



Other subjects in the family-school relationship: the role of grandparents in the educational process of grandchildren¹

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ABSTRACT

The current article intends to present the results of a research done in Portugal and in Brazil, a research whose main purpose was to better understand how grandparents relate to their grandchildren and offer support in their education. The research followed a qualitative approach; in order to better understand the routine of the relation between grandparents and grandchildren, there were 14 interviews with grandfathers and grandmothers in the city of Mariana–Brazil, and 7 in Leiria-Portugal. The data revealed that, in spite of the socioeconomic differences among the interviewed, in both cities the grandparents (most of whom had a low level of education) do not act directly on the process of education of the grandchildren. However, they offer important support to the children's education, whether by managing the schedules of the in-school and out-of-school activities, or by transmitting values appreciated by the school. They are, therefore, important agents in the care for grandchildren so that they have the necessary conditions for a good performance at school.

Keywords: Family-school relationship, intergenerational co-education, relation between grandparents and grandchildren.

Otras personas implicadas en la relación familia-escuela: el papel de los abuelos en el proceso educativo de los nietos

RESUMEN

Este artículo tiene como principal objetivo presentar los resultados de una encuesta realizada en Portugal y Brasil con el fin de conocer mejor la relación e implicación de los y las abuelas con sus nietos y nietas. En la investigación, centrada en un enfoque cualitativo, con el objetivo de analizar la rutina en la relación entre abuelos, abuelas, nietos y nietas, se llevaron a cabo 14 entrevistas con los abuelos y abuelas en la ciudad de Mariana-Brasil, y 7 en la ciudad de Leiria-Portugal. Los datos revelaron que, a pesar de las diferencias socioeconómicas de los entrevistados, los abuelos y las abuelas, en su gran mayoría con bajo nivel de escolaridad, no actúan directamente en el proceso educativo de los nietos y las nietas. Sin embargo, ofrecen un importante apoyo en su educación, acompañándolos para que asistan de las actividades escolares y extraescolares, y en transmitir valores apreciados por la escuela. Son, por lo tanto, importantes agentes en el cuidado de los nietos y las nietas procurando que tengan las condiciones necesarias para un buen desempeño escolar.

Palabras Clave: Relación familia-escuela, coeducación intergeneracional, relación abuelos/as y nietos/as.

1. Introduction

When children are born or come home through adoption, families need a support net which is composed of relatives, neighbors, people who are close to the family core and of the child care institutions. Thus, still at young age, throughout the process of socialization, the child meets agents external to the family core, as it happens at daycare centers, kindergarten, baby-sitters, relatives and friends.

Due to the great social and economic changes that countries with different degrees of industrialization go through ([Barreto, 2017](#); [Pinto & Gomes, 2010](#)), new family configurations show changes in their relations. In these cases, families might experience critical situations in which the solidarity and support net is invited to act, for instance, in contexts of divorce, remarriage, motherhood and/or fatherhood in teenage years, death or abandon of children by the father and/or by the mother, among others ([Cardoso, 2011](#); [Dutra, 2009](#); [Ochiltree, 2006](#); [Shwalb & Hossain, 2017](#)).

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On the other hand, the longer longevity of men and women evidenced in several parts of the world in the last 50 years has extended the intergeneration contact. The increase in time of familiarity impacts families by demanding new ways of negotiation and support between two, three or even four generations. Thus, the support offered by grandparents (be it economic, emotional or material) is part of the surviving strategy of several families, especially those with low income.

This article brings results of two researches, one conducted in Brazil and the other one in Portugal, which had as main goal to analyze how grandparents, who have been, most of them, for a long time away from school and possess low level of education², build the relation with their grandchildren and offer support to their school activities.

From bibliography and field observations other questions appeared, such as: What do the older ones teach? What are the ways found by grandparents to support children's schoolwork?

The chosen city for the accomplishment of the research in Brazil was Mariana, a typical countryside city of Minas Gerais, with 58 thousand inhabitants in 2015 and that depends especially on tourism and mining. In Portugal, the selected city for the research was Leiria, with approximately 125 thousand inhabitants in 2011, out of them almost 2/3 working for the tertiary sector (64, 2%) (PORDATA, 2017).

Studies concerning school failure and the relation between family and school are increasing (Coleman, 1998; Henderson et al., 2007; Suárez et al., 2012; Symeou, 2005); however, it is not usual that they address the influence of other people in the process of socialization and school learning of the children, as in the case of grandparents (Coutrim, 2010a). Thus, the investigation in Mariana and Leiria emerged from the search to know more about the diversity and the complexity of educational processes that take place outside the school environment and that involve the community, the neighborhood, other institutions and, especially, other family members who are not the parents.

This way, the current results expand the discussion concerning the process of socialization by also pointing out to a question that must permeate the studies about family-school relations, which is "what family are we talking about?", since, in a context of great diversity in the family configurations, it is no longer viable to consider only one model, namely nuclear, heterosexual and bi-parental. Thus, it would be more adequate to refer to families-school or school-families relations in different regions and countries that present the same phenomenon, still not so explored by the social sciences and by education.

2. Families: Space of inter-generational upbringing

Solidarity net is built among the family members or others such as neighbors, friends and distant relatives that face together the difficulties caused by specific situations such as the pregnancy of young single women, separation, and unemployment, or due to structural conditions such as poverty and the precariousness of public services to support these families. Such problems aggravate when there are low salaries and financial instability, that hinder the independence of the families and are analyzed by Brazilian authors such as Coutrim (2010b) and Lopes, Neri & Park (2005) and foreigners such as Aboim & Vasconcelos (2009), Dutra (2009), Ochiltree (2006), Sampson & Hertlein (2015) and Timonen & Arber (2012).

Certainly, these factors make it impossible for the older ones to make the choice of living the way and with whom they want; however, it is possible to perceive that the support from older generations to the younger ones represents not only a way of saving money or a surviving strategy of younger generations.

Regarding the case of young adults who live at their parents' home, Ramos (2006) considers that the family constitutes a net in which there are several dependencies. Apparently, such dependencies may mean an obstacle to the family relations; however, it is also in the midst of situations of opposition and mutual support which occur in the family core that autonomy and identity are constituted.

Grandparents and grandchildren, although possessing such distinct knowledge and life experiences, search for spaces of interlocution and growth in a relation permeated, most of times, by affection, but that does not exclude the divergence and even the conflicts (Rocha-Coutinho, 2006). Grandparents, through their age and their accumulated experience, perceive themselves as agents of socialization of motherhood and fatherhood, and offer guidance to their children even after they become adults and have their own families.

According to Paulo de Salles (2011), such proximity and collaboration that occur between grandparents and grandchildren is only possible because bonds are created in a distinct universe of everyday life, which is permeated by duties and appointments. To the author, both the child and the person who has reached maturity are socially marginalized and suffer oppression. Thus, the resistance of these groups is woven through original and very unique practices, built in familiarity, providing new interpretation to ideas and reinventing what is already socially established. Such interaction reveals a creative strength of resistance from the recreation of life together, in a process of intergenerational cooperative education.

Thus, the familiarity between children and their grandparents occurs in another time, despite other conversations, other gestures and codes that grow apart from those established in the relation between parents and children. There is, therefore, a distinct dynamic and the institutions which take and work with children need to be aware of it.

As García, Pérez & Martínez-González (2014, p. 579) state, "the time that the grandparents and grandmothers spend with them [their grandchildren], they dedicate it mainly to take care of them, but they are also interested in their education and in instilling values, such as respect, responsibility and interest in studies" This might, however, make grandparents feel uncomfortable in their capacity to play this role, since García & Martínez-González (2018, p. 117) found "four relevant aspects that affect the daily dynamics of grandparents who assume the care and education of their grandchildren: stress in developing this function, personal security, difficulty in reconciling it with his personal situation and emotional self-regulation".

This way, considering the family dynamic as beyond the relation between parents and children, it is important to reflect on and study what to expect from institutions such as the school, and how it is structuring itself in order to meet the demands coming from "new" families and the place of the child and the adolescent in this structure. In order to do so, it is necessary to stop thinking about childhood and adolescence as if they were isolated groups and with a private and unique culture to search for the understanding of the dispositions they are subjected to, according to Lahire:

² In the Brazilian case, the proportion of literate elderly has had a significant increase, mainly among women; however, the illiteracy is still high. 23,1% of the population over the age of 60 still is illiterate, to a national average of 7,2% of illiteracy in 2015 (IBGE, 2015). In the case of Portugal, the illiteracy rate decreased significantly, tending to be residual and reaching massively the elderly population (over 65 years old), women with particular incidence. In 1950 the illiteracy rate was 41,77% (INE) and in 2011 it was 5,2% (6,8% of women and 3,5% of men) (PORDATA, 2017).

“...thinking sociologically about children and the adolescents imposes understanding their place in the different configurations of relations of inter-dependence among the actors who compose the universe of the family, the peer group and the institution of school, instead of trying to define them exclusively from the practices through which they try to be different from adults – especially parents and teachers” (2007, p.23).

Still according to the author, it is in the childhood and in the adolescence that the individuals are more exposed to family and extra-family events which are important for the set of their mental and behavioral dispositions (Lahire, 2007). This process brings more impact when one perceives what several researches have demonstrated, that we live in times of multiple socializations, with simultaneous and contradictory influences of family, peer group and also school. Following the same direction of Dubet (1996) and Lahire (2007), brings elements to the understanding of the process of socialization. According to the authors the individuals do not live the social experience in a passive way, transposing directly what is brought by the environment where they live to their individual dispositions. That is, their way of being and acting in the world is constituted through several logics of internal and external action, defining the manner how they build reality. Thus, immersed in a system of relations, the individual is forced to mobilize several logics of different actions, constituting, this way, the subjectivity.

For this reason, thinking sociologically about these two institutions (family and school) as interdependent, means to reflect on the processes of socialization that determine the development of children in a net of social configuration (Lahire, 2007).

In this family universe, influenced by different groups and institutions, an intergenerational familiarity allows the creation and strengthening of relation nets based on support and solidarity among family members, the members of community and the school. This can be observed when the grandparents (especially the ones with low education) transmit to the younger ones moral values such as honor, honesty, work, religiosity, among others, pointed out by Lahire (1997) as generators of behavior at school like obedience, the care for school material, the discipline in the classroom and the respect for the teacher. Thus, from the process of socialization comes the transmission of family dispositions passed from the older generations to the younger ones, configuring a constant and subtle process of intergenerational teaching/learning.

In different countries the relation between grandparents and grandchildren has been pointed out as little explored in the research about education and family organization, because the grandparents have been seen as people who receive care and not as active agents, who effectively contribute to the family organization (Plá & López, 2011). In the case of Spain, specifically, comparing to Europe, one out of four grandparents takes care of grandchildren:

“...one out of each four grandparents who have grandchildren takes care of them, what means a smaller presence than the European average, where the ratio is more than one out of each three, but the Spanish dedicate an average of seven hours daily, two more than the European average” (Plá & López, 2011, p.107).

The data brought by the authors were extracted from the research on a large scale *Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe* (SHARE) conducted between 2004 and 2006 with 40 thousand individuals over 50 years old who live in 13 European countries, regardless of family income. The results are surprising and demonstrate that, even in countries presenting high income per capita, such as the case of Denmark, Belgium and Holland, grandparents spend several hours on weekly care of grandchildren (Plá & López, 2009).

However, the participation of grandparents in the life of grandchildren varies a lot among European countries. Silva, Margarido, Pimentel & Santos, (2016), having as basis the same database of SHARE used by Plá & Lopez (2009), conclude that the dedication of grandparents for more or less time to grandchildren depends not only on the state of health and aging of grandparents, but also on public policies and employment for the younger ones. Thus, in countries where there is more availability of part-time jobs for mothers, with good wage and support from the State through social policies, there is smaller need of direct participation of grandparents, be it in the financial realm, be it concerning the daily care of children.

In the countries with more fragile public policies and more impoverished populations, such is the case of the Latin Americans, other factors influence the role of grandparents at home. As previously mentioned, grandparents embrace the care of grandchildren during part of the day so that the parents can work, but also there are specific family moments which demand more cohesion and intergenerational support. One of them is the situation of migration of young parents who search for better professional and economic future in other cities or countries. Such behavior overloads the grandparents (mostly the grandmothers) with work and demand from them physical, mental and educational conditions that they do not always have (León & Serrano, 2010).

If, on the one hand, previous researches demonstrate the role of grandparents as aggregators of economic and emotional value to the families, there are, on the other hand, studies that demonstrate that, in the midst of situations of (emotional and material) lack, the intergenerational support does not mean, necessarily, the professional success and social mobility of grandchildren in the future, because the context of which the family, social relations, school, etc. are a part of, is still predominant. These children and their families lack information and conditions of intervention in the school universe, since the social and cultural conditions are unequal (Nogueira & Nogueira, 2004; Silva et al., 2016).

Consequently, among the families with low education, it is more common to find among the children situations of failing, low performance at school and learning difficulties, considering that these families face bigger obstacles in the relationship with school and school subjects (Crozier, 2000; Silva, 2003; Vincent, 1996).

3. Method: Conducting the Research in Mariana and Leiria

The research selected approach was qualitative and the main tool for collecting empirical data was the semi-structured interview. 14 grandparents were interviewed in Mariana (13 grandmothers and 1 grandfather) and 7 in Leiria (4 grandmothers and 3 grandfathers)³.

The selection of the grandparents interviewed in Brazil and in Portugal was done considering the degree of familiarity with

³ There were questionnaires for teachers in both cities. Parents and children were also heard; however, in this paper, only the statements of grandparents were selected.

the grandchildren and the age of the children. That is, the chosen ones were the grandparents who take care of children from 6 to 10 years old. The delineation of such age group of children was due to the fact that at this phase they are already literate, they are evaluated and considered responsible for homework, although they demand care from the older ones. The age of the grandparents and the time they spend daily with the grandchildren were not considered criteria when choosing the individuals, although it was essential for the research that this contact was frequent. The grandparents' income and level of education were not a criterium for participating in the research.

In the case of Mariana all children study at public school and in Leiria only one of them studies at a private school. It is worth mentioning that, although almost all schools attended by the children who participated of the investigation are public, the differences between the two realities are huge. In the research done in Mariana the socio-economic level of the families is very low (they earn between one and two minimum wages), it is part-time school (morning or afternoon) and, in most cases, the children live at the home of grandparents. In Leiria, families are middle-class, children attend full-time school and in only two cases the grandchildren live at the grandparents' home.

Consequently, the time spent together between the two generations is much smaller in Leiria than in Mariana on school days⁴. Even in the cases in which the parents are divorced or separated, in Leiria most grandchildren do not live with their grandparents, who offer support to take and/or pick up from sports or artistic activities performed after school. Several of them take care of the children until the parents come from work and take them to their own homes.

It is important to emphasize that despite so many differences in income and behavioral patterns among the interviewed subjects in Brazil and in Portugal, and the small number of interviewed people as well, it was not intended to establish a pattern of family organization that could allow some sort of generalization of the data. For this reason, this article does not intend to make comparisons, but to bring some elements for reflection on the relation between grandparents and grandchildren in two such distinct contexts.

After the interviews, all the statements were analyzed through qualitative content analysis (Bardin, 2006; Bryman, 2012), where, without the help of software, categories emerged from the theoretical framework and from the data themselves, crossing a deductive and an inductive perspective.

The empirical data from the interviews were analyzed according to the following axes: a) familiarity and relationship between grandparents and grandchildren; b) grandparents' educational practices (child care, transmission of values); and c) grandparents' school support (homework supervision, relation with the school). These axes emerged from the theoretical frame and allowed the construction of a first table of 160 pages which included all the responses. Secondly, during the process of re-reading and analyzing the data, the axes gave rise to the following main categories: 1) intergenerational education; and 2) grandparents' educational practices. From there a new grid was built; its final version included the most representative excerpts of the interviews distributed by interviewee and by category of analysis.

4. Results

As previously mentioned, the context of the research done in Brazil differs significantly from the Portuguese case, considering both socioeconomic conditions of the investigated groups and the routine of the older people with the children. It cannot be denied that such differences influenced the results of the research; however, it was possible to attest in both cities some similar behavior of grandparents, especially concerning the assistance on school tasks.

4.1. Family arrangements

In Mariana, only a small part of the interviewed children lives with the father at the same place and in most cases in which children do not live with the father and/or the mother, none of them pays child support. It is important to emphasize that it was common to find only women responsible for the home, constituted of grandmother, mother and grandchild.

In nearly all the cases in which the grandparents are the only ones responsible for grandchildren, the children were handed over by the parents when they were babies and did not return to their care. There were cases in which the children lived also with uncles/aunts and siblings, which points up the fact that grandparents take responsibility for other children who have the same or different parents.

In the Portuguese case the reality is very different because cases of social vulnerability in the same level of the ones in Brazil were not investigated. Except one couple of grandparents who have the divorced daughter and the two grandchildren living in the same place, and another couple who have the son living with them temporarily, the other elderly people⁵ live alone, with or without the spouse. Cases of extended or amplified families, such as in Brazil, which enables the familiarity of children with uncles/aunts, cousins and siblings at the same home, were not observed. This demonstrates that the interviewed people in Portugal have a middle-class lifestyle, are independent and preserve autonomy. It also reveals their sons/daughters are able to provide for themselves and their children without needing to live at their parents' home.

Thus, in the cases analyzed in Portugal, the familiarity between grandparents and grandchildren is not as intense as in the cases observed in Brazil. Although it is clearly noticeable the importance of the role of grandparents in the routine of children and in the family support, the familiarity with grandchildren occurs especially in some specific moments of the day, such as when it is time to take to and/or pick up from school or from extra school activities, following up cases of sickness or medical appointments. In the only case in which there is the situation of living together - grandparents, grandchildren and the mother - the grandfather reports the difficulties in the organization and maintenance of the routine of the children:

"Let's see, it depends on the schedules. So, J... JM starts at 8:00 a.m. in the morning, my daughter takes, usually, J, because she starts at 08h00, too, leaves him a little bit early at school, the teacher knows, and... I pick him up around 3:45 p.m. And M, I have just taken her at 9:00 a.m., to school, I'll pick her up at lunch time, if

⁴ The daily time that grandparents dedicate to grandchildren varied a lot in the two cities, between three hours twice a week up to full-time.

⁵ It is known that not every grandfather and grandmother experience the condition of elderly person; however, in the current research, all the interviewed were over 60 years old at the moment of the interview. Although the person is considered elderly from 65 on in Portugal, it was chosen to use the minimum age of 60 according to the UN classification (United Nations, 2015).

she does not have classes in the afternoon, and the rest of the days I pick her up at 5:30 p.m. At 5:30 p.m. there is that break, they come home, have a snack, grab a bite to eat, and go to a sports activity, that usually lasts until around [calculates:] 7:00 p.m., 7:45 p.m., 8:00 p.m. And I pick them up, the mother comes home from work, when she can she passes by the place, takes them and brings them home, right? And... Or, if she can't, calls me and I pick the kids up. I am always attentive and I am always available for this...willingly" (Deponent 2, grandfather, Leiria).

It can be observed in the statement of grandfather 2 that the routine of elderly caretakers becomes more intense for living together with a divorced daughter and two grandchildren. In the case of the interviewed Brazilian families, the participation of other relatives in the upbringing of children, such as the case of aunts/uncles and cousins, limits the privacy of the elderly, but also enables them to share the tasks.

4.2. Involvement with homework

In the interviews conducted in Brazil and in Portugal it was observed that all the grandparents value schoolwork a lot, however they hardly get directly involved in homework. Confirming the statistics, their low education and their outdated knowledge of school content were grandparents' reasons for their lack of support in homework.

"I don't know now, these new subjects, now... put some things and then... She, especially, is very stubborn! One of these days, she was like this: "Oh, grandma, explain to me this problem..." And then... "I know, but explain it to me..." [said the granddaughter] "Oh, child, so, it's like this..." [answered the grandmother] "No, it's not like this!", she tells me!" (Deponent 6, grandmother, Leiria).

However, supporting the process of education of grandchildren may assume an indirect way and, in most cases, this occurs.

"I think that what she has to strain is the studies. Studying moves you forward. I didn't study, I lived in a rural area..."

I tell her: 'study hard...' to have a profession in the future. She thinks about studying to be a veterinarian" (Deponent 3, grandmother, Mariana).

It can be noticed in the statement above that education is valued by grandparents as a tool to get a job and social improvement, because through it one can be "moved forward". Thus, from the elderly point of view, the opportunity that the child has to study has to be seized, and, in order to reinforce the motivational speech, the elderly show, through their own examples, the limitations found to attend school in the past.

The interviews confirm such commitment of the elderly to the children's education, in spite of their little school experience. Out of the fourteen interviews done with the grandparents in Brazil, only one deponent affirmed having more than 4 years of education and in Portugal out of 7 interviewed, 5 had 4 years of education and two concluded the 12 years of basic education. All of them have difficulties helping their grandchildren with homework and delegate to the parents such task.

"This, teaching, we avoid teaching [...] The knowledge is totally different, they learn in a different way than the way I did... Although when it's music, no, music I still, several times, teach

clarinet, she also studies clarinet. Several times she asks me and I teach her clarinet. Now, what is the "school" part, of course, we don't interfere, because there are other teaching methods and we don't want to interfere" (Deponent 13, grandfather, Leiria).

One of the grandmothers bought books to try to help her granddaughter with homework.

"Look, who made me, now, learn new mathematics, I mean, because I have been already retired for 7 years. [...] What happens? I, now, to be able to transmit, had to study her books, and... study... buy a new grammar [...] That's the thing, go online... things I didn't use to do, I didn't" (Deponent 6, grandmother, Leiria).

In most cases, children have a schedule to do homework and the grandparents demand their commitment. Thus, even not being direct agents of education, the older ones make sure that the school material, the uniform, transportation, feeding, homework, notebooks and school assignments are in order. The parents (or uncles and aunts, in case of the mother's and/or father's absence) are always responsible for checking the tasks sent by the school.

Summing up, it is possible to observe on the collected statements the appreciation for studies and the school work, although it is clear, both to the Brazilian and Portuguese grandparents, that there is a limit for the role of grandfather and grandmother. That means, they put themselves as secondary agents of what concerns formal education but see themselves as important individuals upbringing the children. Certainly, the definition of the roles of grandfather/grandmother, father/mother, are not so clear and, in several cases, the conflict appears, in an exposed or concealed way. However, the interviewed grandparents feel important for being more required by their grandchildren and for offering them, most of times, something that the parents do not have: the time.

5. Final Considerations

Despite, as pointed out, the existence of a relatively scarce research about the role of grandparents on their grandchildren's education (Cardoso, 2011; Coutrim, 2010a; Coutrim & Silva, 2018; García & Martínez-González, 2018; García et al., 2014; Ochiltree, 2005; Plá & López 2009, 2011; Sampson & Hertlein, 2015; Silva et al., 2016), this research suggests that grandparents dedicate a lot of their time to grandchildren; however, there is still few research that displays to what extent the time spent together has influenced the education of children and their relation with school.

The research in the two cities revealed that there is one clear difference regarding the family situation of each group. While the grandparents in Leiria take care of the grandchildren for smaller periods of time (except one grandfather) and the presence of the mother and/or the father in the child's life releases grandparents from the direct responsibility for studies, the grandparents in Mariana dedicate more time to the grandchildren on a daily basis. These grandparents, who in many cases cannot count on the mother and/or father's participation at home, resort to other individuals such as single sons/daughters, neighbors, older grandchildren, etc., as it is typical of families of lower classes (Diogo, Silva & Viana, 2018).

Even belonging to such distinct realities, the grandparents interviewed in Mariana and Leiria have in common the establishment of an ethical agreement with the parents, with the school and with the children to support them in their school

path (Coutrim & Silva, 2018; García & Martínez-González, 2018; García et al., 2014; Oliveira, 2011). Having few years of education and being away from school for decades, they do not undertake definitely the responsibility for supervising their grandchildren's homework, but they find strategies.

Thus, both in Leiria as in Mariana, the grandparents continue as the managers of the children's time, be it by observing the schedules of extra-school activities (as in the case of the middle-class families in Leiria), be it by taking care so that other aspects such as feeding, clothing, leisure and transportation are guaranteed (Coutrim, 2010a; Coutrim & Silva, 2018).

The relation between grandparents and grandchildren is built and rebuilt as the bonds grow stronger and the familiarity enables the enlargement in the net of socialization. The grandparents know how far they can go and what to teach their grandchildren. For this reason, by talking to the little ones, they transmit moral values (García et al., 2014), such as to obey the older ones, to respect the teachers, not to break the rules, to pray, etc. Such knowledge is closer to those who do not have a lot of formal education, but is very appreciated by the school (Lahire, 1997).

It is clear in the research that grandparents and grandchildren spend a different amount of time in Leiria and in Mariana, since they belong to a different social background with different cultural and material conditions. However, the motivation given by grandparents to the grandchildren concerning studying is common in the two contexts. In both cases children are encouraged to make an effort, and positive expectations about their own school education are reinforced. Thus, in the process of intergenerational learning, transmission occurs in a way that enables, at a greater or smaller extent, the renewal and the perpetuation of practices valued by the family group and the school.

There is still a lot to explore about the relation between grandparents and grandchildren. For example, teachers' training programs should definitely address home-school relations, including the possible role of grandparents. Also, issues such as generation conflicts (grandparents and grandchildren, grandparents and parents), generation transmission, relation with the school, are topics that need to be better explored in future research.

However, it is believed that the current research, even though the small amount of interviews does not allow generalization (which will consist of its main limitation), helps the construction of a theoretical basis that seeks to know better the role of family and community agents who play an important role in the family-school relation and who have been neglected, for example, by the sociology of education, as is the case of the grandparents.

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