

Author:

Pedro Silva
School of Education
Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Portugal

**PARENT-TEACHERS:
DOUBLE AGENTS OR A PRIVILEGED BRIDGE?**

In this paper I would like to make a few comments on the role of those parents who happen to be teachers – what I name “parent-teachers”.

In the 90’s I conducted a two-year ethnographic study in three public primary schools in Portugal. There, I “stumbled” in one aspect of the “reality” that I was not expecting: the presence of several members of parents associations – including their leaders – who happen to be teachers.

First, I realized that this issue is, in general, absent in the literature about school-family relationships. So, I tried to understand how their role could be characterized, especially having in mind that they were middle-class citizens and that one of the schools was located in a working-class area and that another one had also a “popular” sociological composition (the third school was middle-class).

Why were they there? How were they seen by the other partners? Would they be fully trusted by parents and teachers as well? Would they be considered a sort of double agents? By whom: teachers, parents, both? Or, on the contrary, would they be a sort of a privileged bridge between the school culture and the local culture?

Is this a specific Portuguese phenomenon or is it a broader one? I would like to share some of my findings, my doubts and my concerns with my European and other colleagues.