

HOW TO PLAN, HANDLE, ANALYSE AND INTERPRET NARRATIVES, ACCORDING TO THE QUALITATIVE-UNDERSTANDING APPROACH?

COMO SE PLANIFICAM, TRATAM, ANALISAM E INTERPRETAM NARRATIVAS, SEGUNDO A ABORDAGEM COMPREENSIVA-QUALITATIVA?

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Abstract. This paper derives from our PhD research in Sociology on socio-identitarian requalification processes (processos de requalificação sócio-identitária, henceforth PRSI) of Portuguese women who migrated to the Basque Country (San Sebastian area). To this end, we co-composed 31 exemplary case accounts, following the question: "What are the logics of action and what identitarian strategies are adopted by women who, facing the social experience of disqualification, engage in their 'socio-identitarian requalification'?" We focus and organize this paper on the exposition of the main procedures and specific forms of the qualitative analysis, as we applied it at the 'the processes of socio-identitarian requalification (PRSI) - how we called, since 2008, the analytical-understanding model of social trajectories of requalification from poverty conditions. (cf. Toscano 2015, 2017, 2018). So, in this paper, we explain in depth how we organize the 4 methodological acts which compose this 'analytical-understanding model processes of socio-identitarian requalification' that we have been developing since 2008 in our analysis of trajectories for social change ('leaving' so called poverty conditions). Therefore, after a brief mention of the Tool-Problemativity, which constitutes the base for our research, in point 1.1 (1st act: theoretical-conceptual-epistemological roots), we focus on specific procedures, such as: - point 2: justifying the co-composition of accounts: operationalizing principles, procedures and criteria for the selection of exemplary cases and composition of narratives (2nd act, steps 2-3); - point 3: planning and co-composing the biographical process (2nd act, Steps 4a-4b; 6 stages); - point 4 (3rd act), 1st level of theorization: writing down speech through transcription-translation (step 5; stages 7-8) and transposition-rearrangement (analysis units, operation mode, discursive levels, account axes, rules/kinds of annotation - steps 6-7, stages 9-12); - point 5 (4th act), 2nd level of theorization: interpretation and theorizing composition in emergence (steps 8-9, stages 13-14, 7 operations); and finally, point 6, brief conclusions.

Keywords: life accounts/biographical approach; method of writing as analytical praxis; struggle against poverty; analytical-understanding model 'processes of socio-identitarian requalification'.

Resumo. O presente texto decorre da nossa pesquisa de doutoramento em sociologia sobre processos de requalificação sócio-identitária (futuramente abreviado por prsi) de mulheres portuguesas migrantes no País Basco (zona de San Sebastian). Para tal, co-construímos 31 relatos de casos exemplares, seguindo a pergunta: «Que lógicas de ação e tipos de estratégias identitárias constroem as mulheres que, face à experiência social da desqualificação, se implicam na sua 'requalificação sócio-identitária?» (cf. Toscano [2015, 2017, 2018]). De forma mais aprofundada, o que se explicita no presente texto são os 4 actos metodológicos deste 'modelo analítico-compreensivo processos de requalificação sócio-identitária' que vimos desenvolvendo, desde 2008, na análise de trajetórias de mudança social ('saída' de condições ditas de pobreza). Assim, após uma breve menção da Problemática-Utensílio onde se enraizou a pesquisa no ponto 1.1 (1.º acto: raízes teórico-conceituais-epistemológicas), neste artigo foçamo-nos em procedimentos metodológicos específicos, tais como: - ponto 2: fundamentar a co-construção de relatos: operacionalizar princípios, procedimentos e critérios para seleccionar casos exemplares e construir narrativas (2.º acto, passos 2-3); - ponto 3: planificar e co-construir o processo biográfico (2.º acto, Passos 4a-4b; 6 etapas); - ponto 4 (3.º acto), 1.º nível de teorização: escrever a oralidade pelas operações de transcrição-tradução (passo 5; etapas 7.^a-8.^a) e transposição-rearranjo (unidades de análise, modo de operar, níveis discursivos, eixos do relato, regras/tipos de anotações - passos 6-7, etapas 9.^a-12.^a); - ponto 5 (4.º acto), 2.º nível de teorização: interpretação e construção teorizante em emergência (passos 8-9, etapas 13.^a-14.^a, 7 operações); e, enfim, ponto 6: breves conclusões.

Palavras chave: relatos de vida/abordagem biográfica; método da escrita como praxis analítica; luta contra a pobreza; modelo analítico-compreensivo 'processos de requalificação sócio-identitária'.

INTRODUCTION

The present paper clarifies the procedures of our "*analytical-understanding model processes of socio-identitarian requalification (prsi)*", in development since 2008, in order to analyse trajectories, aiming to contribute to a positive sociological approach on disqualification processes - in our short words, a "sociology of hope" - for our motive is to understand how one exits these social conditions. This line of work focuses on the answer to the following guiding question: *How to 'turn things around'?*, with special emphasis on so-called poverty conditions (although some adaptation has been made to accommodate other experiences, such as mourning).

The "*prsi-model*" places itself between the analysis in emergence of social practices and the experience-application of the emerging theory, given the fact that, via a biographical approach, one aims *i*) to co-

compose information which generates *life accounts*¹ of socio-identitarian reconstruction; and *ii*) to build model interpretative grids to reinforce other co-composition processes of socio-identitarian change (Toscano 2015a, 2015b, 2017). Although the underlying fundamentals of the "*prsi model*" do not pertain to this paper, we must underline that the epistemology of understanding and of the *emergent paradigm* support their guide-notions: that of social-reflexive actor or significant narrator (not "database-actor") and that of interviewer-instrument.

This paper aims to provide access to the stages and concrete procedures of the (4) methodological acts of the *prsi-model*, in five points: to establish a methodological process of co-composition of accounts, encompassing the 1st act - theoretical-conceptual roots and epistemological implications (point 1) – as well as the 2nd act - operationalization of those principles to compose narratives and selection of *exemplary cases* (point 2); to plan and co-compose a biographical process, also belonging to act 2 (point 3); in point 4, to write down what was orally said (act 3); in act 4, to theorize (point 5); and point 6, a few conclusions.

THEORETICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR A BIOGRAPHICAL PROCESS: FROM THE 1ST TO THE 2ND METHODOLOGICAL ACT

Justifying a process of understanding-qualitative methodology for the co-composition of accounts demands the clarification of the Universe of Analysis (1st methodological act, Step 1), as to the theoretical-conceptual roots, the perspective of research and the corresponding epistemological implications. We built a theoretical tool-problematics (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2003), open to analysis in emergence as a basis for the scientific interpretation (not a theoretical positivist frame, for replication or explanation). Such a tool-problematics generates a complex articulation between sociological contents, identity and poverty problematics, in the relationship with which we were able to perform (2nd act) quite detailed tasks, such as: Step 2 - delimitation of type and biographical criteria; Step 3 - reminder-script: justifying the process of co-composition of accounts. Let's dissect the matter.

CLARIFYING THE UNIVERSE OF ANALYSIS (1ST METHODOLOGICAL ACT, STEP 1) THEORETICAL-CONCEPTUAL-EPISTEMOLOGICAL ROOTS)

This paper derives from our PhD research in Sociology on socio-identitarian requalification processes (processos de requalificação socio-identitária, henceforth PRSI) of Portuguese women who migrated to the Basque Country (San Sebastian area). To this end, we co-composed 31 exemplary case accounts, following the question: "What are the logics of action and what identitarian strategies are adopted by women who, facing the social experience of disqualification, engage in their 'socio-identitarian requalification'?"

The 31 women have been chosen by specialists of social intervention on poverty, whom we asked to identify *exemplary cases* of successful trajectories. Our objective was to obtain different narratives of different social trajectories of fighting poverty, in order to identify components of those trajectories. In other words, we wanted to identify and to bring to light affinities through the different experiences related. Thus, we expected to reveal categories that could help to understand how social identities are constructed by the quotidian-daily social praxis and social relations – what we summarize as the 7 core components of PRSI.

By adopting the discussion about 'content analysis' grounds – in short: on the one hand, dividing narratives in sequences, thematics or other various criteria; on the other hand, adopting the categorization as an organizing activity more than a grounded methodological action – we adopted the qualitative and interpretative approach that works with each narrative as a co-composition process, and narrators are reflexive and intersubjective subjects.

So, the act of interpretation consisted of the analytical process of *emerging categories*, in relation with the previous/preparatory 'hypothetical conditions-tool-criteria' and 'guide-factors-criteria' – which we present in this paper. Do remark that these *previous criteria* derived from the conceptual discussion of the research and concerned the 3 big discussions we needed to adopt, in order to construct *the theoretical problematization* of our research: *the poverty studies*, *the sociology of the social action*, and *the problematics of social identities*.

The *theoretical discussion* focused the research on PRSI factors and stages, their respective logics of action and identitarian reactions, considering 3 major dimensions: material, symbolic and relational; *the social-identity theories*, specifically the concepts of the identitarian capitals, *strategies* and *tactics*².

¹ Cf. Bourdieu (1980b) and (1993); Poirier & Raybaut (1995); Santamarina & Marinas (1994); Guth (1994).

² See Lipiansky & Vasquez (1990). Camilleri et. al. (1990). Taboada-Leonetti & Aubert (1990).

The design of our research was also founded on what we identify as the 3 *central postulates* of this model's tool-problematics:

Postulate I: PRSI are social experiences bound by time and circumstances to contexts and situations [14]; the subjective reading of exemplary paths is the scale and the type of observation which are adequate to capture that requalification of actors into social subjects, adopting Alain Touraine's definition of subject.

Postulate II: seven dichotomic vectors³ — emerging from modernity and based on the analysis of historical studies about poverty in Portugal —, shape the vision of poor people as “social fatality and usefulness”⁴; such a vision has legitimated moralist, miserabilistic and populist uses, naturalizing poverty.

Postulate III: to know sociologically is to study how social actors situate and re-contextualize themselves (there are no “social idiots”), and to integrate what we understand to be the three analytical axes of the sociology of identities⁵, i.e.:

- a) to oppose prescribed/assumed identities;
- b) to oppose logics, actors' resources/social determinisms; and
- c) to re-situate identities as objective and inter-subjective negotiations in spaces-times of action.

“A Sociology of Identities is it possible?” asked Suzie Guth (1994) 20 years ago. Today, with this paper, we aim to contribute to the “sociology of hope”, by analysing the socio-identitarian requalification processes - “How does one leave poverty?”.

In an approach of constructive criticism about traditional studies on “poverty”, let us remark what we resume as the 7 core components of the PRSI.⁶

THE 7 CORE COMPONENTS OF PRSI

The construction of the “PRSI model” highlights, as components of this personal experience, the initial social and integration conditions of social actors; and, in articulation with these more structural and lasting conditions, the personally experienced situations of their identitarian trajectory.

A second component is constituted by the striking moments that make up all PRSI and which follow and differentiate each other in the sequence and as a result of factors: factors of change between moments.

We believe the third component to be that those same moments are organized, internally, into stages, which are in turn structured and made possible by disparate reaction phases. The change of stage depends on that reaction's orientation and identitarian strength.

Reaction stages and phases take root and unravel through a complex game which the actor manages, mobilizing their identitarian strategies and their identitarian tactics and aims. We were able to observe that strategies are co-composed along the trajectory and in a non-linear way, not untouchable or definitive. They are, therefore, not available in actors' lives as initial data, being instead tryouts and answers to their life goals and the ways to achieve them.

Furthermore, strategies, like identitarian aims and tactics, are also not always consciously expressed or lived by actors — which guides our distinction between actors and subjects: in fact, with the “PRSI model”, we realized that a subject's construction in PRSI includes their concrete and gradual construction into inter-subjective-consciousness-actor (cf. first conclusion).

A fifth component of PRSI is constituted by the logics of action which underlie all these identitarian negotiation processes. The five core logics of action according to Dubet [22] — integration, interaction, knowledge, communication, and also utility and negotiation — allowed interpretation and analysis of the exemplary paths.

3 I.e.: social attributes and designations of material/spiritual, dignified/undignified, socialized/innate, individual/collective poverty; subjective/objective factors; socio(ethno)centrism and androcentrism.

4 Studies from the end of the Middle Ages to the 70's, published until the 90's. Cf. our analyses (1992) and (1995a).

5 Cf. contributions, significant for us, by Pierre Bourdieu (1993) and (1972); and Claude Dubar (2006) and (1991).

6 This is one of the exemplary cases which integrated our PhD research - Toscano (2015b) and (2008) - reason for which time contextualizations and dates report to that 2008 context.

As to the sixth component, we categorized ten changed or emergent socio-identitarian territories in the PRSI from our research. That is: socio-identitarian requalification is not circumscribed to economic-material, habitational, schooling and labour-professional territories.

All the cases we analysed show that: requalification mobilizes subjects in their entirety and complexity, encompassing, besides the above mentioned territories, socio-identitarian territories; ethnic-cultural, socio-spatial territories; the territory of sociabilities (which unfolds into affective-relational and psychological-emotional territories); symbolic-representational and also societal and lifestyle territories (Toscano (2015b): 145-312).

In fact, in the 5 exemplary cases we analysed – alongside the unquestionable and realistic mark of material and professional territories in all those paths – we highlight the strong and real power of other socio-identitarian territories: symbolic-representational territories (Sara's and Mafalda's PRSIs); and affective-emotional territories, in other two cases - Esmeralda (Toscano (2015b): 27) and Paloma (Toscano. 2015b).

Last, capital-resources constitute the seventh component of PRSI. From our research we drew four inferences with respect to this issue:

1. – PRSI develop and handle 4 great types of cardinal capital-resources (our designation), namely:
 - type a – situational capital-resources;
 - type b – contextual and societal capital-resources;
 - type c – dispositional capital-resources; and
 - type d – subjectivation capital-resources;
2. – In PRSI, situational, as well as contextual and societal capital-resources (types a and b), by themselves, are powerless or sterile for social requalification.
3. – For the PRSI to develop, they demand a co-mobilization of other resources and their relational and inter-subjective negotiation.
4. – The PRSI in the exemplary cases we researched emphasised the importance of dispositional capital-resources (type c), always connected to social subjectivation capital-resources (type d).

In fact, on the one hand, by the sociological analysis that emerges from exemplary cases of women in PRSI, we confirm the strong power of imposition of feminine and masculine stereotypes, due to the inheritance and social expectations of attributes and identity roles for the woman defined by or circumscribed to a domestic situation. The imagery of women sketched by all narrators displays the clear lingering of androcentric attributes, both by reproduction; or by ennoblement; or yet by symmetrical inversion, which results in the same androcentric logic, because the founding vision of disqualifying dichotomies is not overcome (Toscano (2015b): 27).

However, the same “PRSI model” teaches us that the social knowledge and logics of action (common and praxic categories) of the women-subject analysed combine traditional stereotypes with paradoxical social expectations: both those of reproduction of and adequateness to stereotypical patterns; those of predominance over the latter; and also those of negotiation (between adequateness and change).

In fact, we realized that the traditional stereotype does not coincide with the diversity of ways of life of women in this social standing: neither when it is socially adequate (Paloma, Amélia); nor when it projects itself in different feminine ways of being, as illustrated by the cases analysed:

- i) by mono-motherhood — 3 of the 5 cases studied — and by different ways of, mostly, reorganizing family dynamics and the social standing of woman-mother and woman-wife — in all of the cases; (Toscano (2015b).
- ii) by the 5 profiles-in-action witnessed, categorized and analysed; (Toscano (2015b).
- iii) by the personal handling of stereotypes by these women: both in Sara's case: her manipulation of the supposed feminine superiority, exerted through subterranean powers (seduction and faith); and in the other cases studied: Esmeralda's idyllic love (Toscano (2015b): 173-188); Mafalda's deconstruction of the woman-flowerpot (her word for woman-object) and a lingering notion of a feminine 6th sense (Toscano (2015b): 189-235); Paloma's recycling of the father figure, among so many more examples (Toscano (2015b): 236-291); and Amélia's total regret for following an antagonistic path to her mother's expectations (Toscano (2015b): 292-309).

PRSI processes are unstable, unpredictable and non-linear, and that unpredictability and instability are materialized in the various socio-identitarian territories we presented above, which we were able to analyse and divide into three major types:

- i) socio-identitarian territories yielded by disqualification factors: “the fall”;
- ii) socio-identitarian territories susceptible or in the process of requalification; or
- iii) requalified socio-identitarian territories: “the exit”.

We also learned that PRSI are non-coincident processes, which may even generate ruptures at various levels of their configuration.

Having knowledge of the mismatch that exists, in the fight against poverty, between the planning of technical work and change processes, recording its evidence is a necessity. Because, in our opinion, sociological analysis has the responsibility to understand socially constructed inequalities and, consequently, to contribute to the deconstruction of such socially mutable inequalities.

That's why the exposition of the main procedures and specific forms of the qualitative analysis - as we applied them to the ‘the processes of socio-identitarian requalification (PRSI) – is a contribute to sociology and to changes in society. That is why the content of the next parts focus on the exposition of those main procedures.

METHODOLOGY: OPERATIONALIZING THEORETICAL BASES FOR A SPECIFIC BIOGRAPHICAL PROCESS

Delimitation of type and biographical criteria: 2nd methodological act, Step 2

Step 2 of this methodology encompasses choices and constructions at great levels: delimitation of *cases*; biographical type to be adopted; scope of the narratives to be built; and privileged discursive kinds. Therefore:

- i) socio-geographical delimitation-selection of *exemplary cases*: Portuguese women (of Portuguese origin or descent) who are immigrant in the region of San Sebastián (Basque Autonomous Province), and who are recognized as protagonists in social requalification processes by the professionals involved in their "fight against poverty" (1980's-1990's). Such a delimitation guaranteed the homogeneity of contextual factors, as well as the limitation of the *cases* to the same social-political environment, namely in relation to measures and responses and, specifically, to the integration minimum income already put into practice in that region, at the time of our field work (unlike what was happening in Portugal).
- ii) *biographical type*: from the several kind of biographies (psycho-biographies, ethno-biographies, mixed or intermediate kinds), the research objectives demanded that the description, as well as the argumentative and emotional-affective evaluation be captured, corresponding to 3 time axes of the narrated social trajectories: *I. Social Past Scenery*: filtered by the social memory of the subject-women, this scenery covers descriptions, evaluations and feelings from the social experience of mobility (lateral and vertical)/social change, and from the logics of action, linked to "prsi". *II. Social Present Scenery*: also built with the input from past memories, it unfolds around comparisons and social categorizations (generation and gender related) leading to a self-classification of identitarian transactions of these women's "prsi". *III. Social Future Scenery*: having oriented their *accounts* to the Social Past and Present, this scenery is detected by re-evaluative and projective expressions.
- iii) *scope* or *scenery-context* of the narratives to be built: the communicative relationship would have to focus on the co-composition of model *life accounts* limited to the social experience, marking *Significant Striking Moments (MM)*, for women in "prsi", their attitudes and reactions;
- iv) types of *discursive expression* to be fostered, always in relation to the *tool-problematics*:

1. *re-evaluative expression*: discursive quality characterized by: a) the *re-evaluation of individual components of trajectories* - both of social *implication* (inducing social practices) and *definition* (inducing categorization); b) the *re-evaluation of the social components of trajectories* - family and social environment of origin; social representations, categories, practices and measures; c) the *re-evaluation of the MM of "prsi"*, specifically: chronology; intervenients; impacts; and forms of reaction - *logics; strategies-aims and tactics; capital-resources*.

2. *projective expression*: here we refer discourses that, beyond being descriptive narrations, open up to *confidence-confession* and the communication of expectations, dreams-projects and ideal utopian categories (Future and Imaginary).

These 2 types have not excluded expressions likely to be compared: the diversity and singularity of accounts should cover transversal contents, a guarantee of the theorizing analysis of the corpus.

Justifying the process of co-composition of accounts - 2nd methodological act, *Step 3*

Step 3 of the "*prsi-model*" encompasses the delimitation of methodological principles and criteria (factors and conditions), both for the selection of *exemplary cases* and for the delimitation of conversational groups (open to emerging elements), as well as for the inherent elaboration of the *Reminder-script*.

Deep down, with the help of criteria with the exploratory status of a *guiding-tool*⁷, we listed the conceptual utensils which could become criteria-*factors* and criteria-*conditions* for the selection and analysis of *exemplary cases* and their discourses on *prsi*.

We also signalized the anchor criterion for the research: the *condition* of social recognition of the experience of social disqualification and requalification of women, to signal possible interviewees (*transversal criterion*).

Another *five guiding-criteria-factors* of "*prsi-experiences*" have been considered pertinent: economic-material; relational and affective-emotional; symbolic-cultural and of power; and dispositional.

And as *cases* started being signalized, we proposed yet another 5 hypothetical experiences, to which we attributed the status of 5 *tool criteria-conditions*: *i*) mono-motherhood; *ii*) death of significant affective persons; *iii*) social affirmation by power(s): leadership; *iv*) experience of abuse; and *v*) physiological or motor difference ("handicaps").

By joining all the above criteria, we identified 9 great *Conversational Nuclei*: A. Actors, Socialization and «social destiny»; B. Social Mobility; C. PRSI; D. Identitarian Update; E. Objective Transactions; F. Action Logics; G. Self-Classification and Social Comparison; H. Woman: Social Subject and Identitarian Trajectories; I. Imaginary, Dreams, Projects, Utopia and Reflexiveness.

After decomposing these *nuclei* in *great analysis dimensions* and item-indicators, we built the *Reminder-script*⁸ around *conversational "clusters"*. Note that the *Script* was never shown to interviewees, and we reject the interviewer-interviewee relationship as a «*policing act*»; however, it was object of the interviewer's attention prior to every interviewing session.

After *justifying* the process of co-composition of accounts, we started their *planning*.

METHODOLOGY: PLANNING AND CO-COMPOSING THE BIOGRAPHICAL PROCESS - STILL IN THE 2ND METHODOLOGICAL ACT (STEPS 4)

Planning the biographical process occurred in *Step 4a* (from the 1st to the 5th Stages), and *operationalization* of the biographical accounts occurred in *Step 4b* (6th Stage).

The 5 Planning Stages of the biographical process were: 1st - delimiting the 13 mediating entities for the selection of cases;⁹ 2nd - presenting the researcher to the responsible persons from those mediating entities; 3rd - identifying facilitator and mediator technicians; 4th - previous selection of *cases* by the technicians; 5th - triangulating the mediation according to two forms (direct and indirect).

The presentation of the researcher and of the methodological requirements for the interview consisted of a significant *moment zero* of the *communicational contract*, which consisted of mentioning it 6 most significant themes: *i*) guarantee of anonymity through the choice of an alias by the interviewee; *ii*) overall explanation of the issue and of the dynamics of the interview; *iii*) conditions of the place where the interview was to be held: chosen by the interviewee; quiet and without interference from third parties; *iv*) justification for the audio recording of the interviews; *v*) prediction of a possible repetition of sessions; *vi*) commitment to deliver all interview recordings (done in May 1998).

Among 46 women who were signalized, we restricted the *biographical process* to 31 *model social-cases* of women chosen by the methodological requirements. We could, at last, move on to the co-composition of accounts (*Step 4b, 6th stage*), by putting active listening and a phenomenological examination into practice, in order to guarantee the above mentioned discursive qualities.

⁷ Terminology aimed to be coherent with the adopted concept of *Tool-problematics*.

⁸ Cf. Toscano (2008). Appendices to Chapter Two - Appendix 3, pp. 3-7 in https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/bitstream/10071/2833/2/Volu-me_II.pdf

⁹ *Mediating entity*: social intervention institution (public or private) that *signalized*, among their *clients* (immigrants in the Basque Country of Portuguese origin or descent), *exemplary cases* for us to interview.

METHODOLOGY: WRITING DOWN SPEECH, 3RD METHODOLOGICAL ACT

In *Method of Writing as Analytical Praxis - MEPA* (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003): 101 ff.) adopted for the present research, 3 aspects are highlighted in relation to writing down speech: 1st, *Transcription-translation* of the audio recorded interviews; 2nd, *Transposition-communicational rearrangement*; and 3rd, which we consider already belongs to the 4th methodological act, *Reconstitution-narration*.

This 3rd act of Analytical and Interpretative Description is to be specified in *Steps* 5-7.

Transcription-translation. (*Step* 5, 7th stage) This 1st written version of speech consisted of two procedures:

Actual *Transcription* of the Interviews: from audio tape to computer. All *spoken content* of the 31 interviews conducted was transcribed. As to the *informative content*, we performed a cautious *double translation* work: 1) linguistic understanding, because some of the interviewees spoke Spanish (thus the interview was linguistically examined by a specialist) and also because others used (Portuguese and Spanish) expressions with clearly contextual meanings; 2) recording of the signs of affective, expressive and relational communication: rhythms, pauses, hesitations and silences, tones of voice, intonations and omissions from speech, such as gestures, signals, expressions, positions and reactions, were also transcribed.

1st reading of the texts resulting from translation-transcription, as well as 1st annotations and procedures leading to *thematization*, tasks guided by the *Script* and *emerging* elements. These two operations allowed us to produce the *1st written text* for every interview.

Transposition-rearrangement. 2nd aspect of writing down speech, already belonging to *Step* 6 (8th stage): Definition of analysis units (of context and recording); of core discursive levels for the structural analysis: functions, actions and argument; of the two *axes of each account* (syntagmatic and paradigmatic); of elementary operations of disjunction-opposition and conjunction-relation; and of *listing-annotation rules* for the *corpus* and procedures leading to *thematization*.

This demanding task, already part of *Step* 6, consisted of the beginning of the analytical procedure around the 1st written texts.

HOW THOROUGH THE HANDLING OF NARRATIVES IS: ANALYSIS UNITS, OPERATION MODES, DISCURSIVE LEVELS, REPORT AXES, AS WELL AS RULES AND ANNOTATION KINDS

We do not agree with cut-out-exploration of interviews, nor did we consider categorization as «*analysis of the demonstrative kinds*» (Demazière & Dubar (1997): 128), because by the deep exploration and the kind of *material* "cut-outs" - instead of its decomposition - «*L'entretien est passé dans une moulinette et en ressort en morceaux ventilés dans une multitude de rubriques.*» Demazière & Dubar (1997): 18).

In that approach, Demazière & Dubar articulate the construction work of structural homologies - the «*structuration of the semantic universe*» of interview discourses - with the discovery of the social logics of those same discourses Demazière & Dubar (1997): pp. 134 ff.).

And what about the operation mode? The structural codification could not follow: the adopted *MEPA* enabled the thematic and categorial *analyses, in emergence*, as well as the choice of *analysis units*. Therefore, in the present research the following has been taken into consideration:

- i) recording units, from a set of 6 kinds - word, theme, object or referent, character, occurrence and document (Bardin (1991): pp. 104 ff.).
- ii) 3 discursive levels, central for the Structural Analysis: functions, actions and arguments (Demazière & Dubar (1997): pp. 113 ff.); and
- iii) elementary opposition-disjunction and relation-conjunction operations (Demazière & Dubar (1997): pp. 128 ff., pp. 137 ff.); both, however, were understood as relation modes - *relation by conjunction* and *relation by opposition* - and simultaneously we included the *relation by discursive paradox*, which emerged during the analysis of the material.

As to the *3 discursive levels* and the two *axes of every account*, we heeded the following: a) syntagmatic axis: «*What the statement means*», significant «*episodes*»; and account «*functions*»; b) paradigmatic axis: «*actuators*» or «*character systems*»; and «*what is said about every actuator*» in order to characterize «*perspectives in respect to actions*» (Demazière & Dubar (1997): pp.113 ff.), according to three central themes: Trajectory MM for every rapporteur, respective Phases and Stages.

Therefore, the following «interveniements» were established: i) Intervenients-Social Actors, individuals or not (institutional and from other social networks); and ii) another 3 Intervenients-Social Vectors: Factors, Socio-Identitarian Territories and Resource-Capitals affected by the process;

As Narrative Arguments - due to successive *thematizations* and, above all, due to conceptualizing categorizations of trajectories - we chose i) "the Action" - Moments, Events or Significant Occurrences (capturing descriptions and evaluations of trajectories); ii) "the Intervenients" - intervening People and Social Factors; iii) "the Emerging-Theme" - making the interpretation of the subjective sense (superficial or evident) and consequent emerging sociological categorizations possible; iv) "the Word-the Expression" - emerging recording unit in specific situations, imposed itself as an element for seriation and analysis of discursive styles and forces.

But the *analysis units*, the categorization work and consequent annotation procedures on the *corpus* only become clear when one explains the *context units* and the *listing-annotation rules* for the analysis and decomposition of said *corpus*. Respecting the principles of the understanding-qualitative approach, we took two *context units*: a) the discourse (account context); b) the theme, context unit of the recording units "action" and "interveniements" (both axes of the discourses), and of the recording units "word".

Thus it becomes clear why the emergent analysis focused on episodes-events and on people and intervening social factors which the accounts enunciated. This same perspective, and the attention paid to emerging contents, would confirm the legitimacy both of the "previous" designation and delimitations as "tool", and of the corresponding deconstruction-construction work.

Nevertheless, that which one selects-decomposes from a *corpus* varies according to the context where it is sought and observed, as well as to the way it is selected.

In this research, the adopted listing-annotation rules did not intend to serve analysis units: only exceptionally did we measure the frequency (simple, not weighted; Bardin (1991: 109) of words or expressions with socio-discursive significance. *I.e.*: the counting was performed when it made the (qualitative) sociological analysis of discursive styles and forces easier.

In respect to the *annotations on the corpus*, we used every rule and the 5 available kinds: heading, theme, statement, category and code. We used the *heading*, because it allowed us to indicate the subject in hand, although it revealed nothing about mode or specific content of the discourse on such matter. The *theme* is a useful expression as title-summary, labelling and denoting an extract from the *corpus*. Furthermore, a *statement* consisted of short summaries (a few lines long). The *category* can be built by subscripting; this "ordering of contents in different drawers" was necessary, and it did not lessen the use of heading. In fact, categorization by abstraction was the process which tended to induce significant and conceptualizing outlines; and we therefore assumed categories as *theoretical categories*, not mere descriptive-dead clips. Finally, the *code* was also useful when we had to number contents, which was less usual, but also happened (e.g. for recording units).

The annotation task revolved around three screens: 1) to decide the most adequate status: is it a heading, theme, statement, category or code? 2) to identify the singularity and isolate the theme: yes? no?; 3) to be aware of thematic paradoxes.

As we have seen, the guideline for the «technical» and «intellectual» manipulation and decomposition operations on the *corpus* (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003): pp. 51 ff.) was the search for relations, according to the 3 listing-annotation rules: relations by association, by opposition and paradox. To that end, we practiced five kinds of *corpus manipulations*: marks, analytical notes, annotations, inventories and schemes.

Note that, for the two main thematization functions - signalling-identification and documentation - we did not use computer programmes (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003): pp. 124-125). Only after the *Transcription-translation* of the interviews (*Step 5* above) onto paper did we manipulate and annotate those paper-documents.

Although lengthier and more exhaustive, we believe it to have been the best procedure, developing an increasingly deeper relationship with the discourses - in depth and in intensity, also reinforced by the physical contact with paper (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003): p. 126).

Simultaneously, the «flexibility of the support» also guaranteed the fulfilling of MEPA in both ways used for inscribing the themes: the paper margin in each 1st text written (already formatted for that purpose); and, whenever necessary, through underlining and writings in colour in the text itself.

Finally, one realizes the importance of *thematization* in the "prsi model" by making the identification of the (4) recording units possible, observing the 2 listing-annotation rules. Not to forget that we always conciliated the 2 kinds of thematization: continuous and sequential.

ANALYTICAL DESCRIPTION: FROM THE 1ST STATEMENT TO THE REFINEMENT OF THE CORPUS TO ITS FINAL CONSTITUTION

Striving to be more thorough, let's characterize stages 9, 10 and 11, distinguishing the tasks from the corresponding *Steps* 6a, 6b and 6c.

At this stage in our work, we realized we had in our hands *accounts* whose discursive potential asked for different *interpretative strategies*. Therefore, through close readings and annotations, we made the *analytical description* work possible, with three different approaches, as follows.

Step 6a - 9th stage: selection of 15 cases to build life accounts, motivated immediately during the interview sessions. It was based on several *close readings* of the information provided to assess the discursive and reflexive skills of the interviewees.

Then, after renewed *readings, annotations* and *comments*, the first thematizations and pre-categories were identified for those 15 interviews. We were also able to write the *1st analytical description texts* - the *1st provisional statements* - which implied, through several vertical analysis readings, the following 5 operations: 1st - classification, of analogous elements in every account, in *headings*, created according to the discourse *syntagmatic axis*. 2nd - grouping and chronological ordering of the *headings* in every account, because the discourses had *time lapses*, typical of speech. That way, we *diachronically rearranged* the MM of every socio-identitarian trajectory (Past > Present > Future), as well as the *Phases* and *Stages* of the reported "prsi". 3rd - later writing of brief *summary-statements* for each account; 4th - reorganization and grouping of *headings* by *themes* (still with *provisional titles*), which was possible to accomplish only as the *summary-statements* became more autonomous; *i.e.* due to the saturation of the information given and its quality for an *analytical description* of content; 5th - writing of a new document - the *1st provisional statement from analytical description* for each account - following the *ordering* and *regrouping* of *summary-statements*. In the end, those 15 cases were redistributed into the former 5 guiding-criteria-conditions, now transformed into provisional general categories (Toscano (2008):134).

Step 6b - 10th stage: *provisional delimitations* of the *corpus*. During our analytical and interpretative description, we abandoned the category "Handicaps", restricting the *corpus* to 13 *model accounts* and intensifying, from then on, the biographical process, via 3 methodological interventions: 1st - identification of the «Intervenients» mentioned in the *1st provisional statements* corresponding to every one of the 13 accounts (*discourse paradigmatic axis*); 2nd - «construction/reconstruction and decontextualization / recontextualization» work which provoked the reclassification and regrouping of account excerpts into a *2nd provisional statement from analytical description*. At the same time, «pre-units of sense» started to arise given the coherence between reported action-episodes and the identified intervenients; 3rd - reorganization of groupings, in order to fill in the *1st provisional analytical grid* for every account, based on the *2nd provisional statement*.

Step 6c - 11th stage: the «construction/reconstruction and decontextualization / recontextualization» tasks justified our decision to permanently reduce the *corpus* to 11 accounts, based on: i) formal and vertical analysis criterion - comprehensiveness and saturation of reported informations; ii) account content and cross analysis (transversal) criterion - exemplary and reflexive nature, creativity in strategies and socio-identitarian logics as expressed in speech.

By the procedure dynamics already demonstrated, the analysis and reclassification of those 11 cases confirmed the remaining 4 *guiding-criteria-conditions* - Mono-Motherhood, Death, Abuse and Leadership - and simultaneously reinforced the pertinence of the *provisional general category* "poor origins". As such, we had now 5 general categories: Mono-motherhood: 3 cases; Death: 2 cases; Abuse: 2 cases; Leadership: 2 cases; Poor Origins: 2 cases.

The research *corpus* consolidated itself by articulating 3 methodological practices: *Script*, phenomenological examination and translation, and also formulation of the information and analytical writing practice. Finally, the construction of *categories*¹⁰ and their *significations*¹¹ could be intensified.

INTERPRETATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE CORPUS COMPOSED OF 11 ACCOUNTS

The requirements of Qualitative Analysis destabilized the categorization made until this Stage, and resulted in the autonomization of 6 cases in opposition to other 5 cases.

¹⁰ We adopted the distinction between *general category* and *specific category* (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003): 52).

¹¹ According to Demazière & Dubar (1997): pp. 113 ff.), it is already a specific operation of Structural Analysis.

Step 7 - Stage 12: compose interpretative analysis statements. We made horizontal analyses, transversal to the *corpus*, which gave rise to various questions and new perspectives for the interpretation of *cases*. In fact, at this point of our research, the heuristic fertility of *MEPA* was definitively established in relation to the identification of *disjunctive and conjunctive elements* in every account's speech - decisive for the production of the *1st interpretative description texts*. There were several *decontextualizations* of information, and of their clues (which *recontextualized* themselves), because interpretative dynamics, stimulated by analytical writing, led to the deconstruction of previous categories (which only then we realized were provisional) and to the construction of new ones. Given that dynamics, we had to toil on interpretative reconstructions which, in turn, would provoke a reconfiguration of the *corpus* in the following stage.

In fact, still on the *1st theorization level*, it was the resort to *emergent categorization* which made *interpretative description* possible, as opposed to the mere reproduction or accumulation of categories, in this *Step 7*. Only by striving to *relate and oppose (emerging) categories among themselves*, can one aim to *document relations between* narrator experience and trajectories and their respective contexts - making the provisional categorization of accounts possible.

Three tasks were performed: *1st* - annotation of *emerging pro-Narrative Arguments* as to the interviewees' social condition as women-in-prsi, namely: logics of action; and socio-identitarian strategies and aims identifiable in their discourses; *2nd* - rewriting and reclassification of 11 *2nd provisional statements from analytical description*, according to *emerging categories*, in order to override the *mere chronology* of their discourses. It was an introductory work which allowed us to *write the 1st theorizing induction texts* (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003):106 ff.); *3rd* - producing the *2nd provisional analytical grid* for each one of the 11 accounts, based on the reformulation of the *1st Grid*.

Emerging phenomenological categories - specific categories, theorizing categories - have revealed themselves from the understanding of the *sense* and of the *significance* contained in the narratives of socio-identitarian logics and strategies implied, by women-subject, in prsi. Significations and sense(s) which were made visible only by this quantitative analysis, that besides deep, we believe to be innovative - attributes befitting a research process. However, in the search for the *«intégration argumentative de l'ensemble»* (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003): 189), we could only grasp and explain the *sense* of those prsi with the transversal analysis of the *corpus*, in a constant back and forth between deduction and induction, inherent to the task of the *2nd theorization level* - Conceptualizing and Theorizing Induction (4th act).

METHODOLOGY: RECONSTITUTION-NARRATION OR EMERGING THEORIZING CONSTRUCTION IN THE 4TH METHODOLOGICAL ACT

In this *2nd level of analysis*, the focus of our attention was the integrated and global understanding of the significant phenomenon revealed by the 11 accounts (Paillé & Mucchielli (2003):187, 193).

Step 8 - 13th Stage: Reconfiguration of the corpus through the theorizing categorization of the *corpus*, following 4 operations: *1st* - comparative analysis of the *1st theorizing induction texts*; annotation of items from the *transversal interpretation of the corpus* and of emerging contents, which proved to be significant to the point of justifying a recategorization of the 11 *cases*. *2nd* - producing the *3rd provisional analytical grid* for each account, following previous annotations. *3rd* - first formulation of the narrative: by deepening the *analytical-comparative writing*, we reformulated the *1st theorizing induction texts* and produced the 11 lengthy, and *very first, phenomenological statements*. *4th* - re-categorization of the 11 cases which composed the *corpus*: according to the *homological affinities of the narrative arguments*. The same *reconfiguration of the corpus* followed two proceedings: *1st* - recategorize all 11 life accounts which compose the *corpus*, in two major categories: 6 accounts were recategorized as *contextualization-cases* of the *Problematics* that is the focus of the present research and the other 5 were highlighted as *exemplary cases*; *2nd* - internally recategorize and subcategorize all 6 contextualization-cases.

Step 9 - 14th Stage: Theorizing Interpretation restricted to those 5 model accounts, due to their sociological complexity and richness, having 3 fundamental operations been performed: *1st* - analytical writing of 5 *final phenomenological statements* for each one of the 5 cases; *2nd* - production of *interpretative transversal schemes*: a specific grid for each account and schemes for the MM of each one of the 5 cases; *3rd* - production of *qualitative analysis conclusions* derived from the articulation between the theorizations of each *final phenomenological statement* and the emerging conclusions during the construction of categories and *schemes*.

It will now become clear how the **reconstitution-narration**, as an *emerging theorizing construction*, congregated tasks and operations oriented to a gradual translation of "common" and "official" categories

into "sociological" categories. These *Steps* and stages culminated in the writing of the *final phenomenological statements* and in the construction of *in-depth interpretative schemes*.

FINAL REFLECTIONS IN BRIEF

When, at the end of the process, the copy of the recording with all interviews we had made was handed in, besides the researcher's feeling of satisfaction for honouring her commitment, there was also the reaction of those others, of gratitude and complicity, experienced from the beginning until that final moment.

Although the evaluation of the *biographical process* of the present research is positive, it does not prevent that, on a global level, *two styles* be identified in its own production (negotiation and accomplishment): one corresponding to the 16 interviews that *did not achieve the depth* of biographical accounts; and another corresponding to the 15 interviews which evolved to the co-composition of accounts. Such a distinction derives from the determination of the "linguistic skills" factor for the co-composition of *Narratives*. This topic has earned and still earns the attention of methodologists, specifically those who seek to improve social research based on the speech of social actors, to the point of having, nowadays, various perspectives concerning a researcher's place and attitude when confronted with their own language. We will not explore that now.

We highlight, above all, the realization imposed by the field work: in the presence of the current dominance of an image culture, the *social problem* with which the sociological research makes contact overtakes the methodological argument focused on the cultural devaluation of *oral* skills in favour of *written* skills. Given the current civilizational framework, we watch the most complex change of the human communication mode itself, with a strong mass media reach on information, facilitated by immediate communication technologies, real and virtual.

It becomes clear that the interviewees whose discourse did not reach the depth of biographical accounts are not *the protagonists*, nor "the result" of that communicational transformation which is already a reality in urban areas, for young adult generations and, most of all, teenagers.

Distant from the logics of subjectivation, in a society prone to associate *social success* to "*management*" skills, with a "*brilliant*" image and performance, those women are, indeed, *exemplary cases* of a life style marked by *transition*. As such, they lie between that model under construction and the model of social integration which they already struggle to keep up with.

Therefore, they are socially signaled as disqualified. *Exemplary cases*, indeed, in the presence of a complexifying of obstacles to social requalification - to which the "understanding-qualitative approach *prisi*" has contributed.

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