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Maria Marina Dias Cavalcante: memories of her training for teaching (1954-2015)

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Abstract: This research is part of the field of History of Education and deals with the biography of a woman educator. The aim was to gain a historical understanding of the educational background of Professor Maria Marina Dias Cavalcante and her professional work at the State University of Ceará (UECE). This is a biographical study, theoretically based on the assumptions of Cultural History, which was developed using the methodology of Oral History, in which the technique used to collect the oral source was a free oral history interview. The results showed that Marina Dias was born in the countryside of Ceará, in the city of Monsenhor Tabosa, in the 1940s, and had access to her first letters at home with the help of her older sister. In her institutionalized education, she started elementary school in a multiserial school and was later transferred to the only reunited school in the city. She also attended boarding schools and school groups in the interior of Ceará, as well as the Normal course of the Domestic School of Fortaleza, which qualified her to start teaching in state schools. She also studied Pedagogy, a Master's degree and a PhD, which opened up possibilities for her to work in teaching and management positions in state schools and in Higher Education, but it was at the State University of Ceará, in the Pedagogy undergraduate course and in the Postgraduate Program in Education, where she stood out for contributing to teacher training.

Keywords: Marina Cavalcante; biography; history of education; women educators; educational trajectory.

1 Introduction

This research is part of the History of Education field, which, in other words, interconnects with two coexisting areas, Education and History (Vasconcelos; Fialho; Machado, 2018). More specifically, it deals with a woman educator's story, emphasizing her training and practices as a teacher. In this way, the study approaches the northeastern Professor Maria Marina Dias Cavalcante, henceforth only Marina Cavalcante, considering her training and her work at the State University of Ceará (UECE).



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Women's biographical studies have been gaining ground in the scientific field at the present, especially in research conducted in the area of the History of Education (Stascxak; Pereira; Costa, 2023), in which, through the life histories of educators, discussions related to different educational contexts are broadened, based on the study of the lives of these women situated in different times and spaces, which makes it possible to reconstruct and preserve women's contribution to the country's educational development. In this field, far from the positivist biographies that seek to consecrate people with social visibility - religious, kings, war heroes, famous personalities - the aim is to develop a hermeneutic biography of an ordinary person, considering their performance as a historical subject and the educational contributions they made (Dosse, 2015).

Silva, Costa, and Costa (2021, p. 2) highlight that biographical studies, “[...] although recent in Brazil, have already generated numerous qualified scientific articles, which give visibility to women who have contributed to the educational scenario of their time, but have been made invisible”. For information, the authors have located several biographical studies of educators from Ceará, some of which deal with UECE professors, such as Marina Cavalcante. These biographical studies, which contributed significantly to the biography in question, were developed by the study group Educational Practices, Memories and Oralities (PEMO) at UECE: Raquel Dias (Fialho; Santos; Freire, 2020), Margarete Sampaio (Fialho; Costa; Oliveira, 2022), Zelma Madeira (Fialho; Hernández Díaz, 2020), Josete Sales (Fialho; Sousa; Nascimento, 2020); Ana Carolina Pereira (Oliveira; Sousa; Fialho, 2021). In addition to these biographies, it is important to highlight biographical studies at a national level such as the biography of Jandira Pinto (Nascimento; Machado; Almeida, 2020), Fátima Corrêa (Sousa; Cavalcante, 2020), Marlene Piauilino (Sousa; Andrade, 2022).

Marina Cavalcante is a retired professor at UECE, and is a member of the teaching staff of the Postgraduate Program in Education (PPGE), contributing especially to the line of research Training, Didactics and Teaching Work, in which she is a national reference. Marina has contributed to the training of teachers and researchers at UECE since 1987, when she was appointed to the Didactics and Teaching Practice area by public examination, including coordinating the Pedagogy course.

As a research problem, we asked how Marina Cavalcante's educational path was historically constituted so that she could become a professor in higher education in the 1980s, a period when this space was occupied mostly by men. In order to answer this question, an investigation was conducted with the aim of understanding Marina Cavalcante's training and professional career, which enabled her to contribute to education in Ceará and gain national recognition. In view of this, it is important to note that we do not intend to cover Marina's entire life in this research, however, the justification for the time frame, i.e. 1954 to 2015, is that in 1954, Marina began her formal schooling process and in 2015, she retired from UECE.

This biographical research (Dosse, 2015) is supported theoretically by Cultural History (Burke, 1992) and methodologically by Oral History (Alberti, 2005), using a free interview with the biographer as the main source of information. It was considered that her memories, permeated by recollections and forgetfulness, became fertile ground for the foundation of her own life story (Bosi, 1987).

The importance of biographizing Professor Marina Cavalcante is due to her unique educational contribution to the history of education in the state of Ceará. Through the narrative of her biography, it is possible to broaden understanding, reflect critically, and re-elaborate historical narratives, since her formative trajectory goes through distinct moments of reform in the educational context of Ceará, both in the interior of the state and in the capital. Furthermore, by recording and preserving the history of women, we contribute to gender equality in biographical research, historically marked by male figures (Rago, 1997).

This study is divided into five sections, the first being the introduction, in which the main initial elements of a scientific research are presented, for example, the problem, the objective, and its relevance. The second discusses the methodological process, ensuring clarity about the scientific path undertaken to develop the research. The third deals with the biographer's educational background, covering her family and institutionalized education. The fourth highlights her educational practices, with an emphasis on her work at UECE. Finally, there are the final considerations, which revisit the problem of the study, briefly answering it based on the results of the research, also pointing out limitations and suggestions for further research.

2 Methodology

It is known that the history of women over the past centuries was mostly marked by domestic activity, so that they were prepared for marriage, caring for children, and the home (Fialho et al., 2024). This private life made it seem as if women were of little importance to history, a scenario that was gradually reversed with the inclusion of women in the labor market, in which teaching was one of the activities conceived as plausible for women (Almeida, 1998). In this way, the biographical historical narrative was made up of male characters, making women's contributions to history invisible, including the History of Education, a privileged field in which women stood out as protagonists in teaching, whether as lay teachers or as normalists (Perrot, 1998).

At the end of the 20th century, History broadened its understanding of historical sources and subjects, considering that all people are important and everything that can tell the human story over time are historical sources, opposing Traditional History, which is based on official sources and supposed scientific neutrality. This current of New History began to spread with the Annales School, specifically from its third generation, in the mid-1980s, when new forms of historical writing were expanded, as it could be told using new problems, new approaches, new subjects and, above all, new sources (Le Goff, 1993). According to Burke (1992, p. 12), “[...] traditional historians think of history as essentially a narrative of events, while the new history is more concerned with the analysis of structures”. Thus, it became possible to scientifically record Women's History, written from this new historiographical perspective.

From this starting point, biographical studies returned to the discussion, but this time, not just historiography that dealt with the great deeds of illustrious men, politicians, or the clergy; it also brought the life story of subjects considered ordinary, who were made invisible by traditional history (Burke, 1992). Biography, as Dosse (2015, p. 123) states, “[...] is an ancient genre, which spread based on the notion of *bioi* (*bios*) and is not only concerned with retracing 'life', but also the 'way of life'”, in other words, the biography developed here does not focus specifically on the life of teacher Marina Cavalcante to make her an illustrious figure, but seeks to understand

nuances of the different educational contexts she experienced, reflecting on the educational training of women at the end of the 20th century.

To develop the biography, Oral History was used as a methodological support because, as Fialho *et al.* (2020, p. 5) emphasize, “[...] this methodology, which works fundamentally with statements, testimonies or oral interviews, allows the historian to elaborate individual and collective analyses and develop specific understandings, with a greater wealth of detail”. As the main source, the biographer's narrative was used based on her memories, since one can only narrate facts and events about one's own life or the lives of other people from what has been archived as memory, as Le Goff (2003, p. 471) notes: “[...] the memory in which history grows, in turn nourishes it, seeks to save the past in order to serve the present and the future”.

The biographer's narrative was collected through a free interview, as guided by Alberti (2005, p. 102): “[...] in an interview situation, moving towards an informal and sincere dialog, which allows complicity between interviewee and interviewers, as both engage in the reconstruction, reflection and interpretation of the past.” It should be emphasized that the interview took place on March 12, 2022, at 9 a.m., at her home, and lasted one hour and 30 minutes. At first, the Informed Consent Form (ICF) was explained in order to explain the purpose of the interview, as well as its use in future research, the methodology, the form of participation, the possible risks, and the freedom to refuse, as it was a voluntary interview. After reading the ICF and providing clarifications, the teacher signed the form and the recording began, which was then transcribed, textualized, and validated by Marina Cavalcante. During the validation process, she read and analyzed the transcript and had the opportunity to make corrections, additions, and withdrawals.

It should also be emphasized that this research had prior authorization from the National Research Ethics Council, with Opinion number 2.585.705/2018, as it is part of a larger project called “Education and educators in 20th century Ceará: practices, readings and representations”, which seeks to biograph several other women teachers, always respecting all the ethical aspects that involve research with human beings.

3 Marina Cavalcante's educational path

Marina Cavalcante is the daughter of Waldemar Dias Cavalcante and Josefa Costa Cavalcante. Her father was a trader and her mother a housewife. Marina is the third daughter of a seven-child family, six daughters and a son. She was born in 1949 in the backlands of Ceará, in the municipality of Monsenhor Tabosa¹, specifically in the district of Pendência, as the biographer says: "Pendência is the place that hangs at the 'foot' of the peak in Monsenhor Tabosa, a town located in the Serra das Matas, currently known as the highest peak in Ceará" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

Aiming to find better living conditions and schooling for their children, the Cavalcante family moved to Monsenhor Tabosa when she was four years old. She says: "We moved to Monsenhor Tabosa because we needed a job. We needed to study; at that time, there was no school. The school was multi-grade in the teacher's house, so I started school with my older sister, Maria" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

Marina Cavalcante's literacy process began at home, with the help of her older sister, who was already literate. It is interesting to note that this contact with the first letters at home, whether by parents, siblings, or a preceptor, was due to some difficulties related to the education offered at that time, such as the distance between the student's home and the school institutions (Gondra; Schueler, 2008). In order to start formal schooling, Marina Cavalcante had to move house in order to be enrolled in a multi-grade school that was close to her new home: "The school was multi-grade in the teacher's house, which was opposite our house, with a teacher called 'Pretinha', who I have very fond memories of, a very patient and strong woman too" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

It is worth noting that throughout the process of schooling in Brazil, there have been various and distinct forms of educational organization, one of which is the multigrade schools that began in the Empire and lasted for many years (Faria Filho; Vidal, 2000), and throughout the national territory. In Ceará, it was no different, multigrade schools "[...] were common in the countryside of Ceará, in the 1950s,

¹ Small town in the backlands of Ceará at 305 kilometers from the capital, Fortaleza, with a population of around 17 thousand inhabitants. (IBGE, 2021).

isolated schools with only one teacher, who taught from literacy to the fourth year of primary school” (Fialho; Carvalho; Nascimento, 2021, p. 326). These multi-grade and isolated schools were seen at the time as a good opportunity to attend primary school, given that, even though they catered for a small number of children and had few professionals, “[...] it can be characterized as a policy to democratize access to education, even though it relegated the necessary pedagogical options to the background” (Parente, 2014, p. 58).

After being taught to read and write in the multiserial school at the home of her teacher “Pretinha”, in 1954, the Padre Inácio Américo Bezerra Reunited School opened in her town. This was not yet an official school, but it already had systematized grades, in other words, separated by the age of the students.

Then came the Padre Inácio Américo Bezerra Schools, not yet an official school. Father Inácio was Monsenhor Tabosa's son. He brought his nieces and founded the school. Escolas Reunidas Padre Inácio Américo Bezerra and we studied there. We went from a multi-grade school to a school with systematized grades. There it was already separated, ABC Letter, Primer, 1st book, 2nd book, 3rd book (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

It is interesting to note that the Reunited Schools were created by “reuniting” the Isolated Schools into a single establishment, following a serialization model, which was similar to the school groups and which had as its main goal “[...] the improvement of teaching conditions, hygiene of the school environment, classification of students by level and development, as well as facilitating school inspection” (Santos, 2013, p. 3).] the improvement of pedagogical conditions, hygiene of school environments, classification of students by level and development, as well as facilitating school inspection“ (Santos, 2013, p. 3), however, “[...] although designed to function as graded schools, the combined schools consolidated themselves as a simplified model, an adaptation of the school groups to a low-cost school standard” (Souza, 2010, p. 162). Primary education at this time was the result of the Capanema Reform, which established Organic Laws for each type of education, and primary education was guaranteed by Decree-Law 8.529, of January 2, 1946 (Shiroma; Moraes; Evangelista, 2011).

Marina recalls that her parents paid special attention to their children's schooling. Even though her father was semi-literate and her mother totally illiterate,

they wanted their children to follow a literate path, which was different from the reality in which they lived.

My parents were always very careful with education. My mother was completely illiterate; my father could still write his name and read. My maternal grandfather was one of those men who said that women were supposed to stay at home and take care of the house and raise the children, so my aunts, my grandmother, and my mother, none of them could read (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

Marina Cavalcante's maternal grandfather's understanding was in line with what was expected regarding the role of women up until the mid-20th century, especially in the small towns in the countryside of Ceará, where patriarchy, conservatism, and machismo characterized gender relations. The custom that was maintained about the female role was only to take care of domestic duties, the children, and the husband, while it was up to the man to support the household financially. As Scott (2012, p. 24) highlights, in the 1960s, "[...] despite alternative views, it was still considered highly desirable for a woman to get married, have children and be able to devote herself entirely to her family once she was married".

During the last year of Marina Cavalcante's primary schooling, the city's first official public school was opened, thanks to the efforts of Deputy Vicente Ribeiro do Amaral, who was married to a girl from Monsenhor Tabosa. It is assumed that, with the arrival of the official school, the Padre Inácio Américo Bezerra Reunited School, which had not yet been made official, was abolished, since all the pupils were enrolled in the Vicente Ribeiro do Amaral public school². Thus, after completing elementary school, as she was no longer able to continue her studies in her town, the biographer, together with her older sister, moved to a neighboring town, São Benedito, where there were better conditions in terms of education, with courses to take the entrance exam and then, if she passed the exam, to enter secondary school.

From this perspective, the entrance exam was used in Brazil for four decades, starting in 1931 and being abolished in 1971. Its purpose was to select students for entry into secondary education, in other words, the high school course, since there were not enough places for all those who wanted them. According to Abreu and Minhoto (2012, p. 108), in the beginning, the exam included "[...] written tests in

² The school was named "Vicente do Amaral School" as a homage to the deputy with the same name (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

Portuguese and Arithmetic, as well as oral tests in the same subjects and in Geography, History of Brazil, and Natural Sciences. The rules and programs were defined by the National Department of Education". The exam restricted access to secondary education and led to exclusion, especially for those living in the countryside of the state. In relation to the exam that Marina took in the 1960s, there were no longer oral tests, as she recalls "[...] I studied a book throughout the year that had various subjects and, at the end of the year, I took the test and passed, it was really a written test, and then I entered high school [...]" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

At that time, his father was already a trader. He bought goods from Fortaleza in trucks to Monsenhor Tabosa every week and was responsible for reselling them at the fairs in the surrounding towns in the countryside. He had already achieved better economic conditions and was able to pay for his daughters' studies at a nun's school that welcomed girls from the countryside to study, in a nearby town called São Benedito, where he also kept businesses.

Thus, having passed the entrance exam, Marina Cavalcante began her high school course at the Virgin Pedrosa Gymnasium boarding school in São Benedito, as she explains:

And then, at that time, we had boarding schools and my older sister and I stayed there. We stayed there. I lived there during the school term. Classes at that time started in March, then it was March, April, May, and June. There were only 180 school days in the year. We would go at the end of February or the beginning of March and stay for the first semester. In July, we'd go home for the vacations and come back in August, until December. It was a house there, the nuns' house, so they had a whole environment prepared to receive us; there were many of us. At our time, there were more than 50 girls in the boarding school, all teenagers. Some were studying at the gymnasium and others were already studying at the Normal School (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

She explains how they stayed at the boarding school to attend secondary school. All the girls spent the school term, which corresponded to 180 days a year at the boarding school which, as she defines it, was a "nuns' house", and during the vacations they went to their families' homes. In addition to systematized education, there was also informal education, characterized by the strict vigilance of the nuns with regard to the girls, an emphasis on silence and obedience, Marian religious training to serve and control over their bodies.

Despite the fact that the education model proposed in boarding schools was characterized by rigidity and vigilance over the bodies and morals of the students, it was welcomed as a formative space for women (Magalhães, 2002). However, in Marina Cavalcante's case, the choice of boarding school was due to the fact that it was considered by her parents to be the most feasible way for their daughters to continue their studies. The Virgin Pedrosa Gymnasium boarding school, as well as offering secondary education, also had a normal course, was affordable and did not require traveling long distances to get to school every day.

Before completing the fourth grade, however, Marina Cavalcante's parents decided that she would complete this stage of her education in Fortaleza, both because the education in the state capital was considered to be of better quality and because the boarding school was about to close. This was due to the fact that the boarding school's fees were small and the nuns couldn't keep it going as they should, because it was not possible to provide the educational services, accommodation, and food for the boarders with the amount charged. As a result, the institution opted to continue with the school only in the external mode of schooling, without receiving boarding students. It is also important to note that in the 1960s, boarding schools began to decrease in number, not only for financial reasons, but also because of the expansion of the official system of regular education in schools.

In the capital of Ceará, Marina Cavalcante initially lived at the home of some relatives, but she went to Rui Barbosa School to finish secondary school, since she had already completed the first and second grades of secondary school in São Benedito, but her sister chose not to accompany her when she moved. She says that at that time there were already boarding schools in Fortaleza, however, as she was still a minor, it wasn't possible for her to stay, as the boarding schools only accepted girls over the age of 18, as she explains:

[...] at that time the boarding houses began to appear, they gave the pension, but not the studies, we paid for it, but there they only accepted adults, because they weren't responsible for anyone. As I was a minor, I couldn't go to a boarding house (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

When the biographee started high school, with the Normal Course, her older sister decided to move to Fortaleza, so the two of them moved to a boarding house on Guilherme Moreira Avenue, called Our Lady of Fatima Boarding House. Even though

Marina Cavalcante was not yet of age, her sister took responsibility for the two girls. According to Conceição (2012), boarding schools were places that provided housing and food for many girls who came mainly from inland towns to live in the capital, with the intention of continuing their studies, which were not offered in their home towns.

The sisters completed their normal schooling at the St. Raphael Domestic School, an institution which, at first, had the function of training mainly young women from the elite of Fortaleza to be “housewives”. In fact, over time, it became a regular primary and secondary school. According to Lopes (2012), the St. Raphael Domestic School was founded on October 24, 1936 by the Daughters of Charity of the St. Vincent de Paul Association, with the aim of providing comprehensive training for young women, as well as first cycle secondary education, where special courses in women's arts were taught. In 1953, the Domestic Course became equivalent to the Gymnasium Course and, 10 years later, the Normal Course was created. In 1974, the school was renamed the St. Raphael Primary and Secondary School.

After graduating from Normal School at the age of 19, she returned to her hometown and started teaching in a literacy class at the same school where she had been a student, the Vicente Ribeiro do Amaral School, under an employment contract. She explains: "I returned to Monsenhor Tabosa when I finished (the Normal Course). I spent two years there as a teacher and then I went to work at the Vicente Ribeiro do Amaral School, working with children in literacy" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

It is important to note that Marina Cavalcante's return to her hometown after completing Normal School in Fortaleza was a common practice for girls at the time, “[...] since families with better financial conditions invested in their daughters' education at boarding schools in the capital, who then returned home with a different educational background” (Fialho; Sousa, 2021, p. 300). In this way, they invested in training with the certainty that on their return there would be a job as a teacher due to the shortage of teachers qualified to do this professional activity.

Marina Cavalcante did not stay in Monsenhor Tabosa for long. Even though her father had become known as a businessman, entered politics and became the town's mayor, she decided to return to the capital to study for a university degree. Because her father could afford it, since he was a businessman and also a politician in the interior of Ceará, Marina, along with her three younger sisters and her mother,

moved to Fortaleza, as she says: "[...]we came here to Fortaleza. I came with my younger sisters, Fátima, Rosinha, and Gláucia, but my mother came to leave us and said she didn't have the courage to leave us alone, so she stayed here with us [...]" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022). Settled in Fortaleza, the sisters sought out schools and Marina Cavalcante tried to combine a new job with higher education, as explained in the next section.

4 Marina Cavalcante's teaching career

Returning to Fortaleza, Marina Cavalcante began teaching at a private institution, the Capistrano de Abreu School, where she taught in the mornings, and at another public institution in the afternoons, the Monsenhor Hélio Campos School, in the Pirambu neighborhood. In order to enter the first institution, she was selected and approved, while in the second, as it was state-run, she managed to transfer her work contract from Monsenhor Tabosa to Fortaleza, as she recalls:

It was a work contract, because at that time the state government was Virgílio Távora's³ and he facilitated this kind of thing for those who wanted to study. I wanted to study and my father was also a politician, he had the facilities, so I worked in the morning at Capistrano de Abreu and in the afternoon at Monsenhor Hélio Campos Public School, in Pirambu, because I lived in Vila São José. We rented an apartment and lived there, and I went to work at Monsenhor Hélio Campos, which was close to my house. (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

During her first year living in Fortaleza, which was 1971, Marina Cavalcante was unable to go to university because it was a difficult time for her, given that her mother had died in June of that year from a brain aneurysm. In 1972, the biographer dedicated herself more to her studies in preparation for the university entrance exams and managed to pass the Pedagogy course at UECE, which at the time was located on Luciano Carneiro Avenue, where she began a routine that divided her time during

³ According to the Ceará Institute, Virgílio Távora was a federal deputy from Ceará (1950-1954; 1954-1958; 1966), general secretary of the national executive of the National Democratic Union (UDN), Minister of Transport and Public Works in the Parliamentarian Cabinet of the Republic, senator for the National Renewal Alliance (Arena) (1971-1978; 1983-1991) and a member of the National Constituent Assembly. He was the rapporteur for several important projects, such as Telebras, Petrobras and Perimetral Norte. He was governor of Ceará twice (1963-1966; 1980-1982). Information available at: <https://www.institutoceara.org.br/socio/virgilio-de-moraes-fernandes-tavora/>. Accessed on: Jan. 10, 2025.

the day working at the two schools mentioned above, and at night studying for a degree.

After finishing her Pedagogy course, Marina Cavalcante decided to leave Capistrano de Abreu School to become the coordinator of the Normal Course at Oliveira Paiva School. During this period, she was selected to be a supervisor at TV Educativa and was approved. It is important to note that TV Educativa do Ceará was created in the mid-1970s with the aim of broadening access to primary and secondary education in Fortaleza, as well as in the interior of Ceará, mainly through Telensino (Pereira, 1979).

Marina Cavalcante emphasizes that the field of work for pedagogues at that time was broad and that, because there weren't many trained professionals, it was easier to pass selection tests, as she recounts: "Being a pedagogue at that time, we had a lot of job opportunities, it was very, very broad and there were few trained people" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

In 1981, Marina Cavalcante learned from a teacher friend of hers that there was the possibility of doing a master's degree at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), in the area of Supervision and Curriculum, because of a partnership between the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) and the UECE, in which the funding body made master's scholarships available to state higher education teachers, however, as she was part of the state's basic education network, she did not fit the profile for the scholarship. Even so, due to the lack of greater incentive for university professors in the state of Ceará, who earned little and were not covered by a job and career plan that ensured better pay for teachers, doing a master's degree did not make financial sense, and the scholarships provided were not filled, thus giving Marina Cavalcante the opportunity to start a *stricto sensu* postgraduate course, as she highlights:

Back then, scholarships were easy, it wasn't as difficult as it is now. The grants were just starting to arrive, and they had to go back because there were no takers. Then I remember that, with our dean of research, Professor Maria Luíza Chaves, we went to talk and explain that we were public school supervisors (interested), because the priority was for UECE teachers, but the teachers didn't want to go because there was no career plan, there was no incentive; most of them were older people, so there were no young teachers at UECE at that time. So we went, and Maria Luíza consulted Capes, and we won a grant to go to São Paulo. Capes paid for the course and gave us a scholarship. So we went to São Paulo in 1981, to PUC São Paulo (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

With the grant in hand, as well as her state pay, as she had been granted paid leave, Marina Cavalcante moved to São Paulo to study for a master's degree at PUC-SP, where she says it was a period of great learning, and even recalls with pride that she was a student of Paulo Freire: "At that time, I was a student of Professor Paulo Freire. He was returning from exile. In 1984, we had the political reopening of Brazil. He, Fernando Henrique, Franco Montoro, Mário Covas, were all coming back from exile, and they worked at PUC" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

As we know, the period of military dictatorship in Brazil lasted from 1964 to 1985, but the years of greatest repression, also known as the years of lead, were between the end of 1968, with the decree of Institutional Act 5 (AI-5) and the end of the Médici government in March 1974. Many middle-class intellectuals, artists and political opponents went into exile, in other words to escape persecution, torture and assassination, they traveled to other countries. Many of them returned to Brazil when they felt safe after the authoritarian regime (Fialho; Carvalho; Nascimento, 2021).

Even though she enjoyed the course, the biographer recalls that she was unable to adapt to São Paulo and decided to return to Fortaleza after a year: "I didn't like it, I didn't adapt, but I still stayed for a year. At the end of the year, my sister, who was a dentist, died in 1981, so when she died, I did an inner 'exam' and I decided to go back, I left the master's" (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022). In order to finish her master's degree, she managed to enroll in the master's degree in Education at the Federal University of Ceará (UFC), only finishing the course in 1986.

After completing her master's degree in 1987, Marina Cavalcante applied to become a permanent professor at UECE, and was approved to teach in the area of Didactics and Teaching Practice, working concurrently at TV Educativa. At the time, UECE was being internalized, with the creation of campuses in Crateús, Itapipoca, and Quixadá, and she chose to work in Crateús because the town was close to Monsenhor Tabosa, where her father lived, as she says:

When it opened, there was only Iguatu, and then Crateús, Itapipoca and Quixadá were created. It was at this time that UECE expanded its internalization and set itself up as a capillary university in the state of Ceará, and I took the exam for Crateús, because my father, at that time, had already moved back to Monsenhor Tabosa, had already married his second wife, and I stayed close to him. I stayed in Crateús from 1987 to 1992. I worked for TV Educativa from Monday to Wednesday here and, when it was Wednesday night or Thursday morning, I would go to Crateús, because then I would work

there Thursday night, Friday night and Saturday morning. I had 40 hours (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

An important point to highlight is the fact that Marina was able to reconcile her work in two institutions, with different educational audiences, since one was basic education and the other higher education, as well as in different and distant locations, since Crateús is located approximately 350km from the capital of Ceará. This internalization of the UECE mentioned by Marina Cavalcante did not initially happen with the creation of colleges in the interior of Ceará, but only with isolated courses, as she calls them: “It was like a Pedagogy course room here in Fortaleza, but there in Crateús” (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022). It was only in 1992, during the rectorship of Professor Paulo Petrola, that the college buildings were created in the municipalities that had UECE centers.

It is important to note that the creation of the centers in the interior in 1987 meant that, in 1992, the teachers who taught in the interior could be moved to the capital, where most of them lived, as there were already many teachers trained in the interior with the Isolated Courses, through the training offered at the centers. Still in 1987, Marina Cavalcante got married and had a daughter, dedicating herself to her family and work. After 11 years together, she separated in 1998, when she began to think about studying for a doctorate.

I only went on to do my doctorate in 2000, after I separated, because my husband was very jealous. So I did my doctorate here in Fortaleza, always working at UECE. During this time, I had already been coordinator of the Pedagogy course, I had already held a few positions there, but always in the classroom with Didactics and Teaching Practice. We had study groups. I split up in 1998, and that's when it didn't work out. I did my doctorate so late that I was no longer entitled to a leave of absence, because I was old enough to retire, because I brought my time from public school, so the university didn't give me a leave of absence. But we had a director of the Education Center who was very understanding, Professor Lúcia Helena, and she valued those who wanted to study and helped me a lot. At the time, I was her deputy director; I was in management, but I only went there when she needed me. I did my doctorate with a lot of help from her in this sense, but I didn't leave the classroom, I just stayed away from management (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022).

Even though she was unable to take time off from her job, Marina Cavalcante completed her doctorate at the UFC in 2004 thanks to internal negotiations. After all, she had already been the coordinator of the Pedagogy course at UECE and was vice-director of the Education Centre, with her educational contribution recognized by her

peers at the institution. Then, in 2004, the UECE Education Center created the Postgraduate Program in Education (PPGE), with two lines of research: “Didactics and Teaching Work” and “Educational Policy, Training and Teaching Culture”, and Marina Cavalcante was accredited to this program in 2008, because, according to her: “To enter a postgraduate program, you need to have personal and intellectual maturity, so in 2008 I entered; the doctorate had been created, so I entered the Didactics line” (Marina Cavalcante, interview on March 12, 2022). Marina Cavalcante is currently retired from UECE, but she continues to contribute to postgraduate studies, both teaching in master's and doctoral classes and in research, developing projects that include guidance for scientific initiation, master's and doctoral studies in the area of Didactics and Teacher Training, continuing her role in the training of human resources in Ceará.

5 Closing remarks

This research sought to understand Marina Cavalcante's education and teaching career. At the interface, it showed the difficult access to formal education for girls living in the cities of the interior of Ceará in the second half of the 20th century, as well as the changes in the organization of the education system, including isolated multi-seriate schools, school groups, religious boarding schools, among others.

With the help of the Oral History methodology, through the narrative of the biographer as the main substrate for reconstructing memories, it became possible to develop this biographical writing, with an emphasis on Marina Cavalcante's life trajectory and her educational context. The results show that Marina Cavalcante was born in the northeastern backlands of Ceará and had contact with her first letters through her older sister, who was already literate at the time. Her systematized schooling began in a multiseriate school, in a teacher's house opposite her home in Monsenhor Tabosa. She then went on to primary school in an unofficial serialized school, and then finished primary school at the first public school in her town, called Escola Estadual Vicente do Amaral. Her high school education took place in two different settings: firstly, at the Vincentian Sisters' boarding school in the city of São Benedito, until the second grade, and secondly, the last two grades, at the Rui Barbosa

School in Fortaleza. Marina Cavalcante also studied normal education at the São Rafael Domestic School, also in the capital of Ceará.

Her teaching career has been permeated by changes, mainly because education professionals adapt to the changes taking place in the educational context. Marina began her teaching career in Monsenhor Tabosa, in state schools, under an employment contract provided by politicians at the time. Although she moved to Fortaleza, she kept her contract, since it was a state one, as well as teaching in private schools.

She had the opportunity to study for a master's degree at PUC, in São Paulo, with a scholarship, but she was unable to adapt to the big city, considering that São Paulo was already considered a metropolis in relation to the capital of Ceará, so she returned to Fortaleza, only to complete the course in 1986 at UFC. Completing her master's degree enabled her to pass the public examination to become a teacher on the Pedagogy course at UECE, where she contributed by teaching Didactics and Teaching Practice, coordinating the course and vice-directing the center.

As a teacher and supervisor in basic education, working in schools and coordinating TV Educativa in the 1980s, in the countryside and in the capital, as well as teaching in higher education in the following years, she gained prominence among her peers and respect from the educational community for her committed work. Marina Cavalcante made a strong contribution to teacher training in Ceará, especially through her work at the PPGE-UECE, leading a career that is not very well known, but which is very important for education in Ceará.

It is important to highlight that, as this is biographical research, there are some limitations, such as the fact that it does not allow for generalizations, since it has particularities from the life story of the professor who was biographed, but it also reveals the importance of recording, preserving and valuing women's stories, since women have been made invisible, relegated to oblivion and have had their contributions belittled, seen as less important. In this way, the biography has made it possible to learn about the educational difficulties that made it impossible for many other Marinas to complete basic schooling and get into jobs that would allow them autonomy and an independent life.

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