educated women and those with family responsibilities have entered the labour market, especially women from higher-income families (Castro and Lavinias, 1996 and Rocha, 1997). Child birth, child age and lack of social support in terms of child-care have been indicated as elements which inhibit female participation in the labour market (Castro and Lavinias, 1992; Bruschini, 1996; Rocha, 1997). Women continue to have the main responsibility for child care in Brazil (Bruschini, 1996; Rocha, 1997)⁶. The fact that women become mothers has influenced their participation in the labour market: for example, in the 1980s 38.8% of Brazilian women without children worked; this number dropped to 28.5% when they became mothers. In more developed areas of the country, the number of women who leave their jobs after giving birth is higher than elsewhere. It is explained that in these areas the formal market is larger, with more women in it. This formal market makes it more difficult for women to reconcile the demands of family and work, which forces them to leave their jobs (Bruschini, 1996).

Working women from families with low incomes appear to count upon the help of relatives, neighbours or older children for child care⁷. In families with better incomes or where women are better educated (with access to better wages), women tend to leave their children at home and pay someone to do the domestic services (Bruschini, 1996). When children reach

6- In 1985, 75.4% of children between ages 0-6 were under the care of their mothers, against 23.2% in the same age who were in creches or pre-schools. With the new LDB (Brazilian Educational Law - 1996), the education of young children (0-6 years of age) has been neglected (Cury, 1998). This situation aggravates the situation of working mothers.

7- Latin American women have also attempted to increase the family income by "domestic production of goods", by "increasing the number of people earning salary in the family" or by creating a "net of mutual help between members of the same family or neighbourhood" (Safa, 1992).

school age (around 7 years of age), “mothers consider schools as places where they can leave their children under care”⁸ (Rocha, 1997).

In the specific case of women teachers, British studies (eg.: Grant, 1989) indicate the constraints on career promotion of teachers due to child age. Women teachers usually decide to apply for promotion at the same school where they work. Brazilian teachers seem to experience the same constraints. Their family affairs and husband’s career have influenced their own careers: interruptions to bring up their families or their husbands’ career movements. Other studies in the United Kingdom (see Shilling, 1991) also indicate the negative consequences for women’s careers of these breaks from work, but in Brazil, due to the remote possibility of promotion, there are not many career losses for women teachers if they take breaks. In this manner, Brazilian teachers have maternity leave, a limited leave to accompany their husbands or to take care of ill relatives, with the guarantee that they can return to the same post later.

In consequence of their marriages, many Brazilian women have remained at home taking care of “domestic affairs”, others “combining some kind of remunerated activity” which they can do from home (Bruschini, 1996). This latter group forms the informal market, which gives women flexible hours of work, and where family and work can be placed together. In Brazil, many of the women who work from their homes are autonomous workers sub-contracted by industries (sewing, food production). In cases of sub-contracted workers, industries have no legal obligations. Industries usually prefer to employ young single women as inside workers (to work inside industries) and sectors such as “service sector, social activities and public administration” tend to employ “married and probably older women” (Bruschini, 1996).

It appears to be a common idea among Brazilian authors that the participation of women in the Brazilian labour market is determined by the “family cycle” and domestic work (Castro and Lavinias, 1992; Hypólito, 1997). Shilling’s (1991) finding - referring to the United Kingdom context - that women with fewer domestic responsibilities manage to develop more in their

⁸- In 1980, in Brazil, 41% of mothers with children older than 7 years of age work out (Rocha, 1997).

careers seems to apply also to the case of Brazilian women.

3.1.3- Level of Education

Education also seems to play an important role in the participation of women in the Brazilian labour market (Bruschini, 1996; Rocha, 1997). As Bruschini (1996) indicates, the labour market seems more open to better than to less well educated women. In Brazil, better educated women get better paid jobs, which enables them to pay someone to do the domestic work and help them to have successful careers (eg.: Leite cited in Bruschini, 1996). In 1990, 64% of women with 9 or more years of schooling participated in the labour market compared to 28% of those who were illiterate. Thus, it appears that the participation of women in the labour market is directly proportional to their level of schooling. Women with a higher level of schooling also tend to get married later (Rocha, 1997).

Strauss and Thomas (1996) indicate a fall in the number of self-employed women with secondary schooling in Brazil. However, the number of self-employed women rises in the south of Brazil when they have post-secondary schooling, which indicates that some Brazilian women with better education enter “professional types of self-employment”. According to these authors, the level of education and employment of women do not have the same relation as they do for Brazilian men, since “probabilities for market wage employment for people with very low levels of education are much higher for males”. These authors indicate that the “existence of a spouse”, “higher levels of spouse education”, “unsalaried income” are all factors found to correlate with a reduced participation of women in the labour market and in self-employment. Being married increases male participation in work more than married women’s.

Strauss and Thomas (1996, p. 148) affirm that family background in Brazil has great impact on labour market outcomes, which vary according to the “region, sector of employment, gender of the child, and the education of the parent”. For instance, mothers’ educations influences the low market wages of their daughters and sons, which are higher for those with mothers with more education. In the southern regions of Brazil, parents with post-primary

education (as well as the mother-in-laws education) is also a factor related to the low participation of women in the labour market.

In conclusion, Brazilian women have conquered new spaces in the labour market, but they still face prejudices and restrictions in their choices. As noted earlier by Bruschini (1996), Brazilian women are still under the influence of a “socializing process” reproduced by the “family, school, media, which tends to orient women towards occupations that are considered to be proper for the female sex”. She also mentions the “conciliatory wisdom” (Rosemberg cited in Bruschini, 1996) “by which the majority of women who have a choice, in the knowledge that they necessarily will have family responsibilities on top of their professional ones, prefer occupations that are less competitive and absorbing and which they believe will be more compatible with this situation”. However, one must also consider that women’s occupational “choice” is also a reflex of the limitation of the labour market which favours male workers (Strauss and Thomas, 1996). One could say that women’s “preference” for less competitive occupational options is cultural⁹. Culture has an important contribution to the socialization of individuals “to think and act in particular ways to assure survival”, however, culture “does not lock” an individual “into a particular life-style if options and choices are available” (Zambrana, 1994, p. 140).

Economic restrictions must not be neglected since they limit the education and consequently the professional choice of people in general, but mostly of women because of their disadvantaged position within their families and within society (Assunção, 1996).

⁹- Here, culture is understood as “a behavioral repertoire that develops as a function of one’s historical roots as well as in response to the social conditions under which one lives” (Zambranas, 1994, p. 140).

3.1.4- Salary Differences in the Brazilian Labour Market

Female Brazilian workers earn on average 43% less than men. Salary differences in the Brazilian labour market also appear to be related to the race of individuals; see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Salary differences in Brazil (average) according to sex and colour

male worker *	4.9 n.m.w	female worker *	2.8 n.m.w
white male	6.3 n.m.w	white female	3.6 n.m.w
black male	2.8 n.m.w	black female	1.6 n.m.w

n.m.w - National minimum wage

Source: Adapted from data presented by Bruschini, 1996 (cited in Rocha, 1997, p. 32-33).

*On average

As shown above, salary differences persist between Brazilian male and female workers. The low salary given to women has been seen as a consequence of the restricted choices of occupations for them. In addition, salary inequalities for women appear to increase when they gain experience and stay longer in the job (Ministry's data 1988 cited in Bruschini, 1996). Salary inequalities are also explained by "occupational segregation and lesser access that women have to management and supervisory positions; by the low number of women who join the Unions¹⁰; by the view that a woman's salary is complementary to the family income" (Bruschini, 1996).

3.2- Brazilian Teachers: from "Professionals of Faith" to State Workers

¹⁰- Unions are usually "linked with the industrial sector, mainly dominated by women, with lesser bargaining power" (Paiva ref. in Bruschini, 1996). Studies (Demartini and Antunes, 1993) of Brazilian women teachers show that their powerless condition within the Unions is historical and similar to that of other female workers.

It is interesting to notice that in Unions even during the 19th and the 20th century, women assumed "traditional feminine" roles related to social services, while men controlled the administrative positions.

The Jesuit Order controlled education in Brazil for nearly 200 years. They saw education as a “mission” and added it to their pedagogical and evangelical aims. They were autonomous from the Brazilian State but served well the interests of the government for many years. When the government came to see their actions as undermining State control, the Jesuits were forced out of the country (1759) (Louro, 1989). According to this author, education in the following period was “devoid of organization”, when the so called “aulas régias” appeared. These classes were inferior to the education given by Jesuits and were taught only by men. At the beginning of the XIX century men initiated the system of “private (elite) classes” where autonomy in terms of what to teach, length of lessons, salary and who teach to was enjoyed. This will be discussed in more detail in section 3.2.1.

The influence of the Church on the education of Brazilian women was very important and helped to shape the images of women in teaching, which persist nowadays. The influence of the Church began when women were encouraged to engage in charity work, the only field women were able to participate in (Teixeira, 1991). Religious education was seen as the way to control women and to teach “moral obligation to prevent them from inflaming their undisciplined imaginations, or to speak freely in public”. Charity was considered an honest activity for women. In addition, charity work would prevent women from “wasting their energy” and “using their qualities badly”. These services required a “practical sense, intelligence, perseverance, seriousness ... honesty and probity” (Teixeira, 1991, p. 35).

In Brazil, the “missionary spirit” arrived in the 19th century. The Catholic church was having to face competition with the superstitions habits of “mestiços” people and descendants of the colonizers of Latin America (Teixeira, 1991). The “christianization” of these people was done through sermons. Women from religious communities in European countries were brought to Brazil and played an important role in the education of girls (Lopes, 1987). Girls from all over the country came to attend “colegios”, which were a system of boarding schools, supposed to maintain girls and young ladies apart from the world (Teixeira, 1991).

Thus, religious movements in the 19th century, in addition to economic and

political movements, influenced women's place in education (Teixeira, 1991). In this manner, the image of woman as the "Virgin Mary" helped to allocate women to maternal roles, where there was not much space to be sensual. Women in teaching were acceptable, as long as they "exercised the profession as an extension of their maternal duties". The model of teacher matched the Church's model of women.

Before the 1920s and 1930s, Brazilian education was completely elitist and authoritarian. As Darcy Ribeiro (1992, p. 11) angrily, but correctly expressed:

"The rich right-wing Brazilians, always in power, always knew how to give ... the best education to their sons. To the poor was given the cheapest educative charity ... indifferent in quality. In fact, they never wanted to dedicate to those people that schooling attention minimally necessary to make one literate ... This was understandable in an Empire of poor black, slave, mulatto or mestiço people, all puzzled in that spurned group".

With industrialization and urbanization, Brazilians acquired new habits. The arrival of immigrants from European countries and the growth of middle class groups in Brazil increased demands for schooling (Louro, 1997). Also with industrialization came government control over education (Arroyo, 1985; Louro, 1989). Teachers became state workers paid by the government. Industrial development had consequences for educational life and the organization of teachers' work (rationalisation of work; hierarchy at school). There was a lack of interest in teachers as "professionals of faith"; rather, they were seen as "technical professionals" (Louro, 1989; Hypólito, 1994). Yet, transformation of Brazilian teachers into state workers did not erase the religious and the missionary dimensions¹¹ that characterized teaching under the control of the Church or of the local communities. The state did not want to eliminate the ideological dimension which surrounded the image of teachers since it suited the interests of the state (Arroyo, 1985). In addition, "feminine" characteristics such as "patience"

11- The notion of teaching as a vocation has existed since the 16th century, when elementary schools, where people were taught to read religious texts (Scppo, 1988), were opened to the general population (Kreutz ref. in Hypólito, 1994; Pctitat, 1994).

and “altruism” were associated with women teachers, and such values were convenient for building an image of (women) teachers as “docile, dedicated and submissive workers” (Louro, 1997).

Women fitted the features seen as desirable by the Brazilian governments’ ambitious plans for mass education - which, as Paixão (1991) has shown, was similar to what Apple (1987) has described as the American experience. The bureaucratization of Brazilian schools under state control led many men to leave the classroom for managerial positions in education (Hypólito, 1994; Demartini and Antunes, 1993; Assunção, 1994; Louro, 1997), while women, like immigrants, were more tolerant of exploitation in their work (Bourdieu, 1989) and more apt to proletarianization (Apple, 1988). Indeed, arguably it was the entrance of women into teaching which was responsible for it becoming more “rationalized” and subject to external control (Apple, 1987; Grumet, 1988).

Industrialization has also been pointed to as the reason for the feminisation of teaching in Brazil (Paixão, 1991; Hypólito, 1994; Assunção, 1994). Men left teaching for better job opportunities in the industries. As in America (Apple, 1987), in Brazil the presence of women in the profession had negative consequences for teaching, which began to be stereotyped as an occupation suitable only for women, and so less valued. The increase in the number of teachers and their transformation into wage-earning state workers in turn led to a reduction in their social status, and in their autonomy, and meant their work was more rigidly controlled (Louro, 1989; Hypólito, 1994). Teachers found their profession to be under the regulation of a new boss: the state¹². It is not that teaching status lowered because of women, it lowered as a “function of the status given to women in society” (Kelsall and Kelsall cited in Acker, 1987; Apple, 1987; Densmore, 1987; Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989; Lather, 1994).

Today, in Brazil, however, religious and liberal values are in conflict with each other in education, giving a lack of definitive character to the Brazilian educational system as well as to

12- At this stage, education in Brazil also suffered the influence of Taylorism (Duarte, 1988) where the organization of factories and management were transferred to schools, changing the relation of work, bringing to school a factory organization: eg.: division of work (hierarchy); school shifts.

what people expect from it and to the practice of those involved (Arroyo, 1985).

3.2.1- Teachers as State Workers: Changes in the Relationship with the Community

Brazilian teachers have a historical background characterized by ambiguous experiences which have shaped their professionalisation, their self-image, the conditions they work under, and their status in society. As described in previous section (3.2) between the period after the expulsion of the Jesuits (1759) and the transformation of teachers into state workers, non-qualified people (mostly men) used to teach in small communities (local elite) which paid them. A few women were also found in teaching, but they only taught girls and had to be “honest ladies” (Louro, 1997). The local authorities and especially parents had great power to decide (judge) who was “suitable” to teach their children. Teachers were required to make many sacrifices to maintain their job. Their private lives were regulated according to social expectations. Teachers were required to be full-time community workers with little interest in material possessions. They were expected to participate actively in community life, in both the social and cultural spheres. Teachers were also responsible for the building up of these “expectations” in the community (Arroyo, 1985), which may have represented teachers’ strategies to gain the community approval that would guarantee their jobs. The shift to state workers meant a change in teachers’ relation to the community.

Also in Brazil, during the Republican period (1889-1930), liberal ideas of education for all (including educate women) won support from the state (Louro, 1997). Parents (from local elites) who normally paid teachers to educate their children lobbied the government in an attempt to transform these “private” classes into “public” ones (classes maintained by the state) (Arroyo, 1985). When justifying their requests to the government, parents usually listed the qualities of the teacher. There is a rich source of material about desirable qualities of teachers in these letters: “exemplary behaviour”; “makes teaching a true celibacy”; “he is an excellent father”. An interesting example from the State of Minas Gerais during the Republican period shows parents describing the qualities of a female teacher engaged in teaching their sons and daughters. See below:

“ ... possesses ...(shows) good method of transmitting ... (and is) already teaches some pupils, ... assiduous dedication, ... doing it under the inspiration of patriotism, ... for free (without receiving salary)” (letter from 1890 cited in Arroyo, 1985, p. 20).

The transformation of teachers into state workers appealed to parents (those who paid for the education of their children) since it meant they would be freed from paying for their children's education (Arroyo, 1985). The power of government over teachers has increased over the years, maintaining or eliminating prior features of teachers and their work. Apple (1988) describes this (in the American case) as a process in which teachers were re-skilled in order to meet new demands inside schools. Brazilian teachers find in the state a strong opponent of professionalism. As for teachers in England and Wales (eg.: Perry and Perry, 1974), Brazilian teachers were not organized on a professional basis prior to the entry of the state into the educational arena. They never had opportunity for bargaining with the state, nor were they called to participate in the administrative educational structure in which they were inserted. The small emphasis on the “competence” and the overvaluing of the “dedication” of teachers is a characteristic which persists today in Brazil, especially among teachers defining their roles and experiences (Novaes, 1984). This statement can be confirmed when analyzing the story “Dona Marocas em Poço dos Desejos” (“Mrs Marocas in the well of wishes”) about a primary school teacher, found in a comic magazine (“Chico Bento”/Ed. Globo, 1994) for children. The story shows a teacher who is a woman, white, pretty, and who gave up all of her dreams - even marriage - just for the joy of seeing her pupils doing well in the school exams. All the teachers' attributes in the story confirm many of the traditional values about primary school teachers - at least those of a “good teacher” (Figure 3.1).

The transformation of these teachers into “state workers” at the beginning of the 20th century reduced the influence the local community could exert over teachers. And yet, teachers'

loyalty to the government remained weak (Arroyo, 1985)¹³. In addition, the de-powering to which Brazilian teachers were submitted is true, and yet, in such a gigantic educational system as the Brazilian one, it became difficult for even the government to maintain control over teachers' work. Despite all government attempts to control it, educators have managed to retain some autonomy. Teachers remain in their classrooms, declining to share their successes or failures even with their colleagues. Despite a lack of control over the curriculum and other aspects of their work, teachers retain influence over the community by playing the traditional roles valued in the last century. By extending their roles into the community life, teachers gain community acceptance and recover their power, influence and status in the community. This analysis will be discussed later, in chapter 7.

¹³- Teachers' lack of identification with the state is not a new concept; it has been discussed in other studies elsewhere (eg.: Connell et al, 1995). We may consider that "... women work for children, not for those who pay their wages" (Cascoy, 1992, p. 206).

Figure 3.1- “Mrs Marocas in the well of wishes” .



REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

3.3- Women in Teaching Posts

In countries such as the United States, the feminisation of teaching seems to have had its origins in mass education and the desire of government to reduce costs involved in it (Apple, 1987; Grumet, 1988). This is also true in Brazil (Hypólito, 1994; Assunção, 1994). The position of women in society helped them gain entry into teaching. The low status of women's work, which made them "cheap labour", justified their low wages (Apple, 1987; Adler et al, 1993). In addition, the relationship between teaching children and women's "natural" roles (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989) was overemphasized, facilitating the acceptance of women in this sector of the labour market. These generalizations are also applicable to the Brazilian situation (Louro, 1997). Other Brazilian studies (Niemeyer, 1989; Paixão, 1991; Louro, 1997) note that women were accepted to work in schools because these were considered "safe places" for them, offering no threat to family life or traditional family values (Niemeyer, 1989) and, consequently, to the social order.

This idea of school as proper work for women, and the idea of femininity in teaching, exist in countries other than Brazil. In England and Australia, middle-class girls entered teaching only when it became an "acceptable" profession for women. According to Purvis (1987, p. 257), views of the profession being "deviant" or "unsexed" were eliminated, allowing girls to enter the occupation respectably. This process occurred through a "redefinition of bourgeois femininity as 'the new woman' " - which became acceptable in the late 19th century because of new market demands¹⁴ (Purvis cited in Blackmore, 1993, p. 30). In South Australia, the creation of the image of "a good teacher" allowed women to enter this paid profession (Blackmore, 1993). In this manner, the roles of men and women in the family were transplanted to the school setting. Men remained as the head of the family, while women had their traditional roles in the family extended to the public sphere: "caring" and "nurturing" in the

14- We should not forget the political action of feminists towards the entry of women in this area of the labour market in different countries such as United States and England (Apple, 1987). This was also present in Brazil (Lopes, 1991).

school setting (Vick cited in Blackmore, 1993, p. 30-31).

Thus, due to gendered lifestyles, women's professional options and access to other jobs have been limited traditionally (Grumet, 1988; in Brazil, Araújo, 1990). Thus, the entrance to, and predominance of, women in teaching is also a response to government policies (eg.: mass education), economic circumstances and social attitudes. It depends on the historical context rather than only on "natural" proclivities such as women's love for children or motherliness" (Acker, 1987).

3.3.1- The Feminisation of Teaching in Brazil: Aspects that Facilitated the Entrance of Women into this Area of the Labour Market

In the Empire period in Brazil (1822 - 1889) and in the first decades of the Republic (1889 - 1930), women were not employed in teaching and other professions to any great degree (Hypólito, 1994). The idea that teaching was an “acceptable” and a “proper” job for women teachers (Lopes, 1991)¹⁵ became more and more common in the Republic period (1889-1930) (Hypólito, 1994). Although accepted, there is not enough historical proof to demonstrate the presence of women in teaching. However, some Brazilian researchers (eg.: Saffiotti cited in Rosemberg et al, 1990) have identified documents from as long ago as 1824, which show the education and employment of women/girls being reinforced by authorities as a means of implementing mass primary education. It is known that during this period, there were opposed ideas about the possibility of women in teaching. The first saw men in teaching as an anomaly, the second resisted the idea of conferring on women the role of educating children (Louro 1989).

The first “Normal” schools (Teachers’ training course/1830) in Brazil were supposed to train women as primary school teachers, but in reality the only students trained were male (Demartini and Antunes, 1993). As mentioned earlier in this chapter (eg.: Teixeira, 1991), the education of women in Brazil was always controversial. The need to educate women was questioned because of the perception of them as fulfilling “social roles”. However, the “innate abilities” of women were seen by political figures as necessary to successfully educate children (Louro, 1989; 1997; Demartini and Antunes, 1993). Part of a speech made during the inauguration ceremony of a building illustrates this point:

“... there is no doubt that the primary education of children belongs to woman, there is no point to discuss further, that the general education of future citizens depends on mothers” (Professor José Feliciano, 1894 - teacher from the “Escola Normal da Capital” ref. in Demartini and Antunes, 1993, 5-14).

¹⁵. These women teachers taught girls only. The class subjects were related to the domestic sphere.

The image of women as the “protectors” of children persists in discourses today. Evidence of this can be seen in Senator Darcy Ribeiro’s discourse in 1992 about the need to educate children:

“... it is necessary to educate the new illiterate people. This could be done initially ... by making the city mayors to census all the children that complete their seventh birthday and then deliver them to the care of good teachers (used the female noun - women teachers) properly supported by the state and by the Union (Federal government)” (p. 14).

The increase of women in teaching also occurred as women gained increased access to education (Louro 1989; 1992)¹⁶. The teachers’ training course was the only opportunity for Brazilian women to extend their education beyond primary schooling. Women were not allowed to attend university. Only much later (around the mid-20th century) were women who had attended teachers’ training courses allowed to sit the examination entrance for university courses.

That the teaching profession became dominated by women in Brazil can only be confirmed since 1935, when documentation is available (Hypólito, 1994). However, teaching appears to have been the first occupational space for women in the Brazilian labour market (Hypólito, 1994).

The desire of Brazilian women to participate in the labour market in Brazil has met with the resistance of a patriarchal society (Paixão, 1991; Hypólito, 1994) which clearly defines women’s place as being in the private sphere of their homes and men expected to function in the “public sphere” (Louro, 1989). In the late 19th and early 20th century, Brazilian women still had to face social pressures against going into teaching. Husbands of women teachers expressed feelings of “dishonour” and “humiliation” because their wives were working

¹⁶- The first discussions about the education of women in Brazil took place during the “Empire period” (1822 to 1889). Only in 1927 did Brazilian women win the right to be educated, when the schools of “First Letters” were created (Demartini and Antunes, 1994).

(Louro, 1989; Hypólito, 1994). Brazilian men who persisted in teaching after the 1930s and 1940s were considered “unable” or “poor” (Louro, 1989; Araújo, 1990; Hypólito, 1994). In this logic, men considered “to be unable” were seen as having failed to find a better occupation. There were men whose families did not have economic options, so teaching was seen as the best occupational choice available, even if temporarily. Evidence of the rejection of men in primary teaching can be seen in a document from 1930, discussing the use of men for teachers’ training courses as an anomaly (in Brazil).

“Primary teaching is in fact an anomaly (to men). Unless when it is a vocation ... I do not see why (men) - unless their inability to compete with other men in the masculine jobs - would come to it. ... I am sorry for them, ...” (Peixoto, A. 1930 cited in Louro, 1989, p. 35).

Louro (1989) suggests that this separation of spheres reinforced the “nature of gender” and is closely linked with the history constructed around the material organization of the family. She states that the “nature of gender” was reinforced later by capitalist forces (foreign capital) in the country (Brazil). Thus, in agreement with what other authors have suggested in America and Australia, the “ideology of domesticity” in teaching matched economic and social interests (Apple, 1987; Blackmore, 1993).

As in America (Apple, 1987), women teachers in Brazil had their own reasons for putting personal and professional autonomy in conjunction with their moral mission (Paixão, 1991; Hypólito, 1994). Apple’s work (1987) indicates the complications which originated when women began to enter the teaching profession in the United States. In their struggle to guarantee a place for themselves in the work place, which was public sphere and thus the domain of men, women justified themselves by “highlighting the relationship between teaching and domesticity” (Apple, 1987, p. 65). This situation seems to persist nowadays, since schools are one of the few sectors of the labour market where women hold power, although sometimes they do so at the expense of further reinforcing stereotypes about women’s abilities (Acker, 1994). This analysis is applicable to the Brazilian case, as indicated by Louro (1989). The acceptance of Brazilian women as teachers was possible because teaching was seen as “an

extension of the roles of the mother". Teaching was also available as a part-time job, and still is, which allowed women to work outside the home but still without neglecting their primary function at home in the family (Louro, 1989). However, one should also consider the findings of Paixão (1991) in interviews with women teachers from the 1920s and 1930s in Minas Gerais, that for many families teaching was seen as a way of guaranteeing their daughters' future and social mobility.

Another element which feeds this ideology of domesticity in the work of women teachers is the teachers' training course, which embodies this merging ideology of teaching and maternity¹⁷. Educators were trained to emphasize "moral and religious" values. Teaching was identified as a "vocation", with corresponding ideas of "altruism" and self-sacrifice (Louro, 1989; Teixeira, 1991). This prepared teachers to accept low salaries as an element of their service. As it was women (in the early 20th century) who were primarily teaching, their salary has been portrayed as being "complementary" to that of their partner. Men were supposed to be the "provider" of the family (Louro, 1989; Hypólito, 1994). In Brazil, these ideas were strengthened by "pedagogical theories" of the 1930s and 1940s¹⁸, when psychological theories were rigorously applied to education.

Gradually, teaching in Brazil became a "women's ghetto" where their "female abilities" were valued as essential for the education of children (Lopes, 1991; Hypólito, 1994). Thus, the feminisation of primary teaching in Brazil can be seen as a consequence of the economic and social context of an era in which industrialization, urbanization and mass education were occurring. Women's position in society was changing; women had access to schooling in

17- Assunção (1994) affirms that the teachers' training course (in Brazil) embodies an ideology of caring, giving emphasis to the psychological aspects of teaching and linking teaching with maternity and traditional family values.

18- Some authors (Louro, 1989 and Rosemberg, 1992) identify the 1950s as the period when these "psychological theories" were stressed in Brazilian education. In this manner, the absence of a mother at home (engaged at work) was seen as the cause for pupils' failure at school, bad habits, lack of personal hygiene and bad behaviour.

“Normal Schools” (teachers’ training courses); the idea of vocation¹⁹ was linked to that of “feminine abilities”, men abandoned teaching in search of better opportunities, and women teachers could enjoy similar salary to men (Louro, 1989; Paixão, 1991; Hypólito, 1994).

¹⁹. There are different interpretations of this vocational aspect, all of which stress the importance of the manner in which women enter teaching. For example, Assunção (1994) show that the image of teaching as a woman’s role is perpetuated in teachers’ training courses, which endorse women students’ pre-conceptions about the profession: “vocation, love-giving, mission, abnegation are characteristics which have been traditionally associated with primary teaching”. Assunção (1994) studied how images about women were “expressed” in the practice of women when teaching. The study was done with twelve women teachers and the school head in a municipal school of Belo Horizonte. Her understanding is that when a woman becomes a teacher, the “symbolic and subjective dimension” of her “choice of occupation will later be reflected in pedagogical practice”. In this sense, the way women are socialized has a great influence on their professional trajectory and professional behaviour. Nonetheless, teachers’ training course is not the only space women teachers have their professional socialisation (Lelis, 1997).

3.4- Women Teachers in Brazil: the Struggle for Professional Status

Nowadays in Brazil, in the official discourse, teachers are referred to using the word “professionals”. In their struggle to reach professional status, Brazilian teachers have made use of different denominations when referring to themselves. Teachers were initially called “little ‘normalist’ teacher” (“*professorinha normalista*”), then “educator”, then “professional of education” (after the 70s) and “workers of education” (in more recent years) (Louro, 1989). However, these titles have not guaranteed better conditions of work nor the privileges enjoyed by traditional professional groups.

According to Louro (1989), today, the character of “altruism” and “self-sacrifice” of teachers in Brazil has been substituted by demands for better salaries and conditions of work. However, the fight for better salaries might imply that teachers are having to contribute to their families’ income. It does not necessarily mean that women teachers “developed a class consciousness” or reached professionalisation²⁰. Dedication, altruism and love remain as the qualities essential for a teacher (see Novaes, 1984; Louro, 1989).

Recently, Brazilian governments have returned to the rhetoric of the importance of better qualifying teachers, what they refer to as the “professionalisation” of teaching. Behind this idea is the suggestion that educational failure in Brazil is solely dependent on teachers’ low qualifications. It is ignored that educational failure in Brazil is mostly a consequence of the lack of continuity of previous educational policies (a new government, a new plan) (Vieira, 1998). As stated by Lawlor (1985, p. 130), “political structures and conditions have determined the limited contribution made by education to the social and economic development of a substantial proportion of the population”.

The government discourse of professionalisation seems useful to disqualify teachers even more. This process of lowering teachers status seems to be facilitated by the

20- For example, studies (Fagundes and Kreutz, 1992) have denounced the lack of women’s representation in the Unions, which has served government interests.

high number of women in teaching to whom professional status has historically been forbidden.

As seen in this chapter, historically, the entrance of Brazilian women to teaching was not related to professional ideal, but excused by women's experience in the care of children, as an "extension of motherhood" or a vocation. Nonetheless, it was through teaching that women's professionalisation became socially acceptable. Only during the decades of the 30s and 40s in Brazil and under the influence of modern pedagogical theories *did* teachers gain a more professional character ("more scientific"). They were more qualified and applied psychological knowledge in education (Louro, 1989). But vocation and love continued to be considered as fundamental aspect in teaching.

During the 60s and 70s, political dictatorship and control over unions, schools and other civil institutions had great impact in the educational arena. Education was seen as a necessary condition for the development of the country. Numerous laws were established by the government in an attempt to control education. Again, teachers suffered a process of deskilling, in which the decisions of their work were conceived and controlled by the so called "educational specialists". This period is identified as one of an increased process of proletarianization of teachers (Novaes, 1984; Arroyo, 1985; Louro, 1989). With the introduction of "educational specialists" in schools, the teachers' training course lost its status and teachers became professionally disqualified.

From 1971 (Educational Law 5692), the teachers' training courses embodied ideas of "productivity, efficiency and efficacy" (Louro, 1989). Conditions of work in schools were worse than in previous decades and teachers had to work according to educational programs established by the government. Teachers were submitted to a process of "deskilling" and

of "intensification" of teachers' work (Louro, 1989). Teaching as a profession has been in crisis since the 70s when the increased feminisation of teaching led to more control over all aspects of education by the government (Costa, 1995).

3.4.1- Concepts about a Profession

Some effort has been made to define what a profession is. Traditionally, professionals require to have a long period of training and to offer a specialised service to society. It involves defining a broad theoretical body of knowledge (intellectual techniques) and individuals mastering those concepts. Individuals engaged in the profession offer an altruistic “public service for society”. In return they enjoy certain privileges, such as high social status and good financial remuneration, as well as autonomy (Perry and Perry, 1974; Maclean, 1992; Densmore, 1987; in Brazil, Costa, 1995) due to their professional status.

Thus, in a functionalist notion of a profession, it is defined as having, among other features, a “social function” and a “considerable degree of skill” (Hoyle and John, 1995). It is exercised in “situations which are not wholly routine” which give the professional freedom to make “its own judgments”; it requires a knowledge acquired in advanced education where the individual would be “socialized into professional values”; it denotes a “large degree of control over the exercise of professional responsibilities, and a high degree of autonomy in relation to the State” (Larson cited in Armstrong, 1995; Costa, 1995). Traditionally, doctors and lawyers would fit these features (Ozga and Lawn, 1981). Yet, the relations between doctors and patients have changed dramatically, for instance in America, where the relations between them are mediated by the lawyers of each. It has become true that “responsibility to their clients” is usually a secondary issue in the definition of a profession (Hoyle and John, 1995). Nowadays, these professionals have suffered many losses given their transformation into state workers or with the privatization of health services, involving loss in terms of autonomy and conditions of work (Larson cited in Costa, 1995). However, today, “professional elites” continue to have “technical, administrative, and cultural” control over the professions, as always (Freidson, 1994).

3.4.2- Teachers as Professionals: Problems

Despite all the attempts to define what a profession is, these investigations still lack theoretical bases (Freidson, 1994). Teaching is commonly defined as a semi-profession (Maclean, 1992). Some educators affirm that teaching is a profession because teachers have “pedagogical expertise” and retain a certain autonomy in the classroom (Densmore, 1987). The definition of teaching as a profession has been problematic - even defining the roles of teachers fails to reach a consensus. No matter how functionally important, all the so called semi-professions are ones dominated by women (see Acker, 1994). The presence of women in professions necessitates a new understanding of what a profession is.

The view of women as a low paid labour-force with poor career commitment and experiencing high job instability with low educational aspirations and achievements, a lack of accumulated work experience, and a lower supply price, relative to men (Scott, 1986) seems to explain why teaching, a mainly female occupation, has never achieved the status of a profession. The relatively limited position of women in teaching implies that there are other aspects of their practice that might limit their professional development²¹. Scott (1986, p. 158) describes the existence of “notions of femininity and masculinity which are not technically part of the job ... (but) become part of its occupational culture”. The lack of recognition of teaching as a profession appears to be related to this sex-typification of occupations.

Professionalisation results from a history of struggles and is not simply a desire of an occupational category (Costa, 1995). Nevertheless, the lack of professional status of teachers involves more than a lack of a history of struggles. It also involves questions about how society views teaching and women with professional status. Other factors inhibit professionalism of teachers: teachers' relation with the state and influence of factors such as class and gender divide the teaching occupation (eg. Perry and Perry, 1974).

²¹-Here it is used Hoyle's (cited in Hoyle and John, 1995, p. 16-17) definition of **professional development** as a “the process by which teachers acquire the knowledge, skills and values which will improve the service they provide to clients”.

The “notion of professionalism” (Apple cited in Louro, 1989, p. 37) was important to women in their struggle for recognition of their work, for better salaries and for equal treatment compared to men. Professionalism also appears to be a way of avoiding relating teaching and domesticity. However, the notion of professionalisation has taken male workers as reference and neglected the specificities of women workers (Abbot and Sapsford, 1987; Casey and Apple, 1988; Grant, 1988). As Miller (1996) states, “professions were in some sense a nineteenth-century invention ... regulating structures ... This was in the interest of creating a hierarchies and career structures for middle-class men”. “The image of ‘professional woman’ has to contend with the contradictions inherent in a woman belonging as a man might to what is specifically a male way of life and work” ... “a career woman is no longer a worker, but someone who is married to her job and has replaced the ‘natural’ patterns and expectations of a woman’s life with hectic ambition, in ways that men may do, but women do at their peril” (Miller, 1996, p. 107).

The teachers’ attempt to reach a professional status may offer problems. As Costa (1995, p. 124) indicates, the professionalisation of teachers may lead to teachers’ loss of “sensibility, of feelings of solidarity”, “becoming specialists”. Nonetheless, as Sykes (cited in Costa, 1995) suggests teachers professionalisation should take into consideration a social perspective respecting the teachers’ interests, but also respecting the diversity of the school community (pupils, parents).

3.4.3- Women in Teaching: Conflicting roles

As cited earlier in this chapter, nowadays researchers tend to see the educational system as a male creation, with male organizational characteristics (eg.: McKellar 1994; Adler et al, 1993). This conclusion is present in Brazilian studies, where, despite the dominance of women in schools, the male presence in schools is perceived in a “symbolic perspective”, defining the school culture, controlling the organization of schools and the teaching work (Assunção, 1994). In Brazil there is an internal sexual division in teaching. Men dominate the higher levels of teaching, where salaries are better (Costa and Bruschini, 1990). They also dominate the chairs in the Unions, where they are elected (preferred) by their female colleagues (Louro, 1987).

The position of women in teaching has been seen as a reflection of the social construction of women’s identity in both the private and public spheres. Schools, as other public spheres, also reflect male values, and reinforce the “features” expected and demanded from women. Stone (1994) refers to “gender symbolism”, which involves men and women living in different worlds: “subjective-objective, passive-active, procreative-creative, reproduction-production, body-mind, emotion-cognition, nature-culture, private-public, other-person”. Here the latter terms incarnate male features and are seen as superior qualities. In schools, women teachers have the role of “transmitters of cultural norms” and are themselves engaged in their own oppression (Lather, 1994). There have been studies exploring issues of how women teachers are efficient in confirming certain male values such as sex discrimination (eg.: Delamont, 1983; Leonard, 1989).

Women in teaching have experienced the consequences of the union of two conflicting roles in society: of being teachers and being women. They receive gendered messages inside their workplace which serve to degrade their working roles as traditionally “female”. Their response to these messages may depend not only on teachers’ self-images, but also on the group approval important to any individual. This is especially true in the professional sphere.

Studies, especially in Britain, have paid attention to the “ways in which teachers

develop and change their perspectives, interpretations and strategies in response to circumstances” (Acker, 1989, p. 8). Schools are places where “daily disputes” occur between individuals and groups. Different classes, sexes, races and ages struggle to make their voice heard - and dominate the control of professional discourse²². In a sense, attention to the micro-politics of schools provides an opportunity to hear those who have had no voice in the wider educational system. This seems to offer newer insights than a “top-down” analysis of education. Included in this category of people who have not been asked to speak are the “second class workers” (Scott, 1986), the majority of whom are women and have been largely under-represented in educational decisions. These disputes are obviously not placed in an empty “social context”. There is a determinant and structured social space where individuals are inserted, with their different ideologies, interests and positions (Forquin, 1993).

3.5- Women Teachers as “Helping Professionals”: Barrier to their Professionalisation

The history of state education as an efficient way of controlling the poor has already been described by other studies (eg. in France by Petitat, 1994; in Brazil, Ribeiro, 1991). In capitalist societies like Brazil, the school plays an important role of transmitting and controlling values central to maintaining this economic system (Arroyo, 1985). Here, state education has served to maintain a desired social order as well as to perpetuate values and interests of certain groups. It seems that the education provided to the poor is discriminatory compared to that provided for the children of the elites (eg.: Ribeiro, 1991). This discrimination is hidden in the charitable spirit which exists in schools for the poor. The same quality of education given to those who can afford to pay is refused to poor pupils, under the excuse that they will not need

22- The position of an individual teacher in a class, gender/race influences the image teachers have about their profession (Hypólito, 1994; Rocha, 1997). Women located in different positions receive different messages and receive different codes of behaviour.

it in life. Why bother to give to them, and demand from them the same level of education given to and demanded from the children of the elite? The “charity” and paternalistic actions taken towards these children remain one of the great barriers to their achieving personal development as educated citizens. Women teachers have had an important role in these actions.

Lather (1994) has stated that women in teaching “like mothers ... raise children in the service of the dominant group”. Women teachers support the dominant group as agents who maintain their hegemony over the great majority of the society. Because of this, it is necessary to maintain the *status quo* of women teachers as “helping professionals”, who accept, or are forced to accept, traditional roles in a patriarchal society.

In addition, the view of women teachers as “helping professionals” has served well the survival of capitalism. While other women were working outside the home, domestic duties and child-care had to be planned for. Having no option, it appears that working parents (especially mothers) had to rely on what schools or day-care centres were available. For instance, in Brazil, such facilities are unsatisfactory²³. In families where both parents work, cases occur when children have been left alone at home (Veja, 1994), or are left in the care of other women: baby-sitters, neighbours or relatives. Schools perform an important function in communities, especially in poor urban areas, where families cannot afford to pay a baby-sitter or to maintain their children in daily child-care. Primary schools are places where families know that their children are safe, may receive medical and odontological care, and are fed. In Brazil, the transformation of governmental schools into “children’s storage places” or into restaurants has been criticized (Ribeiro, 1991; Vieira, 1998). It seems that all the social problems and family problems pass through the school. In this new context, nothing seems more proper than having a woman at school taking care of children (Figure 3.2).

23. For example, industries which employ women have not respected the law by offering centres for working mothers (UTE, 1987).

Figure 3.2- Press cutting describing the construction of new Ciacs - Centres for education created under president Collor's administration (1990-1993). These centres were inspired in the Cieps - Centres for education constructed in Rio de Janeiro by Brizola when he was the city's mayor - 1983-87. Note that these education centres look more like social care facilities than schools.

"... the centres will have 12 classrooms, one sleeping-room, medical offices, a centre of childcare, lunchroom ..." (Folha de São Paulo, May 29, 1991, p. 10).



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Community poverty clearly shapes those who work with young children in primary schools. As Novaes (1984) indicates, Brazilian teachers have financed the system of education. Women teachers find themselves trying to work in very difficult conditions, not just in terms of the clients they *serve* , but also in terms of the physical conditions of the school. In an attempt to complete their work, teachers *are limited* , by inadequate “training”, adapt themselves and their work to this reality. Consequently, women teachers have used their own gendered identities as a way to validate their work. As Mello (1992) criticizes, it is the use of the “theory of love” by women teachers. This theory is based on the fact that when teachers do not know what to do in their work practice, they “love”.

On the other hand, the school culture itself seems to demand that women teachers perform roles connected to “domestic roles” or with “caring, helping roles”. There is an assumption that men do not possess these qualities, while they are possessed by women naturally (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989). Attempts to change the school’s approach to poor communities in order to improve the quality of education appear to be leading to a misunderstanding which has involved school and teachers in community problems. Schools and, consequently women teachers, appear to be performing roles which the families in these communities have been unable to deal with.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1- Method of Inquiry

The socialization women experience in teaching may explain the manner in which they perceive and act in the social context (Novaes, 1984; Assunção, 1994, Shakeshaft and Perry, 1995). Once they are in schools, it is possible that female teachers undergo a process of re-skilling, where their previously acquired values about the profession are re-shaped according to the culture of each school. This can be called a “socialization” process occurring in the work place. As Quantz (1992) states, “schools are organized around people that make choices concerning their own very personal worlds”. It is for this reason that the culture of schools must be studied in an attempt to understand how the agents in it react.

Thus, in order to understand schools, one needs to study and define not only what, but also who determines the manner of thinking inside schools. How inside-school agents perceive and react to pressures from outside and inside the school are central questions to be addressed in this study. In this case, primary school teachers in an area of Brazil were the focus of research. In Brazil, as in other countries, their profession can aptly be described as a “feminine ghetto”. Reference to the gender of teachers is important, since social limitations pertinent to each sex exist. In primary schools patriarchal values appear to validate and sometimes impose ideas about the mystification and redefinition of the work of women in teaching.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, many attempts have been made to solve educational problems based on investigations external to the school environment, which fail to take into account the daily routine of schools. In addition to this, teachers are commonly blamed for the failure of education without being given a chance to tell their experiences of difficulties and problems which interfere with their work.

Each school has its own micro-political organization with expectations and demands

that certain roles and rules ought to be followed by its members. Often these roles and rules are not explicitly set out in legal documents, but are present in an ideal that these people have about the ideal school and the model teacher. Certain unspoken expectations and demands are naturally met by the members. This does not mean that there is no resistance to the rules¹. Schools should be viewed as arenas where power struggles are ongoing, where members shift position from powerless to powerful (Walkerdine, 1981). It is the nature of these conflicts and struggles inside schools which characterizes the micro-politics of a school. Within this power dynamic can be seen the figure of a female teacher surrounded by “borrowed” children. The manner in which women teachers are interpreted in these organizations, and how women respond to this interpretation, are strong determinants of professional practice. It is also necessary to look at teachers in a micro-level study in order to understand demands made of women teachers, who makes these demands, and how these teachers respond to them.

Studying education using a micro-political approach is a relatively recent trend (Blase and Anderson, 1995). Previous theoretical and practical research focused on the micro-political organization of schools has demonstrated the effects of political actions of those inside school on the work of teachers (Hoyle, 1986; Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Blase and Anderson, 1995, Blase and Blase, 1995). Micro-political studies show that it is necessary to consider the multiple factors of organizations in order to understand “micropolitical processes and structures in schools” (Blase and Blase, 1995). Micro-politics portrays the school agents as negotiating their realities (Blase and Anderson, 1995). The use of micro-politics draws our attention to the “formal and informal power ... (of) individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations”. In Blase’s words:

“... In large part, political actions result from perceived differences between individuals and groups coupled with the motivation to use power to influence and/or protect. Although such actions are consciously motivated, any action, consciously or unconsciously motivated, may have political ‘significance’ in a given situation. Both cooperative and conflictive actions and processes are part of

¹- Giroux (1981) has called attention to the importance of understanding resistance in schools as central to the under pedagogical practice. In his understanding, relations of power in schools are dialectic.

the realm of micropolitics. Moreover, macro and micropolitical factors frequently interact” (Blase cited in Blase and Blase, 1995, p. 57-8).

“Micropolitics is about power and how people use it to influence others and to protect themselves. It is about conflict and how people compete with each other to get what they want. It is about cooperation and how people build support among themselves to achieve their ends. It is about what people in all social settings think about and have strong feelings about, but what is so often unspoken and not easily observed. The micropolitical perspective presents practising administrators and scholars alike with fresh and provocative ways to think about human behaviour in schools” (Blase cited in Blase and Anderson, 1995, p. 1-2).

The concepts of micro-political systems enunciated above form the basic “system of analysis” to be employed in this research. This investigation was conducted by semi-structured interviews² with, and observation of, individuals directly involved in school life. In the case of schools visited, these individuals were mainly teachers, school managers (school head, supervisors and counsellors) and, in some schools, parents. The aim of the interviews was to cross-reference information provided by each of these agents with the others and in this way analyze how their beliefs are reflected in their behaviour (practice) towards others. These interviews gave teachers and school managers an opportunity to explain and to position themselves using their own voice; a woman’s voice that had been silenced in a macro/structuralist view of the system of education.

Parents are also active participants in their children’s schools, but for the purposes of the present study, interviews were limited to those people directly involved inside (employed in) the schools. Parents were excluded from the study because of a lack of tradition of parental involvement in decision-making in government schools in Brazil. Despite the recent effort from the government to bring parents into school life, they influence decision-making inside schools only if they organize themselves and are definitely involved in school life. Such parental organization existed in only one school visited in the study.

Teachers and school managers agreed that there were several reasons why parents failed to become involved in their children’s schools. Many are seen as too busy to come to school, some are afraid of coming to school due to their lack of understanding of school

2. A copy of the interview questions is provided in Appendix 1.

activities, and some were portrayed as simply lacking interest in school life.

I wanted to confirm these opinions with parents, and was able to talk to a few, mostly school representatives. Some of them agreed to have the interview tape-recorded. As in the case of teachers, I met with difficulties in contacting parents. The excuse most commonly given was that they had no time available but, I suspect, some were not interested in participating. I tried to contact parents in different ways and more than once but there was no reply. It would be beneficial to include parents in future studies since interaction between communities and schools is the subject of recent support from local authorities.

The focus of this research is to develop an understanding of how women teachers perceive their work environment situation. This picture meant to include an exploration of women's perception about their roles and how this differed from what they were requested to do in reality. A picture emerged of how women teachers reacted in various ways to these demands, what they thought about their profession and to what extent individuals inside school influence their work. Teachers' voices provide information about the reality of school practices and help to identify gender issues which may limit the professional development of women educators. Understanding how teachers "think, act, develop professionally and change during their careers" can also contribute to a better understanding of educational problems (Goodson, 1992, p. 51; see also Ball, 1987, Quantz 1993; Altenbaugh, 1992; Glucksmann, 1994; Clark and Peterson cited in Nicholson, 1996). The "emotional dimension of organization" with its conflicts, fights, division of groups, the different ideologies inside schools, appear to be important elements influencing the behaviour of women in teaching. This "emotional dimension" of schools stems from the agents' action inside school, specially teachers' colleagues.

Despite resistance, I was able to observe pedagogical meetings between teachers and school managers. I attended a meeting of the "Regional" (local external school authorities) with school staff in one of the visited schools, a meeting where teachers voted for the participation of the school in a strike, and meetings between parents' representatives and school heads. At the schools, I spent time observing the staff-room during the teachers' breaks or study hours.

I also observed casual conversations between staff and activities which took place in the school corridors. I spoke with teachers who worked in the school offices, observed teachers supervising pupils at the lunch-break, at the beginning and end of school, and during extra-curricular events such as dance-training and computer classes.

It was initially my idea to collect circulated school documents and written and visual material that would provide information about the school culture and teachers. I also planned to collect letters written by pupils to their teachers, a common occurrence in Brazil, from which I could ascertain the image of teachers held by their pupils. My attitude towards this collection of data was to “be open” to the material which was made available during field work. Unfortunately, after a few weeks of field work I felt this initial method of data collection (letters written by pupils to their teachers) had stagnated and I decided to end it. However, I was able to collect and read some written material (“book of occurrences”³, didactic books, written material distributed to teachers or attached in the school boards/walls) in use at the time at the schools visited. Finally, a visit to the available files in the Teachers’ Union contributed information about the treatment teachers received during strikes.

I also planned to compare the daily routine of teachers in England with that of Brazilian teachers, in an attempt to find differences and similarities between their realities. For this purpose, I asked a teacher from England to write a descriptive document of a day at school. However, when asking a Brazilian teacher for the same exercise, after many attempts I still could not get a document: the excuses were many. In addition, the writing process proved to be inefficient to know what was really happening in the daily routine of these teachers. The document collected from the British teacher turned to be a description of her time-table with no possibility of analysis of events in which her “domestic” abilities were required inside school. A pilot study (described later in this Chapter) was also carried out in a school in a poor area of London.

3- A “book of occurrence” refers to a book kept in every school to record all the decisions related to disciplinary problems between teachers, parents and/or pupils.

4.1.1- Advantages and Limitations of this Method of Inquiry: Care to be Taken

The technique should be subordinate to the object under study (Bourdieu, 1989). In this case, the researcher needs to be open to possible changes of method during the field work and absorb the various signals emitted when investigating environments like schools. For this reason issues such as race, not considered initially, revealed to be important during the field work and thus included during this study.

I made an attempt to understand the “individual dimension but also the collective dimension of a professional group and social category” through individual semi-structured interviews, as suggested by Assunção (1994). As a teacher who had worked for some years in this same system, in the same city, I had the advantage of being aware of certain aspects of the micro-politics of these schools which might be imperceptible to other researchers.

There are limits to any research method. Researchers do not have the “magic to show the codes, we only do a possible interpretation, that ... is not the only one” (Geertz cited in Assunção, 1994. p. 47; see also Holland and Ramazanogly, 1995). Interviews provide an extensive quantity of data, involving the extremely hard work of single-handedly transcribing the material. Yet, transcribing the tapes leads to a re-enactment of the interview and a comparison with notes taken. It is a form of analysis in itself. I considered using other approaches, for example questionnaires. These offered high risk in terms of feedback, and also in terms of people really becoming involved in answering the questions. Many questionnaires would not have been answered and there was the possibility that some questions would be misunderstood or neglected. In addition, since I wanted to really listen to teachers, and try to understand the underlying text of their answers, a questionnaire was not the best way to do this. Those who answer survey questions could not provide a feedback in terms of body language, or the opportunity to ask teachers to explain themselves and to expand on their answers. Finally, teachers are often busy correcting exams, and it was supposed that a questionnaire would be seen by them as one more piece of paper to deal with quickly. That

would frustrate the whole process of research interested in the nuances of responses and interpretation of these. An example of the inefficiency of questionnaire responses can be seen in those sent to school heads asking for basic information about schools. Some questions were answered improperly, and some not at all. I had to confirm the answers given during my interviews with school heads. The questionnaire would probably have been less complex if it were of an open-ended design, but this form would not have allowed me to fully explore the answers nor develop certain aspects in other ways. I did not want to introduce the concept of gender to the interviewees, and a questionnaire would have forced me to be more explicit about this issue. Semi-structured interviews gave me freedom to investigate gender and class issues in a circumspect manner, minimizing the interviewees' awareness of my central interest.

In addition, most of the teachers work more than one shift. They also have other personal activities and my fear was that they would have ended up answering the questionnaire, for example, in a bus going home; some questionnaires would be lost, others never returned. A semi-structured interview allows the researcher to interact and invite the interviewee to think and re-think about her/his answers.

In the end, the collection of data through interviews (and observation of teachers and other school staff outside classroom) proved to be an efficient and appropriate method to pursue the hypotheses addressed in this study. It was very clear from the first that teachers would not allow a stranger into their class-rooms if observation was chosen as a method to collect data. This is not only because they were afraid of being watched by the government⁴ but also because of their recent negative experience with other researchers. The total time spent in schools in the first year was over 400 hours. In the second year when I visited schools to clarify a few points, over 200 hours were spent.

4- Because of the implementation of the 'Escola Plural', teachers were suspicious and afraid of government visitors at schools. See Appendix 2 for more details on the 'Escola Plural'.

4.2- Selection of Schools

“The perception of history is geographical and has created suspicion about audacious historical syntheses” (Nunes cited in Rosemberg et al, 1990, p. 25). With this in mind, my study is not intended as presenting Brazilian reality as a whole, but is concentrated on the experiences of teachers and school managers in one of the most developed cities in an industrialized area of Brazil: Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais (Southeast region). Schools were selected from a list obtained from one of the “Regionais”, providing the name and location of schools maintained by the local government in Belo Horizonte. The schools were chosen due to their position in different areas of the city. One of the schools visited was the school where I taught for four years. The other schools were chosen based on their locations in the south, in the centre and in the north of the city. Three of the schools were located far from the centre of the city and one of them was quite central. In total, six schools were contacted to participate in the study.

Primary and secondary schools in Brazil are maintained either by the state government, by the city government (municipal schools) or by private groups (usually the Catholic church or individuals). All three types of schools can be found in the city of Belo Horizonte. Differences exist between these three systems in terms of the quality of education offered, how they are administered, the type of professionals they employ⁵, and the salary offered by their employers. This study is limited to municipal schools maintained by the city government, because they educate children from communities in the city of Belo Horizonte. Limiting the study in this way allows for analysis to be related to the educational context of the city itself. In addition, this was a system of education with which I was familiar.

5- See the end of Chapter 2 for information about primary school teachers in municipal schools in Belo Horizonte.

4.3- Interviews: Objectives and Problems

Interview schedules were designed to question both school managers and teachers. Three interviews which addressed the same issues in slightly different ways were conducted. (A copy of each is provided in Appendix 1). Each took the form of a semi-structured interview, since in this methodological approach it is important to give the interviewees the opportunity to explain themselves fully, and to provide information which they perceive as important but that I may not have considered when planning the interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher an opportunity to investigate in more detail the answers the interviewees provide; certain aspects can be highlighted, and the interviewee is able to clarify, expand and explain the meaning of their response (Oakey, 1981; Adler et al, 1995). This methodology also offers a certain flexibility in terms of the order of questions, which can be asked in an order suggested by the interviewee's answers, decreasing the artificiality of the situation. Semi-structured interviewing provides the researcher with the possibility of breaking out of the narrow control of structured interviews, while retaining control over the topics under investigation (Ball, 1992; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Oppenheim, 1994).

The interview questions were designed to provide as much information as possible about the relationship between agents inside school and the position of interviewees in terms of the problems found in the school context. These topics were addressed on more than one occasion during the interview from different perspectives, in a manner suggested by Oppenheim. This allows the interviewees to re-think or confirm what they had answered previously. In addition to this, repetitive questioning allowed me to identify contradictions in teachers' answers and to explore these points with them.

Interviewees were encouraged to ask questions during the interview. At the end of each interview, people were invited to return to any subject they wished, or discuss any points they felt they wanted to mention. Interviews were carried in a very relaxed atmosphere. A small tape-recorder was used to minimize distraction from the recording process. This detail was successful since some teachers and the interviewer forgot about it. Some teachers felt very

comfortable and even started to play with the recorder. I would turn the tape-recorder off if the interviewees requested this, but only two did. As mentioned, tapes were confidential, interviewees were allowed to interrupt the interview to ask questions, to refuse or criticize questions, giving flexibility to the interview. And finally as the cited authors did, the place and time of the interview were considered.

Tapes were fully transcribed by the researcher and coding categories were generated from emergent recurrent patterns. A content analysis of each interview was undertaken initially, to define the categories provided from the data, creating an overall picture of information found in the field work. This was followed by a more focused analysis of each emergent theme related to the gendered experience in their work place. These two strategies made it possible to add an analysis of categories such as race which had not been considered necessary initially.

As mentioned earlier, initial contact was made with teachers and school managers through letters from England in which the aims of the interviews were explained. After the confirmation of their participation, I went to schools to talk to them. Despite previous contacts, I found that many teachers did not want to participate in the interview. I explained the aims of the research once again and guaranteed that neither their names nor the name of the school would be revealed in the research. It was only at this point that some teachers agreed to give the interview. Thus, only teachers who really wanted to be interviewed, or who allowed me the possibility to explain the research aims, agreed to participate in this study. After listening to my explanations, some teachers declined to participate and their decision was respected. Fortunately, some teachers were very positive about being interviewed, and continued our discussion even after the formal interview was complete. Occasionally, these teachers helped me to gain the trust of other teachers who later agreed to be interviewed. Some teachers were initially resistant, but once interviewed did not want stop talking despite a time restriction. I respected their desire to respond, despite imposed time limits. There were also teachers who agreed to be interviewed only after a personal request from one of the school managers. It seemed to be a personal "favour".

In order to foster a relaxed atmosphere, interviews began with easy questions about their work, such as the length of time they had been teaching, which age group they taught, and whether or not they were associated with the Teachers' Union. Gradually, questions became more detailed and focused on the subject of the research. That is, first personal but superficial questions on a general level were followed by questions in which the teachers were asked to comment on or to expand on their previous comments about the early questions concerned with topics such as their colleagues' work and behaviour inside school. Finally, my questions explored very sensitive issues such as personal conflicts at work, at home, salary and family income. Teachers' criticism allowed me to investigate their perceptions of their colleagues, their position in the school, and also enabled me to identify which values dominated in the schools being investigated.

As mentioned earlier, the interviews were organized via groups of questions which approached the same subject from different angles in order to affirm or complement the answers provided by interviewees. Occasionally, information about sensitive issues had to be collected tangentially during the interview. Sometimes, I returned indirectly to questions which were avoided by some interviewees when asked directly. This method was helpful because of the interviewing conditions established by teachers. I did not have the opportunity to interview all of them twice or to talk to them informally. On occasion, interviewees talked about school problems after the tape recorder was turned off. Sometimes they agreed to turn the tape-recorder on again, but in other cases, they whispered to me with the door closed while leaving the room. In these cases, I took notes of the comments.

The procedure of formulating, presenting and analyzing the interviews was guided mainly by the works of Oppenheim (1992), Miles and Huberman (1994) and Ian Dey (1993). My reading on interviews as a method also considered a feminist perspective based on Adler et al (1993). It was important to complement the traditional way research analysis has been conducted (Eichler cited in Adler et al, 1993, p. 63). Adler et al (1993) look at the "links between women's private and professional lives", putting "women at the centre of the discourse, not as 'the other' in relation to men". Their study calls attention to the problems

involved in an androcentric style of methodology, still in use, which preaches neutrality. They also understand that “a conceptualisation of knowledge” is derived from “comparison of multiple perspectives leading towards a complex evolving view of reality” (Regan cited in Adler et al, 1993, p. 61). The present research attempted to consider the different agents inside schools situated in their present context (eg. social, economic, gender, racial). Yet, it is difficult to break away from the straight-jacket of ~~the~~ the positivist model of methodology used by academics. The present research attempted to avoid the traditional separation between subject and object, respecting rather than exploiting situations in which the interviewee was concerned. It took me a great deal of time to negotiate with myself the feminist process of research in which emotional involvement is seen as necessary between interviewer and interviewee (Adler et al, 1993). I definitely did not assume a detached position from my interviewees. I believe that in some circumstances, the researcher has to give his/her opinion to the interviewee because it is ethical. However, as part of my initial negotiation with the interviewees, I made it clear that their opinion were the most important aspect of the interview. Thus, I tried to avoid situations in which I had to give my opinion since I felt more confident in not doing so. I also feared that through my opinion I would direct teachers’ statements.

As noted earlier, the developments of the interview and subsequent adjustments was piloted in a study of an English school located in an area similar to where the field work would be done. The school was located in the northeast of London in an area composed of high number of immigrants. Children taught in the school were of Afro-caribbean, non-European and European origin, and a high proportion of them came from the West Indies, but also children from poor European countries, such as Portugal. Many of their families could be called low income. The interviewing process took a long time and the planned number of interviews was reduced to three (one black English teacher, one white English teacher and one white foreign teacher, all working in England). This was ideal for the piloting of the questionnaire. The Canadian teacher from a Montessorian school, in London, agreed to participate in the interview. The interview questions were tested and further developed/alterd according to responses obtained in the pilot study.

The option to do the “mini-pilot” in an area such as the chosen one was motivated by the idea that in such poor communities, teachers, whatever the country, are exposed to a more difficult reality. In this manner, I expected to find an environment similar to the schools I would visit in Brazil, where teachers would be teaching pupils from a social and economic background which would make their work difficult and possibly enlarge their roles beyond teaching. What I found was that the working conditions of these teachers were very different from those of teachers in Brazil. Despite all the difficulties, the problems were different, and the schools usually provided basic material for pupils and teachers. Teachers interviewed had a different attitude towards their work. They were more engaged in the Union, even when considering the job as a temporary option. They were inserted in a more competitive environment in terms of career, which made them struggle. School organization was different from the Brazilian. The only feature which approached the Brazilian reality was the difficulty of teaching pupils from a poor background where there was a huge cultural gap between teachers and pupils (community).

4.3.1- Interview with Teachers⁶

There is a need to know who is teaching (Apple, 1987). Teachers, like any other group inside schools, are partially responsible for defining the “school culture”. Thus, it is necessary to understand that their personality, which is to a great deal defined by their background experiences, not only influences their actions (Nicholson, 1996) but also contributes to the characterization of their work space, for example, in terms of values. Yet, it cannot be ignored that women will be also tempted to maximize their own interests in terms of their social background, (see Ball cited in Acker, 1994).

Several researchers (Ball, 1987; Goodson, 1992; Altenbaugh, 1992; Quantz, 1993, Nicholson, 1996) point out the importance of understanding how teachers work (act, think,

⁶- See interview questions in Appendix 1.

etc) in order to address educational problems more productively. Thus, the aim of interviews with teachers was to:

- characterize the specific gender situation (in combination with other determinants: class, race, age) that leads teachers to teaching and encourages them to remain in the profession;
- identify the image women teachers hold about their professional roles and position;
- identify the conflicts experienced by interviewees and their level of resistance to assume roles beyond teaching;
- investigate whether these roles are shaped by the roles played by women in the family;
- investigate the implications of teachers' gendered position in their work-place.

The questions aimed to investigate how gender affects women teachers' behaviour in the work-place. Through the interviewing process, my intention was to identify the image held by these women teachers of their roles and position in primary teaching, the conflicts and resistances these women teachers face in assuming roles beyond teaching, and, finally, to investigate if these roles are shaped by the roles played by women in the "family".

The fact that they are women, and women from a specific social class leads them to think, analyze and act in the world guided by the patterns learned from a certain position in society. The gender, and class position of an individual (alongside other variables such as race and age) determines, in an important way, the world that person experiences, and choices they make, in society (see Paixão, 1991, p. 7; Louro, 1997, p. 478). Women from different social classes⁷ and races experience their gender in different ways (Paixão, 1991, p. 7; Zambrana, 1994, p. 138-139).

Race issues in Brazil probably have to be understood in terms of a "hierarchy of colours", in which the darker you are, the lower status in society you will have. It must be

⁷- Social class is a powerful divider of people (groups) in Brazil, justifying marginalization and brutal treatment and creating harmful prejudices.

underlined that in Brazil, social class is a powerful divider of people (groups), justifying marginalization and brutal treatment and creating harmful prejudices. Class and race division have historically been connected in Brazil

Teachers, like other human beings, are a product of the social context to which they have been exposed. Their professional self-image results from their individual views produced by experience (Harris, 1990). Each teacher's individual values and actions, the inherited past of each, intersects within the working context of schools. There, their values may or may not be confirmed. Consequently, teachers will or will not have to adapt themselves to different values present in a new context. In a sense, the school environment can be seen as a place where struggle occurs between groups with different values and perceptions regarding school and teachers' roles. Schools can be seen as places of struggle between groups attempting to validate their own interests and values. Teachers' colleagues, clients and school managers are all active agents with degrees of power which act to validate certain patterns of behaviour at work. Submitting to the dominant culture in an institution is almost a guarantee of being accepted; the reward is experiencing the feeling of belonging to a group. As Brah (1996) stated, this results in a feeling of normality.

Another aim of this investigation was to relate the complaints or satisfactions expressed by teachers (as well as other agents) to the context of their work. Assessing degrees of dissonance or harmony within this context provides information about the thought and values, the network of social relations, of school agents (Ball, 1987, p. 214). "The teachers' daily worklives in schools" are important in defining a "professional community of particular character and strength" (Taubert and McLaughlin, 1996, p. 127-153). My major objective was to identify attempts in the micro-sphere of schools to validate the "ideology of the family" in the work of women in teaching, and how this validation has affected their professional behaviour. Considering that the context of work is characterized by the social agents involved, and investigating the unique relationships which exist among the agents yield information about the culture that predominates in individual schools.

The number of interviews conducted with teachers was . . . necessitated

by the need to identify patterns of behaviour between teachers and their schools and problems common to each. The intention was not to generalize, but rather to understand if that gendered issues vary in intensity from school to school. It was established initially, that in each of the four schools, a minimum of 12 teachers would be interviewed⁸. This number would allow for comparison and verification of congruence in the discourse and also allow the researcher to identify the existence of local ideologies within the same school.

Neither the names of the teachers interviewed, nor the names mentioned during the interviews will be included. Teachers and schools are classified by numbers. The location of each teacher interviewed (case) and the school are as follows⁹:

Cases 1 to 14 - school 1 (Total: 14 teachers)
Cases 15 to 24 - school 2 (Total: 10 teachers)
Cases 25 to 35 - school 4 (Total: 10 teachers)
Cases 35 to 48 - school 3 (Total: 13 teachers)

4.3.2- Interviews with School Managers

Interviews with school managers (4 school heads, 7 supervisors and 4 counsellors)¹⁰ were necessary to compare with the description of the context provided by teachers, and vice-versa. These interviews also provided information as to how school managers viewed teachers and about which the types of teachers they approved of. These authorities wield considerable power inside school and consequently their decisions influence the work of teachers to a large degree.

Previous studies (Ball, 1987; Blase and Blase, 1995; Waite, 1995) have explored

⁸- See more detail in this chapter, in the section entitled: Number of Interviews.

⁹- School numbers respect order of visit to each school.

¹⁰- The school specialists and school head were identified according to their posts: ie.: supervisor/school 1 or school head/school 3. See interview questions in Appendix 1.

difficulties in the relationship between teachers and their superiors. However, their attention was focused on assessing how teachers' life experiences enhanced their understanding of supervision. Here, an attempt was made to compare the perceptions and actions of teachers with those of their superiors, and to assess how these superiors (school managers) influence the behaviour of women teachers inside schools based on an ideology of gender differences. Additional studies (Blase and Anderson, 1995, p. 1) have shown that "a school's micropolitical culture is, in part, a reaction to the type of leadership present in the school". These studies underlined the importance of listening to school managers, since teachers' behaviour often expresses a response to the action of these authorities.

School heads are mainly elected by parents (who have the great majority of votes)¹¹ and can be powerful members in the school community. They occupy a political post and they are well aware of their power. Historically, school heads have been seen by the government as the key to control schools (Mello and Silva, 1993).

Interviews with school heads and the other school managers were important as a means to identify the social position of these individuals and assess the importance of both gender and class in their choice to work in a school environment. These interviews were a means to develop an understanding of what images school managers held regarding teachers' roles, (and if their views were dependent on a teacher's sex). Furthermore, my intention was to identify how the views of school managers influence the work of women teachers, since, as has been mentioned, these people play a powerful role inside schools.

¹¹ - More information about school election of heads in chapter 2 and 8.

4.4- Sources other than Interviews

As mentioned earlier, teachers and school managers were observed in all schools during pedagogical meetings, in a meeting with the “Regional” (local external school authorities) and in a meeting where teachers voted for the participation of the school in a strike. I also observed meetings between parents’ representatives and school heads. However, most of the observation was made in staff-rooms during teachers’ break or study hours. I had the opportunity of listening to casual conversations between staff and had informal conversations with teachers involved in activities outside classroom (teachers who worked in the school office, teachers supervising pupils at lunch-break, and performing extra-curricular events, such as dance-training, preparation of school material or computer classes¹²). Other school staff such as secretaries and door-men, and parents encountered at the school entrance (some parents agreed to participate in tape-recorded interviews) were also contacted during the field work. Among the secondary material collected during the field work were visual and written texts from didactic books or those texts circulated inside schools, school files relating to discipline problems between pupils/parents and teachers, and the school files of “Colegiado”¹³ meetings. Still inside schools, observation was conducted of school meetings with parents, pedagogical meetings and out-of-school activities, such as parents’ and pupils’ preparation for a party and the showing of schools’ video. All schools were photographed and these photos provided useful written material about the messages which circulated inside school (affixed on the school walls). These messages added information about the school’s ideology, organization and physical conditions, and a brief view of the type of clientele and teachers

12. Some of these teachers offered to talk to me or just started to make comments about their experiences as teachers without my asking for their interview and I listened to them. However, the conversation was not formally recorded since I decided to interview only teachers enrolled in classrooms, not teachers enrolled in other school tasks. The reason for this decision was that many of the latter were outside the classroom for many years without having contact with pupils, parents and, consequently, were not involved directly in the teaching aspects and problems at school.

13. See footnote 30 in Chapter 2.

enrolled in it. Some of this material provided useful information for the study and is annexed to the Chapters to illustrate the thesis.

Outside schools, a search of written material from local newspapers filed by the Teachers' Union related to teachers was conducted. Visits to, and contacts with, the municipal Secretary of Education provided material on extra-school administration. Study at the local University with its extensive archive of recent studies on the history and conditions of work of women teachers in Brazil, in the State of Minas Gerais, and specifically in the municipal schools of Belo Horizonte was a rich source of academic material. Another final source of data encountered was a program on national television about a male teacher in a pre-school. In this program, mothers of the pupils and the teacher himself provided their opinion about having a man teaching their children. This program was mentioned by many of the interviewed teachers.

4.5- Contacts and Problems

Initial contact was made with individuals in schools almost six months before the visit to the schools. Letters were sent to the school head, and to other school managers, and one special letter was sent to teachers explaining the aims of the visit to the schools. I also explained that the names of schools and participants would not be revealed in the study. Five schools initially agreed to participate in the study; however, when I arrived for the field work, I was informed that teachers in one of the schools refused to participate in the study. They claimed that the school head had confirmed their participation without their prior consent. That school was dropped from the study. Upon arrival, I tried to contact school heads by telephone. In two schools, they were not easily found. In these two cases, my initial contacts were with the educational specialists. With the exception of schools 1 and 3, heads were usually unhelpful and generally too busy to see me, even though they had agreed to give interviews. In general, teachers were receptive, but only after I explained the objectives of the interview.

Teachers' resistance to participating in the study was also caused by recent changes

introduced in schools by the local government. It was the period post-implementation of the called “Escola Plural”¹⁴.

Teachers were suspicious that I might be an agent of the local government, and wanted to avoid problems. Their fear seemed justified, based on my observations of a meeting between teachers and outside-school authorities, and from the comments I heard from school staff about the manner in which changes were imposed. That I was studying schools so soon after disruptive changes was beneficial to me, since teachers’ sensitivities and reactions to an external decision were clear. Also, the teachers’ anger encouraged criticism and they were willing to talk about their dissatisfaction at work, once I gained their trust. The changes introduced by the local government in the schools under its authority were made three months before my arrival.

It should be pointed out that the second school visited was not originally under consideration when I arrived to do the field work. It differed from the others in terms of the economic situation of its pupils (see section 4.8). While the other schools in this sample had pupils who lived in favelas (very low income) or pupils from families with low income (but did not live in favelas), the pupils in the second school were of middle-class background and experienced few problems in economic terms. This turned out to be an interesting choice, since in terms of gender, we could compare if the different schools shared similar situations.

The following points were considered when choosing the schools to be visited:

- Location: schools were chosen based on their location in the different quadrants of the city. This offered the possibility of comparing schools in different communities experiencing different local influences.
- Adequately staffed school: this guaranteed there would be a sufficient number of teachers for interviews; and if necessary return to them.
- Distance and access: Belo Horizonte is a very large city with a restricted public

¹⁴- More details on Chapter 2 and in Appendix 2.

transportation system; the accessibility of schools was necessary to allow interviews to take place.

4.6- The Achieved Sample

The sample of 67 interviews (67 tape-recorded interviews: 48 teachers, 4 school heads, 11 educational specialists - supervisors and counsellors - and 4 parents) allowed me to develop/alter the questions of the interviews during the process of interviewing. I was able to include new questions suggested by answers provided, to change the manner in which questions were structured, and also to delete questions which were not leading to helpful directions. This was one of the reasons for choosing a large sample. Thus, during field work a few questions were introduced based on teachers' responses, and others were eliminated from the original interview plan. In general, the bulk of questions remained unaltered.

A few parents were interviewed during my field work and during a second visit to Brazil the following year. There were logistical problems in meeting parents, since they were usually working during the day, and it was not safe to visit them at home at night. In total, only four interviews (tape-recorded) were carried out with parents. They were all interviewed at schools, and only one mother (who worked as a housekeeper) was interviewed in her place of work. But other contacts (not tape-recorded) with parents were done at the entrance of the schools, while these individuals were visiting the schools (waiting to meet one of the school managers of the school), and during my visit to the secretary of education. Some parents who had telephones were contacted that way and in some cases messages were sent via pupils. In most cases, parents did not reply. These interviews represent just a pilot study of the opinions of parents, and cannot be said to represent a complete study. Nevertheless, the answers provided are interesting and are reported briefly in chapter 7. Further research in this area will be helpful in defining a general picture of gender issues in primary schools in Brazil. It should be kept in mind that the participation of parents in school life is low in Brazil. This was pointed out by school heads, educational specialists, teachers and some of the parents interviewed.

4.7- Processing of the Material

As mentioned earlier, all the material was collected by the researcher. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed first in the native language of the interviewees by the researcher. During the transcription, some codes and observations were made. The transcription of some of the interviews started during the field work as a way to control and reanalyze the importance of questions asked and new questions that could have arisen from the data already collected.

After all the interviews were transcribed, the first step was to read each interview from the first to last page, loosely identifying code patterns. Then, groups of codes common to all interviews were defined. This was done as an attempt to visualize codes that were possibly not considered by the researcher previously or during the field work or even during the transcription of the tapes.

The second step was to identify emergent themes (code patterns) from each question. Each answer was summarized and then codified. For example, question one from interviewee one (Case 1) was read, summarized and codified. Then, codes from all interviews related to question one were compared and a group of codes was established. In this manner, the common answers and their frequency (the number of teachers who mentioned them) were defined providing more groups of codes which were considered or not by the interviewees. It is necessary to remember that interview questions investigated certain aspects interesting to the study, but they also allowed the interviewees to expand their views. In most of the interviews, the questions asked were not limited to questions previously determined, but new questions were added to understand better the interviewee's position.

The third step was to compare the codes from the first step and the codes from the second step to see whether any important aspect suggested by the interviewee was missing. At this stage, general codes (those mentioned with more frequency) were established according to the frequency with which they were mentioned in the interviewees. Issues such as race, which was not highly mentioned by interviewees, also gained visibility and importance in the

analysis.

The fourth stage was to relate the percentage of teachers who fitted in a particular code in a specific question.

In some cases, interviewees answered in advance questions that would be introduced later. In these cases, I anticipated the question following the interviewee's thoughts. In this way, the answer to a certain question would be located in different parts of the interview. I had to look at the codes from other related questions to get the answer from that specific question. However, I tried to maintain the order of questions, since the interview questions were organized to explore the same issue from different angles (at different times) to avoid embarrassment or suspicion from the interviewees about sensitive issues. I also wanted to compare and confirm their answers at different moments of the interview (stressed at the beginning, more relaxed at the end).

It is necessary to say that each question in the interview belonged to a group of questions which sought to explore a particular issue previously judged important to answer the research questions and to provide information about the individuals and context in which the research was developed. The aims of each group of questions are annexed in Appendix 1.

Once the general codes for each question were established, the issues raised were compared to what is found in the national and international literature. Finally, the quotations used in the thesis were transcribed into the English language with the help of a native English speaker.

4.8- Characterization of Schools

The table below (Table 4.1) contains information about the physical space, internal organization and number of staff in schools visited.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of Schools Visited

Features	school 1	school 2	school 3	school 4
shifts	3 in 1995 4 in 1996	2	3	3
n° pupils	510	940	1500	570
n° pupils	n.a /≥24	48	50	n.a./≥24
n°*	02	04	04	03
“specialists”				
n° class/r	08	16	≥ 20	09
Colegiado	yes (2 student/2 parents)	yes (no pupils/10 parents)	yes	yes (1 pupil)

*Number of educational specialists per school (morning, afternoon and evening shifts)

Other school facilities:

School 1: arts’ room; library; patio; canteen; teachers’ room; heads’ room; educational specialists’ room; office ; copy-room; toilets.

School 2: auditorium; library; patio; arts’ room; sports area; “special room” to serve disabled pupils; canteen; staff room; heads’ room; office; photocopy/copy room, toilets.

School 3: library; patio; canteen; sports area; teachers’ room; head’s room; educational specialists’ room; office; photocopy/copy room; toilets; dental surgery

School 4: library; patio; canteen; teachers’ room; head’s room; educational specialists’ room; office; toilets; dental surgery.

Other information^{1 5}:

School 1: primary school and evening school

School 2: primary school only

School 3: primary school and evening school

School 4: primary school and evening school

According to information provided by the schools, the majority of their pupils belonged to working class families¹⁶ whose parents were either earning low salaries or in some cases working on a temporary basis. The second school was located in the northeast of the city,

15- Information about school shifts (in educational system visited) is in chapter 2.

16- Here, working class background means unskilled workers, working as builders (autonomous or not), painters, rubbish collectors, cleaners, house-keepers, etc. These people usually have little or no formal education (complete or incomplete primary schooling). This observation was confirmed at the schools offices.

where pupils belonged to middle class families¹⁷. In the next few pages, a selection of photos of each school is given (Figures 4.1 to 4.5). The photos reveal the difficult conditions which teachers and pupils experience. Note the poor maintenance of classrooms and schools. Also note that in the Middle class school conditions are improved.

¹⁷- According to information provided by the school, these pupils' parents were of the middle class, most working in the public sector or as doctors, dentists, lawyers, nurses, physiotherapists, or teachers. These people usually held university degrees and had no serious economic difficulties.

Figure 4.1- Photos taken in school 1. Note the clientele of the school (mostly poor, darker skin pupils) and the poor conditions of maintenance of the canteen.



Figure 4.2- Photos showing the staff room and one of the classrooms in school 1. Note the very poor conditions of the ceiling (which fell down the year following the first visit), the conditions of the wall and the size of the windows. There was little circulation of air and, in the summer, the environment was suffocating.



Figure 4.3- Photo taken from one of the schools to demonstrate the lack of enthusiasm of staff. It was april and the “Happy Christmas” poster was still in the school wall. It seems that the school staff was too busy trying to understand the changes in the school organization that they forgot to change the posters affixed to the school’s walls. Inside classrooms, old yellowish posters were commonly found, showing the lack of interest and lack of energy among staff in all schools visited.



Figure 4.4- Photos showing pupils having computer class and girls dancing ballet at the middle-class school. Note the better maintenance of the school, the clearer skin of pupils and the different (costly) activities performed by pupils.



Figure 4.5- Photos showing parents playing sports in the middle-class school. Note the involvement of parents in different activities at the school. The lack of participation of parents in the other three schools was a common complaint.



Chapter 5

The Influence of Teachers' Background on their "Choice" of Profession and their Ways of Thinking about their Practice

5.1- Becoming a Teacher: Choice or Limitation?

The first part of this chapter will attempt to characterize teachers and the importance of their background in "choosing" their occupation and how their background has influenced their behaviour in their work today.

The behaviour of women teachers results not only from their immediate daily demands but also from their past history. Their history is characterized by gender relations in articulation with class, race, religion and age. Women teachers have not always corresponded to the expectations society holds about the ideal teacher. The history of women teachers is constituted by the social relations of power of their time, where they are not always powerful nor powerless (Louro, 1997). The past experience of teachers - in this case women teachers - is an important consideration in how they choose to practise their profession. The process of socialization of women (while under the influence of their family and/or in their contact with immediate social groups) merits consideration when attempting to understand their behaviour when teaching. Their values and world view will affect their view regarding their profession and their practice as educators. The second part of this chapter will look at teachers' views of teaching. What teachers believe is reflected in their behaviour in their classrooms (Hoyle, 1969). And these are not shaped "only by the schools where they work" (Lyon and Migniuolo, 1989).

Most teachers provided more than one reason for going into teaching. Social, economic factors and factors related to their being women were reasons frequently given by teachers for entering teacher training. However, these reasons were not always given in a straight

forward manner. Many interviewees usually began by describing their “natural or inherited” reasons for teaching. Some used the word “vocation”¹ (29%) to (initially) explain their ability to teach children and their pleasure in working with children (27%), giving these as the primary reasons for becoming teachers. During the interviews, however, other reasons for becoming a teacher became clearer. See cases below.

Case 3, p. 3/4: “... This (teaching) seems to be in the blood (laughs) because since I was a little girl I was used to seeing it (pause). My mother was a teacher ... my sister, my aunts. So, you get use to this and you learn to like it. I always liked it, but if I could go back some years I would not choose this profession because of its low status. Not only financially ... In the past, you went into teaching as if it was a priesthood ... It was a blessing. (And what was your case?) In my case ... my mother had a school. And since I was young I loved to help in the school ...”.

Case 15, p. 2-3: “It is really a vocation ... it is a blessing. I was born in the countryside ... the resources were few and there were few opportunities. I do not believe that I opted for teaching because I did not have another option. Maybe if I had insisted with my parents on leaving (leave the city to take another course)?! At that time, women did not use to study ... Teaching was the preparation for marriage, in my case. It was not a preparation for work. (What do you mean?) It was a title that a woman should have. (Why?) Because it helped her to have a general education! This was the case in my family ... I did not feel prepared to work, but I had that vocation to be a teacher! And I always loved what I did. I worked as a supply-teacher since I was fifteen years old”.

In Brazil, the vocational aspect of teaching is rooted in an ideology with its origins in the beginning of this century, in which the professional choice was related to natural abilities (Paixão, 1991; Demartini and Antunes, 1993; Assunção, 1994). “Vocation” seems to be “an easy” answer teachers like to give since these women have been used to seeing teaching as a vocation or a mission, not as a job or a career (see Assunção, 1996; Louro, 1997).

Beneath the discourse of “vocation” commonly found in teachers’s explanation for becoming teachers, the professional decision of women is conditioned by different aspects of their lives. Women’s professional choices are choices under constraints. Studies elsewhere

1- By “vocation” they mean that they enjoyed playing teachers when they were very young, giving imaginary classes, and, when older, helping neighbours (without pay).

(Kob, 1961; Halsey et al and Geer cited in Maclean, 1992)² suggest that teaching is usually not an individual's first professional choice. This appears to be the case for the teachers represented in this research. However, many had learned to accept and enjoy it.

Table 5.1 depicts reasons given by interviewees for entering the teaching profession and how frequently each reason was given. Most reasons given by these women for becoming teachers point to the influence of their families - original family (fathers, mothers) and/or the one they and their husbands established - in their professional lives. Indeed, personal choices are "crossed by the desire of others" and "our own desires" (Assunção, 1994, 313). People "make choices and develop strategies" but "for those belonging to particular groups ('class, sex, race, age, and other identifications and membership'), there are blockages and barriers making their passage more difficult" (Acker, 1989, p. 19). Thus, other reasons (see table 5.1) than women's family affairs were provided. Here, teachers' class, gender and race appeared as important factors of influence in the professional trajectory and behaviour of women in teaching.

2- Kob (1961) refereed to Britain and Germany and Geer (1966) to U.S undergraduates.

Table 5.1 - Reasons Given by Interviewees for Becoming a Teacher

Answers	Frequency
family pressures/influences	42%
vocation/vocation to deal with children	29%
like children	27%
geographical restrictions	19%
at the time, it was a work for women	19%
economic limitations	19%
reconcile family and professional life	08%
teaching useful after marriage/to educate her own child	06%
teaching offers job security	09%
social mobility (to pay for university degree)	06%

N=48 (teachers) / Because teachers gave more than one reason for becoming teachers, the total in table 5.1 adds up to more than 100%.

- Of these teachers - 42% confirmed that they liked teaching, even though their options were limited by the reasons given above.
- Only 15% said they had become teachers because they really liked it.

5.1.1- Women Teachers: Family Influence on their Professional Decision

The social construction of teaching appears to be an important consideration for women making a decision to enter the teaching profession. Generally, socialization is an important element in the “conditioning” of women (Novaes, 1984; Assunção, 1994; Niemeyer, 1985). This finding was echoed by data in my study.

“Encouragement” received from family members (mothers, fathers, mothers-in-law, boyfriends, husbands) was the most frequently given reason for applying for a teachers’ training course (42%). Relatives persuaded women to enter the teachers’ training course in various ways. The majority of women in this study entered the teachers’ training course at the age of fifteen, when girls remain economically very dependent on their families. Many of these women were forced by circumstances to accept the family plans. Most women teachers interviewed entered teaching - 20 to 30 years ago - when it was the most acceptable

occupational option for women in the labour market³. In some cases entering the teachers' training course was a condition imposed on girls by their families before they decided to embark on another career of their choice. Thus, for many girls, the sensible option was to obey their families' wishes in terms of their education and then later continue follow their own professional dreams. These women were dependent at that time and made decisions within the framework of their dependence. Others were forced or even "blackmailed" into taking the course by husbands or boyfriends⁴.

5.1.2- Family Resistance to their "Girls" Entering in Teaching

Despite the many women who became teachers based on the expectation and/or imposition of other people, there were cases in this study of women who had fought hard to enter teaching against opposition. Such behaviour does not mean that these women had ambitious career plans. Rather than that, these few teachers expressed satisfaction in having their own money, even if it was a limited amount and superfluous for the family.

Others said to be happy to teach because teaching kept them away from family and domestic problems, and from feeling obliged to work in businesses belonging to their husbands.

These teachers usually came from families with better economic conditions. Some families attempted to convince their daughters to enter a better paid job. Their families' rejection of teaching as an occupational option was mentioned by many interviewees. In one

3- See Figures "Teaching experience" and "The age of teachers intervieweed" in Appendix 3. As shown in chapter 3, in the whole system of Municipal schools in Belo Horizonte, 43.8% of teachers were between 25 and 35 years old and 39.7% between 36 and 45 years old (Rocha, 1997). In the present study, 35% of the teachers were between 25 and 35 years old and 46% between 35 and 45 years old. Only 19% were between 45 to 50 years of age. Fifty six (56%) were married teachers, 15% were divorced and 29% were single. Most teachers had children (70%), 27% of them with two or more children. The group investigated here gives the possibility of some generalizations about the municipal system of education in Belo Horizonte. Teachers in my sample seem to be representative of the system of education studied.

4- Other studies have made a different analyses. Safa (1992) recognizes the family as a factor that has limited but has also stimulated the participation of women in the labour market.

of the cases, the father said that “one fool in the family was enough”, referring to his wife, who was also a teacher. According to some teachers, the restrictions of teachers’ pay along with low status and a life of sacrifice were seen by some families as reasons against embarking on teaching as a career. Other teachers had families who did not mind that their daughter took teachers’ training, but they did not expect them to work at all or, at least, to work after getting married. Women appear not to be socialized to consider a career seriously, since their prime roles in society are perceived as belonging to the domestic sphere. The idea that women should not bother to work out of the home is a strong tradition in Brazil, especially for those women with a better economic background. The participation of Brazilian women in the labour market, specifically in the teaching profession, appears to be related to ideas that a woman’s place is at home, taking care of the family (Louro, 1989). As stated by Assunção (1994), in Brazil, both the education and the occupation of women remain based on traditional notions of the family.

Case 16, p. 2-3: “... Well, I think that I fell into it because when I did the Teachers’ training course in the 70s, it was a course that every girl had to take. So I took it. But I liked it a lot! ... It was the right thing for a girl to do. But not for the boys. The boy would do the “Científico”⁵ and then pursue a career”.

Women who resisted family opposition to enter teaching gave up later when faced with the possibility of starting their own family. For example, a teacher in her late forties described how her uncle even offered her a salary if she would not work as a teacher. Nevertheless, she decided to teach because she enjoyed it. She described how she later left teaching “without any regrets” (in her words) to get married. Today, after a divorce, she said she did not understand why she had “so easily” given up (“abandoned”) the job, months after having been transformed into “a fully fledged” teacher. She said that she had allowed her marriage to take first place at that time. After the divorce, she became depressed and felt impelled to do

5- “Científico” is a traditional term which refers to the regular secondary school course. The Teachers’ training course also taken at the secondary school has the same length of time as the “científico”; however, the latter is not considered a technical course like the Teachers’ training course.

something to “relax” on the advice of a therapy group she was attending. She initially returned to teaching as a way to overcome her personal problems, but the income provided by her ex-husband was inadequate and teaching became a necessity.

In conclusion, the data suggest that the control of women’s professional trajectories appears to be also determined by the two families in her life. These are her family of origin (parents and relatives), and the family she and her husband establish. This is not to say that family form would necessarily prevent women from entering the labour market, but it would certainly restrict it. Also important, the family remains the central focus in women teachers’ lives. Their professional lives seem carefully planned and adapted to avoid conflicts with parents and husbands or trauma to their children.

5.1.3 - Husbands and Future Husbands: Influence over the Professional Choice and Career of Women Teachers

Of the 48 teachers interviewed, 34 (71%) were married. The professional ambitions of many of these women appear to be frustrated by their partners. But it is also true that a few teachers described their husbands as very supportive of their career as teachers and involved with their wives’ working lives. However, husbands’ support for their wives to enter teaching (or the teachers’ training course) was moved by the idea that “if their wives like children then teaching was the appropriate job option”. Some women said that because they had no idea of what to do as an occupation, their relatives persuaded them to enter teaching mainly because it was a part-time job which would not demand too much involvement from them (This issue will be discussed further in topic 5.2).

Among other pressures described on women teachers, there are cases of boyfriends establishing limits for their girlfriends’ education as a pre-condition to getting married, or husbands complaining about their wives abandoning domestic work, children and husband’s care to take a university degree. The teachers’ training course appears to be the maximum education these men could bear their women to take. Insecurity and fear of their husbands’

authority if not aggression act alongside economic dependency and probably anxiety to preserve the “well being of the family”. These women seem to fear being abandoned or becoming unattractive to their men. In a way, this is a fear of failing to correspond to the traditional position women have taken to satisfy male desires and fantasies.

For others, their only option to continue studying was the teachers’ training course, since their husbands would not allow them to work with men, and teaching was considered a safe profession, with women working in “women only” spaces. This identification of school as a “safe place” for women has also been noted in other Brazilian studies (Niemeyer, 1985; Paixão, 1991). As an example, one teacher gave a very emotional report of her husband’s jealousy, which had prohibited her from completing her studies in psychology, a “secret” desire which she still harboured. She understood her husband’s fear was that he would have felt inferior to her (due to his low level of schooling). As noted here, teachers’ husbands often find it threatening when their wives are better educated than they are.

Table 5.2 indicates the level of education achieved by teachers and their husbands in the study. It shows that women teachers are educated to a higher level than their husbands.

Table 5.2: Level of Education of Married Teachers Compared to that of their Husbands

Level of education	Percentage	
	Teachers (n= 34)*	Husbands (n= 30)
Primary schooling	-	7%
All elementary schooling	-	17%
Secondary schooling	29%	30%
University degree	71%	47%

Of the 48 teachers, there were 34 married teachers (27 still married and 7 divorced)⁶. Four did not give information about their husbands' level of education.

* Teachers must have secondary schooling to be teaching in the system of education visited. Of those with university degree, 47% had completed their studies and 24% were still taking a degree.

Despite teachers' level of education being higher than their husbands (Table 5.2) and despite their income being important in their families (see figure at the end of this subheading), they still consider men (husbands or fathers) as the ones who guide the family. Teachers still hold traditional values about the family head. In the section on personal information, a question about the income of the head of the family was included; this question was asked on purpose to verify if these women teachers still recognize their husbands as the head of the family. Most teachers when inquired gave their husbands' income even when their husbands' income was smaller than theirs. As Safa (1992) indicated, even when men are not the main "providers", they still hold the status of head of the family. Only two teachers questioned the term "head of the family", saying that there was no such thing in their families and that their salaries (their husbands and their own) were computed together with no discrimination in the home expenses. Some teachers even made fun of their own income. A few teachers had no idea of how much their husbands earn, explaining that they probably made a lot since their home

⁶. In the entire municipal school system of Belo Horizonte, the level of education of the husbands of primary school teachers was as follows:

- 60% had only primary schooling;
- most of them had completed elementary schooling;
- almost 50% of them had attended technical courses
- 25% had university degrees.

expenses were high and their salary as teachers was not required at home. Such information was interesting for the research since it enabled us to see the image or values held by these women about their position in the family, and also the importance of their salary in the family income. In some cases, women appear to be trying to belong to a social group where women are still under the “protection” of men, even if the men do not have economic sovereignty over the family any longer. To be unaware of the family’s living costs appears to be as a charming condition, distinguishing them from the “poor” women that need to worry about how to earn money. This shift within the family - in which women have to work out for their families’ survival - might cause too much suffering for a woman who seeks to be seen as “feminine”⁷, which goes against the whole socialization process women receive within the family and in society.

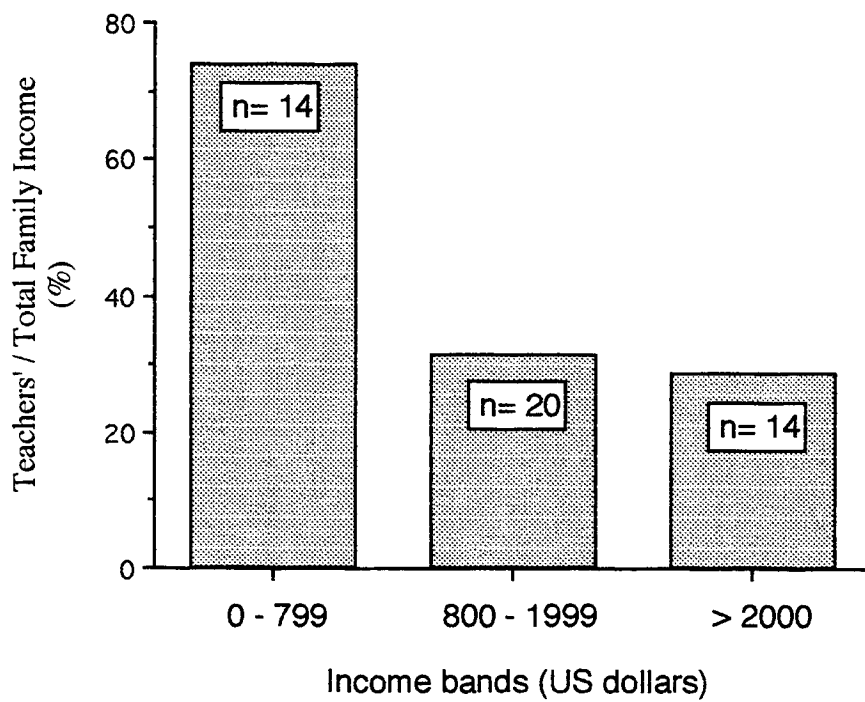
Still, as stated by Anyon (1990), this process of socialization does not completely explain women’s behaviour. Women experience a process of “accommodation” and “resistance” to the stereotypes about women. According to Anyon, women, when corresponding to an ideology of femininity, are - individually - trying to protect themselves in the patriarchal/social structure.

In Brazil, as noticed in previous studies, schools seem to represent “safe places” for women, in a sense that their “female” features are maintained (Niemeyer, 1989; Paixão, 1991). As Assunção (1996) indicates, schools are considered “sexless” spaces, and the family is preserved (Niemeyer, 1989). Some authors have interpreted it as a fear that once women break away from traditional social values, the family structure will be under threat (Niemeyer, 1989), as will the male-privileged position in society. For this author, it is necessary for women teachers to break away from male values and redefine their professional behaviour in primary schools. Teachers’ roles must be dissociated from maternal roles for teachers to develop a role for themselves. Similarly, the conception of primary school as an extension of home must be denied (Niemeyer, 1989). There must be a break away from the “similitude between the

7- Femininity is very commonly mistaken for dependency, fragility and incapacity for standing alone.

activity of teaching and the activity of domesticity” (Paixão, 1991).

The figure below shows the contribution of teachers’ income to the total income of the family (income of the families is given in US dollars per month). Note that the contribution of teachers to their family income is very significant (> 70%) in families with incomes of less than US\$800.00 per month.



5.1.4- Geographical and Economic Restrictions

For 19% of teachers, geography limited their choices in terms of attending a secondary school. When these individuals were asked why they did not move to another city to take a course they would have preferred, two main reasons were given, which are deeply influenced by their gender.

First, the teachers' training course was the only course offered for girls where they lived. When other technical courses were offered, they were often dominated by boys. These women teachers said that technical courses were considered "male" courses and teaching was the only course they could have entered available to girls. While the education system in Brazil does not determine which sex should take a given course, the teachers' training course is mainly occupied by female pupils. In a sense, this dominance of girls may dissuade boys from entering what they perceive as a "sissy course", much as the girls did not consider entering the "male" courses. This notion was considered even by relatively young teachers in their late 20s and early 30s.

A few older teachers affirmed that families considered it neither safe nor proper to send their daughters away (to study in other cities) at such a crucial point in their development. They said that at the time (and age) they entered teaching, families did not send their girls to study in other cities because of the "dangers that the situation could offer to a girl". Paixão (1991) shows how women teachers in Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s experienced similar difficulties. This discussion underlines that values related to "protecting or shielding" women persist in families. It reveals the traditional control over women's sexuality: virginity. In her study, Assunção (1996) found that teaching was inevitable for some women because of the "objective" (material) condition of the families, meaning these conditions were assimilated by the teachers' families and became a desire. Assunção (1996), referring to Bourdieu, says that "objective conditions of a determined social segment have guided the choices and attitudes in schooling and profession". She argues that the objective conditions are perceived differently by individuals. Thus, when women explain their entry in teaching, they may provide reasons

where objective conditions are ignored. However, for Assunção, the subjective reasons must also be considered since they may influence choice.

The second and most common reason (and one most often given by the youngest teachers) was that their families did not have the economic resources necessary to send them to another city. Thus, they had to take the only opportunity of education in their cities: the teachers' training course. Yet, they could have actually taken the regular secondary school course, also available in their cities, but their decisions were defined by the fact that teaching was the only "girl's course" they could have taken. In addition, becoming a teacher was a course which allowed faster entry into the labour market. If these girls were from families which had economic difficulties, then, their fast entry into the labour market was important for the family income. It could also mean that once working, they could pay for their first career option.

Thus, some teachers enrolled in the teachers' training course because it was the best education their families could afford for them. Their career options were limited by the economic restrictions of their families. This is especially true of black teachers. It was noticed here that the darker the skin of teachers, the greater were the difficulties for them to continue their studies. This fact is powerfully evoked in the interviews of two black teachers:

Case 1, p. 1: "... I come from a family with no possessions ... Then, the only option I had in terms of study was the teachers' training course, you know? I went to a state school ...".

Case 5, p. 1: "... I come from a modest family (limited economic resources). And what I could do as a course was that, do you understand? I did not have the opportunity to go beyond this. But I feel fulfilled. I mean, now, we need more and more (to study). But I think that I do not have the courage to go to a university. I haven't got the patience ... (laughs)... I think that to study more prepares you more ... For example, I do not stop, I read and I study. I only do not have economic means (do not have money to pay for courses or for a university degree) ... And I do not have the courage to go to the university at this time (of life). But I continue to improve myself".

Interestingly, some of those who mentioned the economic difficulties of their families

usually referred to the size of their families as a limitation on their parents being able to finance their education in other cities. It will be important to see on whom families spend more of their resources educate - whether families prioritize the education of boys or girls⁸.

Beneath the explanation of geographical limitations, there are gender aspects acting on defining the education and, thus, professional lives of these women. Gender, class and race are among the strong determinants of women's professional trajectories, especially for teachers from small towns.

5.1.5- Reconciling Family and Professional Life

Eight percent (8%) of the interviewed teachers had another job prior to changing to teaching or while in teaching. Most teachers in this study (83%) worked solely as primary school teachers. Of these, half (48%) worked only one shift; 33% worked two shifts and 02% worked three shifts in schools. Some teachers (17%) had jobs other than teaching and said this additional income was necessary to supplement the family income. They worked (mainly autonomous work) as sales assistants (clothes, jewellery), as psychologists, as managers of their own business (canteen), as journalists, as a theatre director, one as a dancer, as a painter /seamstress. A few helped their husbands in their own business - thus saving the expense of hiring an employee. Others taught English or Portuguese at the secondary level.

Despite making more money in these other professions, many decided to leave the other job and work as teachers once the profession helped them combine professional and domestic duties. However, family responsibilities do not appear to be sufficient to explain the low self-commitment and lack of interest of women teachers in promotion (see Acker, 1987). In the present study, teachers who left other jobs to stay in teaching did so for circumstantial reasons, such as the fact that other jobs usually required more hours of work and more

⁸- Chapter 3 shows, in Brazil, educational gap between boys and girls is not large.

involvement or because of unpleasant experiences (stress, pressures) at work. But there was also the economic aspect. Teaching offers to these women job security that was important to them once they had children to support. Teaching was said (by 9%) to offer security in terms of employment, since once teachers pass the entrance examination, they cannot be dismissed.

Some teachers could never attain professional aspirations because early marriage and the birth of children precluded further training. These teachers' family affairs, specially child care - or their husbands' job - have an impact on their staying in teaching, since many women teachers interrupt their work while their children are growing up and return to it later. Considering that in Brazil the chances of promotion are remote, teaching seems an ideal job for married women. They suffer no major loss in their career since the return to work is guaranteed. As stated by Smith (cited in Abbot and Sapsford, 1987), the exploitation of women in domestic life, which also restricts their participation in the labour market, has helped men achieve their professional dreams. In this manner, the successful career of a man is linked with the sacrifice of a woman who solves the domestic problems. Women are expected and educated to give their best to serve men in the name of love and competence. As suggested in empirical studies in England (Abbott and Sapsford, 1987), some married women "tend to 'be employed' rather than 'to have careers'" giving, to their husbands the possibility of following their own careers. Grant (1989) also discusses the effect of "home-family" on the career of (English) women in teaching. Women are not allowed to fully engage in their "career progress" and have to postpone their careers because of child-care responsibilities. A similar situation was found in the present study and in a survey by Rocha (1997) in primary municipal schools in Belo Horizonte.

In the present study, worries about family life were common to all married or single women with children, but less so for those women with better economic conditions. The stress of domestic and child-care roles were less for those women who could afford to pay someone to do such tasks while they worked out of the home. Most of these women counted on their husbands' higher salary to cover the family expenses and enable them to work in such a low

paid profession. Even when having little or no domestic responsibilities, teachers did not invest more in their teaching careers.

Few teachers were able to express pleasure in continuing as teachers. However, they often referred to a dilemma they experienced in enjoying teaching so much as to forget about their families and personal life. Ideas of self-sacrifice and dedication were strongly emphasized here by these teachers. This desire to be in a profession was often expressed alongside feelings of having failed at home, especially as mothers. See an example below:

Case 22, p. 3: “At times, when my children were young, I thought: ‘I am an awful mother!’ This is because at times I left my son at home with a temperature, you know, with bronchitis and a sore-throat. And I came to school and I completely forgot about it! And then at the end of the school shift I would think: ‘I forgot to call home!’ ...”.

5.1.6- Social Mobility

Paixão’s study (1991) found that during the first decades of the 20th century in Brazil, for some families, teaching was a way of guaranteeing their daughters’ future and of achieving social mobility. It is interesting to verify just how active these beliefs and values remain today. If teaching was the first inroad for Brazilian women into the labour market in the first decades of this century (Hypólito, 1994), the situation appears to be no different today. This study illustrates that the teachers’ training course (or to be a teacher) is still used by part of the female population to meet their immediate needs for a job, and as mentioned earlier here as a strategy for job security. In a sense, this is an extremely rational choice that these women make.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, for some of those teachers interviewed, teaching was not their first choice of career, but teaching allowed them to continue studies at the university level or even to “escape” to an urban area to find a better job (as well as from their families’ control). Thus, for some, teaching was considered a temporary job, a way to achieve other ends.

The teachers' training course was used as a fast method of gaining qualifications in order to enter the labour market, and thus help some of these women to pursue their dreams in other directions. Yet the teachers' training course seems to work more as a professional "trap" than a step to a preferred career. Some teachers expressed frustration at not being prepared for entrance in competitive university courses and at their failure to change professions. Completing teacher training coincides with women being unable to enter other occupations. Thus, even teachers who enter teaching as a means of training for other professions have their ambitions frustrated. Apparently, these women's strategy of using the teaching course as a means to a desired profession may actually restrict their access to university courses or into the labour market in other areas. As for women in North America and England (eg.: Abbott and Sapsford, 1987), in Brazil (eg.: Bruschini, 1987) education received by women counts positively as another factor defining their position in the labour market. However, the entrance of women into technical secondary courses, such as the teachers' training course, appears to contribute to women's disadvantaged condition to compete for a job or for a vacancy in competitive degrees at a university. It is not only which level of education women achieve that should be counted, but also the courses in which they are segregated.

On the other hand, although these courses can be damaging to a woman's professional life, they do help many women to reach their primary objective even if in a limited sense. Access to certain of the so-called "soft" courses in some universities, such as psychology, pedagogy and literature is still possible with this educational background. But entrance into elite university courses (such as medicine or law) with high standards requires good educational grounding, usually acquired at private schools and not available to all.

And in the case of women from poor economic backgrounds, especially black women, teaching implies real social ascension. As noticed by Rocha (1997), black women are even more segregated in activities with low pay and status in Brazil, and teaching represents social ascension for them (Rocha, 1997).

The level of teachers' education compared to that of their parents indicates a change for higher levels of education. See table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Level of Education of Teachers Compared to that of their Families

Level of Educ.	Teachers* (n =48)	Fathers (n =41)	Mothers (n= 43)
Lower than primary schooling	none	12%	18%
Primary schooling	none	37%	40%
Elementary schooling	none	17%	12%
Secondary schooling	25%	19%	23%
University degree	75%	15%	7%

Four teachers did not give an answer regarding their parents' education.

*- Teachers must have secondary schooling to be teaching at the system of education visited. Of those with university degrees, 54% had completed their studies and 21% were still taking a degree.

Mothers and fathers of teachers have mostly a low level of education, which is reflected in the position they occupy in the labour market (Table 5.4). Moreover, the professional occupations of teachers' parents (mostly fathers) suggest they are almost equally distributed between working (manual and technical jobs) and middle occupational classes.

Table 5.4- Occupational Position of Teachers' Parents⁹

Occupation	Mothers (n= 45)	Fathers (n= 42)
"Housewife"	71%	-
unskilled manual labour	7%	29%
Manual labour with technical knowledge	15%	24%
Professionals with a University degree	7%	14%
Own business, farmers, politicians*	-	33%

*- Mostly without professional qualification or study.

International (Abbott and Sapsford, 1987) and Brazilian studies (Bruschini, 1996) indicate a relation between women's participation in the labour market and their parents' level of education and professional status. As noted in chapter 3, in Brazil, the level of education of one's parents is reflected in his/her position in the labour market. But the teachers' training course has given teachers the possibility of continuing their education and surpassing their parents' level of education (Table 5.3) with, consequently, a higher position in society compared to their parents. The greater number of teachers with a university degree compared to their parents is specific to the system of education under study (see also Rocha, 1997), which could be partially explained by teachers' attempt to increase their salary gains - as mentioned previously, a university degree would significantly increase their salaries. The latter incentive represents an example of macro determinants influencing the level of education of women teachers.

5.2- Idealisation of Teachers' Roles by Women Teachers Themselves

The symbolic dimension in women's option for an occupation can not be dismissed.

⁹- The classification given in this table was modified from the Social Grade Scheme Classification described by Abbot and Sapsford (1987). The modifications reflect specificities of Brazilian society.

People are also moved in their lives by representations (see Assunção, 1996). Studies have explored how teaching can seduce women. Miller (1996) described the idealisation of teachers in British society as “loving mothers”, rather than showing concern with “creating the social conditions that make” teaching and learning “possible”. According to this author, relating the teacher to the good mother led to an ideal of teaching as natural, as not requiring training; teaching should not be expected to be a career and was not “real work”. In a way, teaching gave women an excuse to enter the labour market without their jobs being considered “inappropriate”. Teaching also matched qualities that women were considered naturally “good at”, requiring little qualification and their “natural” ability to deal with children¹⁰. Thus, in this sense, lack of identification with any profession might have led women to enter teaching, a task considered to be a “mother’s role” or an extension of this role. The paucity of explanations for women becoming teachers, the reliance on explanations centred on “likeness” or “vocation” can be explained by Miller’s point of view. The way women are socialized appears not to give them an opportunity of growing up with different ambitions for a career path. Consequently, women seem unable to identify themselves with certain jobs associated with societal stereotypes and so choose options closely linked to their perceived “natural qualities”. See the example below:

Case 26, p. 2: “Look, I always wanted to be a teacher, but I did not want to be a primary school teacher. I wanted to be a maths teacher ... I wanted to continue my education ... But, I did not feel that I was a leader. At that time, I thought that to work in other areas I had to have more of a spirit of leadership. Then I went to (primary) teaching”.

¹⁰. Here, “natural ability” differs from vocation, since to have a vocation one has to be good at something, has to master some skills to do a task efficiently.

5.2.1- Women Teachers' Beliefs: The View of Teaching as a "Natural" Female Occupation

The most important aspect of this group of teachers was the association they made between the roles of primary school teachers and the roles usually (traditionally) taken by women in society (Table 5.5). Many teachers frequently referred to themselves as educators but in a very extensive way, as if they had to provide pupils' whole education, for life.

Table 5.5: Teachers' Identification of the Main Roles of Primary School Teachers

	Percentage of teachers
* to provide formal education	21%
* to provide emotional support	35%
* to teach habits	33%
* to complement family education	29%
* to "educate"	29%
* to educate in order to live in society	25%
* to educate for life	23%
* to provide more than formal education	21%
* "to teach everything"	17%
* "to re-educate pupils since their families failed to do so"	06%
* to teach moral values	04%

N=48

"Feminine features" were often regarded as necessary "abilities" for the primary teaching profession.

Case 25, p. 7: "(Question about men in primary teaching) Ah, I don't think so. Specially in primary school ... men are not always accepted. (pause) The way they are educated. They are more objective, more intolerant ... And to teach in primary school lots of dedication is necessary. You have to be really available, because the child needs you all the time ... And from my own experience, men seem not to be available for that ...".

Moreover, as suggested in Table 5.6, 23% of the interviewees saw women more able than men to teach in primary school, compared to the 77% who did not.

Table 5.6: Which Sex Teachers Judge Better Able to Teach in Primary School

	Percentage of teachers
Men	-
Women	23%
Both	77%

N=48

Of the group which did accept men and women, 60% of teachers said they accepted men in primary teaching as long as they displayed characteristics similar to women teachers. They needed to be like mothers (like women) - patient, loving, caring; and to like children.

Case 5, p. 7/8: "Ah, I think that we are a bit like mothers, don't you think? There are many men that have this side too ... I think that this is very important in primary school. (Why?) Because they (pupils) are young! They need us ... Here, for example, sometimes they do not receive any caring ... at home. ... For example, when I taught physical education, I used to give relaxation. ... Then I used to touch them ... And one of them said: 'My mother never did that!' Then, I think that ... teachers must have this (maternal side)".

Case 23, p. 5/6: "... there are men that are patient, that like what they do (teach children) and that have beautiful hand-writing (!) better than mine! (laugh)".

Of the 48 teachers interviewed, 87% saw women teachers as different from men. Women teachers were seen variously as more maternal (33%), more patient (19%), more sensitive (10%), and as having a unique "feminine" ability to deal with pupils (48%).

Case 48, p. 7/8: "I think that they (men) do not have that thing that we (women) bring inside us - the maternity ... the wish to get married, to have children. Thus, I

think that men do not have what we (women teachers) transmit to the pupils ... I think that teaching is essentially feminine”.

When asked about their reactions if their daughter or son decided to become teachers, the teachers interviewed here praised feminine features as best in teaching. Most teachers rejected the idea of having their sons in teaching.

5.2.2- Men in Primary Teaching: Resistance from Women Teachers

Another account of teachers’ sex stereotyping was noted when they described male colleagues in teaching. Their accounts rarely included terms of encouragement. Men were perceived by the teachers interviewed as nervous, rude, and unable to deal with children. See the example below:

Case 39, p. 7/8: “I have seen men who took the teachers’ training course. At the beginning I found it very strange because a teacher should be ready to dedicate body and soul to teaching! I cut out part of my life to dedicate more to teaching! ...I think that a man, does not have that ‘proximity’ that women have! ... He (men) is someone more insensitive (brute) ... like a stone”.

Case 21, p. 6/7: “I think that the male figure (inside school) would be interesting ... However, it is said that women are more docile ... that is, more patient. I agree with that”.

A number of teachers (29%) saw the presence of men inside primary schools as necessary for providing a male role model for male pupils.

Case 27, p. 6: “... But, I think that it is necessary to have men inside the classroom, at least for some hours ... the girl usually talks more with us, and the boy ... depending on the subject, he ... does not talk with us”.

When male teachers were present or accepted in primary school, women teachers generally associated them with positions in command or in physical education. The

interviewees discriminated and sex-stereotyped activities of male and female teachers in primary school. They also described experiences with their male colleagues, citing occasions such as parties, where when a man started to talk, everybody paid attention.

Case 27, p. 6: "I think that there are areas, specially physical education, where the pupil (male) should have a male teacher. Girls with a woman teacher and boys with a male teacher ... My children have always had male teachers. They had a very good experience ... Not in primary school."

Case 46, p. 8/9: "... I think that it is funny when I see a man teaching young children. Unless when it (when teaching ...) is swimming, in physical education or in football. Then I find it normal".

Case 4, p. 10: (Description of the difficulties of three male teachers in the other school where this teacher worked in another shift). "They were not able to work inside a classroom! ... They could not manage the pupils. ... But we (teachers) noticed that ... during school parties, for example, when the male teacher was the life of the party ... He had more facility than us (women teachers) ... But we could see that in some activities, men were more effective. Then in those days, when a man took the command of the party, it was beautiful. Everybody ... paid more attention. ... But inside the classroom, I really do not know what happens when it is in primary school". (According to these teachers one of these three male teachers was allocated to teach physical education, then he was successful) .

Sixty-five percent (65%) of teachers affirmed that schools would probably be different with male teachers, because this would result in the schools and teacher's work being more organized. In these statements, 35% of teachers recognized that men are different from women in terms of behaviour, relation, and attitudes. Teachers also imagined improvements in teachers' conditions if men decided to enter primary teaching. They anticipated changes in salary (13%), relations inside school (10%), conditions of work (8%) and, teachers' status (16%). Some teachers (4%) were able to criticize discrimination against women by proposing that teachers would have their conditions of work improved if men entered the profession. They thought that this would be the case since men are the ones who "make the law", and so men would make the profession better for themselves, and this would indirectly benefit women.

Although not questioned, 15% of teachers explained the absence of men in teaching by

the unattractive salary. They argued that “men were the head of the family” and required a higher wage.

Case 21, p. 6/7: “I think that it is necessary to change the salary. If the salary was satisfactory (!) then we would have more male participation ... They (society) always think that women can earn less. Men do not agree to earn less because they are usually the head of the family”.

Case 32, p. 18/19: “... Men must have higher salaries than women! The money women make is to buy little things! Well, today, things are changing a lot! ... We help a lot ...”.

According to the interviewees, there is discrimination against women inasmuch as society accepts that women are paid less (17%) and men get the best jobs (31%). They also saw the absence of men inside primary schools as a result of social stereotypes, which presume teaching is a feminine profession (49%).

Case 28, p. 7: “(silence) Teaching is seen as an appropriate (job) for women. This idea comes from ages ago when men were considered superior. Then, the jobs, the heavy ones, those with high status belonged to men”.

Studies have already explored such ideas and connected them to homophobia to homosexuality (Acker, 1987; Rich, 1980; Witz and Savage, 1992). Their description about “compulsory heterosexuality” in organizations might help to understand why women teachers have their “femininity” emphasized inside their work. It might also help to understand the discrimination of teachers and school community towards male teachers. As Blackmore (1993) stated, “characteristics of the father” in male teachers and the “femininity” of women teachers were transported to the public sphere. She calls it the “cult of domesticity”, in which caring and nurturing, irrationality and emotion are associated with women. Sheppard (cited in Witz and Savage, 1992) has also noted the ways women are required to be “feminine” without being “sexy” in organizations. And schools as public sphere do not seem to escape from this. See case

below:

Case 15, p. 10: "... Primary school seems to fit a woman best. (What do you mean?) ... I think that she (woman) deals better with problems in this situation - the control of children. I do not think that women do better in terms of content. But in terms of controlling children, men get lost because of their position in the family (!) in which the mother controls these things. The father deals with the finance ...".

Those teachers who experienced the presence of a male colleague usually referred to their sexuality and a few said that it would create problems among parents who might think that the male teachers were gay and could be a risk to the pupils. Indeed, problems related to the sexuality of male teachers were specially identified in the interviews with teachers and school managers in two of the schools visited.

Case 17, p. 9/10 (Sch. 2): "We had a male teacher here in this school. But (laugh). Well, to say the truth (laugh) he wasn't very macho! (laugh) ... The way he was all effeminate, too delicate! ... But he was such a nice person with the boys (pupils)! The boys (pupils) loved him! ... Then, there were pressures, a movement to remove him (name of the teacher) because he had 'those manners' and they (parents) feared that the boys would try to imitate him".

Case 22, p. 9 (Sch. 2): "We had a male teacher here, but he was gay! I think he was (laugh). (Why?) Ah, he was completely (!) effeminate ... Even his own pupils (used the masculine noun) used to make comments! At the beginning, parents did not find it good! But he was very interesting! ... At the beginning, people found him a bit strange. A male teacher?! ... The boys (pupils) also said that he was gay. The parents came to school to complained about him and everything".

Case 29, p. 7 (Sch. 3): (In the school of her children). "He was discriminated against. The mothers did not accept him. ... (Why?) (They use to say) "My son?! I do not want him to study with that man! I am not sure if he is gay! Something might happen. He might transmit an illness to him (son)!".

The teacher from the example above (Case 29) decided to verify. At the time she was taking a university degree, which required the observation of classes. She decided to observe the teacher (in a state school) in question for several days inside his classroom. According to her, he was an excellent teacher. In a way, she was acting as a mother disguised as a training

school manager when she entered his classroom to verify his behaviour.

The suspicion men raised when teaching young children is very interesting. It may represent the fear women teachers (and parents) have of men being capable of inflicting injury, especially sexual injury, to young children. This fear goes along with the idea that women have their sexuality denied and are, therefore not capable of committing such sexual offenses. Here, the figure of the woman teacher is associated with the image of the “Virgin Mary” - a caring mother - which is still alive in Brazilian culture. Although these issues do necessitate further investigation, especially in Brasil, it is not the intention of this thesis to discuss them any further.

5.2.3- Teachers’ Emphasis on Practical Aspects of Teaching

Many teachers (40%) were emphatic about the vast difference between what they learned in training and what they encountered when they entered schools. They defined this in terms of the inapplicability of the “theory” to their “practice”. Some teachers described their shame in front of their older colleagues as novices. They often referred to practical difficulties such as how to print and reproduce texts for the class¹¹. Fifteen percent (15%) of teachers indicated the need for more practical training in the teachers’ training course. The emphasis of teachers on technical aspects may be a value acquired in the teachers’ training, since the course is still centred on the practical and methodological aspects of teaching.

Teachers in this study frequently mentioned their first coming to school as traumatic and how they overcame the difficulties by learning from colleagues or in daily practice. The theoretical background acquired in their training was criticized by many teachers as inappropriate and inapplicable to the real school. Giving the fact that teachers’ training courses fail to prepare teachers to deal adequately with the reality of poor schools in Brazil (Louro,

¹¹- In most of schools, the method of printing the texts and exercises for students’ use is archaic. In this case, the teacher was referring to a special paper where teachers write or type the document and then they put it in a copier (using alcohol) to print each individual text.

1986; Lima, 1987), they must base their decisions on something else. Women teachers appear to make their decisions from intuition rather than making pedagogical decisions. As some teachers said, they solved pupils' problems by using their background knowledge as mothers.

Here, practical knowledge is not necessarily seen as "opposite or enemy" to theory. Rather, practice can be a source of "valid theory" (Hargraves and Goodson, 1996, p. 11). Some studies show that practical knowledge can be educationally beneficial. Schön (1996) develops the notion of "reflective practice" to develop "skilled and thoughtful judgment in professions like teaching"; however "... not all practical knowledge is educationally beneficial or socially worthwhile ... whether practical knowledge can provide a proper foundation for it depends on what that knowledge is, in what kinds of contexts it has been acquired, the purposes to which it is put, and the extent to which teachers review, renew and reflect on it".

These authors also suggest that "practical knowledge" can become "parochial knowledge", where teachers run the risk of losing their participation in curriculum developments, reducing their work to the level of "pedagogical skills and technical competence" (Hargraves and Goodson, 1996, p. 12-13).

The fact that teachers base their professional practice at the experimental level or on sharing experience with colleagues is not at all a bad thing. However, learning from colleagues may also lead to perpetuation of mistakes or the acquisition of attitudes not ideal for the work of teachers. It is important to make teachers active agents, if not researchers, involved in the improvement of teaching. Teachers' rejection of more sophisticated ways of developing their work (negligence of theories) can compromise the product of their work, reducing teaching to a superficial activity. Teaching practice has to be reflexive in order to develop new ways of improving quality in teaching. In the case of poor schools, there is the danger that reliance on the immediate demands, and negligence of previous analysis in education, may lead teachers to be mere executors, with no idea of the process of teaching, and may distort their roles in these communities. In this manner, teachers might lose their identity as professionals and have their roles increased by the demands of the school environment, which in the case of a woman teacher can be full of gendered expectations.

5.3- “Mothering the Community”: Women’s Philanthropic Role

Miller (1996) points to an aspect of English women in teaching which is also central to the Brazilian reality. She describes nineteenth century mothers as never having time to spend with their own children. Thus, teachers played a role of the “idealised mother” and at the same time, the “compensatory mother” - “a mother designed to make up for the pretty serious shortcoming of most real mothers” (Miller, 1996, p. 102). The association of teaching with “changes taking place in the family and in child-rearing generally” is pointed to as an element of attraction which draws women towards teaching (Steedman cited in Miller, 1996). In the case of poor women in Brazil, who have too many children and are unable to cope with them all, Miller’s analysis may be useful. It is especially important when considering the position of women teachers in schools where pupils are from a poor socio-economic background and have working mothers. As noted in chapter 3, in Brazil, when children reach school age (around 7 years of age), schools are the places where women (working mothers) leave their children to be looked after (Rocha, 1997).

The economic and social problems experienced by pupils inspire women teachers to think in terms of a holistic approach to teaching. Seventy-one percent (71%) of teachers point to poverty as a factor motivating them to expand their roles in order to achieve teaching success. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the teachers interviewed said they were engaged in meeting pupils’ economic and social needs as well as coping with their emotional problems. Despite this, only 60% of teachers recognized that they perform roles unrelated to the school life of their pupils. Examples of this are provided.

Case 18, p. 4: “... in the other school I even taught basic education that pupils should learn in their homes... I mean ‘birth education’ ... Many times you have to get involved in it too ... And suddenly you get involved in other issues of pupils’ lives. These (issues) are not included in formal schooling, but suddenly becomes so. You start to extrapolate so much. When you notice, you are involved beyond what you should ... Then (I ask) ... Is it my role?”

Case 17, p. 3/4: "... The school is just a starting point. It is where work begins and suddenly you go much further than where you expected to go".

Case 28, p. 2/3: "We called the mother, and she sent him to the doctor who did not charge anything. Then, I thought: 'This is not something for us to do!'".

The expansion of the roles of these teachers towards the "domestic" seems to vary, based on the level of poverty in schools. Of the four schools visited, only teachers in the school with pupils from a higher social-economic class said they did not feel impelled to involve themselves in matters other than teaching. Their worries and complaints were focused on schooling aspects and also on the internal politics of the school. Like teachers from the three poorer schools, they complained about the lack of personal control over their ideas about work inside school. However, ambivalence was found among teachers in poor schools about their involvement in pupils' personal problems. Some asked themselves what their roles were inside school. Worries of these women teachers and school managers towards pupils seem natural, but they gain more strength in a certain working context (poor communities) which give them space (or demand them) to "mother the community".

In three of the schools under study, poverty was certainly a problem which affected the routine of teachers and schools. These teachers were very much involved in roles outside teaching and beyond the realm of those related to school (see Table 5.7). They were involved in counselling parents and pupils in personal problems, such as divorce, in visiting students to talk, or even in threatening parents about pupils' maltreatment at home. They sometimes provided food, clothes and other material to pupils and their families, financed medical and dental services, gave out medicine, and even collected charity from shops or local businesses to give to pupils.

Table 5.7: Teachers Involvement with Students Outside School

	Percentage (n=48)
Gave school material	52%
Gave counselling	42%
Visited students' family	31%
Took students to their home to teach habits	13%
Gave food	13%
Gave money	08%

A common observation of these teachers, whether located in the three poor or in the one middle-class schools, was the psychological character of their worries about pupils. But as noted earlier, in the poor schools, teachers spent more time describing attempts to re-educate children in terms of hygiene, habits and social behaviour, since their full-time and uneducated working-class parents were - in teachers' opinion - not able to do so. Some teachers (13%) reported taking pupils to their own homes for weekends and for short or long holidays to teach them "good manners" or even to prevent their "becoming street children". Some teachers interrupted their classes (teaching) - leaving someone else in charge - to talk to pupils about their personal problems.

Despite the fact that 75% of teachers accused¹² parents of asking them and the school to take care of their children, it is important to realize that teachers themselves felt compelled to interfere in these situations. Such interference was justified by teachers because they saw parents as giving an inappropriate education to the children. They also accused parents (usually the mother) of being absent and not interested in their children's lives (needs)¹³. Pupils' failure or "bad behaviour" or even "lack of good habits or personal hygiene" were pointed out by

12- Some teachers angrily accused parents, others felt that parents' demands were inappropriate. Many identified such behaviour (from parents) as a result of their lower level of education and economic background and positioned parents as culturally limited (unable) to understand the work done in schools.

13- The inadequacy of parents from lower economic background as efficient educators of their children will be discussed in chapter 7.

teachers (75%) as being primarily a consequence of parents' negligence, especially because of the absence of a mother at home. As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, the origins of such worries and conclusions seem to be motivated by the vulgarization of "Psychological Theories" in Brazilian education, which began in the 1950s (Louro; 1989; Rosemberg, 1992). Women teachers assumed a position of "protectors" or mentors of the children, if not of the family. They criticized the irresponsibility and lack of interest of the mothers. By identifying the absence of the mother (family), these women teachers justified their attempts to fulfil the "family's absence", especially "the mother's absence".

Despite changes introduced at the legal level, corresponding changes at the practical level are slow (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Paixão, 1991). This applies to the educational arena in Brazil. The psychological approach persists in the practices of women teachers and it reinforces a teaching practice based in the idea of women teachers as "second mothers" and schools as the remedy in case the family fails to educate the children.

5.4-Conclusion

The women teachers interviewed appear to experience pressure from two levels of influence in their professional 'option' micro and macro. Women's professional option was first subject to a micro sphere influence (within their family and in contact with local groups like: friends, neighbours, school), and later to macro levels of society (the labour market). In this manner, women, like other individuals, undergo socialization for a profession in different spaces (see Lelis, 1995), and this repertoire of experiences varied according to an individual's location within a class, gender and race (as well as age group) in society. This professional socialization is initiated at home, and it has been important in defining women's position in the labour market, as well as influencing the way in which they ought to behave at work.

When asked for the reasons why they become teachers, the interviewees still referred to the notion of a vocation. Vocational discourse gives the impression of teaching as an occupation

requiring little qualification, only natural ability. And women's lack of socialization for a profession might have led them to enter teaching, since it is a job considered natural to them. But this vocational discourse or supposed inherited ability to work as teacher was often used to camouflage other reasons which led some of these women into teaching. Most commonly, teachers' families (original or established) limit and influence their professional options. As noted by Assuncao (1994), Brazilian women have their education and occupational options based on traditional notions of the family. Even those women who struggled to enter teaching, later gave it up to give priority to their marriages. Here, we have families that encouraged or discouraged their daughters (or wives) to enter the labour market or to enter teaching. Indeed, family is a very important element of influence in the lives of women. The families' representation of women and their role in this world was an important element which determined the position of women. In the same way, most of these women had their professional lives planned and adapted in accordance with their families' needs (domestic or economic, child care, husband's career). These women's professional 'option' and participation in teaching was not their *only* concern with their family well-being, but it also involved fear and impotence. Their professional option was often a reaction to threats or blackmail from their male "care-takers" in order to preserve the family's harmony by avoiding conflict or violence. But also, for others, it was their desire to be seen as "seductive" to their men, by incorporating and corresponding to the representations of women and women at work. These are expressions of the patriarchal ideal in women's options and their participation in the labour market.

Thus, these families were subject to an ideology of a certain time, but also to the material conditions of that time. Here, it is necessary to consider that men and women experience family material circumstances differently, eg. in terms of privileges¹⁴. In many cases, the material conditions of families prevented their daughters (or wives) from following their professional dreams. But, in some cases, these women did not express any professional

14- See Safa (1992) about UNESCO report of malnutrition of women and children because of the privilege of food (meat) given to men in families.

dream. Some women had no professional socialization, other than to be good mothers, daughters and wives. The material conditions into which these families were inserted might have led them to see teaching as a work for women. Bourdieu (cited in Assunção, 1996) explains that what initially is seen as material limitation in one context may be rationalized and be seen as a "natural" situation. Following his ideas, some practices may be excluded because they are unknown to the cultural grouping to which an individual belongs (Reay, 1995). In this manner, women may enter another profession not only because of their family beliefs, but also because these families were subject to a context with specific difficulties or facilities that led them to hold beliefs about certain subjects.

Material conditions were the main reason for women becoming teachers most of the time. However, they cannot be seen as total explanation, since the ideological is very much present. For instance, some women in this study had another professional option. In their cities, they had free access to other courses and sometimes even their families wanted them to follow another course. And yet, they entered teaching, some under the influence of close friends, others because of the ideal of teaching as a course for girls. Both situations were guided by the gender condition of these women. As women, their options were limited by the stereotypes about their roles in society.

Interestingly, the women interviewed continue to hold traditional values about men and women in society. They view themselves, the other, their work with patriarchal lenses. They continue to segregate themselves and those under their control according to traditional discriminatory elements - gender, class, race - created by societies. Real or not, "representations are presentations" (Assunção, 1996), and they influenced the practices of women. Teachers can be more stuck in a tradition than society (Goellner and Cardonetti, 1990), and can be active agents in perpetuating a dominant male culture (Lather, 1994).

These traditional values are reflected in their behaviour in schools. This is the reason for women teachers' homophobia in schools, or even for segregation of roles and spaces in schools according to each sex, if male entry in it can not be avoided. Finally, women teachers often bring to their work a collection of views which will certainly influence pupils. It is important to

help women re-think the elements which led them to teaching, so they can challenge their conditions of work and the images created under these circumstances.

Chapter 6

The Construction of the Image of Teachers: Pressures from Colleagues

6.1- Introduction

This chapter investigates how teachers perceive, and the extent to which they control, the work and behaviour of their colleagues. It also investigates how the relationship between colleagues emphasizes certain stereotypes about women's roles inside schools. Inside schools, stereotypes about the roles of women in teaching are not formally defined but are enforced through horizontal relationships among teachers inside schools ("invisible" mechanisms in schools, including gossip and rumours). Considering what Ball (1987) calls the network of social relations, the investigation concentrates on the "informal" relations inside schools, or in Ball's words, the "interpersonal" inter-group "politics".

The size and bureaucracy of the system of education have made communication between teachers and government authorities difficult. As stated by Arroyo (1985), this distance has contributed to a feeling of no loyalty between teachers and government. The scant possibility of promotion has helped to aggravate this situation further. As noted earlier, the primary school teachers in the system of education under investigation did not have the possibility of job promotion inside school, unless elected to be school head. Nevertheless, there were informal hierarchies. Thus, teachers find more gratification in immediate feedback, such as having their work recognized by the school community (colleagues, parents, pupils and school managers) than in getting recognition for their job from the government.

Changes made in municipal schools of Belo Horizonte in the early 90s, including the introduction of competitive elections for school heads, have reinforced teachers' dependency on approval from members of the school community and especially parents. Consequently, individual teachers' campaigning to become the school head, or their support of a candidate

representing their interests, have acted to formalise the division of groups or make these group divisions inside schools more visible. In addition, it has led to increase attempts by teachers to have their work recognized by the community. A result of this has been a further degradation of the roles of many women teachers, because women's attempts to gain the approval of and recognition from the school community have led them to expand their roles, but not as educators. Their fight for recognition of their importance as teachers has led to increased divisions between groups inside schools.

6.2- Gender Issues in Teachers' Roles

There are nearly invisible codes of behaviour between colleagues, which tend to homogenize teachers' behaviour in school.

“... gender affiliations are not recognized as a source of factional identity for all women teachers, but ... the existence of an emotional and sexual sub-text in interpersonal relations in the organization cannot be denied” (Ball, 1987, p. 72).

The world of women is not welcome in the world of work (Ball, 1987). The interviewees referred to women as “gossipers”, as “paying too much attention to details with little objectivity in their work”, as “lacking abilities to work together”, as unable to “share experiences or cooperate like men do at work”. When talking about work, these women shared a similar low self-opinion about women in jobs. This low opinion women have about themselves as workers seems to be reinforced by the organizational structure of the work place, such as lack of promotion. This has been noticed in other countries. Ball (1987), for example, has argued “women who experience discrimination and lack of opportunity experience damage to their self-esteem and sense of personal worth”. Studies (Connison, 1985; Ball, 1987) of mixed secondary schools confirm this from a “micropolitical perspective” and suggest that “the roots of their (women teachers’) inaction may lie structurally, in their relatively powerless position in the school rather than in their simply ‘being women’ ” (Acker, 1994, p. 101). In the

present study, primary school teachers were found to be in the same situation as described above. The main difference is that the schools under examination had only female staff, including the senior posts. Questions may be raised about whether women have been active in perpetuating the “macho culture” which exists inside schools. As noted in Chapter 5, these women have a patriarchal view of women and men at work. This is “because as women, we live intimately with our patriarchal oppressors, we have been especially subject to layers of myths about our own nature and that of the society in which we live” (Lather, 1994, p. 246). Women teachers seemed to repeat to themselves the lessons they had learned in terms of what a woman should be/ behave, about the jobs they should do and how to do them.

Sexual segregation of roles in society seems to be perpetuated inside schools. In patriarchal societies, such as Brazil, the “splits between nurturance and autonomy, public and private, male and female” (Flax, 1980; Grumet cited in Stone, 1994) lead people to accept the existence of different features, roles, and behaviours for men and for women, which are considered to complement each other. Teachers themselves have their beliefs rooted in this “split”. Thus, primary school teachers must exhibit certain features which are basically women’s features. Many studies confirm the perpetuation of this “dual world” (male and female world) of teachers inside schools (Lather, 1994).

As shown in Chapter 5, teachers “bring to school their own expectations and perceptions about themselves” (Lyon and Migniuolo, 1989) and their roles. A character of domesticity was commonly found in teachers’ description of their experience in the profession. Only rarely did teachers in the study refer to the school as a place of work. Teachers continually use words like ‘home’ and ‘family’ when talking about school and words such as ‘friends’ when describing their colleagues.

Case 32, p. 10/11: “... In our shift, people are much older ... I know the families of the others, the problems ... I feel like it was my own house, you know? ... I have a school near my house and I did not want to be transferred to it, you know? ... I come here and it is almost as if I am at home; the continuation of my house ... I do not feel in a different place! ... I would not move to a different school because ... people would treat me different ... But everything has its time for adaptation ... And we would have to change. ...”.

Case 17, p. 13: (related to election for school head) "... the school is a big house that you have to administrate ...".

Changes in the school, such as size, can affect the perspective of teachers and may create a level of dissatisfaction among them. For many teachers, the school seems to lose the cosy "family atmosphere" when it grows. See the case below.

Case 48, p. 3/4: ... "When I began here, this school had just eight classrooms. So, the relation between teachers was excellent! It was friendly ... one exchanging experience with another ... Now with the increase of the school size, the school is too big! There are times which I do not see some of my colleagues ... I think that the relations were different. It is not like it used to be, that family! ... because there were eight classrooms, and eight teachers ... Now there are fifty. Too many..!"

Teachers' descriptions of "good times" have been seen as their failure in dealing with the real school (Assunção, 1994). The identification of school as "family" and colleagues as "friends" shows the social representation of school as an extension of the domestic sphere, ensured by teachers' beliefs. "There are many women working in primary schools who take their exaggerated female role for granted, as something that could not and should not be changed" (Anspinwall and Drummond, 1989). The desire of women teachers to give a "home meaning to school" while at work may be interpreted in different ways:

- It may be an attempt to include their acknowledged world - private/domestic sphere - in their work outside home. Thus, women would be resisting the male world - which tries to impose its style on the female, making schools similar to the agents in it. In some cases, women teachers used their "women's knowledge" to understand teaching. In the first group, teachers liked to describe the many personal sacrifices and full-time commitment they make for pupils, such as spending long hours at the weekends preparing classes. They had great worries about how to give an "orientation to the pupil". When asked about what they meant by "orientation", teachers focused on domestic problems of the pupils (private sphere), the absence of the mothers, and the need to give psychological support to pupils. Many teachers

saw these areas as ones about which it was necessary for teachers to have knowledge. Some teachers said to use their personal experience of educating their own children as a good guide to teaching. See the case below which exemplifies the findings above:

Case 39, p. 3: (About teacher's roles)¹ Well, it is work more in psychological terms, like to be a friend ... There were some cases of aggression in which the pupil raised his voice (pause) Then I usually take it easy! I talk to him about what he wanted, about what was right ... I did not have this problem when I was a student because in my time the mother use to say: "Look, school is not a place to talk! It is not a place for games!" ... I was lucky with my son too. I talked to him and he did the same thing ... I accompanied the development of my son, who is a normal boy, but also poor ... My son was growing up and I observed him until the time of schooling ... there were many things I learnt from my son that I took to my life inside classroom. ... There were people that were aggressive with me because of that. ... I used to tell them (pupils) the good examples of my son as a student and also as a son! Because I think that we have to give a whole education. It is not only to teach the letters. We have to give integral education, for that we have the psychology discipline in the teachers' training course".

- Another interpretation could be that in giving a "domestic" approach to the work at school, women are protecting this space in the labour market for themselves. In this manner, schools would not be the proper place for men, since women have been the experts in dealing with domestic affairs. This has already been noticed in Brazil by Novaes (1984)¹.

- It could also mean that women teachers identify school with home because they have adopted a "pattern" of behaviour in the labour market for women idealised by men. In this manner, women teachers are expected to fulfil a stereotype about women in teaching which associates teaching with family/domestic roles. In this manner, women are "subject to layers of myths" about their selves (Lather, 1994).

This "domestic sphere" brought by some teachers from home to school may also represent a protection against internal school problems. By discussing home events at school, teachers avoid discussing their practice with colleagues who could check and criticize their

1- As noticed in the American case, in their attempt to enter teaching, women stressed their abilities to deal with children -"reproduce ideological elements that had been part of the root causes of patriarchal control in the first place". In this way, "the relationship of domesticity and teaching was highlighted" (Apple, 1989).

work. Teachers affirmed that some colleagues attempted to attain status in school by criticizing or diminishing the work of colleagues. See the example below.

Case 44, p. 2: "I try to get along well with everybody and talk as little as possible about colleagues ... Here we only talk about our lives, about what happens at home, but in terms of relationships at work we have some restrictions ... (Why?) Sometimes things are taken to the school head in a different way ...".

6.3- Group Division of Teachers in Schools

Women teachers working in schools are subject to the values of a number of school agents. Inside schools, the struggle for power takes place among these agents, and takes the form of one individual or group attempting to impose its ideas on another. There is not a single dominant class nor is only one class subjugated; rather, a struggle for power occurs variously between sectors of society (Foucault, 1988; Foucault cited Saffioti, 1992). Schools provide a classic illustration of this fight for power. They represent a space where different groups attempt to validate their interests and values.

As a whole, teachers seem to exercise unique ways of evaluating and controlling other teachers. Hearing teachers' criticisms of and complaints about their colleagues confirms that schools have certain internal rules which establish acceptable practice and behaviour. Conflicts exist between groups and, most importantly, these work towards establishing a hierarchy inside a given school, where specific characteristics will denote the status of a teacher at the level of the micro-sphere. This status is dependent upon how acceptable are the characteristics and behaviour of the particular teacher. One of the ways teachers manifest disagreements with each other is over gender values. Some teachers express the gendered ideology that women teachers should behave in a certain way, while others use the same ideology to maximize personal interests, acting to convince others of the inadequacy of individual actions.

There are several ways teachers control the work and behaviour of their colleagues, including the use of gossip, watching each others' work, isolating individual teachers,

denouncing “unwanted behaviour”. When teachers were asked to comment on how they knew what their colleagues were doing inside classrooms, they said that such things became obvious when someone had to substitute for a teacher at times of illness. They also evaluated the work of their colleagues based on the observation of pupils’ behaviour in the classroom, the placing of desks and the assiduity and behaviour of the colleague towards pupils. According to teachers, information about the work of a particular teacher was shared with other colleagues in informal talks, but was never taken to the teacher herself. Those with little sympathy for someone often made malicious comments or gossiped about that individual to other colleagues. Some groups of teachers even took direct action against colleagues, such as criticising the behaviour of teachers at staff meetings. Others informed parents about the inadequacy of the work of certain colleagues in an attempt to force colleagues to change their practice. See the two examples below demonstrating the ways teachers control colleagues.

Case 2, p. 4: “... Once I arrived late. So, she (one teacher) checked my ‘signature’ (signature in the book stating what time one enters school) to see if I had signed the correct time (pause) ... Then said to her: “What are you doing? Are you checking me? ... Watching the hour I arrived? So, I got very nervous ... (Why was she verifying your ‘signature’?) ... to see if I was writing the correct time of my arrival. (What was her interest in that?) None. (Is she the head’s friend?) (Pause) It is lack of partnership ... (pause) It is what happens most here! They (teachers) ... stay at the classroom doors watching you. (Watching what?) Watching the time you arrive ... If the school head does not watch you, there are others (teachers) who take it to the head (pause). (And what do they gain with it?) Nothing (laughs). They are ‘brown noses’, you know? ... And some ... attitudes from the administration, (pause) protection, you know? (pause). The school head has her ‘especial groups’, and she protects them ...”.

Case 9, p. 4: “Ah! We hear jokes. (What kind of jokes?) Ah, for example, (teachers say that) some teachers are “escaping from work” ... that teachers do not want to work ... (They say that teachers ...) “Want to go on strike because teachers want to stay out of their classroom”. This kind of thing. (Do you participate in the strikes? Why?) Because I think I am badly paid! ...”.

Control generates conflicts which may lead to the further degeneration of teachers’ roles. By studying the conflicts which take place between teachers in the schools visited, I hoped that gender issues which shape the teaching profession might be identified. The following

conflicts will be examined in some detail:

- those supporting versus those resisting the school head;
- newcomers versus old teachers;
- working for “love” versus working for money;
- “P1” versus “P1 Habilitada”.

6.3.1- Conflicts Between those Supporting and those Resisting the School Head

According to 42% teachers, a division of groups exists inside schools, where some teachers enjoy the protection of the school head, are granted special privileges, or are praised for their work. Most of the teachers who expressed a positive relationship with the school head were individuals who focused their concerns on personal matters of pupils’ lives. School heads and school managers confirmed their preference for this kind of teacher, usually referring to their dedication as a mark of their competence.

A supportive relation with school managers (avoiding conflict, supporting their decisions, giving in to their demands) allows teachers to acquire a superior status in school, even if not higher financial reward. As some confirmed, those teachers who did not complain were usually seen as “polite” and “better teachers”. These individuals appeared to be confident in their teaching ability and the success of their school because they did not complain about problems in schools.

Insubordination from teachers or complaints about the school were presented as an “ugly” (negative) feature of character, and some teachers did resist the school head. Resistance might represent a “revolutionary” position taken by individuals, but it also can reflect a “reactionary” position (Walkerdine, 1981; 1990). In this manner, Walkerdine argues, “resistance is not just struggle against the oppression of a static power (and therefore potentially revolutionary simply because it is struggle against the monolith) but that relations of power and resistance are

continually reproduced, are in continual struggle and are constantly shifting”(Walkerdine, 1981, p. 14; 1990, p. 3-4). Walkerdine’s conclusions contribute to the understanding of teachers’ resistance in this present study. However, resistance might represent a strategy employed by teachers to avoid judgment of, or punishment for, their behaviour, with the result that their autonomy is maintained.

A common form of resistance used by teachers was to remain silent. Some teachers said they avoided making comments about school problems, since their colleagues could gossip or distort their comments to the school heads and other teachers. They feared punishment and retaliation, especially from the school management.

Some teachers isolated themselves from the rest of the group, not only in order to avoid conflicts and to protect themselves, but also to avoid criticism of their work. Observation of school meetings clearly showed such isolation. Some teachers sat alone. The possibility that planning or an exchange of ideas about their work could occur in such a setting was low. In this manner, opportunities considered important for the successful implementation of educational innovations were frustrated. Most of the meetings began after an interval of shouting from the school supervisor demanding quiet; sometimes even teachers shouted for silence. Then, some time was spent with announcements from the school administration. Meanwhile, some teachers talked to each other, criticized and made jokes about what was said, others corrected pupils’ exercises or exams, others just relaxed. Such behaviour, including the silences, showed efficient methods of passively resisting in a given context.

In Gold’s words (1995), silence represents the women’s difficulty in “taking part in the discourse or deliberately choosing not to do so”. Thus, the silence of these women teachers can variously represent their powerless position or their desire to stop the “access of dominant discourses”. By listening to what teachers said, one can see that schools are not an environment where teachers feel empowered and able to make their wishes come true. What Gold observed in the group of women in her study is mirrored by the women in my study. In Gold, women were seen as rejecting the male-centred discourse which guides leadership in schools. In my study, the teachers appeared to be refusing the traditional style of leadership

employed by their superiors, despite the supposed democracy present in schools. Thus, many teachers declined to participate in, or give any opinions about, what was said by their superiors. In a sense, this was an effective way of sabotaging decisions with which they probably disagreed.

6.3.2- Conflicts between Newcomers and Old Teachers

Conflicts amongst teachers seem to arise further from the arrival of new teachers at school. Resistance is not so much focused on newly graduated teachers, as on those from other schools. The different positions of new teachers - usually acquired from their work at other schools - were criticized and rejected by many teachers.

Case 15, p. 7: "... last year ... we needed to call a psychologist ... because one of our colleagues was new in the school. She arrived with a different position. The group resisted her, rejecting her ideas ... She had just arrived and she could not just change everything suddenly ...".

Becker and Strauss (cited in Ball, 1987) have shown that the agitations of young teachers for change may produce feelings of dislocation and dissatisfaction in the "older generation of teachers". Age difference was also indicated by some teachers as a problem inside schools, where old teachers resisted new ideas. It has been argued that most young teachers (with new ideas, depending on their training background) are unlikely to sustain their commitments to the new ideas beyond the first years of teaching because of pressures directed at them from inside schools "to conform" and by "career pressure to play safe" (Lacey cited Ball, 1987). However, these "intergenerational conflicts", as Ball (1987, p. 67) calls them, can produce "changes and reactions".

In the present study, some teachers gave up teaching because of these clashes. Certain teachers referred to the resistance of colleagues to new ideas. Such resistance was noticed in some interviews. Other teachers expressed great pleasure in seeing colleagues having to "adapt"

themselves to their new school context. See the following comment from a teacher who described a colleague as being different from the rest of the school.

Case 19, p. 2 and p. 5/6: "... she did not obey the (school) rules. But today she is more adjusted!" (short laugh expressing satisfaction).

Newly arrived teachers were identified as causing problems inside school. Some teachers (19%) recognized their own resistance to accepting new ideas. However, they still criticized the way colleagues worked compared to the way they did. Some teachers appear to act as behaviour police inside schools, sometimes taking actions against young and newly arrived colleagues who work or behave in a different way. Some codes of behaviour were highly accepted or rejected by teachers inside these schools, thus providing evidence that teachers are active agents in perpetuating or in eliminating certain unwelcome behaviour from colleagues. The group control exerted inside school is at times extended even to the personal lives of teachers. Control over women teachers in terms of clothes and behaviour has been shown in other studies (eg.: Apple, 1987) and represents "the ideological condition under which women teachers" (Apple, 1989) still have to work. See a recent example from England (Figure 6.1).

Case 15, p. 8: "... She is different in everything ... she dresses differently. This bothers some people ... It does not upset me the way she dresses, but I get annoyed when she comes with transparent clothes ... I think that we do not have to get the attention of children through this kind of thing. (Do you think that she wore those clothes on purpose?) No, not at the beginning. Later ... yes (when teachers started to complain) ... Ah, she is different ... (pause) I went to her classroom a few times ... Then the discipline was ... We got lost! We ... could not control pupils ... She got lost with the content! (How do teachers know that the other teachers are...?) In the 'conselho de class' (teachers' meeting) ... she said that she did not give that subject ... And also because ... when substituting her ... you saw that she was teaching subjects ... which normally would take fifteen days, in only one day ... because she was late. And this disturbed me even more".

Case 16, p. 8: "... in the last year there was a problem between one teacher and other teachers who questioned her work ... She had a different way of working. Then, she was questioned. She seems ... to be a very well educated person, but

according to other teachers, despite all her culture and despite all her modernity, she was not teaching what the pupils at that level needed ... Then there was a discussion ... That created a very bad environment. Then a psychologist was called to take some sessions with the group. I think that it was not the business of the teachers to question her. I think that the more open the school, the more democratic it is ... (And what happened with the teacher?) ... It seems that she changed (her behaviour) ... I think that it was because she is a very different person (compared) from what we were used to see here (inside school). (What kind of people do you usually see?) People tend to be more traditional, ... more correct ... At least her proposal was to talk more with the pupils ... giving a minimum of content ... And everybody was used to working with pages, and notebooks ... She seems to be too independent, but she is not! Then ... Everybody started to ... bully her! And then the tension increased ... and she 'exploded' in that teachers' meeting".

A teacher wearing transparent clothes was the last straw for other teachers; it broke with the "maternal" image some teachers insist be upheld. According to the teachers describing the incident, the teacher changed her behaviour. According to the teacher who suffered the aggression, she continued to behave in the same way.

The distinction made between "veteran teachers" and the "newly arrived" teachers serves to define territories inside schools, where the "veteran teachers" feel that their "experience" should be acknowledged and taken as example for others. This situation can also be interpreted as a struggle for power. In this struggle, some teachers reaffirm the ideology of sacrifice in teaching. Such ideology carries with it much of what are considered to be the traditional roles expected from women in society. Thus, in schools where "veterans" are the majority, the situation arises where it is difficult for "newly arrived teachers" to continue with their "different ideas".

In addition, resistance to the way of working and behaviour of "new colleagues" may also indicate a rejection of the "new woman teacher" - one who works for money and whose practice reflects less emphasis on a maternal role.

Figure 6.1- Press cutting describing the importance given by the British government to the way teachers dressed.

“Elegant Misses are a hit with Shephard”

Note the observation and recommendation given to teachers by Mrs. Gillian Sheppard (British ministry of education) in a television interview on the Education Bill (The Times, 11/november/96, p. 1).

Elegant misses are a hit with Shephard

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6.3.3- Conflicts between those “Working for Love” and those “Working for Money”

Many veteran teachers referred to the social class background of colleagues who were forced to work more than one shift and could not attend courses or be more involved in school life during extracurricular hours. These teachers used the terms “low”, “worse”, “inferior” social class to refer to those teachers who came from a poorer background and had in teaching an important source of income. They accused these teachers of being unable to engage fully in school life because they had to work in more than one school shift. Also according to some teachers, those who entered the teaching profession today were usually “those girls who did not have any other option or just preferred to work as teachers rather than as domestics or shop-ladies”. There was a noticeable prejudice among some teachers, especially among those from better economic background, regarding teachers who worked for money. A few also criticized colleagues who complained about salary and participated in strike actions. According to them, “the strikers” knew in advance that teaching was not a well-paid profession before they took the entrance examination. They also stated that the government did not force anyone to take the job.

Case 19, p. 3: “... in times of strike. It is very hard! ... Too much pressure ... “Return! You have to work!” Then they throw in our face that: “Teaching is like that!,” that “you have to return ... because it is a vocation, that you are like a priest” ... (Who says this?) The community says it, some colleagues say it ...”.

Here, the criticism directed at the social class of some teachers represents in reality the rejection of women who enter teaching as a job, a job with which they could survive. Race was not mentioned by any teacher as a prejudice dividing them. But race and class segregation in Brazil are intimately related. A person’s class position is also a consequence of his/her racial origin. As discussed in chapter 7, racist attitudes from parents towards black teachers were described by some teachers, including the victims. However, when school staff

were inquired, there was an attitude of disbelief about issues of race inside school. For example, a school head, when asked about a racist attack by two black mothers against a black teacher, treated the subject with disbelief. When asked about the number of black teachers inside her school, she mentioned that there were no black teachers there, only one or two “moreninhas” (word used to refer to people with darker skin). In Brazil, the word “moreninha(o)” is also used as a euphemism for identifying black people. This school head treated the subject almost as if it were an offense to identify someone as black. It is worth mentioning that this school head was herself not white².

Gender, race and class work together to define the position of women teachers in the school hierarchy. These are “social constructions” which are articulated (related) with each other (Meyer cited in Assunção, 1996). Black women teachers frustrate the image people have of primary school teachers. They occupy a lower status among teachers and are seen as “not good enough” for teaching.

6.3.4- Conflicts between “P1” and “P1 Habilitada”

Conflicts between groups of teachers were also noticed due to salary differences between teachers with different levels of education but occupying the same post inside schools. At the time this study was undertaken, the salary of a “P1 Habilitada”³ (teachers with teachers’ training course for primary teaching plus a university degree in either maths, language, science or other high degree subject) was twice that of a P1 (primary school teachers with only the teachers’ training course at the secondary school level) and the same as a P2 (teachers who

2- As noted in Chapter 3, race discrimination in Brazil can be minor if the person’s social and economic conditions is high. This allows people with a darker skin colour enter groups ethnically considered superior, in this case whiter people.

3- Attention must be paid to the word “habilitada” which means “skilled”. Again it seems to be a strategy to disqualify those teachers who only took the teachers’ training course. The same disqualification is noticed in the earlier decades of this century in Brazil, when the state established different salaries for the traditional non-qualified teachers and those who took the teachers’ training courses. Today, the government seems to demand better qualified teachers by giving salary incentives to those with university degrees.

teach the last four years of elementary school and the secondary school). Increases in salary seem to be one of the main incentives for teachers to enroll in university courses, given that 46% of teachers mentioned this issue. Rocha (1997) found similar results in her study of primary school teachers from municipal schools in Belo Horizonte. She confirmed that the pursuit of professional qualifications was a consequence of a social context in which efforts of the local government aimed at a “pedagogical renovation”. In this situation “collective work of schools on pedagogical projects” was invited and there was a “search for alternatives to drop-out and repetition” undertaken in these same schools. The interest of teachers have in professional development was evident also in my study. Many of the teachers felt that their practice improved when they entered university (especially those who took the “pedagogia” degree), even through they emphasized that they had first embarked on a university course motivated by the salary incentive. School managers also mentioned positive changes in teachers’ work since taking a university degree.

Some teachers (19%) complained that the salary difference between “P1” and “P1 Habilitada” was unfair. This is true even of those who had already begun a university course to increase their pay. They complained that when they applied to become teachers, the only pre-requisite was their certificate of the teachers’ training course. These teachers said that salary should be commensurate with years of study, but they rejected the idea that such large differences in salary should exist. Teachers mentioned further that some P1 colleagues were working less diligently because they were being paid less. Below is described part of an interview where a teacher relates what colleagues said about the salary difference between P1 and “P1 Habilitada”. Note that this teacher had completed only the teachers’ training course.

Case 38, p. 19: “I will work less because I earn less! Let her work, she is suggesting it (Criticism from a teacher about a project of work suggested by a P1 Habilitada) ... She earns more than I do. I will just cross my arms”.

An important aspect to be noticed here is that a university degree was not seen as a guarantee of being a good teacher. Rather, the “P1 habilitada” teachers were criticized for being

less dedicated to the school, for not taking notice of pupils' personal problems and for even complaining too much (about work conditions or offering opposition to school managers' demands). Professional qualification - in terms of knowledge - was not prioritized in the discourse of many teachers as a prerequisite of "good" teaching. This notion was also true for those who had taken an university degree. They usually valued features such as caring, loving, dedication and involvement with pupils' personal problems.

Case 27, p. 15: "... We know that there are colleagues ... that unfortunately have the 'qualification' (university degree), but their work is terrible!. And others that do not have it (university degree) and do an excellent job, but are not paid for the work they do. (What do you mean by terrible work?) Ah ... Some teachers (use of feminine pronoun) ... just want to stay there fighting, shouting ...".

6.4- Teachers' Response to Pressures by Colleagues

The existence of conflicts between teachers may indicate that there is an ideal (or most approved) model of what a primary school teacher should be. From the discourse of the teachers interviewed, this model appears to relate more closely to the roles traditionally taken by women within society and the family (see Chapter 5). In the school context, these roles would include involvement with pupils' lives and personal problems. When faced with criticisms and pressures from colleagues to perform such roles, the teachers interviewed in this study reacted in different ways. The most common reactions can be grouped as follows⁴:

- (i) teachers who accepted any roles in their work, especially if these benefited pupils;

⁴- Note that percentages were not given here. This is due to the inconsistencies found in teachers' answers to direct and indirect questioning. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the interview allowed for verification of the veracity of teachers' response at several stages. For example, some teachers initially said not to accept any role beyond teaching, but a later stage during the interview described situations in which they were clearly extending their roles to the domestic life of pupils.

Case 25, p. 6: "The person that chooses this profession, she is usually more maternal. She chooses it, then she does not reject any task. But there are those that think that the important thing is only to teach and they do not care. But I think that most teachers think that school can do other things, don't you think?"

(ii) those who did not want to get involved in the personal problems of pupils but did so in response to pressures from their colleagues;

Case 28, p. 4-5: "... we do not take it very well, but you know that you have to do that! ... if you do not do that, people will have a bad impression of you! ... This comes from the administration or from some colleagues ... Then if she (another teacher) does it, then you also have to do it, almost if it was your obligation to do that! ...".

(iii) those who ended up solving pupils' personal problems because the children's realities could not be ignored;

Case 40, p. 6/7: "Oh, I believe that ... the difficulties existing inside school lead to the degradation of our relation ... with this clientele ... from the favela. You end up living ... indirectly, situations that even you ... in your life it is difficult to face, ... Then, later you start to getting used to it and to accept it. You even think that it is natural because it is something you get used to ... We do not have any help ... The school which prepared us did not give any orientation on how to work with these questions...".

Case 36, p. 3-4: "Outside the classroom I have no commitment to the pupil. ... My role is to teach. I am not a psychologist, I am not a baby sitter, I am not auntie, I am none of these. I am a teacher. My role is to teach. Okay? But we end up getting involved ... the mother knocks on the door ... It is complicated because I try not to get involved but I end up getting involved! ... not at the same level (long pause) ... as the other professionals ...".

(iv) a few who rejected outright any such involvement based on their belief that such involvement was not appropriate.

Case 43, p. 5: "(when questioned whether she does any task in addition to teaching) ... I don't do anything that is not related to the pedagogical aspects of the work ... (silence)"

Item (i) was discussed in Chapter 5, where the interviewees identified themselves as primary school teachers (see table 5.7). As we have seen, "feminine features" were often

regarded as necessary abilities for primary teaching, and providing emotional support was the commonest answer (given by 35% of interviewees). Item (ii) was discussed in the first few sections of this chapter. As we have seen, pressures from colleagues are very important in the definition of teachers' behaviour and practice inside schools. Items (iii) and (iv) will be dealt with below in the discussion about the discourse of teachers when faced with their pupils' poverty.

6.4.1- Children's Poverty and the Roles of Women Teachers

The school routine "is riddled with events and equipment, demands and daily disasters, that seem designed to force female teachers straight into the stereotypical role of the effortlessly caring mother figure, however sincerely they may wish to resist" (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989, p. 18).

The existence of poverty in schools was pointed out as an element which significantly confused teachers about their roles (see also case 40 above). Contrary to what Assunção (1994) has affirmed, teachers are not unaware of their pupils' conditions of life. Rather, here, teachers were usually found engaged in helping pupils from disadvantaged social and economic background.

Case 1, p. 3/4: "I think we misunderstand a lot of things, but the problem is there for anyone to see ... the hunger, the malnourishment, children who have no clothing for the winter, no shoes! I really don't think it is our role, but then suddenly we are there ... dealing with all that! Then I think we have to do something, at least something!"

The importance of poverty as an element which shapes the roles of women teachers in schools is evident when we analyze the interviews with teachers who work(ed) in different social and economic settings. Most of these teachers (71%) said that their roles varied according to the school and their clientele. For example, an interesting case was reported by a teacher from the middle-class school who compared her previous job environment with that of the present school. She reported that the previous school she had worked was very poor. This teacher

agreed that in poor schools - in her own words - she engaged in “more social service than teaching”.

Case 15, p. 4/5: “There (referring to a poor school she left recently) I felt I was doing more of a social work. (What do you mean?) Because I had to serve the human being in his basic needs ... because he (pupil) arrived with his mouth all hurt from eating garbage. Then, I could never go direct to the contents with him (pupil) ... Here (in the present school) they speak my language ... it is easier to work (!)”.

Studies by Musgrave and Taylor in England (cited in Hoyle, 1969) showed that primary school teachers in predominantly middle-class areas had a much more defined view of teachers' roles than did teachers in working-class districts. Teachers in the latter areas tended to assume extra social roles for themselves and their schools. The present study confirmed this in the Brazilian setting. Teachers in the school with a better social-economic background (serving middle class pupils) expressed a defined idea of the role of a teacher, while those in the other poorer schools did not. In the former, teachers limited their definition to professional terms, including formal education and, possibly, emotional understanding, but never in terms of supplying material goods, counselling services, or playing roles not directly related to learning subjects. The interesting thing was that they described their roles without reference to pupils' personal lives. They concentrated solely on educational issues. According to these individuals, it was a focus on professional instruction that was demanded from the parents in the middle class school. When asked about their involvements in tasks other than teaching, these teachers generally denied involvement in them. What they considered “extra-tasks” were things like calling parents to inquire about why homework was not being completed. These teachers recognized that they could not do much to solve the personal problems of pupils. However, the school head and other staff shared similar interests in preparing pupils to solve their own problems since most parents worked outside the home. In the poorest schools, the parents also worked all day and left their children alone at home. Nonetheless, the approach of teachers to the problems faced by pupils was different from in the richest schools. In poor schools, teachers

and other school staff were much more involved in solving the emotional, economic and social problems of pupils, and those of their families.

Like in case 15, other teachers compared their experiences now with their time in other schools when they felt more useful, defining their previous work roles as “more maternal” or “like a social worker”⁵. Despite teachers’ feelings of “being more useful” in poor schools, expressions such as these indicate that while working with poor pupils teachers experienced a great degree of autonomy from parents. A few teachers showed some dissatisfaction in having to work in a middle class school. In that school, parents were described as participating more, and as able to understand what was going on inside school. These teachers were missing their autonomy, their power to make decisions - their traditional place in society as the “real teacher”, as some referred to. Their involvement with the problems of the community had given them power. Nelson (1992, p. 86) states that teachers are “potentially powerful persons within the community”. They know more than most because of their “greater education” and may be required by the community to “help with a wide variety of problems”. Also, teachers’ power rests in their knowing the “intimate secrets gained through their close daily contact with the children and through living in and playing a central role in the community”. According to Nelson, the power of teachers make them a “potential threat, in a blackmail sense”.

Case 37, p. 3: “Two twins were in my class with serious problems. I went to their homes ... Then I knew everything about their lives. ... So, it is the teachers’ roles to find what is wrong ... There are two or three other pupils who live near my house. I went to their houses. I even threatened one father! I threatened him because he was beating the boy ...Then I think that we have to search...it is not to invade their lives, because some parents do not like it, you know? ...”.

In his study about the origins of popular education in France, Petitat (1994) states that schools aimed at “correcting” the education provided by working class families, which society considered insufficient. This ideology of “popular education” seems to be present in the

⁵- This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

discourse of teachers in this present study. Teachers seemed to feel the need to “re-educate” the pupils since their families were not able to. The position taken by these women teachers has a “philanthropic” end, usually taken by women from better economic backgrounds in society in general.

Teachers appear to be unable to accept pupils; they reject pupils’ reality and culture and try to help⁴. However, by “helping pupils” teachers are attempting to bring them into their world of values and this supportive behaviour may be a source of problems. Connell et al (1995) saw the relationship between teachers and pupils as being a class-based one. In a working-class context, teachers seem to be able to exert power over pupils and parents since they are usually better-educated than are the pupils’ parents. Teachers use their skills to impose authority in this context⁶. By extending their roles beyond teaching, teachers do not limit themselves to a judgement of pupil’s lifestyles but teachers use their position to try to change pupils and their families towards an ideal⁷. Connell’s statement is pertinent to the present study. Teachers appear to reject the culture and values of pupils and parents, and actively attempt to assert themselves as examples to be followed. Teachers seem to fail in the duty to complement the education received at home; when they consider such instruction inadequate, they try to displace it. In a way, parents find it hard to refuse since the action comes with many material benefits (see also case 37 in this chapter).

6- Steedman (1985) has pointed out the fact that “you do not need to bear children in order to have them”. In this way, the author shows the relation of power between teachers and pupils in daily contact, where teachers can enjoy the pleasure of having control over a small sphere like a classroom.

7- Royce’s study (1989) explores issues of paternalism, poverty and education. Compulsory education was seen as a sort of paternalism in which those who receive it would “lose their freedom when subject to compulsory education, but since this is to be for their own good they can survive the enforced exchange as creditors”. This author makes an interesting point, in referring to the paternalism involved in compulsory education. In a sense, when women teachers assume a role of “rescuing” pupils from families who fail to educate them properly, they take up a paternalist position which assumes that they know “what is good for the others”. But as Royce indicates, conceptions differ from people to people. Thus, teachers position themselves as the ones who “know best” what is good for pupils without taking into account the pupils’ own position. Teachers are unable to deal with the real needs of pupils. However, theirs is a powerful position.

Case 34, p. 4: "... here parents send the boy like (with no habits) ... it is very difficult for you to find the boy and just teach the academic part".

In many cases, primary schools supply "the only community facility to which all the families of an area are linked" (Connell et al, 1995, p. 165). The position of women as source of "emotional security, feelings of care, and so on" (Apple, 1988, p. 49) is perpetuated by teachers inside school⁸. However, it is the school context and its agents seeking for solutions to their needs which have led women teachers to take on these extra roles⁹. These studies were useful for developing an understanding of the findings of this study, in which most teachers expressed complaints that their roles varied according to the economic and social background of the pupils. As noted along this chapter, many teachers saw themselves engaged in social work, acting as psychologists and even mothers, and being asked to solve all sorts of internal and external school problems.

Case 20, p. 6/9: "... I was doing everything! ... Oh! At the end of the year I felt sick ... I was sure that I was the worse teacher in the world, that I was not able to teach. So, I decided that at the end of that year I would do post-graduate training in psycho-pedagogy. But I was not able to. I said: '... I am going to change to another profession! My responsibility here is too much! I do not want to feel this way again!' Because each time you work with a class is like that, this is how you feel! ... But when you work with a class which responds to the stimulus, it is different! You feel ... there is a feed-back to the things you do".

Case 12, p. 14: "We supply things when some problem happens ... we call someone to take our place inside classroom. We try to solve the children's problems. We leave the classroom to solve the problem, we talk. (What kind of problem?) Usually cases of beaten children, children with pain, headache caused sometimes by worms ... They fail because of hunger ... They come to school

⁸- As mentioned in earlier chapters, in their search to ensure places in teaching, women have reinforced the stereotypes about women's sphere (Apple, 1988; Acker, 1994). In reinforcing these stereotypes, these teachers have reinforced the female and male models among pupils. This also helps to maintain the "social order" which integrally involves sexual division.

⁹- Previous studies (see Nelson, 1992, pp. 82 - on 20th century American teachers) indicate the pressures put on teachers to engage in community activities; these were considered "normal" roles for teachers.

without being fed. (At the moment) We are thinking of giving food to the pupils when they arrive at school ...”.

6.4.2- Schools Limiting Involvement in Pupils’ Domestic Lives

Although most of the time conflicts between colleagues in school tended to make women teachers get involved in the domestic problems of pupils, in a few cases the opposite happened; teachers questioned the involvement of colleagues with pupils or their parents (especially mothers). What is most important here is to notice that the professional behaviour of teachers and the extent to which they (teachers) define their roles is very much influenced by what colleagues accept as the “right” practice. Consider this example.

A teacher (case 42) abandoned her teaching job in a state school because of the lack of support from colleagues who refused to help a pupil who became pregnant. This teacher felt that the school should assume responsibility not only in terms of educating, but also in helping pupils’ challenges in their familial and social setting. Despite the cruel indifference towards the pregnant pupil, this teacher went beyond her role of teacher, in her insistence that the school should have interfered in the case. The school rejected any involvement in the private life of the pupil, clearly defining which roles should and should not be taken in school. In reality, the school could not have offered much help to the pregnant girl. This case illustrated how important work interaction is in limiting teachers’ roles. See part of the interview below.

Case 42, p. 2/3: “... last year one of my pupils, a thirteen year old teenager, got pregnant ... Her father did not accept her at home and threw her into the street ... The school head, where I worked, thought that a pregnant pupil would be a bad example for the others. Then I had to talk to her ... Her first decision (pupil) was to leave school ... I felt very responsible for not letting her do that. I started to be ... discriminated against and pressurized in the school. I was pressurized to the point that this ... “shook me”, and I left the school for this reason. (Did you move to another school?) I left it, I abandoned ... ten years (of my career), ... I abandoned everything and left it because I was very disappointed. You know, I think that ... to educate is not just that! I think it is ... necessary to re-think, for example, work other things and not close the doors of the school. Because ... her family already had closed the doors for her. And now the school closed the door!? Then I got very

angry (laugh) and abandoned the school”.

Again, the issue of poverty is present. How can the personal life of the teachers not be affected by the poor and harsh reality which led the teacher above throw her own life into turmoil because of the problems of a pupil? Social problems should be addressed by appropriate separate institutions, but in Brazil this has not been done sufficiently. “It is not case of rejecting the importance of feeding and health care, but of allocating these to the right place” (Mello, 1990). Many teachers expressed similar frustrations as the teacher in the case above. In each of the schools visited, similar problems (eg.: violence and abandonment of pupils) were common. Some teachers recognized their actions did not solve the pupils problems, but they could not do otherwise. They described their involvement in pupils’ lives as perfectly natural. It appeared to be very common for teachers to try, or be requested by the school community, to solve social and economic problems of pupils and to throw their whole professional career into jeopardy because of it.

In the case above, the decision of the teacher to leave her school was the only way to escape that painful reality. What was distressing for this teacher was not only the problem of a particular pupil, but also that she could not bear the lack of support and recognition, and the pressure from her colleagues. Colleagues’ opinions seem to be powerful motivators for teachers, whether in the form of paternalism, indifference, political involvement, or passivity. This teacher left school because she could not bear to act alone in a role that she truly believed was hers. Perhaps at her present school she has found the “right place” or a “group” with similar ideas to hers regarding the roles of a teacher.

6.5- Conclusion

Conflicts between colleagues (teachers) seem to result from the shock of competing values about their roles as teachers. The conflicts in evidence also show that women teachers

are far from the image of passive and docile women. They seek power and seem willing to employ any strategy to reach their goal. As we have seen in Chapter 5, teachers interviewed in the present study tend to engage in traditional roles usually involving the domestic (eg.: caring, emotional support) in their work. This is true not only when they give preference to the domestic sphere over their work, but also when they accept roles that continue their domestic position inside schools. It might be true that each teacher conforms to a traditional social representation built into teaching (Mignuolo and Lyon, 1989). However, certain women teachers may have experienced a different history, or may be against the call for “the traditional roles of women”. But, once inside school, it appears that women teachers - in addition to their previous training and background - are pressured into acting according to the social representation validated in that particular context. But again, the context is dependent on the agents involved. As Walkerdine (1981, p. 14) stated, “female teachers ... are not unitary subjects uniquely positioned, but produced as a nexus of subjectivities, in relations of power which are constantly shifting, rendering them at one moment powerful and at another powerless”. As individuals they select the ways in which they act. Choices are part of a process of negotiation in situations that, while not optional, allow some personal gain. There is no material gain, but the approval by the group of colleagues seems to bring to teachers self-satisfaction, status and prestige. This is particularly important in a system of education, such as the one being investigated, where there is no promotion.

As we have seen above, the conditions of work conditions experienced by many women teachers are harsh and create confusion. Poor conditions - which results from the macro situation but are only visible in micro circumstances such as those experienced by teachers - have led people at school to behave in a “domesticized” way and to concentrate their efforts on what will initiate immediate feedback. For teachers, long term plans are difficult to envisage. Government control appears to be imperceptible within this reality. Colleagues are one source of “immediate feedback”. As has been, this feedback can be positive and constructive, but it can also be damaging to the self-definition of the professionals in teaching.

Pressure from female colleagues does seem to “domesticize” the roles of women

teachers. In addition, the lack of unity among teachers as a whole, and specifically inside schools, has failed to lead to the establishment of a definition of what teachers' roles inside schools are. "Schools are places organized around talk. The work of teaching is, to a great extent, accomplished via talk and the accomplishment of organization also relies heavily on the verbal medium" (Berstein cited in Ball, 1987).

Chapter 7

The Influence of Parents and Pupils on Establishing Teachers' Attitudes

7.1- Introduction and Brief Context Description

This chapter deals with the complaints teachers direct at the participation of parents and pupils in school life, and the pressures and effects this participation has on teachers' roles. A few parents, most of them school representatives, agreed to be interviewed, which gave the possibility of comparing the view of teachers with those of parents about the demands on teachers and how their expectations are gendered guided.

The importance of listening "to teachers' own interpretation of their experiences can result in a radical construction of the researchers' own understanding of the problem ... since ... participants can supply different and perhaps better knowledge of prevailing conditions than can the detached observer" (Nelson cited in Casey, 1992, p. 206).

Here, "better knowledge" is not taken to mean that teachers' "experience" will give the full, sole account of their position in schools. Rather, teachers can provide valuable information for uncovering and analyzing the context of schools: an essential element.

It is the "understanding of the teachers' perspective ... the way they act, think might provide new insights as to how one might approach the reform in education" (Butt et al, 1992, p. 51).

What teachers say can be used to understand not only what they experience in their contact with parents and pupils, but also, and most important, how teachers react to pressures directed at them by these agents, and how these pressures influence their professional development.

As noted in Chapter 6, teachers' roles vary from school to school in response to the demands of the particular school context. The degree of autonomy exercised by teachers and schools is relative and dependent upon the "clients, publics, superiors and audiences and the basic social and economic structures of the society" (Ball, 1987, p. 247). As has been argued throughout this thesis, it is necessary to consider more seriously the relations inside schools which daily delineate and confirm certain teachers' practices and patterns of behaviour.

Historically, teachers have experienced pressures to behave under a given "moral ideal", and have even been identified as "community builders" (Seppo, 1988; Lather, 1994). And schools have been associated with the family (Apple, 1987; Quantz, 1992; Martin, 1994). The roles of women teachers in elementary schools are closely associated with domestic positions (Apple, 1987). In schools, as in any other organization, women have a specific "cultural perception" (Lightfoot cited in Lather, 1994) about them, and these are gendered perceptions. Women teachers not only experience a lack of opportunity and discrimination in schools, but also experience pressure to behave according to the "image" created inside (and outside) school about women who teach children. "Sex makes a difference ... for organizational behaviour" (Gouldner cited in Ball, 1987, p. 71). "Differentiation and political, economic and social discrimination against women teachers" in the world of work are also found in other professions (Hypólito, 1997, p. 66).

In Brazil (Louro, 1986) and in other countries (Connell et al, 1995; Delamont, 1983; Leonard, 1989) schools have been seen as institutions which confirm the traditional roles of women. Professionals in schools contribute to this process, for example by inculcating pupils with moral values about sex differences (Connell et al, 1995; Lather, 1994; Delamont, 1989). However, it seems that at least in some cases they are compelled to do so by the expectations of school agents in the school context (Biklen, 1995). Parents help to guarantee the perpetuation of certain social values inside schools (Cullingford cited in Beresford, 1992). In this manner, parents can be active agents exercising pressures over teachers to serve their interests which

might not be only related to educational aspects¹.

As noted in Chapter 2, teachers in the present study have recently been given a different relationship with their employer, the local government. Democracy has become the norm and, at least in theory, everything should be decided democratically. The process of democratization in schools consists of giving parents, pupils over 16 years old, and school staff the right to participate in school decisions through a voice in the “Colegiado” and through elections for school head. But elections for school headship have in fact created problems in relations inside school, since parents hold the majority of votes.

Previous studies have shown that the use of parents by the government to control schools has been an efficient means of controlling the work of teachers. Cullingford (cited in Beresford, 1992) refers to the conservative demands of parents as useful to the government, which has an increased interest in their participation in schools. In the educational system visited, the government appears to be using pupils and parents to exert its control over the development of schools and the work of teachers. The result of these “democratic” actions is that an atmosphere of suspicion has been created between teachers and parents .

As much as the position of women in Brazilian society influences society’s perception of the status and roles of women teachers, it also influences expectations that people who are involved in schools have about teachers’ roles. It also has a bearing on teachers’ responses to these demands. Analyzing the statements made by the group of teachers under investigation in this study confirms the above statements.

Some questions were specifically framed to investigate how teachers perceive the demands of parents and how these women teachers respond to these demands². Teachers also provided additional information about the theme during different stages of the interview³. To

1- A more detailed historical overview is given in chapter 3.

2- Questions 15, 13E and 11. See questions in Appendix 1.

3- Questions 3, 7, 8,10/10B, 12 and unexpectedly in question 13B. See questions in Appendix 1.

facilitate analysis, all relevant answers were analyzed together. Having collected teachers' descriptions of their relation with parents, I attempted to identify connections between what these women teachers actually do inside primary schools, and the relation to the roles expected from women in society. Here, conflicts between parents and teachers were emphasized, because teachers highlighted these as major problems affecting their work.

7.2- The Participation of Parents in the School

The majority of teachers (67%) expressed concern about the failure of parents to participate in schools, because it left the teachers having to deal with pupil-related problems by themselves. School managers also expressed concern regarding the absence of parents from the school. School managers (Schools 1, 3 and 4) said that they had to promote "games" (bingo) to bring parents to school meetings.

Case 14, p. 7/8: "Here parents are notably absent, and the father and the mother leave home early in the morning and just return in the afternoon. Then I think that they (mothers) send the child to school and they do not worry, because while the child is at school, the child will be okay. And we try to bring them, we arrange meetings, parties on mothers' day, parties for 'cesta basica' (Basic needs food program), presents. We try to find many attractions. They come and take the 'attraction' ... we send messages, we explain to the boy (pupil) that if the father (parents) does not know how to read they could ask their neighbours, or the elder brother (to read) ... In their minds ... well, they are taking the child off street. Then they are tranquil ... their kids are at school and really they are trying to get a better life for their kids".

Case 44, p. 8/9: "... they just come here to pick up the results ... In a class of thirty pupils just five or six parents come here ... Ah, once a mother came here ... her boy (child) had failed to be promoted. She cast all kinds of spells on me ... She ... devastated me! ... Here, poor people! Some times they do not know how to read or write ... Poor! ...".

The teachers interviewed recognized their schools as being distant from parents. Thirteen percent (13%) of teachers saw parents' lack of participation as resulting from their fear

of visiting the school because of their illiteracy or because they could not understand what the school was doing with their children.

Case 38, p. 8/11: "... the school is too distant from the parents. The parents are still afraid of coming to school to talk about anything, even to criticize or to praise. And they come here more often to criticize than to praise ...".

While most teachers recognized the importance of involving parents in school life, they also seemed to reject the parents' culture. They frequently referred to them in terms of pity and expressed regret that the parents had such low levels of education and were limited in their ability to communicate and understand what teachers say. Parents from poor schools seem not to fulfil teachers' expectations in terms of parental involvement, culture and interest. The cultural distance between the "popular classes" and school (see Sirota, 1994; Connell et al, 1995) was constantly evident in interviews with teachers in the schools visited. Beresford (1992, p. 49) has referred to the difficulties that working-class communities experience in their attempt to understand "school language and terminology", since schools are "highly organized and structured institutions, where authorities intimidate and alienate parents ... run by teachers who often feel threatened by their very presence".

In the school attended by middle-class pupils (school 2), the language used by parents was said to be the same as the school language. Explaining the lack of participation of parents by the logic of cultural difference between school and parents (Connell et al, 1995) seems applicable to this research, at least in terms of how teachers see these parents⁴. Thus, according Connell et al (1995), this enables teachers to impose their ideas more easily, relying solely on their "professional skills". In schools where pupils came from poor social and economic backgrounds, parents already saw their own culture as inferior, and expected schools to teach their children the "right" way to behave. These parents' low self-esteem and difficulties in

4- It is necessary to add, however, that this study, due to restrictions of time and difficulties of talking to parents, only collected the opinion of few parents, most of those who had a more active participation in schools visited. It is important that future studies explore this area further.

expressing their feelings made them easily seduced by the idea that teachers and schools would make their children socially adequate. They keep their distance from schools since they consider their contribution as unimportant.

Case 18, p. 3: "... In a school in the suburbs anything you teach is okay. The parents do not question very much. I think that many times they do not do that because they did not complete even primary education. Here ... the pupils' reality is different. Here, the pupil wants to succeed in the admission exams to 'private' schools. There (in the other school) ... they (pupils) study to be promoted, to get a diploma, to find a job. There, the vision is different. They need to work".

Case 20, p. 6/9: "... The difference is that there (in the other school) the parents were poor. You called them, ... almost had to tie them up, so they would stay! ... Then you had a meeting where everybody agreed with everything, accepted everything ... they are not prepared to claim ... what are their rights. ... (And how is the relationship between parents and teacher in your present school?) Here it is completely different. ... they (parents) want their children to be prepared to compete outside in equal position, to really fight ... to have something in life. ... They (pupils) are preparing themselves to compete outside in life. ... In the other school ... the poorer you are, the more you feel the economic needs are, the less are the demands ... We explain the work ... to the parents. You call them, ... They just want to know: "Was my child promoted or not?" You call them to participate ... Just some of them come. (And here?) Here There is not a situation in which you call the parents and they do not come. They really participate, they really demand ...".

Although teachers criticized the level of participation of parents at school, teachers' opinions varied as to how parents should participate in school:

- 71% of teachers accepted parents' participation in school decisions;
- 15% of teachers accepted parents' participation with restrictions;
- 8% of teachers rejected parents' participation in school decisions.

The latter said decisions about the school should be limited to those directly involved in the school, namely pupils and school staff.

Although the majority of teachers said they accepted parents' participation in school decisions, they felt threatened about the opening of school's doors to parents. They felt that

their autonomy and opinions had been neglected in favour of internal political interests. Forty two percent (42%) of teachers described problems in their classroom as well as in staff relations (school conflicts), because the demands of parents and pupils had been given priority over their own due to school electioneering. Twenty five percent (25%) of teachers criticized the school head as giving preference to parents and pupils in order to avoid dissatisfaction and to guarantee re-election. There were teachers who complained that there existed cases where the school head and deputy head reversed the decision of a teacher as soon as the teacher left the school. This happened in situations involving the punishment of pupils. Teachers accused pupils and parents of being aware of their powerless situation.

7.3- The Different Uses of Schools: Beyond Teaching

As mentioned in Chapter 2, in Brazil, urban poverty is partly a consequence of internal migration from rural areas and small towns to big urban centres. These people bring a tradition of paternalistic relations from the rural world, between people with money and people without it (Romanelli, 1991). In urban areas this relation continues by a “politics of mass” between workers and politicians (Romanelli, 1991), in which the “popular classes” (those without economic power) are “conditioned” to a paternalistic relation and expect “favours” from people in better economic and social positions. The same situation exists in schools where “popular classes” expect paternalist services from teachers and schools. These expectations are encouraged by politicians who want to guarantee votes for themselves. Directing attention at educational failure and at the importance of education in solving social problems serves to distract attention from governmental negligence of social needs. As suggested by Beresford (1992, p. 44), education can become “a scapegoat for and a remedy to economic problems”.

Schools have been used by the “popular classes” as a substitute for the absence of the family in children’s lives. In this way, the “popular classes” join the dominant classes in promoting their own interests in schools. The “popular classes” are addressing their immediate

problems by using the school and teachers for support. They need an immediate solution to the place to leave their children while they work, a place where the child will have a meal, and a place far from the temptations of the streets (ie.: criminality). These immediate problems are ones which the modern family has been unable to deal with.

As noted in the previous chapter, the position of schools as points of reference in some communities was confirmed in the teachers' interviews and was also present in the media (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2 which cover the effects of strikes on families' lives). Seventy five percent (75%) of teachers described parents approaching them for their help in matters not related to formal education. In fact, most of the times parents were said to be absent from pupil's lives and to transfer to schools and teachers the roles of the family. "Teachers have after all been trained to have all the answers, to tell rather than to listen" (Beresford, 1992, p. 49).

Case 36, p. 3/4: "... I try not to get involved ... with the pupil's problems ... But what happens is that we end up getting involved because the mother knocks at the door. 'Look, my son has this problem' ... (What kind of problem?) Ah, all kinds of problems, the daughter who is pregnant, the boy who is out with a group of drugs addicts ... It is complex because I try not to get involved, but I end up involved ... They (the community) do not want ... a teacher who just ... teaches".

Case 6, p. 2: "... some parents came to complain about fights between pupils in the street ... Yesterday, a parent invaded one of the pupils' houses, trying to kill the family because of fights between two pupils inside the classroom ... (Why did the father come to the school?) ... to ask us to stay with the boy here until he could pick him up. He was afraid that the other father would beat up the boy in the street. And this happens often, because it is a school in the favela. Then, he asked us to stay with (and protect) the boy until mid-day ..."⁵.

Case 29, p. 5/9: "... I think that they are not worried if the boy is learning ... but because the boy is at home. So, this disturbs them ... I live next door... I remember when we went on strike and they said ... : 'Are you going to return?! I cannot bear this boy at home anymore! ... why are the teachers on strike? ... you have a good salary!'"

Some teachers (13%) said that they have to define parents' roles for them as well as making clear to parents teachers' roles, to avoid an overload of roles on themselves. Ten percent (10%) of teachers complained that parents expect teachers to educate their children in all

⁵- The school shift finishes at 11:30 am.

aspects of life and 23% of teachers described pupils as coming to them with requests for materials, money to buy lunch out, clothes (uniform), and love (physical contact: as for a cuddle).

Case 7, p. 15: "I do not know if you have noticed how the boys approach us. ... he comes and touches the teachers' hair. There are teachers who maintain a distance ... The boy sees me, he is happy, runs from there to give me a hug. And I hug him".

Case 44, p. 4/5: "... I had a pupil ... Every teacher she had she fell in love with. ... When I got pregnant last year, she used to write letters to me saying that she was going to live with me, that her little brother was going to be born and that she was going to take care of him ... Then I had to stop it because she started to reject her mother. She used to say that she did not have a mother or father, that she did not want to live with her mother. ... She lived in my house for sometime ... She asked me. One day she asked me to come to my house. Then she stayed for one weekend ... Then there was a 'Good Friday' ... and she came again. ... She arrived and had a shower ... slept in one of the rooms. I gave her many clothes. I took her out ... Yesterday one of the boys asked me ... He had three food vouchers ... And he wanted to buy a pair of shoes. And he asked me if I could change it (in money) for him. Then I gave him the money. Some times the boys want to have lunch here in the school and I give it to them. ... There is a guy who sells 'pastel' (local snack). Then (they say): "Ah, can you lend the money, tomorrow I will pay you". (Do they pay you) Ah, no, most of them never. I have also given them pencils, notebooks,

Figure 7.1- Press cutting describing effects of the teachers' strike on family life.

"Turning their backs, the protest of teachers" (use of female noun for teachers) - "Those in need"

"The school (name of school) has 2100 pupils ... Most of the pupils live in the "Morro do Papagaio" slum, and the school head ... is worried ... They are poor children ... parents during strike periods do not have financial resources to pay private teachers or supervise their children. 'All the work already developed with these children will have to start again', says the school head ...

Célia (a pupil's mother) ... has another boy ... in another school which is also on strike, says that **'the teachers' strike changed all the routine of the family. The boys do not keep quiet, they eat all day, there is no way to keep the house in order. There is no time for lunch, or to wake-up. It is a mess!'** ...Fabiano says that in his head 'things already got confused during the strike ...' (Diário da Tarde, 17/july/1991, p. 10). See interview with Célia and Fabiano in the next page.

REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Figure 7.2- Press cutting criticizing teacher's strike and arguing that this was a disrespect.

"Strike and disrespect" (Two month of strike)

"... If there is no way teachers will have their salaries increased, why are they still on strike? This is the question that pupils' parents ask ... in most cases, children from parents who work out ... the permanence of these children at home creates enormous difficulties to find someone to look after these children ... they should be at school. Teachers have always had the respect of society ... always had the trust of parents. But now, **teachers do not have an argument to justify their disrespect with those who guarantee their prestige.** The strike is not a solution. **The image of teaching can still be saved**" (Estado de Minas, 04/july/1991, p. 3).

REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR
OTHER LEGAL ISSUES



Thirty eight percent (38%) of teachers said to have been requested to help or to give their opinion about personal matters for which the parents and pupils were not able to provide solutions. These problems might variously involve divorce, discipline problems, or sexual problems. See the cases below:

Case 9, p. 5: "... today ... most of them (parents) have to work to have a better economic conditions... Then they almost leave their children in the teachers' hands. ... Ah, I think that it overloads the teacher! ... some times we feel like (pause) I ... feel angry with some things that happen. ... Like yesterday, I had to send a pupil out of the classroom. Then today his brother came to tell me that he (the pupil) lives on the street, that he already lived in an internal school (boarding school), that they have three brothers that lived in the streets, who are criminals ... I cannot help! What can I do to help this boy? The only thing I can do is to give advice. It is too little! ... Too little!"

Case 27, p. 5: "...She (ex-pupil) already left the school but she still comes to my house to ask what she should do, what she should not do. ...There are other mothers that we are very close with; I go to their houses ... One had a problem with her husband. Then, she asked me to go there to talk to her (child) ... the child was rebelling. And she thought that I had a good influence (over the child)"

Case 32, p. 14/15: "... I have lived here for many years ... then when the pupils had a problem the mother came to talk to us. ... Sometimes about illness, about fights in the family, problems with the father ...There was a father who used to beat the mother ... And the mother came to talk to me. She came ... to my house many times ... We help by listening ... I also had a pupil that was allergic ... his mother could not buy the medicine for him ... Then I helped her to buy the medicine. ... many times I have helped to buy uniforms ..."

Among other roles, 10% of teachers interviewed described situations when parents came to them and authorized the use of physical punishment when parents themselves could not discipline their children in any other way.

The teachers interviewed pointed out changes in the pupils' families (see Case 9 above), resulting from situations where both parents have to work, as leading to parents' negligence towards their children and an increase in their own roles. For teachers, the fact that both parents have to work full-time has left children at home alone all day, without anyone to care for their basic needs. Teachers usually referred to the absence of pupils' mothers (working the whole day) from home as a prime reason for the pupils' failure at school. It is interesting to observe how these women teachers assume domestic work and child care as the mother's sole responsibility. The teachers recognized that children should receive more attention from their families, and they said that parents rely on their support since they have no other source of

help. See interviews below:

Case 37, p. 3/4: "... they want the school to worry about their children, because they are poor parents who need to work all day! Here is a refuge where they leave their children, because they see that the child is well treated ... There is lunch! They expect care from teachers, because sometimes they have no time to give love at home ... They come home and their children are already sleeping and when they leave home, their children are still sleeping. So, more than education or teaching, they want caring. ...".

Case 47, p. 11: "... the mother went to work and then she (the pupil) came to school to rest. We left her lying down with a pillow there. (In the classroom?) No, in the secretary's office. I mean, the school has to participate in this. Could we say: "Ah, no, here is not a place to rest!" We left her quietly there. There is no other way. We have to get involved and to participate in it'. (In this case the mother worked and had nowhere to leave her daughter who had a high temperature)".

In the school in the middle-class neighbourhood, teachers described parents as expecting something different from them with respect to involvement in domestic affairs of pupils and their families. Indeed, interviews with some of these parents showed that their demands and expectations focused on schooling. All teachers showed great satisfaction in the level of parents' interest in school life. However, even in these contexts, there were parents who seemed to have forgotten their own role in the education of their own children. It seemed to be enough for the school and women teachers to fill the gaps.

Case 21, p. 4/5: "(The relationship between teachers and parents here) is good ... because here parents are very demanding, but the professionals here ... do not wait to be asked! ... So, there is no way to get into conflict with parents ... (What kind of demands do parents make?) ... they demand in terms of content! ... activities to be done. They demand a lot of action of the professional with the pupil! ... For example, if the teacher is giving the content according to the proposed (curriculum). They follow it! In general, ... there are exceptions. (Can you explain it?) ... there are parents that do not worry. The pupil is left at school and forgotten. And the school takes care of him (the pupil). Then, here we used to say that we adopt ... those children. (Adopt in which way) We give them total assistance! Assistance that should be given at home, we give here. We give the child help to do (home work) here. The roles which should be performed by the mother, for example, homework. The school ends up assuming all that, because it does not come from home. But those are not many". (Note: It was a middle-class school) .

It appears that teachers' worries regarding the inability of pupils' families to educate or to take care of them "properly" have led teachers to assume roles in the daily school routine. Previous literature has already shown that Brazilian teachers finance the national educational system by maintaining school and supporting pupils while the government and social institutions fail to provide adequate solutions to the social problems (Novaes, 1984). Despite this situation being made public today, it has become worse. The kinds of work teachers perform in poor communities have continually expanded. It is difficult for teachers to limit their involvement in school communities once a community has welcomed and demanded the extra help provided by teachers.

Nevertheless, there is another reason for women teachers to attempt to limit their roles in poor communities. The "double relation" of women to waged labour, being "both paid" and "unpaid worker" (in the domestic sphere), is important for understanding the "shaping of women's consciousness" (Apple, 1988, p. 21). "Unpaid work" naturally is expected of women teachers by government, pupils, parents, colleagues, school head, and teachers themselves. Despite teachers' recognition of this exploitation, and their occasional resistance to performing roles not related directly to teaching and school life, they are obliged to comply.

Case 29, p. 6/7: "I think that we do not have to involve ourselves emotionally too much ... but we get involved because there is no way to separate the things. I think that ... we are a bit like mothers, then we worry if that boy has a health problem, of if he has something ..." (Talking about a colleague) 'Many people in the school were horrified! They did not accept very well what she used to do for the boys. She ... gave food, she gave clothes. She even gave a television to one of the families she helped'".

Few parents interviewed said they did not expect teachers to act as surrogate mothers or to replace the family of the child. It is important to remember that the interviews provided were given mostly by those parents with active involvement in the schools (and these are a minority of parents). These parents are also involved in their children's education and are, thus, different from the image held by teachers of the negligent parent. However, parents,

especially mothers in the poorer schools, expected teachers not only to teach but also to improve the “bad behaviour” of their children when they themselves were unable to do so. See some comments by parents below:

School representative father: “(What are the roles of a teacher in primary school?) To educate in the full meaning of the word. I think that children of this age are beginning to have more contact with the external world. I mean, they begin to have more contact with society. Until then, the only contact was within the family. I think that the ‘figure’ of the teacher (used a female noun) to this stage ... is very important because she is in reality an extension of the mother. Then, when I say ‘to educate’, I mean the word in a full meaning which is to transmit new information, to support someone who has just started to “walk”. she contributes to the formation of the child’s identity and character ...’.

(Is the school fulfilling this demand?) Without a doubt! ... (Could you explain further the idea of teachers being an extension of motherhood?) ... I think that ... teachers are an extension of the family, ... children in this age group remain closer to their mother than to their father. It is natural ... In terms of education, maybe the female presence ... gives much more support to this age’ ... I think that the school can contribute to develop more the child ... but I do not think that the school can substitute the family. The school can and must complement it”.

School representative mother: “ ... I believe that for this school age ... a woman teacher is better. (Why?) I think that children for primary school ... need a bit of that maternal figure, that female figure. Then, only after the primary school he (meaning child) will be more receptive to a male figure ... but only later! (Why do you think that a female figure is important for this school age?) ... because I think that the children leave their cosy homes. Their usual habitat is there and then if they come to a school with many male teachers! ... I think that in the case of my daughters, it would be a shock. (Why?) ... I think that a female figure is better for this school age ”

As suggested in the interviews above, the expansion of teachers’ roles seems to represent patriarchal influences on the culture of schools and the image of teachers. According to Lather (1994, p. 248) “the subordination of women has been built into the very dynamics of the teaching role”. The extension of the roles of the school seems to be directly related to the gender concept of the professional who works inside school. Byrne states that “teaching children has been regarded as women’s work for so long that it is seen as a natural occupation for them and has ‘acquired an aura of in-born gifts and external maternity that seems ineradicable’” (Byrne cited in Lyon and Mignioulo, 1989, p. 14).

Nevertheless, data suggests that the context in which these women teachers are immersed is important for their definition as professionals as well as for the development of their practice. Eighty-six percent (86%) of teachers affirmed that the school context changes teachers, against only 13% of teachers who said that they are still the same teacher they were when they started teaching. Here, teaching continues to be considered “women’s work”. In order to show how schools are spaces for the production and reproduction of gendered stereotypes, I call attention to the incident described below where the presence of men at school is considered “unnatural”. In school 2 (middle class pupils), some teachers referred to a specific male teacher. All the teachers who brought up this case referred to his “strange” behaviour - “like a homosexual” - as well as to his different style of instructing, which was described as very effective. Teachers said that he usually closed the door of his classroom and left a note on it saying not to disturb the class. According to these teachers, everyone, even the school head, who was a very authoritative woman, respected him. Nevertheless, this male teacher was forced out of the school because the parents saw his presence teaching young children as “unnatural”, thinking that he represented a threat to the children.

Similarly, one mother from a disadvantaged economic and social background rejected the idea of having a male teacher inside primary school classrooms; her fear was that the children could be sexually molested. Another mother from a similar background said that a male teacher would be better in terms of the discipline and would impose more authority. Many times during the interview, she mentioned that she was having problems with her son who had been expelled from school because of his inappropriate behaviour. It is interesting to notice that both men and women teachers are accepted inside school as long as they get the “right posts” and these posts correspond to the sexual division of roles and work in society as a whole - command, authority and control for male teachers - caring and instilling discipline for female teachers.

Primary-school teachers are mainly women and this allows the community to envisage “other educational roles” inside schools as natural. These “other educational roles” refer not only to formal education, but also to the social and emotional work performed primarily by

women. Thus, in a sense, the acceptance of roles outside formal education does not simply reflect that there is no other place to deal with social problems, but it is also gender-directed. The imposition of “other roles” in primary school is a consequence of women’s presence there. These “other objectives” are directly associated with roles usually performed by women: eg.: pastoral care, psychological assistance, child care, among other helping work. “It is against this background of expectation and experience that the primary teacher who wants to break out of male/female stereotypes has to act” (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989). This is a form of exploitation of female workers by demanding free domestic or caring services in the formal labour market.

7.4- Verbal and Physical Aggression against Women Teachers - Issues of Gender and Race

Verbal and even physical aggression was reported by 42% of teachers as being directed against them by pupils and parents in the three poorest schools. These events were confirmed in the “book of occurrences” where disciplinary problems are recorded⁶. These verbal and sometimes physical abuses experienced by women teachers are an expression of sexism (Mignioulo and Lyon, 1989). According to teachers, abuse occurs because of parents’ dissatisfaction with the teaching practice *per se* but, more frequently, it is a response to teachers’ attitudes towards the pupils and during strikes. The way a teacher treated a pupil, expectations in terms of caring and personal involvement with the pupils, or a pupil’s failure to be promoted to another level at the school, led to most incidents. A few teachers (8%) in this study were sensitive to the devaluation of teachers by parents. As a way of justifying their work, teachers usually referred to the importance of their work in terms of education of the citizen and for the well-being of society. This was a rather romantic approach,

⁶- A “book of occurrence” refers to a book kept in every school to record all the decisions related to disciplinary problems between teachers, parents and/or pupils.

a way teachers use to elevate their status and the importance of their work.

Case 3, p. 8: “ ... A politician, a senator, a president born from the hands of a primary school teacher”.

Again, teachers defined themselves as “professionals” and based on that, they deserved to be treated with respect. However, as Biklen (1995) states, while teachers are important figures in people’s lives - “either positively or negatively” - they have not reached professional status nor achieved power over how people perceive them.

Case 1, p. 6/7: “...last year ... one mother argued with me ...I was teaching arts ... Then there was a fight between two pupils. ... Then, at the end to the class, one mother was shouting: ... ‘I am going to beat you (teacher)’... She was threatening me, you know? ... To beat me! ... Because I just called ... attention of her daughter ... Everybody was ‘afraid’ of the mother ... Then the case was discussed in the ‘Colegiado’. I had the opportunity ... to explain to her. ... She said during this meeting ... that she did not like me. ... I said that “Not liking me is one thing, that is fine, but you must respect me. ... I am a professional, I am a teacher! ... I am not afraid! ...” But no one (staff) helped me. ...”.

Teachers’ reactions to pupils aggressions have other implications. As can be seen below, the manner in which pupils relate to female teachers is very instructive.

Case 47, p. 5: “... In many cases the mother cannot cope with the pupil; the father beats him (pupil). But, if the teacher calls the pupil’s attention or if she does not want him inside classroom, then the mother complains. ... these people’s reality is very hard ... Then they do not know how to separate the professional side from the personal side. ... Ah, they say ... that they will attack other people (you)! ‘You (the teachers) are bums⁷! I am going to catch you (the teacher) in the street!’ ... We call the mother and talk and explain everything ... But they (mothers) think that we have to cope! She does not cope, but we have to cope (laughs). (What kind of problems did you have with pupils?) ... They are very aggressive all the time ... you have to watch yourself all the time, because if you try to ‘meet force with force’

7- In this case, the father was angry with teachers because they were in strike. Thus, he meant that teachers were complaining about nothing important, not wanting to work and leaving the pupils with no classes. The idea is that teachers had nothing to complain, they were just making a “show” to escape from work.

with them, you are going to lose, because they will attack you and you cannot attack them back. Because it is not our behaviour. ... when you tell the boy: '... Silence!' ... (pupil replies in a rude way) Then you have to shut up and leave him to shut his mouth, because if you try to confront him you are going to lose. ... this was only the biggest incident. But I know that it happens, because when the teacher tries to match forces, then she loses, you know".

The description above shows how male pupils find positions in schools which confirm their advantageous "macho" position in society. In the "book of occurrence" of each school visited, boys' names involved in disciplinary problems appeared far more often than girls' names. Note also the way teachers describe the impotence of the mother to deal with the pupil and the use of force by the father to correct the pupil's discipline. It is interesting to note how some women teachers perpetuate their position as the "second sex", even when relating as adults with male pupils. These teachers appear resigned to violence from male pupils as if it were normal. These findings echo the studies of Bailey (1996), Walkerdine (1981; 1990), and Stanworth (1981) regarding the difficulties, discriminations and stereotypes women teachers face from male pupils. These authors see schools as institutions guided by male values. All of these studies explored how boys, even at an early age, manage to exert power over their female teachers. The example above represents a teachers' discourse that was well discussed by Walkerdine (1990, p. 5) in her study:

"... Although they are not physically grown men, they can take the positions of men through language, and in so doing gain power which has material effects. Their power is gained by refusing to be constituted as the powerless objects in her discourse and recasting her as the powerless objects of theirs ... she has not ... ceased to be a teacher, but what is important is that she has ceased to signify as one: she has been made to signify as the powerless object of male sexual discourse. ... Boys are not ... powerless children oppressed by the ... bourgeois educational institution or simply as the perpetrators of patriarchal social relations ... they indeed have the potential to be produced as subjects/objects in both discourses, but inherent in the discursive positioning are different positions of power".

The actual meaning of the discourses of teachers has to be understood by taking into consideration "their words and the contextual frames" which influence these discourses

(Biklen, 1995, p. 20). As in Walkerdine's research (1990), the discourse of the teacher cited above shows her understanding (acceptance and explanation) of the behaviour of male pupils involves a child-centred psychological and pedagogical approach⁸. This psychologism has also influenced Brazilian education since the 1950s as has been previously discussed. This approach seems to have lasted until now. See the cases below:

Case 20, p. 6/9: "... in the other school ... One of the mothers was an 'alcoholic'. Then one day she came in the afternoon ... The first time we got very upset and the other times she was stopped. That day no one noticed that she was drunk. ... She came that day to attack a teacher with an umbrella which was given her by that teacher. I got so desperate! ... She beat the umbrella against the windows! ... I tried to talk to her. Then she shouted: "you are a prostitute! There are just prostitutes here! You do not like my son because he is black, because I am poor, because I live in the favela! ... (I said:) "Calm down! You are right, everybody here is a hooker"! ... I said to her ... "I do not want him in the class of that hooker"! ... I was so terrified to be beaten with that umbrella (laughs) ... the school assistant did not believe that I had that courage (laughs). And even the man (school assistant) ... did not had the courage to take the umbrella from her! ...".

Case 9, p. 5: "(How is your relationship with the pupils?) This happens naturally, some times we are in the middle of math class ... We go (to the pupil's table) to correct ... then the pupil says: 'Teacher, can I talk to you?' ... If there is a boy that has a problem, then discreetly, I correct the notebooks and say to him: "Look, at the end of the class you wait for me because I want to talk to you". And then I start to talk. ... Here we have time for that, but in the other school there was no time. Then I arrived early ... I live in ... (neighbouring city) ... Then I always arrived half an hour early. Then, during this half hour I talked to people that I wanted to ...".

Parents' frustrated expectations lead to aggression against teachers, involving both gender and race. As was discussed in Chapter 2, black people are commonly associated with negative features in Brazil (Gomes, 1995)⁹. Indeed, it is not rare to hear the comment "this is a black person's work" when referring to a job done badly. Thus, it was not surprising to find

⁸- See Steedman (1985) about child-centred pedagogy and the discourse of "good teaching - good mothering" (Froebel pedagogy) in the 19th century (see also Miller, 1996).

⁹- See more about this issue in Weiler (1991) - "institutional" racism in American society where people of colour are seen as "deviant" from the "white norm".

parents who associated the work of black women teachers- with bad teaching. In two different schools, black teachers described situations in which both black and white parents made comments about the teachers' skin colour, relating it to their competence to teach. In one of the schools (School 1), a black mother arrived at school angry with a teacher (who was also black) and then criticized the teacher's method of solving a discipline problem in her classroom. In another school (School 2), the aggressor was a white mother who made racist comments when a black woman was elected school deputy. According to a teacher, the mother said that she was sorry that a "better candidate" (referring to the deputy head's skin colour) had not been chosen (see Figure 7.3 and 7.4). Here we can see that the social image of teachers goes beyond gender to include racial aspects.

Case 23, p. 4/5: "... sometimes they (parents) want more than they can get ... from the school. ... There are parents who complain, for example, if you give homework today ... But sometimes parents do not understand it, they want the notebook corrected everyday! ... (How does the school deal with problems between parents and teachers?) (School managers) call the father (parents) for a meeting with the teacher... If the problem is serious, and I think it never happened, just once with one father ... said that: the teacher was black. She was not totally black, she was a 'mulata'. Then, one mother attacked her ... She (the mother) said: "You are 'a niger'! ... that is why you are incompetent!" ... She attacked the teacher in a way that had nothing to do with the professional (ability) ... But it seems that the mother was not mentally normal (laughs)"¹⁰.

¹⁰- These two mothers involved in the incident were called for a meeting at the "colegiado". There, they were told that their comments were unacceptable. No other action was taken against these mothers.

Although racism was not recognized at this school, one of the teachers expressed her belief in a racial struggle for change. See Figure 7.5.

Figure 7.3- Note the school deputy head to the left of the priest.

Figure 7.4- A classroom in the school where this deputy head works. The number of black pupils (few) and black teachers (only one “parda”) is certainly low. However, according to the school head, there were **no** black pupils at the school.



Figure 7.5- The posters below were found in the classroom of a black teacher. She was one of the teachers who described a racist attack from parents. She may have expressed in these posters her belief in a struggle for change. This material was found in a school where the school head (also darker skin) said there were no black teachers among the staff. See translations below:

“Life”

Life is a struggle.
 Life is worth.
 Life is divine.
 Viva Life!

“The Mulata”

“The mulata Divina is experienced (well lived).
 Divina struggles and changes her life.
 (Obs.: Divina is a name but also means divine).



Most teachers react passively and with understanding when faced with aggression from parents. This is similar to the ways in which women are taught to react to similar situations in society. While teachers expressed that they certainly were not happy with the conditions of work they had to bear, most of them did not have the choice to leave. In addition to this, schools had no effective ways of punishing pupils who act in this manner. Moreover, the violence perpetuated against women teachers inside schools, and the manner in which it was reacted against by school's managers, perpetuate the traditional position of women in society, because women teachers are constantly blamed for such incidents.

The violence directed at women teachers at school seems to be validated in the discourse of the government and the media (see Figures 7.6 and 7.7). In Brazil, ideas of sacrifice and maternity in teaching continue to be reinforced (Rocha, 1997, Louro, 1997). Some teachers were not able to recognize the devaluation of their status was a gendered condition. Yet they had a negative view of the treatment teachers received from society. See the case below:

Case 3, p. 8/9: "... we are marginalized by society. During strikes, (we are called by parents:) 'bums, you do not want to work! Look at the bunch of teachers in the street, rather than staying in the schools!' ... Parents rather than supporting us ... We have been called ... even as 'badly married' (you have married badly)¹¹! ... if we were not well-paid, it was because we were badly married. (Who said it?) One governor ... Helio Garcia. Francelino sprayed water at us with a hose pipe ... Never mind it because it was a very hot day! (laughs). (Why do you think teachers are treated like that?) Because they are fools. ... It is again teachers' education. A better educated teacher ... with more education, he would have conditions to claim more".

¹¹ - The use of the term "badly married" is used to indicate that the woman did not get married to a man that could supply all the material conditions for her to stay at home. The governor of the state of Minas Gerais once used this term to indicate that if the teachers, all women, were complaining about their salary it was because they did not find a suitable person to maintain them economically. Thus, they were "badly married". The opposite of this term, "well married", usually means that the woman found a man with a good economic situation that would allow her to stay at home or if she wanted to work, there would be no pressure for money. This episode was published in the local newspaper at the time and confirmed in other studies (see eg. in Rocha, 1997).

Figure: 7.6- Press cutting describing the aggression by police officers, under government orders, against teachers on strike.

“... a history teacher (male) Nilton Francisco Cardoso, that had his head hurt by a police officer ... Remembering what happened (he) ... said he was hurt when he was trying to protect a teacher (woman). He said that when he saw that the policeman was trying to spank a teacher on her abdomen, he (Nilton) pulled her by her arm taking her away from the policemen’s gun by using his other hand ...” (Hoje em Dia, 13/june/1991, p. 14 - Teachers’ Union Archive).

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Figure 7.7- Press cutting once again demonstrating the aggressive behaviour of the government against teachers on strike.

“Category has always been repressed”

“Teachers of public schools have always been the object of repression from the police during the strike movements ... In a manifestation of the category in 1979, teachers, mostly women, were object of great police repression ... interference of the Fire Department that aimed their water hoses to disperse teachers ... water from a dirty river ... From that time on, strikes became a symbol of the category ...” (06/june/1991, p. 11).

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LEGAL ISSUES



The government, as well as the parents, are not "... monsters, they are responding to a conditioning process which must be readdressed" (Lyon and Mignuolo, 1989, p. 161). This "process of conditioning" is perpetuated and validated by different social vehicles, such as the media, the Church and also the state. In addition to the validation of women's position as "second class citizens" in society, there are pressures in the micro-system, inside schools. Here, "... micro-political processes in the organization operate to inhibit change, to maintain the status quo" (Ball, 1987, p. 279). In this manner, the close relationship which exists between women teachers and pupils (children) makes it difficult for women to resist the association of teaching with maternity, socialization of children, pastoral work and charity (see Lyon and Mignuolo, 1989; in Brazil, Durães, 1994). What teachers experience specifically in each school context seems to have great impact on them as persons and consequently as professionals (Ball, 1987). Teachers educate themselves through their experiences both in private and professional contexts (Butt et al, 1992). Interaction between contexts - in this case schools - will shape their professional behaviour¹².

Ball (1987, p. 197) stated that "femininity is confirmed or fulfilled in a woman's work role, those particular aspects of femininity which posit women as desirable sex objects can and do interfere in relations at work¹³". Women teachers, like any other women in other work places, seem to have their "femininity" confirmed and required inside schools, although the roles required here seem to be appropriate to the context of teaching young children. Schools and (women) teachers are involved, whether they want to be or not, with parents in their attempt to help the parents solve personal problems. The kind of services Brazilian schools seem to be providing for parents and pupils are in terms of protection, social work, pastoral and emotional support, materials, restaurants and a "children's storehouse".

12- Ball (1987), in his study of young teachers as agents of change in schools, states that the context of school has great influence "on what the changes are, and whose interests it advances".

13- Witz and Savage (1992) discuss attempts to "de-eroticise" women in organizations while preserving the idea of them being "feminine enough" (eg. clothes of women managers).

7.5- Conclusion

Specific complaints made by teachers about problems with parents and pupils vary from school to school. Common to the three poor schools visited, the cultural gaps which exist between schools/teachers and clients from poor communities results in the involvement of teachers with the domestic affairs of pupils and local communities. Teachers seem to have a dichotomous position in regard to the participation of parents. They are critical of poor communities and attempt to “convert” them to a different culture: their culture. They tend to see working class parents as “culturally inferior” and unable to educate their offspring.

Complaints of teachers were also directed at the way that pupils from poor communities are left to the care of the school. Many teachers said that when the family does not care about the child, then some one else has to, and that is the school most of the time. Teachers expressed great frustration over attempting to replace the family in their struggle to supply family absence or to guarantee even minimum learning. Indeed, in the poor areas which were studied, teachers face social problems that make their work extremely difficult. Besides, there are pupils who lack basic needs and do not receive the minimum necessities of life. The poverty of the pupils leads most of these women teachers to become involved in other activities outside and inside school in an attempt to improve pupils’ lives. Their actions appear to be similar to the traditional roles expected from women in society: emotional support, childcare, the education of the citizen and teaching of moral values. The specificities of a workplace seem to be a powerful element which changes any professional. In the case of women teachers in primary schools, they have to face the “social ghosts” which establish links between the education of young children and their roles in the family.

Thus, poverty and “family negligence” are the main reasons given by the interviewees to explain the expansion of teachers’ roles inside schools. However, in contexts where women are not asked to become involved in roles other than teaching, teachers have focused their attention on teaching alone, including employing suitable methods of teaching and developing the curriculum.

Women teachers develop a “style of practice with which they were personally identified and for which they felt personally responsible” (Grumet, 1988). Despite being very critical about the way parents educate their children, teachers seem to be aware of parents’ perception of their work. Pressure from parents, whether real or imagined, is real for teachers, and their work is affected by it. In these poor areas, schools were points of reference for the community to solve their problems. Indeed, schools were involved in solving basic community problems, many not related to school life. There is also the traditional relation of poor people in Brazil with people in better economic situation. Thus, these people expect paternalistic treatment from those in a higher social and economic class in society. Schools and teachers have their work influenced by these aspects, and as teachers are women, traditional roles of women in society are naturally expected from them.

Added to the expectations described above, women teachers are also subject to the other not very pleasant ways of treating women in society. These are the physical and verbal violence and racism from parents and pupils, which these women suffer. Teachers’ workplace replicates structures of domesticity and of female identity (Grumet, 1988).

Women teachers’ gendered identity was constructed during their personal lives, but it is confirmed in schools (Grumet, 1988; Lelis, 1997). This chapter shows how women teachers are subject - as well as receptive - to the gendered stereotypes held by parents and pupils about women in teaching. Parents and pupils appear to be major agents which compel and influence women teachers to extend their services to include an involvement with domestic and personal problems of school clients. But teachers are not mere bystanders; they gain from “seducing” parents into promoting a gendered stereotype at school.

Chapter 8

Influence of School Managers on Teachers' Work

8.1- Introduction

This chapter investigates how women teachers have had their work roles domesticized by the influence of the school managers. By school managers I mean the school head and the educational specialists (supervisor and counsellor). School managers, like teachers, are in the great majority women. As noted in Chapter 2, in the municipal schools of Belo Horizonte, women dominate the teaching and technical-administrative posts.

In the fieldwork for this thesis, special attention was given to school heads, since the number of educational specialists in schools has decreased in the last years. This is because there is no longer a selection (examination entry) for these posts in municipal schools, so that some of the schools visited had fewer educational specialists (supervisor and counsellor) than others. According to the educational specialists interviewed, their colleagues who were retiring were not being replaced and schools were left without pedagogical support¹. In the long term, this position (educational specialist) will probably cease to exist, at least in the local educational system of Belo Horizonte.

Understanding the attitude of school managers, and specifically school heads, seems important in order to understand how women teachers have had their work domesticized under the leadership of women in these posts of authority. School managers have always enjoyed high status in schools compared to teachers. The personal and professional interests of these

¹ - Educational specialists (supervisor and counsellor) are being replaced by what is called a "school coordinator". This is a teacher elected among other teachers in the school. These individuals perform very similar roles as did their superiors - educational specialists - and earn a teachers' salary.

individuals have important implications for the domestication of the roles of teachers, and for the image held by the school community of the roles of women teachers.

8.2- School Managers: Ideal of Teaching Based on Their Woman's Background

Like women teachers, school managers (school head and educational specialists) also made their professional choices under the influence of gender, but unlike women teachers, the school managers interviewed for this study were more positive about their chosen career. Older school managers expressed their deep emotional drive to become teachers. They referred to their family as being proud of having a teacher in the family. As Lelis (1997) states, "dispositions for a professional qualification are born in a remote past in institutions like the family". See case below:

School supervisor A/School 3 - "... when I got my teaching diploma ... my father said 'Sister, my daughter was born a teacher. She came here just to pick up the diploma'. Really, I was born a teacher, I always liked it ... Then I came to Belo Horizonte ... to work as a secretary in DNER ... I worked in a room with air conditioning, a wonderful boss, electric typewriter ... When my appointment was published (to work in a school) I jumped with happiness. I was going to earn half of my salary, working in a favela ... and then I started my work as a teacher ... I worked for 16 years as teacher ... 'It has been 45 years of teaching and I would start everything again'. I would do exactly the same".

Others described the persistence they needed to enter teaching, when their families (usually the father) were unhappy with their choice and tried to convince them to choose a different, better-paid and higher-status profession. These women had both the opportunity and incentive to choose another career, but persisted in their choice. In the case below, the choice of this school manager was not motivated by a career ambition, but mainly by group pressure.

School supervisor B/school 3 - "... my father was a teacher ... He did not want me to be a teacher because his mother was a teacher for 35 years and she had a very poor retirement ... But ... I had a group of friends (girls) and all of them were going to do the teachers' training course. I did not know what I wanted from

life, if I wanted to be a teacher or not. But I could not lose my friends ... It was a great friendship ... When I finished the course, I wanted to work ... To work in a school was another problem with my father: 'How can someone earn 800 cruzeiros! ...' It was 40 years ago (laughs) ...”.

Many of these women had remained in the profession for a long time, having taken time to raise families and later enrolled in university courses in “pedagogy” to occupy their time. Those who had a career “up-grading” had it almost by accident - the opportunity was presented to them; it was not a goal that had been pursued all through life.

School supervisor A/school 3: “... my husband said: ‘Are you going to work in it (teaching) all your life? ... Despite the fact that you like it, one day you are going to get tired ... Why don’t you do the pedagogy course ... And it will not be so much work’. Then I started pedagogy. I took it. At the time I already had three children ...”.

Women interviewed, including the younger educational specialists, seemed to have had their professional choices influenced by families, but not because of economic restrictions. Some described how once they became educational specialists, they were stuck in this work. The option of some of these women for becoming a school specialist was due to the limitation of their previous training (teachers’ training course) which did not prepare them to qualify for the more competitive university courses. See interview below:

School counsellor/School 3 - “I became a teacher because of my family ... I had no option. I wanted to do the ‘cientifico’ and they did not allow me. ... then when I finished the teaching training course I soon found a job ... Then I noticed that I was good at this job even though I had never played ‘teacher’ as a child ...I had no ability for that! ... I hated to look at teachers! ... Because since I understand myself as a person, teachers are badly paid ... I fought to leave it. I did many courses and I could not leave this profession. (Why?) I do not know! It is funny, I could not! I was stopped in everything! (How?) I was stopped ... I entered in selections (for jobs), I studied for that, I struggled and I never passed the entrance examination ...”.

The social and economic background of these women seems to have a strong influence on how they act inside school and also over what they expect from women teachers in their schools (see also section 8.3). The way they judge a “good” or a “bad” teacher, the qualities and problems they point out about teachers show that they value a type of teacher whose behaviour approaches the traditional model of teachers in primary schools. They appear to value features such as sacrifice, abnegation, and emotional involvement with pupils. And these features were usually said to be present in women.

The values held by school managers about teaching are important since these people give positive feedback to women teachers about their work. Thus, they value traditional stereotypes about women in teaching. See the comments below, part of a text distributed by a supervisor to teachers in one of the schools visited (Figure 8.1) and a point of view published in a national magazine (Figure 8.2).

School supervisor/school 1, p. 17/18: “...women teachers ... are more caring. They have that ability exactly because of that feminine side, like mothers. The majority are like that ... they are patient. In Brazilian society ... women are responsible for this, to take care of the children. Even now that many men are helping, it is not the same. When things get difficult, it is really the women who will be there (laughs) ... Even if I think that the male presence at school ...is interesting because it will have that male relation ... It would be interesting because the pupils (male) would have both sides ... But women are more sensitive. Men are more pragmatic. He solves things in a more practical way. He does not get upset if the pupil cries ...”.

Figure 8.1- The Prayer of the Master. The text below was distributed by a supervisor to teachers in one of the schools visited. The text clearly reinforces stereotypical attitudes.

“The Prayer of the Master” (by Gabriela Mistral)

“God You who taught me, sorry that I teach too; for also being called ‘master’ ...

Give me the unique love of my school, that not even the pain of beauty is able to steal the softness of all my instants ...

Give me that I be the mother of the mothers, that I love and protect, as they do, what is not part of me (blood of my blood) ...

Make me strong, even despite my basic position as a woman, as a poor woman.

Make me indifferent to all power that is not pure, to all pressure that is not Your ardent wish for my life ...

Help me when times I will not have anyone but only You ... Make me free of being complicated or banal ... Make me avoid the eyes of hurt hearts ... every morning in my school.

That I do not bring to my work ... my little pains ...” (Obs.: Only part of the text was translated).

Figure 8.2- Press cutting from a national magazine in which a woman teacher expresses her point of view about being called "auntie" by pupils.

"Teacher is not a relative"

"Call me teacher. I am a professional of the education and I am auntie of no one"
(box)

(The teacher described her first day in a classroom. When introduced to pupils, they called her "auntie." Humiliated, she told them that she was not their auntie. At the same day she was called at the school managers' office. See below)

"... 'I am auntie of no one, I am a teacher'. ... The children looked at me with surprise ... That day did not end without been called by the school administration and obliged to make an option between the nickname or the job. Frustrated, I chose the second option and I taught my 'nephews' for ten years ... When I moved to Porto Alegre and entered in the state system of education then I decided to restore my professional identity and, from that time on, I never allowed any pupil to call me auntie ... Auntie is that person in the family that has no commitment in terms of the education of the nephews ... she does not educate, discipline or teach ... The master can and must be ... caring, patient ... but she has to demand ... obligations and respect ... normal in the teachers-pupils relationship ... We need to be aware of our importance as educators and not to be "pretend-parents" expected to give gifts and cuddles ...". (22/March/1995).

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In the case above (supervisor/school 1, p. 17/18), one can see how these women make a clear division of spheres for men and women inside school. Even men (teachers) cannot escape from a gender stereotyping of their roles at school. The presence of men was seen as necessary to change relations, conditions of work, or disciplinary problems inside schools. Women were seen as unable to make their work conditions better. See the case below:

School supervisor/school 3: “ ... the male presence ... brings another vision of more dedication at work! In terms of duties and attitudes! He is more original. And woman is more influenced. She is influenced by the collective ... I think that men ... claim more and defend more their point of view, do not accept things and fight for it ... Women are more accepting. It is more difficult! Today, some women are standing out ... but men in general, he imposes more ... Not that he is a better professional ... It is not common ... even if a young man wanted to do the teachers’ training course he would not be well accepted ...”.

Compared to the idea (previously described here) about men being more professional than women, one can conclude that school managers probably do not see school as a place of work like any other. Schools and teaching would be that part of the labour market where “women’s qualities” are in demand. If schools and teaching do not require professional skills, but a vocation, then it opens space for the domestic and the intuitive.

School head/school 2; p. 5/8: “... Then, I think that the involvement is great! It is almost like a second maternity. We get involved from head to toe ... I don’t think ... (that teaching is a profession). I think it goes beyond that. I think the involvement is so big that ... it is almost altruism (donation) ... We start to feel like the school is our house too. I think that it is really difficult to see the professional, to separate emotional involvement from school ...”

Interesting how “to be a professional” is related to being insensitive, organized, neutral: Characteristics usually identified by these school people as men’s characteristics. Most of the school managers interviewed saw women as better primary school teachers. They showed admiration for teachers who provided material help (food, clothes, money, etc) and emotional support to the families of pupils. On the other hand, educational specialists criticized the fact

that the school was involved in tasks which went far beyond formal education. These school managers were therefore ambiguous in their perceptions of school. They criticized the excess of roles taken on by schools in poor communities, but at the same time they idealized a woman teacher and a school performing such roles. This non-definition about what schools should be doing also allows the penetration at schools of free domestic labour which female staff have been required to take on².

School supervisor C/school 3: "... unfortunately the school has not been ... a school ... it became a medical and odontological centre, and we became social workers ... the last thing in all of this is the school in itself ... Today, too many things are expected from school (!), in addition to teaching how to read and write ... Then, they began to transfer, to delegate ... many other roles that were not school's roles ... And what were schools roles ... have been lost more and more! What we should be teaching ... to prepare them ... I mean in terms of content ... every year the program, the curriculum is diluted, ... impoverished ...".

School supervisor A/school 3: "... I have been in teaching for more than 40 years ... the school has left what it was its initial proposal as a place to learn how to read, to be prepared for life, to then be transformed and serve pupils in ... the social aspects of their life".

School supervisor C/ school 3: "... This (paternalism) disturbs me ... because in the labour market, everyone will be the same! If he (pupil) wants to compete ... he needs a good education ... But we see them (pupils from poor communities) like that: 'Poor kids! They are from the favela, then I will teach only the basic³, because they can not learn more than that'. ... What is necessary for them is improvement in the quality of public schools and not promoting aid services. (Why is there this aid approach?) School ... is a point of reference for the region. Then the homeless from floods, the epidemics, everything is gathered in the school. (These people think): 'Who is going to help us? It will be the school' ... (I think that) there should be doctors, ... dentists for the community but not at the school ... School is for other things, it is not (to be) a restaurant, or (to see) a dentist or a doctor or for homeless. Everything is sent to school!! ... What are the roles of the school? What is its main role? It should not be this way".

Thus, it seems that women in management posts - particularly the younger ones -while

2- Warton et al (1992), referring to the Australian context, suggest that some factors combined account to give to teaching "lack of clarity" in terms of roles. Teaching is a labour process that does not "produce visible and quantifiable effects" (pp. 170). Thus, it is difficult to specify teachers' tasks. Warton et al suggest that the tasks performed by teachers may vary from those considered professional tasks (eg.: "teaching, reading") to those "which require no special skills (eg.; marking the roll). The nature of teachers' work, the teachers' daily routine are "ambiguous, with undefined duties extending beyond class hours, and with some tasks explicitly mandated" (Kerchner and Mitchell, cited in Warton et al, 1992, p. 170).

3- Meaning that they will teach the very basic part of the curriculum.

admiring the “individual charitable” actions of teachers towards pupils, rejected the idea that these were compulsory. They recognized that certain roles were not appropriate for the school, but they did nothing to prevent them. They actually promoted a school-wide effort to provide material help to pupils and called teachers to get involved in problems at the local community.

School managers were very sensitive to poverty. Their concern, especially school heads’, was not limited to problems at the school and they were often involved in community problems outside the school. Despite criticizing the excess of tasks taken on board by schools today, school managers do not reject the idea that schools should take care of the children in case of parents’ failure (in their opinion) or negligence. Rather, through their practice, they have “mothered the community” and at the same time promoted the expectation of this behaviour in the school community.

The age of school managers is another factor which seems to influence their opinion on their purpose as school managers, as well as their expectations of teachers’ behaviour. The young educational specialists show a better understanding that women teachers have no time to fulfil the expectation of a “mission” in teaching anymore. The central excuse for these women not getting involved in other activities in the community other than schooling was that they had to work other shifts to complement their families’ income. Nonetheless, even the youngest educational specialists retain traditional gendered stereotypes about the roles of women and men in society. See the interview below (a supervisor in her thirties):

School supervisor/school 1, p. 15: “... Today, they (teachers) do not like it, but in the past it (teaching work) was like a mission, a sacrifice! ... Today ... we have thousands of things to do. So everything is done in a hurry! You have to try to do ... everything at work because if you do not, you go home and you have a thousand things to solve, domestic problems, husband, children ... So, there isn’t much time to be ... planning”.

Conflicts between school managers and women teachers were often caused by the expectations school managers had of teachers. Many teachers expressed their disagreement with demands made on them by school heads, and so they said they resisted or had to accept them.

to avoid problems.

8.3- Social and Economic Background of Women in Posts of Command

A way of understanding the behaviour of women school managers, especially school heads, is by taking their social and economic background into consideration. In this way, some questions must be addressed: Who has access to command inside schools? What are the social background of these women? Do these women school heads incarnate the ideology which normally dominates such posts?

The school managers interviewed in this study had a different economic and social position compared to the teachers interviewed⁴. They belonged to families where parents and husbands were mostly educated and had an above average income. These women showed extreme care and skill when talking about either their actions or those of any of the staff.

Thus, the relationship between school managers and teachers seems to be determined not only on the basis that all the participants are women, but also that they represent different social groups. The female managers exercise power over women teachers, who in most cases are socially and economically disadvantaged compared to these senior women. This social difference may also explain why women in positions of authority in schools behave in such an authoritarian manner. These women transferred patterns of behaviour they learned in their social group (towards their “inferiors”) to school relations. In other words, they transfer group ideas of social stratification to their work relations with women from groups usually deprived of power. Power appears to be inherited by an individual with a privileged background. Despite being women, and hence exploited by men, women school managers find ways to exploit other women. However, these same school heads, when they are conscious of the “disadvantaged” people under their domain, have a paternalistic (benevolent but patronizing)

4- This statement is made based on an assessment of their manners, their grammar and speech, and the care they took in expressing their opinion, as well as on the basis of their personal information in terms of family income and family background.

approach. This behaviour again reflects their group “habitus”, which gives them a notion of self-superiority and places them in the traditional position of women from better economic backgrounds; but also gives them a philanthropic approach toward those who are in need in society.

Inasmuch as not every teacher in schools visited behaved in a submissive manner, not all school heads were authoritarian. Conflicts identified in visited schools between teachers and school managers showed that conflicts were usually caused by women teachers from a similar or better economic and social background⁵. The economic stability enjoyed by a few teachers gave them the option to resist school heads, since they did not rely on their salary to support their families. Those with a better education (university degree) were those who mostly showed resistance to the school managers’ demands. They were usually better informed about their rights and were more critical about the way school heads and other school managers behaved in schools.

Case 26, p. 11/12: “... We have an educational counsellor ... that unfortunately never works ... Comparing ... what I learned at the university (pedagogia) ... her work and the difficulties we have here with the pupils, I expected ... (help). We gave it up (to have her help) a long time ago. (Can you exemplify?)... one boy beat one of the teachers ... Then, he started to kick everybody in the school ... She (school counsellor) came in and called his attention, made him sign an ‘occurrence’ and that was it. ... I taught groups of pupils that had sexual problems. It happens a lot! Then, we tried to work it out, but we needed counselling. And we never got it. Usually she was worried about organizing parties with the boys (pupils) ...”.

British and North American literature on gendered leadership issues commonly identifies differences of styles between female and male managers (Adler et al, 1993; Gold, 1995). If taken the literature definition of what a male leadership style is, one could say that

⁵- As said earlier, I am aware that the definition of a class as agents that “occupy similar position ... under similar conditions ... probably will have similar attitudes and interests ... so will be similar their practice and position taken” is a theoretical definition, as Bourdieu (1989) affirmed. As the author said, a “real class” does not exist, but what exists is “a space of relations which is as real as the geographical space, in which the changes of positions” are done through “the work, in efforts and ... over time” (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 137).

women managers interviewed have not taken such a different style. In this manner, they are emphasizing hierarchy, excessive control and authoritarianism over staff. The hypotheses that there is a male and female style of management does not seem to provide all the explanation for the behaviour of women in headship, since this study found that women do not match the literature description of the "female style of management". Like in any working environment, women teachers are exposed to forms of power relations and culture within schools. Some identify these power relations as patriarchal (Densmore, 1987; Witz and Savage, 1992)⁶. One might think that a patriarchal form of power is absent in Brazilian schools since they are mainly staffed by women. Such statement was denied by Assunção (1994), about Brazilian schools. She says that despite the almost complete absence of men in primary schools, these organizations are male-oriented. As Witz and Savage (1992) affirm, an increased number of women in a profession does not necessarily result in the organization being any less patriarchal. Even under female leadership, patriarchal forms of control are noticed (Ball, 1987). The "feminisation" of a profession implies that the workers in this area have been "barred from effective organizational power" (Savage cited in Witz and Savage, 1992, p. 12). This seems representative of the Brazilian reality - or at least to the school system visited - considering for example the remote possibility of promotion (vertical). Thus, despite the idea that there can be a "female style of management" which is "flat" (egalitarian), the social class of women makes it unlikely that they will work to establish such a style of management. Such a conclusion needs to be further explored. Women school managers may promote a different ethos inside school than male school managers, as stated by Ball (1987). This is certainly not a final conclusion, since to pursue this topic I would require more data and this question was not central to my research. Nonetheless, I wish to make clear that I am sceptical that women and men necessarily have different management styles, they may have a different management "mission statement" (see section 8.5.2). My data indicate that some women in school headship assume a very authoritarian style of management (it could be a different authoritarian style).

⁶- Others have seen power relations as a consequence of the hierarchical structure of education that defines the management's roles in it (Adler et al, 1993).

These are women (from a wealthier background) who are capable of seeing themselves in positions of power in school. Their social background and the resulting class-based values greatly influence the way these women act. Their gendered position might serve to make them even more resistant to change, since they see themselves as “protectors of good manners” and of those in need. Women have been very important in maintaining the values of our society and preserving society’s *status quo* (class, gender, race) (Lather 1994).

8.4- School Managers Difficulties in Adapting to a Democracy Inside Municipal School in Belo Horizonte

School managers (school heads and educational specialists) have experienced difficulties in adapting to the new “democracy” inside school. With the introduction of democratic elections for school heads in the municipal schools of Belo Horizonte in 1989, the school community chooses the school head by voting. The following are considered the school community: parents, pupils over 16 years of age and all the school staff. Each individual vote is computed as one. Thus, the school staff’s votes are greatly largely outnumbered by the votes of parents and pupils.

Before democratic elections for the school administration were introduced, a school headship was a post occupied by individuals with political connections⁷. These school heads were important personnel for the government. They maintained tight control over what happened inside schools and obeyed government orders. It was common for teachers in this study to mention past experiences with authoritarian and repressive school heads, characterized by persecution and denunciations. Teachers had to obey the school managers in

7- “Politically connected” means that the school heads were people appointed by local politicians, ensuring their political control over schools and local communities. Thus, school heads were people trusted by local politicians.

order to avoid punishment, such as losing their jobs⁸.

Case 45, p. 1: "... There was a problem with the school head here. She was very dictatorial and at the time she had many problems with many teachers. Once one of the teachers confronted her and ... Then her (teacher) attitude was seen as abusive; as disrespectful to the authority (school head) ... Then later she (teacher) was sent out of school. Then ... later there was an amnesty (political amnesty) and she returned to school. (When did it happened?) Six years ago ... before this school head..."

Case 38, p. 9: "... At the time we used to make demands and to fight. And the school head did not want that. The school head wanted someone to say 'amen' to everything that she demanded. And we did not accept that. (And what did you fight for?) We wanted autonomy, we wanted to work together. We wanted to make decisions together and at the time things came from top to bottom. Then, you had to let them. Nothing was discussed with you. ... Things were imposed. ...".

Rocha (1997) points out that the introduction of democratic elections for school head was a success for teachers as well as an attempt to democratize schools. However, teachers' involvement in the pedagogical and in the democratic process of schools, as noticed by Rocha (1997), does not reveal the whole truth of the process. Many teachers in the present study expressed great anger about the recent changes in schools. This fact does invite questions as to whether or not teachers were really involved in promoting the changes inside schools, as the above author seems to believe.

The introduction of elections for school head has had many implications for the development of relationships in schools. According to many teachers, the elections for school head have introduced a feeling of freedom to schools. Teachers confirmed that only recently have they been able to participate in school decisions and to express their opinions. Yet, even today, many teachers (27%) interviewed still complained and feared school heads and other school managers.

Thirty-one percent (31%) of the teachers interviewed affirmed that school heads

⁸- The fear and terror of teachers were experienced in the context of the political dictatorship which ruled Brazil until the mid-80s.

continued to impose their wills on teachers. Ninety percent (90%) of teachers described attempts by school heads to control teachers' work. It seems that while teachers previously concentrated their efforts on resisting the government or the school managers as the common "enemy", nowadays, their energy is spent on conflicts between colleagues, between groups of colleagues supporting different school heads or even between teachers and parents. See the example below:

Case 3, p. 17/18: "... Teachers, staff and pupils can better evaluate (candidates) ... It is very easy to conquer the community. If the candidate has a better economic condition, then she goes up there (in the favela - which is on a hill) ... gives food, makes promises ... Parents get fascinated ... Then, it will be teachers on one side fighting against the community up there".

Case 2, p. 3/4: "... we elected the head thinking that she was an element who would give more to us ... fight for us ... But she was many times very authoritarian ... Sometimes she uses words that offend us ... Sometimes we want to do something and she does not accept it. Her opinion has to prevail over ours, so everything ends up in her way. ... Sometimes we stop doing things because there are limitations ... (What do you mean?) Sometimes we have very advanced ideas ... but you do not say anything because there is a 'wall' (a barrier), you know? (Who creates the 'wall'?) The school head".

School heads are not the only school managers to make use of an authoritarian approach to teachers. Educational specialists also manage to control teachers and appear to value and use an authoritarian style of management in their work. This authoritarian behaviour is perceived with a certain irritation by some teachers. See the example below:

Case 40, p. 7/8: "It is difficult, especially because it is only recently that the idea of specialists was modified ... they were not prepared to follow this new way of thinking ... All this authoritarianism exists in education because the government created these 'technicians' (educational specialists) ... to give orders to teachers. ... They (educational specialists) still do not accept it (the democratic changes inside schools and think:) 'Ah, the teachers have to work according to my way!' (Does it still happen?) Yes, indeed! (How teachers have reacted to it?) Many teachers accommodate the situation ... to avoid conflict. Others accept it, accept the control ... Then when you show what you are going to do, and insist on it, you create a

great conflict”.

Case 28, p. 5/6: “ ... here, people do not say everything they would like to say. And usually when they say - this has started recently - then the other person feels offended. ... We were having problems organizing the time-table ... Then there was a fight because of that ... between teachers and the administration ... Then later put on an angry face. This person (teacher who complained) was called to the administration office and they asked her if she had anything against the school head ...”.

Educational specialists expressed feelings of inadequacy and loss about their jobs, often making comments about the “good old days” when they enjoyed control and status. See the interview below:

School counsellor/School 1, p. 1/2: “ ... my training was too traditional, too authoritarian. Then, I have felt difficulties in dealing with it. (Which difficulties?) Difficulties in coordinating... a collective work, in which everybody thinks in the same way ... in being careful to respect the others, in not giving orders ... we did not learn to work collectively ... ‘He’ (but referring to woman teacher) is traditional, ‘he’ has ‘his’ own classroom and that is it ... I think that the most serious problem between teachers and me is the relationship. Also in terms of respect, trust ... To be honest, I am feeling inadequate ...”.

Other aspects of the relation between teachers and educational specialists showed evidence of an authoritarian pattern of controlling people. This included the use of harassment and verbal intimidation, as noted by many teachers (27%).

8.5- The “New” Relationship between School Managers and School Community

8.5.1- School Elections: Political Interests

The primary reason for conflict with school heads in this study was teachers’ suspicion that school heads (or candidates) were motivated by personal ambition in school elections or re-elections. Many teachers (42%) perceived that the elected school heads were very conscious of choosing a leadership style that would win sympathy among parents. Teachers said that the school heads focused attention on problems in the community, undermined teachers’ authority in terms of discipline or promotion, and rejected specific teaching styles and behaviour in their attempt to avoid conflict with parents.

Case 39, p. 15/16: “... the election caused problems ... in terms of discipline at the school ... it was said that many things could not be done because ... it would make them (school heads) lose votes ... People say that it is necessary to ‘cross their arms’ (let the community do what they want; not to censure pupils and parents in case of conflicts with the school or teachers) not to lose votes ... (How have teachers reacted to it?) ... we have reacted very badly because we are facing serious problems with pupils’ discipline. There are pupils that do not respect the teachers ... treat the teachers as if they were a chair, worse than that! They attack them! There are cases ... in which the pupil beat the teacher! And it was not only one teacher but he also beat the school head ... That is the reason why they do not lose votes”.

Case 38, p. 7: “ ... the school head is distant from us. I think that there are so many things for her to do that it is not possible for her to stay near us, to talk and sometimes to listen to us. ... when you need to talk to the school head, you have to beg: ‘Please, for God sake!’ ... Too many meetings at the ‘prefeitura’ (local government), and things to do in the community ... Look, lately, the school head ... has participated a lot in the community ... Sometimes she participates in meetings, sometimes she helps ... community activities ...”.

Teachers said they felt forced to learn to work independently, since the school

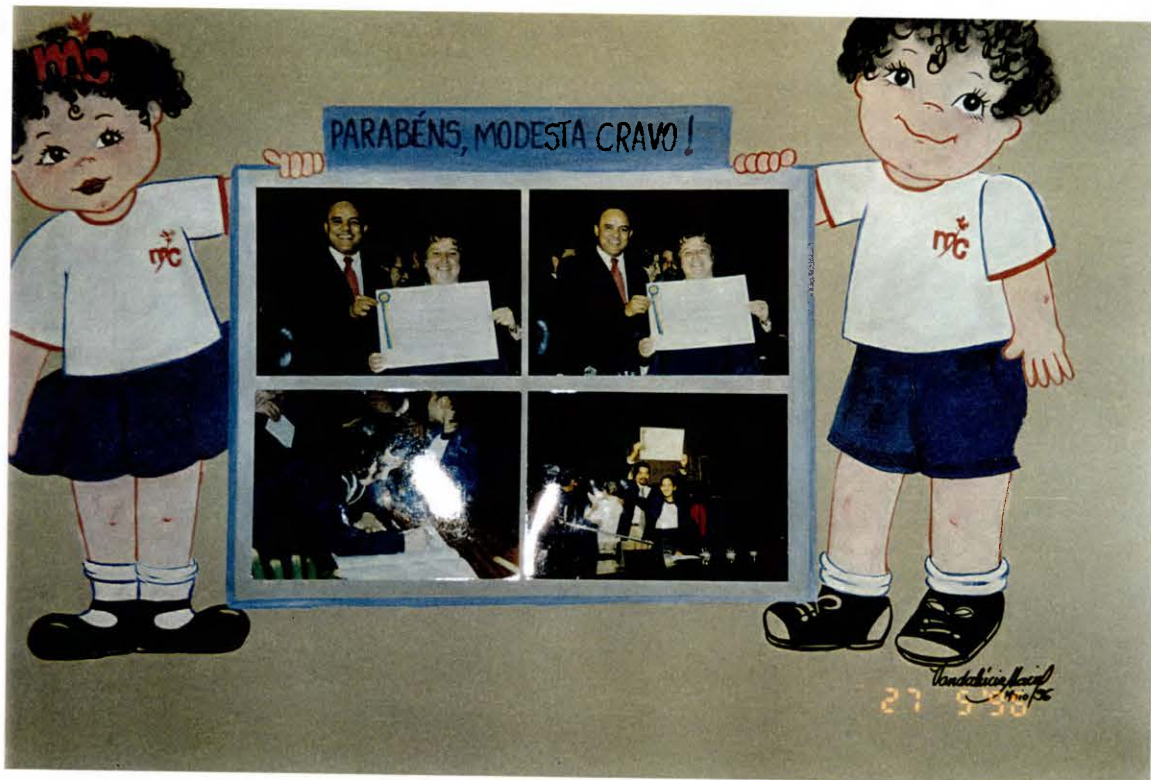
managers spent their time on tasks not related to school⁹, rather than helping teachers to solve difficulties in their work. School managers were said to ignore teaching matters, such as application of the curriculum, use of didactic materials, and disciplinary problems with pupils and their families. Indeed, it was difficult during field work to talk to school heads, since it was frequently said that they were busy at meetings at the secretary of education or at the local community. Schools were said to be in constant use by the surrounding community for their own parties, for the vaccination of pets (anti-rabies campaign), and for community meetings, all with the permission of the school head. Some teachers complained this was excessive and that making the school available to outside groups was political propaganda on the part of the school head¹⁰ (Figure 8.3). Some schools even offered evening courses for mothers; and teachers in school 3 taught these women embroidery and other domestic arts (see photos next pages). These classes were not a success because they coincided with a popular soap-opera; mothers preferred to watch their favourite TV show, a sacred Brazilian custom in the evenings. In the middle-class school (school 2) under investigation, a computer course was available. According to the school head, even the grand mothers of pupils attended this course. The school was paying for the course as well as all of the computer equipment¹¹.

9- For example in social needs of the community like community meetings to discuss problems in the area.

10- Such practice of opening schools for the local community use is interesting and has been getting good support for schools. The community ends up “protecting” the school from destruction. As a public space, schools should be open. For example, to allow the community to use the school sport areas at the weekends. This should be done as long as the community has interest and takes responsibilities of this use and, in addition, does not expect school staff to embrace such events as their roles. It would be another facet of altruism required from teachers who are not commonly allowed to refuse it.

11- This was the only school to have computers (only two) sent by the local government. Technology at the other schools was limited to pictures affixed to the walls about “technology at school”. This indicates the gap existent between what is said or determined by the government and what exists in reality.

Figure 8.3—Picture taken from a poster on the wall of one of the schools (school 2) in which the school head is seen with a local politician.



It is important to point out that in the event of elections for school head, pleasing parents and pupils has become central to the agenda of school heads (or candidates). After all, parents have, by far, the majority of votes. The struggle for parents' support has led to many changes inside schools. Many teachers denounced the inadequate behaviour of school heads or candidates (colleagues) before and after the school elections. For example, in one of the schools, school heads were said to be using the food sent to school for pupils' lunch as a way to buy votes from parents. In another school, it was said that one of the candidates was not married but that she just lived with her partner. Apparently, it was a strategy used by one candidate to convince parents of the moral and professional unsuitability of the other candidate. The image of the "family-woman" remains highly valued as a pre-requisite for those who work inside school, even if it is a great social hypocrisy.

The paternalistic manner which school heads insisted on using in their contact with parents, which is seen here as a strategy to conquer votes, was also in evidence on one occasion when I was observing pupils during the school lunch-time. The school head approached me and we started to talk about the school (school 4). Then she stopped talking and turned in the direction of a woman approaching us. The woman had two children with her. This woman was searching for a vacancy for her daughter, who meanwhile was hiding behind her dress. The school head started to talk to the mother and the girl, using a different voice intonation - a very soft version; almost motherly - than she had with me. Then, she started to hug the child, pinching her cheeks and finally telling them that 'she' would help them: "Yes, do not worry, I am going to help you, okay?! Do not be sad!". This is interesting in the context of my experiences a few days earlier, when I was talking to a woman in the office of the school. While she was waiting to be attended, she started to talk to me. Thinking that I was one of the staff, she said that she was looking for a vacancy for her son. After waiting for a long period while the school staff talked among themselves about personal (domestic) things, this woman was told that there were no vacancies at the school and that she would have to put her name in the waiting list. The lady seemed not to understand what was said, and insisted on explaining that she really needed to leave her child in the school. It was the middle of March

and the classes had started in February. But the school staff confirmed that she should keep coming to the school to check for a vacancy. Thus, it is un- how the school head could promise a position for one girl, when only a few days before another mother was turned away. This situation confirmed much of what had been identified about the political interest of school heads.

Despite the fact that all school heads seemed sensitive to the needs of the pupils, social concern is merely a screen for their political ambitions. Female school heads seemed willing to use any strategy necessary to improve their status with parents and pupils. They seemed to incorporate certain traditional “feminine” behaviour and roles in their practice as well as encouraging teachers to do the same as a strategy to ensure their popularity. By taking a paternalist approach to parents and pupils, school managers have led schools and teachers to assume roles usually related to the domestic life of the community. This discussion returns to the subject of women “mothering the community”; a traditional position taken by women. When the school head or any other school staff assume such a position they do so from a position of power. Their involvement with the problems outside school then gives them access to information about people and, consequently, expands the power they have over others in this context. This power can be used in different ways: to control teachers, to control parents, to control pupils and, in the specific context studied, to win votes for a re-election.

For example, in one of the schools, some of the staff worked on a project in which the local park was used for activities with pupils after school hours. This was done because teachers feared that the pupils would stay in the streets and get involved in criminal activities. The project was interrupted some time later, but two of the teachers decided to continue the work at their own expense and after working hours. In this school, the head and some teachers also used to visit pupils in their own homes as a way of understanding how the pupils lived, to discuss problems with their parents. These visits were made at weekends. This is in a violent area, with difficult access. The roles being undertaken were pastoral, much like the work the Church and social workers are engaged in, or similar to the way women help in the social sphere. Here is an example of how schools have responded to the demands of the local

community. According to the teachers and school head, the people from the community usually came to the school asking for support.

Case 38, p. 7: “ ...The school head has helped (the community) ... There is an unoccupied area near here. The community wanted to build a creche. So, we entered in the ‘fight’ to get it for them ... we (school staff) went to the meetings (at the local community) ... When some years ago, the distribution of ‘tickets for milk’¹² started to create problems ... I remember that we went there (in the ‘favela’¹³) to help to coordinate it to avoid fights. So, we always helped. ... It is very difficult to have community meetings during the week. I remember that I went to some meetings on Sundays ...”.

Because most teachers are women, certain attributes assumed by the school are easily incorporated as personal qualities rather than work. As noted in Chapter 6, women teachers who refuse what is seen as their natural role experience condemnation as bad professionals. It is very difficult to disassociate teachers from the figure of women, just as it is difficult to disassociate teaching from women’s roles.

Schools heads heavily involved in community activities outside school criticized teachers for being prejudiced about the social background of pupils. They said that teachers were unable to understand pupils’ problems and expected too much from them. Heads criticized some teachers’ lack of cooperation with, and sometimes outright rejection of, pupils’ culture which made work more difficult. See quotation below:

12- “Milk tickets” were distributed to the poor population by the government as a way to supplement children’s diet. There was a huge problem to prevent the parents or other adults in these communities, as well as politicians, from exchanging these tickets for other goods, such as cigarettes or liquor. In the case of community representatives and politicians, these tickets were used as political propaganda, as if they themselves had given the tickets to these people. They were also used to show favouritism towards some families. I myself volunteered to work for the Rondon (an organization of the Brazilian government) which used university students to help stem such abuses.

13- Usually teachers referred to this as “going up the hill” because pupils’ houses were located on a hill above the school.

School head/school 3, p. 4/5: “ ... Because of its location, our school receives teachers who have a better level when compared to teachers in schools at the periphery. (What do you mean by ‘level’?) Social. And it is a problem ...because I believe that they come here prepared to deal with a type of pupil who is completely suitable (perfect). But here, they meet children from a different segment of ... society ... What upsets me is the difficulties of the educationists working with ... these children from popular classes ... They are very traditional! There are some exceptions ... (How do those who are exception work?) ... He (used the male noun but meant a female teacher) is the one who comes near the pupil ... The one who accepts the whole pupil ... who is trying to make the pupil grow as a person ... it is not just to transmit knowledge ... to form the person ... the citizen ...”¹⁴.

School heads seem to be very responsible for increasing (or for confirming) feelings of social care in schools (out of personal interest or real compassion for students’ poverty). Consequently, this action has expanded the roles of women to a domestic sphere of pupils. The difficulty is that such expansion is many times easily made in a work place full of women. Poverty makes people who work in schools confused about which roles they should accept or how far their work should go. The exposure of people to social miseries, especially when there are children involved, seems to create a situation in which is almost impossible not to exceed the actual roles these teachers should be performing at schools¹⁵. The inability to solve such problems causes teachers particularly to experience stress at work. Nevertheless, what these schools seem to provide are caring roles and social services for particular pupils. Many teachers and school managers, specially school heads, saw fulfilling such needs as the only way to achieve learning. However, statistics regarding school drop-outs and repetition of grades, as shown in Chapter 2, do not support the efficacy of school staff getting involved in pupils’ lives. After all, teachers have been doing this for many years (Novaes, 1984).

Women’s involvement in social matters inside schools invites questioning about the

14- This was the only black school head in the sample. She was more emotional and engaged in the problems of community than any other school head interviewed. Her involvement and attitude towards pupils, despite the economic gap between them, might be explained by her colour. She was able to identify teachers’ prejudices against pupils. However, she was not able to identify this prejudice as racial. Her perception was still centred in a class or cultural difference between teachers and pupils.

15- Apparently, teachers are not doing well in any of these roles - they are not fully involved in their teaching and at the same time they are not solving the social problems they are facing inside schools.

boundaries of professional development. Exposure of women to social realities and the lack of social support for these professionals as well as to the communities makes it even more important that teachers and school clearly define their roles (expertise). The dangers of schools getting lost in middle of other roles were seen in interviews. See example below:

School head/school 3, p. 4/5: "... My God! We even say that the school is everything except (laughs/pause). (Except what?) Except its main role. (And what are these roles?) ... In my opinion it (the school) is to 'give tools' to the pupils; to really form the person as a whole, in all aspects. But it is like that, we provide social care in everything ... Then, we get worried about lunch, almost as if the school was a restaurant. We get worried because "Ah, we do not have a doctor here to see the boys!" Almost if the school was a hospital!. 'Where is the dentist?... We have to treat the teeth of these boys!" ... The school has been worried a lot in giving this kind of assistance ... And the main thing which is to pay attention to questions in terms of the formation of the human being ... it seems to be left ...".

It is worrying how school staff have been unable to avoid their profession becoming faceless by being forced to assume "multiple-roles" far beyond that of educating.

8.5.2 - Women Managers: School Managers or House-Keepers

Interesting literature regarding discrimination suffered by women teachers in primary schools indicates that stereotypes about women in terms of their "supposed characteristics or because of their competing family roles" have led men to see women as not "trustworthy colleagues" (Lorber cited in Ball, 1987, p. 195). As seen in Chapter 3, Brazilian primary school teachers also experienced such a reality in the past, before men left the profession (Paixão, 1991). Nonetheless, men may not be the only people responsible for discriminating against women teachers or imposing a male order in schools. These women school managers appear to have a "feminine mission statement" but not a feminine management style.

Some studies have indicated that female school heads have turned to a male style of leadership because of the male structure in which schools are organized (Mckellar, 1994; Adler

et al 1993)¹⁶. This point has also been taken to explain the Brazilian context (see Assunção, 1994). However, data from the present study appear to show that despite the absence of men in primary teaching, women teachers experience patriarchal pressures in the schools visited.

Sarcasm, threats, raising voices, jokes, insults and/or patronizing attitudes were very present in the visited schools among women staff. In this study, the situation faced by women teachers goes beyond what, for instance, Ball (1987) or Ramazanoglu (1985) point out in their studies, which identified male teachers as practitioners of sexism against women teachers. The “institutional sexism”¹⁷ present inside schools has led to the inclusion of roles traditionally expected from women in the private sphere of family or in the society in their professional practice (here in teaching). These roles include the socialization of youngsters, the teaching of values, habits, the re-education of poor pupils whose families are seen as unable to teach proper manners, and additionally, involvement in “charity adventures” and in providing other social services. In this female-only environment, teachers face an extreme case of an association of their roles with their gender position.

The style of management of women school managers interviewed for the study indicates the existence of a “character of domesticity” in their practice inside schools. Their behaviour was a mixture of authoritarian mothers wanting to keep the “house in order”, maintaining discipline but also “maternally” protecting those who could not protect themselves. Most school heads were very resentful of teachers’ lack of recognition of their efforts to make the school an attractive work place. They took as a personal offense resistance offered by some teachers to their ideas, which sounded very much like a house wife looking for recognition of her work. These practices and feelings were confirmed in the observations of their (school heads’) contact with pupils, in interviewing them, in their worries about the school, or even in their minor actions such as putting messages of comfort and “cheer-ups” on the walls of the school. See Figure 8.4 and part of the interview with the head of school

16- As Ball (1987) suggests, patriarchy can flourish under female headship.

17- Here, I call it “domestication” of teachers’ roles.

1:

School head/ school 1 "... when we won the election, there was a certain rejection of our presence ... There was an 'air of criticism' ... We (she and the deputy-head) always tried not to be bothered with it. It was ... very difficult because we wanted to do so many things for the school! On the first day, when the teachers (used female noun) returned, they saw a different school ... In our concern to tidy up the teachers' room (used female noun), we acquired material to the school, such as chairs, a different table, pigeon-holes ... glasses, plates, cutlery ... When we welcomed them in the school garden, the school totally tidy, painted, with vases of flowers, with posted messages of welcome. Then they felt that we had a very good intention to give them pleasure to stay in the school ... At the beginning (because of the lack of staff)... for one year ... I was the school secretary, doing the work of the secretary, also assuming the administration, the pedagogical aspects, receiving parents and without a counsellor in the school ...".

In this manner, women school heads seem to take schools as their homes. And this view seems very much to influence the way they act and expect school staff to act.

Figure 8.4- Photos taken from schools which show messages of comfort and “cheer-ups” on the walls of the school.

- A- “... (school’s name): 25 years educating, loving and respecting your son”
- B- “Happy teacher! Happy Pupil! Happy School!”



8.6- Teachers' Reaction to Heads' Style of Management

Some authors envisage school heads as being "all-powerful and unchallenged" in schools "... determining what school sets out to do and the extent to which it achieves those aims" (Ball, 1987, p. 82). In this study, 42% of teachers described resistance to impositions of the school head. The data indicate that the school head may have legal powers inside schools, but these are not always recognized by the staff. There was a clear division of groups in schools, particularly among teachers, in relation to the management style of the school heads. Resistance was noticed in discreet messages affixed on the wall (Figure 8.5) or even by observing the positions assumed by teachers in the room where pedagogical meetings were held. It was possible to identify teachers who disagreed with the school head at the back of the room. There were groups, usually at the back of the room, which spent the whole meeting making jokes and funny comments about what was said by the school managers. Some comments were directed at the teachers' salary or status, or even concerned sexual or domestic aspects of their lives.

When describing the problems they faced with the school head, some teachers showed fear that the information they were giving me might be made known to the school managers¹⁸. Some teachers were also very sensitive to attempts of school heads to stop them from socializing in the school. According to teachers, the school head feared that if teachers talked too much, they would create difficulties for the administration. Indeed, in most of the schools it was very rare to see teachers talking together, with the exception of the lunch break. Even at this time, some teachers had to supervise pupils in the canteen and others looked after pupils playing in the play-ground. When all the teachers were together, on the occasion of pedagogical meetings, school managers were present, in charge of the meeting. This could be seen through their silence in the staff-room. ~~All the~~ teachers spent their time correcting exercises

¹⁸- In one of the schools, the deputy-head demanded that she be allowed to listen to the teachers' interviews. The school head interfered, saying that she agreed with me that all the interviews would be kept secret. I said that it would not be possible for the deputy head to participate. Fortunately, I had finished the interviews in that school.

or preparing material - they did not even look up when someone entered the room (To get the teachers' attention when calling them for the interview, I usually had to go with the school head, but most often with one of the supervisors).

Figure 8.5- Picture taken in the school where the poster in Figure 8.4 was affixed. The poster was found affixed in the back of a cupboard in the teachers' room.

From left to right:

“Monday - Sorry! We have to start all over again!

Tuesday - Is this week going to have an end?

Wednesday - God! I am going to die!

Thursday - Just one ... just one ...

Friday - At last! It has arrived!

Saturday - I am very happy!

Sunday - It is the end!”.



8.6.1- Teachers' Demands for a "Male Style" of Management

The micro-politics of school "is a dynamic process dependent upon the skills, resources and alliances of its participants" (Ball, 1987, p. 85). Here teachers are "joint actors in the social accomplishment of a style" but also "an audience for it". The way women teachers view the managerial role and the behaviour of a manager create difficulties for both teachers and school heads (see Chapter 5). Expectations from both camps mean that the process of developing a different management style is fraught with problems. The cases below show how colleagues can help to perpetuate an authoritarian style of management in schools. And teachers were sensitive to this fact.

Case 1, p. 5: "... I would have a chance in other schools because I am hard-working ... I am very intelligent ... But there are people that are very insecure, they fear to lose it (the job) ... Everybody fears to say anything because they fear to offend someone ... If I disagree, if I defend (stand by) my own ideas, then I will be considered aggressive ... They see it as lack of education, as lack of gentleness. You know, those who are 'gentle' are the ones who always agree. It is polite to accept always".

Case 15, p. 7/8: "... And when I arrived here I saw everybody speaking what they were feeling! ... I thought that it was excessive! ... In terms of the school head and specialists ... It might be my generation, but ... I think that a hierarchy is necessary. I have the right to say what I want ... but I must know how to say it. ... We have this democracy (at school) to say what we feel, but we should know whom we are talking to. Don't you think so? ..."

While there were teachers who liked the "democratic" behaviour of school heads (19%), others did not. The position of neutrality assumed by the head seemed to bother some teachers who demanded a direct intervention from the school head in school problems. A few teachers criticized the attitude of the school head who took school problems, such as fights between staff, to meetings with parents, rather than solving the problems themselves. There is evidence that women in management posts feel they have to make use of "male techniques to gain recognition or as a means of self-defense" (Adler et al, 1993, p. 12). However, it is not always the case. Some of these school heads were demanded a very "feminine" approach to

their posts. See section below. Indeed, as indicated by Sheppard (cited in Adler et al, 1993, p. 16), women “in order to be taken seriously, have to ‘manage’ their sexuality and gender”.

8.6.2- “Emotionally Sympathetic” Style of Headship

In institutions where the school head was identified as being “emotionally sympathetic” (19%), teachers gave examples of this quality by pointing to the action of the school head before and after school elections. Actions related to the efforts made by the school heads to solve community problems in addition to the pupils’ school problems were those of a “good human being”. Examples of this are school heads visiting pupils’ homes to understand their living conditions and the difficulties they face. Other examples include the material support given by heads to these children, such as medicine, clothes, medical and odontological services and emotional care. In addition, the “human side” of the school head did not stop with helping pupils; it also included helping teachers. Teachers (23%) said that some colleagues enjoyed privileges and protection. Fifteen percent (15%) experienced the benevolence of the school head, who allowed them to avoid specific school tasks or be flexible in their working hours when experiencing domestic or personal problems. These teachers could pay back the lost time by working another shift or by taking home certain jobs (eg.: putting together material for parties or teaching material). As teachers themselves made clear, these “favours” were not available to everybody. Those teachers who enjoyed these privileges expressed strong gratitude towards the school head. At the same time, they recognized that they did not experience problems with their school head because they did everything they were asked to do, without complaining. In a sense, it is a relation based on a reciprocal exchange of favours. Those who enjoyed this protection showed loyalty towards, and understanding of, the head’s actions. As a result, teachers who befriend the head have more access to information, which gives them power and enhances their status. Sharing secrets with the school head results in an situation of empowerment. For the head, a friendly group of teachers guarantees a degree of

control over what teachers do and gives access to information which teachers do not wish the heads or other school managers to know.

Case 48, p. 4: "... I never had any problems ... What they need from me, I do. Every time I needed them I was helped ... When I started to study, finishing the pedagogy course ... I had to change my work shift. Then I stayed one term working in the mornings. However, on Fridays, I could not come here. So I worked ... on the Thursday afternoon and evening and then I did not have to come on Fridays ... I had to go to some classes. Then she let me ... arrive later at school ... I arrived here at half past two¹⁹ ... and stayed until the evening ... I never had any problem. She always 'made it easy' for me ...".

This "human side" was considered an important feature of individuals willing to become school heads. It appears that the "human side" of the school head is related to the caring and supporting side of women. Thus, such expectations towards female school heads, like those towards women teachers, are a natural demand/expectation in the school culture and they are important to winning an election. See the example below:

Case 26, p. 10/11: "The relationship is very good, at least in this shift ... She (school head) seems to be a very 'human' person ... very concerned ... She is 'human' with the pupils ... When she was the supervisor in this school ... She used to visit the boys (pupils) in their homes to know what was happening. She used to call the mother here and if the mother did not come, then she would go there (to the pupil's house). Thus, it was because of that, that we could evaluate her work ... (to be the school head)".

In reality the "human side" of the school head towards teachers was - as mentioned earlier - only directed at certain teachers loyal to the school heads. The school heads wanted power, and their attempts to impose their will were described by teachers in an informal talks. For example, a teacher talked about the first election in her school as one in which all the teachers who had intended to stand for the post of headship decided to quit and allow the school head to run as the only candidate. The situation was such that the school head had been

¹⁹- The normal school afternoon shift in schools starts at 1p.m and finishes at 5:30 pp.m.

in her post for many years and if she lost the elections she would have had to retire with loss of her salary. Thus, teachers decided to let her stand as the only candidate in the elections but with the promise that she would leave the post after the election, when the *deputy*-head would assume the post. By that time she would have completed her tenure and would keep her salary as a school head. This was done, but when she was elected she ignored her promise and, according to the teacher relating this case, said that no teacher would tell her what to do. Consequently, after two years she retired from the post of school head, and only then the school had the opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice.

8.7- Conclusion

School managers reinforce a school culture which values and demands traditional roles and behaviour of women. This is detrimental to the development of a professional environment seriously engaged with the educational needs of pupils and educational changes.

Elections for school head seem to have changed the entire relation between school and community. There have been positive results from the democratization of schools. Schools have gained relative independence in terms of freedom from the local government over such items as the school budget, strengthening of the “Colegiado”, and in internal decisions of schools (Mello, 1995). Moreover, political opportunism over poor communities, “a captive public”, has diminished (Mello, 1995). However, the unbalanced distribution of votes, whereby the votes of parents decide who is going to be the school head, has had great consequences for the professionals, mainly women, working in schools.

School heads have achieved a novel status in the school community. School heads are seen and attempt to behave as though they are community representatives. Rather than attempting to represent the entire school community, the school heads focus their attention on the needs and demands of parents, who have the majority of votes. The desire of school heads to show their voters a positive image has created problems for women teachers. Struggle for political support has led school heads to confirm certain beliefs, expectations and stereotypes from

clients which have damaging results for teachers. Competition for the head post can lead colleagues to play a very “dirty game”. It was pointed out how the image of teachers as well as that of the school head, particularly if they are women, are important to parents, even when parents themselves are not good role models. In addition, it appears that some school heads have expectations about the roles of schools and teachers that go well beyond teaching. As we have seen, some school heads offer all kinds of support to pupils and their families, which the school is unable to give properly.

On the other hand, women teachers react to increased expectations of them in different ways. Some resist, and this resistance has been responsible for the failure of school heads’ proposals. And yet, this is not a straightforward resistance, since teachers themselves are strongly influenced by the traditional images of women in teaching (see Chapter 5). Sometimes their resistance is not really to the idea behind the actions, but is only directed at the idea of a woman being in a position of authority. Nonetheless, women teachers themselves can be active in perpetuating an authoritarian style of management. They demand such a style by supporting what they judge to be the “right” kind of management.

School heads, as any politician, understand this is a cycle difficult to break, and that it is an old but successful method to win popular support. Paternalism guarantees the sympathy of parents and in return their votes. Thus, school heads were frequently engaged in community activities not related to the school and outside their own communities, since they often do not reside near the school themselves. Their attempts to win community approval have led schools to become involved in activities far beyond formal education, and that has had a great cost to the professional development of women in teaching.

As noted throughout this thesis, the involvement with the community, and the transformation of the relationship of school and parent/pupils in a family relationship, conceals great losses for this part of the population. While the children of the elite have access to a good education which will amply prepare them for a future life as workers and citizens, the poor are left with a paternalistic school and inferior education. The heads’ fight for power at any cost has resulted in a loss of time that should be used to find better ways to teach, and improve the

learning potential of pupils from working-class backgrounds. One possible solution to end such political games in schools would be to give parents and school staff equal weight for their votes.

The attitudes of these women school managers make “female” roles highly valued in school as a synonym of “competence”. Despite the ambiguous relationship between teachers and school managers, there seems to be a consensus in schools about the image cultivated of women in primary school teaching or working in primary schools (as women managers). It is true that they will behave based on a gender stereotypes, but they are also guided by their class and race condition. In this manner, like women in teaching, women school managers seem to have their behaviour as authorities defined in the light of their gender and class background - as authoritarian paternal figures, they also contribute to domesticating the role of teachers as well as of the school. Women teachers have been forced to obey the “roles society had defined for them” (Weiler, 1991) and female school heads perpetuate such attempts through their attitudes, which continue to be both authoritarian and paternalistic.

Chapter 9

Summary and Conclusion

This thesis has investigated how women teachers in primary schools in an urban area of Brazil - Belo Horizonte - have their roles domesticized by those involved in the school. By domestication is meant the demand and inclusion of roles traditionally performed by women in the family, at home or in society: child care, charity, social assistance, emotional support. It is women "mothering" children outside the home. Thus, in this study, investigation gave priority to elements inside primary schools that could be shaping the roles of women teachers along the lines of the roles of women in the domestic sphere. This study has aimed at a better understanding of the work of teachers in primary schools in Brazil, foreseeing improvements in the quality of teaching and thus the quality of education.

Although this investigation is limited to schools in the municipal system of Belo Horizonte, some interpretations and results of this study can be taken to characterize the experience of other women teachers in schools throughout Brazil, as long as some of the limits for generalizations are respected.

The present Brazilian educational policy aims to universalize education. However, little has been modified in terms of public expenditure. What has really been modified is that government has passed on to local communities the responsibility for managing the resources destined for schools (Cury, 1998). According to Vieira (1998), schools have been transformed into "mini-banks". If resources are enough or not will not be a central government problem, but a situation to be solved by the school community and its representatives. It will also mean that parents and the community have to complement school expenses.

Certainly, government policy in education has affected the people in schools. However, this does not mean that new policies will be accepted without resistance or without reinterpretation by people at the bottom of the system. The understanding of teachers' behaviour has to consider the work context in which these people are immersed: schools. Schools are

institutions inserted in a historical context, marked by its social, cultural, economic and political characteristics. Yet, schools do not merely reproduce societies' organization (Petitat, 1994). Even if schools often reflect the way society is organized (eg.: hierarchy of posts, distribution of power), people in schools can use this organization for their own benefit. Schools may have a conservative or an innovative position compared to what is accepted in society. This is because individuals or groups in schools also struggle to maximize their interests and values over others (Ball, 1987), which give to schools a unique characteristic. It is thus necessary to understand the relations and context in schools, before innovation or change in teachers' work or in education are contemplated.

Primary teaching is significantly different compared to other levels of teaching. In Brazil, it has been a female occupational ghetto, deeply marked by religious values about teaching (Arroyo, 1985). The association between women and teaching has been in the interest of the state in its plans for mass education. Most of the representations about women in teaching persist nowadays. In schools, "daily disasters" and "routine demands" require women teachers to have a caring mother-figure approach to pupils (Aspinwall and Drummond, 1989; Miller, 1996). Indeed, gender is an important determinant in the work of women, and is translated into violence (verbal or physical), harassment and discrimination against women in work places. But, here, in the case of women teachers, they have been called to the domestic - the mother side and emotional side, usually identified as a woman's job - in their work. In the schools visited, where social and material conditions are critical, women teachers are - often aggressively - demanded to take on tasks traditionally given to them in the domestic and family sphere. There is a call for the emotional characteristics usually identified as women's.

This demand for emotional characteristics in teaching primary school has been important in enabling women to participate in the professional world, but inversely, teachers have their "identity permanently threatened by emotional and social expectations and frustrations ... teachers are expected to fulfil the ideal image of this profession" (Schaffer, 1990, p. 12). The demand for emotional characteristics in primary school teaching has been evidenced in the Brazilian literature too. Some have considered this as women's contribution to the teaching

occupation and have insisted that such an approach to teaching should be maintained (see eg. Costa, 1995). Emotionality, usually identified as being women's natural characteristic, has been seen in opposition to technicality, to the positivist approach in education. However, the demand for the emotional aspect in teaching is also a call for technicality. This is because in giving priority to the emotional, teachers have been distanced from intellectual work. They have centred their work on the practical aspects of school, ignoring the fact that theories emerge from reflexive practices. Teachers today, as stated by Schaffer (1990) and Thomlinson (1990), have been requested to fill too many roles and expectations in society. "The multiplicity of roles expected of teachers has been called into question as undermining their basic tasks of teaching skills and knowledge" (Watson, 1991, p. 120)

The call for the emotional in teaching primary school has transformed women teachers into "helping professionals", and women have performed social roles for so long that it seems expected that they will carry on performing them now in schools (Densmore, 1987; Byrne cited in Lyon and Mignioulo, 1989; in Brazil, Louro, 1989; Assunção, 1996). Yet, this emotional demand in teaching has influenced the representation people have of teaching and women teachers, as well as teachers' work. Indeed, women teachers have experienced a process of intensification of their work similar to what happened to other workers. Thus, they lost control over the process of their work. But, their work has also been intensified in other ways. Women teachers have their work increased by expectations and roles that women deal with in the domestic sphere. Thus, there is a domestication of the work of women teachers - called domestication because it relates to roles performed within the family and at home - which is a kind of intensification of (women) teachers' work.

As shown in Chapter 2, although Brazil is among the ten largest economies in the world, it has a society marked by inequality of opportunities, with great disparities between rich and poor. A paternalistic relationship with local authorities in Brazil has been the stuff of mass politics, which has established a charismatic link between poor people (a majority) and politicians (Romanelli, 1991; Plank et al, 1996). Popular classes are conditioned to expect "favours" from people in better economic positions. Education in Brazil is subject to "political

spoil" (Birdsall et al, 1996; Siqueira and Barreto, 1996).

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 aimed at universal schooling and eradication of illiteracy. Free and compulsory education has been seen as the duty of the State. While access to schooling has increased, the quality of schooling has not been guaranteed (Gatti, 1990); quantity has been privileged over quality of education. In Brazil quality of education has been the privilege of an elite (Ribeiro, 1992, 1995). The "educational pyramid" in Brazil is built according to the class, economic and social status and gender of the individual (Costa, 1995), as well as race.

The promise of democracy in schools appears to be a populist action of the government. As noted here, the government(s) still control the most important aspects of education: curriculum, selection of teachers, educational policies, financing of education, among others. It has been converted into gains for the government and losses for the population in general.

Educational policies have attempted to universalize education and eliminate illiteracy. This has deeply affected the situation of teachers in primary schools. The Brazilian government has overemphasized the training of teachers for achieving the present educational aims. In this manner, teachers have been identified as the most important elements for success in universalizing education and eliminating illiteracy - thus they will also be the most responsible for any educational failure as well. This educational policy - to "democratize" schools and the view of teachers as major educational agents - has made the work of teachers in schools more difficult and has created an even higher expectation for teachers, especially in poor communities.

When one looks at who occupies the posts in primary schools in Brazil, one sees the huge number of women. Such a presence has been identified since mass education became the government's political flag in the first decades of this century in Brazil. As shown in chapter 3, Brazilian women share a similar history to other women who go into teaching in other countries. In Brazil, women's entrance into teaching has served well the state's ambition for mass education. They have also maintained - often economically - the project of mass education in Brazil (Novaes, 1994) by being cheaper and more submissive workers and by assuming a

charitable or caring approach to pupils. Women's entry into teaching was possible due to the ideal surrounding this occupation as an act of love, not a profession, and also because of their "natural" abilities to teach children. The association of women and teaching feeds the social representations about women teachers in terms of "natural" abilities in teaching children (Assunção, 1996). Teachers, transformed into State workers, have kept the religious values of teaching: self-sacrifice and dedication to a noble cause, a mission. Today, primary school teachers still face very harsh conditions, low salaries and little autonomy at work (Costa, 1995).

Thus, as seen above, the entry into, and predominance of women in, primary teaching in Brazil has been determined by the material and ideological conditions of society at a certain time. Today, considering that most of the Brazilian population has a low income, these people have difficulties in educating their children. Thus, teaching appears to represent a good level of education to be achieved by the daughters of these families. Teaching is also a good option considering the conditions of work and opportunities available to women in the labour market. Brazilian women still face discrimination in the labour market. They are still segregated in certain areas - mostly in the service sector or in the informal labour market. Public service, including teaching, is one of the major areas of the market which employ women.

As shown in chapter 5, the discourse of vocation is still frequently used by women interviewed to justify their entry and permanence in teaching. This vocational discourse is an expression of the emotional call to teaching, and this call was usually promoted inside families or in the first groups of contact. Yet, women in this present study entered the teachers' training course or became teachers as a result of material and ideological¹ conditions. Family (original or established) appears to be an important determinant in the professional 'option' of these women: limiting or encouraging them. In this manner, in families with limited material conditions, teaching was the only option available to their daughters. However, these options

1- Here, ideology is understood as "being both a 'worked out' system of ideals and as being inconsistent - incoherent and unsystematic". These levels are inseparable. However, "while ... ideology does determine thought, we must allow that this determination is not and cannot be, total" (Parker, 1979, p. 135-6).

were made to appear natural and so women started to believe that there was an option, which become a family desire (Bourdieu cited in Assunção, 1996). Women were socialized for a profession, under the material restrictions of their families. However, this analysis can only be applied to some families. As was seen in chapter 5, some women's professional aspirations were not restricted to material conditions, but to their values about women and work at a particular time.

Despite the contributions of material conditions toward creating an ideology of women in the labour market, as well as limiting them, it is unquestionable that families have a central importance in the professional "choice" of women in the present study. For women teachers in this study, their families have influenced women's entry, participation and location, progress, breaks, and drop-outs from the labour market. This is so, especially considering a society like Brazil, where people can not count on the state apparatus, but only in their families' support throughout their lives. Family links are not only emotionally important, but economically necessary for individuals' success in this kind of society. Thus, the occupational option of these women carried an imposition, even when some of them struggled to enter teaching. If not material impositions there were ideological impositions. In addition, it appeared that the class, race and age characteristics of women interviewed here were influential in their occupational choice.

Despite prejudices about teaching as an occupation - and because of the historical marginalization of women as workers - the entry of women into teaching still offers the impression that teachers will have different conditions of work compared to women in other areas of the labour market. To a certain extent, there are advantages - there are no long and inflexible working hours, as in industry or in commerce, working with men who reach the high posts of command faster than women, or experiencing male harassment. But there are other problems in schools that women have to face as workers.

The "safety" at schools mainly occupied by women is questioned in the present study. Women were found dealing with expectations and demands which were even more directed to the traditional position of women in society and in the family. This is seen as an intensification

of their work, not in terms of bureaucratic roles included in teaching when it came to be state controlled. But, as described earlier, there seems to be an intensification of work by the inclusion of domestic activities for women teachers in schools. It is interesting to observe the naturalness with which women teachers accept and provide solutions for all the social problems brought to primary schools. Despite poverty, which gains visibility in schools, we cannot expect that all the social problems be solved, nor can we expect that schools and teachers solve the social problems in schools; such an involvement is expected because women have taken on these roles without complaint. These demands are new forms of exploitation of women, who accumulate the roles of other professionals in their jobs.

Thus, discrimination and segregation of women in the Brazilian labour market are a reflection of socialization and the material and ideological conditions experienced by women within the family. Families of teachers - original and formed - have great influence over the reasons why women become teachers and over the values women teachers hold on teaching. As explored in chapter 5, most women in the present study are from families which still view teaching as an occupation for women or an occupation that will not disturb the domestic/family sphere. This belief has helped to bring people to teaching (women) with an inaccurate impression of the occupation.

In conclusion, there is a variety of aspects influencing women in their professional "options". Their socialization for work occurs in different spaces: the home, immediate community, school, and in other spaces of social interaction. However, the socialization of these women for a professional life varies according to their class, gender and race.

The socialization for a profession is not static, but appears to occur more actively and constantly in the work place. This appears to be the case teachers interviewed in this study. The socialization occurring in the work place may confirm or contradict decisions taken or values developed in previous places of socialization. And this socialization at work varied, considering that each school is composed of different people under different material and historical circumstances. Here, socialization does not always mean a "soft" process, but it can be a process that causes discomfort and frustration and even resistance to those experiencing

it.

At schools, relationships are important in the configuration of teaching as a woman's work. The school culture itself seems to demand that women teachers perform roles connected to "domestic roles" or with "caring, helping roles". As shown in Chapter 6, one of the major school agents responsible for perpetuating a culture of domesticity in teachers' work was the women teachers themselves. These women not only make but have been responsible for perpetuating traditional associations between teaching and women. Women teachers control each other through gossip manipulation and, many times, by openly forcing female colleagues to assume certain positions or traditional roles of women in society.

The poverty of pupils in the schools visited make some women teachers more sensitive to enter a campaign of charity and social service. In addition, attempts to change the school approach to poor communities in order to achieve learning has led to a misunderstanding which has involved school and teachers in community problems. Schools and women teachers have extended their work to the social and family sphere of pupils. Concealed behind this charity and social concern are also personal interests involved. Many women teachers have made use of the image of care and "mothering" to achieve personal aims. As a consequence, school personnel have spent their time on solving social problems rather than on concentrating their attention on finding better ways to help pupils from a disadvantaged background. The image of a "good teacher" is confused with the idea of caring mother, older sister or counsellor. Schools have become first-aid spaces, while women teachers spend a lot of their time mothering the community. Certainly, mothering the community empowers women teachers. They become powerful figures in these communities, being able to maximize their personal interests. Therefore, schools became unfriendly spaces for men. Women teachers have reinforced ideas of segregation, in which women were seen to be more adequate for teaching in primary schools, and the presence of men inside schools has been usually rejected. There is an assumption that men do not have the necessary characteristics for teaching in primary school, while women do. This rejection is also shared by parents' fear of the male presence inside schools. They fear men's aggressive behaviour, they find men untrustworthy for working with

young children, and they are suspicious of male teachers' sexuality. However, they accepted men are seen in posts of command, putting order in schools and being leaders. In this manner, the roles and behaviour expected from men and women at school are clearly segregated, following the general division of roles for each sex in society.

Teachers' attitudes towards pupils and parents are not only a response to their rejection of the values and life style of communities in which they teach. Teachers also respond to the direct interference of pupils and parents in schools. Other agents identified as active in the domestication of the roles of women in teaching were pupils and parents. Parents - those who work out of the home or not - have left pupils unattended, expecting schools and teachers to educate their children fully. As noted in Chapter 7, it is explained that parents from a disadvantaged position in society hold the belief that their culture is inferior and that schools will give to their children what they think to be "right". Similarly, we find women teachers who believe that their roles are to teach the "right" way of living to children from disadvantaged social and economic background. Very commonly, teachers appear to believe that parents from a poor economic background are not able to provide the "right" education for their own children. In this manner, women teachers, from their position as better educated, and from their social position of "mothering the community" have taken on the hard task of "correcting" the "bad" (insufficient or incorrect) education provided to children in poor communities.

Parents appear to accept this circumstance, not only because of their cultural inferiority complex, but also because it is part of Brazilian culture. As noticed earlier, poor communities in Brazil have been used to a relation of dependency on richer groups. A paternalist relation and a relation of "exchange of favours" have survived over time. Economically disadvantaged people appear to come to school expecting their problems to be solved. Since Brazilian women have traditionally assumed roles related to "mothering" society (charitable work), poor communities find it very natural to demand such services from women teachers.

A third element responsible for the domestication of the roles of women teachers has been school managers. In the schools visited, school managers have reinforced a school culture which values and demands traditional roles and behaviour of women teachers. The

authoritarian behaviour of school managers has been a consequence of the traditionally hierarchical organization of schools. However, recent attempts to democratize schools have led these school managers to change their traditional ways of control. Educational specialists, traditional agents of government control in schools, have lost their power and parents have been called to "take care" of ("to watch") school. In this new context, school heads have had their power reinforced by the democratic elections for school heads by community, mainly through parents' votes. If in one sense, the elections for school heads in schools have diminished political opportunism in poor communities (Mello, 1993); on the other hand, school elections have been used by candidates and the elected school head as a political scrutiny. School heads have privileged certain groups in schools (parents and some school staff). This distribution of privileges is made under a negotiation, many times not explicit, to guarantee support to their interests, actions and the implied promise to keep control over what happens in the school community. It has also divided teachers even more, considering that the candidates for school headship are selected between teachers themselves. During and after elections, school staff are divided between those for or against the candidate, leading to resistance later. The most common problem is that, since teachers' votes are not significant in electing school heads, teachers find themselves having to accept a school head elected by parents. As seen in Chapter 8, the strategy that school heads or candidates for school elections have used was to satisfy parents and pupils by adopting a paternalistic approach to them. This means adopting a great involvement in the social problems of the community which are not always related to schooling. School heads are thus "mothering" the school community. And, school heads or candidates have reinforced stereotypes about women in teaching, as a way of convincing and seducing parents as to their "competence" and "qualities" to take on the headships in schools. It is a temptation for parents from poor social and economic backgrounds to have in schools a source of first-aid. School heads and the other school managers, like teachers, also have a background that has led them to formulate gendered conceptions about schooling and teaching. Not only were these women previously socialized to adopt a 'motherly' approach when in schools, but they have also made use of the gendered view of

teaching to promote their own interests: winning elections, or just achieving status within the community. Yet, school managers also suffer pressures from teachers (women) to have certain attitudes they judge proper for a manager. In fact, these school managers (all women) were sometimes rejected because they did not incarnate the authoritarian (usually male) figure in management posts. But also many of the women teachers appreciated and demanded a “motherly” management style from school managers (women), as if this approach were natural to them. Thus, the situation can be understood in the light of Acker’s view (1994) which states that schools are one of the few sectors where women hold power, and sometimes they do it by reinforcing stereotypes about women’s abilities.

In conclusion, it was found that, school staff (all women), in their attempt to reach the headship position or acquire status in the school community have made use of stereotypes/representations about women in teaching. These stereotypes/representations are already present in society as a whole, and parents and pupils come to the school, mainly occupied by women, with such expectations. In this manner, the domestic roles of women in the private sphere are demanded in schools. Teaching is an extension of the domestic sphere to the work in primary schools.

The fight for power inside schools has taken from teachers in schools their chance of getting together to fight against outside decisions and to impose themselves as a collective group. In adopting a “motherly” approach to their work, in affirming the gendered stereotypes about women in teaching, these women are contributing even more to the intensification of their work. The strategy of incorporating the domestic in schools has reinforced gendered representations in the community of teaching or women in occupations. In this manner, if women once justified their entry into teaching by confirming their “natural” abilities for it, nowadays they have again made use of so called “feminine” abilities to gain control and power inside schools. As a consequence, they have become “professional helpers”, not teachers.

Changes at the macro level, such as in legislation, can help and certainly need to be carried out. There are still needs to improve women’s position in society in general and specifically in the labour market, so teaching will not be the only "option" for women. But by

giving equal conditions for women, we may decrease their temptation to use their “traditional female roles” to achieve their professional ambitions or to guarantee their places in the labour market. In this manner, women will not have to confirm their talents for a profession by making use of the stereotypes about women, as they have done in teaching. Nonetheless, at the same time, it is necessary to complement these efforts by implementing changes at a micro level in work places. Changes at the macro level are slow and when they arrive at schools are reformulated. If changes are desired, it is also necessary to work them out from within schools, with the engagement of teachers and the school community. Women teachers have to be aware of the negative consequences for their occupation, as well as for pupils, when they make use of or accept demands which call for the domestic at work. Domestic work has to be considered as work like any other, and has to be dissociated from others and probably paid for. But while this does not happen, it is necessary to stop the exploitation of female workers, in this case women teachers, who are having their work increased with domestic services, as if it were natural. The emotional demands of teaching have helped to make official the inclusion of other kinds of social work in the work of women teachers. It is necessary to exorcise the ghost of domesticity, usually associated with women at work, from schools. This may lead to improvement in the work that schools and teachers provide the community and may concentrate teachers’ efforts to better solve the educational problems, especially in poor communities.

Abolishing the paternalist (“motherly”) attitudes may not change the condition of women in the labour market, but it may change the situation of women who are in teaching. It is necessary to re-think the image of teachers as givers of a full education or professional-helpers and to re-evaluate the position of teachers in schools. Schools and teachers must have a clearer notion about their roles, which are not to be confused with social aids. There are already professionals in society prepared to take care of these problems, and they may come to school to work in conjunction with teachers. It is time that poor communities receive a fair education to help make them capable of competing on fair terms with the children of the “elite” (in the case of Brazil, those who can afford private education). The “motherly” approach to these people is a palliative action, and the necessary changes in the social structure are concealed by this

“motherly” approach.

It has been the purpose of this research to argue for the central role of gender in understanding the dichotomous position of women in teaching. Characteristics such as dedication, self-sacrifice, involvement with pupils and community life still remain part of teachers’ practice, reproducing other elements of the patriarchal society. Nevertheless, as shown in this study, gender is not an independent category. Race, class, as well as other categories may play an important role in determining an individual’s experience in society.

“Women have sometimes sheltered behind the notion that teaching is not so much work as a sort of religious calling or service to the community” (Miller, 1996, p. 99). The subordination of women is built into the “dynamics of the teaching role” (Lather, 1994); once women teachers assume roles which relate to their “traditional” roles as women in society, they conform to the view of teaching as an extension of women’s role in the family. This seems not just to confirm male leadership or to perpetuate sexual segregation in the labour force (Lather, 1994), but also leads teachers to uncertain future in terms of their roles in society.

Education of the population cannot continue to be dependent on the “altruism” and dedication of teachers (mostly women), but rather, in real and solid educational policy with a continued investment in education.

Appendix 1: Interviews

Interview with teachers

- 1- Are you associated with the teachers' union?
- 2- How/why did you become a teacher?
- 3- It has been suggested that school context has changed the teaching profession. What is your opinion?
- 4- Do teachers have opportunities to update?
- 5- Are teachers up-to-date in terms of educational innovations?
- 6- What are the roles of primary school teachers?
- 7- Do teachers play other roles in addition to teaching?
- 8- Consider teachers' "extra tasks"; those tasks not related with teaching. Are teachers doing tasks at school beyond teaching?
- 9- How have teachers reacted to being asked to engage in "extra tasks"? Explain it.
- 10- Should teachers have their roles limited to the school life of students (formal education)?
- 10 B - Have you been involved with any student outside school? (What kind of help have you given them?)
- 11- Considering school community as those people directly involved in school - parents, students, teachers, school staff, school administrative body - what do you see the school community as expecting from teachers in addition to teaching?
- 11 B - What is a 'real teacher'?
- 12 - How would you characterize (relationship) this school?
- 13 A - Could you describe the relationship among teachers in this school?
- 13 B - How is the relationship between teachers and the school head in this school?
- 13 C - How is the relationship between teachers and 'specialists' in this school?
- 13 D - How is the relationship between teachers and other staff in this school?
- 13 E - How is the relationship between teachers and parents in this school?
- 14 - Do teachers have opportunities to participate in school decisions?
- 15 - How have teachers reacted to community participation in school decisions?
- 16 A - Teaching has traditionally seen as a profession for women and as one not appropriate for men. What is your opinion?
- 16 B - Would primary teaching be different with male teachers?
- 17 A - Who would be better to teach children in this age group (primary school)? A male or a female teacher?
- 17 B - How would you react if your daughter decided to be a primary school teacher?
- 17 C - How would you react if your son decided to be a primary school teacher?

- 18 A - Do you have any professional plans?
- 18 B - Would you change anything in the teaching career?
- 18 C - Are you engaged in any activity other than teaching?

Personal information:

- Age
- Teaching experience
- Level of education (when completed each course)
- Marital Status
- Number of children
- Salary
- Parents/husband level of education/profession/income
- Husband or partner level of education/profession/income
- Family income

Interview with School Head

- 1- How long have you been in the school administration?
- 2.1- Have you have any experience in teaching? How long?
- 2.2- How did you become a teacher?
- 3- Can you describe your relationship with teachers?
- 4- Have you ever had any problems with any teacher?
- 4.1- What kind of problems has the school had with teachers?
- 5- How has the relationship between parents and teachers been in this school?
- 6- Do you think teachers today are different from teachers in the past? If so how?
- 7- Do teachers have the opportunity to update in courses?
- 7.1- Do teachers who attend these courses have any gain eg. as better career prospects or salary?
- 7.2- What kind of teachers usually attend these courses?
- 8 - Who would be better to teach children in this school age - male or a female teacher?
- 9- Would you define teaching as a profession?
- 10 A- How would you react if your daughter decided to be a primary school teacher?
- 10 B- How would you react if your son decided to be a primary school teacher?
- 11- What do you think about the salary difference between “P1 Habilitada” and school specialists?

Personal Information:

Age
Teaching experience
Level of education (when completed each course)
Marital Status
Number of children
Salary
Parents/husband level of education/profession/income
Husband or partner level of education/profession/income
Family income

Interview with “Educational specialists” (supervisors and counsellors)

- 1- How long have you worked as a school specialist?
- 2.1- Have you have any experience in teaching? How long?
- 2.2- How did you become a teacher?
- 3- Can you describe your relationship with teachers?
- 4- Have you ever had any problems with any teacher?
- 4.1- What kind of problems has the school had with teachers?
- 5- How has the relationship between parents and teachers been in this school?
- 6- Do you think teachers today are different from teachers in the past? If so how?
- 7- Do teachers have the opportunity to update in courses?
- 7.1- Do teachers who attend these courses have any gain eg. as better career prospects or salary?
- 7.2- What kind of teachers usually attend these courses?
- 8 - Who would be better to teach children in this school age? A male or a female teacher?
- 9- Would you define teaching as a profession?
- 10 A- How would you react if your daughter decided to be a primary school teacher?
- 10 B- How would you react if your son decided to be a primary school teacher?
- 11- What do you think about the salary difference between ‘P1 Habilitada’ and school specialists?

Personal Information:

Age
Teaching experience
Level of education (when completed each course)
Marital Status
Number of children
Salary
Parents/husband level of education/profession/income
Husband or partner level of education/profession/income
Family income

Objective of each question

1 - Identify pressures from school community on teachers to assume 'extra-tasks' (other tasks than formal education), which can be related with 'domestic roles' usually inherited and performed by women:

- a) teachers themselves
- b) colleagues
- c) school authorities
- d) parents/students
- e) Staff

2- Identify who is doing teaching: their imaginary

- a) social background and present status (class)
- b) professional definition/consciousness
- c) Gender aspects: option, imaginary about teachers' roles

Questions which intended to exploit the topics above:

1a - questions 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 16B, 18C

1b - questions 3, 4, 11B, 12, 13A, 13B, 13C, 15

1c - questions 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13B, 13C, 15

1d - questions 12, 13B, 13C, 15

1e - questions 13E, 15,

2a - questions 2, 5, and personal informations

2b - questions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13A, 16, 16B, 18, 18B

2c - questions 2, 4, 16, 16B, 16C, 17A, 17B, 18C and personal information

Interview with parents (semi-structured interviews)

1- Personal information

Name, occupation, age, marital status, number of children, level of education.

2- Do you participate in any school activity? How is the participation of your community in the school?

3- How do you feel about this school? Is the school open to the community?

4- How do you feel about the teacher of your son/daughter? About her work?

5- Have you ever had any problems with any teacher? Explain.

6- What are the roles of the school? What are your expectations from this school?

7- What are the roles of teachers?

8- What are the roles of families in schools?

9- Why did you select this school for your child?

10- Who would be more appropriate for teaching in primary school: a male teacher or a female teacher? Why?

11- Would you like to say anything else to complement this interview?

Appendix 2

Escola Plural: Some Early Consequences Teachers' Work and Relationship Inside School

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of the Escola Plural is the second event which had great impact over the system of education visited. Here, it is important to see how macro forces still control and affect schools, but in the same way, how the micro level of schools finds ways to resist macro forces. Resistance inside schools does not mean that the old order will continue the same; but certainly, the new changes will not have the planned effect. Here, we see how important it is to consider both macro and micro levels in order to make effective any educational proposal. In addition, we can see that some school managers have changed their position of "representatives" of the government, and became more related to the school community, even if it is not the case for many others.

During the field work, schools were having to adapt to the many changes introduced by a new administration in the Municipal Secretary of Education. Teachers, as well as the school managers interviewed, said that they really did not quite know what the Escola Plural was. They could only provide bits of information which were sometimes at odds with each other. It was not the intention of this study to try to understand what the Escola Plural was, and it was avoided talking about this subject because, in all the schools visited, teachers made very clear that they did not want to talk about it. They were very angry at the government decision, which they felt forced into accepting. As noticed earlier, at the time of the study, teachers were suspicious of strangers inside schools, and feared that I could be someone working for the local government to see if their plans were being implemented. The subject of the Escola Plural was frequently mentioned during interviews, even though teachers generally began by saying that they did not want to discuss it.

According to all teachers, they only heard about the government plan to introduce change in education at the end of November 1994. It was March, 1995 when I visited the

schools, and the school staff was still confused about the changes. Information about the Escola Plural was not easily available. In some of the schools, only two to four informative leaflets left in the library were all that was available to inform the whole school. According to teachers and school managers, the material promised about the Escola Plural had not arrived.

Among the changes introduced was one that saw teachers, rather than working with their own group of pupils, sharing two classrooms of 25 pupils each with two other teachers. So, rather than 25 pupils, they were teaching groups of 50 pupils. Further, teachers were supposed to change the subject taught during the year with the other two teachers. Thus, if a teacher began the year teaching Maths, Portuguese and Art, in the following trimester, she would teach Physical Education, Science and History, and then change again in the following trimester. There had previously been teachers for certain subjects - Religion, Physical Education, Literature and Arts. Teachers were supposed to have time introduced for study inside school hours. In reality, due to the elimination of "supply teachers"¹, many teachers were having to stay in the classroom during their hours of study to fill in for absent teachers. Another change had to do with how pupils were distributed in classrooms. Before, they were distributed according to their learning progress and would be promoted if they achieved a minimum of 50% of the marks given throughout the whole school year. In the new system, pupils were grouped according to age, with the result that pupils were promoted to their age level, doing the work of a school level above their age cohort, without actually having command of the subject material. According to teachers, this resulted in pupils who had repeated the first or second year of primary school being moved into the third or fourth year. Teachers found it very difficult to work effectively with such a heterogeneous group of pupils, and discovered that the changes were resulting in disciplinary problems in classrooms. Teachers did not understand

1- Previously each school shift had a teacher who would be working for the year as the "supply teacher". The manner in which "supply teachers" are defined varies from the school to school. They are usually teachers who as a reward are given the chance to stay out of the classroom for a year. A "supply teacher" is defined as a teacher who would stay out of the classroom for the year doing activities other than teaching. In addition, part of her work involves staying in classroom when a teacher can not come to work for any reason. This could be for a day or more. In cases where teachers have to stay out of work for longer, then another teacher is hired to replace the absent teacher during her/his leave.

exactly how the system of evaluation would work. They said that at least reprobation/repetition would not exist anymore.

A post was also introduced in schools - that of a "coordinator". The coordinator was supposed to be a teacher who would plan the activities to be undertaken at the school, with the help of other teachers. They apparently were doing the job of educational specialists, but at the same salary as a teacher. In addition, these individuals were expected to teach, and had to work with special classes of pupils with learning difficulties. These coordinators shared work space with the educational specialists (supervisors and counsellors), who complained that these new coordinators were replicating the job of a school educational specialist. Not many teachers were interested in such a post, since it involved discussion and conflict with other colleagues, in addition to the extra-roles and without any salary increase. See the interview below:

Case 26, p. 11/12: "... People come to me... (They/teachers say:) 'Are you the coordinator? What do we have to do!' This is not my role! (And what are your roles?) Well, the coordinators' roles is to plan together with teachers, to know what is going on at the school and to do integrated work with the supervisor and with the counsellor. But from the moment that teachers start to question the program, this is not in my competence. I think that the supervisor is here to deal with it ...".

Supervisor/school 4, p. 17: "... I will retire this year. When I retire, no one will come to take my place. She (referring to another specialist) will retire in June, and her post will vanish ... Then, if specialists retire or change their roles, no one will take their posts".

Teachers said that they were forced to attend a course during their holidays in January. At this time, the Secretary of Education had introduced new courses in Maths, Language and other subjects. Teachers said that they were not given the option to choose a course of interest to them, and some said that they ended up in a course no one else wanted, wherever vacancies were left. Teachers expressed feelings of discontent and that they did not know how to react to the changes. Many recognized that change was necessary in the school system, but that the project would fail if it was forced upon them. Their resistance to the whole process was a point made forcefully by many teachers. Some underlined that the government dictatorship had

ended, and that there was supposed to be democracy in the schools. By March and April, teachers frequently complained of stress, and compared their feelings of exhaustion to how they normally feel at the end of the school year. Most teachers said that they were having problems sleeping and did not know what to do at work. Indeed, very little information was sent to the school and to get information was really difficult. Indeed, I even had problems trying to obtain material related to the Escola Plural.

In most of the schools visited, teachers opted to continue working as before the implementation of the new plan. Others adapted the Escola Plural to their needs. In one of the schools visited (school 1) a most interesting resistance was discovered unintentionally during an interview with a teacher, and was confirmed in the interview with one of the school supervisors². In this school, teachers pretended to work according to the Escola Plural. When the “Regional inspectors”³ came to visit the school, staff acted as though they were doing what had been asked. Teachers and the supervisor had agreed that the project of Escola Plural would not work for those pupils, and decided to continue as previously. This was happening in the morning shift. Teachers seemed very sure of themselves in making this decision. The external authorities seemed to have neglected to consider how difficult it is to implement change in education without the support of teachers. The Escola Plural was certainly introduced without previous consent or participation of the school community.

In another school (school 2), teachers queried why they should change their way of working when they were experiencing successful rates of promotion. They claimed they were one of the best schools in the system. In the end they did change, or at least partially accepted changes introduced by the Escola Plural.

Many ~~conflicts~~ occurred between teachers and visitors from the “Regional” when they

2- This school supervisor was the youngest specialist interviewed. She worked as a teacher in another municipal school in the afternoon shift.

3- Belo Horizonte is a large city. To control schools, the city of Belo Horizonte has been divided in regions and these are named “Regional”. Each “Regional” is in charge of supervising the work of schools located in a set area of the city. See more information on chapter 4.

came to the schools. On such incident happened in a pedagogical meeting. Since I was not present at the school that day, the incident was described to me by teachers interviewed the next day. The school managers confirmed what had happened. It seems that visitors from the “Regional” called the school head and said that they were going to visit the school to make a presentation about the Escola Plural. However, teachers were not told that they would come during the pedagogical meeting. The school head and educational specialists said that they did not think that this would bother the teachers. When visitors from the “Regional” arrived, teachers reacted to their presence by saying that they should have been informed about the visit, and that they would not allow them to use their pedagogical time for this purpose. Some teachers were verbally aggressive. Many teachers were embarrassed by what had happened. It is interesting to note that the teachers’ embarrassment was due to the impolite approach of colleagues. Women teachers show shame to behave aggressively even in situations where their rights are taken from them. Teachers and the inside school-authorities seem careful to preserve the traditional position of women as submissive, often accepting circumstances without complaint, and behaving as “well-educated girls”.

In another school (school 3) people from the “Regional” came to the school and a similar conflict resulted. Teachers and school managers were angry with the manner in which individuals from the Regional behaved during the meeting. They came to the school and talked about necessary changes in teachers’ work and class organization. According to teachers in this school, when teachers attempted to express their opinions the people from the “Regional” asked for their names and noted them down. Teachers felt very intimidated in this situation. Those whose names had been written down were afraid of retaliation. Others who witnessed this, understood it as a signal that if they objected, they would suffer future punishment. One of the teachers said that she asked what would happen if she did not change according to the Escola Plural. The answer was that she would have to leave her job. Finally, people from the “Regional” stopped the discussion and distributed a story about an animal. The story was

about "The Anta"⁴. In Brazil, another connotation for the word "anta" is for a person who is stupid or stubborn. It seemed that the text indicated teachers resistant to change were "antas". When the teachers tried to comment on this story, the visitors from the "Regional" got up and left. The school head described the situation as funny, but teachers were extremely angry about the whole thing.

In the fourth school, I was present during a visit from the people of the "Regional" and could confirm the absurdity of the situation as described by teachers. This visit occurred again during a pedagogical meeting. The "Regional" staff arrived at the school with very unfriendly faces, no smiles. They did not introduce themselves. I tried to get a copy of the leaflets with information about the Escola Plural which were read in this meeting, but these individuals were very unhelpful. Copies of material were not left with the teachers either. When they discovered that I was not a teacher, they stopped talking to me and said that I could get the material at the Secretary of Education. I received no help at all.

The most shocking aspect of this meeting was complete lack of dialogue. It looked more like a military meeting rather than a so-called democratic event. The people from the "Regional" asked teachers to read the small book they distributed in pairs, since they did not have enough for each teacher to receive one. While some teachers read, others raised their hands in an attempt to ask questions or criticize the content. A common complaint was that they were not able to implement what was expected because they did not receive the material promised by the government. One of the people from the "Regional" interrupted the reading in an impatient voice, and told the teachers to move to a specific page. On this page were lines about the problems that resistance can bring to work, and comments about negative aspects of resistance. This was followed by a silence and reading of the book. The reading was not completed because they had to leave the school, and they did not return to school during the time I was there. I tried to talk to them after the meeting but the visitors said they were too busy

4- Such event was also described by the school head (who described it laughing). However, she recognized that teachers got very irritated with the event and were having feelings of impotence, frustration and discouragement to work facing the changes, especially those teachers considered "good teachers" by the head - those more involved in cultural events, community meetings and in emotional support to pupils.

and could not spare any time.

In reality, the Escola Plural appears to be more of a political project than a pedagogical one, as many teachers complained. There are positive aspects of the project, but the way it has been introduced has caused conflict inside schools and made teachers insecure in their work. Teachers were not prepared for the change in any way. No written material (nor school had physical conditions) were provided to help implement changes. In some schools, like school 2, the previous method of teaching had been successful, and parents and teachers were happy with the school performance, and so the changes made no sense. A pilot study should have been undertaken before all the schools were involved in this project, as many teachers suggested. It could be that conflict was exactly what the government wanted - conflict, leading to a decrease in teachers' autonomy, a weakening of democracy inside schools and destabilization of teachers as a group, increasing division between staff inside schools.

Teachers' fear of persecution seemed unreal considering that Brazilians live in a democracy. Nevertheless, the actions of the Municipal Secretary of Education and the manner in which people from the "Regional" visited the schools only proved that the dictatorial relationship that has existed between government and schools has not ended.

The Escola Plural was only introduced at the primary school level. As has been mentioned, this level of schooling is a female ghetto. It may have been expected that the changes would be easy to impose - that these women would accept their destiny without complaint. However, there is a new generation of women inside schools, with different reasons to stay at work and that do not accept external impositions anymore.

The attitude of school heads towards the changes imposed, and consequently to the conflicts inside schools was neutral. They appeared to understand the frustration felt by teachers, but continued to administrate schools almost as if nothing had happened. They continued to attend meetings at the "Regional" and ensure the school would follow the proposed changes. They were extremely careful not to criticize the Municipal Secretary of Education. School heads have been considered important elements inside schools to implement school changes (Mello and Costa, 1994). It was noticed that they were usually involved in

meetings at the Municipal Secretary or at the "Regional". Thus, there seems to be close attention and control over the attitudes of school heads.

As for parents in the poorest schools, at the time of the study parents had not been informed about the changes. In the middle-class school, the parents I talked to were concerned about the changes, but they accepted them. And the school staff had made clear to parents that they were worried too. In school 3, I had the opportunity to observe the day where parents were invited to the school to be informed about changes introduced in the Escola Plural. Those who actually came filled only one classroom. According to the counsellor and supervisor, they were not sure what to say to parents since they themselves did not really understand what the Escola Plural was all about.

In other words, the Escola Plural caused chaos in the schools visited. It does not mean that changes were not wanted. However, the way it was implemented caused great stress for teachers and other school staff. In the following year (1996), most of the schools visited said that they had returned to their traditional way of teaching or at least partially so⁵. According to teachers, schools who had developed a style similar to the Escola Plural independently continued to work like that.

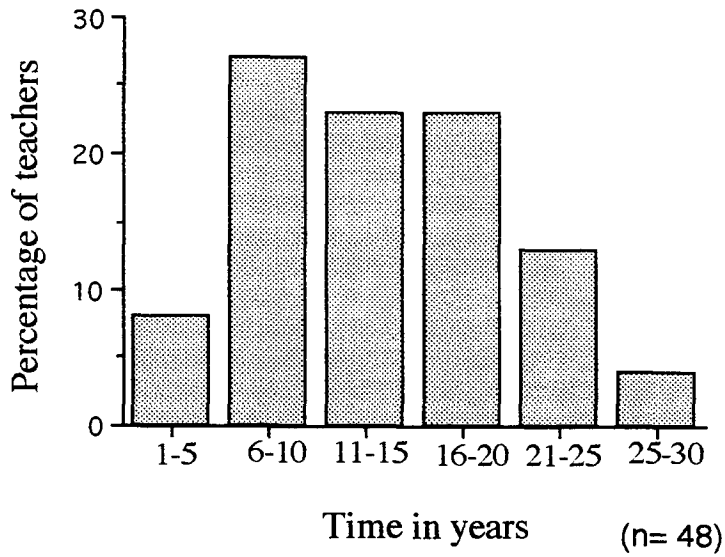
Since the plan was introduced only at primary school level where there are mainly women teachers, gendered expectation of the workers may explain the authoritarian manner in which the government attempted to make its demands known. School heads and most Educational specialists did not offer any particular opposition to the changes. Despite being women, these people were loyal to their own needs and career plans. Their submission to government authority - even though they have a degree of power once elected by the community - shows the women's habitus to obey orders. However, it might also be that these women's submissive behaviour towards government decisions reflects their traditional position

5- According to information from the Municipal Secretary of Education in 1997 (the new secretary, under the new government) many schools remained unchanged or adopted partially the changes of the "Escola Plural" imposed during the previous government. However, the new secretary has continued the work and was trying to better understand schools from the perspective of each school and then try to implement the "Escola Plural" in a more democratic way.

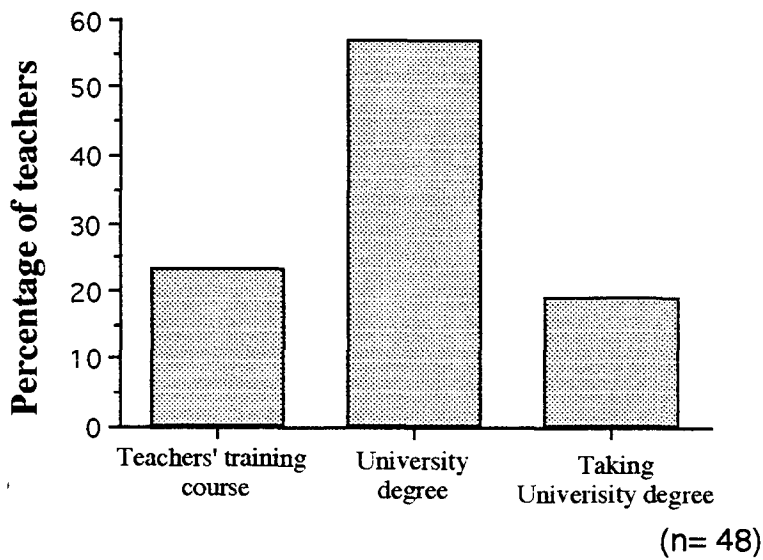
in the hierarchies at work, where women are expected to obey orders without positioning themselves against it.

Appendix 3: Teaching Experience and Level of Education

Teaching experience: number of years in teaching.



Teachers' level of education



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