
CHILD LABOUR IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULTS: EXPERIENCES AND CHILDHOOD

IMPLICAÇÕES DO TRABALHO PRECOCE PARA ADULTOS: VIVÊNCIAS E INFÂNCIA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze child labour implications for adults who experienced that process when they were children or adolescents. To this end, we used as tool the Historical-Cultural Psychology approach. Five adults who were child labourers participated of this research. Their children were enrolled or egressed to the Program for the Eradication of Child Labour – PETI, and access to these participants occurred by means of the Reference Center for Social Support – CRAS. The saturation criterion (Minayo, 2008) was applied to delimit the number of participants. Open-interviews with life story elements were used as instruments. Data analysis was carried out through the trees of association of ideas (Spink, 2004). As a result, participants reported that early labour brought implications for schooling and health, in addition to losing childhood, and also brought difficulties to obtain employment in the current life.

Keywords: early labour; child labour; implications; experiences.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar as implicações do trabalho precoce para adultos que vivenciaram essa experiência quando crianças e adolescentes. Para tal, utilizou-se como ferramenta a perspectiva da Psicologia histórico-cultural. Participaram desta pesquisa cinco adultos que foram trabalhadores precoces, cujos filhos estavam inseridos ou eram egressos do Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil – PETI -, e o acesso aos participantes ocorreu a partir do Centro de Referência da Assistência Social – CRAS. Utilizou-se do critério de saturação (Minayo, 2008) para delimitar o número de participantes. Como instrumento, utilizou-se da entrevista aberta com elementos da história de vida. A análise dos dados foi realizada através das árvores de associação de ideias (Spink, 2004). Como resultados, os participantes apresentaram em seu discurso que o trabalho precoce trouxe implicações para a escolaridade e saúde, além da perda da infância, e trouxe dificuldades para a obtenção de emprego na vida atual.

Palavras-chave: trabalho precoce; trabalho infantil; implicações; vivências.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze child labour implications for adults who experienced that process when they were children or adolescents. To this end, we will make use of the participants' discourse about this topic by means of elements derived from a Master's dissertation research.

The literature has pointed out that early labour results in a number of implications for children and adolescents. Due to family economic needs, many children and adolescents are supposed to abandon school in order to work or even take care of housework so adults get free to work outside the home (Paone, 2007; Tabatabai, 2007; Tavares, 2002).

Although in Brazil the school-grade/age distortion is generalized, overall, children and adolescents labourers are found to present higher distortion rates than those that do not work (Haas, 2003; Kassouf, 2004, 2007; Schwartzman, 2004). Studies based on the National System for Assessing Basic Education (SAEB) concluded that child labour in Brazil – specially that performed for long periods and outside the home – is responsible for a decreased school performance by up to 20% in relation to non-worker students (Kassouf, 2007). Cavalieri (2000), in a comparative study between a group of children who laboured and a group of non-labouring ones,

concluded that the inclusion of children into labour caused damage to their school performance.

Other studies have shown that the fatigue resulting from labour activities is presented as an element that hinders the schooling process, or even makes it unviable (Kassouf, 2007; Tavares, 2002). The exhaustive and sometimes long-term labouring journeys provoke distress in children and adolescents labourers, thus raising difficulties on going to school, following school activities, getting concentrated and, consequently, learning (Tavares, 2002). The inclusion itself into labour takes the time to be dedicated to the studies, which is reflected as low performance and school-year repetition.

The working needs allied to fatigue, concrete labour experiences and lack of time to dedicate to home studies, provoke noteworthy difficulties to the permanence at school and enjoyment by children and adolescents labourers. Accordingly, the early labour is a factor that brings implications for those who execute it, and relates to other long-lasting repercussions such as lack of qualification to the work and perpetuation of poverty (Emerson & Souza, 2002; Kassouf, 2007; Tabatabai, 2007).

Sampaio and Ruiz (1996)¹ identified damages of child labour upon psyche as regards the state of animus, where the lack of succession between positive and negative experiences would provoke the creation of a pessimist and uncritical adult. They still indicate that skills development is hindered by the repetitiveness of work, which causes certain “inflexibility” of psyche in its dynamics, and makes difficult the acquisition of new information.

These implications for children and adolescents, highlighted by a variety of studies, arise the question on how child labour can have long-term impacts in the lives of adults who lived through this experience in the past. Studies address the child labour implications for adults, especially with regard to income, health and education. Kassouf (2000) identifies, from analysis of data from PNAD (1995), high rates of adults who entered the job before 14 years of age, chiefly in rural areas. This author also identifies that, even controlling variables such as education level, region, age, work activity, among others, the age at which the individual began working had a significant effect on the income of the study participants, in the sense that, the younger they started working, the lower wages they got as adults. Emerson and Souza (2007) found similar results, recognizing that the fact of labouring early has a major negative impact on the income of adults, even controlling other intervening variables. They conclude that the effect of the child labour on

income is reduced among those who started labour later, between 12 and 14 years.

Emerson and Souza (2002), similarly to Kassouf (2000), identify a negative impact of child labour on income when early labourers become adults, especially coupled with low education. They conclude that the loss of income when children are early directed toward labour is more significant than the gains in income that one could have and the experience acquired in the early labour.

Although the intergenerational transmission of child labour is also set as one of the causes of early labour, Emerson and Souza (2002) recognize that this transmission is also one of the consequences of early labour, since parents who were early put into labour tend to do so more easily with their children as well.

Kassouf (2000) still ascertains that child labour also affects adults health, even when are provided scholarship, household infrastructure, sanitation, among others. Kassouf, McKee and Mossialos (2001), in a study on self-reported health in adults who were child labourers, found that those who started working before the age of 10 claimed to have poorer health. Therefore, according to these authors, adults who were early labourers reported more health problems compared to the general population.

Lee and Orazem (2007) analyzed the relationship between health and child labour in Brazilian adults from PNAD data (1998), using self-reported health data and information from the time when adults were children. These authors found that when a comparison is made directly between health and child labour, there is a higher incidence of illness, accident and disability among these adults.

According to the aforementioned authors, it may be perceived that child labour can bring several short- and long-term implications, especially negative ones, for the life of those who labour or laboured. In this respect, we shall ask: before this context, how did adults experience early labour? How do they realize the implications of this labour, and from that, their current lives? Hence, the Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology brings elements that help us reflect on these issues.

Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology: thinking on the child labour implications through experience and consciousness

Reflecting on the implications of the child labour also entails studying them in the nexus

between external and internal aspects of the human being, in how experience is experienced. Therefore, we adopt here as a tool the Vigotski's Historical-Cultural Psychology approach, which understands the psychological construction as a dialectical relationship where take part the meanings present in its background, and individual perceptions and feelings about reality in the construction of the meanings.

According to Vigotski, the human being is a product of the interaction of individuals with the social and cultural environment in which they operate. For him, the focus on the functioning of consciousness provided the study of human beings in their peculiarities, on the act of being human. Consciousness is understood as something that does not exist *a priori*, but that is constructed in the very process of constitution of the human being as such, which has materiality. For Vigotski, the latter is understood according to Marxist principles, which advocate that science is a product of human activity and not of pure reason or natural reality. Hence, the historical-cultural psychology is characterized by the study of psyche development according to a Marxist philosophical basis and from a historical-cultural perspective. In other words, it is assumed that there is no natural psychological development by itself, but the development requires a deliberate action to be reconstructed (Teixeira, 2005). Therefore, the consciousness exists only in the conscious human beings (Delari Jr., 2000), i.e., in the active humans, inserted in the social environment and that, in the meantime, suffer and produce deliberate actions concerning the world and their own behavior. For Bozhovich (1979/2004), who accomplished the study on children's development and personality, consciousness is a center into which new psychological structures are integrated, thus determining the definition of a personality as a superior psychological system. In this sense, it is emphasized that consciousness as a language-mediated social construction suffers from crises and revolutions throughout its development, so ever achieving new formations. Given this, based on Vigostki's studies (1933-1934/2006), the author emphasizes that crises can occur during children's development approximately in the first, third and seventh years of life, and also in the beginning and ending of adolescence.

This whole process of child development is permeated by a progressive complexity of the child's conscious activities, always toward new ways of relating

to the social environment, targeting its internalization and differentiation, in addition to the awareness of the world that constitutes self-consciousness, and culminates in a simultaneous recognition of oneself in the world. According to Vigotski, the change in child's behavior was explained by an internal change of the child's relationship with the environment. The crisis emerged from the conflict between the new capabilities of the child, in terms of self-consciousness and relationship with the social environment, and the non-acceptance or recognition from others about the new situation or position of the child, often marked by presenting various meanings about the same object (Toassa & Souza, 2010).

Nevertheless, the social media does not influence directly the subjects' development, but its influence is mediated by the meanings that subjects shape on such social environment under its relationships and conditions. Allied to that, are the affective aspects involved in the process – comprehension that is modified together with the child's social experiences. In this context, Vigotski makes use of the concept of experience.

Vigotski affirms that the experience shall be understood as the inner relationship of the human being with a moment of reality, and as intermediate between personality and environment (Vigotski, 1933- 1934/2006). The author discusses the concept of living experience as something that integrates all characteristics of the personality and environment toward the child. It is a dynamic unit of consciousness, unit that represents its base, differing from elements like attention (Vigotski, 1933-1934/2006), which encompasses “the ways how children perceive, interpret and react emotionally to an event” (Vigotski, 1994, p. 341). The experience, while dynamic unit of consciousness, involves the same characteristics of this; that is, the indivisible inter-relationship between cognitive and affective aspects. It is through experience that the environment influences the development in its diverse features.

However, not all personal features are implicated at once in a living experience; only some will play a decisive role in the way how situation is experienced. It means that in a given situation, different personal features might be implicated and, in another situation, other personal characteristics differing from the first context will be involved. Diverse events will produce diverse experiences, which implies in different impacts on the child's development. For Vigostki, the important was to know which features play a central role in each experienced situation. According to this author, the study on the influence of the environment upon

development must be relative, i. e., one must consider the level of development and consciousness of the child in a given moment, since at different development stages reality events will result in varied impacts. The study of development should also consider the child's experiences upon a given event, that is, which personal resources the child has at the moment to understand such event (Vigotski, 1994).

The experiences, as well as the consciousness, undergo a restructuring process at every development crisis. These changes would be the least conscious part of the personality – where it is apparent that, despite Vigotski's emphasis on consciousness, it also has a partial character, that is, we cannot be aware of all aspects of our behavior, even because otherwise it would be impossible to search for knowledge, for becoming human. There is a profound inner change in the way how the child relates to the environment, what determines his/her behavior (Vigotski, 1933-1934/2006).

The subjective world is constituted by the interaction of social conditions and by the inner elaboration of such environment (how it is experienced), what also highlights the development of the self, configured by the interaction of the diverse types of experiences that make the human being. Thus, the environment does not compose these directly, but this process happens under a mediated pathway, assuming the peculiarities of the inter-relationship among various experiences (Vigotski, 1933-1934/ 2006). In this respect, each consciousness and personality is unique and immutable; but, in each subject we may find regularities shaped according to his immersion into the social environment and in accordance with his personal background (Toassa & Souza, 2010).

These concepts may help understand the several life pathways that are outlined from the child labour experience, and that for many times even with similar social backgrounds take so diverging directions, which are the interest of the present study.

It is adopted herein the Historical-Cultural Psychology perspective as a tool that can assist in the understanding of the object under study, by considering the human beings as a result of hereditary set of experiences acquired in their individual course as well as in their historical and social environments. In addition, it is understood that the peculiarity imbricated in each experience results from the infinite possibilities of interaction between them. The category *consciousness* is approached by us as a general construct, but the consciousness unit of analysis is the experience, which is situational. The specific

awareness on early labour is the experience resulted from the labour itself.

The definition of experience is relevant in this study, since it helps understand the contradictions present in the discourses. Furthermore, it supports the meanings that participants give to child labour in their personal history, presenting the discursive elements acquired throughout their life trajectories based on the social groups to which they belonged. At the same time, it also gives visibility to the subjective elements constructed from this relationship with the environment, highlighting the active role of participants in the interpretation of discourses present in the social environment. Moreover, the category *experience* allows breaking the atomistic vision, in which the cognitive and affective aspects are integrated in their forms of expression through the language.

Methods

Participants and background

Five adults participated in this research, being 04 female and 01 male. They were child labourers whose children were enrolled or egressed to the Program for the Eradication of Child Labour – PETI. This study was conducted in the municipality of João Pessoa, PB, Brazil, covering two neighborhoods. The access to these participants occurred by means of the Reference Center for Social Support – CRAS, which follows up the families of children and adolescents enrolled in the PETI at the aforementioned neighborhoods.

In order to delimit the number of participants, we used the saturation criterion. It reflects the “knowledge formed by the researcher in the field, evidencing that he/she could understand the internal logic of the group or collectivity under study” (Minayo, 2008, pp. 197-198). That is, the saturation criterion applies to the researcher's knowledge, which can only be acquired from fieldwork; in addition, it assumes that the topics and aspects addressed to the reality under study were already sufficiently mapped and understood, considering repetitions of themes and meanings in the gathered speeches.

Techniques and instruments

This project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the 196/96 Resolution of the National Health Council. We had access to the participants' residencies, where were explained the research aims,

secrecy, and freedom to quit the participation at any moment. After signing the informed consent term, the interviews were initiated; interviewees' discourses were audio-recorded and posteriorly transcribed. We performed non-structured or open interviews with elements of the life story technique, approaching since childhood until adulthood, interpellating questions about work, school, health and income.

Data analysis

The analytical perspective adopted herein starts from the concept of discursive practices by Spink (2004). By discursive practices, the author understands "the language on action, i. e., the ways through which people produce meaning and behave before quotidian social relationships" (Spink, 2004, p. 45). The concept of discursive practices refers, therefore, to language as a social practice, since when one uses the language are produced criticisms, questions, justifications, i. e., the use of language results in a position face to the interlocutor. Although the discursive practices are not restricted to an analysis technique, but refer to a perspective of knowledge production, we used them as technique for enabling access to experiences through the language.

To this end, it was necessary to employ analytical techniques that would make visible the use made of the contents of discursive practices. In this sense, the data were obtained from the *trees of association of ideas* proposed by Spink (2004). The trees of association allow us to understand more clearly the concatenation of the participant's discourse, in a summarized way, what facilitates understanding the singularity of the production of meanings and the dialogism of the interview. This technique has been usually used for specific excerpts of the interviews, in which one seeks to understand the construction of the respondent's argument.

To establish the trees of association, we proceeded as follows: (a) the trees began with the question triggered by the researcher and ended with the conclusion of the respondent or even with the formulation of a new question. Then, we summarized the statements and used graphically simple lines to indicate the concatenation of the participant's discourse, and double lines to indicate interventions by the researcher. The amount of flows ranged for each participant according to the individual meanings constructed; (b) thereafter, the trees were described in ordinary text, emphasizing the participants' meanings. Then, we undertook the interpretation of these meanings and argumentation that emerged from the discourses.

Results and discussion

The participants were aged between 30 and 50 years, all had lived in two neighborhoods of the city, marked by poverty and lack of infra-structure. During childhood, they laboured on activities such as homework, agriculture, street fair work, and newspaper delivery. Among the subjects, one had never studied, three presented incomplete basic education, and one was attending a higher education course.

The organization of excerpts from the interviews as trees of associations of ideas revealed flows of discourses on child labour as being positive, disciplinarian and formative. Laura's² discourse has flows addressing child labour as a natural activity to the time of her childhood. That emerges as an experience that refers to the discourse on labour as being formative, marked therefore by a reference to the meanings of its social environment: the child labour – when performed for parents as in such a case – would be desirable, at the same time it results from lack of social equipment for education, restricted only to class rooms of the National Literacy Movement (MOBRAL).

Following the same line of relationship between child labour and school, Laura's discourse reveals that differently from what happened at her childhood, there has been currently prohibition of labour and possibility of getting into school to those who have conditions or not. On the other hand, her discourse was found to present a contradiction: nowadays, there would be a possibility of formation by different spaces other than the early labour, to which all would have access, something that was deprived of her. Then, the labour is experienced in a dubious way: it is formative, but justifiable only if there are no other educational spaces.

Natural!... it was natural [child labour] at that time, nowadays we have this, you know, it can't happen, but it was natural ... we didn't work for anyone, we worked for ourselves, for our home, for our parents... natural...it's better work than standing at home, doing nothing, what would I do like the PETI? Live inside home?...at that time, we had only the MOBRAL and who wanted to study... it was private, who had money to pay studied in a private school... (Laura, 46 years, female, began to work on agriculture at 6 years, currently: washerwoman)

Similarly, Marcos presented two flows on child labour: for him, it brought more responsibility and avoided getting involved with illicit activities. Here we have again the concept of child labour as formative and disciplinarian, a discourse circulating in the social environment to justify child and adolescent labour. Meanwhile, he identifies that the labour entailed losses

for education, and also diminished the time for playing. Thus, child labour is experienced in a dubious way for Marcos: it brought positive and negative aspects, and such paradox takes part of its meaning by him.

The participants' discourse flows have also brought the child labour experience as a fact interfering negatively with education. We can consider that for Helena, labour and study activities are tied together, and child labour resulted in lost years, with no access to education. It is experienced today as a factor that hinders her access to work and better living conditions, as indicated by authors like Kassouf (2000) and Emerson and Souza (2007).

According to Helena, education plays an important role in the personal construction: the lack of education implies "being no one", with no possibility of personal recognition.

[working during childhood] *it really hold me back, sir! I should be a doctor today! Now I'm the nobody!... that's it...to get a job at a good place we need good study...where's it? How am I gonna say I've got study if a hit only the second grade?* (Helena, 36 years, female, began to work on housework at 8 years, currently: maid)

Laura, in turn, presents a contradictory discourse flow on the relationship between child labour and scholarship. Whereas child labour is seen as positive and formative, Laura demonstrates in her discourse that she could study just for some months of the year, because she needed to work on the plantation. It is therefore understood that the school for Laura used to be experienced as a desirable place, well, it aroused interest. At the same time, her access was restricted by the need for working and non-valorization on the part of her father in following the studies. The consciousness of this implication of labour on education appears incipiently, mediated by the family social meanings concerning education, and it is justified by the poor access to the educational equipment.

I only studied till the second grade...because...I studied...half the first grade, half the second one, so I never studied a full year, one year like...I never studied one year...to begin and finish...never! We studied that period, when we got here....in this month we stopped so...latter, dad enrolled us again for four or five months at school...dad used to say: if you learn how to write and read, that's enough!...so, learning to read and write was ok... (Laura, 46 years, female, began to work at 6 years, currently: washerwoman)

Laura points out in her discourse something relevant to the discussion on child labour: the precariousness of the institutional equipment at the

time of her childhood, which is an element that even today has contributed to the entry of children into labour. This fact of reality makes her to experience the studies as something unachievable, outing of the question the possibility to have had access to more years of education; this was so far from her living conditions.

We perceive in the Clara's discourse flow that child labour for her is experienced as having negative implications on education, corroborating with what the literature has pointed out on the relationship between child labour and education (Haas, 2003; Tavares, 2002). This consciousness emerges, overall, when it is confronted to the reality in the search for job: her education degree is low before the requirements of the current world, what contributes for child labour to take a negative meaning.

Vera's consciousness about the relationship between child labour and education appears in two discourse flow ways: in the first flow, it is arisen a reflection on maternal history with regard to education and early labour, and on the impossibility of mother's schooling who similarly to Vera did not studied as well. Given such reflection on the family background of lack of schooling, Vera comes again upon her own personal situation of lacking education, what is repeated throughout her own history. This is corroborated by authors like Emerson and Souza (2002) and Tabatabai (2007) who identify an intergenerational reproduction of the child labour as one of its possible implications. In the second flow of her discourse, Vera identifies that child labour resulted in difficulty to study and brought about other implications for her current life: shame not to know how to sign her name and the discriminatory glance of other people because of that; impossibility of leaving home by herself; not to know how to read and write, therefore having limited her autonomy possibilities and becoming dependent on her daughters in relation to that.

my mother never thought of studyin', she didn't study either...she never studied. My grandmother never took her to school...her business was power-plant... in the mills we had to carry and cut sugar cane...my mother never studied...me neither; this tied my studies...today if I want to write my name down...sometimes I don't get ashamed 'cause...but sometimes I do...I won't say it...and when I leave home to a far place, I gotta take them [her children] with me, 'cause I dunno how to get a bus to come back home from a far location...but to go to other places I gotta go with them...otherwise, I'll get myself lost! Twenty years I'm living here, but if I try...wow! I'll be completely lost, I dunno...if I go down the street, I'll get lost...I dunno the street name, where I am, I don't! ...'cause who dunno how to read,

you know... (Vera, 45 years, female, began to work on housework at 6 years, currently: housekeeper)

In his discourse, Marcos brings the meaning that education contributes to economic ascension. For him, the tiredness of work and lack of access conditions to education are factors that culminated in school dropout, as confirmed by the findings of Kassouf (2007).

Of course, the education opens doors, right?!...But we started early...we were forced to either study or work!...This led us to...to give up, 'cause we worked during the day and studied during the night, so we got like tired...everything contributes, the school going on strike, far away from home...we had to go on foot, come back on foot, all this...contributed, contributed for us to give up... (Marcos, 45 years, male, began to work on newspaper delivery, currently: pastor of church)

From the participants' discourses it is also revealed that child labour hindered childhood enjoyment. For Helena's discourse flow, the early labour was negative because it brought implications like loss of childhood, and that represented for her losing a phase of her life, something that she was deprived of, stolen, and which has repercussions that come upon a reflection on the life itself: the consciousness emerging from such reflection is that her history resembles a nightmare, something to be denied and forgotten.

No...I didn't have...well...my childhood; I was restrained from many things guys used to do; my mother deprived me of the world...Just imagine a person at 10 years...well...inside anyone else's house, under the responsibility of someone else; the others painted the town red...No, it's not a life for anyone!... (Helena, 36 years, female, began to work on housework at 8 years, currently: maid)

In her discourse flow, Laura brings as element the loss of childhood; however, it is marked by the impossibility of having toys, of playing; the labour experience makes her to give value to everything and avoid waste. The child labour experiences and loss of childhood bring implications for her current life, especially in the relationship with her children: her efforts are targeted to teach them on giving value to what they have, since they now have what she did not have, and even so they do not valorize this.

because I had nothing when I was a child, I didn't have childhood, I had nothing...today they have, so I try to show it to them, you know? And they say: "mom, gimme this!" "We don't have it, son" "Oh, we've got nothing! Blah blah"...I say: you're complaining for no reason...Why they are complaining for no reason?...if they'd lived at the time I had...(Laura, 46 years, female, began to work at 6 years, currently: washerwoman)

For some participants, the child labour brought both positive and negative implications for health. We realize in the Helena's discourse flow that it is difficult to relate health and early labour, such as indicated by Kassouf (2000). Meanwhile, this relationship does not seem to be unlikely according to Helena – the uncertainty of the future invades the present time. *"concerning health issues...I'm good, thanks God! Up to now I don't suffer any consequence of the labour I did...but I dunno from now on"* (Helena, 36 years, female, began to work on housework at 8 years, currently: maid).

For Laura, the flow about the experience of the relationship between child labour and health is linked to the comparison with peers and valorization of goods: the labour sacrifice re-means its relation with life, reinforcing the understanding of labour as redemptive, disciplinarian, and the sacrifice as necessary to valuing life.

I think it was advantageous, because...I see many people younger than me whom live getting sick... you know, I don't know, I think it's advantage...it was good for me...and when we work like this we learn to give more value...I give value to...to everything...at all...that I have inside home, I give value...because I've got it all with sacrifice...labour too... (Laura, 46 years, female, began to work on agriculture at 6 years, currently: washerwoman)

For Clara, the discourse flow on child labour reveals it is experienced as bringing physical damages, what corroborates with the findings of Kassouf (2007) on the child labour implications for health. At the same time, she identifies the financial need as a factor contributing to the entry into labour.

I think it was disadvantageous...because I feel like... very tired, full of problems, I've got the spine deviated, feel very tired, really...since I got the job, I feel really tired...intense legs and body pain, too young, but full of pain from hard work...I began very early, because I really had to work, until now... (Clara, 31 years, female, began to work on street fair at 9 years, currently: housekeeper)

Vera, in turn, identifies in her discourse a child labour implication for health: bone pain due to water transportation during housekeeping; sight problems due to the smoke of the wood stove; pain; and she also refers to the physician's speech, who acts as an authority that confirms her experiences of physical suffering owing to the labour. She takes her mother's history over to build the consciousness of her own history: her mother has the same health problems that she, also owing to the labour. We conclude that such personal labour background, nowadays, makes her to

be a woman with poor health, unable to work. This confirms what authors like Kassouf (2007) claim about the relationship between child labour and health upon adults as they report greater health problems than the general population.

because...this is my health...now and then my leg pops...I've got bad legs...and more: sight problem... wood burning fire, all that smoke...the doctor said that was the reason...there was a time when I had swollen eyes...I have a backache...the doctor says that was the reason...bone pain have I...rheumatism...so, I haven't health left...I carried a water gallon...who is the woman that stands carrying two gallons, one upon one side and other on the other side?...I had to do it...we couldn't ran out of water...mainly I didn't let her [mother] to do these things, 'cause she had bad health...even today she has problems of rheumatism, bone pain, 'cause of the work, you know...I think that working on that kind of service, carrying heavy things...well, my health is it... (Vera, 45 years, female, began to work on housework at 6 years, currently: housekeeper)

It is also emerged from participants' discourse that child labour brought implications for their current professional lives, especially related to lack of or low education. For Helena, labour and studies are activities tied together, and child labour resulted in lost years for training, experienced today as factors that make difficult her access to work and better living conditions, as indicated by authors like Kassouf (2000) and Emerson and Souza (2007).

What do I have now? These were too many years in vain. No study, no job, living in a slum, that's what I've got...I won't give this future to my children, no way! If they can study, they'll keep doin' (Helena, 36 years, female, began to work on housework at 8 years, currently: housekeeper)

Clara reaffirms the meaning on child labour as being negative, both in terms of education and current professional life; the latter was the main aspect coming from her discourse. The labour appears as impeditive, limiting her actual living possibilities and professional improvement: *"I had a better job, it was worthier and could provide us with more things, more than I could afford to my children, you know? Today I can't, I don't have study or job"* (Clara, 31 years, female, began to work on street fair at 9 years, currently: houseweekper).

Once again, Vera expresses in her discourse that study is the element that would provide herself and the others with better living conditions: *"if I had education, I think I wouldn't live in a situation like this...I wouldn't live...I'd win the bread for myself and for those that needed"* (Vera, 45 years, female,

began to work on housework at 6 years, currently: housekeeper).

We can observe, through the participants' discourses, that child labour brings various kinds of implications for each one. In the meantime, however, there are irregularities appearing in the discourses.

The experience of labour in resulting in negative implications for education appears in the discourses by Helena, Clara, Vera and Marcos, each one with peculiarities. Although the same implication has emerged from the discourse, it is not experienced in the same way: the way how each participant elaborated the social conditions in which he/she operates results from the interaction of the different situations experienced (Vigotski, 1933-1934/2006): the family discourse, the suffering experiences at labour, the lack of schools, among others. All those contexts have built each one of them, both in their regularities and uniqueness. For some participants, this affective aspect appears as contradictory: while labour emerges from the discourses as formative and even desirable, it also causes suffering. For others, it assumes a negative character, which implies losses in the constitution as a person and a negative view of themselves due to their low education.

Helena and Laura still bring in their discourses the loss of childhood as implication, in addition to the living time deprived of them. They see it as a life stage with no way back. This consciousness comes mostly from the current living experience with their children, but it is unfolded in different ways for these two participants. We realize that the reality of loss of childhood takes diverse experiences and impacted differently the participants (Vigotski, 1994). For both, their living experience considers the social relationships as parameters, but with distinct elements: for Helena, the experience of losing childhood comes from the comparison of her life with that of the children she lived with, when she was also a child. For Laura, such experience emerges in the comparison with her children's childhood, when she was already an adult. The foremost feature of the situation according to Helena is the suffering of the deprivation of childhood experience, whereas to Laura it is the valorization and formation occasioned by such suffering.

With respect to health implications, both Laura and Mark understand it as bringing positive implications, if referring to formation that labour brought them. Helena, meanwhile, brings this relationship as uncertain; feels no implications today, but there is no certainty that this will not happen in the future. As for Clara and Vera, child labour had negative implications for health, and that consciousness comes

from pain, fatigue. Vera also brings the doctor's speech to confirm her impressions. It is noticed that child labour implications for health are experienced according to the meanings flowing in the social environment, and also with the experiences of suffering at labour and suffering entered in the body, i.e., the experiences are marked by a cognitive aspect. This relationship, which is dialectical and contradictory, defines the experiences of the participants that will be part of their psychic construction.

In the participants' discourse, another recurrent child labour implication is the difficulty in obtaining employment that could give them a better life, especially due to the low education. This experience, mediated by the labour and own current life situation, acquires different meanings for each participant, and brings further implications for their own vision of labour and living possibilities today, being constituents of their present selves, and also of the professional projects that they envision for themselves.

Concluding remarks

Contradictory experiences emerged with regard to child labour, but these were coexisting: the labour was not good because it deprived of playing, hindered the studies, and exposed to risks. At the same time, there is the meaning that the experiences promoted acquisition of responsibility and supplied the family needs at that moment. The interviews showed that the meanings about labour are diverse, linked to discourses present in the participants' social environment, to living conditions in which they were maintained, and to the experiences at labour. In an attempt to form the personal meaning, these factors interacted in various ways, sometimes giving the child labour a personal positive meaning, sometimes negative, sometimes contradictory, but equally producer of various social practices. This diversity helps to understand the different ways by which these adults deal with child labour today.

Thus, we observed that the child labour brought these adults implications, particularly in terms of schooling and work, which contributed to the configuration of their current living conditions. This study raised several issues whose investigation is beyond the scope of this work: (i) that factors in the life histories of these participants caused changes upon future perspectives before the labour; because, despite identifying child labour implications for adulthood, they put their children early into labour activities; (ii) that deprivation of playing can bring damages to the child labourers, among others.

Notes

- 1 Sampaio, J. J. C. & Ruiz, E. M. (1996). *Trabalho Precoce e Psiquismo Infantil*. [s.l.]: [s.n.].
- 2 The name of the participants is fictitious in order to preserve confidentiality.

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