

Concept of public school quality from the families' point of view

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Abstract

This article presents a study carried out in a school in Campinas/Brazil, and also data from a research developed in a school in Porto/Portugal, both referring to how families see the quality of public schools. In each municipality, one school was selected based on a socioeconomic level (NSE); and questionnaires with items on the researched subject were applied to the students' families of those schools. Similarly, in both surveys, Brazilian and Portuguese families emphasized the importance of quality teaching and the school-community relations. However, the relationship established with the school was characterized differently. For Portuguese families, besides the activities promoted by the school unit, the actions developed by the community itself contribute to the quality of the school. Brazilian families, although they also mention the school-community relationship, only reported on the activities developed by the institution. The data from the studies allow us to reflect on the families' views and their participation in public school, in the sense of a socially referenced quality development, whose principle is in the arrangement of different voices that build the school community and it can't perform without the students' families.

Keywords: School Quality. Public school. School-family relation.

Introduction

Discussing public school quality involves worldviews and conceptions of society and education. To corporate reformers⁴, school quality refers to indexes achieved on standardized tests. Raising those indexes, in this logic, depends on the teacher's work and, therefore, it is on an opposite way of the co-responsibility between the school community and public power. On the other hand, professional educators advocate for social equality on education. This point of view "establishes the school itself as the protagonist in the process of looking at itself", sharing responsibilities with the public power. When self-assessing, the school community (managers, teachers, employees, students and families) begins from the commitments made on the Political Pedagogical Project that, despite considering external indexes, glimpse "the social, political, cultural and human formation of the students" (FERRAROTTO; MALAVASI, 2015, p. 233).

In defense of the free and social quality of the public school, the Observation and Descriptive Studies Laboratory (Loed) at the Faculty of Education at the University of Campinas (Unicamp), since 2003, has developed studies that seek to reflect the

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4 Corporate Reformers is an expression created by Diane Ravitch (2011) referring to the union of politicians, businessmen and private foundations that defend the involvement of private initiative to solve educational problems (FREITAS, 2012).

assessments from teaching networks. In a propositional initiative, Loed believes in evaluative processes anchored in a participatory accountability, in which the school community and the public power elect goals and “accept, without embarrassment, the social control over practices” (SORDI, 2013, p. 08).

One of these studies – School Generation (GERES-2005) – carried out from 2005 to 2008 in partnership with other Universities⁵, had as its focus to annually evaluate the same students' performance, since second grade of middle school (former first grade), showing that the student's entry performance helps to understand a school's overall performance. Often the child's entry conditions, if not measured, mask the results found initially. Thereby the school ends up being held accountable, especially when the outcome is unfavorable. Researchers such as Sampson e Raudenbusch (2004) also indicate this phenomenon.

As a result of this research, from 2009 to 2012, Loed developed another study called “Institutional Evaluation on Elementary School: increasing the use of external evaluation data by the school professionals”, financed by CAPES⁶, which objective was to discuss the school quality based on its internal and external factors. One part of this research tried to portray families and their relationship with the school. As a methodological option, four public schools from the city of Campinas were selected, with contrasting Socioeconomic Levels (NSE) – meaning two with lower NSE and another two with higher NSE – in order to find out which elements the families considered when analyzing the quality of the school where their children are enrolled.

In order to keep the discussion, in 2015 was developed a study with families of students from a public school in the city of Rio Tinto, in Portugal, about the institution's quality. Making note of the striking differences between these two countries (historical, social, economic, and the educational policies), in this article we will reflect on the relationship established between family and school, as well the former's point of view about the second, to enhance the debate about social quality on public schools.

The path traveled

Finding out what families understand by quality school requires an approximation between the researched institutions and the student's families. For this, we selected schools based on Socioeconomic Levels (NSE). This criterion was adopted since studies show NSE as a factor of influence on the relation between family and school (LAHIRE, 1997; NOGUEIRA, 2006).

We initially discovered the NSE of the public schools in Campinas, where the research “Institutional Evaluation on Elementary School: increasing the use of external evaluation data by the school professionals” was being developed by Loed. Based on this data, we identified and approached two institutions with higher NSE and two with lower NSE. The first contact with both schools was made through school management and its objective was to identify characteristics regarding the physical structure and available resources, as well as to dialogue about the community attended. In the process of approaching the families, we opted to use a questionnaire as the research method in order to map the reasons that led the families to enroll their children on

5 UFMG (Federal University Minas Gerais), PUC-Rio (Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro), UEMS (University of Mato Grosso do Sul), UFBA (Federal University of Bahia), UNICAMP e UFJF (Federal University of Juiz de Fora).

6 Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel.

these schools and what they considered important in them. The questionnaire had 10 closed-ended and 2 open-ended questions (Did this school contribute to life in the neighborhood? How?; Did this neighborhood contribute to life at the school? How?), and a space for comments.

The questionnaire in the four schools was sent to the families of students from 4th and 5th grade of elementary school. We received an average of 73%⁷ of answers back. The answers received from closed-ended questions were coded, typed and their frequency was accounted for. The open-ended answers were transcribed and analyzed based on their content. In (ALMEIDA; FERRAROTTO; MALAVASI, 2017) we show the results found in this investigation.

In 2015, with the opportunity to do a post-doctor in Porto/Portugal, we approached a public school in Rio Tinto, in order to investigate the families' point of view of the school where their children are enrolled. This institution, according to information provided by the management and confirmed by the Ministry of Education, has the higher NSE among the schools in Porto. The initial contact with the school was also carried out through the managers, who introduced the school to us and described the community. As the schools in Campinas, contact with the families was done through a questionnaire. It had the same questions as the one conducted on the Brazilian schools, but with the appropriate vocabulary adjustments. However, unlike the Brazilian schools, in this institution, we were given a moment on the Parents and Teachers Meeting to conduct the questionnaire. The families of each grade representatives in the school (called Class Counselors⁸) were in attendance, totaling 17 participants, which all answered the questionnaire. To tabulate the data, we counted the frequency of the answers on the closed-ended questions, and on the open-ended ones, we considered their content, with emphasis on their recurrence (BARDIN, 1977).

Next, in an exploratory way, we will discuss the conception of school quality, from the point of view of Brazilian and Portuguese families, of the institutions where their children study. We will use the data from the Brazilian school with higher NSE⁹, since it has a context closer to the Portuguese school (aside from the socioeconomic level, it is located in one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city). In this school, from the 120 questionnaires sent, we received 85 back, meaning 70,8% of the families from the sample, took part in the research. Although there is a difference in the number of participants, we understand that the discussion about school quality can be enhanced by the approximations and distances observed on the speeches of the families that belong to different realities.

The school quality to the families

The Brazilian School

The Brazilian school is located in an old neighborhood and near to the urban center of Campinas. According to information provided by management, the families are

7 Questionnaire return from each school: School 1 with higher NSE – 70,8%; School 2 with higher NSE – 78,3%; School 1 with lower NSE – 73,3%; School 2 with lower NSE – 72,6.

8 The Class Counselors are elected by the other families and are part of the Association of Parents and Guardians of the School Education of Rio Tinto (APASERT). The Class Counselors meet monthly with the families they represent to discuss matters related to everyday life in the school.

9 This institution has an NSE of 0,25. As explained by Almeida, Ferrarotto and Malavasi (2017, p. 668) "The NSE values are normalized with a zero average and a standard deviation of 1. This means the values can range from -3 to +3, however approximately 68% of schools are between -1 e 1".

made up of salaried workers. In the managers' point of view, families seek the school on conflicted situations, a fact that, for them, don't mean a full appreciation for the work performed by the institution, even though they offer spaces for participation in events, meetings and the composition of collegiate. For the management team, the community participation in the school is still low (DUARTE; ALMEIDA, 2011).

The school has students from elementary school, aged 06 to 13 years. There are 950 students distributed in 22 classes in two shifts of 5 hours each. This institution doesn't have full-time students. It has 10 classrooms, 50 teachers and 30 employees. This institution also has a science lab, a computer lab, a vegetable garden, a sports court, a library and an arts room. In this occasion, the school was being renovated (BETINI; ALMEIDA, 2010).

As for the criterion for enrollment, municipal management advises the use of geo-referencing, that is, one must take into consideration the closest school to the student's home. However, based on reports of families from this research, as an institution recognized to be concerned with the teaching of curricular content and human values, families from other districts also seek to enroll their children in this school¹⁰.

As other municipal schools in Campinas, this one also has two collegiate composed by representatives of various segments of the institution (managers, teacher, employees, students, and families) to discuss actions related to administrative and pedagogical matters. One of them is the School Council (CE) established in 1991, with Law n° 6662. The other collegiate, designated Self-Assessment Commission (CPA), was implemented in 2008, with the Institutional Participatory Evaluation policy, through the Resolution n° 05/2008. Both are regulated by specific normative acts that assign the articulation of the work accomplished to a member of the school management (School Principal to CE and Pedagogical Advisor to CPA).

School quality to Brazilian families

From the closed-ended answers, we found the main reasons the families pointed out when enrolling their children in the selected institution, namely: quality of teaching, the home and the school proximity and the institution being close to a bus line.

Table 1 – Reason for choosing the school.

	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important
Close to my house	48,2%	31,7%	11,7%
Close to a bus line	10,6%	25,9%	41,2%
Quality of teaching	60%	28,2%	2,3%

Sources: elaborated by the researches.

The data in table 1 reveals that 88.2% of families indicated that the quality of teaching was considered when the enrollment was made. However, it is worth remembering that geo-referencing is the guide-criterion to enroll in public schools in Campinas, that is, in theory, there wouldn't be an option since the child should study in the neighborhood school. This criterion for enrollment may justify the answers concerning the importance of the location of the institution. 79.9% of the participating families said that this is an important or a very important aspect.

¹⁰ Information obtained on conversation with the families.

As for the open-ended answers, at first, we didn't focus on specific topics. We sought to identify aspects that, based on the families' voices, related to quality. In this exercise we found 6 topics that help us understand what, to the families, contribute to quality schools, namely: 1) Quality of Teaching; 2) School-Community relation; 3) Reasons for appreciating the school; 4) Safety; 5) Extracurricular Activities; 6) School Organization (ALMEIDA; FERRAROTTO; MALAVASI, 2017).

As it was mentioned in the closed-ended questions, the "Quality of Teaching" was emphasized by the participants as the most contributing fact for the quality of the institution. 31.4% of the answers were related to this topic.

Yes. It is a good school, well known by the teaching and the teachers (Responsible 6).

Yes, because there are many children and many of their parents have studied in it, and there are many conditions among the others to meet the expectations of many parents about the teaching (Responsible 33).

In addition to the aspects related to the teaching of curricular contents, this topic includes messages that highlight the relevance of the school's action with the students in the "construction of values and social relationships" (ALMEIDA; FERRAROTTO; MALAVASI, 2017, p. 657).

[The school contributed] Trying to teach people to live socially (Responsible 1).

Another topic found from the open-ended answers refers to the "School-Community relation". In this topic, the families describe the relation with the school and the participation on events promoted by the institution. 18% of the research participants highlighted this factor as an element that composes the quality of the school. In these answers, the families mentioned that the school's actions promote the construction of affective bonds.

Promotes activities that promotes the integration among the residents. (Responsible 1).

Yes. On party organizations and specially on the fair. (Responsible 10)

I think so, because most of the residents studied in this school, their children. It is where the residents get together in harmony and to celebrate friendship (Responsible 25).

The topic "Reasons for appreciating the school" concerns the location of the school. 12% of the research participants highlighted that the institution is close to their home or it is located in an easy-to-access neighborhood.

It gives opportunity to the children living in the neighborhood, which makes it much easier for the location and infrastructure (Responsible 23).

Giving opportunity to the residents to study in the same neighborhood (Responsible 38).

On this topic, it is worth noting that beyond the criterion for enrollment adopted on the municipal schools in Campinas (geo-referencing), the location of the institution is also a factor considered by the families when analysing the quality of the institution. These answers help us understand that enrolling the children in a

school close to home is relevant to the families and not only a requirement from the Municipal Education Network.

The fourth topic that we identified relates to "Safety". On this factor, 6% of the families mentioned security inside and outside the institution and pointed out, as a positive aspect, the presence of security personnel.

We are satisfied with the quality of the school in relation to the teaching and safety of the children, "no one leaves the gates without a parent or guardian", and this gives us peace of mind to leave our children in the school (Responsible 35).

The "Extracurricular Activities" makes up the fifth topic present in the messages obtained with the open-ended questions. 4.5% of the participant families value positively the activities made possible by the school, which are intended for both the students as well as the residents of the neighborhood.

Participating of the activities and programs that allow the entrance of the residents (Responsible 3).

Yes, promoting extracurricular activities where everyone can participate (Responsible 29).

The last topic regards the "School Organization". 3% of the families mentioned negative aspects of the institution's organization concerning cleaning, meals and child care. As it can be observed on the following comments, the families argue that they would like to see the school's spaces cleaner.

I would like the school to be cleaner (Responsible 14).

I would like the school to have a weekly or bi-weekly cleaning because it shows abandonment on the environment areas of the school and on the school's toys (Responsible 47).

In general, we noticed that to the Brazilian families participating on this study, the quality of the public school is multidimensional. Among the dimensions we identified are the quality of teaching, the way the relation between the school and the community occurs, the location of the institution, its safety, the extracurricular activities as well as the organization and maintenance of its spaces.

The Portuguese School

The school researched is in Rio Tinto, located in the vicinity of the city of Porto, in Portugal. According to information obtained with the management team, the institution serves a population with high Socioeconomic Levels (NSE) and most of the families live around the school. The model to define school enrollment in the country is associated with the area the student's family lives. However, there are families that even though they live in other districts, want to enroll their children in this school, since in their conception, the institution teaches contents to external evaluation and imprints values for the formation of "respectable and respectful human beings"¹¹.

11 Information obtained on conversation with the families.

The school was built to serve students aged 14 to 17 years and, three years ago, it also started to serve students for second cycle¹², aged 10 to 13 years. It has 1885 students, 64 classrooms, 135 teachers and 33 employees. In the school there are also 3 computer labs, a dining hall, a canteen, one teacher's meeting room, a pool, five sports courts, two Association of Parents and Guardians of the School Education of Rio Tinto (APAISERT) meeting room, one covered and one uncovered patio. It is worth to mention that, in the educational system in Portugal, all Basic Education is, at least, 6 hours per day.

For the discussion and deliberation of administrative and pedagogic questions, the researched school has the participation of the families. For this, each grade elects a representative, called Class Counselors. The Class Counselors are assigned to participate in all school activities as well as to be part of APAISERT.

According to the families that took part on this research, this association has its own statute and it was institutionalized to give more visibility to the importance of families in school. The families that make up APAISERT get together every two weeks. The minute with the matters to be discussed is forwarded to all the families in the school.

Quality of Education for Portuguese Families

The answers obtained with the closed-ended questions show that, when enrolling their children, Portuguese families consider, above all, the quality of teaching and the location of the institution.

Table 2 - Reasons for choosing the school

	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important
Close to my house	47%	35,3%	17,7%
Close to a bus line	23,5%	29,4%	41,2%
Quality of teaching	82,3%	17,7%	

Sources: elaborated by the researches

The data in Table 2 shows that all the family members that participate in this research gave a value of important or very important to the quality of teaching when enrolling their children in the school. The location of the school, and above all, its proximity to the residence, was pointed out as important and/or very important by 82.3% of the families. We believe that this factor was significantly mentioned because enrollments in Portuguese public schools are also made effective based on geo-referencing. As pointed out by the Brazilian families, the quality of teaching was mentioned on the questionnaire's open-ended questions as an aspect part of the quality of the public schools, therefore constituting an element considered in the act of enrollment as well as when evaluating the school their children attend.

It is worth mentioning that, when looking at the open-ended questions and grouping them by similarities, we identified four topics that, on the families' point of view express the quality of the school. They are: 1) School-community relation; 2) Appreciation of participation; 3) Community contribution to the quality of the school; 4) Quality of teaching.

¹² The Second Cycle in Portugal stands for Middle School in Brazil.

“School-community relation” was the most recurring topic on the Portuguese families' speeches (76.4%). The families that participated in the research pointed out as a positive contribution from the school to the community, the offer, by the institution, of diversified activities that favor the integration of several segments.

Keeps a diverse activity/initiative open to the whole community. E.g. Theater, lectures, art, expositions, etc (Responsible 1).

Promotes or sponsors events (debates, meetings, etc) trying to get the community involved (Responsible 15).

Yes, a lot. With activities that intend to involve the families (Responsible 3).

In their speeches, the Portuguese families also emphasize community involvement on the school everyday life. Therefore, 58.8% of the messages that make up the topic “Appreciation of participation” attribute a positive value to the school and the community's approximation; however, they highlight that it would be important to intensify the families' participation in activities promoted by the school.

[...] the community should participate more in the school's activities (Responsible 4).

[...] parents should participate more in the school; the family should also be the school (Responsible 16).

In addition to the actions promoted by the institution, the families emphasize that there is “Community contribution to the quality of the school”. 41.2% of the messages that make up this topic refer to the community collaboration with activities promoted by the institution, as well as actions carried out by the community itself.

Yes. The parents sometimes also take part in many initiatives, getting the community together for a better performance (Responsible 7).

Yes. As a way to be represented – Association. Suggestions that can be applied and used by all the students (Responsible 9).

Holding of sports and other events (Responsible 13).

As for the “Quality of teaching”, 23.5% of the Portuguese families point out the importance of teaching the curricular content, which contribute to the development of cognitive and social aspects and prepare for a better future.

Yes. The school promotes the development of cognitive and social abilities of our children (Responsible 11).

Yes. The school always helps in a certain way in the life of the community, it integrates a very important part of the students' lives by preparing them for the future. And in consequence in each other's lives (Responsible 2).

When we relate the open-ended and closed-ended questions, we observe that for Portuguese families participating in the research, the quality of teaching is an important aspect when they enroll their children in a school. However, beyond the curricular components and the development of cognitive abilities, the quality of the public school is also linked to factors such as involvement, school and community relation and its contribution to the institution, being observed by the Portuguese families, as well as the Brazilian's, in its multidimensionality.

It is pertinent to highlight that in the open space left to other considerations, the participants mention that even though the school carries out actions aimed to its qualification, the public power has influence over the school's everyday life by giving importance to the results of standardized tests and not looking close enough to the needs of the students and the training of the teachers. The following statements portray the families' concerns beyond the school's walls.

This school has good will, it intends to be a good school. However, sometimes, the contingencies imposed by governmental public policies mine the good intentions. The importance given to the exams impair school performance, the students' success and their disposition. The students would be happier and they would have better results if there wasn't so much pressure on national exams (Responsible 11).

There many things that need improvement, but they are not always on the school's hands, some of them need higher state approval. It should have the support of the so called special students, i.e. special education students. The classes should be reduced in terms of number of students (Responsible 12).

The school begins on the training of teachers, as they are the pillars of the school. Over the years it has come to be seen that this training is getting worse and worse (Responsible 13).

Reflections on the data found

As we previously presented, the tool used in this study was made up of closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. In the analysis of the closed-ended questions, we were able to notice that a significant amount of Brazilian and Portuguese families mentioned that being close to home is an important factor when enrolling their children in an educational institution (Brazil: 48.2% Very important and 31.7% important. Portugal: 47% Very important and 35.3% important). The enrollment criterion adopted in both teaching networks (geo-referencing) can justify this amount of answers.

However, beyond the requirements of the teaching network, when reflecting on the social quality of the public school, we need to analyze the relation it establishes when a child studies in its neighborhood. We understand that studying in a school close to home contributes to the formation process of the student. The school, when looking to its context on the formation process of its Political Pedagogical Project, approaches the community allowing a "better comprehension of the served population, their yearnings, doubts, claims and propositions" (ALMEIDA; FERRAROTTO; MALAVASI, 2017, p. 666). This fact allows the school community to identify itself with the practices performed, in order to recognize itself and be a part of it. Thus, to be able to collectively build the social quality in the public school, it is imperative the use of the multiple voices that make up the school, and when families are there, the process of negotiation and deliberation of the action to be performed are potentialized.

As for the enrollment, another aspect observed by the families concerns the quality of teaching. According to the information obtained with the closed-ended questions, to the Brazilian families and the Portuguese families, this is the main aspect observed when enrolling their children in a school. Thereby, considering that

both networks use geo-referencing, we can infer that in the quest for better quality teaching, there could have families that use strategies (such as omitting their true place of residence) to “ascend to the ‘sanctuaries of excellence’” (ANTUNES; SÁ, 2010, p. 113, highlights made by the authors).

As a consequence, in addition to being observed for enrollment, the quality of teaching was among the factors that, according to the participants of this research, make up the set of elements considered when analyzing the quality of the school. Almeida (2000), Vieira (2007) and Antunes e Sá (2010) highlight that the concern regarding the quality of teaching reveals that families, especially the more economic favored classes, are seeking “competitive advantages”. Considering the socio-economic level of the families part of this research, and as it was pointed out by the aforementioned authors, we infer that it could have a look at this aspect in a sense of quest for the realization of social ascension projects.

Another factor mentioned by the participants in this research on the elements observed in the quality of school was the school-family relation. The Brazilian families, when reporting about their relation to the school, mentioned the involvement in events and meetings promoted by the institution. To these families, participating in these moments favors the formation of affective bonds among the members of the community. The Portuguese answers also pointed out that these activities promoted by the school also contribute to the integration of diverse segments. In this direction, Zenhas (2006) points out that the activities promoted by the institution benefit the family-school relationship since it allows people to get to know each other, establishing a trust relation. According to the author (2006, p. 165),

The frequency and diversity of the contact between school and family are an important factor in the promotion of collaboration, with greater emphasis on the face-to-face contacts. The service and the EEs¹³ general meetings constitute privileged communication opportunities between the family and the school, characterized by the promotion of strategies to promote learning and problem solving for students.

It is interesting to note, however, that beyond the school's initiative, the Portuguese families affirm that actions they develop also contribute to the quality of the school. In their speeches, there is a reference to events, as well as the presentation of suggestions through the Parents' Association. The topic about the contribution of the community to the school, in a certain way, relates to the topic of appreciation of participation, both are identified in the answers of Portuguese families. These families attribute a positive value to the involvement of families in the school and even emphasizes that it needs to be intensified. It is worth to mention that, in the school in Porto, the Parents' Association – whose members answered the questionnaire used on the study we developed – establishes a narrow relation to the school's management. It is a collegiate marked by the protagonism of the families. By our observations, we noticed that agreements are established and decisions are made without a hierarchization between them.

We believe that the involvement of families in the school environment favors the social quality of the institution and, consequently, the complete formation of the

13 In Charge of Education. According to the author, the In Charge of Education (EE) “is the individual who, at the time of enrollment of a minor student, is responsible, to the school, to monitor the school life of the child, regardless of the family bond that may tie them and whether or not parental responsibilities are attributed to them (ZENHAS, 2006, p. 25).

student. In our understanding, the participation of the family in the school needs to happen beyond attending events, meetings and monitoring homework.

From the perspective of social quality of the public school, the commitment of the institution is with the formation of the student and with its community. We cannot imagine building this commitment in a distance relationship with the families, in which they are at school only for specific moments of the school calendar. The participation of the family in the school, in this logic, is related to the construction, concretization and collective evaluation of the Political Pedagogical Project.

In this sense, despite the differences in conceptions and actions, it seems valid to us that the families, both Brazilian and Portuguese, have acknowledged and valued the school-family relation and the participation of it on the former, as part of an institutional quality. It seems to us then that even with diverse historical, political, economic, cultural, and social processes, the families look at the school and conceive its quality based on a set of elements and, among them, they perceive themselves as actors who can contribute and be authors on the construction of the school where their children attend.

However, as the Portuguese families highlight, it is necessary to look beyond the school's walls when we put into question the discussion about its quality. Thus, we need to be attentive to the hegemonic disputes that permeate education (FRIGOTTO, 2010). Among them, the attacks of neoliberal policies that bring repercussions to the family-school relation. In their discourse, those policies appropriate and resignify the struggle of the professional educators for the necessary approximation between the school and the family.

In the neoliberal logic, the State acts as an evaluator (AFONSO, 2001), presenting to the society the school indexes obtained on standardized tests, blaming the teachers and giving the families the role of "overviewing" (not to say pressuring) the results, conceived as the quality of school itself. Therefore, in the context of "speeding the commitment of the State with its own policies" and given the valorization of the product in detriment of the process, we witness the impoverishment of learning, weakening the "civic and citizen dimensions of education" (ANTUNES; SÁ, 2010, p. 249).

In Brazil, we saw the emergence of policies that, in this direction, encourage the participation of families in the school, especially with the creation of Everybody Together for Education (TPE)¹⁴. According to Ferrarotto and Malavasi (2016, p. 239), when analyzing the TPE, the family-school relation is "characterized by supervision, which focus on obtaining improvements, without the analysis of school reality, taking the teachers and the institution as the sole responsible for the educational quality". It is worth saying that according to the authors, the TPE takes as reference of quality the results obtained in the large-scale external evaluations that, as many other studies pointed out, have repercussions to the organization of the pedagogical work, inducing practices of curricular narrowing and training for tests.

On the other hand, the social quality perspective is not limited to "numerical equations that can measure the results of such complex and subjective processes, as advocated by some business sectors, which expect from the school the mere

14 Created in 2005 by a group of businessmen: Grupo Pão de Açúcar, Fundação Itaú-Social, Fundação Bradesco, Instituto Gerdau, Grupo Gerdau, Fundação Roberto Marinho, Fundação Educar-DPaschoal, Instituto Itaú Cultural, Faça Parte-Instituto Brasil Voluntário, Instituto Ayrton Senna, Cia. Suzano, Banco ABN-Real, Banco Santander, Instituto Ethos.

formation of workers and consumers for their products” (SILVA, 2009, p. 225). It is sustained in a plural Political Pedagogical Project, built from the participation on its diverse segments (managers, teachers, employees, students, families). A participation that aims at the general will, the social pact (NOGUEIRA, 2004), without the individual interests being placed above the collective ones, envisaging the construction of solidary relations and leading to emancipatory processes.

Final considerations

Among the findings of the research, we consider well-timed to highlight that the families, either Portuguese or Brazilian, look at how the family-school relation occurs when analyzing the quality of the institution. It seems to us that there is the desire, even if embryonic in the Brazilian case, to share the school's responsibilities in the educational process of the children. As Zenhas (2006, p. 31), we believe that the school-family-community collaboration favors the “formation of more intervenient and active citizens”, with greater participation in the diverse public matters, beyond the school. However, in the opposite direction of the neoliberal defense, we believe that the responsibilities for the educational process must also be shared with the public power, therefore, not being restricted to the school and the families the solution of the difficulties encountered. It is also worth mentioning that there are some differences between the visions of the families, which do not detach themselves from historical, political, economic, and social contexts. However, we understand that the participation of the family in the school can favor the social quality, since with it, the new voices and forces are added up to build ascending demands to the public power.

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