



Lutheran School and the rite of confirmation: discontinuation of education in Serra dos Tapes, Rio Grande do Sul (1938-1971)¹

A Escola Luterana e o rito da confirmação: descontinuidade da escolarização na Serra dos Tapes/RS (1938-1971)

La Escuela Luterana y el rito de la confirmación: discontinuidad de la escolaridad en Serra do Tapes/RS (1938-1971)

Karen Laiz Krause Romig
Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel) (Brazil)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0809-0835>
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/6100789243728896>
karenlaizromig@gmail.com

Patrícia Weiduschadt
Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel) (Brazil) CNPq Research Productivity Scholarship
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6804-7591>
<http://lattes.cnpq.br/0643205535014525>
prweidus@gmail.com

Resumo

O trabalho tem como objetivo discutir aspectos da escolarização luterana e o rito da confirmação em comunidades étnicas pomeranas da Serra dos Tapes/RS. Pretende-se evidenciar os impactos desse rito na descontinuidade dos estudos de crianças e jovens escolarizados entre o período de 1938 a 1971. Tal interrupção dos estudos esteve ligada ao seguimento do trabalho agrícola nas propriedades rurais dessas famílias pomeranas. Esse grupo teve, ao longo dos anos, dedicação predominante à agricultura, por isso usavam a confirmação como uma justificativa da igreja para que os filhos saíssem da escola. Concluiu-se que a liberdade de escolhas adquirida com a confirmação, a não presença de escolas de ensino secundário nessas zonas rurais, e a legitimação da profissão agrícola dentro do contexto cultural, foram fatores que associados geraram uma descontinuidade nos estudos desse grupo étnico, favorecendo uma baixa escolaridade e uma perpetuação histórica da agricultura e permanência dos pomeranos no meio rural.

Palavras-chave: Escolarização luterana. Rito da Confirmação. Vida na agricultura.

¹ The publication of this paper was partially supported by PRPPGI/UFPel and CAPES. English version by Universo Traduções Ltda. Email: contato@ldtraducoes.com.br.

Abstract

This paper aims to discuss aspects of Lutheran Education and the rite of Confirmation in Pomeranian ethnic communities from Serra dos Tapes, Rio Grande do Sul. The intention is to highlight the impacts of this rite with the discontinuation of education of children and youths graduated between 1938 and 1971. Such school interruption was linked to agricultural work on the country estates of these Pomeranian families. This group has predominantly dedicated, throughout the years, to agriculture, using, therefore, Confirmation as a religious excuse to let their children drop out of school. It was found that the freedom of choice obtained with Confirmation, the nonpresence of Secondary Education in the countryside and the legitimization of farmer occupation within the cultural context were elements which, altogether, produced an education discontinuation of this ethnic group, promoting low levels of education and a historical perpetuation of agriculture and the stay of Pomeranians in the rural area.

Keywords: Lutheran schooling. Rite of Confirmation. Agricultural way of life.

Resumen

El trabajo tiene como objetivo discutir aspectos de la escolarización luterana y el rito de la confirmación en las comunidades étnicas de Pomerania en Serra dos Tapes/RS. Se pretende resaltar los impactos de este rito en la discontinuidad de los estudios de los niños y jóvenes educados entre el período de 1938 a 1971. Esta interrupción de los estudios estuvo ligada a la continuación del trabajo agrícola en las propiedades rurales de estas familias pomeranias. Este grupo, a lo largo de los años, se había dedicado predominantemente a la agricultura, por lo que utilizaron la confirmación como una justificación de la iglesia para que sus hijos abandonaran la escuela. Se concluyó que la libertad de elección adquirida con la confirmación, la ausencia de escuelas secundarias en estas zonas rurales y la legitimación del oficio agrícola dentro del contexto cultural, fueron factores que asociados generaron una discontinuidad en los estudios de esta etnia, favoreciendo un bajo nivel educativo y una perpetuación histórica de la agricultura y permanencia de los pomeranios en las zonas rurales.

Palabras clave: Escolarización luterana. Rito de Confirmación. La vida en la agricultura.

Introduction

This article is a study focused on the Lutheran parochial schools, educational institutions that worked together with religious communities, and that had their advent in the late nineteenth century until the second half of the twentieth century. It is intended to discuss the relationship between the rite of confirmation and the duration of study of Pomeranian descendants, who mostly studied in these Lutheran parochial schools.

These parochial schools were of great importance within Lutheran communities of Pomeranian ethnic origin. However, it was noticed that the students, children of settlers and descendants of Pomeranians, only studied, for the most part, primary education, having to know what was considered the basics, such as reading, writing and doing basic mathematical operations, and that then these students left school to dedicate themselves to life in agriculture with their family. Here, in this article, some aspects that were decisive for the short schooling of this ethnic group will be elucidated, and the reasons that determined this early drop out of school and a dedication, from an early age, to the profession in agriculture.

Beforehand, it is clear that among the main reasons that determined leaving school is the Lutheran confirmation rite, which will be specially treated throughout this study, as a cultural and religious factor that interfered in the student decisions of this ethnic group. It can be noted that in the region studied there is a history of the population in general, in the period in question, having a low level of education, but what needs a close look is the fact that the Pomeranian ethnic group uses the confirmation rite as a reason religious for this early drop out of school activities.

The first immigrants who came from Germany to the region of São Lourenço do Sul, in the extreme south of Rio Grande do Sul, arrived on January 18, 1858, mostly from Pomerania (SALAMONI, 2001). The immigrants, when they arrived in Brazil, received land to work and built their homes, in this movement of establishment in the Brazilian territory they also brought the Lutheran churches, and together with them the community ethnic schools, facts that contributed to the formation of religious and school organizations in the south of Rio Grande do Sul. Soon, from the immigration process, until the mid-twentieth century, these Lutheran parochial schools were predominant in the rural areas of Serra dos Tapes/RS. These schools lost strength with the nationalization of education and the emergence of rural public schools² in these regions.

As previously mentioned, this study is inserted in the context of Serra dos Tapes, in the southern region of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande Sul. This space was historically occupied by immigrant groups of Germanic origin, especially the Pomeranians³, an ethnic group that was

² The emergence of the 1946 Constitution favored that most of the Brazilian population had access to education, as minimal resources began to be allocated for this. It can be seen that with this Constitution, public schools began to spread throughout the inland of Brazil on a larger scale, reaching spaces that were previously occupied primarily by Lutheran private schools or other school groups.

³ Coming from the territory of Pomerania, a region located on the coast of the Baltic Sea, they were descendants of Slavs and Wends who worked mainly in agriculture and fishing RÖLKE (1996). It is considered an ethnic group with its own and peculiar characteristics, maintaining language and customs differentiated from other German ethnic groups (WEIDUSCHADT; TAMBARA, 2014).

also responsible for the consolidation of Lutheranism⁴ in this region. The Lutheran religion, which constitutes parochial schools, also consolidated the practice of rites of passage in the church, rituals that impose cultural conditions on their participants.

The Pomeranians came to Brazil in search of better working conditions, but in the Brazilian territory they were neglected in relation to educational and religious aspects. In this way, immigrants and their descendants tried to build their own churches and, together with them, community schools. These schools underwent interventions for the nationalization of education,⁵ by the 1946 Constitution, and by the LDBs of 1961 and 1971, but even with these changes in educational policies, the Lutheran private school remained until the mid-1970s, linked to Lutheranism, prioritizing the basic education of the student, so that he could learn to read, write and do mathematical operations, always signaling for continuation in the profession of agriculture.

Methodology

This study analyzes situations that occurred in four private Lutheran schools located in the southern region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, especially in Serra dos Tapes, in research restricted to the period from 1938 to 1971. For the achievement of results, the study used the oral history methodology, through interviews with people who were students of these schools, and also with the verification in documentary sources of these schools, which brought significant data regarding the school attendance of the students, of the contents studied and of the indications of the length of permanence of the students in the school.

The methodology of oral history was used, as it worked with narratives of individuals who experienced the studied period. The narrators of the research are residents of the Serra dos Tapes region, where there is a strong predominance of German and Pomeranian descent. People who studied in community and private schools of Lutheran churches and who studied within the period of analysis were interviewed. Here is a summary of the respondents⁶:

⁴ The term 'Lutheranism' is used in a historical-political sense, as a set of developments of the reformation movement, originated from Luther in Germany" (RIETH, 1990, p.256). In the Serra dos Tapes/RS region, three Lutheran strands coexist: The first of them are the Independent Churches or Free Communities, which first settled in this region together with the Pomeranian immigration. After the constitution of the so called independent communities, the organization of the Rio-Grandense Synod emerged, which later on originated the IECLB (Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil). IECLB was formed as a Lutheran religious institution, influenced by German Lutheran churches. This institution was established in Brazil in the 19th century, based on the strategy of pastors who came from Germany to work in the immigration communities located in the south of Brazil. In the middle of the early 20th century, the Missouri Synod, which is now the IELB (Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil), a religious institution founded in the United States by German immigrants, also appeared in this region. This institution was established in the regions of Pelotas and São Lourenço do Sul, southern region of Rio Grande do Sul, in 1900 (WEIDUSCHADT, 2007). Still today these three branches act in the region of Serra dos Tapes-RS. They have in common the practice of religious rites and the consolidation of a historical relationship with the education of their faithful.

⁵ Nationalization took place in the Estado Novo period, during the government of Getúlio Vargas, with the banning of the German and Pomeranian languages, causing the weakening of the ethnic schools of the religious communities. The nationalization of education meant an effort by the government to form a national conscience among citizens from ethnically homogeneous groups; there was closure of ethnic schools and destruction of didactic material (MÜLLER, 1994). To learn more, see Telmo Müller's book (1994).

⁶ The respondents in this research signed the informed consent form, in which they grant authorization for the use of their respective narratives. Two of the interviews presented in the table were brought from another study, carried out on a date prior to this research, so these two respondents did not obtain the signature of the consent form, which justifies the use of two pseudonyms. Thinking about care with confidentiality, even with the signature of the other seven terms, it was decided to use only the initials of the names of the survey respondents.

Table 1 – Presentation of the respondents.

RespondentName	Year of birth	Religious Institution	Confirmation Year	Period of Schooling	Confirmation Age
A. G.	1941	Independent	1955	1950 to 1955	14
R. P.	1943	Independent	1957	1952 to 1957	14
C. P. M.	1932	Sínodo Rio-Grandense	1947	1942 to 1947	15
O. M.	1934	Independent	1949	1941 to 1949	15
W. V.	1930	Independent	1945 (03/25/1945)	1938 to 1944	14
E. Q.	1951	MissouriSynod	1964 (12/13/1964)	1959 to 1964	13
B. H. S.	1943	MissouriSynod	1957 (01/13/1957)	1952 to 1956	13
Rosa (pseudonym)	1943	Sínodo Rio-Grandense	1957	1952 to 1957	14
Hortência (pseudonym)	1948	Sínodo Rio-Grandense	-	1955 to -	-

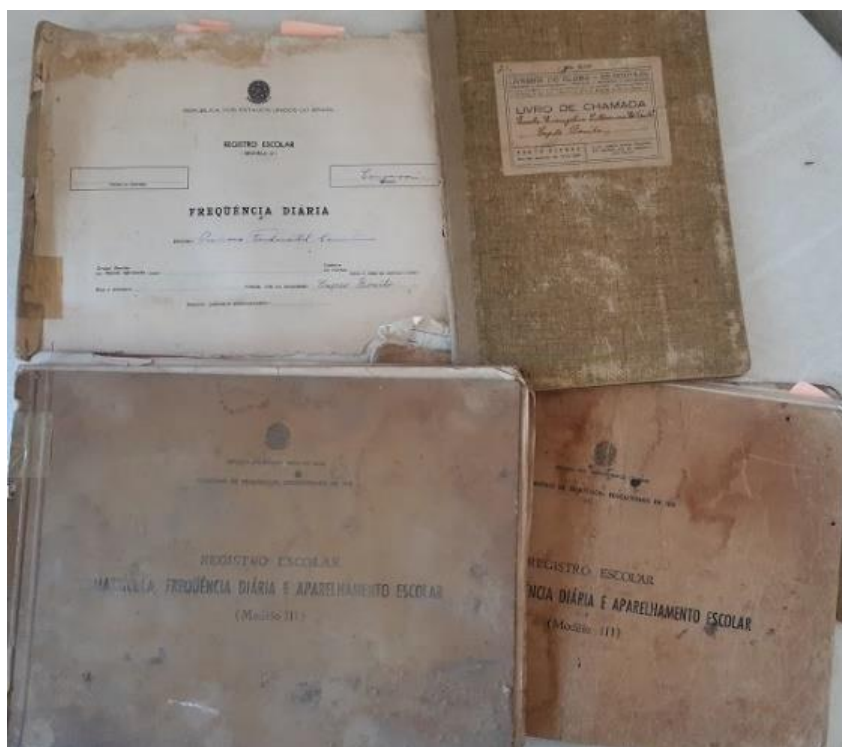
Organization: authors, 2020.

Following the perspective of the consolidation of Oral History with the elucidated methodology, Verena Alberti (2005) considers oral history a research method, whether it's historical, anthropological or sociological, which starts to privilege interviews with individuals who witnessed events, facts, and that express worldviews that can bring data that bring the researcher closer to his object of study. It is a method that makes it possible to study historical events, institutions, social groups, movements and conjunctures, in the light of people who accompanied these facts (ALBERTI, 2005). That is, people who participated in schooling and rites at the time were able to participate and contribute to this study.

In the speech of these respondents, narrators of experiences, with different school and religious experiences, particularities that contribute to this study are perceived. Therefore, Delgado (2003) says that time grants uniqueness to each concrete experience of human life and also defines it as an experience of plurality, because in each movement of history multipletimes intersect that, coupled with unique experiences, provide it originality.

For the selection of the respondents, a previous document analysis of the minutes and school records of the surveyed religious communities and of the documents found about each school in the study was carried out. In this way, the names of students who studied in these schools were selected, so that they could report their school memories, and mainly talk about their confirmation processes.

In this survey, the main documents analyzed are those preserved by Lutheran churches and private schools, documents that in their fragments reveal clues about these institutions and their school and religious practices. Regarding religious documents, Bacellar (2008) discusses that archives of a religious nature in Brazil hold a rich and varied set of documents, composed especially of parish records of baptisms, marriages and deaths, various processes, parish books and mail, but they are not always accessible. Some of the documents used in this study are presented below:

Figure 1 – Some sources analyzed in the study.

Source: Authors, 2019.

Thus, the respondents were selected through the analysis of documents and through searches and informal conversations in the respective communities. In this way, the analysis of documentary sources and interviews is justified based on Alberti (2005), who reinforces the convenience of resorting to documentary sources to better understand the topic, and then, if you do not have sufficient sources for this prior knowledge, it is appropriate to conduct interviews, which were oral history here, in order to better understand the theme.

In the documentary analyses, in turn, it was noticed that, for a few moments, the schools recorded in writing that the child left the school when it was confirmed. In addition, the documental analysis favored the verification of confirmation dates and dates of school periods of the interviewees themselves. It was also verified that the school and religious realities, at times, merge, as elements of religious studies also appeared in the school curriculum. That is, the school and religious daily life were intertwined spaces for a long time, and it is possible to perceive that these fields were mixed and were cohesive for a moral, religious and school education.

The rite of confirmation

The rites of passage belonging to the Lutheran religion are basically four: baptism, confirmation, marriage and death. They are rites that determine new phases in the lives of individuals, and are part of the religiosity and ethnicity of the group. Baptism is the rite of presentation of children to the church. The rite of confirmation is marked as the passage from childhood to adult life, that of marriage represents the constitution of responsibilities for the formation of the family, and the ritual of death is seen by the community as the end of earthly life, because for religion Lutheran belief is eternal life. These rites determine the formation of the *habitus*⁷ of communities, legitimizing and strengthening the religious field.

⁷ According to Pierre Bourdieu (1996), *habitus* are modes of conduct to be inculcated in individuals through internal dispositions and which are constituted in practices of an entire social group.

The rite of passage called “confirmation” can be considered a religious ritualistic practice. This rite assumed, for a period, a dominant role in cultural and religious terms. Confirmation determined when the child should leave school to work with the family, thus causing changes in the lives of children and young people who were confirmed, as for a long time peasant communities believed that after confirmation the young person would already be an adult, and so they could already work on the family property.

By focusing on the rite of confirmation and relating it to schooling, it is understood that confirmation is one of the rites of passage of the Pomeranian culture characteristic of the Lutheran religion. It is a ritual similar to the Confirmation of the Catholic religion, practiced by young people between 12 and 14 years old (MALACARNE, 2017).

For Perrot (1996, p. 92), “the first communion coincides more and more with the beginning of learning, which is why many parents try to anticipate it”. This author points out that in the first half of the 19th century, many parents sought to anticipate their first communion, so that their children could start working. According to Dalla-Déa (2006, p. 10), “theological literature speaks of chrismal catechesis as being the sacrament of decision and maturity in the faith of young people”, leaving adolescents with a moment of choices and decisions.

When dealing with rites of passage, specifically confirmation, studies by Malacarne and Streck (2018) and Malacarne (2017)⁸ discuss the importance attributed to rites of passage and confirmation teaching⁹, so that confirmation rites help adolescents to make the transition from childhood to adulthood, also being understood as rites of separation, margin and aggregation.

In this way, it is clarified that confirmation takes place in the period of initiation into youth, as an act that commonly happens at the beginning of adolescence. However, in the course of this work, it is noticed that the adolescence phase was, in many cases, suppressed by cultural and religious habits, within the context of analysis.

Youth work and responsibilities

The perspectives that the former students of the private Lutheran schools surveyed had, at the time, regarding their future, were always more directed towards activities in the countryside and life in the agricultural profession, as young people made their choices taking into account some cultural and religious ideals that were already present in their family environment.

It is taken into account that the descendants of Pomeranians, since the immigration process, have preferably dedicated themselves to agricultural work, first for subsistence crops, and then for more concentrated crops, as is currently the case with tobacco growing in the region of Serra dos Tapes. Therefore, agricultural work is something present in the memory and narratives of the respondents who, when talking about their school and their church, also mentioned the activities developed by their families in the fields.

In all the interviews, the respondents were asked what their roles were and what their parents' roles were, to find out if they actually worked in agriculture or if they took other professional paths. Of the total of nine respondents, six had their lives dedicated to agriculture, two were pastors, and one was a business owner, but their families always lived in the rural area and, therefore, had some connection with the agricultural reality.

All respondents lived in the rural area, but currently the vast majority live in the urban area, as they are already in retirement.

⁸ The cited studies took place in the context of an urban Lutheran community of the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) – (Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil).

⁹ In this period of Christian instruction and/or confirmation, young people learn biblical messages, the confession of the church, the commandments of the smaller catechism, among others. Young people usually start attending confirmation teaching after they have turned eleven, but in some cases the age can vary between eleven and fifteen (MALTZAHN, 2011).

It can be inferred that the vast majority of these, students at the time, did not continue in school because, in the face of religion, when confirmed, they became adults with responsibilities, and from then on, they would have to seek their own livelihood and help their parents in the domestic chores and other peasant activities.

It should be noted that for a people so attached to work, the tasks carried out by children, that is, child labor, was a way of educating them for the future, so that they would “learn” the crafts of farming, and, in this way, they became interested in agricultural activities from an early age, in which child labor was almost always seen as something positive and promising, as that child would become a working adult. But this early incentive to work ended up distancing the child from school.

Still on the practice of agriculture, one of the respondents reports that “my parents were farmers, they planted everything, especially potatoes, beans, corn, even in the wettest areas they planted rice, my father had a mill, so we planted a wide range of things” (C. P. M, 2020). This statement is in line with Roche (1969), who brings the idea that the activity of the colonies of German and Pomeranian origin was basically subsistence culture, especially corn, black beans and potatoes.

Another respondent, B. H. S., says that he had a life dedicated to agriculture, revealing that: “what was most planted was corn, potatoes and beans, at that time 10 to 15 bags of beans were enough to buy a hectare of land” (B. H. S, 2020). This aspect shows that, at that time, the products produced in the colony were valued and supported families, which can now be rethought, as monoculture production and agricultural machinery changed this scenario.

One of the respondents, E.Q., who worked as a pastor, unlike the majority, followed his studies, not dedicating himself to agriculture. However, his choice for this pastoring career may be related to the activity of his parents, who were not exclusively farmers. In this way, E.Q. (2020) says “my father worked in the fields and also had a French tile workshop, which was closed due to lack of raw material (clay) [...] and my mother was a seamstress and also a housewife”. About the sequence of studies, he says: “besides me, two or three students in my class went to other courses and graduated, but the others continued to work in the fields with their parents” (E. Q., 2020). Thus, this continuation of studies is understood as an exception, as his family had a history of dedication to other professions, in addition to agriculture. Also, it is clear that the vast majority of families of Pomeranian origin at the time dedicated themselves to agriculture as a means of survival, and that only the families that had more financial possessions allowed their children to take other paths, since a child away from home meant the lack of manpower.

Still E.Q., when narrating about facts of his confirmation and schooling, also spoke about his family's work in agriculture. According to him, when he was a teenager, potatoes, corn, beans, wheat, sweet potatoes and all kinds of vegetables were grown, as well as fruit trees (grapes, peaches, plums, pears, quince, among others). Later, wheat was put aside, as it was no longer viable, and soy planting began, “my father was one of the pioneers in soy planting. He even planted tobacco in a shed, but soon put aside this cultivation” (E. Q., 2020). In this narrative, he gives us details of everything that families planted in that period in order to support themselves. The same respondent also points out that:

From an early age, when they were ten or twelve years old, the boys and girls helped in the fields or at home with all the work. From adolescence, many already went out to even work as an employee, when they didn't have enough at home, or if they wanted to have a little extra money to buy their own clothes, or to spend on the weekend (E.Q., 2020).

In this report, the respondent makes it clear that during adolescence individuals helped families with domestic and rural tasks. This fact may be associated with the fact that, from an early age, or since the confirmatory act, adolescents, as holders of adult responsibilities, should follow their own interests, acting with a certain “independence”, characterizing this period of their lives as a transition between the child who studied to the young man/woman who worked.

According to Weisheimer (2009), youth is precisely a period of transition. He thus designates a transitory state, a phase of human life with a well-defined beginning with the appearance of puberty and a variable end, changing according to criteria and points of view adopted in each society. The youthful transition, far from being defined by biological and/or age principles, is characterized as a process of socialization and attribution of specific roles¹⁰. Youth is, therefore, a stage in which the entry into full social life takes place and which, as a passing situation, composes a condition for assigning rights and duties, responsibilities and independence broader than those of children (WEISHEIMER, 2009).

The family has a great influence on the thinking and acting of children and adolescents, so if parents understand early work as natural, because they learned it that way, they will reproduce this learning with their children, and this social problem will continue for several generations. The economic and cultural characteristics of the families contribute to the decisions of the crafts that will be developed by the children and adolescents who make up future generations (MARIN, 2006).

About child labor and early work in the colonies, Rizzini (1996) is used, who deals with the topic, and this assignment of work can often be understood with a disciplinary objective, which can develop a sense of responsibility in young people and, thus, be a means of preventing acts considered inappropriate. In this case, the act of working could serve as an instrument of discipline and training, preparing the individual for life.

For each element of the topic studied, a concept was addressed that helped in understanding its entirety. Through the studies carried out by Pierre Bourdieu (1994), two concepts were privileged: the *habitus*, which deals with cultural elements inculcated in the practices of the Pomeranians, and the field, which explains the influences and tensions between the religious field and the school field. The concept of ethnicity (BARTH, 2011) which explains the culture and identity of the specific ethnic group of Pomeranians as constitutive and relational.

On the other hand, the concept of Protestant ethics (WEBER, 2004), helped to understand the intentions with regard to dropping out of school to take up work in agriculture, which is a trait of work carried by the Lutheran generations. The concept of school material culture (JULIA, 2001) was also used to understand the school institutions that were part of the study analyses.

Confirmation and dropping out of school - theoretical reflections

The custom of confirmation is defined as the milestone for dropping out of school. It is a rite of passage to community life to work and to parties. As Joana Bahia reports (2001, p.77),

The time of confirmation marks the passage to adult life and to the choices that will result from this peasantry. After confirmation, the boy (a) masters all the technical knowledge for his work on the land, he can marry, or choose to study, because he knows the law of life and its values, being able then, from this moral and technical knowledge, to trace one of the several paths that allow the continuation of the peasant way of life.

The confirmation ritual was one of the most awaited moments by families of Pomeranian origin, as the child/young person was able to work in the fields, meaning more labor to work in the field. Therefore, continuing their studies, leaving the field and leaving agriculture were not the objectives of the vast majority of students and their families in the studied decade. For Pomeranian families, confirmation “educated for life”, teaching the fundamental values for peasant life. In this way, families of Pomeranian origin considered religious education, that is, confirmation itself, as sufficient to learn what was necessary to work in the field.

¹⁰ In the Pomeranian context, this specific situation would be the dedication to agriculture.

The descendants of Pomeranians, in the southern region of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, make up an ethnic group possessing a set of sociabilities that, according to Barth (2011, p.189-190), in anthropological language, designate a population that perpetuates itself biologically broadly, sharing fundamental values, carried out in cultural units, thus constituting an interaction and communication group, in which its members identify with categories that differ from others. A social, cultural and religious organization that demarcates the characteristics of the ethnicity of this group.

When dealing with the concept of ethnicity, one also thinks of culture, which the topic of this work also focuses on. Regarding the influence of the rite on Pomeranian schooling, one can reflect that it is a process that took place in the midst of a specific cultural context. For Geertz (1978), culture is understood as the basis of human specificity, expressed through the symbolic ways in which men and women communicate and develop their life experiences.

This study analyzes the religious and school field by working on the relationship between the confirmation ritual and the school process of children. From the interrelationship between school and confirmation, it is understood that there was a “power” of religion over schooling, as the religious act was more important for families than the sequence of studies, or a more complete formal education. “The religious field and the school field have their constitution peculiarities, at the same time that they are related to each other” (WEIDUSCHADT, 2007, p.73). The agents involved in this relationship would be pastors, teachers, confirmation-dedicated people, and their respective families, all located in communities of Pomeranian origin. The concepts of field and *habitus*, by Pierre Bourdieu (1996), are evidenced here, because, according to the author, they are elements that are interrelated and allow the reader to understand the processes studied.

The concept of Protestant ethics, discussed by Max Weber, helps to think about the strong relationship of Lutheran Germanic ethnic groups with the importance of work. Thus, the early drop out of school activities, religiously justified by the Confirmatory Lutheran Act, presupposes the continuation of children and young people in rural work. This dedication to agriculture was understood as a divine vocation and therefore should not be questioned, as there was a cultural appreciation of work.

Lutheran schools had their own characteristics, these same institutions were governed by religion and were part of communities of Pomeranian descendants. Thus, they had the role of educating citizens to work on the property, teaching them to read, write and do basic mathematical operations. These schools were multigrade and did not go beyond teaching to the 4th or 5th grade. These formative institutions were private and destined for the education of the individual until their confirmation.

To take the theoretical concept of school culture as a basis, Julia (2001) stands out, who defines school culture as a set of norms that establish knowledge to be taught and behaviors to be inculcated, and a set of practices that allow the transmission of this knowledge and the incorporation of these behaviors; norms and practices coordinated with purposes that may vary from time to time (religious, socio-political or simply socializing purposes) (JULIA, 2001).

In this way, the theoretical concepts, presented and articulated here, define a very singular reality, the early drop out of school activities due to the confirmatory act, and a predominance of dedication to agriculture, facts that determine a specific reality of the analyzed context.

Schooling and Confirmation

During the course of the study, it is perceived in the narratives and documentary records that topics that would be useful in the daily life of the students who attended schools were already being studied. Its audience studied mainly math, reading and writing calculations. In this way, what was studied in the curriculum of these schools was the basics for these students

to read the catechism, the Bible, to prepare for confirmation. Therefore, when these young people were confirmed, parents no longer saw the need to send their children to school, because the school was understood as a space for preparation for confirmation.

The school culture of these Lutheran private schools, endorsed by the documents and memory of these alumni, is marked by a specific context, predominantly by the multigrade classes, which valued the teaching of mathematics and civic moments, such as singing the anthem and performing plays of nationalist nature at school. These patriotic and nationalist characteristics were the result of the historical process of nationalization, which imposed restrictive measures for these schools, especially after the year 1938, which was the initial temporal framework of the survey. With the changes caused by the nationalization period,

parish schools ended up reinventing themselves, and many of them continued with their activities until the mid-1970s, as seen in schools that are covered by the study.

The reality of one of the studied schools can be perceived in the following image, in which the teacher appears with his class of students in front of the school and the church, demonstrating the union and interdependence between the institutions.

Figure 2 - Students and teacher in front of the church and school building.



Source¹¹: Personal collection of W. V., 2020.

With this image, it can be understood that many of these students who are in the photo are probably also confirmed in this community. The students of the school were the children of the partners of the religious community. Who appears in the center of the image is Teacher W. V., who was teacher of this school, pastors of this same community and also one of the individuals interviewed in this survey.

Pomeranian descendants lived strongly in community, and that this also caused a kind of imitation of the other's attitudes. That is, many families did not give their children the opportunity to study, as this could also cause a lack of credibility for the family reputation. In that context, many did not think of the benefits of the study, but in the idea of not respecting the established idea of discontinuation of the study, because following at school after confirmation was not a common practice.

It was through religious and cultural practices, such as the rites of passage, that social rules were thus defined, agreed and were valued within the community.

¹¹ Photography taken between 1958 and 1969, when the respondent W. V. acted as a teacher at this school.

It can be thought that these students interrupted their studies due to the lack of conditions for the continuation of schooling, as there were no secondary schools near their homes. However, it is understood here, through narratives and documentary analysis, that even those students who were in the 2nd or 3rd grades and were confirmed did not take advantage of the opportunity to study another year or two, since private schools offered until the 4th grade, and some until the 5th grade. After being confirmed they were seen before the community as adults and no longer had the obligation to attend school. In addition, no pressure records were found by the community to constitute a secondary school in rural areas, demonstrating the naturalization of the process by the community itself.

The following is an image that brings part of an attendance book from a Lutheran private school, which had its activities linked to IELB. In the first column appear the names of the students, next to some data, and further to the right a column that brings the date and reason for cancellation of enrollment, in which the names of three students are read and the indicated reason was that of confirmation.

Figure 3 - School attendance book page indicating confirmation as a source of registration cancellation. Escola São João do Herval, Canguçu municipality. Year 1943.

Seção a) - Página destinada aos alunos

N.º	DATA DE MATRÍCULA			NOMES	DATA DO TERCIO-MÊS	CLASSIFICACAO	IDADE	SEXO	NACIONALIDADE	PROFESSOR	RESIDENCIA	CANCELAMENTO	
	ANOS	MESES	DIA									DATA	MOTIVO
1	1	3	1943	Ana Lianke	23/10/1943	11	M	Bras.	2.ª		Herval		
2				Elza Lianke	21/10/1943	9	F		2				
3				Theresa Rodriguez	10/10/1943	5	F		1				
4				Elza Yangt	01/10/1943	12	F		1				
5				Ana Yangt	10/10/1943	10	M		1				
6				Armando Yangt	14/10/1943	8	M		1				
7				Rosa Veltter	10/10/1943	15	F		1			10/10/1943	Confirmação
8				Ilse Casutt	10/10/1943	12	F		1				
9				Theodoro Casutt	25/10/1943	10	M		1				
10				Hilda Casutt	10/10/1943	8	F		1				
11				Kelmeit Kelling	10/10/1943	12	M		1		Chacara dos Anjos	10/10/1943	Confirmação
12				Linda Kelling	21/10/1943	10	F		1				
13				Uli Kelling	10/10/1943	8	M		1				
14				Elza Buehly	20/10/1943	12	F		1				
15				Lida Buehly	20/10/1943	10	F		1		Herval	10/10/1943	Confirmação
16				Lida Buehly	10/10/1943	11	F		1				
17				Ulrich Buehly	10/10/1943	8	M		1				
18				Luana Ramm	10/10/1943	13	M		1				
19				Helena Ramm	10/10/1943	12	M		1				
20				Roberta Ramm	21/10/1943	10	F		1				
21				Luana Kelling	10/10/1943	9	M		1		Boita Lianke		
22				Renata Maria da Rosa	10/10/1943	12	M		1		Herval		
23				Maria Joaquina Leite da Rosa	20/10/1943	11	F		1				
24				Luana Leite da Rosa	10/10/1943	2	F		1				
25				Luana Luana da Fonseca	10/10/1943	10	M		1		Ipatinga		
26				Ana Joaquina Brandt Rosa	10/10/1943	9	F		1		Herval		
27				Antônio Borges da Rosa	10/10/1943	12	M		1		Chacara dos Anjos		
28	1	3	1943	Arnaldo Casutt Rieckert	10/10/1943	11	M		1		Herval		

Source: authors, 2019.

It is understood that the drop out of school life with the accomplishment of the Lutheran rite of confirmation was something internalized by the culture of the community, as it was an unquestionable practice, but simply accepted. This cultural internalization can be thought of as a cultural *habitus* (BOURDIEU, 1994) that young people should stop studying to work with the family. In addition to this there was a lack of schools in the countryside and also public legislation and standards, there is no contribution from studies to students to the community, leading to the exit of school life.

The universalization of access to public schools was a slow process in the countryside. However, Pomeranian families did not even make a point that these secondary schools existed, as they would be an attraction for the young person to seek their life away from the field, family and religious community. Consequently, they believed that this drop out of school could “distort” this individual.

Currently, for legislative reasons and with the advancement of schools in rural areas, this drop out of school due to confirmation no longer happens so often. Even so, confirmation is still a “watershed”, as the young person can then have freedom to leave home with friends, celebrate, and seek a loving partner.

In the period studied, access to a more advanced level schooling was rare, especially due to the cultural issue and difficult to access, because they were students living in the countryside, and who had a predestined culture for agriculture. Confirmation thus had a very strong weight in the discontinuation of studies.

Final Considerations

In the first conclusive point of this research work developed within the context of the Historical and Geographic process of Pomeranian Colonization of the Serra dos Tapes-RS, it was inferred that the rites practiced in the Lutheran Church were related to the schools that were inserted within that community religious nucleus.

Pomeranian families had culturally legitimized the practice of children, their children, in rural properties. The ethnic group of the Pomeranians had, over the years, a predominant dedication to agriculture, so they used confirmation as a justification of the church so that their children would leave school. The confidence that the Lutherans had in this rite seemed to slow their own families awareness. The idea of freedom and responsibility acquired with the rite of confirmation made it possible for many young people to follow their parents' example and continue in the countryside, without aiming to continue their studies or new perspectives beyond agricultural work.

Thus, it was concluded that for the research narrators, confirmation was a fact remembered in detail, they remembered that confirmation caused significant changes in their lives, making them stop studying and start going out to balls, parties, and work on family property. Of the nine respondents, eight of them stopped studying when they were confirmed, while only one of the respondents followed their studies to become a pastor. It was also understood that the profession legitimized by Pomeranian ethnicity was that related to agriculture, as children and young people were prepared to act in peasant life. The continuation of studies in the urban environment could mean a cultural distancing of the community.

These practices were simply reproduced and internalized over the generations because they believe they were religiously correct. That is, without being questioned, these cultural practices were part of a reproduction of cultural *habitus*. Most respondents in this research were farmer and retired from this profession, that is, they stopped studying when they were confirmed and dedicated themselves to life in agriculture, in various tasks, living most of their life in the countryside. The only exception was one of the respondents, who was a pastor, but being a profession to religiosity, was approved by the family and the community. Therefore, it is understood that the professions legitimized by the Pomeranian community were agriculture or pastoral ministry.

In this way, Protestant ethics (WEBER, 2004) is something that strengthens the feeling that the good Lutheran is the one who dedicates him/herself to work and as a result thrives within the community. Therefore, since the beginning of colonization, families

integrated their children, still quite young, with the work of property, because they understood that household and agricultural tasks prepared these individuals to remain on the property along their life trajectory.

Thus, it was understood that the work was legitimized at all stages of life, so children should also get involved in rural property tasks, because only in this way they would learn and know how to do the tasks that agriculture and that Family ownership required. Adepts of Lutheranism should accept divine designations, in which their life and profession were God's impositions. These learnings in the world of agricultural work become more significant than school knowledge, within the restricted Pomeranian community relations, as they acquire religious connotation. Families of Pomeranian origin thus found justifications and strategies to withdraw their children from the continuation of studies in religion, because, according to the purpose of this work, it is clear that families assigned to a religious rite the power to determine when the young man could make his choices, being imposed, religiously, that the confirmed young man should be an adult and so he should date, marry and work on the property.

It was realized that confirmation was one of the factors of the religious field that determined the moment of dropping out of school. But, as seen, there are other factors that are associated with the rite of confirmation that helped the children leave the school, such as the geographical location of Serra dos Tapes, which made these schools be located more distant from urban centers. Besides, of course, inefficient educational legislation, so that it would not arrive in these communities access to secondary education quickly to the point of intervening in the student choice of leaving the school. The association with the work factor was of fundamental importance in the analysis, because, for the descendants of Pomeranians, children's work was one of the instances that educated and prepared young people for the challenges of future life. The community understood that those who did not help parents from an early age would not be interested in work and thus would not prosper and would not have the knowledge required to manage their own crop. Thus, children stopped studying when they were confirmed, as it would be the ideal age for "learning" the craft of working hard in agriculture with their families (WEBER, 2004).

In the speech of the alumni who were interviewed in the survey, it was found that they were generally intended to finish only primary studies and then help their parents in agriculture. This is explained, therefore, the Serra dos Tapes is considered here as a stage of historical adaptation of German and Pomeranian immigrants and descendants, who were predominantly dedicated to the practice of family agriculture. In this way, the whole descendant's family was involved in the agricultural process. In the school context analyzed here, only primary education was considered relevant because it was shorter and bringing to the student what the family considered basic to remain in the countryside.

This process of the individual reproducing the cultural *habitus* of their ethnic group, based on the work of Geertz (1978), says that the culture of a society consists of a form of behavior that is accepted by group members. Culture is understood as something public, and thus is reproduced. Culture can only become public if intentionally transmitted by the education process. In education, culture consists of structures of socially established meanings.

What happens is that within immigration communities and Pomeranian descent, religion and cultural habits prevail as a value. Therefore, over the years, it was internalized that confirmation was the milestone for the end of the permanence in school, that is, who was confirmed had no longer an obligation to attend the school. This practice has been so acculturated within the Pomeranian context that it was not even questioned, but simply repeated over the years, so that people who have been studying in primary education in Serra dos Tapes between 1938 and 1971 are, for the vast majority, currently, retired farmers who have not studied beyond primary education. In this way, these individuals know how to read, write and perform mathematical operations, but few aimed at some profession other than agriculture.

This scenario only began to change when public schools were entering the rural localities of the municipalities of Serra dos Tapes-RS. Also, over the years, most families of Pomeranian origin began to grow tobacco and market it with large tobacco companies, which are dedicated to the industrialization and export of the product. As a result, these companies themselves began to demand from the families of producing families the school attendance of their children. Thus, in these final considerations of this survey, it is systematized that the non-permanence in school on the part of Pomeranian descendants was basically for three reasons:

1. The rite of confirmation, which generated, culturally, an idea of freedom, in which the young man had new responsibilities to his family, should know how to behave, could celebrate, look for a spouse and work on family property. Due to these post-confirmation demands, there would be no more time for dedication to studies. Furthermore, dropping out of school after the confirmatory act was naturalized, being something internalized in the Pomeranian cultural habitus;

2. As these are communities and schools located in rural areas, there were no secondary schools in the region during the study period, and it would be difficult for children to go to the city to study. In addition, life in the city was perceived as something that could distort the young man's path;

3. The young man, after being confirmed, would not “need” to study, as he already had a defined profession historically, in which he should follow the profession of his family members and become a farmer. So soon, to be a farmer, the basic teaching of the primary school was enough for him.

Thus, in the historical period from 1938 to 1971, in Lutheran private schools, in the Pomeranian cultural context, the rite of confirmation was a determining practice of responsibility for young people, from which school life ended, to give continuation to life in the farming.

In the rural, agricultural and cultural context of the colonizing formation of Serra dos Tapes, of European Pomeranian predominance, it can be said that there was the formation of three distinct fields, the religious field, the work field and the school field. One might think that these three fields were interconnected, but what predominated was the religious field, as this determined, through the rite of confirmation, the time to leave school, dictating the moment of entering agriculture, that is, the entry in the field of work.

In this way, it is concluded that confirmation and schooling were elements that interconnected in Lutheran and Pomeranian communities in Serra dos Tapes-RS. The school formed the individual to have a life focused on the church and work in the countryside, as, in this way, he would be close to the cultural and religious practices of the group and could not distort the collective ideas of the community.

References

ALBERTI, Verena. *Manual de história oral*. 3. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2005.

BACELLAR, Carlos. Fontes documentais: uso e mau uso dos arquivos. In: PINSKY, Carla Bassannezi (org.). *Fontes Históricas*. 2ª ed. São Paulo: Contexto, 2008.

BAHIA, Joana. A lei da vida: confirmação, evasão e reinvenção da identidade entre os pomeranos. *Educação e Pesquisa*, São Paulo, v.27, n1, p. 69-82, jan./jun. 2001. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1517-97022001000100005>

BARTH, Fredrik. Grupos étnicos e suas fronteiras. In: POUTIGNAT, Pilippe. *Teorias da etnicidade: seguido de grupos étnicos e suas fronteiras de Fredrik Barth*. 2 ed. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2011.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. *A Economia das trocas linguísticas: o que falar e o que dizer*. São Paulo: USP, 1996.

DALLA-DÉA, Paulo Fernando. *Igreja católica e adolescentes urbanos: expectativas dos adolescentes em idade de confirmação da fé, em vista da construção de um novo método de catequese crismal*. 2006. 332 f. Tese (Doutorado em Teologia) Instituto Ecumênico de Pós-Graduação em Teologia, São Leopoldo, 2006.

DELGADO, Lucilia de Almeida Neves. História oral e narrativa: tempo, memória e identidades. *Revista da Associação Brasileira de História Oral*. v. 6, p.9-25, 2003. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51880/ho.v6i0.62>

GEERTZ, Clifford. *A interpretação das culturas*. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores, 1978.

JULIA, Dominique. A cultura escolar como objeto histórico. *Revista Brasileira de História da Educação*, nº 1, jan/jul, 2001.

MALACARNE, I. K. Ensino confirmatório e confirmação: adolescência e rito de passagem. In: *Anais do Salão de Pesquisa da Faculdades Est*, v.16. p. 39-53, 2017, São Leopoldo.

MALTZAHN, Gislaine Maria. *Família, ritual e ciclos de vida: Estudo Etnográfico sobre narrativas pomeranas em Pelotas (RS)*. 2011. 151 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Ciências Sociais) – Instituto de Sociologia e Política. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Sociais. Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Pelotas, 2011.

MARIN, J. O. B. *Trabalho infantil: necessidade, valor e exclusão social*. Brasília: Plano Editora, Goiânia: Editora UFG, 2006. 124p.

MÜLLER, Telmo (org.). *Nacionalização e imigração alemã*. São Leopoldo: Ed. UNISINOS, 1994.

PERROT, Michele. A juventude operária da Oficina à Fábrica. In: LEVI, Giovanni; SCHMITT, Jean-Claude (org.) *História dos Jovens a época contemporânea*. v.2, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996. p.83-194.

RIETH, Ricardo W. *Luteranismo rio-grandense no século: da independência à institucionalização*. In: FISCHER, Luís. GERTZ, René. Nós, os teuto-gaúchos. 2ª ed. Porto Alegre: Ed: Universidade/UFRGS, p. 283-289, 1998.

RIZZINI, Irene, et al. *A criança e o adolescente no mundo do trabalho*. Rio de Janeiro: USU ed. Universitária, A mais Livraria e Editora, 1996, 212p.

ROCHE, Jean. *A Colonização Alemã no Rio Grande do Sul*. Porto Alegre: Globo, 1969.

RÖLKE, Helmar Reinhard. *Descobrendo raízes, Aspectos Geográficos, Históricos e Culturais da Pomerânia*. Vitória: UFES. Secretaria de Produção e Difusão Cultural, 1996.

STRECK, G. I. W. MALACARNE, I. K. Adolescência e ritos de passagem: A partir de uma perspectiva do Ensino Confirmatório e Confirmação. *Protestantismo em Revista*, São Leopoldo, v.44, n.1, p.127-139, jan./jun., 2018. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22351/nepp.v44i1.3190>

WEBER, M. *A ética protestante e o espírito do capitalismo*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004.

WEIDUSCHADT, P.; TAMBARA, E.; Cultura escolar através da memória dos pomeranos na cidade de Pelotas, RS (1920-1930). *Cadernos de História da Educação*. Pelotas. v. 13, n. 2, p.687- 704. 2014. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14393/che-v13n2-2014-17>

WEIDUSCHADT, Patrícia. *O Sínodo de Missouri e a educação pomerana em Pelotas e São Lourenço do Sul nas primeiras décadas do século XX: identidade e cultura escolar*. 2007. 256 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação) - Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Pelotas, 2007.

WEISHEIMER, Nilson. *A situação juvenil da agricultura familiar*. Tese (Doutorado em Sociologia) – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Porto Alegre, 2009.

Oral Sources

G., A. Entrevista [jul. 2019]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2019, Canguçu-RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

HORTÊNCIA. Entrevista [jun. 2013]. Entrevistadora: Cássia Raquel Beiersdorf, 2013, Arroio do Padre - RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

M, O. Entrevista [mai. 2020]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2020, Canguçu-RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

P., R. Entrevista [jul. 2019]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2019, Canguçu - RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

M., C. P. Entrevista [mai. 2020]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2020, Canguçu – RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

Q., E. Entrevista realizada por escrito [jul. 2020]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2020, Canguçu - RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

ROSA. Entrevista [jun. 2013]. Entrevistadora: Cássia Raquel Beiersdorf, 2013, Arroio do Padre - RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

S., B. H. Entrevista [set. 2020]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2020, Canguçu - RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.

V., W. Entrevista [mai. 2020]. Entrevistadora: Karen Laiz Krause Romig, 2020, Arroio do Padre - RS. Entrevista concedida para fins de pesquisa acadêmica.