

**DOSSIER**

*The sociology of family-school relationships: social reconfigurations and new analytical and methodological perspectives*

## As Our Parents: Extracurricular Activities and the Transmission of Cultural Inheritance

### *Como nossos pais: atividades extraescolares e a transmissão da herança cultural*

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#### ABSTRACT

The article explores how the participation of children and teenagers in extracurricular activities can transmit cultural inheritance, mediating the passage from parents to children of practices and customs valued by the family group. The analysis is based on interviews conducted with 13 young people from the city of São Paulo and focuses on their accounts and perceptions regarding the influence of their families on their participation in different types of extracurricular activities, such as language classes, college preparatory courses, sports activities, music lessons etc. Among other aspects, it is noteworthy that in most cases there is a successful process of transmission of legacy, with the development of a taste for activities valued by the family group, in a process that tends to favor the conservation of lifestyles across generations and emphasizes the shift of decisions about educational experiences to the private sphere.

*Keywords:* Extracurricular Activities. Family Educational Strategies. Shadow Education.

#### RESUMO

O artigo explora como a participação de crianças e adolescentes em atividades extraescolares pode constituir uma via de transmissão da herança cultural, mediando a passagem, dos pais aos filhos, de práticas e costumes que representam o que é valorizado pelo grupo familiar. A análise baseia-se em entrevistas realizadas com 13 jovens da cidade de São Paulo e tem como foco os relatos e as percepções desses jovens sobre a influência de seus familiares em relação à participação em diferentes tipos de atividades extraescolares, como cursos de idiomas, preparatórios para o vestibular, atividades esportivas, aulas de música etc. Entre outros aspectos, destaca-se que, na maior parte dos casos, ocorre um processo bem-sucedido de transmissão da herança, com o desenvolvimento do gosto pelas atividades que são valorizadas pelo grupo familiar, em um processo que tende a favorecer a conservação dos estilos de vida entre as gerações e que acentua o deslocamento das decisões sobre as experiências de formação para o âmbito privado.

*Palavras-chave:* Atividades Extraescolares. Estratégias Educativas Familiares. *Shadow Education*.

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## Introduction

Though family relationships with schools can be mediated by social maintenance or ascension intentions, school continues to tension the wishes for social segregation or differentiation, offering an experience of collective formation in which family projects of inheritance transmission can be confronted with a common formation to all, characterized by shared curricula, times, and spaces. In general reserved for families with material and symbolic resources, the possibility of choosing the education establishment, though efficient to enact formation projects adjusted to family objectives, is not enough to guarantee the transmission of cultural inheritance. With its verdicts, the school can contest the intended school/social trajectory, as well as contradict the private interests of formation, allowing for experiences that oppose what is cultivated and valued in the family environment (Bourdieu, 2012; 2017).

The tensions between the intentions of transmitting the values and practices of a private family group and the school collective experience, possibly potentialized by the valuing of individualized choice-consumption processes that spread to different spheres of life in high modernity (about this, see Giddens, 2002), have reflected on the emergence of ideas, discourses, and practices aiming to contest the shared experience represented by school socialization. In a first moment, the existence of private schools and policies for parental choice – such as *vouchers*<sup>1</sup> distributions or the implementation of *charter*<sup>2</sup> schools – seems aligned, in some measure, to the desires to conform educational trajectories relatively adjusted to family wishes, reflecting and reinforcing the value of a supposed parental freedom of choice. In a second movement, school formation, even if supported by choice, is not considered enough to contemplate the formation wished by parents, which seek to build an educational trajectory (not restricted to school) that is advantageous (in terms of future social returns from the acquired training) as well as compatible to what the family values.

Understood as typical manifestations of educational competition, contemporary individualism, and the privatization tendency of education, the extracurricular activities, which are important representatives of this second movement, are the analytical object of this article. Based on a study conducted between 2018 and 2022, I explore how these formation experiences parallel to school establish a mechanism of family continuity, reflecting and reinforcing pre-reflexive notions of social belonging. The study is grounded on interviews conducted with 13 young people<sup>3</sup> from the

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<sup>1</sup> The *vouchers* policy is generally classified as a policy to incentivize parental choice. It consists on the distribution of public resources for families to choose what school their children will attend and pay for it. The public subsidy can be partial or total, enabling students to attend the school parents prefer. This practice has been used in Chile, the United States, and others.

<sup>2</sup> The *charter schools*, also associated with the incentive of parental choice, are private schools funded with public resources and free access. In this case, instead of directing the public resources to maintain public schools, the public sector focuses them on private schools through hiring mechanisms. Families can choose and freely access the private schools that keep this type of connection with the public sector. Implemented in different countries, this model has raised comparisons with the case of affiliated schools in the Brazilian context (about this, see Adrião, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> I use the category “young people” to describe the group of interviewees, but I stress the differences in life experiences. Besides the possibility of discussing the adequate age range to classify those individuals as “young people, we highlight that young women and men with similar ages have socially distant social ages (about this, see Bourdieu, 2019). For example, while some lived with their parents and attended preparatory courses for the universities, others lived alone

city of São Paulo, between 19 and 23 years old, who reflected about their extracurricular formation during childhood and adolescence.

Therefore, the analysis focuses on the perception of these young people, and not their family members, about the adjustments or contradictions between their families' conditions and lifestyles and the development of interests or preferences for specific extracurricular activities. The young people invited to participate in the interviews represented, as much as possible, different socioeconomic profiles, allowing a certain diversity of situations regarding extracurricular experiences, as can be seen in Table 1 in the next section. The question that guided the analysis was: How do the experiences of extracurricular formation reflect, reinforce, or contradict habits, practices, or values cultivated by the family?

Besides this introduction, the article has two sections and some final remarks. The research theme is contextualized in the next section, and the young interviewees are presented. The following part analyzes the interviews. As a conclusion, there are final considerations.

### **The research context and the young people interviewed**

Though the practice of resorting to the support of private tutors (or private classes) is not new (Hussein, 1987; Whewell, 1838), it was only in the last decade of the 20th century that the search for extracurricular support and experience disseminated in large scale in different countries (Aurini; Davies, 2004; Bray, 2007; Bray, 2024; Southgate, 2009; Zhang, 2023). The studies on the theme, generally concerned with educational inequalities due to children and young people's participation in extracurricular activities, sought to measure and problematize students' attendance in activities, such as reinforcement classes, university preparatory courses, language classes, activities to deepen or accelerate certain subjects, and other extracurricular activities that could imply educational advantages to those with the resources to access them. As has been broadly reported, in different contexts, the participation in extracurricular activities, a product and a producer of competition for better school positions, tends to potentialize the chances in educational, professional, and social success of individuals from privileged families (Bray, 2007; Buchmann; Condrón; Roscigno, 2010; Gomes *et al.*, 2010; Southgate, 2009; Stevenson; Baker, 1992). Furthermore, aligned to the logic of an education focused on the preparation for exams and tests, these activities have been affecting the dynamic of regular education. The testimonies of students that were not dedicating themselves to school education were common, as they save their efforts and attention to the activities of extracurricular education (Bray; Kwok, 2003; Costa; Neto-Mendes; Ventura, 2009; Fung, 2003; Hussein, 1987).

Recently, however, some studies have been focusing on other roles these activities play in the lives of children, teenagers, and their families. Besides having acquiring educational advantages, these studies show that, among other things, the participation in extracurricular activities has been

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and conciliated work and study during the time of the interviews. For the research focus, however, I favored individuals who had recently finished high school, helping them to recollect their experiences in extracurricular activities during childhood and adolescence.

establishing an important way to create and maintain social relationships between children and teenagers. When exploring why students participate in extracurricular activities in Japan, Entrich (2014) indicates that among the main motivations to join university preparatory courses were the possibility of meeting friends and the wish to make new ones. In a study conducted in Hong Kong, Bray and Kwok (2003) also point out friendship as an important reason to participate in extracurricular activities, even though the main motivation was better exam performance.

In another analytical focus, some studies have shown that these activities have been assuming a sense of care for children and teenagers while parents work. Especially when children cannot stay in school during the parents' work hours, these activities have been a way to enable care and follow-up school activities, allowing the company and supervision of adults in the school counter shift, with activities that can include tutoring classes or the guidance to organize the study routine, among others (Bray, 2021; Galvão, 2022; Nascimento, 2007; Silveirinha, 2007; Sulz; Nogueira, 2023). Even if those responsible for these guided activities moments do not necessarily have teacher training, the activities are developed in a format similar to the school one – with responsible adults, spaces, and times organized around a set of pre-established activities –, which tends to bring a certain perception of security for parents and guardians, as the school form is well-known and, to a certain degree, respected.

These roles played by extracurricular activities, which surpass the logic of extra preparation for educational, professional, and social competitions that permeate most countries in the last decades, are important and need more studies because they are related to socialization standards marked by urbanization and the intensification of work routines and, certainly, explain part of the increased demand for these activities since the 1990s.

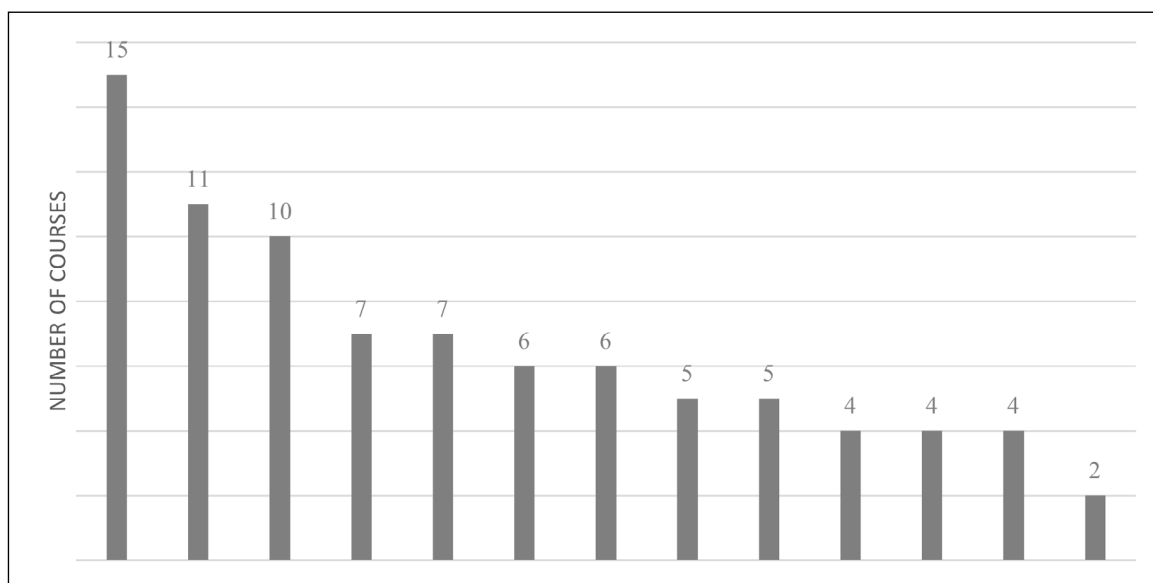
However, in this work, the focus lies on a possible less explicit purpose for these activities, which is often not even perceived as a purpose, the transmission from parents to children of habits, practices, preferences, and tastes that compose the families' lifestyle (always representing a social group). To do so, I choose to consider not only extracurricular activities that imply school gain or better performance in exams (such as tutoring classes, university preparatory courses, language classes, etc.) but a wide array of activities, including sports classes, visual arts, music, dance, and other activities. Table 1 indicates all types of activities attended, and Graphic 1 shows the number of activities per young person, portraying the difference in access to these experiences.

**Table 1:** Courses attended and the number of young people in each type of course

Course	Freq.	Course	Freq.	Course	Freq.
Preparatory	6	Singing	1	Karate	1
Tutoring	1	Children’s musicalization	1	Boxing	1
English	7	Swimming	7	Capoeira	1
German	2	Soccer	6	Theater	2
Spanish	2	Volleyball	2	Ballet	2
French	1	Basketball	2	Belly dance	1
Japanese	1	Olympic Gymnastics	2	Jazz	1
Acoustic guitar	5	Handball	1	Drawing	1
Piano	4	Water Polo	1	Computing	1
Violin	3	Running	1	Makeup	1
Clarinet	2	Horseback riding	1	Hairdresser	1
Trumpet	1	Skate	1	Crafting	1
Keyboard	1	Judo	2	Manicure	1
Flute	1	Jiu-jitsu	1	Work preparation	1
Choir	3	Muay Thai	1		

Source: Galvão (2022).

**Graphic 1:** Number of courses made by each young person



Source: Galvão (2022).

Regarding interviewees’ social conditions and their relationship with the number and types of activities attended, it is possible to identify three main tendencies. Among four young people who completed K-12 education in public schools and/or worked to support themselves during higher education (in all cases using scholarships from the *Programa Universidade para Todos*), their testimonies show that only free extracurricular activities were possible. For the youngsters whose parents could not finish K-12 education, the courses to complement school formation (such as language courses of preparation for university admission) seemed to be distant realities, as they

could not attend them during K-12 education. Moreover, sports and art activities could only be attended if there were places in which the activities were offered for free (generally by NGOs or churches). In these cases, the testimonies of attending the activity available, not exactly desired, were recurrent: “[...] my focus would be the acoustic guitar, but the violin, you know, it’s beautiful too” (Francisco, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 154). Among these young people, it was not possible to clearly notice the parents’ influence in the (possible) choices of extracurricular activities to be attended.

The second tendency observed was the prioritization of activities typically focused on educational competence, such as those preparing for the university and language classes, among middle-class interviewees, whose trajectories took place, with some family effort, in private schools. Among these young people, the reliance on school success as a way to socially climb seemed to favor the investment of time and resources in activities typically investigated in studies about *shadow education*, with the parents highlighting these activities’ sense of investment, a meaning that these young people have generally accepted. Despite this prioritization among these youngsters, the types of extracurricular activities frequented are relatively diverse. We can perceive some formation of interest in sports and artistic (among others) activities, generally aligned with their families’ lifestyle.

In the third group of young people interviewed, composed of five individuals with privileged positions in the social space, the relationship with activities that potentialize school performance oscillated between familiarity (all of them attended classes of more than one language and/or bilingual schools) and the lack of concern with this type of investment (in some cases, the attendance to preparatory courses was dismissed because university admission was not a priority). Among them, a great variety of extracurricular activities were attended, the reference to less known and recognized activities (such as water polo, horseback riding, Japanese, and drawing) were recurrent. In these cases, though the freedom of choice was widened, we can notice certain restrictions, with courses that could be done (apparently more as elements to signalize social belonging than as a school investment, such as in the cases of the second or third foreign language) and courses that could not be done (restrictions normally related to the gender considered appropriate for a particular activity, as we will see in the next section).

The young people interviewed were contacted by the indication of common acquaintances, and the interviews were conducted through video calls as they occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. At first, this option seemed less advantageous as part of the information in the communication process would be lost without an in-person meeting. However, after the interviews, we noticed that the video call interactions had at least three benefits: 1) the reservations or discomforts related to the in-person meeting with an unknown or little-known people seemed to be softened; 2) the possibility of audio and video records were facilitated, mainly because it was easier to establish an environment free of disturbances; and 3) as there was no need for displacement, the participation in the interviews was facilitated (the interview with a young woman who worked during the day and studied at night, for example, would have been unlikely if it was in-person).

In the next section, I seek to identify in the youngster’s testimonies how extracurricular activities work as a way to transmit cultural inheritance, representing the passage from parents to children of habits, values, and lifestyles.

## Extracurricular activities and the transmission of cultural inheritance

In one of the 13 interviews that based this analysis, a young woman, aged 19 at the time, described, with the attention dedicated to the good memories, the path that led her to horseback riding:

*I did horseback riding. [...] I like horses a lot, my brothers have already done horseback riding, but I also wanted it...But the place they did it had closed. So, my father, he would take me early in the morning to ride the horse in the reservoir. [...] My father always took me to the places... in a hotel-farm, what I wanted the most was to ride horses...so I started to like it, I wanted to learn. [...] It was a passion I had, I was...I wanted to learn...and I decided to take classes (Lia, in a interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 170).*

During the first of the thirteen interviews that based this research, when the listening was more careful with what was known about the theme than the novelties brought by the young people interviewed, the testimonies that dealt with extracurricular activities as the development of one's own taste and preference, which was also the taste and preference of other family members, sounded as a surprise. This "confusion of tastes," in which it is not possible to notice precisely the frontier between what the parental taste is, the incentive to develop the same taste in the children, and the taste the children had, was recurrent: only three interviews did not mention this adjustment between extracurricular practices and what was valued or practiced in the family<sup>4</sup>.

This adjustment seems to happen mainly in two forms. In the first case, certain extracurricular activities start to be attended to fulfill the young people's wishes as an autonomous choice, even if strictly connected to the activities attended by parents themselves or related to the lifestyle of the family group. In these cases, in which there is an adjustment between the children's taste and preferences to what is common, valued, and "natural" in their environment (*amor fati* as Bourdieu, 2017, p. 168-169, proposes), parental projects for their children seem to be conducted organically, with the lifestyles, values, and practices that perpetuate without an apparent contradiction and dispute. A successful inheritance transmission process takes place, which might not be seen as such and has the advantage of being chosen rather than granted, a process that results in activities attended more for pleasure than duty, partially hiding their instrumental role of reproduction. However, in many cases, the origins of the tastes, preferences, or interests developed are the object of reflection from young people, the parents' influence does not go completely unnoticed:

*And volleyball because...I grew up with volleyball. My father was a volleyball teacher, he graduated in physical education, he was a coach, and a volleyball referee...so I grew up with volley and, since the second year of high school, which was also in the school, yeah...a class started to be arranged at R. [high school attended] [...] It was the opportunity I had to start and I started, and I'm there until now playing volleyball. [...] Today I play for the university (Milton, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 169-170).*

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<sup>4</sup> In these three cases, in which interviewees reported living with family members who could not grasp the senses of extracurricular practices frequented or desired, friends and regular education teachers were cited as important influences regarding the practice of extracurricular activities.

*My father, he played some instruments, you know. So, like, I grew up in an environment where the music was something very strong. And so, like, either I wanted or not, at this time, I had much more of this wish to go...because of this...this family input [originally in English] really. But today I notice that I'd do it simply because I love the violin, like. I...it's something I intend to do...in the future (Mônica, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 170).*

*My father came up with this idea to start with karate. He always like martial arts and so... he didn't make me do anything, but he said like "ah...I want to do karate, do you want to give it a try?", so I said "ah, let's go". Then we started, I ended up liking karate. [...] Because I liked karate, after I also did jiu-jitsu and... we stayed a year on that. [...] After we ended up returning and muay thai (Caetano, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 170).*

*Yeah... my grandma speaks French very well, my father, my aunts, so, like, a lot of people in my family speak it, so...I always thought that [French] was a very cool language, very beautiful, you know. And I thought that I needed to learn another language because...I speak Portuguese, English, and Spanish. But...many people that are coming to the work market now speak these three languages, you know. Like, with my age, you know. So I thought I needed something to distinguish myself a bit more so, I decided to study French (Arnaldo, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 170).*

When discussing the adjustment processes between the practices of parents and children, Singly (2009) stresses the importance of family interactions and aspects related to building subjects' autonomy in the processes of cultural inheritance transmission. As the author proposes, the children can or cannot appropriate their families' practices, tastes, preferences, and lifestyles depending on a series of factors, and when this appropriation takes place, it generally means more than simply adopting the parents' lifestyle. It is up to the children to resignify elements of their context. On the one hand, he highlights that the interactions between individuals (in the family context and other spaces) can affect the processes of cultural inheritance transmission, mediating the approximation or distancing of the subjects regarding the inheritance. On the other hand, the author highlights that in building their own identity (compatible with contemporary individualization processes, supported by individual choices) children can identify their choices, preferences, and tastes as different from those of the previous generation, reinforcing what distinguishes them. Thus, even when the appropriation of family practices and lifestyles does happen, to a certain degree, this process can be experienced as an autonomous construction, in a type of continuity with rupture traces or as a reinterpretation of experiences, with the creation of their meanings to them, and the variations regarding the family practices.

In the case of the interviewees, this type of dynamic can be noticed mainly in when the young people indicate they understand why parents suggested a given activity but give their own meaning to their participation in the proposed course: "while my parents thought about the professional issue, I was always more interested in the curiosity of learning a new language, of being able to communicate myself" (Caetano, interview to Galvão, 2022, p. 148). Moreover, this process of building autonomy can also be noted when inheritors innovate compared to their parents, advancing, for instance, in a musical or sports formation that goes beyond what was initially incentivized by the

family members (as in the case of those that diversified the types of sports practices, due to their own interest, after been presented to a single practice).

In the second form of adjustment, at least initially, there is no full agreement between parents' and children's interests. Recurrent mainly in the cases of language courses, the testimonies point towards the development, with time, of an interest or preference for these courses, considered an obligation at first. Thus, the adjustment between what the family values members and the activities done happens in a less organic way: the activities are later recognized as important or interesting, which the young people "end up liking," in a dynamic that takes back to the development of a taste for necessity<sup>5</sup>:

*My parents, my parents enrolled me in the course. As I was still very young, I had no reason to want it but my parents enrolled me and [long pause/ it was kind of forced but I ended up liking it, you know. [...] They wanted to guarantee that...that I had this language as...as a differentiator, you know, man? Because English is...is kind of obligatory nowadays, if you want to...to have a good performance, like, a good recognition, let's say so (Milton, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 168-169).*

*Terrible (laughter)... Terrible. Because I was a child [and] I didn't want to have German classes and my mother, my parents, forced me. Because my siblings were interested [and] they said "you also have to do it, you have to do something, you can't just play around" (laughter). I went to German classes, whether I wanted it or not, I didn't want to do it or anything...and I also didn't have the concentration, it was the same in English, I wanted to talk to the teacher. But then it was [long pause] very cool, because...the teachers tried to teach me German with the things I liked, so lots of things, like, I learned silly things but I learned a lot because it was what I liked at the time. For example, they did activities, games, that I ended up learning. Then, when I was older, later, when I had this time, I wanted to return because I perceived it was essential...to learn another language besides English (Lia, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 156-157).*

*I think it was my parents' influence, really. [...] They wanted the best for me... then they enrolled my in an English school so I could have one more language, have it in my CV and such...I don't know how to explain this. [...] They thought about my future...if I'll need to interact with people, if I'll need English (Luiz, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 172).*

In these situations, the relation with these courses was explicitly instrumental, parents guided the use of their children's time and resources for the activities that could bring school and professional profits, similar to the "concerted cultivation" dynamic observed by Lareau (2007), among middle-class American families. This parenting model manifests itself, among other things, through the organization of their children's time around activities that can transmit abilities considered important for life. In this sense, in the case of language courses and other activities that assume the meaning of an "investment in the future," such as the preparatory courses, the

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<sup>5</sup> In this case, individuals assume as a choice an experience that was not necessarily chosen. Faced with the possibility of accessing alternative experiences, they start to understand the possible experience as positive, representing what is, in fact, desirable. As Bourdieu (2017, p. 350) proposes: "Necessity imposes a taste for necessity which implies a form of adaptation to and consequently acceptance of the necessary, a resignation to the inevitable [...]"

transmission of a “feeling of the game” or of the importance of these activities was reported only by the young people whose families belonged to the middle and upper classes. In the case of less privileged youngsters, all from public schools, the language and preparatory courses seemed to be relatively distant realities. These practices and the rules for educational competition (such as the hierarchy of education institutions and the admission exam competitiveness) were themes that the families did not understand well. Among these young people, the meanings for participating in these activities were gradually constructed by other pathways (contacts at work, friends, and teachers), not representing an adherence to values or objectives cultivated in the family group, almost always marked by deprivation and exclusions. However, those who could not attend these activities (language and preparatory courses) do recognize their importance. It seems that the collection of social experiences (mainly school and professional ones) provides, little by little, the elements to legitimize the relevance of these activities, emphasizing the perception that they were excluded and they would be behind in a race that, despite unfair, cannot be abandoned:

*I didn't do a prep-course [preparatory course for university admission]. I did some admission exams to join the prep courses. So, I could get a scholarship at F. [paid preparatory course]... there is a free prep course at USP, but it works...you have to do a test, you know, because the demand is very high, you know. [...] So I ended up doing this...this admission to the prep course, you know. But I couldn't. [...] And then the frustrations began, you know, you trying to do the things and can't so [long pause] you can, you can say that it was quite distressing, like, this process, like, because I saw the importance of that, because just the high school, you know... [...] I was really like, you have to have this conviction, that it is necessary, that you needed that to, in fact...not to guarantee, like, but at least to try to be in a position of more equality, like, with the people who were, that came from a different education, or that have been doing the prep course for forever or something...[that] learned English... dude, my English test in Enem [university admission exam]...I was like, dude, I don't know English...I know nothing of English...so, it was a lot like this (Francisco, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 163).*

Among those with resources to attend diverse extracurricular activities, regardless of how the adjustments between parents and children occurred, family socialization seemed to favor the creation of a meaning and a “know-how”, previous or simultaneous to the participation in these activities, which prepared these young people to appropriate their destinies, sometimes “metamorphosed into free choices” (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 71). I aim to emphasize that families seem to offer not only the possibility of extracurricular education but also the pathway that it takes to implement this formation and competence so that these young people know how to take the best advantage of these experiences.

Therefore, with no apparent calculation, these youngsters appropriate themselves to formative trajectories to which they were prepared from an early age and will be, at the same time, a factor of conservation and social distinction, externalizing a social belonging that does not need to be announced.

The following transcriptions illustrate situations in which young people could appropriate their probable destinies by receiving from the family the material and symbolic resources to fit

into their life stories, with relative easiness, the learning of a language and the participation in a preparatory course for the university.

In the first case, the precocious learning of languages allowed, among other things, an exchange program; in the second testimony, from a son of teachers, there is an apparent familiarity with the environment of the preparatory course that helped him to reach his goals:

*English, like, has always been a part of me, like, since I was born I've known how to speak, you know, I've been in contact with the language and...it is part of my daily life, you know, I see a movie and I don't need subtitles, I listen a song and understand, like, in the exchange program I remember I even dreamt in English, you know, like, some weird things, like that, and...and it's already part, like, of me, you know? I swear there are things I don't know how to say in Portuguese because I say them in English, you know, like [long pause] it's, it's inside, you know, I can't explain, but I don't see myself, like, today, without speaking English, you know? Not being able to express myself in English, without reading a book in English that...I love reading books in English...so, I think it does...it did a whole lot of difference to me, like, as a formation (Marisa, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 159).*

*This was something that really marked me, like, the prep course was something extremely not healthy, but...I was already prepared for this. In the introduction lecture, the coordinator arrived telling is "everyone, that is the think, the prep course, it's not healthy, we aren't going to lie to you, it's very stressing, you'll be overloaded, so, prepare yourselves". So, I had several symptoms, if you want I can list some I remember, yeah...physical and emotional ones. [...] But, like, well, I did what I had to do to be pass at the university and I ended up being admitted. But it was stressful, it was complicated (Caetano, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 158).*

Nonetheless, considering the testimonies of those who could attend a certain diversity of extracurricular activities, not all experiences agreed or adjusted with what was valued in the family environment. In some situations, mainly when the young person expressed preferences different from those cultivated in their contexts, the experiences were of conflict and accommodation, with a search for activities that partially fulfilled the youngsters' desires and adjusted to what the family members considered adequate. These cases were mainly reported by young women who could not attend activities considered inappropriate for women. Though they represented attempts to challenge roles and values imposed by the family and the social environment they circulated, in a way, they also represented solutions of family and social continuity, as the parents' viewpoints and wills prevailed. This was the case of a young woman who wanted to have drum lessons, but ended up studying piano (Galvão, 2022), or the ones who noticed a discouragement, regarding the practice of sports, such as soccer and swimming (Galvão, 2022).

*In everyone's view, boys should do soccer, this kind of things. And I wanted to do it, but I had to have, for example, a women's group to do it. Also, when I was younger, I thought about doing swimming [and] my mother said "no, you'll get a man's body, you'll get a large back". [...] She would say the same about soccer. Drums, she said it was a man thing, that I should do piano...so I suffer a lot with this at home, a lot really (Lia, interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 167).*

Carvalho, Senkevics, and Loges (2014), dealing with the socialization of boys and girls from low-income classes in the city of São Paulo, also call attention to the different extracurricular activities

attended by both genders. The authors notice that the girls face greater restrictions regarding the possibilities of socialization outside the home and are guided towards extracurricular activities with a format closer to school, which contributes to the development of discipline, organization, and obedience, more incentivized in girls than boys. On the other hand, they noticed among boys a greater incentive to do activities further from the school format and relatively less focused on more prolonged schooling, as is the case of sports practice:

Therefore, we see activity and partially autonomous choices for some girls, within the narrow array of extracurricular practices that were possible to them. These options led them to take advantage of these opportunities to improve their learning or refer them to activities closer to the school model. [...] At the same time, their brothers seemed to consolidate a progressive distancing from the activities close to the school model, dedicating themselves to soccer and work and leisure activities far from the school culture (Carvalho; Senkevics; Loges, 2014, p. 731).

Here, we can notice that participation in extracurricular activities can enable not only the transmission of practices and habits to the daughter and sons in the form of courses but also the transmission of viewpoints on the roles and practices appropriate to different social groups. In other words, extracurricular activities can play an important role in the production of durable dispositions regarding what is appropriate or not, having as a reference the practices and viewpoints typical from a family group, which transmits to their children the family history and the typical dispositions and practices of the family's social group, in a dynamic in which the characteristics of the private family group are passed on and tend to be kept in time. In the personalized formation (and often in segregation) enabled by extracurricular activities, it is possible to escape the socialization patterns in which the margin of choice is smaller, as in school. If school, ideally, tends to allow a certain contact with a difference, offering references and viewpoints that can compete with what is posed by the family group, the families tend to seek, through an extracurricular path, a way to increase their chances to transmit their perspectives and lifestyles, reproducing their perceptions (and those of their social group) about what is appropriate or inappropriate, desirable or undesirable.

In this sense, extracurricular activities, which, at first sight, seem to favor the freedom of choice with the possibility of personalization (or hyperpersonalization<sup>6</sup>) of educational trajectories depending on family preferences (morphed into individual preferences), might act in the contrary sense: if understood as an efficient mechanism of inheritance transmission – that is, the cultivation of dispositions, viewpoints, and lifestyles typical of the family group –, establish a path to limit and not to broaden choice, at least when having children and teenagers as reference points. They can be mobilized as mechanisms to reinforce family values, limiting the action of antagonist influences and viewpoints allowed by socialization in spaces/moments that the family members do not choose.

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<sup>6</sup> I adopt Linhart's (2014, p. 49) term, which uses the concept of hyper personalization to refer to the "systematic individualization of employees' management." According to the author, the individualization of salaries, formations, and promotion criteria (summing up, the individualization of careers), with the processes of individual evaluation, establishes an entrepreneurial movement against workers' collective organization. It aims at the atomization of workers and the disarticulation of workers that challenge employers' interests. In this case, the mobilization and individual accountability in work environments is established, demanding flexibility from the workers to adapt themselves to unstable work conditions marked by intense competition.

Therefore, as this transmission process of tastes, preferences, and viewpoints (potentially conservative) tends to go unnoticed, what prevails is the sense of freedom assumed by the participation in these activities. Contraposed to the obligatory and shared experience of regular education, these activities are apprehended as an important way for self-expression and the constitution of belongings (and exclusions), processes that regular education seems to limit:

*School, sometimes, is something that, like, everyone has the same thing, right. So, like, everyone will see that in science, that in geography, that in history, so everyone will have, like, the same thing, in the same year...especially if you are from the same school, I will be, like, at the same day, the same time. In the extracurricular activity you can, like, differentiate yourself a bit, you know, I think. So, like, it is the individual formation of each person, like... your interests, you do what you want, like...you are doing this research, you're probably discovering that there are courses, like, very different from one another, you know...so, I think it is cool because...like, it creates a difference, it differentiates people, people of different interests, you know (Arnaldo, in a interview for Galvão, 2022, p. 147).*

In the previous testimony, we can perceive the importance of extracurricular activities and how they contemplate the interests of each individual (that can be the expression of family interests, a particular case of the social group) but also school as a limiting factor in creating differences. The possibilities of meaning in this testimony are intriguing: school would not be encompassing the individuality and the development processes of each one, what is seen as negative, or would be making unfeasible an exclusive and hyper personalized education (supported in the freedom of choice), which is also noticed as something negative?

In different contexts and times, middle and upper-class families have sought mechanisms to transmit their inheritance to their children, seeking to keep or improve their position in the social sphere (Almeida; Nogueira, 2002; Bourdieu, 2011; 2017; Brandão; Lellis, 2003; Nogueira, 2004). Perhaps the novelty is that part of what was transmitted through family socialization and in school trajectories adjusted to the family interests (in regular education) has now been made viable by a collection of services with a format close to the school one but adjusted to the logic of personalized experience, based in a broad “menu” of consumption possibilities that enable individualization projects of differentiation. They seem to be adjusted to the tendency of spreading the consumption logic to different life spheres, valuing the individual freedom of choice in which contemporary individualization processes are supported, even if a set of possibilities socially built guides this freedom and, maybe, represents conservation more than transformation.

The extracurricular activities, more easily accessed by the more privileged ones, seem to compose a set of relevant social practices to distinguish classes and social class fractions<sup>7</sup>. Hence, they are one of the ways to transmit family inheritance, passing the parents' social status to the inheritors, i.e, is the status of those who attend or value each type of activity or those who know how

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<sup>7</sup> In a study that explores the homologies and distinctions between asset composition (in terms of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capitals) and the practices of individuals, Bertoncelo (2016) identifies differences in the participation of activities, such as language, music, arts, and computer courses, among other practices, to reconstruct the space of social classes in the Brazilian context. As expected, participation in language, music, or arts courses is more frequent among the relatively privileged groups, composed mainly of individuals who own or are partners of companies and receive part of their inheritance from past generations.

to behave in certain situations due to the learning allowed by certain extracurricular experiences, which are increasingly more relevant in lifestyles marked by so many other practices that reaffirm, individuals' social belonging in the symbolic sphere. It is important to highlight that this process can occur unpretentiously, with no intention or consciousness to maintain a lifestyle or obtain profits (educational, professional, and social). In this sense, perhaps the more unpretentiously they are experienced, the more efficient their effects of social distinction, as the lack of pretension would sign the distance from necessity and the freedom to use the time, which tends to characterize the elites, mainly the economic ones. As Bourdieu (2017, p. 263, author's highlight) proposes:

The objects endowed with the greatest distinctive power are those that most clearly attest to the *quality of the appropriation*, and therefore the quality of their owner, because their possession requires time and capacities, demanding a long investment of time, like pictorial or musical culture, cannot be acquired in haste or by proxy, and which therefore appear as the surest indications of the quality of the person. This explains the importance that the pursuit of distinction attaches to all those activities which, like artistic consumption, demand *pure, pointless expenditure*, especially of the rarest and most precious thing of all — particularly for those whose market value gives them the least of it to waste — namely, *time*, time devoted to consumption or time devoted to the cultural acquisition which adequate consumption presupposes.

## Final remarks

In this article, based on interviews with young people between 19 and 23 years old, I sought to explore how extracurricular activities can constitute a way of sharing tastes and lifestyles between parents and children. These activities seem to be an important path of cultural inheritance transmission among the middle and upper classes, enabling experiences that are simultaneously useful (from an educational and social perspective) and representative of what is valued by the family. Though, in some cases, young people have disagreed with their parents regarding the activities they wanted to attend (in an attempt to deny a heritage or part of it), the testimonies show the predominance of family judgments, with the adjustment of practices to what is advisable, acceptable, or possible in the family-social space these youngsters live.

Among other possible considerations, I call attention to the ability of those families to find the means to guarantee family and social continuity. Apparently, new forms of inheritance transmission are found in other socialization experiences, such as school ones, which lose space in the efficient transmission of privileges and viewpoints that support these privileges, threatening the social continuity intended by the family. Furthermore, it seems that extracurricular activities are an important way to continue family and social continuity in contemporary times favoring an alchemy that transforms the maintenance of lifestyles into freedom of choice, need into taste, and privilege into merit.

I end up proposing questions that can guide future investigations: Would the expansion of obligatory school education and the regularization of education flows be limiting the power of social differentiation in and through school, thus reflecting in the search for differentiation and heritage

transmission through an extra-school pathway? Does the education offered in schools tend to lose relevance with the activities attended, in part assuming a leading role, in line with the warning given by Costa, Neto-Mendes, and Ventura (2009) and Bray (2015)? Does the expansion of participation in extracurricular activities constitute one of the manifestations in the educational area of the consumption logic supported in “menus,” always renewed by choices, which have been spreading in several life spheres? How does valuing personalized formative itineraries, with the prioritization of individual-family choices that tend to displace the formative processes’ decisions from the collective to the private sphere, affect the perception of the formative processes supported in sharing, collaboration, and the valuing of differences?

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