

# Batuque workers: career in an afro-gaúcha religion

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## Abstract

This study investigated the career of two people from different generations to analyze the time-space relationship and its longitudinal transformations, and the objective and subjective dynamics existing between subject and context. We used the historical construction of the occupation and the concept of career to support the research. As a research method we use life story. The results show the changes that have taken place in careers at an individual level through the reinterpretations of the interviewees and at a structural and contextual level through the reconfigurations of the actors present in the field. It was also possible, from the perspective of time, to identify antecedent, distinct, present, and common elements of the subjects involved, and signs of changes in the field of this career. In addition to investigating the occupation of batuque, this work presents the differences arising from time and space, in the context, institutions, groups, and individuals, from the visualization of the careers of two people of different generations.

**Keywords:** Career. Batuque. Afro-gaúcha religion. Life story.

## Trabalhadores do batuque: a carreira numa religião afro-gaúcha

### Resumo

Analisando a relação tempo-espaço e suas transformações longitudinais, bem como as dinâmicas objetivas e subjetivas entre sujeito e contexto, este trabalho tem como objetivo investigar a carreira no batuque de 2 pessoas de diferentes gerações que vivem essa trajetória. Para isso, resgatamos a construção histórica da ocupação e utilizamos o conceito de carreira para fundamentar a pesquisa. Como método de investigação, usamos a história de vida. Os resultados apontam para mudanças transcorridas na carreira, vistas ao nível individual pelas reinterpretações dos entrevistados e ao nível estrutural e contextual pelas reconfigurações dos atores presentes no campo. Também foi possível, diante da perspectiva de tempo, identificar elementos antecedentes, distintos, presentes e comuns aos sujeitos envolvidos, assim como visualizar indícios de mudanças no campo dessa carreira. Além da investigação sobre a ocupação do batuque, o trabalho apresenta as diferenças oriundas do tempo e do espaço, em instituições, grupos e indivíduos, baseado na visualização da carreira de 2 pessoas de diferentes gerações que trilharam caminhos nesse campo.

**Palavras-chave:** Carreira. Batuque. Religião afro-gaúcha. História de vida.

## Trabajadores del batuque: la carrera en una religión afrobrasileña

### Resumen

Analizando la relación tiempo-espacio y sus transformaciones longitudinales, así como las dinámicas objetiva y subjetiva existentes entre sujeto y contexto, este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar la carrera en la religión *batuque* de dos personas de diferentes generaciones. Para ello, rescatamos la construcción histórica de la ocupación y utilizamos el concepto de carrera para sustentar la investigación. Como método de investigación utilizamos la historia de vida. Los resultados muestran los cambios que se han producido en la carrera, vistos a nivel individual por las reinterpretaciones de los entrevistados y a nivel estructural y contextual por las reconfiguraciones de los actores presentes en el campo. También fue posible, desde la perspectiva del tiempo, identificar elementos antecedentes, distintos, presentes y comunes a los sujetos involucrados, así como ver señales de cambios en el campo de esta carrera. Además de investigar sobre el trabajo en el *batuque*, la obra contribuye presentando las diferencias que surgen del tiempo y el espacio, en el contexto, instituciones, grupos e individuos, a partir de la visualización de las trayectorias de dos personas de distintas generaciones que han transitado caminos en este campo.

**Palabras clave:** Carrera. *Batuque*. Religión afrobrasileña. Historia de vida.

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## INTRODUCTION

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Given its procedural, historical, and contextual nature, the concept of career allows observing, based on people's trajectory, a broad picture that integrates subjects, collectivities, organizations, and society, showing the reciprocal interactions from a longitudinal and territorial perspective (Hughes, 1958; Mayrhofer, Meyer & Steyrer, 2012). In addition, the concept of career offers the possibility of researching non-traditional and little explored occupations (Becker, 2008; Hughes, 1937).

As we move away from conventional careers, it is important to remember that when we come across environments, cultures, or beliefs that are distant from our traditional spaces, we face new words, customs, and meanings, which, in turn, make us reinterpret and create new understandings on what was already built. It is in this perspective that we carried out the present study, dealing with a peripheral career and a religion distant from popular currents. It is *batuque*, a religion little known nationally, besides being a profession for a group of people (a kind of drum player).

This current is considered an Afro-Gaucha religion, due to its African roots and historical process of formation and syncretism in Rio Grande do Sul (Corrêa, 2006). Today, with more than 200 years of history in the Southern ground, also spread across the Silver river countries - Uruguay, Argentina, and Paraguay -, it has created a complex field of relationships. These include holy fathers and mothers, the faithful, representative associations, public entities, manufacturers and traders of religious products, as well as customers and entities of other religious currents (Leistner, 2016; Oro, 1998).

Beyond the figures, which mention Rio Grande do Sul as the Brazilian state with the largest number of people that declared practicing Afro-Brazilian religions (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2019), the practices and movements within the religious field are taking on new forms, and seeking modernization in the face of contextual changes (Oro, 2012). Either through the bias of religion or through the perspective of work, this is the picture - of movements and transformations - that shapes the field of *batuque*.

By analyzing the time-space relationship and its longitudinal transformations, as well as the objective and subjective dynamics between subject and context, this paper investigates the *batuque* career, based on the narrative of two persons from different generations who experienced this trajectory. We start from an interactionist point of view, by considering that careers are structured under objectivities and subjectivities, conflicts and dilemmas, and elucidate relationships between individuals and institutions (Hughes, 1937). Therefore, our interest in researching the *batuque* field strengthens the understanding that everyone defines and assumes a career, regardless of the structure to which they are linked, and follow different paths and make decisions in a contingency environment.

To do this, based on the conceptual career framework, we seek to rescue the history of this occupation and of the research subjects, contextualizing and interpreting actions, as well as identifying the role of people, groups, organizations, and society in this environment.

In view of this proposal, we divided the paper in seven sections. The first is this introduction, where we present the central topic and the objective. The second discusses the concept of career, addressing the contributions of the theory and the elements that supported the research. Then, we resume the history of the field with the occupation trajectory, pointing its transformations and its current context. The fourth section presents the methodological aspects, and in the fifth, we analyze the interviewees' speeches, describing their careers. In the sixth part, we discuss the data in the light of theory. In the seventh section, we present the final remarks.

## CAREER AND DEVIATION

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The career concept involves studies that gather people, groups, organizations, and society within a research. Its interdisciplinary theoretical nature offers a field of analysis where elements such as time and the historical building of the social space, objective and subjective elements, and the interactions among those involved are present (Moore, Gunz & Hall, 2007). Together, this conception provides the exploration of peripheral social groups and new contexts (Hughes, 1937).

The notion of time provided by career's theoretical base allows observing different portraits regarding the object of study, and their changes over time (Hughes, 1937). This means that we can examine past scenarios, transfigurations, show the present context, and even project future pictures related to career. In addition, the investigation of a field history where the career is exposed reflects the construction of the social space with people, organizations, and society.

Thus, the career covers all spheres of the individual's life (Hughes, 1958), which allows identifying two correlated environments. The first are objective constructions and changes that intertwine with the career, individually or in groups, organizations, or society. The second are the person's subjective constructions, the way he/she observes and evaluates his/her world, which are based on his/her contextual relationships and objects of constant redefinition. This conceptual framework generates a relational, interactional, and contextual scenario for analysis (DeLuca & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2016).

The relational perspective of the career concept involves all levels of analysis and the elements present in the discussion (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence, 1989). This enables an analysis of the dynamics between individuals, organizations, institutions, and society. On the other hand, new paths open up for the association between objective and subjective career elements, which, in turn, can also be seen longitudinally, by observing the nature of these relationships over time.

Amid such a career analysis framework, in the search for understanding social interactions, the individual has a central role by reflecting such dynamics through his/her perceptions (Carter & Fuller, 2016). However, it is important to observe these dynamics as a two-way street, where individuals influence and are influenced by the institutions of their space (Hughes, 1958). In this case, we strengthen the importance of contextualizing the career space, since trajectory movements are affected by the territorial location of the field, and by its social and cultural aspects (Abbott, 1997; Hughes, 1937).

Linked to the context and its representations, deviant careers reflect the trajectories of people with careers in non-traditional areas, which belong to social subgroups. Although the term is relative, its importance lies in understanding the construction of this label in the person's context, that is, "a deviant behavior is one that people label as such" (Becker, 2008, p. 22).

Deviant careers are recognizable when a person breaks the socially established standards and withdraws from patterns and norms historically seen as traditional. Following this path and inserted in peripheral groups, the person is viewed as deviant, as well as his/her career. In parallel, and considering the world of *batuque*, Frigerio (2008) suggests that supporters of religions considered non-traditional can receive the same *status*: deviant.

## FROM BATUQUETO CROSS LINE: TRANSFORMATIONS AND THE FIELD'S CURRENT SCENARIO

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Although there is no concrete information on the emergence of religions of African origin in Rio Grande do Sul, their first expressions occurred between the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Corrêa (2006) recalls that the cities of Rio Grande and Pelotas received a large number of slaves to work in the *charqueadas* (place where oxen were slaughtered and *charque* (beef jerky) was prepared), and, once established, they sowed their identity traits in the region. It is important to note how the context and the passage of time were decisive for structuring these religions and their practices. Several studies show how African origin's religions have adapted to the socio-cultural and economic conditions of Rio Grande do Sul (Oro, 2002; Tadvald, 2016).

The first religion of African origin that emerged in the state was *batuque*. Its adaptation was fast, since the traditional customs of the territory resembled the religion practices. In addition, the characteristics of the period facilitated the actions. The patriarchal structure of the worshiped Oris has resembled that of the families. The animals that wandered peacefully through the city streets facilitated sacrifice rituals. Finally, the almost nonexistent work relationships and the spatial distancing between residences enabled extended services and the sound of the drums during dawn (Corrêa, 2006).

Only in the 1930s, in a somewhat different scenario, the second Afro-Brazilian current arose on Gaucho soil. *Umbanda* emerged. According to Oro (2002), its practices were against *batuque*, seeking to accommodate to a scenario of growing cities, housing agglomeration, and the beginning of the industrialization process. Given this situation, where work was more important and the cities' pace became accelerated, *umbanda* demanded less commitment from its believers, had shorter meetings and without drums' noise, so as not to disturb the neighbors or draw their attention. In addition, it did not sacrifice animals, as they had become valuable commodities (Oro, 2002).

The last Afro-Brazilian current to emerge in Rio Grande do Sul was the cross line. It arose in the late 1960s, together with the consolidation of capitalism and problems such as unemployment, insecurity, illnesses, and frustrations (Corrêa, 2006). Adjusting to the context, the cross line developed from a mix of practices of *batuque*, *umbanda*, and other religions, and was defined as a "practical, pragmatic service religion, which specializes in supernatural solutions" to the problems faced by the modern man (Oro, 2002, p. 359). This current, of a hybrid and adaptive nature, spread the most on this space. The latest records show that, in Porto Alegre, about 95% of the *terreiros* (places of practice) - in a universe of two thousand - practice cross line (Corrêa, 1994).

Today, in the aftermath of the capitalist regime, religions of African origin, besides changing into consumption, are the central pieces of a complex scenario (Prandi, 1996). On gaucho soil, especially in the Porto Alegre region, the structuring of a specific market for religions is visible. Oro (1998) mentions the impact of the economy on Afro-Gaucha religions, and shows the involvement between agents, institutions, and companies in this space. Unlike the old days, presently, in addition to a scenario composed of a larger number of actors, they play distinct and complex roles. Considering the field analysis of the *batuque* career, it is important to mention the presence of these actors - people, groups, organizations, and society - and show the attributes of their performance in that territory.

Taking into account this study's objectives, we analyzed a holy father and a holy mother, complex figures in this research field. From the religious point of view, they represent the centerpiece and the maximum authority of the *terreiro* or religious house. In the work sphere, they are informal service providers, often considered as small entrepreneurs; despite playing the role of priests, they need to "constitute an economic fund capable of ensuring the *terreiro's* infrastructure and functioning, in addition to their own livelihood and that of their families" (Oro, 1998, p. 8).

These two faces of the activity lead us to two other components of the field: the faithful and the customers, who are different because of their connection with religion. The former carry in their identity all the content that surrounds the religious sphere, while for the clients, religion is a service able to meet their emotional or economic needs (Prandi, 1996).

Also part of this scenario, there are industries and establishments that produce and sell consumer goods, such as candles, statues, herbs and flowers, used in practices and rituals of this social group (Giorgio, 2015). The presence of such agents marks the transformation of the work logic of these people; in the past, they cultivated the materials used, and now these are costs embedded in the value of the provided services.

Representative entities - with emphasis in Rio Grande do Sul on the Federation of Afro-Brazilian Religions (Afrobras) and the Spiritualist Afro-Umbandist Federation of Rio Grande do Sul (Fauers) - are also institutions active in this career field. Although their actions concentrate on different demands from this social group, they stand out for the defense of the group against acts of discrimination.

This leads us to highlight the presence of institutions and faithful of different beliefs, who, in distinct ways, relate to Afro-descendant religions. We highlight the role of the Pentecostal churches - an evangelical religious current that arrived in Brazil in the 1960s, and is presently represented by neo-Pentecostalism, mainly by Edir Macedo's Universal Church of God's Kingdom (Iurd). It assumed the leadership of discriminatory actions against religious expressions of African origin in Brazil, under the argument that they worship demons in their practices (Souza, 2019).

We must also consider in the analysis the role of the State and local society. Regarding the former, its actions can be seen in Porto Alegre, mainly through the Assistant Secretariat for the Black People, of the city hall, and through the systematic discussions in the legislative system of conflicting issues on Afro-Gaúchas religious practices (Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Alegre, 2019). We mention the discussion on animal sacrifice in African religious practices and the amendment that prohibits the abandonment of dead animals on the streets in Rio Grande do Sul (Leistner, 2016; Oro, Carvalho & Scuro, 2017). As for the space and the local society that surround these careers, and where all interactions take place, Rio Grande do Sul – although seeking a self-image of being made up of white, Christian people, colonized and inhabited by European immigrants – keeps in its history and preserves the traits of Indians and blacks (Oliven, 2006).

It is in this field that holy fathers and mothers live their trajectories. These figures are, at the same time, priests and service providers, seen by some as the soul of a *terreiro*, and by others as demons that must be exorcised. This contradictory activity, surrounded by complex relationships and exchanging elements with multiple actors, opens up spaces and paths for investigation.

## METHODOLOGY

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Given the characteristics of the interviewees' field of work, the proposed objective, and career's theoretical basis, we used the life history strategy as the research method, seeking to understand the individual's trajectory based on his own narrative. Life stories are a methodological choice with the focus on subjects in disappearing or invisible professional positions, women, and ethnic and socio-cultural groups discriminated against in peripheral territories (Fernandes, 2010). In the administration field, especially in studies that discuss career, the life history method proves to be timely, as it reveals a potential methodological path for research (Closs & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2015).

The life history method emerged with the Chicago School, in the United States, in the early twentieth century. As of the 1970s, the method grew, starting from a simple collection of empirical data, in a positivist perspective, to the knowledge on individuals and groups, their historical and singular experiences. Thus, it deepened the understanding and the capture of messages originating in the stories of these groups. To that end, it relies on testimonies, aiming to rebuild subjects' history, from their childhood to the present. Through life stories, subjects are "living texts", if we may say so, since they rebuild their past and design the future beyond the present time, adding new meanings and transforming their existence (Granato, Lopes & Costa, 2020).

In life stories, there is an equal relationship between the researcher and the subject researched. There is a tendency to develop reciprocal bonds of trust, involvement, and commitment, especially by the researcher. Both parties change throughout the process, that is, the individual and the researcher are objects and subjects of the investigation. Another feature of the method is its historicity. In other words, it allows the analysis and understanding of elements that make up the subject, rebuilding his/her relationship with history (historical subject), as he/she is both its product and producer (Granato et al., 2020).

This research also relies on the analysis of life trajectories in order to understand interactions and sequencing between generations. Under this approach, the perception of individuals of different generations can show similar traits and contrasts between trajectories (Atkinson, 2002; Brandão, 2007).

As a complementary method, we chose to use the qualitative content analysis, considered by Bardin (2010) a set of communication analysis techniques that uses systematic and objective procedures to describe the content of messages, in order to infer knowledge regarding the conditions of its production. The analysis can be quantitative or qualitative; the quantitative approach plots a frequency of the characteristics that are repeated in the text content, while the qualitative considers the presence or absence of a given content characteristic or set of attributes in a specific fragment of the message (Caregnato & Mutti, 2006).

The use of the life history strategy or the content analysis must adapt to the field and to the intended goals; therefore, researchers choose to use the combination of these two methodologies, in order to achieve inferences of objective and subjective aspects. In doing so, they consider contextual, institutional, identity, and *status* elements, since the meaning and the sense used in the narrative are closely related to the social interactions that occur, which may change over time and provide reinterpretations of the past in the present (Bujold, 2004).

The first stage of the study was the exploratory research, where we collected data from secondary sources on the two main topics addressed in the theoretical framework: career and the *batuque* field. Bibliographic analysis also provided a historical deepening, especially of the field where the *batuque* religion developed, aiming to intertwine time and space in subjects' narrative.

The second stage of the research comprised meetings with interviewees and field observation. We held three meetings with Aparecida and Wesley, mother and son, both *batuqueiros* and residents in Porto Alegre. Each meeting lasted about two hours, and, at Aparecida's request, they took place together, with the participation of one researcher and both interviewees. Conversations took place at the family's residence, which is also the religion center they own. The place is divided in three environments: the first, next to the sidewalk, is intended for the sessions of the religious family of both. The second is private, and used for private conversations between Aparecida or Wesley and their clients. The third is at the back of the land, where are the other rooms of the house.

In addition to these moments, we made another visit to the religion center. On that occasion, people related to the religious family of both interviewees were present. Our objective was to understand the dynamics and work processes carried out, as well as to approach the dialect and the system of codes and symbols of that universe. We recorded the perceptions during all the meetings in field diaries that allowed the analytical deepening of the study.

At the end of each meeting, we transcribed the dialogues and made a previous analysis based on such records and on field diaries, in search of issues that deserved greater attention, to address them again in the next meeting. After transcribing the dialogues of the last meeting, we began the analysis of the narratives, considering that telling a life's history is to portray, at the same time, multiple stories (Vogt & Bulgacov, 2019). Through them, we can glimpse meanings and experiences - subjectively interpreted by the listener - which, as they disclose a person's individuality, reflect society, illuminating its socio-cultural values, its historical and economic trajectory, and the institutions that are part of it (Colling & Oltramari, 2019).

Considering life as a social construction, we understand objective and subjective aspects. Objectively, the analysis can investigate economic, political, historical, and social questions, while, subjectively, it has the power of checking social constructions and subject's own emotions, temporally built and within a specific field (Closs & Rocha- de-Oliveira, 2015).

## ONECAREER, TWO GENERATIONS, AND MULTIPLE CONTRASTS

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This section presents the life trajectory, first of Aparecida, and then, of Wesley. Through the analysis of the interviewees' career, we seek to point out their characteristics and show common elements and significant differences, both for their individual constructions and, in a broader way, the collective and institutional changes related to the *batuque* career.

### From Aparecida to Cidinha of Oiá

Named after Brazil's queen and patron saint, Aparecida was born in the late 1960s, in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, in a city far from the state capital, called Jaguari. At that time, it had about 10,000 inhabitants, with a population based on European immigrants, among which Christianity prevailed since its creation (Ferreira, 1959). Her family, of humble origin, lived in harmony with the community customs, which made her undergo experiences in the Catholic world since her childhood.

At the age of 7, she received news from her grandmother that her parents had left the city. Today, she understands and explains the complex situation, revealing that, at the time, the small town, fervently Catholic and entering a period of military dictatorship, scolded and chased away her mother, who had begun to receive a spiritual entity, something strange in the community's eyes.

After a few months living with her grandmother, she moved to Santa Maria, again with her parents. Upon arriving, Aparecida recalls that she faced a new world. In a larger city and with less traditional resistance, her mother took distance from Catholicism and immersed in the *batuque* religion. Working and living the religion intensely, she already had, in addition to followers, a religion center, where the activities took place.

At that time, her mother started to form her own religious family, composed of followers, orishas, and entities. Busy with the activities of this other family, her mother withdrew from domestic and maternal chores, against her husband's expectations. Shortly after, her parents broke up. The interviewee, still a child, inherited domestic responsibilities and the care of the 4 younger siblings, which redefined her child's social "role".

Although the city had more inhabitants and a greater feeling of freedom, residents distrusted non-traditional religions, especially local authorities. The period, marked by the dictatorship, carried a series of restrictions. Aparecida recalls that, for doing her activities and not be seen, her mother worked in the early hours. She also recalls her being arrested several times while working on street corners, in bushes, or playing a drum on the edge of rivers, which are common practices of the activity.

Within this context, Aparecida entered the religious universe and, still in the first decade of her history, she lived the *first spiritual experience*, incorporating an entity: the 'cabocla Jurema'. After this experience, her mother limited her presence in the sessions, being against her participation. Her wish was that her daughter should only study and not take part deeply in religious activities, by understanding the hostility of that period. Then, Aparecida partially distanced herself from religion. The combination of the temporary abandonment by her parents, their separation, responsibilities at home and with her siblings, the violence against the mother during the military dictatorship, and her opposite positioning, withdrew her from this universe.

From this point on, the interviewee lived a normal life: she studied until the fourth grade of elementary school, and lived in different cities together with her mother, until they took up residence in Porto Alegre, the state capital. There, she got married, had her only child, and worked in several places, holding different functions over the years. The non-permanence for long periods in these functions allowed her to experience several occupations in her first 3 decades of life, taking on industrial activities in production lines, administrative tasks, and even working as a small entrepreneur. However, Aparecida says that there was no identification with any of these jobs.

Until the age of 30, although not receiving her entity, religion surrounded her in other ways. Occasionally, she participated in sessions, took 'passes for unloading', observed her mother's work, and, informally, almost as a joke, as she reports, read deck of cards for her friends. However, this scenario began to change when her husband was diagnosed with a serious disease that affected - economically and emotionally - the family for some years. Aparecida reports that, at that moment, her mother,

noticing her dejection, summoned her to immerse in religion definitely, as a means of survival. At this point, we noticed that Aparecida lived a conflict between the role of family's matriarch, where she needed to be strong and provide the financial resources for her husband and son, and her resistance – due to subjective aspects, especially the negative memories – to return to religion permanently.

Understanding her needs and with her mother's approval, Aparecida changed the course of her life, left her activities as entrepreneur and placed a sign in front of her house: "We play cards and shells." Revealing her *new identity*, from that moment on she changed her name to "Cidinha da Oiá". Shortly after, in the first months of work, Cidinha relates, emotional, that her income was sufficient to pay the family's monthly expenses. Over the years, the work provided *economic stability*, as it had not happened in a long time.

Today, after three decades working as a fortune-teller, the interviewee believes that she has reached *maturity*, which we can see through her own religion center and her extended religious family, synonym of a position built within that market. When designing her future, she does not see changes in her professional trajectory. Having the job as an acquired responsibility and *her life's destiny* leads Cidinha to discard other paths and to foresee a long permanence in this field.

## Wesley, from Past to Present

Wesley was born in 1984, and his early memories evoke games at school. Unlike his colleagues, his entertainment always had religious traits. While friends drew houses and animals during classes, and played hide and seek in the playground, Wesley painted *caboclos*, drums, and tried to recreate 'unloading sessions' during class breaks. This behavior made the school call his parents regularly to talk to the psychologist, or to the parents of other students who feared his games. They said that Wesley did not have good mental conditions, and was considered, in some situations, "possessed", as he says. He explains his childhood actions mainly by *living with his grandmother*, who had worked as a *batuqueira* for years.

In teenage years, the contact with *batuque* grew. Wesley and his mother, who at that time had already immersed professionally in religion, moved to live with his grandmother. He reports, "everything I saw in the evening session I did during the week with my colleagues and street friends". The coexistence, observation, and practice of activities were so intense that, at the age of 18, Wesley had mastered most of the work processes of a *batuqueiro*, besides having undergone the *first spiritual experience*, by incorporating the entity "Pango Beira-Mar".

After finishing high school, Wesley, encouraged by his mother, sought a job and a bachelor's degree. He was soon selected to work as an administrative assistant in a company, a position he held for five years. He also started the undergraduate program in physical education, but took only three courses.

Although he spent considerable time at his first and only job, the occupation and the evening course always *conflicted with religious activities*. According to the interviewees, as they acquire knowledge on religion, they assume responsibilities and activities that must be done before the religious family, which demands time and energy. In view of these requirements, the job and the undergraduate course were always in conflict with the religious activities, which took place especially during the night and in the early hours, hampering the accomplishment of other commitments.

The conflict between activities lasted until the moment his holy mother – in this case, his grandmother – told him that he was prepared to carry out all activities in the world of *batuque*. The grandmother, who was the only person that could assign him such a role, officially made him a *holy father*. At this point, Wesley, who was no longer linked to the undergraduate program, also quit his job, and began to dedicate himself entirely to the services and religious activities.

After almost a decade working as a *batuqueiro*, the interviewee reports that work takes up the entire time of his day. Currently, Wesley is living with his mother, has been divorced for almost 11 years, and has a 13-year-old daughter, who lives with his former partner. He says that the girl, although not "awakened within the religion", has taken root in this world.

Just as his past and identity, which kept a constant integration with *batuque*, he *foresees all his future in this area*. The interviewee's wish is, first, the growth of his religious family, by increasing the number of bonds, and, second, the development of the religion center, whose owners are him and his mother. Resource investments in the space would improve the structure and attract a larger number of customers.



## DISCUSSION

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First, it is important to say that, by using the life history investigation strategy, the dynamics between individual and context are decisive, especially their impact on career building. Time-space elements are important parts in this analysis (Abbott, 1997), as well as the confrontation between objective and subjective aspects of different generations (Atkinson, 2002; Hughes, 1937).

Career building of mother and child has similar, and very different elements, mainly due to the different periods lived and the spaces experienced. The first contacts with the religious field took place in a similar way for both, but the experiences were significantly opposite. In common, mother and son were born in *religious family environments*, observing and achieving their practices. However, while Wesley faced occasional negative experiences associated with religious practices, like his time at school, Cidinha went through intense, diverse situations, and for long periods, such as the two decades spent during the military regime.

Hence, we notice differences between the trajectories, in view of the social time-space markers. The gap of almost 3 decades between their childhood and the social spaces where they were raised - small cities in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul, in the case of Cidinha, and a metropolis like Porto Alegre, in the case of Wesley - affected such paths.

The fact is that the initial contextual contrasts defined the sequence covered by interviewees (Mayrhofer et al., 2012). We can say that Wesley's initial experiences in a space of less conservatism and restrictions, unlike that of his mother, did not have so many barriers, enabling a greater power of action and an early entry into the professional field of religion, while his mother sought other experiences until approaching the area.

Since the environment influences objective actions of subjects within the field, we also notice the *notions built* from past events, which are now shared by interviewees (Barley, 1989). One of the most interesting subjectivities of the analysis is the feeling of a son's taking on his mother's occupation.

In the reports, Cidinha said that her mother was initially convinced that she wanted her daughter away from religion, in the same way that she showed some dissatisfaction in seeing her son following her footsteps later. However, we noticed a decrease in the annoyance towards the professional entry into religion in the relationship between mother and daughter, and later, between mother and son. The social constructions related to that career and to subjects' own emotions changed, as they resist less to assuming the profession. This statement is strengthened when Wesley, in mentioning his daughter's future, places no restrictions on her professional choices.

On this, we can also add the creation of Cidinha's new identity, who, in the face of a different time-space, allowed herself to enter a career that she could have started decades earlier. At the time of the interview, although it was possible to see that the memories were exhausting, there was a *reinterpretation of the past*, by softening such facts, in an attempt to leave behind meanings of that period. In these cases, we concluded that the resistances and meanings, seen as built notions, in that order, decreased and became a reflection of a less violent environment regarding the occupation.

It is also interesting to observe the status achieved within this social group, which are part of the religious career. It is common to find a series of denominations that label people who work in Afro-Gaúcha religions, including some created by the subjects themselves, for commercial purposes or to move away from their own historical background of intolerance. Names like "fortune teller", "tarologist", "astrologer", in addition to other discriminatory names, such as "saravá" and "macumbeiro", are easily seen (Giorgio, 2015). However, in contrast to these terminologies, the interviewees claim that, in the group, they are recognized as *batuqueiros*.

We can still say that the status of *batuqueiro* is distinct, according to the individual's position in the group; he/she can be a holy child or a holy mother/father. The first comprises those who entered this area and may become, after a *training process*, holy mothers or fathers. The second refers to a position that allows the individual, according to the internal rules of the group, to create his/her own religious family, lead the group sessions, and assist followers and customers.

The process for achieving this status is interesting. First, subjects need to immerse in religion, learning the mythological, axiological, linguistic, and ritualistic elements of the current (Ramos, 2017). Then, a holy father or mother will evaluate and grant the title. It is also possible to formalize the title through the group's federations. In Rio Grande do Sul, with the approval of the applicant's holy father or mother, federations can issue an affiliate card, certifying the individual as a holy mother/father and supporting his/her practice, according to legal rights. The federations rely mainly on the 1988 Federal Constitution, Article V, Paragraph VI, which declares, "freedom of conscience and belief is inviolable, the free exercise of religious services is ensured, according to the law, and the protection of places of worship and their liturgies is guaranteed". However, religious services offered by *batuqueiros*, as well as by agents of other religious currents, still do not fall under any specific jurisdiction in the work sphere (Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil, 1988).

Although interviewees have not renewed their membership card by paying the annual fee for a long time, it is through the federations' movement that the main *link between the mand their peers* lies. Both revealed that they have participated for almost ten years, eventually, in movements in defense of Afro-religious practices organized by federations. Cidinha recalls that, "when they wanted to create the law that would not allow killing animals, something essential for us, we went to the front of the city hall, all the *batuqueiros*, singing and playing the drum".

Through this movement, individuals, mainly by adding up their forces, have an important role in acting on the structure of their career's field (Barley, 1989; Hughes, 1958). In this case, direct interference can happen in two significant moments. First, through state legislation decisions, and, later, by national ones in favor of the group, resulting in the social legitimation of its practices (Ministério Público Federal, 2018). Second, by looking at the past, not with the direct participation of the interviewees, but through the sum of forces of this social group, in creating federations that fight for their rights until today.

We notice the dynamics between practitioners and other institutions in the field, since the beginning of the trajectory of the *batuque* career in Rio Grande do Sul. This historical process explains the framing of the trajectory as a deviant career. When looking back, we see that the lack of legitimacy, in addition to a fragile position of its practitioners in society, has made violence and prejudice always present in this religion's space.

The main records on the history of this belief in Rio Grande do Sul until now are the police pages (Oro, 2002). Currently, despite Afro-Gaúchas religious practices – from the perspective of religion, and not of work – being legally supported, and assisted by associative institutions, their practitioners still suffer from prejudice, especially from intolerant speeches of religions of pentecostal roots (Guerreiro, 2018; Souza, 2019).

The historical construction of this scenario allows us to state that, both through the work and career bias, and by religious orientation, interviewees belong to subcultures or subgroups, which leads them to be *deviants* (Becker, 2008; Frigerio, 2008) – a concept internalized and somehow understood by them, from the moment they consider their trajectories in religion-work abnormal.

Finally, the transformation of the field of African-Brazilian religious careers in the face of the current economic regime, and its impact on the future projection of professionals is undeniable. First, in different ways, we can see how the notion of trade has improved practices and processes in this field. There are already people who sell, as a training course, the preparation to become a holy father, and people who seek this training to serve clients, aiming just to succeed economically (Oro, 1998).

Even the interviewees, created under genuine beliefs and practices that involve the *batuque* religion, although far from the rationalization processes defined in their activities, have these same goals. They already anticipate, as the next steps within the career, actions for the economic development of their religion house or, from another perspective - already foreseeing the mercantile growth of this field -its establishment.

## FINAL REMARKS

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Observing the time-space relationship, its longitudinal transformations, as well as the objective and subjective dynamics between subject and context, this paper investigated the *batuque* career under the narrative of two persons of different generations, who have lived this trajectory. When retrieving the history of the profession and the subjects examined, we contextualized and interpreted their actions, as well as identified the role of people, groups, organizations, and society in this territory.

In view of this discussion, we can mention changes that took place in this career and obtain previous, distinct, present, and common elements to the subjects involved, with signs of potential changes in the field of *batuque*. Regarding the first issue, when observing the relational nature provided by the career concept, the dynamics between individual, career, and context are evident. The research identified, both in the work sphere and in practices and customs linked to the religion, changes originating mainly from the mercantilist regime. Likewise, and following this direction, interviewees' future career projections are increasingly linked to the economic scenario.

Regarding the second issue, we can say that, although the family environment is one of the triggers for following this occupational trajectory, the economic scenario causes, at the structural level of the career field, the insertion of new actors. Among them, the groups that stand out the most are the people who sell training programs for the formation of holy fathers/mothers, and who seeks them. These dynamics may influence the practices of those that are already part of this market for religious reasons, and maybe this means higher levels of competition between religion houses/centers and deep processes of rationalization in the group's practices, today still embryonic.

Considering the deviant career, the longitudinal look at interviewees' representations (and their transformations), and the context experienced, we observed a decrease in the number of barriers for the *batuque* career over the years. Born in a slave environment, it crossed the military dictatorship, and today it faces barriers, especially through discriminatory and prejudiced acts, often violent and spread across multiple spaces. In addition, the violent role, previously practiced by the State police authorities, belongs to neo-pentecostal religious groups, intolerant in their beliefs.

The situation indicates that, although this career has gained representation - through the creation of representative institutions - and greater legitimacy in recent years - by legislative decisions favorable to the group and by public actions of religion encouragement - subjects who follow it still carry labels that hinder their activities. Their *status* is recognized and valued only within the group. Externally, prejudice and violence often lead these workers to cover up their identity, and take on different roles in life, seeking a greater balance between environments. This allows us to say that this career, in addition to being deviant, disguises itself.

Finally, by investigating people's occupation in *batuque*, and exploring the standpoint of those who live in this world, the paper presented this career field, expanded the discussion to non-traditional areas, and confirmed its understanding as a non-linear sequence with constant (re)interpretations of meanings. It also showed the differences that arise from time and space, in institutions, groups, and individuals, based on the careers of two persons of different generations who followed the same path.

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