

Educational practices and the contribution of social and cultural approaches to the family

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Abstract

Considered as an informal process, family education contributes to the development of the child and his socialization. There have been numerous attempts to determine the nature of this education and its consequences taking into account here the complexity of family interactions as well as social contexts. This paper highlights the issues of the consequences of educational practices within the family for which all those who deal with issues of family education are interested. Family education, how can we define it? There is a reflection on the objectives and methods of family education that ensure the reproduction of society.

The question that arises is, should family educational practices be formalized just like school educational practices?

The use of the term "school form" defines precisely the formal system of school education, the result of a rationalization of educational practices implemented in institutions composed of a group of professionals, with precise programs, with ad hoc buildings, with a division of students according to level of them (Vincent, 1980). But for all school activities can we say that they are formalized and is the education within the family disorganized? We consider education as a process of interaction, respectively as a relationship between teachers and educators, a meeting between the action of educators and those who self-educate. This process is two-sided and asymmetric, but in this paper, we will mainly address the action of educators towards the educated.

Keywords: educational practice, informal process, family education.

Introduction

In many families the transmission of culture and extracurricular activities of children is consciously organized methodically by the parents, according to a very defined program, a structured model close to the school model thus making the home a continuation of the school. Seen from this perspective, the formal and informal aspects characterize both school and family education, moreover, the opposition of the formal to the informal loses much of its importance in many cultural contexts. Consequently, the characterization of education in the context of the family as informal is not self-evident. Other aspects of the traditional approach to family education also raise questions such as the direction of the educational process. For many years and even today, for most people, education is a one-sided process, the transmission of a set of knowledge from educator to educator. Considering children as imperfect beings, beings characterized by shortcomings, unreasonable and irresponsible, it clearly seems that they had to be taught what was considered necessary in order to be integrated into society. The first conceptual frameworks related to children, whether psychological or sociological, contributed greatly to this vision of family education. Many researchers are interested in the role of the child not only in his education and socialization, but also in modifying all the reactions of the

family, including the socialization and education of his parents. Some consider the informal aspects of education as socialization. But this concept refers to a wider and continuous interactive process, part of which is education, a process which includes interactions with peers, media, cultural works and objects, etc., socialized by actively participating in of (Malewska-Peyre & Tap, 1991; Montandon, 1997). In fact, the meaning we give to socialization is closer to what these scholars call eculturation. Undoubtedly, it is difficult to distinguish in a person what education, socialization or cultivation is from those processes that take place in the family, school or elsewhere. Cultural transmission is not a one-way street; children not only build the values and knowledge transmitted by parents, but introduce new cultural elements which they inject into the family.

The relationship between the social and cultural environment of families and their educational practices, it is appropriate to place them in the evolution of all perspectives developed in this area. It is very intentional that we place ourselves in a continuum of anthropology, sociology and comparative cultural psychology, for two reasons. This is because we believe that the perfection of approaches appears more clearly if we cross the boundaries between disciplines; but on the other hand, an act referring to the sciences of education, an interdisciplinary attitude is not contraindicated.

These approaches, which are sometimes combined, characterize this area. And this attempt to explain the differences observed in the educational practices and attitudes of parents (methods, respective roles of father and mother, coordination with other persons or authorities, their expectations and projects). And second, on the consequences of family education on child development and analyze in particular the effects of different educational practices on children. So, we look for the type of family education that would best contribute to the child's development, his academic success, his professional integration, etc. Therefore, parents' educational practices should be evaluated, without always placing them in a broader social and cultural context.

Family group composition and child characteristics

Many studies link the number of children in the family, their birth order, and their sex to their parents' educational practices (Maccoby, 1980). Changes in parental marital status (separation, divorce ..) have been taken into account by researchers analyzing the relationship between child characteristics (physical aspects or inclinations) and parenting practices (Maccoby, 1980). Variations in educational practices according to the gender of the child in different social environments and societies have been studied (Munroe & Munroe, 1975).

Studies on family structure highlight the difficulty of the evolution of the family context within the same family. Every family has a life cycle. The life cycle of the family goes from the formation of a stable couple until the death of its members. Interactions within the family are not the same during the first years of a union and in the following years. Beyond changes in marital or cohabitation status, there may be other events, such as unemployment, accidents, illness, the birth of a child with their interaction styles, their strategies with parents. All dynamics and disabilities etc. Periods of crisis or reorganization also deserve to be considered. The period of adolescence for children is shoesh a period of reorganization of existing relationships. This aspect of relationship reorganization has long been neglected by scholars who were very preoccupied with the aspect of adolescence personality transformation,

adolescence crisis, etc. (Claes, 1986). We therefore think that all these aspects of the family life cycle deserve further study.

Similarly, it is important to further analyze the concept of family as a “non-common environment”, meaning that children growing up in the same family do not necessarily share an identical environment (Plomin, Chipuer & Neiderhiser, 1994).

Emphasizing that the family context does not have a common influence that causes similar characteristics in all children living in the same context. The family can be a specific and unique context for the child, not separated from his siblings. Therefore, for children of the same family there would be different environments, which depend on their individual experiences, especially on diadetic relationships with other family members. Moreover, these differences can be highlighted. Children on their side can modify the family can be influenced and siblings can live together in the world in the context of life relationships with relatives, within family boundaries, with grandparents for example, half brothers and half sisters, members of others of a mixed family, or kinship network.

Social and cultural characteristics of families

It is very interesting to know to what extent educational practices are related to the social and cultural affiliation of families. Numerous studies have noted differences in educational practices between middle-class and working-class parents. According to these studies, middle-class parents tend to exercise self-control in their interactions with the child, to reason with the child and to exercise discipline within a rational and clearly defined framework, to negotiate with him, to use the punishments and rewards they have for aim to correspond to the specific actions of the child and what motivates them, and to plan their long-term success. The working class parents, still according to these works, did not have an educational plan calculated in advance, they would tend to satisfy their children's whims, to spend some time to explain the reasons for their requests, to punished by caring little about the purpose behind their actions (Gecas, 1979). Unlike past centuries, in which children were considered the “property” of parents in today's society, they are seen from birth as subjects with independent wills and precise rights. This social change creates a certain variety of educational styles, which are the modalities of choices made by parents when it comes to educating children. And the main styles of education are: authoritarian style based on a rigid system of norms set by partents, to which children have to passively submit. The one allowed which is based on the parents' effort to eliminate any frustration for the children and of course to satisfy their demands to the maximum. Another parenting style is the inappropriate style, a style that oscillates between authoritarianism and permissiveness, depending on the mood of the adults. Appropriate style based on sustainable values and adult educational responsibility which materializes in a set of flexible rules focused on needs.

It should also be noted that many studies have focused more on parents' strategies regarding their child's education.

Many studies on the relationship between social and cultural background and family educational practices lead to one-sided interpretations of reality, as inter-individual variations and nuances of attitudes and practices within the social group are not taken into account. Family studies show the complexity of the problem, i.e. the multiplicity of factors to be considered in addition to belonging to a social setting (Clark, 1983). Parental practices are inspired by intercultural work, which prevails in the

parents' work environment, the values they transmit to their children, directly through their verbal interactions, or indirectly through their preferred teaching methods. When parents educate their children, they instill values that they themselves have learned or adopted in their workplace. Thus children are prepared for the lifestyle and work of their parents. Thus, parents with high social status, whose profession includes taking initiatives, manipulating signs and symbols and whose promotion depends on personal actions, tend to appreciate and encourage autonomy in life, the education of their children. On the other hand, working-class parents, who are subject to direct supervision in the performance of repetitive and routine tasks, whose work involves manipulating things and whose promotion depends on the collective conditions, tend to appreciate and seek order and their children's demands and beliefs. In their educational endeavors, parents are guided by their expectations about their child's future, by the vision they have for him when he will be an adult. In addition, parents would have knowledge about children and their behavior. This parental knowledge would be shared by groups or subgroups of people belonging to the same culture and would constitute the parental ethnotheory. These ethnotheories refer to the knowledge that parents have about their society. On the one hand, they originate from the daily life that parents have with their children of different ages, creating experiences, but also from the knowledge that has been accumulated in their social circle. Individuals construct their belief systems from systems of cultural values (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992).

We also know the impact of family cultural and social affiliation in the context of immigration. In educating their children, immigrants from the majority countries to minority countries emphasize collective values, value social relation within their groups, seek persuasion from children and its conformity. They do not agree with the prevailing attitudes in the host countries, they expect the school to deal mainly with the teaching of their children, the transmission of specific school knowledge and not education in the broadest sense of the term. But it is necessary to qualify more, initially among immigrants of different origins, but also within immigrants of the same origin. Parents' attitudes towards the culture of the receiving country can influence the adoption and self-esteem of the children (from the studies conducted). Social class differences are shaped in specific ways across cultures. While qualities such as independence, self-confidence, creativity and personal success are valued by middle-class mothers rather than working-class mothers. They want their children to grow up as responsible adults, capable of making important decisions in life. For them, independence is seen as part of the responsibility. Intelligence is recognized as important as the ability to communicate with others. For them to be able to find a good job is important because it can secure the future of their child.

The educational role of parents is considered a normal dimension. It is more necessary to explain educational practices and to propose topologies of family educational styles. For this variables in family dynamics should be included. This means those position-oriented families, in which the behavior between parents and children stems from their respective statuses, and person-oriented families, where the specific personal qualities of each are recognized. The more favorable the social conditions in which families live, the more person-oriented, the more verbal expression is processed and the more parents pay attention to the development of autonomy and creativity of the child. The more difficult the social conditions in which families live, the more position-oriented the family structure is, the more verbal expression is restricted and the parents pay attention to the control of the child and his obedience.

Thus, two dimensions of parenting behavior, support and control, intersect, identifying three styles of education: authoritarian style (high control and low support), permissive style (low control, high support) and authoritative style (high control and support) Baumrind (1989).

The social affiliation of the parents, the way of structuring their family group influences the values and educational principles which are considered important in the family and which guide the practices. Thus we can distinguish three types of families like those with rigid structure where the rules are unbreakable and where there is little incentive for children, those with weak structure with no rules but with strong stimulation, and those families with more flexible structure with strong stimulus for children and flexible rules.

Flexible forms of family structuring are more common in affluent social classes, which value originality and initiative in their children, and conversely, solid forms are more common in working-class circles, which attach importance to external norms and child control, with poor structuring that tends to grow at both ends of the social ladder. Flexible family structuring, which is more common in privileged social settings, would be most conducive to the child's cognitive development (Lautrey, 1980).

Why do we study education in the family context?

Previous studies have linked parenting educational practices to the social environment (a way that today seems simplistic). Current studies take into account not only the different social, historical and cultural dimensions of family realities, but also the differences that exist within social and ethnic groups, be they in family structures, social representations, types of function, changes in family biography.

Better knowledge of the educational attitudes and practices of parents and the factors that contribute to their shaping is of considerable interest from a theoretical point of view, also useful for those dealing with the family on a professional level. For teachers working in the field of education and socialization of children, it is important to understand the values, goals, methods adopted by the parents of their students and the reasons why they differ. It has been observed, for example, that parent-child conflict often arises when parents hold certain collectivist values in a culture where individualistic values prevail. Excessive parental control, reduced communication with parents, very strong traditional beliefs among the elders, among other things arranged marriages, prejudices against western values, as well as expectations of perfection to preserve the honor of the family.

In this article we have focused on the causes that can shape family education and not the consequences. We have mentioned not only the educational practices of parents, but also the effects that these practices would have on children, on their cognitive and social development, on their school results, on their features, personality, on their behavior. The aim of the study of educational practices is highly practical, to determine which of them are most favorable to children, there is also interest and a social demand.

The role that other children play in socialization would be more important than that of the parents. An example is that of immigrant children, who quickly learn the language and accent of their schoolmates, as well as other cultural elements of the peer group. But we must share the influence of parents before concluding that parents significantly influence the personality and behavior of their children. Therefore we

need to work not only on the relationships that are created within the family, but also on their complex relationships with peers, as well as with other external family agents.

Children have their own culture because we are a segment of society at all times. If they inevitably leave the space they occupy as they grow up, other children come to take their place, but the segment still remains. What children think is not always what parents think. By taking more into account children's perspective, the meaning they give to their socialization, their experience, we can better appreciate the impact of parenting education.

Thus, a new field can be opened at an intercultural level, namely the study of the experience of children from different cultures on educational practices in the family. Perspective oriented work can complement and bring a fuller understanding of family education research.

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