“The children think that if their parents manage to live like this, they can too.”

Children’s learning difficulties in Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil.

Jilmah Gallinera
“The children think that if their parents manage to live like this, they can too.”

Children’s learning difficulties in Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil.

Julmah Gallinera

Abstract

Many scholars have argued that the education system in Brazil tends to strengthen the pattern that reproduces inequalities, where families with higher income are likely to be the ones holding the majority in education in. The focus lies in ten interviewees, thereof five parents/caregivers and five professionals that works/worked with the children who were interviewed in Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, south of Bahia, Brazil 2012. This qualitative study intends to analyse the underlying social causes from a sociological perspective in how the informants reflect upon the child’s/children learning difficulties at the elementary school, Casa da Criança /Escola Daniel Rebouças in the shantytown Banco da Vitória. It will try to answer questions such as; which are the main social causes that affect a child’s learning difficulties in Escola Daniel Rebouças, according to the informants/interviewees? How has the informant’s situation affected their own perception in the child’s/children’s learning difficulties? This paper studies marginalised people who live in a marginalized district, Banco da Vitória. It will highlight home environment and education to show a continuing pattern that causes the child’s/children’s learning difficulties. This study will demonstrate the necessary cooperation between the school, government, teachers, and parents/caregiver in order to improve the children’s education and well-being.

Keywords

Brazil, Banco da Vitória, Escola Daniel Rebouças, shantytown, education, sociological perspective, children’s learning difficulties, social causes, marginalised

---

1 Interview with Dr. José Rebouças in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-27
## Contents

1. **Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 5  
   1.1 The Problem .................................................................................................................. 5  
   1.2 Objectives and Research questions .............................................................................. 6  
   1.3 Limitations ..................................................................................................................... 6  
   1.4 Terminology .................................................................................................................. 6  
   1.5 Disposition ...................................................................................................................... 8  
   1.6 Background ................................................................................................................... 9  
      1.6.1 Escola Daniel Rebouças ....................................................................................... 9  
      1.6.2 Banco da Vitória .................................................................................................. 10  
      1.6.3 The State ............................................................................................................. 11  

2. **Methodology** ................................................................................................................. 14  
   2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 14  
   2.2 Qualitative Method ....................................................................................................... 14  
   2.3 Semi-structured Interview ............................................................................................ 15  
   2.4 Collecting Data ............................................................................................................ 15  
   2.5 Selection ....................................................................................................................... 17  
   2.6 Implementation of the interviews .................................................................................. 17  
      2.6.1 Processing the interviews ...................................................................................... 18  
      2.6.2 My interviewees ................................................................................................... 18  
   2.7 Pre-understanding ....................................................................................................... 19  

3. **Theoretical Framework** ............................................................................................... 20  
   3.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 20  
   3.2 Sociology ...................................................................................................................... 20  
   3.3 Reproduction in Education ........................................................................................... 21  
   3.4 Social Reproduction ..................................................................................................... 23  
   3.5 Social Reflexivity ......................................................................................................... 23  
   3.6 Giddens’ concept of Poverty and Social exclusion ...................................................... 24  
      3.6.1 Poverty ................................................................................................................ 24  
      3.6.2 Social Exclusion ................................................................................................ 24  
   3.7 Lay trauma theory ....................................................................................................... 25  
   3.8 Summary ...................................................................................................................... 26  

4. **Interview Results** ........................................................................................................ 26  
   4.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 27  
   4.1 The parents and the caregivers .................................................................................... 27  
   4.2 The professionals ........................................................................................................ 29  
   4.3 Summary ...................................................................................................................... 31
1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem

“The parents do not help their children because they do not have the interest. When a child comes home from the school, usually, they just watch TV with the children. Brazilian families coming from the poorer areas of Brazil are poorer, susceptible to dissolution, separation at home, alcoholism and/or use of other drugs. The child gets confuse in this environment. It does not give the child the right stimulus, on the contrary; it makes it more difficult for a child to learn at school.”

Dr. José Rebouças

Dr. José Rebouças, reflected upon his time as a volunteer and teacher at the elementary school, Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças in Banco da Vitória, where he expressed his concern with the children, about being primarily raised by a TV. It is a well-known phenomenon that children in socially disadvantaged groups often have language difficulties that in many cases subsequently leads to reading- and writing difficulties. Most of the children in the shantytown Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus Brazil, struggle in their daily life, whether it is for food or for safety. Many of the children at the elementary school Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças are illiterate. Some of the informants reflected upon the social causes and the main actors in their daily life that could aggravate a child’s learning difficulties as they criticised the internal and external factors in their environment. Scholars has stressed that the family’s impact on a child’s education is the fundamental educational agent in every society meaning. It teaches the child the basics of how to securely encounter, the world physically and emotionally “The family presents children to school, already partly formed, with potentialities and limitations”.

Moreover, this impact is often related to parents’ own background such as, their education level, social status, income, etc. that plays a crucial role in a child’s future since they are the ones who are investing. Parents often tend to replicate their own pattern by transferring them to their children. Scholars have argued that the education system in Brazil tends to strengthen a continuing pattern that reproduces inequalities.

---

2 Interview with Dr. José Rebouças in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-27. See Appendix 1
3 Havighurst Robert and Moreira Roberto (1965), Society and Education in Brazil, pp 207
4 Bourdieu Pierre (2004), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 119-120
where families with higher income are likely the ones holding the majority in education by having the access to resources and by living in the right environment.\footnote{Lima Márcia (2011), “Access to higher education in Brazil: Inequalities, Education system and affirmative action policies”, pp 1-38. See also: Bourdieu Pierre and Passeron Jean-Claude (2008), Reproduktionen: Bidrag till en teori om utbildningssystemet, pp 118-133}

1.2 Objectives and Research questions

This paper intends to analyse the underlying social causes via a sociological perspective in how the informants reflected upon the/their child’s learning difficulties in school. It focuses specifically on the elementary school Escola Daniel Rebouças (where five of the informants’ children attend) which is located in Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, north of Brazil. Using previous research as well as my own fieldwork and interviews, I hope to show the informants (parents/ caregivers and the professionals) perceptions and their reality to this problem.

The questions at issue are:

- Which are the main social causes that affect a child’s learning difficulties in Escola Daniel Rebouças, according to the informants/interviewees?

- How has the informant’s own situation - such as; background, education level, parenthood, socio-economy etc. - affected their own perception in the child’s/children’s learning difficulties?

1.3 Limitations

I will not write about every aspect in the society that may or can contribute to inequalities in Banco da Vitória but more of what my interviewees focused upon as the main issues. My interest lies in the elementary school, in the cases of some of the informants’/interviewees’ children who attends at Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças who I observed and communicated with during the length of my internship in Brazil.

1.4 Terminology

These terms are used continuously in this paper. Some of the terms will be explained furthermore in the theory section such as, cultural capital, social exclusion, poverty and social reflexivity, social reproduction. The terms blocked and learning difficulties have been described by the informants, the
latter is described through lay trauma theory by Jeffery C Alexander for further understanding of how interconnected a child’s education is to his/her home environment.

**Blocked** was used by the informants as children being hindered to learn due to severe home conditions. I therefore, use the word trauma by Jeffery C Alexander⁶ to explain the children’s experiences as being traumatise by being the victims of abuse, neglect and/or violence that they have encountered at an early age.

**Cultural Capital** was used in this study as defined from Bourdieu; as parents’ education, norms and values, tradition, culture that they invest as capital in a child’s education development. It also explains their child’s/children’s future school achievement and their place in the society.⁷

**Learning difficulties** referred by Megashire and et.al. by the term “learning disability” as “a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities”⁸ that may occur with other handicapping conditions such as, mental retardation, reduced sensor, social and emotional disturbance etc. It might also occur by environmental influence such as cultural differences, psychogenetic factors.⁹

This paper referred to learning difficulties by the informants, as an effect of the trauma and social causes that the children at issue encounter/encountered in their lives. This resulted in children, finding it difficult to learn how to read or write as their minds are being block.

**Poverty** is according to the informants as lack of material and opportunity. Giddens defined poverty as a distinction between absolute (people living in existence minimum where basic needs are not met) and relative (is people who have basic needs but cannot afford other materials that they need).¹⁰ The term poverty is mostly depended on the society where people live; it has therefore transformed in time depending on how the society has changed overtime.¹¹This paper uses relative poverty.

---

⁶ Alexander Jeffery C (2004), Cultural trauma and collective identity, ch 1
⁷ Bourdieu Pierre and Passeron Jean-Claude (2008), Reproduktionen: Bidrag till en teori om utbildningssystemet, pp 119-145
⁹ Ibid, pp 387-388
¹⁰ Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 277-279
¹¹ Ibid pp 278
Social exclusion has a broad concept. It refers to a group of people being marginalise.\textsuperscript{12} Giddens described it as individuals that are exclude in various ways and on different levels to be able to participate in the society.\textsuperscript{13}

Social reflexivity\textsuperscript{14} stands for our constant reflection over the circumstances in which we live our lives. Giddens believe that it is important to be more critical in today’s society in order to survive.

Social reproduction refers to, according to Giddens, how communities can survive over a long period while new rules and structures are changing.\textsuperscript{15} Bourdieu amplifies that family plays a crucial role to maintenance of the social order, of reproduction, not only biologically but also in social terms i.e. the reproduction of the social space social relations structure.\textsuperscript{16}

1.5 Disposition

The first chapter provides a description of my chosen subject area. I then proceed with the aim for this thesis, questions and background of Banco da Vitória and Escola Daniel Rebouças. The second chapter outlines the methodology where I present my approach, execution, the interview process, ethical and pre-understanding. The theory section in the third chapter introduces my selected sociological theories I use as an instrument for better analysis through the ideas of Bourdieu (2008), Giddens (2007 and 2003), Bernstein (1971) and Alexander (2004). The fourth chapter presents a short summary of the results of my empirical investigation. The aim of the chapter is to provide my readers a comprehensive view of my investigation and to provide a background to the reasoning engines that will be at the basis of my analysis.

The discussion within the analysis section in the fifth chapter has its starting point in the problem. The analysis is based, on the empirical research and will be performed with the help of the presented theories. It is here, where my empirical studies and the theories I have selected, will be linked together in order to provide a greater understanding of my study. The last chapter outlines the final discussion that answers my questions at issue and ends with a conclusion that reflects upon my thesis as a whole.

\textsuperscript{12} Giddens Anthony (2007), Sociologi, pp 275
\textsuperscript{13} Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 287
\textsuperscript{14} Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 548-549
\textsuperscript{15} Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 20
\textsuperscript{16} Bourdieu Pierre (2004), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 120
1.6 Background

1.6.1 Escola Daniel Rebouças

Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças is a combination of a school and an institution that works with children in situations of social vulnerability. It is coordinated by the Sisters of the Poor of St. Catherine of Siena, who have been developing activities that promote the value and life for the children in this area for 46 years. Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças intention is to provide education for the children, who live in a suburb far from access to opportunities for better livelihood. They promote the care of children who are living in vulnerable situations, creating conditions for their fundamental rights; right to life, health, freedom, respect and dignity, family life, education, sports, culture and recreation. All of these aspects brought together in their entirety with the purpose of trying to give the children the right tools to express their creativity and their achievements by making them participate in activities that encourage the acquisition of new knowledge. One of the institution’s main objectives is to try to minimize social exclusion through actions that could benefit the children’s development. These actions require economic support to continue and develop the work established with the attending children. This is one of the institution’s main challenges. Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças is the only full time school that is maintain by an institution, without any government help in the shantytown Banco da Vitória, Ilhéus.

The school was awarded twice by the Premio Itau / UNICEF, in 2002 and 2005 for increasing the children’s life standard. The idea was from the start that Casa da Criança would work as a complement to regular school, where children would receive help with their studies and their mothers would receive the support they needed to be able to create a better livelihood for the children. They believe that one cannot help the children without working with their mothers, they have therefore, created workshops and education to increase their development. Since they have been awarded, several authorities (all have been nuns) from Sisters of the Poor of St. Catherine of Siena, have taken over Escola Daniel Rebouças. Most qualified authorities that previously worked at the school have been transferred to a bigger school with more students. This has affected the school such as, losing qualify authorities and much of their financial support. Another reason was the loss of students, where some of the authorities attempted to penetrate the catholic beliefs and values rather than working with the children’s education and development to the children attended. It has therefore, turn to that their main beneficiaries, Sisters of the Poor of St. Catherine decreased their financial support to the school and lost their cooperation with an international organization Kinder. The school’s existence and its progress lies in the management. These transformations demonstrates in the children who studied in the spring term 2012 in Escola Daniel Rebouças/ Casa da Criança. The school could not give the children the help they needed such as; access to school materials, workshops created for the mothers and children, more
teachers that is needed, and a counsellor for the children who lives/lived with abusive parents/caregivers to talk to.

The school had during my practice in Brazil 2012, 68 students who are between 5-9 years old and are divided into three groups such as; kinder garden, first grade and second grade. The classes were not often divided by their ages, but instead at which level they are in learning. Some of the children are quite advanced, unfortunately, they are the ones who loses, since many of the children have learning difficulties. Out of these 68 students, only 10 were literate. The school had two teachers, which created pedagogical difficulties for the teachers, since there are more than thirty children in one class with only one teacher. This led to ineffective teaching that hindered their pedagogical methods, when the children are too many and the level of differences in learning were quite vast. The school’s function has been questioned both from the institution and the school principal whether the children benefit by attending or going to a public school. However, the problem lies in the area. Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças is the only school in Banco da Vitória and for many children attending, access to public transportation is limited.

1.6.2 Banco da Vitória
Banco da Vitória is located in the municipality of Ilhéus in the South of Bahia and is one of the poorest districts of Ilhéus with a slow infrastructure and education development (see the map in Appendix 3). According to the informants, the reason for its slow development is the vast corruption among the politicians, where the resources have been unequally distributed, and the lack of law enforcement that could decrease the immense drug problem in the society. The district has 261 wastelands and 1.634 real estates including the cemetery and the abattoir. Banco da Vitória is relatively populated, with a Public Dental, pharmacy, schools, churches, supermarket and avenues close to the main road. Furthermore, the infrastructure, sanitation and public transports are still limited and insufficient to meet the demands of that community. Most of the children who attended the Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças lives on the top of the hills where there are no public transportation. Most of the residents’ income generates simply on fishing; the reality in Banco da Vitória is marginalization where residents have become marginalized living in a marginalized district. They live in a society with informal small branches, obtaining an income below minimum wage, a high rate of delinquency and lack of opportunities to improve their livelihood.

The Brazilian educational model divides into three levels such as, fundamental, where it is compulsory for children at the aged 7 to 14 to attend at the school (free at all public institutions). Intermediate; free in public schools, it is not compulsory and aims at full development of adolescents and higher education; often thought in isolated schools or universities. Although, Brazil has increased access to basic schooling, the country underperforms vastly in educating the majority of the population where “policy makers favoured an extension of services rather than a fundamental reorganization of the sector toward equity enhancement”. Historically, education has been under-prioritized by the government, whether it be democratic or authoritarian, which have led to greater social inequalities and decades of educational backwardness in Brazil. The relationship between educational level and poverty is marked by regional disparities where the North and the Northeast of Brazil are the regions who have the lowest income levels and the highest rates of poverty in the country strongly relates to the illiteracy rates. Former Country Director for Brazil and Vice President Vinod Thomas implied that one of the main factors that contributed to its inequality is the unequal distribution of education. According to the World Bank, although the country reached its universal coverage in primary education, it still struggles to improve the quality and outcome of the system. However, one of the reasons for its achievement is Bolsa Familia Program (BFP), former called Bolsa Escola. The program gives a poor family R$70 (250kr) per month (for food, schoolbooks, and clothes) in exchange for them to send their children to school. Although BFP aims to reduce poverty by families investing in children by sending them to school, it somehow forfeits its task once the children finish elementary and secondary school.

Many scholars have argued that having a higher education is only for the privileged ones and that those who goes to university have likely “the advantages of parental guidance and a good private secondary education” privileges that poorer families with children attending a lower quality secondary education and university often lack. However, it is at the university level that the inequality is at its highest because of the country’s regressive investment in its universities. Other scholars pointed out that

---

19 [www.un.int/brazil/brasil/brazil-education.htm](http://www.un.int/brazil/brasil/brazil-education.htm)
20 Sugiyama Natasha and Hunter Wendy (2009), Democracy and social policy in Brazil: Advancing basic needs, preserving privileged interests, pp 37
21 Sugiyama Natasha and Hunter Wendy (2009), Democracy and social policy in Brazil: Advancing basic needs, preserving privileged interests, pp 29-49
22 Souza Paulo Renato (2005), Sector study for education in Brazil: Summary, pp 46
23 Thomas Vinod (2006), From inside Brazil: Development in Land of contrasts, pp 33-34
24 Bolsa Família: Changing the lives of millions in Brazil 
25 Ibid, pp 35
although the lack of federal or state legislation impose its adaptation by institutions, the educational policies regarding public university have created controversy and debate on affirmative action has advanced, which spread in public school. This showed “that final decision about adopt or not an affirmative action policy in public institutions is a result of political and local negotiation”. This in turn had led to the creation of PROUNI, the University for All Program (an inclusion policy that grants scholarships). The Brazilian educational population is still low but in order for the poorer, and even middle classes, to benefit from an increase enrolments in university, a more targeted policy is necessary.

Many scholars also argued that one of the greatest problem in education in Brazil is the low qualified teachers in the poor neighbourhoods and their lack of recourses in the schools. It has been demonstrated that the children are learning less in the school than expected and one of the main problems is the “Low teacher qualifications and the frequent diversion of resources away from optimizing learning..”. The need of improvement in this area is necessary, primarily regarding joined responsibilities between the school and the teachers. “Improving education has come from both politicians and education technocrats whose concern is not only human welfare but also Brazil’s ability to compete in the global economy”, it was therefore, President Cardoso’s prime social priority to enhance basic education.

To increase the quality of education former President Cardoso created a program FUNDEF (Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento do Ensino Fundamental) Elementary education development and teacher valorisation, this defined the educational responsibilities of the FUNDEF of the teaching profession. This program provided support and technical (as computers) assistance to poorer states and municipalities. Brazil adopts a mixed public-private-educational system where local governments are responsible for free public education for all children up to completion of secondary education that funded by federal government through FUNDEB (the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Valuation of the teaching Profession). This program demonstrates inefficiency in

---

26 Lima Márcia (2011), Access to higher education in Brazil: Inequalities, educational system and affirmative action policies, pp 34
27 Ibid, pp 31-33
28 Thomas Vinod (2006), From inside Brazil: Development in Land of contrasts, ch 2
29 Hunter Wendy and Sugiyama Natasha (2009), Democracy and social policy in Brazil: Advancing basic needs, preserving privileged interests, pp 41
30 Dr Chawla (2012), Freitas L and et.al (2008)
31 Hunter Wendy and Sugiyama Natasha (2009), Democracy and social policy in Brazil: Advancing basic needs, preserving privileged interests, pp 38
33 FUNDEB was established 2007. It is newer version of FUNDEF providing for government financing of preschool and secondary education.
the system where resources is not distribute equally in many regions as local governments function to their benefits. Although the obstacles are yet to be overcome in the area of education, the main challenges and focus is to improve the quality of the teachers, preparing new teachers, technical skills of the current faculties, promoting diversity and reducing the gap and differences between the educations within the country.
2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces a concrete explanation of the fieldwork process, interviews, choice of methods and procedures. Previous research will also be used to complement this paper in order to have a general idea of the underlying social causes in education in Brazil.

2.2 Qualitative Method

Qualitative method involves individual events and seemingly, small details that can be given utmost importance.\(^{34}\) It has an inductive view in relation between theory and method where it bases on empirical study and probability. This qualitative paper uses induction, where one draws general, overall conclusions from empirical facts.\(^{35}\) Induction is when; one examines a particular aspect of social life, and then derive theories from research results.\(^{36}\) Andreas Fejes and Robert Thornberg (2009) describe the strength as lying in, "allowing human insights and experiences to generate new understandings and ways of seeing the world"\(^{37}\) where human element is the very essence for the study. Since the purpose of my study required a deeper understanding of the social causes in children’s learning difficulties, I found it relevant to use qualitative method in order to get the information that was needed. The importance of this study lies in the interviews where each of their voice has to be lifted in order to understand their reflections to a child’s learning difficulties.

Tim May described in his book Social Science Research (2001) that in the field of social science, interviews give a good in-sight into peoples experiences, opinions, feelings, emotions, attitudes etc.\(^{38}\) and these were all the things I wanted to have access to. I have therefore, used semi-structured interview to get a deeper knowledge of my questions at issue by analysing the narratives statements, behaviour, intentions etc. via word data\(^ {39}\).
2.3 Semi-structured Interview

Charlotte Davies describe semi-structured interview as when the researcher have some sort of “schedule”, meaning a mixed of structured and unstructured interviews where the researcher might already have a set of written questions (structured) or it might as well be an informal list (unstructured), of topics. Using semi-structured interview gives the interviewees, a chance to answer freely and less restricted. It makes the person more comfortable. However, this method may present new topics that could digress the respondents from the certain topics and introduce their own concerns. The new topics that are present could therefore, lead to more questions that may affect the time limit of the researcher (if there is a deadline) since it often requires more than a single interview.

I decided to use Tim May’s Social Science Research (2001) because of its qualitative method, where interviews are the main focus. Qualitative information about the subject at issue gave me more access to try to clarify and develop the answers that are given, which gave me the chance to deepen answers with dialogue. It is specifically important in a semi-structured interview to get the context by being aware of the content in the interview and to register the nature of the interview as how the questions are being ask. Three conditions have to be fulfilled in order for the researcher to be able to achieve a successful interview. One is availability, where the informant has the access to the information the researcher is seeking. Since I am interested in the informants’ own experiences and opinions about something they themselves have lived and experienced, I think they had quite good access to what I was looking for. The second necessity is cognition where the informants must understand what is required of him/her in the role as an informant. This was an important factor for me to explain to my informants what I was looking for and what their role would contribute and mean to my studies, not only as a researcher but also mainly out of respect to my informants. The last condition is motivation, meaning that the researcher has to be able to motivate the informant to feel participated and that her/his answer is meaningful because cooperation is the very core for the research to be carried out. The informants were motivated because of their concern for the children and were therefore, eager to state their thoughts and opinions.

2.4 Collecting Data

I gathered, firstly, much of my information from my own experience at the school, through interviews and observation during my field study in Brazil as a dance teacher and as an administrator at the

---

41 May Tim (2001). Samhällsvetenskaplig forskning, pp 154-159
elementary school Escola Daniel Rebouças from 19th of February to 29th of June 2012. Secondly, this information has been analysed with the help of the literatures and previous research that describe home environment and social causes that can affect the child’s education.

Primary Sources
I have interviewed ten people - thereof five parents and five professionals who all live and/or have worked with street children in Banco da Vitória. I interviewed people that are working/have worked at Escola Daniel Rebouças such as a psychologist Dr. José Rebouças, (Professor at UNIME – ITABINA University) to have a better understanding from a psychologist point of view and a priest Dr. Marcos Antonio Cardoso, who has been working with the street children (Crianças de Rua) in Ilhéus for ten years. The informants did not only contribute with their experiences and expertise but they also gave me a general background of Banco da Vitória through their stories as residents and/or workers. Although I have not found any substantial written information about the term “blocked”42, I find it relevant to include this in my paper because many of my interviewees referred to this as an effect of children’s learning difficulties.

Secondary Sources
Since my study required a deeper understanding of the children at issue, I find it relevant to examine earlier studies through articles and books. Sociological theories were taken from the books: by Anthony Giddens Sociology (2007, 2003), Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture (2008)43, Jeffery C Alexander Toward a theory of Cultural Trauma (2004) and Basil Bernstein (2003) Class, Codes and Control. I felt very restricted and frustrated in terms of finding literatures about Banco da Vitória’s background. I only found one report written by Cristina Bochicchio, A Formação do Banco da Vitória em Ilhéus e seus Impactos Ambientais 1979-2003 (2003) that describes Banco da Vitória’s development during the years 1979 -2003, from being an unknown location to the district it is today. The author also reflected upon the problem of finding any written documents of Banco da Vitória. Most of her information came from interviews from the residents and previous administrators. I have also used previous research to complement my study regarding Banco da Vitória.

42 A term that I will explain further later in chapter 3, theoretical framework and in chapter 4 as I give a background of my informants.

43 Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, Reproduktionen: Bidrag till en teori om utbildningsystemet, 2008
2.5 Selection

Working as a dance teacher at Escola Daniel Rebouças and at the administration, gave great access to observe the environment and the surroundings, which provided me with a deeper understanding of the interactions between the teachers and the students and their everyday life living in Banco da Vitória. The observation also lied in the interaction amongst the children themselves, as well as in-between the caregiver/parent and their children (as they dropped off and picked up the kids on weekdays at school). This gave me an access to find informants that had the time and willingness to be interviewed. One aspect that could be worth noticing is that most of my informants are women between 25-65 years old. It was never my intention to select certain gender, I had to adjust after their availability but this may affect my study.

2.6 Implementation of the Interviews

Since I made my selection in the way I did, I am well aware of how it could affect my study. There are both advantages and disadvantages in my method of choice. The advantage would be that the interviewees might have felt safer with me and answered honestly, because they know who I am and that they trust the people who presented me to them (in particular the parents). A disadvantage may be that the informants did not want to “make a fool” of themselves around me (this was not the case for the professionals) and consequently, they may not answer truthfully. It was therefore, important for me to have an informal conversation and laugh with them in a mutual way, to get the confidence and security I wanted them to feel in my presence.

The interviews took place in surroundings where the interviewees would feel most comfortable; I therefore always asked them to choose a place. The parents/ caregivers were interviewed at their home, while the professionals, at their work environment in Banco da Vitória, Ilhéus/Brazil between May and at the end of June 2012. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 2 hours depending on the informants’ availability. They were asked to reflect upon the social causes of the/their child’s difficulties in learning at the school. The parents/caregivers were asked to answer questions that reflected upon their child’s/ children’s education, while others were asked to answer questions depending on their expertise, such as a psychologist, a teacher and a principal who have/are encountered/ encountering the children of Escola Daniel Rebouças on a daily basis. I always started the interviews by explaining what the interview substrate was about and emphasized their anonymity and that the interview would be on tape and/or written. The informants comes from different backgrounds whereas parents and the caregivers have similar perceptions of their daily life, education level and experiences. The professionals do not have similar backgrounds nor history but most of them graduated from college and some have advance degree but their perceptions regarding children’s learning
difficulties are the same. There is a reason why I divided the two groups, mainly because the outcome of their own perceptions differ greatly from one another.

2.6.1 Processing the interviews
I tried to transcribe after each interview while the information was still current. The first coding was relatively open. I divided the interview into different themes and then made a deeper coding. This time I developed new and more specific themes and concepts. Since the interview were in Portuguese, I had a bit of help from a Portuguese friend of mine Liliana Chantre (26 years old, cabin crew) who speaks both Brazilian Portuguese and English in case my Portuguese would not be enough or if I might have missed some words that could misinterpret the whole context. I then interpreted the interviews based on my selected theories and founded suitable quotations this way.

2.6.2 My interviewees
In order to obtain a broader knowledge of the social causes of a child’s learning difficulties, I have chosen three mothers, two caregivers and five professionals to interview. Therefore, I would like to present my informants/interviewees. The parents’, the caregivers’ and the children’s name have been modified in respect to their wishes.

Parents/ Caregivers

Flavia: 35, is a mother of five children. Two of her children go to Escola Daniel Rebouças, her eight-year-old son, Eunício and nine-year-old son Gustavo. None of the boys know how to read nor write. Christina: 25, is the guardian of her eight year old nephew Paulo who studies at Escola Daniel Rebouças. He cannot read nor write. Teresa: 65, is the grandmother of eight year old Letícia who goes to Escola Daniel Rebouças. Letícia knows how to read but not to write. Paula: 40, is the mother of eight year old Manuelito who studies at Escola Daniel Rebouças. He does not know how to read nor write. Fatíma: 36, is a mother of three. Her nine-year-old daughter Faviana studies at Escola Daniel Rebouças. None of them knows how to read nor write.

The professionals
Marcos António Cardoso: 47, is a priest and Ph.D. in Theology and a resident of Banco da Vitória. Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis: 53, is a Nun and a teacher. She has had 20 years of indirect experience working with children and direct 3 years in Casa da Criança in Tupa and 1 year in Conquista. Dr. José Rebouças: 60, is a psychologist professor at University Professor at UNIME – ITABINA in Itabuna, Ilhéus. Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha: 51, is a Nun, Teacher and School Principal at Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel
Rebouças in Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus. She has worked with children for 25 years. **Eunice Souza Santos de Oliveira**: 53, is a cook at Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças since 16 years and a residente of Banco da Vitória.

2. 7 Pre-understanding

According to Fejes and Thornberg (2009), qualitative research requires the researcher to reflect constantly upon his/her approach and her/his elected method, objectivity, perspective, values etc. and how it affect the study.\(^{44}\) Davies (1999) argued that to be able to ensure one’s objectivity, one has to maintain, “*distance through using observation and other methods in which interaction is kept to a minimum or is highly controlled.*”\(^{45}\) That is why I chose to interview the children’s parents instead of the children. Bourdieu argues that in order to understand others in a society, one has to understand one’s own self and that is by examining sceptically our own views as well as others.\(^{46}\)

My experience at the elementary school was both challenging and educational. It was challenging both mentally and emotionally working with the children. The trauma and the abuse many of them are/ have been going through reflected upon how they behaved and interacted at the school. The violence, grief, sadness, anger, frustration reflected how they were in class, towards each other, towards us as teachers but most of all it affected their ability to learn. All of these circumstances had therefore, affected me as a person but at the same time, it created a necessary distance in order for me to work and help both the teachers and the children in the better way. I am well aware that I carried with me and understood the preconceptions from the start and that is why I worked actively with myself throughout this essay to keep myself as objective as possible.

\(^{44}\) Fejes Andreas and Thornberg Robert (2009: 221)

\(^{45}\) Davies Charlotte (1999: 13), Reflexive Ethnography : A Guide to Researching Selves and Others

\(^{46}\) Bourdieu Pierre and Wacquant Loic (1992), An invitation to reflexive sociology
2. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction
This theoretical section works with the sociological selected theories I have chosen as an instrument to my analysis section. My frame of reference is based on the literatures of Giddens’ concept of “Poverty” and “Social Exclusion”, Bourdieu’s “Cultural Capital”, Bernstein’s “Restricted- and Elaborated code” and Alexander’s “Lay theory of trauma”. These theories, specifically Cultural Capital are used to highlight aspects to address my questions at issue.

3.2 Sociology
Anthony Giddens (2007) describes sociology as a study of human social life, of groups and societies. It is a subject, in which man is seen as a social being and is the centre of interest. To be able to understand the imperceptible and complicated yet profound way in which our individual life reflects the social context we live in, is fundamental in order to attain a sociological perspective. Pierre Bourdieu argues that the core of sociology is to reveal the hidden structures of the social worlds that lie in the social universe as well as its mechanisms, and this tend to certify their reproduction or their transformation. Sociology is dependent on the view that all effects have causes. Even if we all are affected by the social contexts we live in, our behaviour is not predetermined or determined by these contexts. What seems to be obvious, however, is that our lives are greatly affected by historical and social factors. Moreover, sociology is characterized in the way that it sees every human action as part of a larger context that is linked together in a net of interdependency.

---

47 Giddens Anthony (2007), Sociologi, pp 23
48 Pierre Bordieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant (1992), An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology, pp 7
49 Anthony Giddens (2007), Sociologl
3.3 Reproduction in Education

_Pierre Bourdieu (2008) studied education system and its reproduction mechanisms. He referred to the term Cultural Capital as certain forms of knowledge; skill and education combined with higher expectations of parents and teachers which gives some individuals a higher status in society. He saw Cultural Capital as a characteristic that helped to solidify social status. He described, according to Giddens (2007), that the elites in the society together with the culture elites are the ones holding the control over the education system and their access to ensure the economic power, thoughts, tastes and patterns of the economy structure in the battle for resources^50. Bourdieu sees speaking properly and succeeding in the school is a form of Cultural capital. ^51_

He saw the elite’s children as privileged, in the sense that they already possesses most of the cultural capital (such as; information, skills and access) that facilitate their education experience. This, in turn, makes educational system easier for them to navigate since the elites are the ones who have control over economic resources. He meant that privileged children likely have parents who have advanced degrees or are college graduates, who may know influential people that can influence the school. Since those parents are highly educated, they would likely replicate in their children such as; how to behave, what the expectations are and they would be able to push the child and give him/her the resources that are needed in order to succeed.

The less privileged children do not often have the same set of information, skills and access; they have less cultural capital to invest in the system of education. Less privileged children often end up in a school environment where there may be less qualified teachers, they might have parents who are not educated to a higher level and therefore, the parents struggle to understand the system as well as their children. Non-elites also do not have control over their economic resources where they often have an occupation that depends on their ability to perform a task for someone else, where elites are usually the ones employing because they are the ones who more often than not have total control of their economic resources. They are the ones who employ. If one has less cultural capital, one is therefore, always dependent on the elites to maintain a middle-class standard in one’s life. ^52. Bernstein has further developed this theory back in 1970, where he noticed that children with different social backgrounds developed different linguistic codes, such as their way of talking and using the language that later_

^50 Giddens Anthony (2007), Sociologi, pp 120-121
^51 Bourdieu Pierre and Passeron Jean-Claude (2008), Reproduktionen: Bidrag till en teori om utbildningssystemet, pp 118-186
^52 Ibid: pp 117-133
correlate with their school attendance. His primary interest lied in the systematic differences in the way of using the language, both as a speaking form and in gestures/body language. Bernstein specifically compared rich and poor children. Bernstein’s two concepts are the *elaborated code* and the *restricted code*.

*Restricted code* is according to Bernstein working-class children’s language. It is restricted in the sense of using a language that contains a vast amount of meanings with a few words, each of which have a complex set of connotations and act like an index, pointing the hearer to a lot more information that remains unsaid. It is a way of speaking where there is a great deal of shared and taken-for-granted knowledge. Many people from the working-class live in a relative- or neighbour oriented culture where some norms and values are taken for granted, therefore, are not expressed in language.

*Elaborated code* is a way of speaking that can stand on its own because it is complete and full of detail. Most people overhearing a conversation in elaborated code would be able to comprehend it without seeing the image to understand it. The linguistic development for middleclass children is according to Bernstein, characterized in that they learn a developed code, i.e. a way of speaking, indicating that the meaning of words can be adapted in various situations. This facilitates the children to generalise and express their abstract ideas.

According to Bernstein, children using the *elaborated code* accomplish better at school than children using *restricted code* when it comes to the formal requirements that the school demands. This, because of the children’s (with restricted code) way of conducting the language does not match the school’s language norms. Bourdieu argue that the school examination systems legitimise this reproduction of the social order where exam certificates of skill of this structure places less privileged children’s background in an unfavourable position.

Giddens (2003) argues that “in a modern society, people must be equipped with the base skills such as, reading, writing, counting and basic knowledge of the physical, social and economic environment they live in...”

54, this goes hand in hand with technology such as, computers which many schools and households have access to. Giddens (2003) explained that technologies have created a gap between schools that have access to technologies and those who have not. He referred to this with the term “information poverty”. He further argues that there is no technologically universal solution to the problem, that in many underdeveloped countries, they are still struggling with illiteracy and having access to electricity, which is often required in order to succeed in education.

55

---

53 Berstein Basil (2003) Class, Codes and Control
54 Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 417
3.4 Social Reproduction

Bourdieu states that one does not realize that there are appropriate social conditions in a family that seem to be natural for some to possess and some do not understand that it is by far not universal. He meant that family, by its definition, is a privilege that has elevated to universal norm. He explained that those who have the privilege to have a “normal” family might require that others also have a “normal” family that with the same privileges as they have, by having access to what is required by what the privileged demands of others. Bourdieu means, “The family plays a crucial role in the maintenance of the social order, of the reproduction, not only biological but also social respect, that is, for the reproduction of the social space and the social relations structure”\textsuperscript{56}. It is within a family that accumulation of capital in various forms transfers between generations to generation such as symbolic capital (family name), economic capital (material heritage) and cultural capital. Family is, therefore, the very essence of ensuring ones capital unit where it has become a reproductive strategy to solidify social status.\textsuperscript{57}

Bourdieu argues that in the modern society, the State is responsible for the construction of the official categories that structures both population and human thinking. He states that, “economic and social effects (such as, child support), the State strives to benefit a certain kind of family organization, to strengthen those who can adapt to the organizational and by all means, both material and symbolic to foster a logical and moral conformism that help to create a consensus on a system of forms to perceive and construct the world, a system in which in this form of organization, the family, is the main building block”.\textsuperscript{58}

3.5 Social Reflexivity

According to Giddens (2007), social reflexivity stands for the fact that we constantly have to think and reflect upon the circumstances in which we live our lives in. Giddens focused on the changes that reflected upon the changes that have occurred in people’s thinking, which is expressed in reflexivity. He meant that reflexivity is in both our modern society and in us.

Reflexivity is both our constant questioning, which is based on the flow of information in our modern society, and also the globalisation’s modernity. Giddens believe that people today are more critical and more knowledgeable, which you have to be in order to survive in today’s globalised society. At the same time, however, it leads to more/bigger consequences. One of the global characterisation of our modern

\textsuperscript{56} Bourdieu Pierre (2004), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 120
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid: pp 118-122
\textsuperscript{58} Bourdieu Pierre (2004), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 122
society is the social events and relations that in distance affect close relations and self-identity. Today’s global society, according to Giddens, is all about relationships and encounters the accessibility elsewhere of the world. Individuals’ ability to choose in today’s modern society is quite different to what it has been in the past. We as individuals have more options and diversity to choose between, and according to Giddens, today’s struggle lies in self-identity.59

3.6 Giddens’ concept of Poverty and Social exclusion

I have chosen to highlight both poverty and social exclusion to describe the informants’ situations in order for the reader to better understand the great significance of these terms. Giddens divided these terms, mainly because exclusion differs from poverty on where it focuses in several factors that hinder people from having access to those opportunities that others in the society have.60

3.6.1 Poverty

According to Giddens (2007), there are two concepts of poverty: absolute poverty and relative poverty. The first mentioned is based on the idea of existence minimum where the conditions need to be met in order to maintain one’s health. Absolute poverty refers to deprivation of basic human needs such as water, food, sanitation etc. However, many countries are not unanimous on how to determine existence minimum, thus it is better to use the term relative poverty. Relative poverty is economic inequality related to the country and its living standards. Giddens (2007) mentioned that people who use the relative poverty referred to as culturally defined, cannot therefore, measure poverty from a universal view of deprivation or lack. He argues that what may seem as important in one place might as well be consider as luxury in another else. He states that the view of poverty might change as a society changes. This paper uses relative poverty in terms of what the informants’ stated during the interview as the parents/caregivers identified their lack of materials. Although most of the parents/caregivers are struggling for food on a daily basis, they do not define themselves as living in extreme poverty.

3.6.2 Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a broader concept than sub-class. According to Giddens, it is a term used in sociology to describe new forms of injustices and inequality in the society. It focuses on the processes, i.e. the underlying mechanisms to exclusion such as, living in a decay area with dilapidated schools and little opportunities to find work in the community. All of this minimizes the condition to create a better livelihood and creates an exclusion from other people that have these opportunities in the society.

59 Giddens Anthony (2007), Sociologi, pp 128-129
60 Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 286
Giddens describes social exclusion as something that can take various forms, such as living in a suburb with high criminality and low housing standard. Exclusion can be described in three different terms: Economic; where people can feel excluded when it comes to production and consumption, (a simple thing such as not having a phone can create an exclusion because in today’s society, having a phone creates a connection between friends, family etc.). Politic; where people do not have access to create an active political engagement, to create a representation and/or be a part in different levels of the political process and Social; where people find themselves marginalised in the society where access to various activities such as museum, cultural, sport fields etc. are limited. According to Giddens, people who are marginalised often feel excluded within and outside home environments’ activities. The social exclusion also applies to not just being excluded from people or society, one can also exclude himself from other parts of the society such as saying no to work, being economically inactive or abstain himself from voting in the general exclusions. Giddens emphasizes that social exclusion is the interaction between people’s responsibilities and their ability to act but on the other hand is the role that social forces play when it comes to forming their life conditions.\textsuperscript{61} I have chosen to use social exclusion/marginalised people to describe the informant’s (parents/caregiver) condition within and outside their home environment.

3.7 Lay trauma theory

Trauma is according to Jeffrey C. Alexander something that does not naturally exist, he meant that it is socially constructed, culturally conceived. Lay trauma theory is based on an individual or collective group that has experienced “naturally occurring events that shatter an individual … sense of well-being”\textsuperscript{62}. He mean that, “human beings need security, order, love and connection”\textsuperscript{63} and when these needs are not met (because of the occurring events, that violates an individual), the result would be trauma and the individual would be traumatized. There are two versions of Lay Trauma Theory such as, enlightenment and psychoanalytic. The enlightenment version suggests, according to Alexander, that “trauma is a kind of rational response to abrupt change whether at the individual or social level...The objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by the actors, their responses are lucid and the effects of this responses are problem solving and progressive”\textsuperscript{64} he states that the effects could be that that they become shocked or outraged which can result in disaster in the physical environment. He

\textsuperscript{61} Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 286-290
\textsuperscript{63} IBID (pp 3)
\textsuperscript{64} IBID (pp 3)
argues that such trauma could be efforts to change the circumstances that created them. The psychoanalytic version suggests, that according to the academic version is unconsciously that the individual “can become so frightened that they can actually repress the trauma itself.../...rather than activating direct cognition and rational understanding”

he meant that in order for the individual to recover, he/she must work with the problem itself. He amplifies that to prevent bad events to become traumatic, powerful, productive and persuasive, social structures has to intervene.

3.8 Summary

According to Giddens, today’s society is characterised by wealth of information. Changes in the society can be found in globalization and the increase of reflexivity. Globalization is present in our everyday life. Distant relationships and events affect us, which in turn leads to an increase of reflexivity. Social reflexivity stands for the fact that we constantly have to think and reflect upon the circumstances in which we live our lives. Giddens believes that reflexivity is the very essence for our survival. The importance of the parents’ investment in a child lies in their cultural capital that is greatly affected by the social contexts they live in. It affect their future such as, their school achievement. Having more cultural capital enhances a child’s possibility of going to a more qualified school in order to obtain a better occupation; it also enhances a child’s reflexivity of the social context he/she lives in. It is the ones who speak in elaborated code who often succeed better in examinations (it is natural in their environment to go to school, having parents that push them to be better, having the access to resources and having the same values as their parents). The children at issue have learning difficulties, their parents/caregivers has invested less cultural capital. The parents’ reflexivity relies on a marginalised district and their own experiences that might result in trauma (enlightenment).

Is there any signs of reflexivity from the parents’ and caregivers’ point of view, being marginalise and living in a marginalized district? How has their own cultural capital heritage affected their children? Will the children live in the same pattern as their parents/caregivers?

In the light of these questions and the mentioned theories, I want to examine the underlying social causes that resulted children at issue to have learning difficulties.

_______________________________

65 Ibid: pp 5

66 Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 548-549
4. Interview Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a short summary of the results of my interviews. The aim is to provide my reader with a comprehensive view of my investigation and to provide a background to the reasoning engines that will be at the basis of my analysis. The results chapter begins with a presentation of my informants. As mentioned earlier, the parents’, the caregivers’ and the children’s name are modified in respect to their wishes.

4.1 The parents and the caregivers

Flavia\(^{67}\) is 35 years old. She is the mother of five children. Two of her children study at Escola Daniel Rebouças; her eight-year-old son, Eunício and nine-year-old son Gustavo. None of the boys know how to read nor write. She does not have time or ability to help her sons with homework because of the lack of economy and the fact that she herself is illiterate. Flavia works as a housekeeper and barely has enough money for food to feed her five children. She is trying to convince her mother to help her financially by moving in with her. Their house has no electricity, no running water and is approximately 30-45min walking distance to Escola Daniel Rebouças. Her neighbours help her to babysit her two youngest a couple of times a week.

The father of Eunício and Gustavo, abuse/abused Flavia mentally and physically before and after the boys were born. Flavia referred Eunício’s and Gustavo’s vast learning difficulties as them being blocked. According to her, the children have not only witnessed violence at home but they have also been abuse mentally and physically. She remembered a time when the boys witnessed their father kicking and beating her (she told him that she was pregnant and he tried to kick the baby out of her), the boys started to cry. Their father started to beat the boys instead for being weak and told them that they are not man enough. He took the gun he had from his bag, gave it to Eunício, dragged him towards his mom, pointed the gun at her face, and told him, “Show me that you are a man and shoot her.”\(^{68}\) Eunício started to cry and screamed that he did not want to. The father turned to him and said, “Then choose you or your mom!”\(^{69}\) As they heard the police’s, sirens the father started to run and disappear. She said

---

\(^{67}\) Interview with Flavia in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25

\(^{68}\) “Me mostra que você é homem e atira nela”

\(^{69}\) “Escolhe você ou sua mãe!”
that it was humiliating but she felt more secure when the police arrived. To her disappointment, the police blamed her for being “stupid” for staying with her molester. She went to the boys and told them to sleep. She said that Eunício stopped talking since that day. He was only six years old. Flavia is still married to the father but he is rarely home.

**Cristina** is 25 years old. She does not work and she copes economically via bolsa familia. She is the guardian of her eight-year-old nephew Paulo (studies at Escola Daniel Rebouças, 20-25 minutes by walking distance) who cannot read nor write. He is underdeveloped. Their house is made of metal plates and broken bricks, no running water and no electricity. Besides taking care of her nephew, she also has a five-month-old baby son and a four-year-old daughter. Of all the family I visited, this family was the poorest. None of her children’s father were there to help emotionally, physically nor economically. She cannot write and she was, at that time of my interview, still learning to read. Paulo’s father (left Paulo to be with his new family) has abused him, emotionally and physically. Christina referred this as a cause of Paulo’s learning difficulties at school and that it is why he is *blocked*. Both of his parents left him when he was younger but his father and his new family live nearby and beats him quite often. This boy hardly talked. He often cried and none of his classmates wanted to play with him. A couple of weeks before I left Brazil, he was in a hospital. According to the neighbours and police, his father tried to drown him by the river. He would not have been able to survive if not for the people by the river who stopped his father.

**Teresa** is a 65-year-old grandma who has three grandchildren living with her. One of the children is eight-year-old Leticia who goes to Escola Daniel Rebouças (twenty minutes walking distance). Their house has electricity but no running water, has approximately two bedrooms, one small kitchen, one small living room and one big flat-screen TV. Teresa and her grandchildren get by financially thanks to her state pension and bolsa familia. Teresa is the one taking care of the two small ones because their mother (Teresa’s daughter Ana) left her children there. Ana has abused drugs far too long and she has never been there to visit her children. Teresa thinks that this is the reason why Leticia does not know how to write, which make her *blocked* from learning. No one knows whom the father (s) of the children is or where they are. Teresa is sick, has a hard time to walk up and down the hill to their house. Every day is a struggle; she has heart disease and is afraid of how long she is going to live. Leticia is much loved and she knows how to read. She gets help from her 17-year-old cousin (who lives with them) that works to help to provide for the family.

---

70 Interview with Cristina in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
71 Interview with Teresa in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
Paula72 is a 40-year-old mother who has an eight-year-old son, Manuelito that studies at Escola Daniel Rebouças. None of them know how to write nor read. Manuelito has a father (who works a lot) who he hardly sees. He has a great relationship with his mother. Their house is quite small with no bedroom, no electricity nor running water and it is approximately 40 minutes away from the school. Paula blamed herself for Manuelito not knowing how to read or write because she did not go to any school. She said that it was never a priority in her family to study. What was important was to find a job. She said that Manuelito will never be a doctor (she laughed), that it is not just in their genes. Paula does not have any contact with her parents since her father has sexually abused her. She ran away from home at a young age and lived homeless for a period, where she found temporary work in order to survive until she met Manuelito’s father. They get by economically via bolsa família and the father’s salary. She does not believe in education, she believes in hard work (physical) and hopes that her son will understand the meaning of it to be able to put food on the table.

Fátima73 is a 36-year-old mother who has three children, thereof, her nine-year-old daughter Faviana who studies at Escola Daniel Rebouças. Fátima does not have a good relationship with her daughter Faviana and she is verbally abusive towards her. Faviana lives half of the time on the street and half of the time with her mother Fátima. Faviana is violent, which illustrated at the school as she beat her classmates by kicking them until they fall down and bleed. She has been working as a prostitute since she was five and she has no respect for authorities. She cannot read or write and often threw the books at the teachers as they tried to teach her how to read. Fátima and the teachers found her too difficult to work with, which resulted in them letting her do what she wanted at the school, such as harassing other children and teachers. They have given up on her.

4.2 The professionals
Marcos António Cardoso74(47) is a Priest and a Professor in Theology in Banco da Vitória where he lives. Cardoso believed that the absence of the family is in fact a main impediment to a child’s learning. He said that it also effects when a child lives in a hostile environment with alcohol, drugs, violence etc. He stated that children and their families in Banco da Vitória are not only marginalised people who live in a marginalised community but they are also poor in the sense of knowledge. He said that, access does exist but if people never had the tools (knowledge) to use what is in front of them, it then does not

72 Interview with Paula in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
73 Interview with Fátima in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
74 Interview with Marcos António Cardoso Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-01
matter. This, according to Cardoso, can create a circle of poverty within the family and within Banco da Vitória that might never produce educated people.

**Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis**\(^{75}\) is a nun and a teacher\(^ {76}\) who has worked with children for almost 25 years. She believed that many children at the school in Escola Daniel Rebouças are *blocked* because the family is broken. She said that when children do not have the basics, such as food, knowledge of how to take care of their hygiene etc. and surrounded by drugs, they do not develop. This leads to children becoming boundless, which makes it difficult for them to adjust when they go to school as they face limitations and rules. She also stated that parents’ immense impact on a child’s learning ability is important, such as taking an interest in their child/children. Irmã Lourdes amplified that to be able to help the children, parents’ need to have access to help. She meant that the government must be willing to interfere and provide the help that is necessary and needed by giving more resources to Banco da Vitória and the school; otherwise, the children are the ones who will suffer the most.

**Dr. José Rebouças**\(^ {77}\)\(^ {62}\) is a Psychologist professor at University UNIME – ITABINA between Ilhéus and Itabuna. Dr. José Rebouças argued that the causes of a child’s learning difficulties are the environment, such as home, school and the place where they live. He stated that it is important for a parent to take an interest in their child’s development. He emphasizes that the child’s development depends on the environment. Within a poor family, it is difficult for a child to advance or develop when they don’t have access. He said that any child could be *blocked* if they are surrounded in a hostile environment, lack of food and school resources etc.

**Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha**\(^ {78}\)\(^ {51}\), is a nun, teacher and School Principal at Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças. She started to work in the school in 2011 because of the need of new management. Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha believed that the children are being *blocked* because it is the effect of the bad and poor structure of the family. She said that many of the children at the school are surrounded by domestic violence, drug abuse etc. She also stressed that the neglect and abandonment of a parent can *block* a child that it often results in he/she becoming broken inside. Irmã Vilma stated that the other reason of a child being *blocked* could be the family’s economy, meaning that if the parents do not work it could create depressions, which affect the whole family, especially the children. She also reflected

---

\(^{75}\) Interview with Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis in Banco da Vitória. 2012-06-04  
\(^{76}\) Licenciatura em Letras. I could not find a proper translation for her focus.  
\(^{77}\) Interview with Dr. José Rebouças in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-27, 2012-06-01  
\(^{78}\) Interview with Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-21
upon the lack of school enforcement and resources that is limited. She said that the children desperately need a psychiatrist and more teachers but no one wants to work for free. She said that the school has been trying to find support from the government and they are always willing to help but there is no action. Since she started working at the school, the children have been the priority but she rapidly realized that Banco da Vitória has too little to offer for the children and their families. She amplified that stronger structures has to be build and the government needs to understand that they have to invest in Banco da Vitória.

**Eunice Souza Santos de Oliveira**79 (53) is a Chef who has been working in Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças for 16 years; she is also a resident of Banco da Vitória/ Ilhéus. Eunice argued that a child’s learning difficulties many times depend on the parents being divorced/separated/single and their interest in their child, she finds the presence of a parent as one of the most important element in a child’s ability to learn. She stated that, many of the children got abandoned by their parent/s and it makes it difficult for a child to have a future when no one is around to help. Eunice argued that in many cases, many of the children are exhausted for being the one that takes over the role as a parent at such a young age as eight or nine. They usually stop going to school. A child’s learning abilities develops faster if the child has the main role models present in its life as a mother or a father, mainly because having them completes a child’s progress in life. She stated that many of the children at the school come from a broken family, which often leads to children feeling abandoned and neglected. The other reason would be the family’s financial condition (that could give the child the right tools to succeed in her/his education). Eunice is born and raised in Banco da Vitória, she said that although it is one the most dangerous districts in Ilhéus, it is also the safest place to be. She meant that people have each other, they know where and who to turn to if something happens but she also stated that the residents usually do not turn to the authorities for help because they do not trust them.

### 4.3 Summary
The parents and the caregivers reflection towards children’s learning difficulties is something that they feel close to and understand because they recognise it quite well as being the victim of neglect, being abused physically and psychologically. All of the parents and caregivers were illiterate. All of the parents and caregivers struggle financially, they are relatively poor. None of them can provide a better environment for a child to study or having access to materials and relations that could enhance a child’s learning. None of the parents answered the causes in a larger context, such as reflecting upon what the

---

79 *Interview with Eunice Souza Santos de Oliveira in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-21*
government, school or other actors can do to improve their situation in order to facilitate their own and their children’s condition. However, their concern for their children demonstrated in them taking time and making an effort for an interview.

The professionals answered in an elaborated way since all of them are educated, it facilitated for them to explain on how they reflected upon the children’s learning difficulties in a larger context. They saw the causes as not just being within the family (as being traumatised or being abused) but they also recognised that government has to interfere. The responsibilities lied in many actors such as the government, school and Banco da Vitória and parents, that there has to be a co-operation between all involved actors to be able to improve the conditions for the children as well as the residents of Banco da Vitória. They emphasised that the future lies in the education.
5. Reproduction of life?

The discussion in the analysis section has its starting point in some of the informants’ (parents and caregivers) children who have learning difficulties. The analysis is based on my empirical study, elected theories and previous research that will connect them together in order to provide a greater understanding of my study.

5.1 Banco da Vitória and social context

“They are the daughters of single mothers ... who had their first child at the age of 14 - 13 years old, who are grandparents at the age of 30. And her 13 year old daughter will then also have a child because it is precisely the lives of these people.”

It is clear in Ph.D. Theologian and Priest Marcos Cardoso’s statement that the parents’ cultural capital reproduces as he describes most of the residents’ situation in Banco da Vitória. The problem lies according to Cardoso is in reflexivity, the parents, caregivers and their children do not reflect upon the environment because it has become natural. He explained that being poor not only lies in the material or environment but it also lies in the mind of the people as a chain of poverty. He meant that the residents do not have the ability to reflect because they are born in an environment that is marginalized. They do not have the capability to reflect upon, their choices, responsibilities and how to improve their conditions. How can someone reflect upon a child’s learning difficulties if they too are traumatised by their own experiences? Both professor Cardoso and Dr Rebouças saw consumption as one of the main catalysts of the problem, because it demonstrates how people that have more cultural capital penetrate the minds of people in Banco da Vitória. Professor Cardoso and Dr Rebouças explained that it is easier for the residents to consume, such as buying a TV or merchandise for the kitchen because it is a way for them to disappear from their reality. It has become natural to buy a TV instead of repairing a roof and the children see this as a natural action where they grow up thinking the same. Most of the informants (parents and caregivers) do not have electricity nor running water because they prioritize food. Cardoso elucidated that in a situation of many cultures and within those cultures, there are many sub cultures, it has become a culture that is marginalised of the marginalised people living in a state of total abandonment.

---

Interview with PhD theologian and Priest Marcos António Cardoso in Banco da Vitória 2012-05-01
See Appendix 1
Even though Giddens (2007) believe that people today are more critical and more knowledgeable, Cardoso sees the residents in Banco da Victória as the contrary. The impregnated culture he reflected upon does not allow the residents to think about social reflexivity because according to him, one must be able to reflect not just in the society but also reflect upon themselves and their role in it. The children of the informants (parents/caregivers) are surrounded by this environment and then inherit this cultural capital; they are the effect of their parents’ cultural heritage by being the product of their own history and surroundings.81 The government needs to interfere in this situation otherwise they become even more excluded from the society. Dr. José Rebouças stated that these problems could be prevented, if the government provides the right tools to help the children, not just in school resources but also address to the issues of children and adults that are “lost”. Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha amplified that stronger structures has to be build and the government needs to understand that they have to invest in Banco da Vitória. Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis specified that the government must be willing to give the help that is necessary and needed by giving more resources to Banco da Vitória. Otherwise, the children are the ones who loses. It is clear that the parents’/caregiver’s children lose since they are the ones who have learning difficulties.

Both Professor Cardoso and Dr José Rebouças were born privileged with lots of cultural capital that they inherited from their parents. Dr José Rebouças lives in an environment where there is less violence and education is an important factor in his family. All of his children are college graduates and some have advanced degrees. Both Professor Cardoso and Dr José Rebouças does not see that poverty is the cause of the violence, prostitution and drugs but rather in the minds of the residents in Banco da Vitória. They meant that there is access to resources but one needs to work for it. The parents and caregivers cultural capital may aggravate their children’s opportunity. They stated that, it is the parents’/caregivers’ job to seek the help that is necessary for their children rather than wait for the government to act. However, they do not reflect upon their own commitment and their own influence to the government by being a force to press the government to increase the children’s development and livelihood. Being educated and “understanding” the causes of the problem, why do they speak rather than act? Giddens (2003) argue that “what we do in our lives affect other people”82, Professor Cardoso and Dr Rebouças do not reflect upon their own influence. They both have high status in the society but it also blinded them to act because it is natural for them to know and “understand” but they segregate themselves from the residents of Banco da Vitória by not acting to the problem. They both could be the connections the children at issue and their parents/caregivers need in order to brake the chain in reproduction of

---

81 Bourdieu Pierre (2003), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 119-120
82 Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 20
inequalities. It is here where their role in the society matter, where they both can intermediate between the residents of Banco da Vitória and the government because being a priest (Cardoso) and a powerful professor (Dr. Rebouças) who have connection international and national gives them the opportunity to act, as they are respected in all social statuses in Ilhéus, Brazil. Why did they not act? Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha and Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis have their commitment to the Catholic Church and their religion that often lies in a scheduled matter where they often pray or go to masses. This automatically segregates them from the residents of Banco da Vitória as they see them in a passive role and victimize them. They do not reflect upon their own view nor do they reflect upon their own distance from the residents. However, having the role as a nun, Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha does not give an effect towards the people working in the government, as they often seem to cooperate but never act on the commitments they say to Irmã Rocha, they would do.

The parents and caregivers may not reflect upon their own role as abused mothers but lacking of cultural capital inevitably exclude them from the society. They need to have new knowledge in order to act to the visible problems in their daily lives.
5.2 Family’s cultural capital

“For the poor family, they cannot give the child the assimilation he/she needs because they do not have the resources. And those ones who come from a family with abuse or any use of drugs get confused in this environment. It does not give the child the right stimulus; on the contrary, it makes it more difficult for a child to learn in school. Children that have a parent/s that earns money can many times pay a tutor to help their child progress in school. But for a poor family: they do not have the money to pay a tutor for their child. Their children do not have the same environment to study as other children do.” ⁴⁸³

Dr José Rebouças stressed that a child has to have the right environment to be able to succeed in their study. Children who has less cultural capital, as the informant’s (parents/caregivers) children, do not have that opportunity. It is here where the government plays an important role to interfere rather than to exclude the already marginalized people. The children do not only have less cultural capital but the informants children suffer from trauma, such as 8-year-old Eunício who stopped talking, and 8-year-old Paulo who hardly spoke because of their fathers aggravated assault.

The trauma that Fáviana, Eunício, Gustavo, Paulo and Leticia have experienced/experiencing, such as having a broken home environment, being mentally and physically abused by someone close, living in a dangerous environment (being surrounded with violence, drugs etc.), according to the informants, has blocked the children from learning. Children at issue have severe learning difficulties; they act violently towards each other and other children at the school. Their parents have replicated their trauma to their children.

“A child does not concentrate in school because they are still at home, therefore, they are blocked. A child can often say, “I don’t want to learn”. An example of what we often see is when the child’s mother is violently abused, the child loses respect for the teacher (because the teacher is a woman) therefore, he/she is blocked from learning./...“everything the child sees/feels, she reproduces it” ⁴⁸⁴

Reflections of Sister Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis during an interview in June 2012⁴⁸⁵, not just upon the issues mentioned above but she also explained the complexity of the role as the teacher as being a reminder of a mother that has been physical abused by the child’s father. In this case, Flavia⁴⁸⁶ has not reflected upon her significant role of how Eunico and Gustavo would see their teacher as she may

⁴⁸³ IBID. See Appendix 1
⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Irmã Lourdes se Fátima Alves de Assis in Banco da Vitória. 2012-06-04. See Appendix 1
⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Irmã Lourdes se Fátima Alves de Assis in Banco da Vitória. 2012-06-04. See Appendix 1
⁴⁸⁶ Interview with Flavia in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
remind them of their mother. She referred Eunício’s and Gustavo’s vast learning difficulties as them being *blocked*. The children according to her have not only witnessed violence at home but also the victim of both mental and physical abuse. Fatima⁸⁷ felt that she has lost Faviana long ago and have therefore not been able to reach through to her. All of the informants saw the children’s being *blocked* as a result of a parent’s absence, neglect and/or abuse but none of them have reflected upon their own role as mothers and the abuse they have experience/d may transfer to their children where they might lose respect for authorities (as Faviana) and women in general. Having no respect, for instance the teacher (woman) may affect their future school achievement that could create better livelihood for them and the future of Banco da Vitória. *Cultural capital* is skills, values etc. that children inherit from their parents. Do they also inherit abuse? Is this a part of their family’s *cultural capital* that they invest in the children? Giddens (2007)⁸⁸ believe in constant questioning of the circumstances that is around us but the *cultural capital* that these children possess seem to be determined by their parents/caregivers. How can they reflect upon something that seems to be inevitable and difficult to change, as there are many factors that aggravate their situation?

Parents/caregivers are also traumatised such as Faviana, Flavia, Paula and Christina, which might *block* them from *reflecting* upon the effect of their child’s/children’s future. It might be the reason as to why they have not reflected and questioned their own role in their children’s development. Do they have the ability to do so? Is it feasible for the parents/caregiver to reflect upon (in a greater context as they inherit their parents’ cultural capital) their child’s/children’s future? The children at issue are according to the informants, *blocked* from learning because of their *trauma*. The professionals saw these as a part of a cycle of inequality within and outside home environment.

Although, Bernstein studied working-class children, the informants’ child/children are *marginalised* since most of their parents do not have a job. They can therefore, not be classified as working-class. The children’s parents/caregiver spoke in *restricted code*; will the children then inherit this *cultural capital*? Moreover, since they are *relatively poor* does it mean according to Bernstein’s theory by being in one of lowest in the hierarchy in the education system, that they would be even more *restricted*?

Bourdieu argues that the parents are the ones that provide children with *Cultural Capital*, that they are the ones shaping their child/children to be comfortable and familiar in an environment such as school.

---

⁸⁷ *Interview with Fatima in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25*

⁸⁸ *Giddens Anthony (2007), Sociologi, pp 128*
He meant that a child’s thoughts and comprehension are being shaped in a certain social environment, which can give an immense impact on a child’s future school achievement.89

According to Eunice Souza Santos de Oliveira90, the presence of a parent is very important. She reflected upon some of the children’s situations (as many of children at issue were abandon by their parent/s) and the responsibility they can feel for being the ones that take over the role as a parent at such a young age as eight or nine. She said that it is difficult for a child to have a future when no one is around to help. In many cases, they usually stop going to school mainly because, according to her, they are exhausted. Bourdieu explains that these children are failing from the very beginning and as a result, they tend to not only fail at the school examinations but they also often ends up not going to school. Dr. José Rebouças explained that when a parent or a caregiver does not take an interest in a child’s education, often the children do not see the necessity to study. Because what they see the parents do, they reproduce and this action becomes normal “the children think that if their parents manage to live like this, they can too”99.

All the informants believe that having a parent/parents lies in the very essence in a child’s progress, they can therefore, help or destroy a child’s future. However, how could the informants (parents) show a responsibility towards their children regarding school achievement when they too are suffering from their own cultural heritage? How can the teachers in Escola Daniel Rebouças develop their own pedagogical progress when they do not have the resources that is needed and the classes are too big?

The parents/caregivers saw the visible problems such as violence, abuse and neglect that could affect their children’s learning difficulties but it also put them in a situation they comprehended and know quite well because it reflects upon their own situations as being the victim and/or being a witness of abuse. Christina92 referred Paulo’s learning difficulties at school because to being caused by the violent abused his father put him through and the absence of his mother. Teresa93 thought that the reason why Letícia does not know how to write is that she misses her mother Ana who has been abusing drugs long before Letícia was born, while Paula94 on the other hand blamed herself for being illiterate. Bourdieu

---

90 Interview with Eunice Souza Santos de Oliveira in Banco da Vitória. 2012-06-01
91 Interview with Dr. José Rebouças in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-27. See Appendix 1
92 Interview with Christina in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
93 Interview with Teresa in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
94 Interview with Paula in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
sees this as a reproduction of inequality in education where children have been affected by their parent/s education background.  

Even though Giddens (2007) sees today’s society in a western point of view as having a relatively functioning social system, I do not think that he reflected upon marginalised people living in a marginalised community as the parents and caregivers of the children in Banco da Vitória. The professionals see self-identity as an important issue, particularly for the parents. They meant that the parents/caregiver should question their role in the children’s lives more.

5.3 Reproduction in education?

In a poor family like in Banco da Vitoria, the government helps a family depending on their economy in the household. They have what we call here “Bolsa da família”. A family might receive 70R$ every month, so you can imagine how little it is if you have 1-3 children. It is impossible for the children to get any right stimulus if you are hungry and do not have the right environment. The government gives 600R$ every month after you become 65 years old, many of the children live with their grandparent/s, if you divide 600R$ in a household of 8 people which usually are, it is too little.

Dr. José Rebouças explained in an interview June 2012 the complexity of the Bolsa Familia Program. Bourdieu saw state as responsible “for the construction of the official categories that structures both the population and people’s thinking”, he may believe BFP is the elite’s way of ensuring their social status because of the unequal distribution. Although BFP aims to reduce poverty through families by investing in children, it somehow forfeits its task once the children finish elementary and secondary school, where less privileged children with low cultural capital tend to work instead of going to school.

Less privileged children with low cultural capital are provided for by the government through Bolsa Familia Program (BFP) but for the informants’ children who live in a marginalised community and study in Escola Daniel Rebouças, the quality and outcome of the system is a struggle. Out of the five parents/caregivers I have interviewed, only Teresa and Paula received contribution from BFP. Since Christina is not the biological mother of Paulo, the father is the one receiving the contribution and he

96 See Appendix 1
97 Bourdieu Pierre (2004), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 122
98 Thomas (2006) pp 33-34
does not give anything to help Christina with Paulo. Paula\textsuperscript{99} does not believe in education, she saw it as a way for the government to help her with her financial struggle. Although, Manuelito goes to school almost every day, Paula wants him to stop studying by the age of 15. She believed that hard work is the essence for true survival and this, is a part of the \textit{cultural capital} she wants to transfer to Manuelito.

None of the parents nor caregivers know how to write or read, they cannot help the children with their studies and all of their children are illiterate, except for Leticia that knows how to read. This is a reproduction of the \textit{cultural capital that they} replicated in their children. Even though they want to help their children in this issue, their own condition makes it difficult for them to do so.

According to the professionals, the causes of a child’s \textit{learning difficulties} relies not only on home environment but the historical context of the society, such as Banco da Vitória and how it would affect the future of Banco da Vitória itself by producing low educated people. Dr. José Rebouças argued that 40-50 years ago in the beginning of elementary school, the teachers had 60 days to literate the children. Nevertheless, since the government started with democratizing for all the children, the school system has become more efficient. It has, therefore, led to the successive development of Brazil. The joint responsibility would not work here, if the parent is illiterate and do not have the financial status to employ a tutor, as the parents/caregivers of the children.

However, because Escola Daniel Rebouças is non-governmental, the help that government states (FUNDEF) does not involve this elementary school. The government of Ilhéus distribute the resources firstly to public school, leaving the children at the Escola Daniel Rebouças to take over old books. It took more than one year for the school principal to receive the books that were needed for the children, nor does the teachers receive more pedagogical education that is desperately wanted and required. Besides the vast difference in levels of learning, some of the children need someone to talk to such as a counsellor, which usually exists in most elementary schools in Sweden. Escola Daniel Rebouças does not have the resources to employ a counsellor nor more teachers to increase the children’s development.

This demonstrated that Bourdieu’s statement regarding education system favours individuals who have more \textit{cultural capital} but the state also affected children’s learning by not giving the right tools for the children, parents and school.

5.4 Summary

The informants (parents/caregivers) are greatly affected by the social contexts they live in and their children’s \textit{learning difficulties} is the results of their \textit{cultural capital}. The parents/caregivers are the

\textsuperscript{99} Interview with Paula in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-25
product from their own cultural heritage, as they replicate their own parents’ education level. The children’s parents/caregivers come from terrible home environment where some continues to live in an environment of abuse. They are the product of their parents’ cultural capital and their child’s/children’s future may continue to live in the same pattern as them. The children at issue are dependent on their cultural capital they inherit from their parents.

I do think that Bernstein’s elaborated- and restricted code reflected upon the informants’ status, whereas elaborated code is used by the professionals and restricted code is used by the parents/caregivers with low education level and low cultural capital. These codes are formed by the social circumstances that the informants live in.

According to Giddens (2003), Social reflexivity stands for the fact that we constantly have to think and reflect upon the circumstances in which we live our lives in. Although he believes that reflexivity is the very essence for our survival\(^\text{100}\), the informants have reflected upon children’s learning difficulties in various ways that demonstrated a great contrast between the informative society and the accessibility to this information.

\(^{100}\) Giddens Anthony (2003), Sociologi, pp 548-549
6. Final Discussion

This chapter outlines the final discussion that answers my questions at issue and ends with a conclusion that reflects upon my thesis as a whole.

This paper intends to analyse the underlying social causes via a sociological perspective in how the informants reflected upon the/their child’s learning difficulties at the elementary school Casa da Criança/Escola Daniel Rebouças. I hope to have shown the informants similar and dissimilar reflections to this problem. My questions at issue are: which are the main social causes that affect a child’s learning difficulties in Escola Daniel Rebouças, according to the informants/interviewees? How has the informant’s own situation (such as; background, education level, parenthood, socio economy etc.) affect their own perception in the child’s/children’s learning difficulties?

The informants saw: home environment (such as children being abuse/d, neglected, being the ones taking the role of a parent to their siblings) Banco da Vitória (as children being surrounded with violence and drugs). They also put education (by not be given the right tools to the right assimilation) and corruption (government does not function as it should and the people do not receive the help that is needed) as additional reasons to why children may struggle. All the informants believed that a parent is the very core of a child’s progress and can therefore, help or destroy a child’s future.

The term *blocked* is being used by the informants, as an effect of the trauma the children have experienced that has aggravated the child’s learning difficulties. I find it as something that limits the informants to find a solution to the problem as seeking psychological treatment. It has somehow become comfortable for them to use the term *blocked*. These children need help in order for them to change the social reproduction of their parents/caregivers cultural capital.

The informants’ cultural capital has affected their way of reflecting upon their own perception in a child’s learning difficulties. The parents/caregivers for instance, have not reflected upon their own role as mothers/caregivers, where their children might lose respect for them, as they have not fought back towards their abuser, which demonstrated at the school, as they do not listen to the teacher. This in turn might lead to children losing valuable information that could help them succeed better in the school environment. The parents’ (who talked in restricted code) reflected upon home environment, their own parenthood, experiences and education level because this is something they comprehend and recognise well. Some of the parents/caregivers believed that the problem lies in their own illiteracy. Bourdieu argues that it is because they are placed in this certain society and that it reproduces the inequality in
education where children have been affected by their parent/s own education background and that this continues their low-status in the society.\textsuperscript{101}

Bernstein’s language code does not necessary say that a child that comes from a lower social group tends to perform worse at school, but it helps us to understand why. The children of the informants’ (studying at Escola Daniel Rebouças who struggle for financial support in order to survive) interdependency with their parents combined with the school’s lack of resources and good quality of education, and living in a shantytown Banco da Vitória have given the children little chance to succeed in their future school achievements. This can lead to low work prospects where the children’s parents/caregiver transfer their cultural capital through their children.

The professionals (who talked in elaborated code) connected the problem at issue to a larger context (such as; school, poverty, society, being marginalized, corruption, violence etc.) that might effect not just the children in concern but also the people in Banco da Vitória. They saw poverty as children not having the materials and access to a higher education as cause. However, Professor Marcos Cardoso saw poverty in the mind of the people as cultural heritage (mass consumption) from already marginalised people. The professionals saw both internal and external factors that could contribute a child’s learning difficulties, where corruption, lack of resources at the school and home, living in a marginalized community, being marginalised and the lack of governmental support all play a part in the cause. Dr. José Rebouças amplified that the residents in Banco da Vitória cannot only rely on others to help but they too must seek for work instead of waiting for other solutions. It might be easier for the people coming from a privileged home to state this, but I do think that there must be a reason why criminalisation in Banco da Vitória is widely known for being high. However, both Cardoso and Rebouças did not reflect upon their own commitment and their own influence to the government of Ilhéus as being a force, to press the government to invest by increasing the resources in Banco da Vitória.

Although, they are educated and have the understanding and knowledge about the struggle the children encounter in their daily lives both in school and home environment, they still do not act to the problem. Their own cultural capital has excluded them from being a motivating force in the lives of the children in Banco da Vitória. Both of them could be the connections the children at issue and their parents/caregivers need in order to brake the chain in reproduction of inequalities. Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha and Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis exclude themselves by their commitment to the Catholic Church and their religion, which automatically segregates them from the residents of Banco da Vitória as they see them in a passive role and victimise them. They do not reflect upon their own view nor do they reflect upon their own distance from the residents. The parents and caregivers may not reflect upon their own role as abused mothers but lacking of cultural capital inevitably exclude them

\textsuperscript{101} Bourdieu Pierre (2004), Praktiskt förnuft: Bidrag till en handlingsteori, pp 119-120
from the society. They need to have new knowledge in order to act to the visible problems in their daily lives.

The need for cooperation between the main actors, such as government, school and teachers, is necessary. The resources have to be distributed in a more equalised manner. The focus has to be on children in every perspective, where everyone has to invest support, whether it is emotional or financial. The government needs to support the parents who too suffer from trauma. It is therefore, important to stress the family’s impact on a child’s environment by education in order to prevent their child to end up in the situation of delinquency. Parents have to take an interest in a child’s daily life, such as education, and try to provide a better environment for the children to study. The mothers’ need to be educated so they can find an occupation that could benefit themselves and their children’s development and learning. Furthermore, it is vital for a child’s progress as he/she enters the world of education to have a good and supporting relationship with his/her parents. However, in order for a family to provide for their child’s educational needs, they need to have a generated income and for a poor family living in a shantytown as Banco da Vitória, it is a struggle. There has to be collaboration and cooperation from all angles. Since everything is interconnected - everyone in Banco da Vitória loses if there were to be a continuation of no, or little, cooperation.
References


Chawla Anita Dr. (2012). “The relationship between family environment and academic achievement” Indian Streams Research Journal Vol.1 no XII. India


http://bfi.uchicago.edu/humcap/wp/papers/11_Brazil_JR.pdf
Last visit: 2013-06-04

Last visit: 2013-06-04


Websites:
Bolsa Família: http://www.mds.gov.br/bolsafamilia/
Last visit: 2012-10-29

Last visit: 2013-01-09

Brazil-Education: www.un.int/brazil/brasil/brazil-education.htm
Last visit: 2012-10-28
Appendix 1

Original quotations from the informants

1. “Os pais não ajudam as suas crianças porque eles não têm o interesse. Quando a criança chega em casa da escola, normalmente, eles apenas assistem à TV com a criança. As famílias Brasileiras que vêm de áreas mais pobres são pobres, suscetíveis à dissolução, separação em casa, alcoolismo e/ou o uso de outras drogas. A criança fica confusa nesse ambiente. Não é para a criança um estímulo certo, pelo contrário; fica mais difícil para a criança aprender na escola.”102

2. “As drogas estão tomando conta dos jovens. A maioria dos nossos jovens estão cada vez mais buscando uma forma de viver nas drogas ambiente. Além disso, quando as meninas / mulheres entram no mundo da experiência das drogas, é mais difícil para elas para saírem desse ambiente. Mas para os homens, eles só consomem drogas se tiverem dinheiro, enquanto que as mulheres têm o corpo para vender e consumir a droga em qualquer momento que necessitem. Por isso, a dificuldade em ajudar essas meninas a sair desse mundo. As meninas também são analfabetas e muitas delas não sabem ler, porque elas se "perderam" muito cedo.”103

3. "Elas são o que é chamado de desordem social, vítimas".104

4. “Elas são as filhas das mães que são mães solteiras... que tiveram a sua primeira criança aos 14/13 anos de idade, que são avós aos 30 e que a sua filha de 13 anos de idade, irá também ter uma outra criança porque é precisamente a vida dessas pessoas.”105

5. “Uma criança não pode concentrar-se na escola porque elas ainda estão em casa, por isso, elas estão bloqueadas. Uma criança normalmente diz:"(...) Um exemplo do que nós normalmente vemos quando a mãe de uma criança é abusada violentamente, a criança perde o respeito

102 Interview with Dr. José Rebouças in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-27
103 Interview with PhD theologian and Priest Marcos António Cardoso in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-01
104 Interview with PhD theologian and Priest Marcos António Cardoso in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-01
105 Ibid
pela/o Professor/a (porque a Professora é uma mulher) por essa razão, ele/ela está bloqueada para a aprendizagem. //... tudo o que ela vê/ sente, ela reproduz.”

6. “Para a família pobre, elas não podem dar à criança a assimilação que ela/ele precisa porque elas não têm recursos. E aqueles que vêm de famílias com abuso ou qualquer uso de drogas, ficam confusas nesse ambiente. Não dá o estímulo certo para a criança; pelo contrário, fica mais difícil para a criança aprender na escola. As crianças que têm parentes que ganham dinheiro podem muitas vezes pagar um tutor para ajudar a criança a progredir na escola. Mas para a família pobre: elas não têm dinheiro para pagar um tutor para a sua criança. Elas não têm o ambiente para estudar como as outras crianças têm.”

7. “A criança pensa que se os seus pais conseguem viver assim, elas também conseguem.”

8. “Numa família pobre como no Banco da Vitória, o Governo ajuda a família dependendo da sua economia no lar. Eles têm o que nós chamamos aqui de "Bolsa da Família". A família poderá receber 70R$ todos os meses, então podes imaginar o quão pouco é se tiveres 1-3 crianças. É impossível para a criança ter algum estímulo certo se estiveres com fome e não estiveres no ambiente certo. O Governo dá 600R$ todos os meses depois de tornares 65 anos, muitas dessas crianças vivem com os seus Avós, se dividires 600R$ num lar de 8 pessoas, o que normalmente é. É muito pouco.”

---

106 Interview with Sister Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis in Banco da Vitória. 2012-06-04
107 Interview with Dr. José Rebouças in Banco da Vitória. 2012-05-27
108 Ibid
109 Ibid
Appendix 2

The informants/interviewees

Parents/ Caregivers

1. Name: Flávia  
   Age: 35  
   Adress: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil  
   House: no electricity, no running water, approximately 30-45min to Escola Daniel Rebouças  
   Family members: a mother (35), two daughters (6 months and 3) and three sons (12, 10 and 8)  
   Occupation: housekeeper  
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-25

2. Name: Christina  
   Adress: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil  
   House: of metal plates and broken bricks to hold the house, no running water and no electricity  
   Family members: a mother (25 years old), one daughter (4 years old), a baby boy (5 months), takes care of her 8 year old nephew, approximately 20-25 min from Escola Daniel Rebouças  
   Occupation: none, she gets by via bolsa família  
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-25

3. Name: Teresa  
   Age: 65  
   Adress: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil  
   House: electricity, no running water, big TV, have approximately two bedrooms, one small kitchen, one small living room  
   Family members: grandma, three grandchildren (17, 7 and 5) the seven year old goes to Escola Daniel Rebouças. The 7 (girl) and 5 (boy) year olds are siblings  
   Occupation: grandma  
   Economy: Pension and Bolsa Família  
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-25

4. Name: Paula  
   Age: 40  
   Adress: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil  
   House: No running water, no electricity, one longitude room (kitchen, bedroom and living room in one place)  
   Family members: her son Manuelito who go to Escola Daniel Rebouças and her husband  
   Occupation: none  
   Economy: Bolsa Família and her husband’s salary  
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-25

5. Name: Fatima  
   Age: 36  
   Adress: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil  
   House: One small house with broken walls, no electricity and no running water  
   Family members: two sons and one nine years old daughter (go to Escola Daniel Rebouças)
Occupation: none
Date of the interview: 2012-05-25

The professionals

6. Name: Marcos António Cardoso
   Age: 47
   Occupation: Priest and Phd in Theology
   Address: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-01

7. Name: Irmã Lourdes de Fátima Alves de Assis
   Age: 53
   Occupation: Nun, Licenciatura em Letras
   20 years of experience working with children, 3 years in Casa da Criança in Tupa and 1 year in Conquista.
   Address: Conquista, Brazil
   Date of the interview: 2012-06-04

8. Name: Dr. José Rebouças
   Age: 62
   Occupation: University Professor at UNIME – ITABINA
   Have worked voluntarily in Escola Daniel Rebouças for 5 years
   Address: Itabuna/Ilhéus, Brazil
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-27, 2012-06-01

9. Name: Irmã Vilma de Oliveira Rocha
   Age: 51
   Occupation: Nun, teacher and School Principal at Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças and have worked with children for 25 years.
   Address: Banco da Vitória/Ilhéus, Brazil
   Date of the interview: 2012-05-21

10. Name: Eunice Souza Santos de Oliveira
    Age: 53
    Occupation: Chef/ Housemaid (has been working in Casa da Criança/ Escola Daniel Rebouças for 16 years)
    Address: Banco da Vitória/ Ilhéus, Brazil
    Date of the interview: 2012-05-21
Appendix 3

Districts of Ilhéus

Bairros da Cidade de Ilhéus

1. SÃO SEBASTIÃO  15. IGUAPE
2. CENTRO        16. SÃO MIGUEL
3. TERESÓPOLIS   17. SÃO DOMINGOS
4. BOA VISTA     18. PONTAL
5. CIDADE NOVA   19. JARDIM ATLÂNTICO
6. CONQUISTA     20. NELSON COSTA
7. TAPERA        21. SÃO FRANCISCO
8. MALHADO       22. HERNANI SÁ
9. BASÍLIO       23. ILHÉUS II
10. ESPERANÇA    24. NOSSA SENHORA DA VITÓRIA
11. VILA NAZARÉ  25. BANCO DA VITÓRIA
12. TEO TÔNIO VILELA  26. VILA CACHOEIRA
13. BARRA DO ITAÍPE  27. SALOBRINHO
14. JARDIM SAVÓIA

Fonte: Lei 3476/09

52
Map of Banco da Vitória

Banco da Vitória is geographically coordinated: 14° 46 `58`Lat. south, 39° 06 `28`Long. West of Greenwich point of 1 to 14° `26`Lat. south, 39°05 `42`Long. West of Greenwich in point 2.